Vinaceous Correspondents:
Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles
The Third Article in a Series / Tenth Section
by Barbara Marinacci

This is the tenth segment of an article about the longstanding friendship between wine quality control-promoting vintner Martin Ray and renowned enologist Maynard Amerine. As with previous segments, it is based primarily on correspondence between them, as well as letters that MR and his second wife, Eleanor Ray, wrote to or received from other people. Once again the author—"Rusty" Ray's stepdaughter—thanks John L. Skarstad and Daryl Morrison of UC Davis Library's Special Collections for permission to utilize documents now in the archives there, as well as for supplying copies of many letters. This significant and intriguing 1955 battle of MR with the California (and, at the time, American) wine industry has rarely been acknowledged, or perhaps even known about and therefore addressed by subsequent wine scholars. Thus it will be presented in some detail over several issues, as much as possible within the narrower context of the Ray–Amerine relationship.

PART III. MARTIN RAY AND MAYNARD AMERINE (1937-1976)
-10-

Over the telephone in April 1955, Martin Ray had declined Louis Gomberg's invitation to attend the first meeting in early May of the Premium Wine Producers of California—the new association that Gomberg was shepherding into existence. Still, he wanted Gomberg to present, there and then, his proposals for ways by which motivated wineries could raise the quality, honesty, and ultimately the reputation and marketability, of the state's better and costlier wines, thereby diminishing the competitive attraction of inexpensive imports. MR's expectation was definitely out of bounds. The initial convocation of potential members would set up organizational matters and discuss the PWP's primary goal: overcoming the serious economic threat to the state's superior wines of those duplicitous foreign "shippers" wines by conducting an effective nationwide public relations campaign. The topic of imposing the quality control measures that MR insisted upon could have no place on the agenda.

Moreover, any suggestions, let alone pressures, coming from Martin Ray were certain to meet with strong resistance. Over the years he had made few lasting friends in the wine industry. He wasn't a joiner of clubs or associations. He rarely visited or socialized with winemaking peers, nor had he made himself beloved over the years by delivering verbal and printed diatribes about others' winegrowing practices. His closest friend by far was UC Davis enology professor Maynard Amerine. For almost 20 years the two of them had been pushing in separate ways for improving both the selection of grape varieties grown for making wine and the methods by which wines were made, along with insisting upon honest labeling of the higher-priced varietals. (If they actually were blends, the label should say so.) The first man did it through research, teaching, wine judging, and publishing both technical and popular writings; the other, through producing dry and pure fine-varietal table and sparkling wines ... and periodically blasting at other winegrowers' ignorance or greedy pigheadedness. Among California's vintners, MR had made enemies instead of allies, whereas Amerine was widely respected for his knowledge, many accomplishments, and adroit manners.

A Cascade of Correspondence Begins

Two days before the first formal meeting in San Francisco, on May 5th, of representatives of the state's better wine-producing firms, MR sent off notes to four winery proprietors, accompanying copies of his two letters to Louis Gomberg written in April. (Their contents were presented in the previous *WTQ* issue.) By the meeting day, probably none as yet had received MR's note; but if anyone had and then taken time to read the enclosed letters, he might have mentioned their combustible contents and tone to the other named recipients.

During his visit to the Rays' mountaintop in Saratoga in the previous week, Amerine had counseled MR not to send out these Gomberg letters to the owners of Wente, Beaulieu, Inglenook, and

Krug, as he intended. Doing this would only stir up trouble—infuriating instead of persuading them to agree to imposing on their operations MR's various long-advocated quality-ensuring measures. Nor did Amerine at all approve of the Rays' intention to distribute these same letters far and wide, among the 200-some wine retailers, wine writers, and customers on the Martin Ray winery's mailing list.

The first irate reaction came in a letter to MR from John Daniel, Jr. of Inglenook, composed on the day after the PWP meeting. Among its seven paragraphs are these:

> In your view of so much that is virtuous abroad and so much that is sinister at home, it occurs that you may inadvertently be grasping the telescope by the wrong end.... Your inferences that the preponderance if not all other California growers except you ignore all fine wine practices, blend nine parts of neutral wines to one of Cabernet Sauvignon, lowered such standards as you left to them in your description, etc., etc., are not only contradicted by the facts but are a great disservice to the California wine industry, particularly when stated to members of the trade who may not be in possession of the facts.... We are as proud of our reputation as any wine firm. We do not presume to set ourselves up in judgment of others, but do not make statements regarding our products lightly, nor do we regard derogatory remarks about them in that vein. There are additional statements regarding our products and practices which are unwarranted, unmerited and untrue. [5/6/55]

The "cc" at the foot of Daniel's letter indicated that he had forwarded copies to the proprietors of the Wente, Beaulieu, and Krug wineries, and also to Gomberg.

Although Maynard had told Martin to expect incensed rebuttals like this one, if recipients bothered to respond at all, he must not have asked him to refrain from reporting any such repercussions. MR, of course, couldn't resist doing so. He either sent Amerine fresh copies (made by Eleanor) of the irate letters from winery owners or else read them to him over the phone, followed by the texts of his own immediate, trenchant replies.

Here is a portion of MR's response to John Daniel.

> As I made very clear, your group cannot attack imported wines without hurting most of all the fine European growths that set all quality standards.... You perhaps forget that you personally admitted to Julian Street in my presence at your table that your Chardonnay was made from Chenin Blanc and your Pinot Noir from Pinot St. George. And I am obliged to call to your attention that Dr. Winkler did not certify that the wine you sell as Chardonnay came unblended from the authentic Chardonnay grape. Having Chardonnay vines in your vineyard does not guarantee the truth of your label. I am not going further into any personal correspondence with you in this spirit, for I am interested solely in safeguarding standards of quality, and any personal references were used merely to show our great need for a self-imposed industry control such as they have in France. Like conditions forced them to it there, and they have proved that authentic labeling policed by their own group is the first step in protecting fine wines in the market. [5/10/55]

[Vintage Label Courtesy of Angela Stewart]

As more letters arrived—from Herman Wente, Robert Mondavi (at Krug), and finally even Beaulieu's Marquise de Pins (the de Latour founders' daughter)—MR liked this evidence that at least he and the wines he made were important enough not to be ignored. Even more pleasing were the approving letters sent by influential wine connoisseurs, respected wine merchants, and wine writers. The best of them he shared with Maynard. Among the first group was the eminent publisher Alfred A. Knopf, who had visited Rusty Ray before the war at the original Paul Masson premises in Saratoga. ("The old place," as MR called it, lay just to the southeast, across the small canyon that split Table Mountain in two. The Rays were now calling their own "hogback" side of it Mt. Eden.)

> How right you are. Good luck to you. Book publishers could learn something from you. As a matter of fact, I find myself drinking less and less California wine. It is not a matter of price, because I buy practically no cheap French wines, i.e., the kind that can compete on the basis of price with wines from California. It's simply that the California wines aren't good enough. I'd be very glad indeed to have your list. [5/16/55]

Another connoisseur whose supportive message the Rays proudly quoted was W.H. ("Hal") Smith, a vice president of the Anglo California National Bank in San Francisco.

> I appreciated receiving copies of your letters to Mr. Gomberg, as I am very interested in the problems of the wine industry. Certainly there can be no serious criticisms of your proposals, for what you advocate for the premium producers has worked well for you. [5/25/55]

Wine author Ernest Peninou contributed his own pro-QC vote, having found the MR's letters to Gomberg "very interesting and unfortunately so true."

> If the so-called "premium wine producers" would only take a few of the constructive steps or measures you advocate they would be proving a much brighter future for the next generation of winemakers and vineyardists of California than are their claims of quality we hear about on radio and T.V. and read about in magazines and billboards. [5/22/55]

Since the availability of photocopiers—those now-ubiquitous, low-cost, xerographic devices—still lay several decades away in the future, both Rays routinely typed up carbon copies of all letters they wrote. To make copies of other people's letters, Eleanor now transcribed them, using thin carbon papers layered between "onion-skin" sheets to produce multiples. Such copies could then be sent out to Amerine and other favored recipients. Any communications that MR wanted to distribute in large quantities could be turned over for mimeographing by a commercial service.

The most notable letters and other documents of the time were also inserted in a few expandable, clasp-bound binders that contained various written materials. These would serve as informational press kits or, eventually, as permanent archival records. Special Collections in the UC Davis Library has such a binder that holds the fascinating, articulate, and often volatile letter exchanges that took place during May 1955 between MR and the wine proprietors he had targeted for special attention. There too are additional Gomberg–Martin Ray letters, as well as other documents written or received by the Rays during their "Wine Quality Control Fight." Both MR and ER later added some commentaries on the entire affair.

The sheer bulk of these 1955 communications defies easy extractions and summaries for use in this article, which in any case focuses primarily on MR's friendship with Maynard Amerine. None of MR's letters to Amerine are in the Quality Control binders, since the growing conflict between them remained a private matter. Nor can they be found among Amerine's papers, for he destroyed most personal correspondence; doubtless the incendiary MR letters were torched early. However, the Rays' carbon copies and a few original notes to them from Amerine are in the Martin & Eleanor Ray Papers, as are numerous other Ray letters covering their QC Fight period.

At this midpoint in Martin Ray's 40-year-long winegrowing career, his battle of words with the California wine industry reached its apogee. At some future time MR's correspondence with Gomberg, Prof. Albert Winkler, the four winery proprietors, and others at the time may be more fully presented in *WTQ*, for the convenience of interested wine historians. For now, there's ample material in MR's letters to Amerine, plus several to John Melville and a few of ER's and others', to select from, to provide detailed accounts of, along with some colorful glimpses at, this brief but remarkable period in 1955.

Unfortunately, Gomberg's correspondence with other people, his notes, the PWP meeting minutes, and other materials relevant to MR's dealings with him and the Premium Wine Producers group—as well as anything else he may have written possibly tracing back to Martin Ray the upcoming surge of certain wineries' and winemakers' determination to improve the wines they produced (for it's apparent that Gomberg secretly admired, even agreed with, MR's perfectionist stance, even in the mid-1930s)—cannot be accessed at this time at their Gomberg & Fredrikson location. Hopefully they will be archived and made available to scholars in the future.

Reacting to John Melville's Book

In mid-spring, while the Rays were busily mounting their Wine Quality Fight, Amerine received an advance copy of *Guide to California Wines*, sent to him by Doubleday, doubtless at its author's behest. He was not impressed.

> Dear Rays—
> Well Melville's book is here and it is surprisingly like Mrs. Mabon's! [He's referring to *The ABC of America's Wines*, 1943.] The Wine Institute boys really got their licks in. Everybody gets praised. To wit: "The policy of Benoist and Goulet [at Almaden] is to produce only wines of the highest quality" "Paul Masson produces ... wines of superior quality." You get 2 pages but so does San Martin who produce "wines of fine quality." The story of Silvear and how Goulet made his champagne will slay you. Too bad it isn't true. He has collected together a lot of history, some of it new to me. But he hasn't done any particular harm or good. Some of his praise may be tongue-in-cheek comments. I can't say for sure.

(This undated note had a final sentence, "Well—will be looking for you the 29th around 3:30 in the afternoon," indicating that MA had written it in May.)

The author was temporarily spared MA's unfavorable yet genteel review until the autumn, when it would be published in *Wine and Food*, the Society's quarterly publication. [*See Review at end* – ED.] The Rays lacked a public platform for discharging their own negative opinion of the author's opus. As she'd done earlier, first after meeting Melville, then after hearing of the book's acceptance by a major East Coast publisher, Eleanor ripped into it in letters to family members and friends. Even before she and Rusty had secured a copy of *Guide to California Wines*, she expressed vast annoyance to her East Coast author friend Helen Augur, with whom she sometimes exchanged book-trade gossip.

> Say, Doubleday must be mad—they're actually publishing that character Melville's book on Calif. wines.... Recall he's the one we called Baron von Rieken (the stinkin Baron)? [The Rays were almost floored by his B.O. when, on visiting them, he removed his jacket.] He's one of the most ignorant but brassy lugs in history, knows less than nothing because he thinks he knows all, can't tell one wine from another, just ran around to all the wineries and lapped up whatever they said, praised them all, passed along all the lies, frauds, usual stuff. Why don't they look into something before they publish such? Joe Jackson [Joseph Jackson of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who had sent the manuscript to Doubleday and then wrote the book's Introduction] of course is such an enthusiastic amateur wine man that he was bent on associating his name with wine in a book. Melville said our wines were the finest & most expensive in the country — but he wouldn't know — great God, when I think of all the idiots writing books on wine I can't sleep for gnashing my teeth! [5/15/55] [*See Melville bio note at end.* — Ed.]

Ironically, despite the Rays' objections to both Melville and his book (though they hadn't read it yet), they had earlier encouraged him to show up at that first PWP meeting in early May. Having provided information about its time and place, they expected him to report on its transactions. ER had followed up MR's letter with an instructional one of her own.

> Gomberg may suspect you of being the [journalist] chappie referred to in Rusty's letter to him, so you'll have to let him know you're out to do an impartial reporting job or maybe you won't get in.... Certainly all these growers are in trouble over competition, and you can give them sympathy—but you must bring out how they themselves have gotten themselves into this jam.... Is it possible for you to get different ones to give you their increased production figures in the war years??? They're too cagey, I suppose—but they certainly were proud of shooting their volume up, and would expose this whole picture, if not suspecting you would use it against them.... You should get quotes that really could be terrific, as to how these various fellows think they can cut off the cheaper foreign wines without hurting the fines ones—that should be

"A vineyard any Burgundian would be proud of."
DR. MAYNARD AMERINE
Author of "Table Wines"

"Wine which will make the vineyard known throughout the world . . . with commendable insistence Martin Ray has withdrawn his wines from comparison with other California (wines) and set his standards on par with any in the world. Favored by fortune and with wisdom to establish unique marketing practices (he) has stepped into leadership of an industry which may one day be able to emulate (his) puristic and classical methods."
ROBERT LAWRENCE BALZER
Author of "California's Best Wines"

"(His are) the great wines of California."
ALEXIS LICHINE Author of "The Wines of France"

"The highest priced, most expensively made, most carefully bottle-aged native vintages in the country . . . their quality is so high they cannot be neglected."
MABON: "ABC of America's Wines"

". . . the finest and costliest California wines . . . comparable to the finest wines of France."
MELVILLE: "Guide to California Wines"

". . . wines comparable in character and quality to the finest European growths in their greatest years."
DR. ANGELO PELLEGRINI
Author of "The Unprejudiced Palate"

"Mr. Ray . . . has done a lot to raise the standards of winemaking in California."
JOHN STORM: "An Invitation to Wines"

"I'd love to try (his Pinot Noir) on a good Burgundian. It would greatly astonish him to get that unmistakable, unforgettable flavor out of California. I'm still excited when I think of (his wines) . . . they prove what California can do if it ever gets around to following the best practices of the finest European vineyards. . . . He has made the best wines that have ever been made in the United States."
JULIAN STREET Author of "Wines"

Martin Ray
Saratoga, California
ESTABLISHED 1852

- Madame Pinot . . $100
  A blanc de noir Champagne made entirely from the free-run juice of the Pinot Noir. Vintage 1953.
- Sang-de-Pinot . . $120
  A coral-pink Champagne, from the first light press of Pinot Noir. Made only by Martin Ray. Vintage 1953.
- Pinot Noir $48
  Vintages 1950, 1952, 1954.
- Pinot Noir 1954 . . $96
  The Great Third Crush
- Chardonnay 1955 . $48
  Dry, fragrant, spicy.
- Cabernet Sauvignon $48
  Vintage of 1948.
- Cabernet Sauvignon $72
  1947 - a collector's item.
- Cabernet Sauvignon $36
  Mariage - a remarkable 1946-1949.

Retail Case Prices

interesting, when skewered on a needle in direct quotes. You know all the personalities, so you could do a wonderful picture of it all, letting them expose themselves.... Say, would you do something for me? I'd love to have some comments about Rusty for my humorous collection, [so] will you please tell me any really hot comments against him at the meeting? Or any stories they tell? There are sure to be some comments with sparks flying. [4/29/55]

Apparently, though, Melville steered clear of crashing the vintners' gathering as an undercover agent sent in by the Rays.

Sometime in mid-May the Rays managed to purchase a copy of *Guide to California Wines* prior to its official publication date in June. The first thing they must have done was turn to the index to check on the pages containing what Melville had written about "Martin Ray, Inc., Saratoga"—though they had surely seen it all before, in manuscript.

High above the Saratoga foothills rises Mt. Eden to an altitude of some two thousand feet, commanding a grandiose view of the whole of the Santa Clara Valley. It is here on the very summit of the mountain that Martin Ray devotes his skill to the production of the finest and costliest California wines, of which the Pinot Noir champagnes and table wines especially rank as supreme achievements, comparable to the finest wines of France.

After several more paragraphs describing Martin Ray and his small-scale, high-quality operation on Mt. Eden, Melville neared the conclusion.

Martin Ray's wines are all 100 per cent varietal vintage wines and of the best years only. Any wine not measuring up to the highest standards is disposed of and sold in bulk. The policy is to produce only the very best and to improve wherever possible, regardless of cost. Production is in a small scale, the wines being destined for gourmets and connoisseurs and for the best restaurants and clubs. It is not surprising that their cost is high.

In an appendix Melville listed currently available Outstanding California Wines in different regions of the state—in categories for red, white, and rosé table wines; sparking wines; aperitif and dessert wines. Wines were marked "V" if they were vintage, and were awarded stars (asterisks, really). Six of Martin Ray's vintage wines were starred. The only one listed that didn't get a star was the non-vintage La Montaña Woodside Cabernet (a blend of vintages) in the Claret group—and Rusty now wished he'd spoken more favorably about it, since he judged it superior to the three Cabernet Sauvignons (besides his own V one) that Melville had starred, among a total of 10. The Rays naturally were pleased that Martin Ray wines were given the topmost ratings for fine quality.

[The wine label (reduced) features a sketch by Peter Martin Ray of the Mt. Eden Martin Ray home (left) and winery (right).]

In the author's foreword, the third paragraph had said:

California wines have their own and diversified charm. The best of them match in quality, flavor, and savor all but the finest estate-bottled wines of Europe and have the advantage of being very reasonable in price. Even the great wines of California are remarkably inexpensive.

In his copy MR underlined "all but the finest" in pencil, and in the margin added an exclamation mark.

After reading the whole of Melville's book, Martin tried to rein himself in while writing to its author. His damning critique was far more detailed than Amerine's would be. His carefully composed letter of three single-spaced pages (which Eleanor typed up) began: "Dear John / and dear Willy too! because I know you worked hard on the book too as did John—" (ER may have had a hand in this extended salutation, since she well understood the crucial functions of a wife in many creative men's lifework. It's significant that Melville gracefully acknowledged ER's role in the Martin Ray Winery's success in the new, 1960 edition of his book.)

Eleanor and I want to congratulate you on this triumph, the publication of "A Guide to California Wines," on all the perseverance you displayed in bringing it to successful issue, and on all the industry that went into it. I do believe it may sell better than any wine book yet.... You deserve credit for setting a lot of things right in the book, John. I only wish you'd shown me the complete copy so I could have stopped the furthering of a few false claims and completely

fabricated stories whose sources are obvious to me—though these won't make or break the industry, of course. I'll discuss these with you sometime so you can correct them when further editions are issued.

Paragraph after paragraph followed, mostly covering MR's corrections, objections, and dire warnings.

Despite the fact that I like so many things about the book I must point out something which perhaps you have [not] realized in advance would be a cruel blow to me in my perennial fight to elevate quality in the industry—for unwittingly perhaps you have been used by the growers who have been turning out false varietals and who are responsible for the present lack of confidence in California wines and increasing sales of imports.

As far as I know your book is the first that has authenticated the misuse of varietal names. I know you are in the quality camp and your intentions are sincere, John, but evidently you didn't realize that these growers have made you an ally in print of their malpractices. You cannot allow yourself to become identified with their untenable position, or that of the Wine Institute which is the organization fighting quality standards and which in fact represents the distillers and volume valley producers of cheap skid-row alcohol. Let them help you with your book but don't identify yourself with their practices.

A great mistake was in lending authenticity for the first time to Chenin blanc as a pinot, to "Pinot St. George" as a pinot, actually classifying them as "White Pinot" and "Red Pinot" as they concocted those terms in Napa Valley. You even bolster these false classifications by calling the Pinot Meunier (a true pinot) "Black Pinot," and by thus allying it with the fraudulent white and red classifications create acceptability for them through association....

By usage alone wrong is not made right. I am aghast at all those Napa growers admitting their malpractices to you; they never would to me, knowing what I thought of such!... These growers have had many years to weed their poor grape varieties from their vineyards, grow fine varieties only and label them honestly. When I bought Paul Masson's I inherited similar conditions to theirs, but within a year's time pulled out all second-rate vines and started right, dumped hundreds of bales of false labels. But these fellows have never made any effort to right their situation from the vines up; their only concern has been to cover up and make false claims for their poor varieties and poor wines.

When I see all the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay people claim to have throughout the book I am overcome! The total tonnage of both together is but a tiny amount in the entire state. I am deeply disturbed that you presented these varietal problems in such a manner as to pass on the deceit of these hypocritical growers to the public. Other writers in turn will use your book as reference, and the evil thus is perpetuated, you see. [5/21/55]

In another letter written to Melville ten days later MR lumped him in with a host of other wine writers whose works were inevitably bound to contain innumerable errors due to poor knowledge of actual winegrowing, plus the limited or biased perspective endemic to uncritical authors, who repeated whatever winery publicists and vintners had told them—perhaps having been charmed into gullibility—and then passed it on to those writers (and wine scholars too) coming after them, who probably would never have even tasted the wines cited for excellence.

One of the great faults found in virtually all wine books is that they are written by people who have never been winegrowers, and consequently their information for the most part comes from former authors of wine books or from winegrowers who may know their own cellars and their own vineyards and varieties but assume the same facts are true of other varieties and other districts.... Amerine tells me there has never been a book written on wines by a Frenchman other than scientific or otherwise limited, though they actually have more knowledge viticulturally speaking than others. [5/31/55]

Luckily for MR, the timing of the book's publication, and its immediate popular reception, merged with his push for wine quality control. It added fuel to the firestorm that the Rays had begun engendering in April. The best use MR made of the book was to point out that this seemingly authoritative guide exemplified how the wine industry's practitioners constantly and often deliberately misled the wine-consuming public. Martin Ray, within the generation of post-Prohibition winegrowers, had already proved that great wines could someday come from California. He regarded as reprehensible the damage being done further to the state's reputed ability to produce truly high-quality wines. The industry deserved the public beating he intended to deliver through the medium of journalism. Under his threat of broadly exposing their lack of knowledge or downright deceptions, its premium-wine leaders, embarrassed or chagrined, might wisely choose to mend their ways.

Thus when communicating with Maynard Amerine and others at the time, MR claimed that Melville's book demonstrated the dangerous consequences of wine writers' believing everything they had been told by winery spokesmen. He emphasized the timeliness of his current war against the industry's methods in growing wine-

grapes and in the making and merchandising of wines. The situation would only be made worse by the Premium Wine Producers' future publicity efforts, as envisaged by Lou Gomberg. As he would soon write angrily to Maynard:

> Melville's book would have just about authenticated their mal practices [*sic*] had I not attacked them just when I did. It was very fortunate. It had already just about been accepted that a Pinot Noir grown in California did not carry over the varietal characteristics or quality of the old country. And it was simply because all these wines labeled Pinot Noir are fraud and people had no other alternative but think what they did. The same with Chardonnay and Gamay and Pinot Blanc. Why should these frauds be treated differently than other frauds? When Frenchmen have gone to prison for the same frauds and even lost their heads, why should Wente and Daniel and Mondavi be treated as gentlemen? The same kind of people in the industry fought to retain the right to duplicate French labels and sell their California wines as "imports" not so long ago. Paul Masson had Clicquot yellow labels and Clicquot corks and sold just as much Clicquot as Paul Masson before prohibition. He would give you Mumms if you preferred, too. I have drunk recently [John Daniel's] Inglenook Chardonnay that was identical to his white Pinot which he says is Chenin Blanc. Why should he be permitted to get by with it and maintain the position he occupies? And who but me can stop him? [5/19/55]

Who, indeed? Only someone with an almost megalomaniacal sense of his own special, intensely purifying mission in the wine world. If such a zealous and aggressively articulate quality control advocate as Martin Ray had not been around at that very time, when the public was starting to take much greater interest in wine, it might have been essential for true wine connoisseurs in the U.S. to put forward some fearless hell-raiser very much like him. Also, it's important to recognize that another wine-loving group was lurking in the shadows: vintners who wanted the high-end of the industry to raise its standards and change for the better, but whose positions didn't allow them to risk sticking their own necks out, to be professionally guillotined. They were pleased that Martin Ray spoke out for them and then took all the abuse, ridicule, ostracism, and—it often turned out—virtual censorship when trying to gain access to the press and publicity. (His notable paranoia in this last regard was partly justified.)

In one of his long letters to Amerine, MR kept up the harangue over mislabeling and other deceptions that urgently required correcting through quality control edicts. At the time he felt confident that his and Eleanor's efforts to elicit print media interest were about to pay off.

> Now we have a magazine story coming on it and maybe one more. I can spare enough time to keep popping away at them [the PWP group] and something good may yet come of it. I will give them satisfaction if they will give me the chance but don't ever let it be said that any of them wanted [quality control]. I hope to make it ultimately <u>their</u> plan. You can see I am working toward that. But they all hate it. They want to continue to be respected crooks. The more I think of this the more absurd it seems to me that they should be able in this age to put on their labels all sorts of untrue statements and get away with it....
>
> Just as you can see many of [Melville's] words are lifted directly from [Robert] Balzer [*California's Best Wines*, 1948; 1949] and other writers, so others to come will lift words from his book. I am going to write him at length and very critically and I am going also to his publisher. At least they can not say "sour grapes" and he has given me the platform from which I will be heard. [5/21/55]

Because Martin Ray and his wines had been elevated to near cult status in *Guide to California Wines*, he could hold the high moral ground when delivering attacks upon those other winegrowers whose operations were vaster and far better known and endowed than his own small domain. And whatever the Rays really thought of Melville and his book, they certainly didn't hesitate to quote widely from his note written after receiving copies of the two Gomberg letters.

> I think your quality control idea a very good one.... Many a so called Pinot Noir is <u>not</u> a Pinot Noir as you and I well know.... I join you in trying to improve wherever possible the quality of California wines.... Better would be to call these wines by their true name(s) ... a typical job for "quality control." [5/24/55]

Heading into the Fray

When Eleanor wrote to her son Peter, at Harvard, about *Guide to California Wines,* saying that she and Rusty would send author-inscribed copies to both him and twin brother Barclay, she sketched in the madly bustling scene going on at the home front.

> Melville's book is out, causing us to have a stroke—first night we brought it home and read excerpts as we drank icycool Chardonnay, wonderfully tart, out on the front veranda as it was a hot summer evening—and we laughed our heads off at the wild fabrications being passed along from one phony author (& grower occasionally) to posterity thru the Stinking Baron. We had lots of fun. But we were wild about his putting his stamp of approval on all those fraudulent labeling practices like White Pinot for Chenin Blanc, etc., and have been writing letters to him, more to Gomberg, more to [John] Storm who's writing an article probing into all this—we've stacks of letters, copies, great god we sometimes forget whom we've sent what, and it takes all our time!! [5/21/55]

ER also indicated in this letter that Rusty, influenced by Gomberg's diplomatic good sense and perhaps recognizing that his attacks upon the four winery proprietors had been a bit impolitic, had been making an effort to be more moderate in his next responses to John Daniel and Herman Wente. For instance, to the latter he had written:

> Well, Gomberg just phoned me and we have had a long talk. And we have agreed that when you fellows get fully organized and elect your directors, I will be asked to come before you and tell you more about this problem as I view it. He holds out the hope that ultimately some such approach may be made and he has spoken especially of some of the younger members of your families. .... A board of quality control must ultimately be established. If I can aid that and hurry it along, I will feel I have done something. I would like to think some of you fellows would support my effort. And toward this end I am going to ask a few of you here for a dinner, perhaps around vintage time.... Perhaps Gomberg is right. Perhaps it must be a movement that matures slowly. Anyway, you know where I stand and I will ask you up after you get organized and I will look forward to talking to your group when it is ready. [5/12/55]

From the start, MR had been operating under the misimpression that prospective PWP members had actually wanted him to join their group. Thus he had written this to Gomberg:

> As you know, Lou, I have been fighting for some means of self imposed quality control for well on to 20 years now. It was because of their unwillingness to even consider such that I refused to join the Wine Institute when they were organized. They wanted me for the same reason your group does—simply because I am known as uncompromising when it comes to quality. I could work with your group and bring to it something no one else can. If they are smart they will see it. I think it is time you call off all the letter writing. They are getting in deeper and deeper and that is not what I want. So why don't you talk to them, calm them and make them see how they stand. [5/16/55]

In his quick response, Gomberg tried to set MR straight on two of his misconceptions.

> There are two points in your letter I would like to clarify. One concerns the invitation extended to you to join the group. That was my own idea. They left it up to me to decide to whom the invitations should be directed. The other concerns the possible adoption of a control program along the lines you propose. I did not intend to give the impression that the present generation of growers would "never" accept it. What I thought I said, and so intended, was that under the circumstances, adoption of such a plan would take a long time no matter how desirable it might be and that the way to sell the idea is to win people over to it through friendly persuasion. [5/18/55]

Although MR continued to express a willingness to talk to the PWP group or, preferably, to select members thereof, and even to join the organization if it agreed to accept self-imposed quality control as a goal, he remained as adamant as ever—maneuvering so that, no matter what, he'd be in a winning position. As Eleanor told Peter—

> But let me tell you the worm is turning under all this pressure—Gomberg tells Rusty he is doing better in his last letters at soothing feelings among the injured and even holds out hope of getting the leaders together to hear Rusty's plan for quality control. Rusty laughs, since he has not given an inch—it's merely that he's scared them, when they see he is going to put each of them on record as approving or being opposed to quality control. You know [Robert] Mondavi [at Krug] wrote him asking if he understood libel laws. Rusty wrote back saying something like this: "Let me repeat what you have made no attempt to deny: your Pinot Noir is not an authentic unblended Pinot Noir"! He told him, however, he wasn't interested in particular wines, and not to get off on personal tangents—it would be more to his credit to help organize some plan of quality control rather than go on record against it. [5/21/55]

Then ER also remarked about how Melville's abundant praises of most California wines and wineries greatly spurred their determination to carry on with the battle.

> You'd think we would be purring like cats—he really gave us the works as producing the finest and costliest of Calif. wines—yet Rusty has been so concerned over

Melville being used as an ally in print of those rascals that the personal gain is overlooked. [5/21/55]

Eleanor's opinion of the book soon began mellowing when it became apparent that Melville's *Guide*—or misguide, as the Rays judged it—had undeniably whetted the public's appetite for exploring both California's wines and its "wine country." The latter increasingly meant the attractive Napa Valley, easily accessible and welcoming to motoring tourists. Melville's guidebook was inspiring enthusiastic readers to undertake tours to wineries near and far in hopes of sampling wines, buying them at the premises, and even conversing with the winemaker himself. (Back in those days of yore, female winemakers of course were unthinkable.) Sometimes wine aficionados even attempted to visit the Martin Ray winery, for the book had stirred up an extraordinary new interest in its wines and their maker. As ER wrote to their young physician friend Robert T.A. ("Bob") Knudsen several weeks after the book's publication:

> Everyone seems to have read Melville's book, and it's a good thing we keep our chain across the road or we'd be swamped with the many [people] wanting to come up here and look around. Also letters ordering cases of wine, quite astounding. He certainly did well by us in that book, giving us top billing—and even if we were disappointed in his handling of "White Pinot" etc. in that chapter about wine classifications, he says he's going to change that in future editions when he has a chance to rectify the thing, so seems to us we shouldn't be too hard on the guy. After all, he certainly worked hard, and nobody's work is perfect, what? One thing I like about him very much, he's most willing to learn—when I say this, Rusty groans and says that's the trouble, John wears him out asking questions, never ceasing! But one thing is certain, with his determination he's going to get ahead. The book is selling like mad, simply astounding for a wine book. [6/21/55]

As more and more people became knowledgeable and discriminating, having moved into buying French and German vintages and comparing them with the disappointing California wines, many would start insisting upon adherence to quality standards and honest varietal labeling. Ultimately, then, how could Martin Ray's cause *not* triumph in the long run? Still, he has seldom received credit for having lobbed off all those early attacks—particularly in 1955—upon other wineries' integrity from his aerie in the Santa Cruz Mountains, to which visitors were rarely invited. (And when a privileged few were, they felt as if they'd been summoned for an audience with royalty, or America's veritable pope of fine wine.)

Both MR and ER would maintain a cordial but exceedingly two-faced social, and sometimes even business, relationship with John Melville, despite their disapproval of his book as well as his personality and hygienic drawbacks. As with MR's correspondence with the four winery owners, and additional letters to and from Gomberg, his abundant communications with and about John Melville during 1955 can only be touched upon here. (And like the Amerine–MR letters, they weren't included in the Rays' Quality Control binders.)

Meanwhile, ER Prepares a Treatise

The Rays were extraordinarily energized and busy during the entire month of May and well into June, consumed by their furious battle (as they saw it) with the wine industry at large, spending hours almost every day, and sometimes far into the night, on the telephone or at the typewriter. Somehow they also managed to take part in social activities, especially with actor Burgess Meredith (as described in July 2006 *WTQ*). Meanwhile, the several thousand vines in their acreage atop Mt. Eden—mostly Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, but also expanding blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon derived from budwood originally taken from Rixford's La Questa vineyard in Woodside—were bursting forth in lush green splendor. Each vine, standing 10 feet away from its neighbors, during late fall or winter had been "basket"-pruned, with several stout young canes (if available) fastened tightly with metal straps to a tall redwood stake and four or five spurs selected for next year's cane candidates, all to be ready for the rapid springtime growth that now went on. Rusty sulfured his vineyards every two weeks—or oftener if it rained soon afterwards—to prevent the mildew that could ruin the future crop. He also frequently walked down the rows, securing any lengthy canes that risked being broken off by the strong winds that assaulted his mountaintop from all directions.

A few magazine publishers' editors, whom the Rays—primarily Eleanor, the winery's in-house publicist—had contacted toward the end of April by telephone or letter, had been willing to consider running a lead article about the urgent need to introduce quality standards in America's wine industry, centered in California. Not surprisingly, the Rays especially hoped to place it with the most popular, wide-circulation weekly, *Life*, and kept up communications with an editor there. But publishers' people asked for written information to convince them to go to all the trouble and expense of mounting a major story.

The several wine writers whom the Rays had approached—Melville, Robert Balzer, John Storm [*An Invitation to Wines—An Informal Guide to the*

Selection, Care, and Enjoyment of Domestic and European Wines, 1955]—felt overwhelmed by the need to quickly research the subject and then compose an article, with no assurance of ever being paid for the efforts involved. The Rays began to realize that in order to grab the print media's interest in the potential of a timely article focusing on the fierce argument that they claimed was now going on within the industry over honest labeling and improving wine quality, they themselves would have to write up the background for this fight, over which Martin Ray had long been spoiling. If the idea landed a contractual assignment, another author—maybe even one they favored—might then take over, as well as a photographer or two.

So Eleanor, who earlier had failed to sell her novel to book publishers, took on writing a synopsis. Actually all the wine-history reading she had done in the past three years to spin the inspirational life story of a hell-fire, quality-fixated hero much resembling her vintner husband, plus of course all the rich and dastardly tales she had listened to when Rusty was carrying on as he customarily did, had prepared her well to do what needed doing. It took her several weeks to finish the job. Her essay and chronological notes could now be sent off as a portfolio to magazine editors.

Secured within the Rays' Quality Control binder, with its collection of relevant letters and other documents, are these two pieces: the single-spaced, nine-page "Letter written to a national publication by Eleanor Ray, May, 22nd, 1955, background of material on story" and her accompanying six-page "Boom and Bust Cycles in California Winegrowing Related to Quality of Wine." Both provide ample evidence of the extensive historical research ER was doing to bolster MR's arguments pertaining to imposing wine quality control measures in the near future.

The background piece also gave ER the chance to supply an engaging profile of her husband. As she put it, "There never has been a real fighter for quality within the industry until now." She portrayed him as the true successor to Professor Eugene Hilgard of the University of California, who in the late 19th century had alienated winemakers with his insistence upon vintners' adhering to quality standards. "They would listen to no criticism, quite as today," ER wrote. "And Dr. Hilgard had no economic lever to force better quality." A half-century later, though, the deplorable situation was hopefully heading for correction.

> But now we have for the first time in all California viticultural history a battle for quality standards brought on by one of the winegrowers himself—Martin Ray—in a lone stand against everyone else in the prestige sector of the wine industry (table wines). Acknowledged as the grower of the finest and most expensive wines in the country since 1936, eminently sound and successful financially as well, he has a natural lever for prying quality out of the growers who merely claim to produce quality wines but make little effort to do so—his retailers. And much to the fury of the industry he is applying this lever through them. The battle started when table-wine growers of Cali-fornia recently organized in still another fight to curb importation of European wines. Their promotional organizer, Louis Gomberg, wrote an article in the current issue of "Wines and Vines" attacking imports and blaming the sale of cheap imports for the present economic crisis in sales of California wines. When Martin Ray was asked to join in this effort against foreign wines the fireworks started. He not only refused to join but immediately went into action condemning their stand. He wrote a series of letters to Gomberg (copies of first two enclosed), had them mimeographed and sent them to all his retailers, to connoisseur friends throughout the country, and to some of the growers themselves whose practices he attacked. In these letters he scorches the other growers for blaming imports for their loss of sales, says the truth is their wines aren't good enough, that people are willing to pay more to get wines of character and quality; the thing for them to do is to face this fact and start making better wines—and the first step toward that is a self-imposed quality control such as they have in France. His open attack suddenly changed the entire aspect of the situation, made the issue now one of whether or not they would accept quality control. Many of the growers now wished they'd never started their attack on foreign wines, for they've been maneuvered into an untenable position where they either have to approve some plan for quality control or be placed on record as opposing it. They're afraid to oppose, as Martin Ray will use it against them with retailers.

With the material sent off in the third week of May, the Rays felt confident that, whichever direction the Premium Wine Producers group decided to go—toward quality control or against it—they themselves would come out as the big winners. MR was pressuring Gomberg to get their definite yea or nay. Some outlets of the national press, then, would soon announce either the intended future move in California toward making truly fine wines ... or else expose the shoddy and deceptive practices among the so-called premium wineries that they had just refused, "on record," to alter.

MR's Efforts to Re-engage Amerine

During the super-busy month of May 1955, the Rays were thrilled about the responses, overall and individually, to their having sent

out MR's letters to Gomberg the several hundred people on their mailing list. Toward the end of the second week, MR had heard from Gomberg that he intended to present MR's "plan" to the Premium Wine Producers group when they next met later in the month. It looked as if MR's campaign to get the winery owners to self-impose quality control measures now might actually succeed.

But as the days went by, MR—so wrapped up with Eleanor in conducting their cottage-industry attacks upon premium winery proprietors and the Wine Institute over quality control—grew alarmed by the increasingly negative signals emanating from his good friend at UC Davis Department of Viticulture. Amerine the enologist displayed an obvious lack of enthusiasm in his voice whenever MR telephoned him to report on his continuing talks and correspondence with Gomberg and the latest progress in his mounting epistolary war with certain members of the new Premium Wine Producers group. Worse than that was when the downright disapproving Maynard delivered critical comments or caustic remarks.

Eleanor Ray reported to her son Peter that only one significant person, once an avid quality ally, was disappointing and even deserting Martin Ray in his furious battle for wine quality control.

> All kinds of people are writing, phoning, etc—all hearing about these letters, wherever they go—and all seem tremendously in favor, with one exception—can you guess? Maynard Amerine! Rusty's been bombarding him with copies of all, and [MA] says he can't fight fire with fire, whereupon Rusty sends him a wonderful cartoon about fighting fire with fire which says this is the <u>only</u> way. This is sort of like the Russians, they put on such an offensive that everyone else scrambles around on the defensive—most people are too afraid to take a stand. [Note that the Rays' fight took place during the first, and heated, decade of the Cold War.] Maynard seems to be going soft. These birds never were friendly to Rusty's efforts to quality, so why not force them to it, for you certainly wouldn't get anywhere with them being a Milquetoast, they'd never like Rusty a bit better, merely dismiss him sneeringly. Now he has them on the run. [5/21/55]

Whenever MR got really worked up about something or somebody, he and ER tended to move to their typewriter as if to a battle station, and there start verbalizing whatever positive or negative things currently occupied much of their thoughts, talk, and activities. MR's often extraordinarily lengthy letters to Julian Street had set the pattern during the early 1940s. Nowadays he periodically wooed, counseled, or harangued Eleanor's twin sons with long letters. In that peak year of MR's activism, both John Melville and Burgess Meredith (among others) also received lots of mail from MR. But during May, Amerine was the chief letter recipient.

MR, in his most fulsome letter-writing barrage yet, frequently now sat down to furiously compose a missive aimed at Amerine. (Carbon copies of his letters show well the difference between those he himself typed and ones he'd dictated to his wife.) One after another he sped them off. In the UC Davis archive there are carbon copies of six letters he wrote to Maynard in May of 1955 yielding a total of 16 single-spaced pages. (Four more long ones would go off in June.) MA responded, if at all, with brief postal notes, but mostly by just silence—though of course there were also phone talks, when almost inevitably arguments went on, as both MR's letters and MA's sparse, mostly undated notes indicate.

Never before had their strong wine-centered bond of almost 20 years seemed imperiled like this, after MR criticized something the younger Maynard had said or done, done imperfectly, or failed to do. But now it seemed precarious. And MR hoped that his intensive letter campaign would ultimately repair the unraveling connection, even though justifying his own actions might sometimes involve censuring Maynard's inaction. This wouldn't be the only time he (and sometimes ER too) would use typewriter or pen to get someone—a son or other relative, a friend or business associate—back into line, to rejoin their righteous wine mission. (MR's minister father may have passed on to him some gene for fundamentalist-style preaching.)

In a postcard dated 5/20 Maynard advised MR, "Sell your wines & forget the others," signing it with his characteristic "m" with a slash through it. This succinct advice must have served as a comment on the excessively long (5-page) letter, containing few paragraph indentations, that he'd just received from MR. Only a few portions will be replicated here.

MR started out by telling what he'd learned, or re-learned, from his recent wine-selling trips in face-to-face encounters.

> There is a world you know nothing about. And none of the growers with which I am presently involved know anything about it either. It is the world of the retailer. Whatever else I know, I know this world. And it is the retailer that sells your wines. Did you know, for example, that there is at this time a statewide practice—and likely it is nationwide—on the part of these retailers to buy a case of any wine or spirits that is pressed upon them and just put it under the shelf and never offer it to any customer. When the salesman comes around they tell him,

"Well, you can see for yourself, your product never sells. People don't know about it or they don't like it. I'd be glad to buy it but it doesn't move." These retailers, I understand. They tell me what they think of others. They tell others, often enough, what they think of me, too, no doubt. But the idea is, they do sell our wines in most places and they do respect them even where they do not move rapidly. If they do not move at all, I take them out. This has happened so far in but one place. But they speak ever so openly about all the other California wines. They will tell me, "I know this Inglenook Pinot is no good" or "Hell, their labels at Wente don't mean a damned thing" or "What the hell do I care about the fact it is or isn't made of what it says—labels don't mean a damned thing to any of them." You simply don't realize how low in respect they have all fallen.

Now, if Wente, John Daniel, the Marquis[e] at Beaulieu, Louis Benoist [at Almaden], the Mondavis [at Krug] and other growers would do something by way of honest wines and maintaining contacts with their customers, they would not need to worry about the shippers wines. They have simply adopted the methods of the distillers and of Petri and Roma and all the others. They sell through big organizations and they not only don't know the salesmen who sell their wines, they don't even know the bosses. I know, I ask the salesmen. Why do you think Paul Masson is able to outsell all of this group? It is because Fromm and Sichel, their brothers and various families, are out maintaining contact.

Martin Ray, the former ace at selling stocks and bonds, concluded: "It is basic in selling to establish and maintain contact with your market." One of the main things he could do was to promote his wines in retail outlets (albeit because his operation was so small it couldn't afford to hire sales reps). Because his competitors had failed to make direct, personal connections with the retail market itself, where most of their wines were to be sold to the public, they could not know what store managers and customers actually said about them. Hence MR felt confident in summoning a whole legion of retailers to back his attacks upon the integrity of those so-called Premium Wine Producers.

MR wrote four and a half more pages, mostly consisting of ranting, specific attacks upon respected vintners and their wines (e.g., "After all, their old man was a criminal and they grew up as a criminal family. You cannot overlook these things"). Then he suddenly remembered the man he was writing to, and strove to make his friend understand that, despite his resistance, he too was known to favor the imposition of wine quality standards and controls.

No, Maynard, these people like you no more than they like me. Wherever I go I hear it, and increasingly so. I hope you continue to strike out for what you think is right and not soften as you get older. You once encouraged me. Now you tell me I am hurting myself. It is unrelated to our friendship but you must not grow accustomed to what every day you see. Usage alone does not make custom right. [5/18/55]

Not everything that MR wrote to Amerine in May and afterwards would pertain to his Wine Quality Fight, for there was the usual trade gossip, the long description of the grotesque party cruise of San Francisco Bay taken at night with two dozen drunken guests of actors Burgess Meredith and Scott McKay (told in #8, July 2006)—as well as limning the social whirl in star-lit Hollywood that the Rays were setting up, with Burgess Meredith's help, to entertain the niece of the esteemed Burgundian winemaster Louis Latour, Christiane, who would be visiting there from France. (She would also stay for a while in the Ray household on Mt. Eden and be taken on visits to a few California winegrowers—including ones that MR was currently deriding.)

Martin wouldn't easily abandon his strenuous efforts to rouse Maynard's interest and approval, if not actual participation, in his big battle with the wine industry. Certainly he didn't intend to terminate their long friendship. Still, some of his harsh statements began crossing the line. It was as if MR reverted back to that period in the late 1930s and early '40s when he considered himself the younger man's mentor and could scold him at will.

[To be continued in the April 2007 issue]

"The book is selling like mad, simply astounding for a wine book." [Eleanor Ray, 6/21/1955]

MELVILLE'S GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA WINES
A Review by MAYNARD A. AMERINE
(Wine & Food, No.87, Autumn 1955)

When the non-technical writer strays into technical subjects the results are not always happy, as the following too amply demonstrates. Melville's book represents the broadest survey since Mrs. Mabon's *ABC of America's Wines* of 1942. It is filled with interesting facts concerning many California wineries and wine makers—their history, owners' idiosyncrasies, grapes, and wines. These are mainly based on the premise that the way to write history is to interview the participants or their descendants. In

some cases, at least, the discussion reads as if it had been written by the winery. Surely the opinion and memory of the participants is a factor, but these do not always conform to the considered judgement of historians. The general tone of the book is thus to praise almost every winery. Wineries are credited with producing "superior quality" (this seems to cover almost anything), "remarkably successful, first-class, excellent, finest, select, top-quality, one of the best of its kind, very fine indeed, a character all their own, higher quality, standard quality, fine quality, fine table", &c wines.

Even more serious is the use of history to glorify or at least support the present reputation of various firms. A winery which got a prize in 1890 and which has since undergone two changes in ownership and a 100% increase in size of vineyard is not certain to produce wines reflecting the quality they had in 1890. Wineries which continue to put prize-winning medals on their labels, whether California or French, are among the worst offenders in this respect. The author should have warned his readers that changes in ownership and policy occur rapidly in the California wine industry.

One is intrigued to learn more about the Philery wine which is produced in the same manner as retsina but without the resin flavor. When we learn further that it is "somewhat similar to a Rhine wine" our confusion is confounded. There is again a confusion about the influence of irrigation on the quality grapes. And should California brandy be served in a balloon-shaped glass of the snifter type? There is much useful information in this book and one hopes that in future editions the edges will be polished a bit more carefully. The most valuable feature is perhaps the recommended wines. One doesn't have to agree with all of his selections to appreciate their general validity. It is too bad, however, that more notation of specific vintages was not made.

A BRIEF NOTE ON THE AUTHOR & HIS BOOK

Baron John Robert Melville Van-Carnbee (1903–1962) was born in The Hague, Netherlands, the son of a Dutch diplomat who had a keen interest in wine, and a fine cellar; Melville came to learn and appreciate the pleasures of wine at an early age. His education was directed toward law, and he graduated a Doctor of International Law. During World War II, he fought in the Free Netherlands Army, rising to lieutenant colonel, and was posted to Washington, DC, between 1945 and 1950. He later settled in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, at his Casa Carnbee, where he began to write his *Guide to California Wines*, published in 1955. The Introduction to his book was written by Joseph Henry Jackson (1894–1955), a noted California literary critic and author of numerous books about California. As a book reviewer for the San Francisco Chronicle for some 25 years, Jackson was recognized for his longstanding encouragement of young local writers. Melville revised and updated his *Guide to California Wines* in 1960, and dedicated it "To the memory of Joseph Henry Jackson who first made this book possible." Subsequent editions published in 1968, 1972, and 1976 were revised by Jefferson Morgan.

Martin Ray, Inc., Saratoga

The *Martin Ray* wines include the following *champagnes* and *table wines*, which are available in the vintages indicated, to be succeeded by later vintages:

Champagnes (bottle-fermented): Madame Pinot Champagne (Blanc de noir), made entirely from the free-run juice of the Pinot noir grape, vintage 1950; Sang-de-Pinot Champagne (Rosé de noir), a coral-pink champagne, made from the first light pressing of the Pinot noir grape, vintage 1949.

Table wines (all marketed in champagne bottles with champagne corks for better aging, a Martin Ray trademark since 1936):

RED: Pinot Noir, vintage 1941, one of California's greatest wines, produced from Martin Ray's old vineyards, available only in limited quantities and easily the costliest California table wine; Pinot Noir, vintage 1951, the first great Pinot Noir vintage from his present domain; Cabernet Sauvignon, vintage 1947, his finest Cabernet Sauvignon to date; Cabernet Sauvignon, vintage 1946, a great full-bodied wine, is available in very limited quantities for laying-down purposes; Cabernet Sauvignon, vintage 1948 and similar in character to the 1947, is developing well.

Note: A small amount of La Montana Woodside Cabernet is still available. This is a non-vintage Cabernet Sauvignon (marketed in the traditional claret-type bottle), produced from Woodside vineyards in San Mateo County, which Martin Ray used to farm.

WHITE: Chardonnay, vintage 1952, a true Mountain Chardonnay produced from Pinot Chardonnay grapes only.

ROSÉ: Pinot Noir Rosé, vintage 1952, coral pink, and the only rosé produced in California from the Pinot noir grape.