Vinaceous Correspondents:
Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles

The Third Article in a Series / Eleventh Section

by ***Barbara Marinacci***

This long-continuing series (published in WTQ *since April 2003) portrays, primarily through correspondence and other written materials, the winegrowing life and wine quality-demanding actions of vintner Martin Ray. MR entered the California wine industry in 1936, two and a half years after the end of Prohibition, with his purchase of the Paul Masson Champagne Company. Its vineyard, winery, and chateau property (now known as The Mountain Winery), in the Saratoga hillside area of the Santa Cruz Mountains, overlooked Santa Clara (now "Silicon") Valley. In 1945, two years after selling the Masson holdings to Seagram, MR started planting vineyards, then built a home and his own small winery on the adjacent "Mt. Eden."*

This segment extends the detailed coverage of Ray's close relationship with UC Davis enologist Maynard Amerine. In the late 1930s their connection was fused by a mutual desire to perfect the better wines made in California—primarily by persuading winery owners to plant or expand their vineyards with fine winegrape varieties and make unblended wines from them. (MR was an extreme foe of the pervasive blending out and mislabeling of varietal wines.)

Readers might keep in mind that Martin Ray's strident activism in the period described here (which actually had begun two decades earlier) took place 21 years (almost a generation) before the celebrated "Judgment of Paris," which showed the world that some California (and eventually American) wines could actually outmatch their classic French models. MR's perpetual push for quality standards and "classic" methods, which made him an industry pariah, aroused attention and encouraged other winemakers, at that time and later, to break away from the current modus operandi in the hopeful belief that they too might eventually earn decent livings by selling the fine wines they made using much smaller production methods. Wine connoisseurs also appreciated his insistence upon accurate varietal labeling. Yet few wine history books say much, if anything, about Martin Ray's long-term revolutionary efforts.

Author Barbara Marinacci, who is MR's stepdaughter, is coauthor with her mother, Eleanor Ray (ER), of Vineyards in the Sky: *The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray. She again thanks UC Davis Library's Special Collections (in particular, archivist John Skarstad and head Daryl Morrison) for permission to utilize documents in the Martin and Eleanor Ray Papers and for assistance in providing copies of them. And, as always, she is grateful for editor/publisher Gail Unzelman's dedication, skills, patience, and indulgence.*

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

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In the late spring and early summer of 1955, Martin Ray began writing long letters to his best friend, Maynard Amerine, UC Davis's well-respected professor of enology. They demonstrated an urgent desire to justify his current agitations and disclosure threats against the proprietors of California's better wineries, whom Louis Gomberg had enlisted in the new Premium Wine Producers (PWP) group. Much in this correspondence expressed MR's often venomous grievances against various winegrowers, along with a boastful confidence that he'd soon emerge as winner in his insistence upon achieving quality-enforcing measures in the industry's high end of winemaking.

An intriguing contrast and counterpoint, though, to several epistolary harangues that MR wrote to Amerine in May are the two diplomatic letters he composed to send to Lou Gomberg. Probably he sent copies to Amerine, as he customarily did over the years with important correspondence. When sending them, he'd usually enclose messages updating Maynard about activities in his business and personal lives. Invariably, too, he'd opine and gossip about wines and wine-connected people, who often were mutual acquaintances.

Martin Ray's Quality Control Plan

The letter that MR would write to Gomberg on May 16 appears to have been triggered by the irate note he'd just received from Robert Mondavi at Charles Krug, decrying MR's attacks upon the new wine group, other wine men, and wineries in the two letters he'd previously written to Gomberg and then printed for circulation among many retailers. After asking MR whether he was acquainted with libel laws, Robert Mondavi went on:

> Considering your vehement antagonism towards your fellow vintners in the California premium wine class, as so clearly evidenced by your letters, it may well be that you would not feel happy in our group, even when you know our aims. That is entirely a matter for your own decision. All we could do was to extend a cordial invitation. That we have done.
>
> Our final procedure has not as yet been formulated. Any concrete plan that you may wish to offer for consideration by our group, I feel sure will be given a careful study. I can find no such detailed plan in any of your letters to date. [5/14/55]

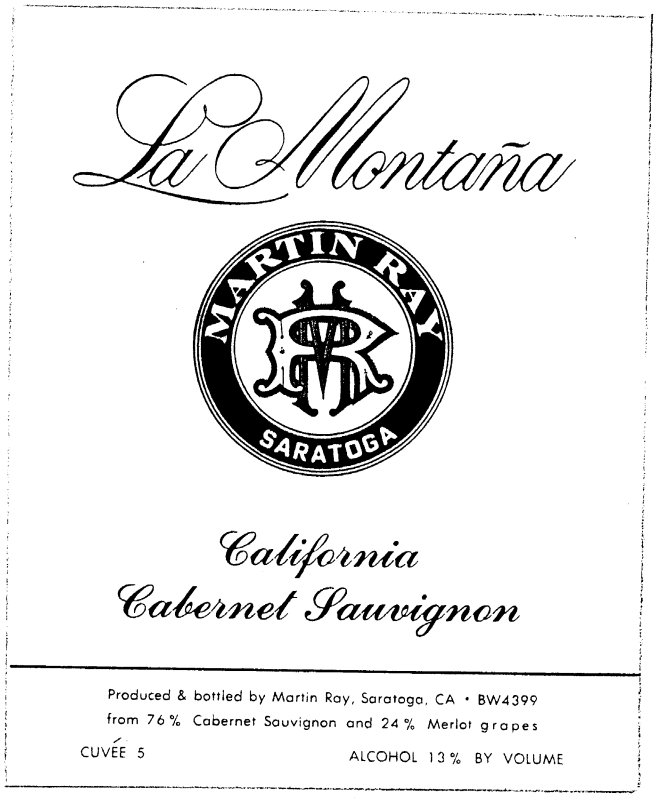
Thus MR now felt pushed to set down for Gomberg his specific directives for wineries to bring about their

own quality control system, well ahead of a time when they were likely to be imposed by some state or federal agency's edicts. In his preamble he expressed certain niceties.

> I saw in your proposal of a group organization what I thought was a real hope of achieving something definite at last. But after the letters I received and our last talk I was inclined to accept your declaration that self imposed quality control was a long way off—that it would ultimately come but that the present generation of growers would never accept it....
>
> It now occurred to me with new conviction that now is the time and yours is the organization to establish self imposed quality control or be forced on record as opposing it. There could never be a better time.
>
> So I offer you my membership and full support, subject to the approval of the majority of your group to a plan to be mutually worked out. And I suggest that the initial meeting be informally at my house with Herman Wente, John Daniel, someone from Beaulieu, yourself and 2 or 3 others important to the success of your group.

And now MR was ready to set down his proposals for consideration.

> Someone has said I have never offered a concrete plan. Of course I have. But the whole idea is for a plan to be made by all of us. My suggestion is that the quality control extend only to varietals. I would propose that enforcement therefore confine itself to the listing of each grower's acreage of each varietal, that this be annually checked, that the grapes at harvest be checked against the acreage and that these findings be used as a preliminary check against the amount of wine of each varietal brought to market. I would further propose that suitable samples of each bottling of every varietal be required by the quality control and that they be tasted initially and set aside against any future requirement. I think that blends of Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Riesling and certain other varieties should be abolished and that members should be required to bring them to market unblended. The use of any such names as "Red Pinot" or "White Pinot" when the wines are Pinot St. George and Chenin Blanc would be declared against and prohibited, and the straight forward correct names should be required for all. For a grower to market varietals he should be required to grow them or submit to the same controls the acreage he may buy from others. I would ask that making the wine be an absolute must unless the wine could be purchased from another grower-member and carry with it a certificate of origin to be authenticated by the quality control. For those upon whom this might work an injustice of economic substance I would favor a time limit being placed upon his operations so as to give him an opportunity to plant vineyards or otherwise contract for grapes under the authority.



MR now suggested how this quality control emphasis could fit perfectly with Gomberg's and PWP's aims to widely promote the virtues of California's superior wines and wineries.

> You cannot force or require quality. But these rules enforced would automatically make for labeling of wines for what they are and elimination of blending would raise surprisingly the standard of quality in all varietals. Every varietal label should carry some such words as QUALITY CONTROL, perhaps lightly imprinted across the face of the labels as the French do with their appellation controlée. Failure to live up to the controls should result in dropping a grower from membership. I see no reason for having smaller penalties for first offenders. The thing should be so enforced they could not hope to successfully operate otherwise. And the meaning of the words, QUALITY CONTROL should be publicized to establish the value of it on every grower's label. Every book on wine would describe it. Magazine articles would proclaim it. I can personally vouch for some publicity on it and favorably, too, if you can get the

growers to support the undertaking. All else you wish to do with your organization could dove-tail into the same publicity. My interest is primarily in the quality control, although I would gladly go into the other ideas I have discussed with you and help in any way members wished. The education of salesmen is very important. That is a weak link in the whole business. But quality control should come first. With it will come better wines. They should be sold by better trained salesmen and a central committee should prepare and send out to all sales outlets material which one man could well handle—pictures, news releases, stories, booklets, interviews. Important names can be brought in favorably. So long as the standards be kept high all would go for the thing.

He even proposed an active role for himself in countering the competitive flood of inexpensive foreign wines, which had triggered Gomberg's shaping of the PWP coalition.

And as for the shippers wines, I hope you will let me have a hand in training men to meet that problem. I can do it. I can promise you I can do it. In fact, if that is all your people are disturbed about, they can well afford to trade me some quality control for this job which I can do cheaper and better than they will ever be able to otherwise accomplish as proposed. You should be invaluable to the organization and no doubt you have plans already agreed upon to take care of this. I only want you to know I am anxious to cooperate, if you will just make the thing sound. Without a quality control of this sort your whole thing is just a lot of time and money out the window. Let me hear from you. [5/16/55]

MR heard back from Gomberg right away. Initially he mentioned the discord that MR had aroused among industry persons.

I, too, am deeply distressed over the recent exchanges of letters for I fear they have tended to widen the cleavage that previously existed rather than to establish the rapport that is so essential to group action. As explained over the telephone, the forwarding of your letters to the retail trade was, in my opinion, the most disturbing aspect.

Be that as it may, I have read your proposed quality control plan and, in line with your thought, it is my intention to forward it to the four wineries with whom you have been in correspondence plus any others you may wish to designate. Please advise me about this. [5/18/55]

MR answered Gomberg by return mail, again expressing an accommodating disposition.

I am glad you think we may be making progress. It would seem so.... And I am happy to know that you are forwarding my plan for quality control to the four wineries with whom we have had the correspondence.... I would really like it very much if you would include all of your group that you think it best to include at this time. What we should seek first, it seems to me, is assent that the plan will be considered or discussed. In this way it permits everyone to participate in approving it or giving reasons for not. And the action is joint as against having something thrust at them. You will know how best to handle it. And the way you introduce it, beyond those we have already discussed it with, will be most important to their manner of considering it. It may be presented as something I have been talking up for many years or as a plan that some think must sooner or later be adopted. Or it might be introduced as a plan that is not unlike one that has been adopted successfully in France. You may wish to say that I believe it basic to meeting foreign competition and indicate that it will be more fully discussed in this light. No resolution is worth more than the force or prestige behind its sponsors. When and if it is proposed to your group for some definite action I would like to have it in such form as to carry the support of such people as Wente, Daniel, the actual leaders of your group. So, you may wish to present it to the original four in a more personal way than you think it may be best in the case of the others who may be hearing of it for the first time, more or less. This I leave entirely to you.

I see what you mean with reference to your thought as to when and if the plan may be accepted. It is always difficult to carry one's exact thought to another by the spoken word only and even more so by the written word sometimes. But as we work together it gets easier and after a time thoughts run parallel, don't you think? [5/19/55]

Over the next few months Louis Gomberg continued to communicate with Martin Ray by letter and telephone. There is good reason to believe that his patient persistence was genuine, for in fact he had long wanted quality control. He now hoped that some at least of MR's plan could be brought about in the near future. Still, he was basically the PWP's organizer, not its dictator.

MR Raises Hell About Various Premium Wine Producers

On the day before writing the above letter to Gomberg, in which he aimed to show how his belligerence toward adversaries was mellowing, MR had written one to Amerine far less amiable in tone. It indicates that his bonhomie toward the PWP was really for show—masking a continuing vituperative bent focused on specific past affronts. Frequently his remarks appear arrogant, or

else they display a paranoia that perhaps was well merited. (Over the years, other wine men's abiding dislike was often relayed; also, writers' articles featuring him were cancelled by magazine publishers, much to his and Eleanor's disappointment and disillusionment.)

MR's six-page letter to Amerine, written on May 18th, included such statements as these:

> These growers think they are somehow beyond it. But they tell their visitors about me. They have become increasingly hostile since we came back into the wine-selling market a year ago. Well, I am not only taking care of our interests, I am meeting the challenge they created. I could not possibly increase their hatred. I have had it for years. They don't like honest labeling. They don't want [quality] control. Wente, Martini, lied and deceived. Mondavis asked for cuttings of Pinot Noir [in 1951]. I told them they could have them free—but I must cut them. It was set for August 1st—they were to phone me before coming. I was away getting married. I returned to find our vines cut and slashed and canes and grapes torn off without regard of anything but a hasty operation. What would you think. It was done at a point farthest from the house and out of view. Mondavis say they now have a young Pinot Noir vineyard.... Look at the so called Pinot Noir that Pelly [Prof. Angelo Pellegrini of U. of Washington] was given a couple years ago—in October late. Remember, I checked with you and you told me it was impossible that the variety would at that date remain anywhere in California still on the vines. I told Pelly. He went back with the information. It was my word. You were not in it. They hate me for that. Only last night Burgess Meredith told me of saying casually at Inglenook that he understood the correct name was Chardonnay, not Pinot Chardonnay. They jumped at him saying, "Did Martin Ray tell you that?" He says wherever he meets wine men they show their feelings even if he did not draw them out—and this was before this incident opened, even. It has been coming back to me for months. Why, Benoist [of Almaden] was almost insanely angry at me a year ago. [See #6, in January 2006 *WTQ*.] It is because I can do what they cannot. If they had the minds of children they would have long ago drawn me into their group and benefitted by the things I can do they cannot.... Well, the strange thing about the whole matter is that if they repudiate my plan, refuse to have any quality controls, we will be closer to it. And if they accept it in any form however amended, we will be even more advanced. My cause cannot lose. They cannot win. Why else would Gomberg talk to me for one hour on the phone and ask me to stop writing to retailers and to get Wente and John Daniel down here and make friends with them? He said they were alarmed and could not figure out how to meet my cutting in all the retailers on the entire correspondence. I am working with about 200 of the top retailers and I have received letters from a third of them or phone calls, all favorable and delighted.

Then he began reminiscing about the years when he owned Paul Masson and first got to know Amerine—when both were beginning their separate efforts to raise the quality of California's better wines, with MR already warring with other vintners. They were gratified when improvements had come about by the late 1930s and early '40s, only to be reversed by wartime conditions that halted the making of hard liquor and favored wide consumption of any kind of wine, however poor. The greatly expanding production had mostly ruined that previous quest for fine quality. Now he was reviving that strident early activism.

> It was no different 20 years ago [while proprietor of Paul Masson]. Do you remember I got out my mimeograph, so to speak, then, and I let them have it on the same subject? I was reading a copy of one of those blasts only yesterday. It was about the same thing and I hit at the same people. What good did it do? It established us. It caused them to come to me and offer to put me on every important committee of the Wine Institute and give me a Vice presidency with promise of the Presidency, if I would identify myself with them. They refused me any quality controls and I refused them. Since then they have taken over the pioneering I was doing in varietals, *under your advice*. [Emphasis added.] They stopped a lot of blending and as [Frank] Schoonmaker appeared, anxious to buy our wines at any price, others kept their wines straight and quality did improve. They also saw

that I had led a way to higher prices for such wines than they had ever hoped for. Several of them told me so. And they came out with their $2 and $2.50 wines. [*Note:* In those pre-WWII years such prices doubled or tripled those for the usual generic wines, and of course would be equivalent to about $20 or more today—now a modest cost indeed for an exceptional vintage varietal.] But the war gave them the greed that reduced their standards and now they want to be five or ten times as big as before and still get the same prices. They want to be able to say their wines are quality or premium and have them so accepted without someone like me pointing a finger at them.

Interestingly, the PWP's coordinator himself very recently had assured MR that he was not alone in his battle to raise quality and require honesty in winemaking. But the newer wine men who agreed with MR's position weren't yet in positions to run their family businesses.

Gomberg says several of the younger generation think as I do and that has caused fighting in their families. He named Martini's son [Louis P.] and Joe Concannon's son and said there are others. [Possibly LG was thinking, too, of the younger Mondavis at Krug, Peter and Robert.]

As he kept on with his typing, MR grew increasingly vehement in his determination to bring his foes to their knees—either by blackmailing them into accepting the quality-guaranteeing conditions he'd demanded for so many years or else, if they rejected quality controls, by causing them to face scorn and rejection from retailers and knowledgeable wine consumers.

Gomberg says the old gang will never accept any self imposed quality control but that it will come when they die off. Well, he should know. I do not. But I know I have gained a great deal in this fight and I know that they stand to gain even more if they will pull away the greed that is blinding them. I can go with them or against them. But what I am doing is not new [for me] in any way. I have merely sought to take advantage of what they are doing and in such a way I can not lose and they cannot gain without going against the cause they have fought. They may just conceivably decide to go for the plan in some qualified way. I do not permit myself to think of whether or not they will accept, but to be very careful that I keep myself in a position to protect myself come what may. I will get what I want some day if I live long enough. Its pretty sad to drink some of their wines I buy. I see John Daniel is selling his "red" Pinot for the same price he gets for his Pinot Noir. Yet, he would have me accept one is St. George, the other genuine. I have bought and drunk them. It is John that disgusts me. He is a weak man. He has always been. Yet, he sets himself up as so pure.

MR then told or reminded Maynard about the nasty conflict he'd had long ago with Inglenook's proprietor, after John Daniel had led a vineyard owner acquaintance of MR's to purchase grapevines grown from budwood of his that he claimed was Pinot Noir. But MR had known otherwise. He always remembered and relished long-held grudges.

I think of old Bill Short and how all that planting [on Monte Bello in the Santa Cruz Mtns.] was a result of John being so smug and refusing to be truthful. Short would have failed anyway. But I phoned John then and he had the nerve to tell me, hemming and hawing, that there was a difference of opinion as to just what the Pinot Noir is. He said that in Napa Valley the St. George was accepted as authentic and just because I did not agree with them did not make me right. I caused a lot of the vines to be sent back and the nursery came at John plenty mad. The story was widely spread but not by me. John now speaks of what happened 20 years ago ... but the business of Julian Street was only 10 years ago. He said then he did not approve of the "red" Pinot and "white" Pinot [mislabeling] business. He told Julian and me that it was the doings of Freddy Wildman and Bellows. He seems now to have forgotten this and speaks of "going into the matter" very carefully. He is a hypocrite and I will fight him for all times, inside an organization or from without and all like him. They can do what they like about it but they cannot survive all markets that will ultimately come.

While MR continued his venomous predictions of other vintners' failures, he also displayed a tendency to be two-faced whenever he believed that cultivating a distasteful relationship might somehow eventually

benefit either him and his winegrowing business, or else serve his penchant for transforming the higher end of the state's wine industry.

> Anyone that would design the last two pieces of equipment [the Mondavis at Krug] installed for making fine wines—the crushing and juice extracting business—cannot hope to survive a buyers market. They may go for years but they don't belong in the business. I think of Wente and his hot room, his varietals and his holier than thou attitude. Both Wente and Daniel have been the tool of the distillers and now that the distillers no longer need them, they want to get another organization [i.e., the PWP, not the Wine Institute]. And Bartholomew! [Frank Bartholomew had bought Haraszthy's Buena Vista winery and vineyards in 1941.] I want to get him down here. His wife told a mutual friend recently that there are no fine Imported wines, that all California wines are better. What Ignorance, what rot. He is influential. His winery is a complete fraud. But he has power. I'd like to try to get him on the right track. It might work. He has no business going at it the way he is. He is merely buying wines and bottling. His Pinot Noir isn't even fit to drink, much less Pinot Noir. His winery hasn't even the facilities to turn out wine for family use. [5/18/55]

This letter was only the first of an extraordinary sequence of largely one-way communications. In the coming weeks Maynard Amerine's mailbox would suffer a veritable bombardment. Because his friend had mostly become silent, unresponsive, to these diatribes, MR's anxiety level began climbing ever higher—and for him that required composing even more letters to Maynard.

More Letter Blasts

Probably just after sending off his above long letter to Amerine, MR received an undated note card from him. Maybe it was Maynard's succinct comment about Martin's quality-fight tactics, following an argument they'd just had over the phone. He had written this with a pencil:

> The ends do not justify the means—St. Ignatius, Hitler, and Lenin et al. notwithstanding. That's what I mean by not fighting fire with fire—it removes whatever moral basis one may have for fighting. – m.a.a.

(ER, when writing her son Peter soon afterwards, noted that Rusty had just sent Maynard "a wonderful cartoon about fighting fire with fire which says this is the only way.")

MR must have sat right down at the typewriter to bang out his response, once again validating his need to pillory the other California vintners.

> To say the ends justify the means, is dangerous at the least. But it is much less complicated to say, sometimes, that there is no other means. Then you have something you can consider. It is the simple problem of whether the ends warrant the effort. And that is a matter of individual appraisal. With regards these growers and the exchange of letters, I view the effort as justified. And I do not accept that there are other means. To me they are no more than a bunch of head-strong children, spoiled, grown strong but mentally undeveloped. With such you do not make the normal approach. Now, take the last letter from Gomberg, a copy herewith. Would you have thought that Wente, Daniel and Mondavi would be calmed? Well, Gomberg says they are. I know they are not and I know what is taking place. They are quieted, not calmed. And they are quieted by the threat that they are possibly to be forced on record as opposing what I have outlined as self imposed quality control. They are afraid. Now is the time for me to accept this turn of events on their appraisal. You can not be sure what will happen from day to day to upset the cart but we have made some progress and our position however you view it is much elevated in the eyes of the retailers and in the eyes of these growers. As for their liking us, no. They have hated us from the first years at Paul Masson. We have never had common interests. [5/19/55]

Then only two days after that, MR began another letter, at first gently chiding Amerine as a deserter in their wine quality crusade and suggesting that Maynard had become lily-livered.

> I have come to believe that it is impossible to change another's basic way of thinking. For, our thinking is the result of the sum and total of our experiences and we think as we do as a result of what has already happened within and about us.... So, what I am doing so far as we two are concerned is only a reporting job. I do not seek to alter your thinking. I do, however, wonder what in your life has taken place to alter your thinking. Once you described to me with obvious pride and high feeling how you ran judgings, wine committee meetings. You wrote growers scorching letters and you were respected and feared by all. You most certainly are respected the more with time in many a place. But growers and even friends openly challenge you everywhere and you do not strike back.

Then MR began explicitly expressing his keen disappointment in Maynard's failure to approve of what he was doing in prodding other wine producers to change their sorry ways.

> There have been a few hundred people who have already applauded what we are doing about these so called Premium Growers [*sic*] of California.

Thus far, to me, only one person outside the growers themselves who are under attack has failed to approve. You. Yesterday I spent the entire day answering letters and phone calls from everywhere. Some of the telephone calls were from Los Angeles and they talked on at length just telling me how much they approved.

Because as yet this was insufficient hammering at his friend, MR went on to describe in detail the dinner he and ER had just been to at Edith Main's home, where the Esquins and Harold Price—wine people all well known to Amerine—were guests as well.

I was showing them all some of the letters received and sent and they were giving encouraging remarks. I said to them all: "Its a strange thing, of all those with whom I have discussed this or from whom I have received comments, only one person does not fully approve. You would never guess who." Lilly immediately said, "I know who" and without making a sound used her lips to say your two names. John and Price spoke up at the same instant, saying your name. I was astonished. I asked them how they could know.

During dinner an unidentified red wine had been served that MR identified as a California Cabernet; he'd found it "too soft" and "short on total acid and tannin." It was revealed as a Beaulieu claret. The other guests praised it highly. But—

Not Eleanor! She said she only wished she could understand like Maynard Amerine what is lacking in a wine or what it has too much of. She told of how you have been able always to tell her things she could not herself otherwise understand. She said that when she could not get satisfaction out of a wine and when she suspects it is lacking in acid she would like to <u>know</u> if that is the trouble and just how much acid it might have and should have to be satisfying.

Having delivered ER's tribute to Maynard, MR didn't hesitate to pile on the others' disagreeable comments afterward, informing him how wine connoisseurs and winery reps, and therefore the wine retailers they dealt with, increasingly disrespected him now.

Price went at once into a minor tizzy and said: "Whenever I taste with those fellows at Davis they can't see the woods for the trees. They are so concerned with the technical knowledge they can't judge the wines." Well, we lit into him and you were not defended by anyone but us. They did not personalize it, Lilly made a little talk about how wonderful you are but the men openly revolted at your being held up as a wine judge. John didn't fail to add that you know a lot about California wines but know nothing about foreign wines. It was the Esquin–Lucia dinner all over again. [This was described by MR to MA in #6, in *WTQ*'s January 2006 issue.] And retailers you may never have heard of have been told by the salesmen of the growers I attack that you are this and that and anything but what you are. You are being discredited everywhere in the public eye. Not so many years ago they would not have dared raise their voice to anyone against you. I have not heard it said about me that my wines or my vineyards are not as represented. They can only say of me that they do not like what I do or my method. But they now strike at your very abilities and you now defend them, in a sense.

Then MR moved on to Lou Gomberg, who in his most recent phone conversation had expressed his intention to offer MR's specific quality control proposals for consideration at the PWP's next meeting, to take place in the coming month.

At least you do not believe I am going at it right when it is perfectly apparent not only that the public does approve but I am getting somewhere. Witness the spectacle of Gomberg now presenting my plan to growers. And keep in mind it is those I attack that are paying for his time and material as he sends out to them my plan. Also note, he now speaks of the <u>possibility</u> of the plan being considered for adoption. And he seeks to withdraw from his statement to me that such quality control would never be adopted in our life time. That was what he said to me—in our lifetime.

MR now referred to his and ER's ongoing efforts to persuade a national magazine (*Life* was their primary target) to cover, in a major story, the conflict he'd stirred up with the Premium Wine Producers of California. He was feeling more confident now of victory.

I let Gomberg slip out of it, you note. He must save face and self if he is to help me put this over. Now we have a magazine story coming on it and maybe one more. I can spare enough time to keep popping away at them 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 it. 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.... So far as California wines are concerned, they are not respected nearly so much as before the war. They had their great chance. After the war the retailers actually were saying that our wines are better than any of the imports. Their stand was shocking. But the public just got fed up with the wines and they have turned and are daily turning away from them.

And here MR was back at the bottom line of his objections to the PWP's plan to publicize widely, through all media, the patriotic desirability of buying American wines—that is, California wines, and *not* the imported ones. MR, having proposed an alternative way, was now at his battle station.

> The thing to do is obviously improve quality, control labeling and meet competition. They planned to do all they could to keep the imports out and I called them on it and then they said they meant only to attack the cheaper imports. I told them they could not attack $1 French wines and praise $4 French wines. The tariff and the TV will treat them all alike. So they then take personal exception to what I say about them personally. I tell them I will force them to accept or reject some form of self imposed quality control and that I will not be frightened by the threats they hurl at me and so now they think I have done a good job in calming their feelings! This after I have talked straighter to them than ever before. I told Mondavi he had failed to deny that his Pinot Noir is a fraud and I repeated it.

After MR dispensed some further observations, he tried cajoling his former comrade-in-arms to join up again, if only by supplying wise words from the sidelines. But what he really wanted was for Amerine to assume co-leadership in this campaign.

> Now, what I tell you Maynard, you must force these fellows into any quality move that is successful. Or circumstances must. French wines will force them to the wall if they do not move first. That might be best but they are now well fortified, for the most part, with their ill gotten gains and they could hold out a long time. Another war will probably come and that would save them again and possibly forever.
>
> You could not use my methods but I think you should come out for some reform. I would like to work into my suggestions to the growers some of your ideas if you will propose them. As I have said, you should be the one heading up this move. How do you think Hilgard would react? [Prof. Eugene V. Hilgard, founder in the late 19th century of University of California's viticulture and enology programs, was long vilified by many commercial wine men because of his adamant quality stance.]

Sometime earlier, Maynard had invited the Rays up to Davis for an afternoon dinner, as he often did—just as he came to them on Mt. Eden from time to time. So MR in signing off said:

> We are looking forward to seeing you shortly. Remember, I have no personal feeling toward you about whatever you say on this action. I am reporting to you what we are doing and why we are doing [it] and what I think about your stand and what others think. I expect that you will continue to think as you believe best. Is that not reasonable and right?
>
> Eleanor joins me in sending you our love.

Then, as if he hadn't already said enough, MR typed in some additional comments in the left margin. If he had managed to do these things, why hadn't the other vintners as well?

> When I took over Paul Masson I found my position just like that of these growers at this time. Vineyards were all mixed, wines were blended and labels were put on as sales required. I pulled out vines, learned about varieties, replanted, got new labels and within a year had accomplished what none of these people have even been willing to discuss doing. They have been at it for years and many of them were born into it. If they wanted to do anything about it they would have done it long ago. There are a lot of practices I would like to attack but I do not want to scatter my shot. Other varieties are involved, too. But I think the attack should be concentrated in one place. [5/21/55]

In a clear response to this latest diatribe, Maynard sent MR an undated card with a message written in blue ink. First he commented about their mutual acquaintances' nasty criticism of his abilities as a wine judge, then about the purported contempt expressed by members of the wine industry. And finally he disputed MR's portrayal of his cowardly withdrawal from the wine quality battleground.

> Still no comment. If my "friends" talk of me that way they must feel I am pretty bad. The industry has seldom liked what I do. When my TAC talk of May 13th is published you will see that I am not idle.

Despite his friend's insinuation, Amerine had not abandoned his own ardent advocacy of improving California's wines. Apparently, though, he hadn't told Martin beforehand much, if anything, about the presentation he was scheduled to give to attendees at the Wine Institute's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on May 13.

By now Amerine had already delivered his hard-hitting talk. Its title was "Some Facts and Fancies About Winemaking and Wines." And he obviously intended to send a copy to Martin Ray, once it got duplicated for distribution.

[To be continued next issue]