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Vinaceous Correspondents:

Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles

by *Barbara Marinacci*

PART I. INTRODUCTION

[Tendril Barbara Marinacci, a developmental book editor, and author/coauthor of ten books on such diverse subjects as *Walt Whitman*, *Linus Pauling*, and *California's Spanish Place-Names*, is the stepdaughter of winegrower Martin Ray. Her mother was his second wife, Eleanor Ray. She is currently the editorial director of a history of the Viticulture & Enology Department at U.C. Davis. — Ed.]



his series began as a single article, inspired by Thomas Pinney's article on "The Wine List of Alfred A. Knopf" in the January *WT Quarterly*, as well as editor Gail Unzelman's chronological checklist of books on wine published by Knopf Inc.

Another book about wines and winemaking that Knopf himself wanted to publish, had it ever arrived in a form worthy of appearing among the offerings of his illustrious publishing house, was one that would be written by California vintner Martin Ray (1904–1976). An autobiography or memoir could have covered the long and turbulent career of this voluble California winegrower, whom Knopf had known since the early 1940s. For forty years, between the mid-1930s and the early 1970s, that strident wine-quality advocate—now classified as a "pioneer," a title conferring new respectability—produced America's most authentically varietal wines, and certainly the costliest.

A book about his lifework would have given MR a public forum for emitting his zealous opinions about

winemaking and other matters, and also enabled him to express his genuine passion for "hands-on" vineyard and cellar work, which he performed both strenuously and with meticulous attention. But despite determined though intermittent efforts over a score of years by Martin's second wife, Eleanor, and sometimes even on her husband's part as well, the promising book that Knopf hoped to receive never arrived on his desk. Instead, the manuscripts that the Rays sent him from time to time, submitted with high hopes, were always regretfully declined. Whether cast in semi-fictional or ostensibly factual form, the Martin Ray story, as recounted by Eleanor, either wouldn't hold a reader's attention for long with its earnest lecturing about MR's noble campaign for quality-ensuring practices, or else was off-putting in its hyperbolic portrayal of the brave vintner who often spoke out fiercely, and mostly alone, against the attitude and practices of the wine Establishment of his times—whose representatives he variously called greedy, corrupt, spineless, conniving, or ignorant. MR never lacked insulting epithets for describing his generic or specific foes.



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Martin Ray's Crusade

"Rusty" Ray—as he was known to most friends and acquaintances—was both admirable and notorious for his perennial warfare with the wine industry, particularly the salient one in his home state. Largely for self-protective financial reasons, for all too long after Repeal ended Prohibition's dozen dry years in 1933, most commercial wineries (backed by the Wine Institute that represented them), declined to support and then implement the enactment of stringent quality standards that Ray kept insisting would be the unsteady industry's economic salvation.

In 1936 Martin Ray bought from Frenchman Paul Masson, his longtime mentor, the old winery and extensive property in the east-facing foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains and west of the town of Saratoga in the Santa Clara (now "Silicon") Valley. He already recognized the value of producing high-quality wines so as to remove the overall shameful reputation of America's vinous products, whether past or current. And for four decades thereafter, whether in publications written as the Masson proprietor, or in pronouncements issued later from his own small mountaintop winery close to his "old place," launched in the mid 1940s, MR insisted that far more California vineyards should be planted to fine-varietal winegrapes. These could be vintaged by the premier wineries into prestige-aiming wines; and when eventually released, they would be honestly and specifically labeled, as the current bottled wines were not.

An evangelistic purist, MR always maintained that only he did it all—grape growing, winemaking, wine labeling, wine marketing, even wine imbibing—as it *should* be done. This egoistic position scarcely endeared the Saratoga vintner to his winemaking peers, most of whom worked on a different scale, annually making quantities of wine counted not by a small and limited number of cases (as did MR) but by substantial gallonages. Indeed, for many years few of them ever produced wines that could compare favorably with the prime French models, as Martin Ray's best ones were acknowledged as doing. It took the "Judgment of Paris" in July of 1976, a half-year after MR's death, for the wine world to recognize finally that sometimes certain painstakingly made wines from California might even surpass their archetypes made in France.

According to Ray's gospel, the varietal named on a bottle's label would preferably be 100 percent, or the exclusive contents within; but if not, the percentages of any other contributory grapes should be identified. He berated the feeble BATF decree, introduced in 1936, stipulating that at least 51 percent of the bottled wine named on a label must actually come from that varietal grape. This meant that the near-half remainder, 49 percent, could legally come from

inferior or junk grapes, or an unspecified grape concentrate. Identifying on labels the wine grapes' geographic origins was also crucial in MR's quality pronouncements. It would then force many wineries to admit having used as blending materials a sizable proportion of prolific and bland grape varieties, most probably grown in the torrid Central Valley, such as Alicante Bouschet, French Colombard, and even Thompson Seedless. (MR wouldn't have been pleased when the BATF in 1983 finally raised the minimal varietal amount to 75 percent, a figure still current; but this at least showed modest progress.)

MR wanted an industry-regulated system, modeled somewhat on the French wine industry's Appellation Contrôlée, that would be enforced through tight government inspections, as well as fines for violations found anywhere along the route from grape harvesting and crushing to bottling and marketing. The result?—dependably fine wines that finally would gain respect and credibility for California products among the world's wine cognoscenti. Premium wines could then sell for much higher prices, in line with sought-after French and German vintages, so that the rise in high-end wine consumption and wine revenues would benefit individual wineries, including those that in the past had refused to make the needed changes.

Telling Martin Ray's Story

As some Wayward Tendrils readers will recall, Eleanor Ray eventually published, in 1993, the final version of a memoir/biography of her husband: *Vineyards in the Sky: The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray*. By then she was 89 years old and no longer capable of publicizing her book, which she could have done wonderfully well in previous years. Had the book come out much earlier, in the years following MR's death in 1976, she would have relished undertaking its promotion. She had persisted, as letters show, in seeking some publisher's commitment; but as with the prior Knopf disappointments, she didn't succeed, in spite of periodic efforts to revise the manuscript. Duplicated and bound forms of it, however, did circulate over the years among acquaintances and friends, almost like an "underground" publication.

In 1990, after moving up to Martin Ray's Mt. Eden "chateau" in Saratoga to take care of my mother in her old age, I undertook to make a reality of her book. Knowing well its importance to her, I was determined to publish it while she was still alive. My editing work included contributing new informational passages, rendered in her writing mode: for instance, she had taken for granted all readers' knowledge of basic aspects of grape growing and winemaking, whereas even some wine connoisseurs actually lack this. I even retrieved whole chapters, crucial to the emotional underpinnings of the story, that she had previously

cut from her manuscript in an effort to shorten it. A co-publishing arrangement was made with Heritage West Books of Stockton, which handled the book's production.

In the past decade Eleanor Ray's drama-filled memoir, which people often say "reads like a (major) novel" (that exact quote came from Anthony Dias Blue), has had numerous vocal admirers. Fictionalizing his life's tale in many places, Eleanor Ray managed to capture well the "essence" of Martin Ray in its more positive manifestations. But that book doesn't—it can't possibly—tell the whole story. No book or person can. Rusty Ray was a complex, contradictory, and often difficult man, with abundant psychological quirks, even pathologies, that were exacerbated when he was upset or on a wine-drinking spree. Yet on his best behavior he was undeniably charismatic, with decided heroic qualities and dimensions. Most people who knew MR couldn't help but be fascinated, and to this day they *love* to talk about him, whether they admired or hated him. His mesmeric reputation endures.

Now, what exactly had Alfred Knopf wished to get from his friend Martin Ray in the form of a publishable book about himself? The frank yet tactful letter that Knopf wrote to the Rays on 4 June 1969 conveys succinctly his expectations, along with his reasons for declining the latest attempt to put Martin Ray into print. His message is typed on the Knopf Inc. letterhead stationery. Yet it looks as if he himself typed it because it does not appear to be the work of a competent professional secretary, who surely would have been available had he dictated it at the publishing house. (By then Knopf Inc. was incorporated into Random House, and its founder-publisher had officially retired.) Moreover, Alfred in his own handwriting made various additions and alterations to the text. The absence of customary commas, somewhat improved here for readability (and omitting the [sic] indicator), is surprising in a fully literate person. Yet at the bottom on the left the typist's initials traditionally follow his. But it's a good letter, anyway.

Dear Eleanor and Rusty:

I was going to write you today about the manuscript and now I have your letter of May 29th as well as that of the 17th to which I made a reply on the 27th.

Both of you dear people sign all letters but my hunch is that Eleanor wrote the one of May 17th and you, Rusty, wrote the one of May 29th. The two styles, I must ask you to believe, are not identical. This is important and I'm going to risk our old friendship, hoping that the risk will be no more than nominal, by writing you both with the utmost frankness. Eleanor has tried many times to tell your story and the present manuscript, judging by what we have seen of it, promises to be more of the same. When I say more of the

same, I mean same in the sense of being open to exactly the same objections as before. She's a good wife and so much in love, as so many people are, with what you have done that I don't really think she is temperamentally fit to write your story. On the other hand, I am by no means certain that you couldn't write it yourself—having all the help you like from Eleanor in the form of frank talks between you, criticisms back and forth and so forth but with the writing to express your personality and yours alone.

The point is that if your story is good enough to be published, and we think it is, then it's good enough to be done right and not in terms that—again I must speak frankly—really embarrass your more sophisticated friends. And the story of your career with its culmination in the present wines that you are making is a sophisticated and not a naïve or simple tale.

It certainly redounds greatly to your glory in the eyes of those who know you but even so it will not bear a thick sugar coating of sentimentality or any attempt in the telling of the story to make you out to be larger than life, a superhuman "one against the Gods" so to speak who apparently never made a mistake. It shouldn't remind one of the story they tell about the late English publisher Sir Stanley Unwin, whose wife said to him after she had read the manuscript of a good part of his autobiography, "Don't you think, Stanley, that it would sit better if you admitted once in awhile that you had been wrong and made a mistake?" Whereupon Sir Stanley replied, "My dear, I'm not writing a work of fiction." Generally speaking, the facts should be allowed to speak for themselves. People who have no interest whatever in wines are not going to buy the book while people who have could be counted on to form the right opinion without its being pointed out repeatedly and, if I may say so, tiresomely by the text.

So I think, if Eleanor will forgive me, she ought to encourage you to try a few chapters all by yourself. If they are done while I am away, send them on to my secretary, Mrs. Gretchen Bloch, with a note requesting her to turn them over to Mrs. Judith Jones, who is in charge, and has been for many years, of all our wine and food books—among others. If this scheme doesn't work out, then we'll frankly be faced with the fact that your story will have to be told by a third person.

I wish we could come to see you on our way to Brazil but apart from the time involved it would take us several thousand miles out of our way.

And I hope I don't need to say how flattered I am by your attitude toward our imprint. But for that very reason and because of our old and enduring friendship I wouldn't want to publish and you wouldn't want us to publish a book about you that we couldn't stand behind with everything we have.

Helen joins me in best love to you both.

Yours ever,
(signed) Alfred

AAK:at

The tone and contents of this letter demonstrate well enough the friendship that existed between Alfred Knopf and the Rays, who had previously entertained him and Blanche Knopf, his wife and extraordinary publishing partner, separately or together, at their home and winery in Saratoga on half a dozen occasions. (On Alfred's last trip there, in 1969, he brought his second wife, Helen, whom he had married after Blanche's death in 1966.) The letter delicately addresses Eleanor's tendency toward reverential sentiments, inflation, and bombast—though MR certainly had them all, and more, in his own ample forms, which she had merely embellished.

The letter also reveals Alfred's own awareness of Rusty Ray's innate ability to be able tell his own tale, in more manly language. But how did Knopf know that MR could actually write well enough to create a book? ... Because for a number of years, between 1953 and 1969, he had periodically received letters from his vintner friend, detailing issues that concerned him or current happenings. Sometimes these missives sent from Mt. Eden would go on and on for pages.



Martin Ray as Letter Writer

Alfred Knopf by no means was the only person who received lengthy and sometimes eloquent epistles from Martin Ray himself. These clearly weren't written by his alter-ego "voice," the more effusive Eleanor, who as his more-than-willing amanuensis frequently composed both business and personal letters to be signed by him. She also often took Rusty's dictation while he worked in the cellar among his beloved wines (conveniently for him, she had learned Gregg shorthand in young adulthood and never forgot it), and then typed up his orally composed letters.

As Knopf pointed out, it is usually evident from the writing style which one of them had created a particular letter, though it might be signed by them both, or just by MR alone. Rusty Ray himself actually wrote competently and often expressively, but usually without Eleanor's special flourishes. When intent upon producing a serious letter, which involved thinking through some issue before setting ideas or feelings or event coverage directly down on paper, he might handwrite a letter, or at least create an outline or draft that Eleanor could then elaborate upon in a

draft—which he could edit prior to sending it out in final form. But sometimes he just wished to type out the letter himself. As the words came to him, seated before the typewriter for several hours, he might pound away on the keys without taking a break, which would have ended the focused concentration that enabled him to pursue some topics intently for paragraphs or even pages, or even to take discursive or reflective pathways as it pleased him to do. The people he chose to write to in this way were usually regarded as his intimate friends or as people worthy of cultivation because of their important influence in the world of wine—or both.

The Shields Library's Special Collections at U.C. Davis is now the permanent repository of the Martin Ray & Eleanor Ray Papers. The Rays' correspondence occupies the largest part of this considerable collection. They obviously enjoyed letter writing, for over the years they wrote many hundreds of letters to friends, family members, acquaintances, and business contacts. Unlike many private correspondence collections purchased by or donated to libraries whose contents are frustratingly lopsided because these notable persons usually failed to make copies of the letters they wrote to their correspondents, the Rays' own letters are almost totally preserved—usually on the canary-yellow paper used as second sheets. Then there are hundreds of originals of letters written to the Rays, whether initiating contact with them (often because the writer had greatly admired some Martin Ray wine introduced into their life, perhaps transforming it) or in response to a letter received. (The collection, however, contains few letters dating back earlier than 1953, since fires destroyed the main letter files: first in 1941 at the Paul Masson winery, where the business office was located; then in 1952 at the Rays' newly built mountain home. Two chapters in *Vineyards in the Sky* describe these dramatic conflagrations.)

For a period of a quarter-century, in their many letters the Rays reported in detail on their day-to-day existence. This middle-aged-to-elderly couple lived on a mountaintop in a rather rustic and isolated place. Though they were close to the rapidly expanding urban world 2000 feet below, which their spectacular homesite overlooked beyond the vineyards, a 2½-mile narrow dirt road wound up through steep terrain that was covered with impenetrable, scrubby chaparral or thick groves of oak, laurel, buckeye, and madrone. In the opposite direction, along the coastal ridge, lay forestland with tall redwoods. The Rays' lives there were almost wholly devoted to the labor-intensive pursuit of winegrowing, and to the attendant cultivation and entertainment of friends and acquaintances who admired wine—especially Martin Ray-made wines.

Fortunately, researchers intent upon finding out more about Martin Ray will benefit from the Rays' automatic procedure when letter writing: they inserted a carbon paper in front of a second sheet for producing a copy for their own files. Thus they made carbons of all letters and even handwritten notes that they sent out through the years. The Rays routinely copied not only business letters, but also the gossip and sometimes highly personal ones to friends and family members—which often contained business-connected matters too. They wished to have always available to them the firm evidence of what they had said before to someone, so as to avoid repetition—or, worse in Rusty's way of thinking, ever contradicting themselves. They could also thereby "recycle" statements they had previously made to another person. Actually, among the most intriguing letters are some that one or the other Ray wrote, usually when inflamed with some notion, but then decided to refrain from sending out in this form. Still, the original was kept, and penciled in at the top would be "Not sent." Edited drafts were also filed away.

When the Rays wished to widely broadcast letters or newsletters in some publicity blitz, Eleanor carefully typed up a special "master" and then could run off dozens, even hundreds, of copies on their own Swiss-made machine. These duplicated papers too are in the Ray collection. Nowadays, of course, with the invention and prevalence of photocopiers, facsimile devices, and computers it isn't difficult to retain or retransmit digital or hardcopy records of one's correspondence, or to reuse texts already written by adapting them into new forms. (What a great time the Rays might have had in our electronic era—with a word processor for letter writing, software and printers for desktop publishing, and Internet e-mail; and how much time and postage they could have saved!)

Probably less than a quarter of the archived Ray correspondence consists of Martin Ray's own letters, whether dictated or typed by him. But what's there is still plenty, and often authentic stuff. Eleanor Ray, though, barely tapped into this rich vein of her husband's words when writing *Vineyards in the Sky*. Instead, she presented Martin Ray, appropriately for her own perspective and the one she wished to convey to her readers, as the righteous protagonist in his own life drama, beginning in early childhood and ending with his death. She replicated in mostly fictional form (based on what she knew or surmised, or on what MR had told her) his thoughts and feelings, supplied scenes and dialogue, and provided passages with background wine history, as well as added her own perceptions and experiences over time. (Conveniently, she actually had known MR well, starting in her college years—three decades before she married him in 1951, after his wife Elsie's death. In the early years he

was her first husband's friend and business partner, and had even been the best man at their wedding.)

Perhaps it is time now to get Martin Ray to speak for himself in print. And using the distinctive voice expressed in his own letters is surely the best way for doing this.

Looking Ahead

Initially, at WT editor Gail Unzelman's invitation, I undertook to write a single article about MR's epistolary and in-person relationship with Alfred Knopf. But I soon found myself writing too much, going off on side excursions with other Martin Ray friends and acquaintances whom both men knew. Particularly compelling were MR's letter exchanges in the early '40s with Knopf wine author Julian Street—who, after all, had supplied the initial link between Knopf and Ray. This was also the period when Martin Ray was achieving his first fame among oenophiles with his Paul Masson varietal wines. I also knew, from having gone carefully through the Ray correspondence before turning it over to UC Davis, that other fascinating relationships were reflected in the letters that MR had written and received during the later thirty years. So I decided to propose furnishing a far more ambitious and lengthy contribution involving Martin Ray's correspondence with wine lovers—since the very existence of these letters may otherwise never be known to most wine scholars and researchers.

Thus now, with our editor's indulgent permission, the original topic has been greatly expanded in prospect, to be published in future installments. The long, segmented survey will portray Martin Ray and a selection of his notable "vinaceous correspondents" through the years—and also bring in other personalities, along with certain key events relevant to the relationship's particular time span.

The article in the next *Tendrils* issue will feature MR's remarkable correspondence with renowned East Coast author and wine connoisseur, Julian Street. Once begun, it led to their close friendship. These early letters establish Rusty Ray's bent toward writing long letters to people whom he admired, or at least regarded as useful contacts, and therefore hoped to impress or influence in particular ways. (Their letter exchanges, however, are not part of the U.C. Davis-owned collection; instead, they have been preserved in the Princeton Library.)

Taking the Ray correspondence in a somewhat chronological sequence will then lead to U.C. Davis enologist Maynard Amerine, who was MR's good friend and ally (as quality advocate) from the late 1930s until 1955—the year of Martin Ray's "Wine Quality Fight." Following this I will take up the Martin Ray/Alfred Knopf letters, which are unusual in their expansiveness and revelations, particularly be-

cont. p.10 —



Welcome, new Tendrils! **Sarah Beekley-Hahn** has received a gift membership from her long-time-Tendril father, **Marts Beekley**. Enjoy! **Robert Alexander**, proprietor of Cesare's Wine Bar (102 S. 2nd Street, Stillwater, MN 55082) has joined us. And, from Finland, we welcome **Rae Fahlenius** (rae.fahlenius@jippiifi) who, for 25 years, has enjoyed collecting wine books in different languages—English, German, Italian, French, Finnish, Swedish, Spanish and Portuguese. He has promised to tell us about his collection, and Finnish wine literature.

The Port Lover's Library

of **Isaac Oelgart** announces two new publications: *Reminiscences of a Port Shipper. The Next Generation. 1960-1999*, by Peter Cobb. This handsome 10"x7" hand-sewn booklet (25p) is limited to 286 numbered & signed copies, of which 240 are for sale. \$35. In this, the third in the Library's "Portonian Series" of specially commissioned original works, Mr. Cobb tells of his nearly forty years in the Port trade. Also just released is the eighth PLL reprint: *Report on the Port Wine Trade in Oporto...1893*. This is a facsimile (12p) of *Report No.304 of the Foreign Office ... Portugal*. Limited to 100 copies, wire-stitched. \$15. Contact Isaac (pll@valley.net) for ordering information and a complete list of his available publications and other Port-related books and pamphlets he has to offer.

A SUPERB BUNCH

of wine books for sale! Your editor has been asked to assist with the disbursement of two significant wine book collections. Both were formed over a number of years as working reference libraries, one by long-time wine industry executive and "artist in the noble art of good living," Bern C. Ramey; the other by a very respected California wine historian. Mr. Ramey is selling his collection in two parts: individual books of note, and a 300-volume library of 20th century wine books. Contact Gail Unzelman at nomis@jps.net or ☎ 707. 546.1184 for further information and the lists of these desirable books.

SPECTACULAR!

Wine and Coins in Ancient Greece by Peter R. Franke and Irini Marathaki is an exquisite, academic book. (5000 copies produced by The Hatzimichalis Estate wine-growers, Athens, 1999, Greek and English editions, slipcase, 9½" x 9", 167pp, 140 figures, one map). Dr. Franke is Professor Emeritus of Ancient History, University of Saarland, Germany, and Ms. Marathaki is an Archaeologist-Numismatist. The illustrations in the book are stunning: full-page plates throughout, each plate capturing a single coin in rich

photographic detail. Available from Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. (cng@cngcoins.com). \$75 + S/H.

"Grapes in the Golden West:

The Early Wine Trade in California"

is an exhibition of Pre-Prohibition wine advertising—posters, die-cut calendars, trade cards, business cards, tin trays, and other colorful examples of early promotional pieces—that will be featured at Copia—The American Center for Wine, Food & the Arts in Napa, CA, 4 July to 22 September 2003. Tendril **Dean Walters**, an avid and knowledgeable collector of California wine history artifacts, and proprietor of Vintage Antiques, has assembled, and will be guest curator for this fascinating exhibit.

"History—Be Careful Who You Read, or, Vallejo is not Vallejo!"

Napa Valley wine educator, **Jack Fairchild**, was amused by this "historical faux pas" he discovered in the Robert Mondavi autobiography (with Paul Chutkow), *Harvests of Joy* (Harcourt Brace, 1998, pp.58-59): "According to Charles L. Sullivan, in his authoritative *Napa Wine: A History*, Yount also planted vegetables, built a corral, and began a herd of cattle. Most important, he decided to plant grapes. At that time, the Spanish missionaries, who did so much to settle the state of California through their unique system of regional missions, were known to be avid grape growers. *So Yount went to the mission in what is now Vallejo and purchased a substantial quantity of mission vines* [my italics]. He brought them back to his property, above what is known today as the town of Yountville, and planted the Napa Valley's very first vineyard. Soon thereafter, George Calvert Yount began making wine." What Sullivan actually wrote (*Napa Wine*, pp.12-13) is this: "Before we leave Sonoma to concentrate on affairs in the Napa Valley, we need to take a backward glance at an important viticultural event. In 1836 [Gen.] Mariano Vallejo took over the Sonoma Mission vineyard. He made about 400 cuttings from the untended vines there, which he planted behind the two-story adobe he had recently built on the northeast corner of the Pueblo's plaza. He later expanded the vineyard with cuttings taken from the San Rafael Mission. Since Napa's first vineyard came from Sonoma cuttings and since the mission vineyard there was in disrepair in 1838, it is clear that George Yount's Napa vines, planted in 1838 or 1839, probably came from Vallejo's own plantation and not from the vines of the old mission vineyard enclosure."

A book collector is interested in the 1st edition. An author is more interested in the tenth. — Anon.



A Startling Revelation



not Savarin St. Sure. This startling revelation came to light in the recently published *Tid Bits from Bohemian Life as seen by Savarin St. Sure. From the Newsletter of The Bohemian Distributing Co.* (Pasadena, CA: Weather Bird Press, 2001. Dan Strehl, Series Editor):

"*Bohemian Life* was a bit of fresh gastronomic air in Los Angeles during the 1940s and 50s. It was published by the Bohemian Distributing Co., a major wholesaler of fine wines, spirits, and their own brand of beer, Acme. Edited by Phil Townsend Hannah [Hanna], the longtime editor of *Westways*, under the *nom de plume* Savarin St. Sure, *Bohemian Life* came out as a four-page monthly filled with food tales, cookbook reviews, information on all sorts of drinks, and recipes for the good life. Between 1939 and its end in 1957, 172 issues came off the press. Hannah [Hanna] employed the novelist / journalist / bon vivant, Idwal Jones, to write and sometimes edit, and M.F.K. Fisher was also a contributor. It was always an elegantly done, yet simple piece...."

We stand corrected.

Observations upon Observations Requested!

■ John Locke, *Observations upon the Growth and Culture of Vines and Olives: the Production of Silk: the Preservation of Fruits* (London, 1766).

For a project tracing the reading, reception, and influence of this work, David Armitage, Associate Professor of History, Columbia University, New York, would like to hear from Tendrils of any ownership marks, annotations, or provenance details in or regarding their copies. He would be grateful to receive any such information by email da56@columbia.edu or by mail at Department of History, Fayerweather Hall, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027. Any information will be kept private, though may be used, with the owner's permission, in a forthcoming article on Locke's *Observations*.



IN MEMORIAM

F. William Sunderman, M.D. [1898-2003]

F. William Sunderman was a physician, scientist, teacher, author, photographer, editor, musician, and until recently, at age 104, the oldest working person in the United States. In 1999 he emphasized, "I have too many interests to retire." The author or co-author of hundreds of scientific papers and sixteen scientific books, he also wrote several books on chamber music, travel and photography, an autobiography *A Time to Remember*, and, of most interest to Tendril members, *Our Madeira Heritage* (Philadelphia: Institute for Clinical Science, 1979, 121p). Besides his own reminiscences and photographs taken during a visit to the island of Madeira, this limited edition (500 copies) book includes a reprint of S. Weir Mitchell's classic *A Madeira Party*.

Mannie Berk recalls: Dr. Sunderman was probably the last surviving link to the Madeira culture that was still active in Philadelphia in the 1920s and 1930s. At the heart of it were the city's physicians, one of the most famous of whom was Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914), the author of *A Madeira Party*. In a 1996 letter to me, Dr. Sunderman told the following story: "During Prohibition, Mr. Costaleris, owner of the Romeo and Juliet Cigar business, requested a Philadelphia physician to come and attend to his daughter. My mentor was unable to go, and I was sent in his place. It turned out that the girl had leprosy, and nothing was available to treat her at that time. Before leaving Havana, however, Mr. Costaleris took me into his wine cellar and drew off from his casks two bottles of 1816 Malmsey Madeira. After having it taken off the ship by a bootlegger, I had a dinner party for five of my medical associates. We drank one bottle and signed our names on the other bottle with the stipulation that the last man alive would get the bottle, which was held in my cellar. In 1988, I became the last man, and at the 40th anniversary banquet of the Association of Clinical Scientists, held at The Union League of Philadelphia in November 1989, the remaining bottle of 1816 Madeira was uncorked, and the founding members of the Association all consumed a small drink of superb wine."

Our special thanks to **Joseph Lynch**—who first brought Sunderman's *Our Madeira Heritage* to our attention in 1996 (See *W-T Newsletter*, Vol.6 #4, Oct 1996, p.24)—for sending us notice of Dr. Sunderman's passing.



IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by
Bob Foster



"Barolo lovers can rejoice"

The Mystique of Barolo, by Maurizio Rosso and Chris Meier. Torino: Omega Arete, 2002. Distributed in the U.S. by www.ArtisanIdeas.com. 287pp. Large format, 400 illustrations, cloth. \$75.

There is no question that Barolo is hot. After four great vintages in a row (1997 through 2001) and high scores from the *Wine Spectator* and Robert Parker, imports to the United States are up sharply—not only in quantity but in price. One of my favorite Southern California wine stores used to have about a four-foot-long section devoted to Italian wines. Now, these producers command an entire aisle in the store. While there has been a great interest in the wines from the region, there has not been a concomitant rise in English language wine books in support. But now, Barolo lovers can rejoice. There's a lavish new book out and it's superb.

The work begins with chapters on the history of the region and its wines. The impact of political events, as is true with so many other wine producing nations, is fascinating. The work then has sections on the Langhe (the region where the Nebbiolo grape is grown), the legislation governing the production of Barolo, the actual making of Barolo, and a short section on drinking and appreciating Barolo. But this is merely a well-woven prelude. The heart of the book is comprised of thirty-six sections written by various producers: the men and women leaders of the Barolo industry. They speak in their own words, covering everything from history and appreciation of the wine to the struggles of making the wine itself. These winemakers and/or owners cover the gamut from the international celebrities (Gaja) to the up and coming new wave of university trained winemakers.

The book finishes up with fifteen pages of color reproductions of labels from almost all of the Barolo producers. The book is lavishly illustrated with stunning photographs, in both color and sepia. At first glance, given its size, it may look like a coffee-table book designed for show and not for substance. But it's not. It's a superb work on a great wine that deserves to be in every Italian-wine lover's library. Costing little more than a single bottle of top notch Barolo, it is worth every penny of its hefty price. Very highly recommended.

"sorry...not recommended"

Grape Varieties, by Pierre Galet. London: Hachette Wine Library/Cassell Illustrated. 159pp. Softback. \$18.

I realize that many Frenchmen still believe that France is the center of the universe as is the French wine industry. But that attitude so skews this book that I question its usefulness for a wine lover anywhere outside of France. The book is in the same realm as Jancis Robinson's classic work, *Vines, Grapes and Wines* (Knopf, 1986), covering the details of major wine grapes, including history, vineyard profiles, flavors and regions where they are grown. In this work there are sections on nearly forty different grape varieties. Since the author obviously could not cover every variety in every country, choices had to be made. I would not have expected to see regional grapes like Norton or Marechal Foch. But I'm puzzled when the author includes Ondenc, a grape from southwest France grown on a mere four hectares there and 300 hectares in Australia, and manages to omit Zinfandel, a grape grown on at least four continents whose acreage is in the thousands of hectares. Who made these choices?

In the back of the book there is a chart showing the various varieties, with a picture of a leaf, a picture of a grape bunch, and then a list of the regions where it is produced. But the accuracy of this material is, to my mind, open to question. The work informs the reader that Viognier is grown in the U.S. in California and Georgia. Why the author chose to include Georgia but omit Washington, Oregon, Colorado, New York, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia is beyond my understanding. This kind of inaccuracy makes me wonder about the reliability of the rest of the work. Sorry, even though the Robinson book is almost twenty years old, I'll stick with it as a reference tool. Not recommended.

[Bob's reviews are written for his column in the excellent bi-monthly, *California Grapevine*. For subscription information, call 858. 457.4818. As always, we appreciate the kind permission to reprint. — Ed.]



WINE IN PRINT

by
Hudson Cattell



"highly recommended"

The Wines of Argentina, Chile and Latin America by Christopher Fielden. London/New York: Faber & Faber, 2001. 274pp. Soft cover. \$20.

It is good to have a solid book on Latin American wines in print. Christopher Fielden has had forty years of experience in the wine trade and has written ten books on wine-related subjects. Some readers will remember him as a regular columnist for *Decanter*. The publisher's note adds something I didn't know about him in a lovely aside: "In real life he is a clergy spouse in Wiltshire, where he is deeply involved with rural life."

The author covers ten countries in this book. In addition to Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, he writes about Bolivia, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The wine industry in each country is described along with the grapes that are grown, the wines that are made and the wineries. Fielden admits to having an interest in history, and one of the strengths of the book is the historical background he is able to bring to his discussion of each country. Wines are not rated, but for some wineries he mentions wines that he particularly enjoyed.

A little less than two-thirds of the book is devoted to Argentina and Chile, the two largest wine producing countries in Latin America. Argentina's acreage is 209,000 hectares; Chile has 132,000. Argentina leads in per capita consumption with 40.99 liters; Uruguay is second with 31. Fielden regards Argentina as the most exciting country in Latin America in many ways. "Like most New-World wines, those of Argentina can be relied on to be sound. They have the climate to see that the grapes are sufficiently ripe and enough new equipment has been bought in the past decade to ensure that the wines are well made. What is more, most of the wines are not in the common mould: they are different. Why select a Cabernet Sauvignon when a Malbec has just as much character?" Despite the limited plantings, Viognier is the white grape that seems to him to have the most potential because of the intense varietal characteristics the wines have shown.

One of the valuable comments he makes about Chilean wines is that the image of Chilean wines is quite different on the U.S. market than on the British: "In the United States, Chilean wines are primarily a price item, with the market leader, by far, being

Concha y Toro. In Britain, the market is much more fragmented and prepared to pay higher prices. This has made it particularly attractive for such newcomers as Caliterra and Cono Sur." On his last visit to Chile, Fielden observed that very few wines were made for aging. It is not that would not age well, but that they are released young, perhaps to facilitate cash flow.

A very interesting part of the book are the sections dealing with the wine situation in the smallest producing countries. Sometimes there are concerns about climate. In Venezuela there is no dormant period for vines during the year and there can be two or three vintages annually with distinct differences in the qualities and yields of each season's vintages. Paraguay and Brazil are two other countries that lack ideal climates. Political and economic instability in other countries such as Bolivia can also be a problem. "Peru is the saddest of the wine-producing countries in Latin America. It has had a long and glorious history, but lack of investment, a small domestic market and a lack of interest by a series of governments have all led to an industry that is in a sad way." Nevertheless, Bolivia and Peru are two countries that the author is optimistic about as far as the future of their wines is concerned.

These are some of the insights into Latin America and its wines that the readers can find on virtually every page of this book. It is highly recommended.

[Our Tendril thanks to Hudson for offering his *Wine East* book reviews for reprinting in our *Quarterly*. Visit the *Wine East* website! www.wineeast.com. — Ed.]

OTHER CHRISTOPHER FIELDEN WINE BOOKS TO SEEK OUT...

Burgundy, Vines and Wines. With John Arlott.
London, 1976. Revised ed. 1978.

A Dissertation on Wine Waiters. London, 1996.

A Dynasty in Drink – the Suntory Story. 1991.

Exploring Wines & Spirits. London, 1994.

Harvey's Pocket Guide to Wine. London, 1981.

Is This the Wine You Ordered, Sir? London,
1989.

The Sainsbury Book of Wine. London, 1984.

A Traveller's Wine Guide to France. 1987.

Revised editions, 1989, 1997, 1999.

White Burgundy. London/S.F., 1988.

Wine. London, 1988.



MARINACCI, cont. from p.5 —

fore the Rays founded the time- and energy-consuming Mount Eden Vineyards Corp. in 1960. That ambitious but ultimately doomed endeavor (at least for the Rays), which involved two dozen member-investor couples, deserves an article unto itself.

Several other important sets of correspondence over the years will later be presented: MR's letter exchanges with wine writers and commentators such as Angelo Pellegrini, John Melville, Edward Wawszkiewicz, Robert Balzer, and Robert Benson; his correspondence with various aspiring winegrowers and fledgling vintners, some of them now well known; and excerpts from his frequent letters over the years to his stepson and namesake, Peter Martin Ray, whom he had adopted as an adult, and who was his early emissary to French and German wine estates—and after 1959 usually functioned as the Martin Ray Winery official winemaker at vintage time.

As much as possible, all these letters will be mined primarily for technical information they contain about MR's grape-growing and cellar methods, at a time when new scientific knowledge and technological innovations, notably issuing from UC Davis, were rapidly changing winemaking; for insights into the "real" Martin Ray, with his vivid memories, strong biases, glorious dreams, and deep disappointments; and for his views—harsh but often fact-based—about past and present trends and problems in the wine industry, in the state, the nation, and internationally, during the years leading up to the California-led Wine Revolution.

I have undertaken this lengthy project partly because I am aware that many people interested in American wine history, even some wine historians, may never have even heard of or read about Martin Ray; therefore they do not realize the importance of the crucial role he deliberately took for forty years as the infamous gadfly of the firmly entrenched California wine establishment, dominated by the big wineries. The independent MR could say all sorts of scurrilous things that vintners with personal standards perhaps as high as his, but who were in the employ or even management of reputable wineries, wouldn't dare reveal or declaim. Someone, after all, had to hold the quality banner aloft, take the gunfire as it came, and fire back. As wine historian Charles L. Sullivan and others point out, almost everything that Martin Ray doggedly fought for in the wine industry, often single-handedly, ultimately came to pass—if not exactly as he had willed them.

The wine industry's leaders, understandably enough, did not intend to help immortalize MR by ever giving him, in magazines and books, the recognition that surely was due him. Apparently their tactics largely succeeded: omitting his wines from

premium lists, and also preventing his stridently critical opinions from reaching most people who were becoming interested in wine. They did this not just by ignoring his proposals and attacks, but also (or so MR maintained) by getting the powerful Wine Institute to forbid periodicals that carried lucrative wine ads to even mention his name or his wines, let alone print articles praising him and the bottled vinous elixirs of his mighty labors. Thus wine scholars may never encounter the name of Martin Ray in archived publications, while students of wine history are unlikely to read much about him, if anything at all, in retrospective books.

Using excerpts from various documents originating with Martin Ray may kindle the interest of researchers in the Martin Ray & Eleanor Ray Papers. The Ray correspondence also should intrigue people probing and profiling the winegrower's psyche—in the generic sense, but also in its particularly unique and burly manifestation in Rusty Ray. The Papers, given to the U.C. Davis Shields Library four years ago, are now identified on the Special Collections' Website list of manuscripts pertaining to Viticulture and Enology (<http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/specol/html/viticul.html>). The Papers are difficult to access as a totality because they repose in warehouse storage, at the University of California's Northern Regional Library Facility (NRLF) in Richmond. Boxes containing particular files can be requested for delivery within several days to the Shields Library, and there their contents may be perused and copied, but not borrowed.

Why Remember Martin Ray?


MR prided himself on being a "classic" vintner in the small French wine-estate manner. He produced annually at most only several thousand cases of wine. He used equipment that would now be considered antiquated and, indeed, rather primitive. Nevertheless, in his search for perfection he constantly experimented in both his grape growing and winemaking. His prideful "lone-wolf" stance (which began in the late 1930s), however, increasingly kept him distant from the technical knowledge and innovations that went on in an accelerating pace in university research programs and at other wineries—ultimately to his detriment as a vintner.

Martin Ray, although long departed now, remains an intriguing icon to idealistic winemakers who avow that handcrafted wines are best and that "Small Is Beautiful"—the chapter title in Paul Lukacs' book *American Vintage* (Houghton Mifflin, 2000) featuring Martin Ray. He is also known to wine aficionados aware of the strenuous history of finally bringing quality standards and honesty into American winemaking and wine marketing. Therefore, it seems a worthwhile challenge to present the particulars of one

man's singular fixation on making the best possible wine—not just within his own cellar but in the nation's wine industry at large. His thoughts, opinions, concerns, and actions are mostly revealed within the context of his friendships and frequent correspondence over time with a variety of oenophiles.

**WINE BOOKS CAN STIR UP A TREMENDOUS
ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING ABOUT FINE WINES**

CATCH YOUR CUSTOMERS' INTEREST WITH A BEAUTIFUL WINE BOOK LAID OPEN NEARBY, SUCH AS ANDRÉ SIMON'S BOOK THE NOBLE GRAPES AND THE GREAT WINES OF FRANCE (McGraw-Hill) WITH ITS EXQUISITE COLORED PHOTOGRAPHS. ENCOURAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS TO READ WINE BOOKS BY HAVING THEM THERE, BOTH FOR ATMOSPHERE AND FOR SALE. YOU WILL WANT JULIAN STREET'S WINES (KNOPF), ALEXIS LICHINE'S WINES OF FRANCE (KNOPF), JOHN MELVILLE'S GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA WINES (DOUBLEDAY). NO ONE SHOULD TAKE TOO SERIOUSLY WHAT THEY READ IN ANY WINE BOOKS, AS MISINFORMATION IS RAMPANT; NEVERTHELESS, MUCH CAN BE GAINED FROM THEM, ESPECIALLY IN WHETTING THE DESIRE TO TASTE AND KNOW THE WORLD'S WINES.

From "Great Wines and How to Sell Them" by Martin Ray (1958, 14-pages, typed in the familiar uppercase, sans-serif font used by Martin Ray). 

[TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE]

[Please note: Eleanor Ray's *Vineyards in the Sky: The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray* (with a new cover and excerpts of reviews it received) was recently reprinted. Priced at \$21.95, it may be ordered from The Bookmill (Barbara Marinacci's DBA) at 22000 Mt. Eden Rd., Saratoga, CA 95070. California residents, please send a check for \$26 to cover shipping/handling costs and state tax; out-of-state buyers, \$24.25. (Discounts available for multiple copy purchase, and to distributors and retail outlets.) Barbara also welcomes Martin Ray reminiscences and comments from readers. Contact: bookmill@ix.netcom; Phone/fax (408) 867-9450.]



THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly Membership / Subscription to the WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY is \$20 USA and Canada; \$25 overseas. Permission to reprint is requested. Please address all correspondence to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS, Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA. 95405 USA. FAX 707-544-2723. E-mail: tendrils@jps.net. Editor and Publisher: Gail Unzelman. —

THE WINE LABEL CIRCLE

by

Darrel G. Rosander



TENDRIL members may be interested in the Wine Label Circle, a small group similar to the Wayward Tendrils. The "labels" are not paper, but usually of silver, designed

to hang on small chains around the necks of decanters to identify the contents. The Wine Label Circle was founded in 1952 in England as a society for collectors of wine, spirit, sauce and bin labels, and to provide a focus for academic research into all aspects of labels and their historical and social connections. These wine labels were originally known as bottle tickets when first introduced around 1730, but are now usually called wine or decanter labels and are still made today. The international membership numbers about 150, consisting mostly of collectors, but includes authors, auction houses, museums, livery companies and wine related businesses. The Journal of The Wine Label Circle is published twice a year—issues contain about 35 to 40 pages. Members contribute the articles that cover such topics as names on labels, silversmiths that made labels, identification of silversmith's marks, label designs, bin labels, descriptions of members' collections, auction results, etc. Members also submit questions that other members answer or discuss. Many photos of wine labels are included in each issue. There are no advertisements. Some auction houses may send notices or catalogs when collections of wine labels are offered for sale. Each fall an Annual General Meeting and Dinner are held in England.

The book, *Sauce Labels 1750-1950* by John Salter, was released (cost £57 / ~\$88) at the October 2002 General Meeting. This book traces the history and development of the use of condiments in Great Britain, of soy and vinegar frames and of labels for sauces, ranging from Anchovy and Soy sauces to Camp, Worcestershire and Harvey's Fish Sauce.

Wine Labels 1730-2000: A Worldwide History, written by a number of members and edited by John Salter, is scheduled for release in November 2003 (estimated cost £85/~\$132) at the Olympia Antiques Fair in London. The book covers how and why these labels originated, names on labels, shapes, designs, manufacture, hallmarking and makers. The Wine

Label Circle will exhibit labels, decanters and associated items at the Fair.

For additional information on membership (£20 yearly) or the books, contact: The Wine Label Circle, 45 Shepherd's Hill, Highgate, London N6 5QJ. There is also an embryonic web site at <http://mindlink.net/circom/index.html>. Mention that you read about the group in the Wayward Tendrils Quarterly.

Literature of the Wine Label

Printed information on wine labels is not common. Information on bin labels is even scarcer. In the available literature, the information provided usually includes the history and use of the wine label, uncommon wine names, the identification of the Goldsmiths' initials, the designs in silver, and wine labels made of other materials. The Wine Label Circle is often referenced, while labels from members' collections are often illustrated. Some authors of the books (Penzer, Stancliffe and Whitworth) were members of, or associated with, the WLC.

Books on Wine Labels

Dent, Herbert C. *Wine, Spirit & Sauce Labels of the 18th & 19th Centuries*. Norwich: H. W. Hunt, 1933. 4to. 15 pp., vi black/white plates. Limited edition of 250 copies, signed by Dent. This is the first book to deal exclusively with labels.

Penzer, Norman Mosely. *The Book of the Wine Label*. London: Home & Van Thal, 1947. Foreword by André L. Simon. 144 pp. + 27 black/white plates. Reprinted in 1974 by White Lion Publishers. This is the major work on wine labels, and is often referenced in WLC articles. A number of incorrectly named Goldsmiths in the book have been correctly identified by the WLC. Wine label designs are classified into twenty types. There are chapters on "The Evolution of the Wine Label" and "The Lesser Known Wines." A list of over 400 wines & spirits is provided, along with a chronologically arranged bibliography.

Stancliffe, Jane. *Bottle Tickets*. London: Victoria & Albert Museum, ca 1987. 48pp. About half text and half pictures of labels (color & black/white).

Whitworth, (Rev.) Eric W. *Wine Labels*. London: Cassell & Co., 1966. (Volume 8 of *Collectors' Pieces*.) 63pp. Illustrated throughout. Chapter 7, "Bin Labels," provides a good, brief introduction.

Books with Chapters or Sections on Wine Labels

Butler, Robin and Walkling, Gillian. *The Book of Wine Antiques*. Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club, 1986. 287pp. A large-format book, with two well-illustrated chapters on labels: Chapter 4, "Bin Labels" (pp.71-78) and Chapter 10, "Wine Labels" (pp.160-173). Outside of the the WLC Journal this

book presents the most information I have seen on bin labels. Appendix IV is an Alphabetical List of Names on Wine Labels. A brief bibliography cites the WLC Journal.

Hughes, G. Bernard. *Small Antique Silverware*. New York, 1957. 224pp. Chapter 7, Section II (pp.133-144), covers "Wine Labels." Good general information. Six plates of wine labels.

Simon, André L. *Bottlescrew Days. Wine Drinking in England during the Eighteenth Century*. London: Duckworth, 1926; Boston: Small, Maynard, 1927. 273pp. Chapter VIII, "Wine Labels and Bottlescrews," pp.243-255. Five plates show nine wine labels.

Books with a Few Pages on Wine Labels

Delieb, Eric. *Investing in Silver*. London, 1967. 158pp. A brief mention of wine labels on pp.146-147. Pictures of wine labels are on six pages.

Ellis, Phil. *Corkscrews & Wine Antiques*. London, 2001. 64pp. Pages 10-11 on Bin Labels, with five bin labels pictured. Pages 12-15 cover decanter & wine labels. Rough price ranges are given.

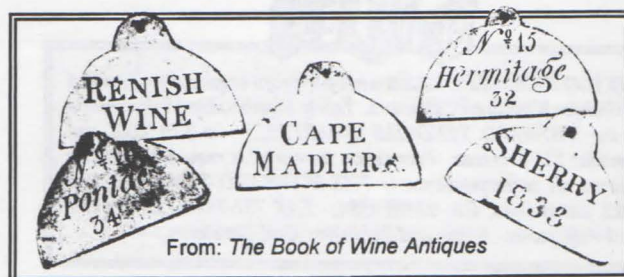
Goldsmiths' Company. *The Goldsmith & the Grape: Silver in the Service of Wine*. London: The Goldsmiths' Company, 1983. 48pp. Published to accompany the joint exhibition by the Vintners' Co. and the Goldsmiths' Co. held 11-28 July 1983. "Wine Labels," pp. 33-35, with a black/white plate of wine labels and a plate illustrating the closely related silver-mounted bottle corks.

Luddington, John. *Starting to Collect Silver*. Suffolk, England, 1984. 225pp. Chapter 3, "Small collectable silver: late 17th century to c.1900." Fifty-two silver wine & spirit labels illustrated at pp.74-78.

Waldron, Peter. *The Price Guide to Antique Silver*, 1982 (reprinted 1986). Suffolk, England. 365pp. Wine Labels, pp.348-350.

I would be pleased if members with knowledge of additional books containing information on wine labels or bin labels, or interest in collecting labels, would contact me. DarrelRosander@cs.com.

[Darrel, a Tendril since 1991, has been collecting wine books, with a special interest in the literature of American, French, and Port wines, for almost 30 years. — Ed.]



THE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES OF THE WINE INSTITUTE

by
Robert Zerkowitz

—At long last I agreed to write an article on our library after years of being “politely asked” (I’d never say hounded) by our Tendril editor and publisher, Gail Unzelman. Fortunately a patient person, she never pressed too hard, but neither did she relent. Finally, I knew she had me cornered when, at last November’s meeting of the Wine Librarians Association hosted at the Wine Institute, she agreed to fill in for our absent secretary. *O.K. Gail, please, if you’ll take minutes for this meeting, I’ll gladly write that article I owe you anyway...*



he Wine Institute Library is nestled on the 10th floor of 425 Market Street in downtown San Francisco in the main offices of the Wine Institute. It is a wine library similar to the state’s other noteworthy collections at Napa, Sonoma, Davis and Fresno; but we differ in that

we don’t necessarily serve an immediate faculty or student body, nor are there any growers or wine-makers in the neighborhood. But given the size of the archives, along with the book collection, we’re probably the largest private wine library in the state and most likely the country as well.

This is not such a surprise given the role of the Wine Institute in the California wine industry. Organized directly after Prohibition to help market and protect the trade interests of the industry, the Wine Institute has succeeded by growing with the times. Today the mission statement reads: *The Wine Institute is an association of California wineries dedicated to initiating and advocating state, federal and international public policy to enhance the environment for the responsible consumption and enjoyment of wine.* In support of its mission, the Institute acts as a strong voice for the wine industry to educate public policy leaders and decision-makers on the consequences of punitive legislation, regulation and taxation.

Given the complexity of the Wine Institute’s day to day demands, this valuable collection serves a vital function: it is here to support the staff and members in any way it can. In today’s sophisticated industry, sending five dollars of your product to the wrong state can land you behind bars. Conversely, almost contradictorily, other items from W.I.’s past highlight a simpler ethos, one of uncomplicated pleasures: tour-

ing, traveling, entertaining, wine appreciation diplomas, recipes, and the campiest, endearing wine images of the ’70s. Although the Wine Institute has always been a political entity, it has progressively moved away from any type of marketing it may have done fifty years ago (see Wine Advisory Board at end), and more to an organization focused on trade and regulatory issues. In the 28 years that John De Luca has been Institute president, it has been one whose immediate concerns are the public policy issues facing the California wine trade.

The archives: roll up the sleeves...and dig in

But where to begin? Well, perhaps I should just begin where I began some nine years ago: as they say “all journeys begin with the first step....” For me that first step was rolling up the sleeves and heading down into the archives—at that time the equivalent of about 25 four-drawer filing cabinets two-thirds filled with documents, letters, ephemera, business materials and other artifacts—and going through each cabinet, file by file, writing down the file names one by one to later transfer to a computer document.

A wise move, because back then the archives were housed a floor down, and it proved very beneficial to be able to consult the file listing as well as search the file names by keyword—which today quite often sends us directly to the file we need. (The archives now contain 15 filing cabinets, 100% filled.)

Fortunately I was able to capitalize on the work of my many predecessors. The archives had been formed and organized over the years into eight major sections: Reference, Wine Institute, Wine and Wine Products, California Wine Industry, American Wine Industry, International Wine Industry, Laws & Regulations, Viticulture & Enology.

Within those main categories are individual folders or sections: Raisins, Bitters, Mission Era, Maps, Weights & Measures, Packaging Equipment, Prohibition (6 large files—3 pro, 3 against), Speeches (Adams, Amerine, Gage, Wentz, et al), Wine Study Courses, Wine Publications, Committees (Energy and Environment, Technical Advisory, Grape and Wine Quality), Wine Institute Membership Directories 1930s to present, W.I. past Letterheads and Logos, Sherry, Brandy, Fruit Wine, County Files, McKee, U.C. Davis (a whole section), Wine Organizations, Labeling, Taxation, Marketing Orders, Wine Making, Wine Institute Bulletins... The list goes on and on.

Other sections we often access are the “Bios” on wine industry figures and the “Winery” folders that contain historical information on individual wineries (articles or clippings about the winery, examples of their ads, brochures, newsletters, and PR materials), usually between the 1930s and the 1970s, but sometimes with Pre-Prohibition items.

Importantly, perhaps uniquely, is the historical photo archive of some 1,000 black & white images, in addition to photos of many Wine Institute meetings and functions featuring past leaders of the industry—and let's not forget those Wine Queens of the '50s and '60s.

A most enjoyable way to search the archives is to simply flip through a few of the file drawers where large-format photographs of past American figures come to life from any number of folders, be it historical wine men: Maynard Amerine, John Daniels, Brother Timothy; or popular actors with wine: Vincent Price, Lorne Green; American Presidents with wine: Kennedy, Nixon, Ford and Eisenhower (also a file of interesting correspondence between Ike and the Wine Institute on wine), and even Nikita Khrushchev and Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. toasting with wine.

The Institute has assumed the responsibility of updating the collection of color California wine photographs. This means going out into the field at harvest and shooting the images we need—which of course beats filing periodicals. We have released two CDs of original images illustrating the winemaking process, from the vineyard to the bottle, photographed over the last few harvests. The third set of images, photographed at many smaller wineries, depicts the winemaking process as a “hands-on craft” in California. It may be accessed from our main web page (www.wineinstitute.org). Recently we also completed a digital collection of images of sustainable wine practices to accompany the current sustainable winegrowing program.

When I had finished cataloging the archives, I next tackled a mountain of over 100 video tapes that had stacked up—mostly media coverage of various wine issues important to the Institute. One of my first assignments involving the tapes was to “dupe” copies of two videos for our Washington, D.C. offices. For whatever reasons, they needed “W.I. Delegates Meet with President Clinton” from a Washington Week meeting where Wine Institute members participated in week-long activities. In this tape, Wine Institute delegates met President Clinton in the White House for a short meeting and a photograph. The second tape was from a few days afterwards, titled “President Clinton on MTV – Wine.” A quick look told me they were discussing youth and responsibility issues with Mr. Clinton, who talked to the MTV audience about the current studies regarding the health effects of wine. The correlation (other than Bill Clinton) between the two tapes was very obvious and to me a good indication of what the Wine Institute does and how it does it.

The Library: a valuable resource

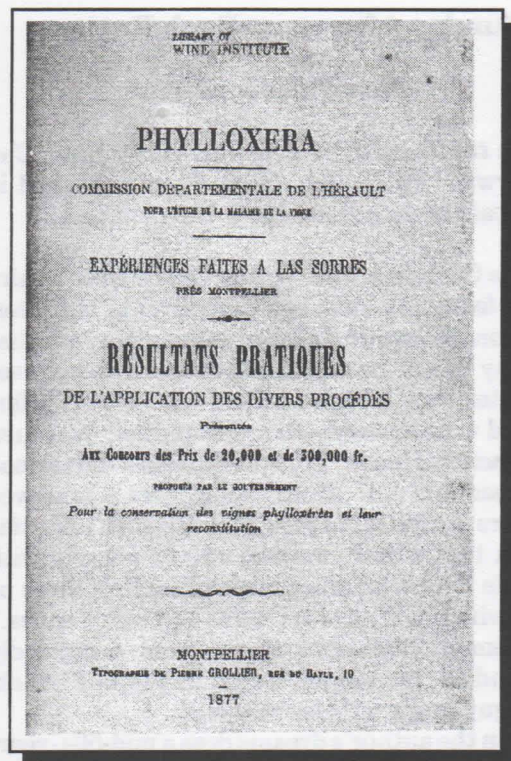
The Wine Institute Library serves chiefly the Wine

Institute staff and affiliate offices and its member California wineries and associate members. Membership to the Wine Institute is optional to all bonded California wineries and dues are based on production. The Institute has about 550 member wineries, a number that represents over 90% of the wine produced in the state.

The library is comprised of some 3,000 books on wine, viticulture, enology, wine history, gastronomy, and other related subjects. We try to add the latest books each year pertinent to our collection, and maintain subscriptions to over a hundred periodicals relevant to the wine industry. Rare wine lists, menus, historical wine periodicals and a collection of old wine labels are also part of the library's holdings. There are many rare wine books dating back to the 1800s, mostly on American and French viticulture. Some books of note are the celebrated 1877 Bosqui printing, *Grapes & Grape Vines of California*, the seven-volume Viala and Vermorel ampelography, and a copy of George Husmann's 1888 *Grape Culture and Wine-making in California*, inscribed to John H. Wheeler, Napa winegrower and a power on the State Viticultural Commission (who late in life most likely donated this and other books to the Wine Institute library).

One of the more valuable reference tools we have is a complete, bound set of *Wines & Vines* magazine. (During Prohibition it was called *The California Grape Grower*.) We have consulted it countless times for many types of research: from a winery celebrating a 25th anniversary wishing information on the industry in the past (we came across an article about Gallo purchasing a fax machine 30 years ago for some astronomical sum) to simply seeing what types of wine were being made in 1940.

The library attempts to answer all research requests. For *Market Watch* magazine, we scanned a number of wine ads from the early periodicals, including *Pacific Wine and Spirit Review* from 1909. Another time a media person needed a graphic for phylloxera (and since we figured a louse is a louse is a louse—or something like that—and anything over 100 years old was in the public domain), we provided a digital image from *Phylloxera: Resultats Pratiques*, 1877, a beautiful French tome (stamped “donated by Charles Sutro”) with an amazing color graphic of the devastating louse, what it looks like on the leaves, the vines, etc. Truly an astounding early color graphic that, I'm guessing, looks better than the real thing. Another similar phylloxera book in French, dated 1875, has the name of its previous owner stamped on the inside cover: Cap. J. Chamon de St. Hubert, San Jose, CA (one of the state's most respected pre-Prohibition wine experts). Perhaps another clue in how the collection was assembled.



The collection is acknowledged to have been spearheaded by the late Leon Adams (1905–1995), co-founder of the Wine Institute, and noted journalist, publicist, historian, and author (*Commonsense Book of Wines*, *Wine in America*, among others), and a true leader in the industry. His oral history is just one of the often-referred-to Bancroft Wine Industry Oral History volumes in the library. Truth be told, I read up on Leon Adams with this article in mind. His history led me to dozens of fascinating facts about the rebuilding of the industry upon Repeal and early Wine Institute history which, of course, spawned another project: compiling an in-depth history of the formation of the Wine Institute, as we approach our 70th anniversary next year.

Most importantly, we enjoy seeing the library and archives utilized. It's nice to have interesting pieces, but even nicer to keep them in use and circulating. Recently we researched menus over a hundred years old looking for wine price information for an economics professor. For wineries big and small, we pull materials for V.P.s, or their marketing or advertising staff. We see our fair share of book authors and historians, and design people often come in for old graphics and images or to look at the wine label collection for ideas. We are currently considering the loaning of a 20th century engraved ad for the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society to be part of an upcoming exhibit on pre-Prohibition wine advertising at Copia in Napa.

The requests are always different if sometimes a little strange. Last month Randall Graham of Bonny Doon Winery came in for historic images for a project. Thumbing through images his criterion was very selective for old b/w pictures of notable winemen, passing up this person or that person with no seeming rhyme or reason. I couldn't imagine why some noted men made the cut and others did not, until he remarked, "Come on, I need more dead guys." We aim to please. Having a large number of historical images already digitized, it didn't take long: they were e-mailed to his designer that day.

"The Robinson Project"

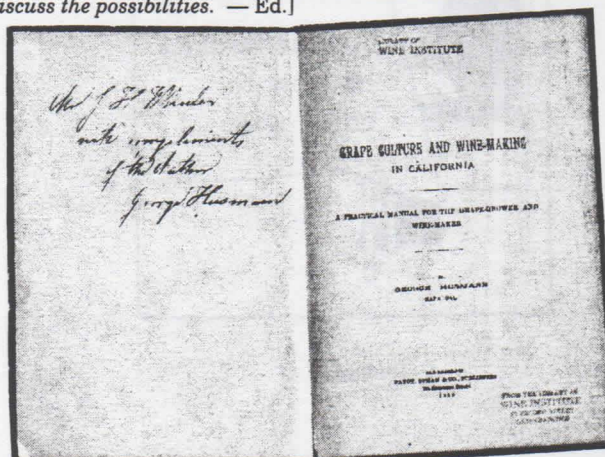
I shall close with one of my favorite files, unearthed during my early diggings in the archives, with the strange file name, "Robinson Project." It reads like something straight out of James Bond. Every time I think "Robinson Project" I want to give someone the secret wink... What Robinson Project?

Apparently, back in those "oh so secret 1960s," getting a few cases of wine together for a not-to-be-named VIP ("wink-wink") was no easy task. And if a few bottles broke, they were not to be replaced by just anything...papers in the dossier stated certain bottles of wine were to be delivered to a high official and those exact bottles were to be present. Back and forth, a few such broken bottles held up the whole program.

Many weeks later, the wineries at last learned the wine was destined for the White House cellar. They presented the wine to Richard Nixon who, of course ever the statesman, remarked, "Yeah, but I only drink French wine."

Oh what a tale of woe... important memos abound in "The Robinson Project. Folder 2: Damage Control." To make a long story short, President Nixon toasted the Russian Chairman at their eventual meeting in Russia with a bottle of California Sparkling Wine.

[Robert maintains an excellent, informative website for the Library: www.wineinstitute.org.wilib. He notes the Library is considering what to do with its many years of back issues of periodicals (*Decanter*, *Wines & Spirits*, and such). If anyone needs consecutive runs of periodicals, contact him at: wilib@wineinstitute.org to discuss the possibilities. — Ed.]

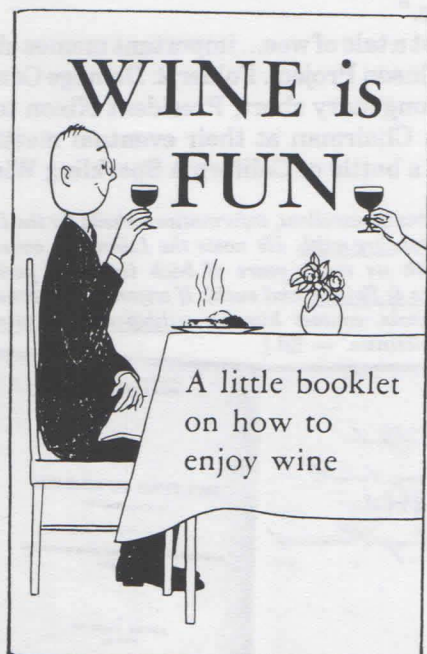


THE WINE ADVISORY BOARD

by
Gail Unzelman

In 1938 the Wine Advisory Board was established in San Francisco to promote California's wine industry in a fashion similar to other wine tourism boards around the world. Before it voted itself out of existence in 1975 (rather than comply with a set of demands proposed by the U.S. Department of Food & Agriculture), the Board, often in conjunction with the Wine Institute, published numerous wine cookbooks, maps, tour guides, and other non-technical, entertaining wine pamphlets. A selective listing follows.

- Easy Ways to Cook with Wine*, 1939. [14]pp.
Hostess Book of Favorite Wine Recipes. Wartime edition. 29pp.
Wine Handbook Series...on Wines and Wine Selling. Four booklets, 1943.
The Therapeutic Uses of Wine, 1945. 40pp.
Brighter Dinners, More Glamorous Parties, the California Way, 1950. 31pp.
The Wine Cook Book...54 Recipes for Making Good Food Taste Better, 1955. 31pp.
California's Wine Wonderland: A Guide to Touring..., 1962. 32pp.
Favorite Recipes of California Winemakers, 1963.
Magic in Your Glass, 1966. 24pp.
Wine is Fun. A Little Booklet on How to Enjoy Wine, n.d. [14]pp.



[reduced]

A Sunday Afternoon Book Review

by
Ron Unzelman

Death on the Douro, by Tony Aspler. Toronto/ Chicago: Warwick Publishing, 2000. First published in Great Britain by Headline, 1997. 185 pp. Cloth.

This is Canadian wine writer Tony Aspler's third tale featuring alter ego Ezra Brant, "an internationally known Toronto wine writer" who has an uncanny knack for stumbling onto murder. Never has a mystery novel been so filled with vinous information and wine history—Baron Forrester, Methuen Treaty, Factory House, Port production—but a good mystery read it is not. What action there is slowed while we are compelled to plow through such minutiae as to learn that a new vineyard will be planted with "the double Guyot pruning system, leaving three or five eyes which will give us eight to twelve canes." The excitement high-light comes from a decidedly James Bondish "poisonous snake in the bed" trick. The good guy never falls for this one...

Only in the author's dreams does a mid-50s -year-old bulky, gray-haired, out-of-shape hero with a "rubicund white face" end up in bed with the lovely young Katarina (who by the way is dying of leukemia!) and share orange-juice soaked pineapple during their love-making.

An "A" for Port wine information, but where's the beef!

Aspler's two other books in his "A Wine Lover's Mystery" series, *The Beast of Barbaresco* and *Blood is Thicker than Beaujolais*, rest unread (so far) on our bookshelf... more wine history? or good mystery reads?

SOME RECENT RELEASES

Gleaned from **Hudson Cattell's** reviews
in his Wine East magazine:

- Breaking Away to Virginia and Maryland Wineries*, by Elisabeth Frater. Sterling, VA: Capital Books. 356pp. \$20. A tour guide and much more.
Muscadine Grapes, edited by F.M. Basiouny and D.G. Himelrick. Alexandria, VA: ASHS Press. 378pp. An authoritative reference book, long overdue.
Winemaking from Grape Growing to Marketplace, 2nd ed., by Richard Vine, et al. New York: Kluwer. 477pp. \$80. "Highly recommended foundation text for anyone ... considering opening a winery."
Grapes & Wines, by Oz Clarke and Margaret Rand. London: Websters. 320pp. \$40. "In the completeness department, this book offers no competition [to Robinson's *Vines, Grapes and Wines*, 1986]."

THE LITERATURE OF WINE

An address by Clifton Fadiman to the 83rd Quarterly Dinner Meeting of The Society of Medical Friends of Wine, held on Wednesday evening, November 6, 1968, at the Hotel St. Francis, San Francisco, California.



Master Chairman, Learned Doctors, Lovers of Wine: This is supposed to be a literary address, but I think I will begin on a note of high finance. I have had one memorable commercial contact with wine and spirits. This contact I owe to my small son. He was three years old at the time, and we lived in the East

Sixties in New York, a convivial neighborhood where a good many excellent liquor stores flourish. My son was in those days a pretty smart boy; except for his sex, he takes after his mother. At the age of three he had somehow managed to recognize and identify by the label about thirty standard brands of whiskey, gin, rum and cordials that we kept around the house. He couldn't read, but he knew each brand by label or by the shape of the bottle. I figured that expert knowledge of this kind should not be wasted merely on entertaining guests. So I would take him around to the various liquor stores in the neighborhood—all run by good friends of mine—and challenge the proprietors that my three-year-old son could identify their stock by name, to a bet of a quarter per bottle. Now as my son at the time had only six or seven teeth and could hardly talk, this seemed to the proprietor a sucker's bet. So I would point to a bottle that was duplicated in my own bar, and my son, a little indistinctly, would call out "Johnny Walker Black Label," or "Benedictine," or "Gilbey's Gin," as the case, or rather bottle, might be.

Visiting two or three stores would work out to a fairly profitable afternoon. I might net three bucks or so before the proprietor threw in the sponge. Of these three bucks I gave my son 20%, reserving the balance for the entrepreneur, that is, me. Then I persuaded my son to return his 20% so that I could put it in the bank for him—after all, who trusts a three-year-old with money?

Well, it wasn't a bad little business—no tax or inventory problems—until finally my son went on strike. I think he felt I was exploiting his genius. At any rate he explained to his mother that Daddy, instead of taking him to the park playground, was dragging him around to liquor stores all afternoon. So the business folded. My son is now seventeen, and I haven't made a dime out of him in fourteen years.

But come to think of it, I did have one further financial contact with wine. Some years ago I got

together a little anthology called *Dionysus. A Case of Vintage Tales about Wine* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962]. It consisted of stories and other literary oddments all bearing on wine. It included some names that will be familiar to those of you who are readers: George Meredith, Hilaire Belloc, Lawrence Durrell, Edgar Allen Poe, Robert Graves, A. A. Milne, for example. The book was created not to make money but as a labor of love for the subject. However, I didn't expect it to make as little money as it made. It appeared in the middle of the New York newspaper strike; and so no one ever heard of it. You can still pick up an occasional copy of the first edition in odd places; but a copy of the second edition is rare. In fact, non-existent.

This book *Dionysus* was intended to give the wine-lover and general reader some idea of the amusing and imaginative literature wine has evoked. The Persian poet Hafiz once wrote: "On turnpikes of wonder wine leads the mind forth." *Dionysus* explored a few such turnpikes.

If you wish to explore others you will have to begin in remote antiquity with the Bible itself, where wine is both celebrated by Solomon—"Stay me with flagons"—and warned against by the author of Proverbs—"Look not upon the wine when it is red."

One can go even further back, perhaps, to a Chinese poet who lived twelve centuries before Christ. One of his quatrains has survived for thirty-two centuries:

The dew is heavy on the grass
At last the sun is set
Fill up, fill up the cup of jade
The night's before us yet.

Indeed though it has produced only a few nameable masterpieces, wine permeates literature as it does history, from the Old Testament to our day. It is like that other liquid with which you are so familiar: blood. Wine and blood flow incessantly through the labyrinth of symbols we have constructed to mark our status as human beings, from the rudest peasant festival to the mystery of the Eucharist. One of your own profession, the greatest writer among all physicians who have ever lived, Dr. Francois Rabelais, made a book *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, one of whose central symbols is the Divine Bottle.

The literature of antiquity glows and flows with wine. In the Periclean age we come upon the *Symposium* of Plato, often called *The Banquet*. Here we find Socrates discoursing as eloquently on wine as on love. He was perhaps the first to note that of all the curious actions of which our physical bodies are capable, the two that feed the imagination most richly are the making of love and the drinking of wine. The last play of Euripides, the *Bacchae*, has for its subject

the mingling of sexuality and intoxication: it is a mystery play about wine.

Literature, love and wine are inextricably linked. As proof I offer you the moving poem about the young lady of Kent.

There was a young lady of Kent
Who said that she knew what it meant
When men asked her to dine,
Gave her cocktails and wine;
She knew what it meant — but she went.

The delightful connection between wine and venery reminds one of the story, carefully nurtured by the owners of the great vineyard of Château Lafite, about the Duc de Richelieu, grandnephew of the great Cardinal. At 84 he admitted to his bosom his fourth wife, a charming young widow. At 92 he died, in the full bloom of sexual vigor, crediting his powers to the habitual consumption of Château Lafite. I commend this story to those of you who are bothered by male patients of my age, all of whom expect you to produce something in the way of a hormonal miracle.

That story, I regret to say, reminds me of another. It seems that the head of an Oxford college was entertaining a teetotaler guest at a formal dinner. The teetotaler, offered a glass of port, proclaimed loudly: "I would rather commit adultery than drink a glass of liquor." There was a short, embarrassed silence. It was broken by the venerated head of the college who remarked quietly, "Who wouldn't?"

On the other hand there is the story about the famous English poet, essayist, historian and wine-lover Hilaire Belloc. In his delightful book *In Praise of Wine*, the novelist Alec Waugh recalls a Saintsbury Club dinner which featured one of the great bottles of the century, Chambertin 1911. Hilaire Belloc, in an eloquent apostrophe, spoke at the dinner, ending his speech thus: "And when I depart from the earth to appear before my beloved Lord to account for my sins, which have been scarlet, I shall say to Him: 'I cannot remember the name of the village; I do not even recollect the name of the girl, but the wine, my God! was Chambertin!'"

Speaking of Belloc, I said before that wine has produced only a few masterpieces. One of them surely is Hilaire Belloc's *Heroic Poem in Praise of Wine* [London: Peter Davies, 1932]. I know of no nobler celebration of its subject in all English verse (and if you all were not so anxious to start eating and drinking), I could quote long extracts from it. I will retrieve only one line, which to my mind deserves immortality: "Dead Lucre, Burnt Ambition: Wine is best." I think these seven words enclose more of life's heartbreak than will be enclosed by all of this year's novels.

That is a poetic masterpiece. There are perhaps a handful in prose. By general consent George Saintsbury's

Notes on a Cellar-Book is one of these. Saintsbury was by trade an historian and professor of literature, the author of perhaps half a hundred fat tomes of solid though often crotchety scholarship. He had apparently read everything in half a dozen languages. Yet nothing he wrote will last except a tiny volume that you may read in half an hour and savor for a lifetime. He put together *Notes on a Cellar-Book* when he was seventy-five, many years after he had been compelled to abandon serious wine-drinking. The wines he discusses are virtually all from the nineteenth century, and you and I will never drink them. Yet, so vast is his knowledge, so accurate his memory, and so delightful his Tory wit, that this collection of casual notes will be read when all his scholarship is dust. His character was as crusted as the Port he prized, and character impinging on a miracle (wine is a miracle) may be one of the keys to the secret of literary survival.

Saintsbury boasted that he had never given a second-hand opinion, whether of books or wine. On the other hand one remembers the witty English parson, Sydney Smith, who remarked, "I never read a book before reviewing it; it prejudices a man so."

To get back to the literature of wine. I know of only one masterpiece in the field of the short-story, Roald Dahl's chilling little tale called *Taste*, which I included in my anthology, and which I guarantee will keep you on the edge of your chair as you read it.

The best-known story about wine is not this, however, but Edgar Allen Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*. This is a good enough yarn, but it is so full of errors about wine that, as Oscar Wilde remarked of Dickens' description of the death of Little Nell, "He is a hard-hearted man indeed who can read it without laughing." As a matter of fact, as you can discover if you re-read *The Cask of Amontillado*, Poe didn't even know what Amontillado was—indeed he thought it was something quite different from Sherry.

I once wrote a little rhyme which I believe explains Poe's appalling ignorance of wine as contrasted with his familiarity with spirits. It is called Poe-atory:

Poe's curse
Was mixing stimulants and verse;
No sooner was Poe
Done with his old raven
Than he started on his Old Crow.

And so one could continue to call the roll of great writers who have written, sometimes without full knowledge, more often with both passion and erudition, about wine. We think at once of Omar Khayyam whose *Rubaiyat*, of course, is partly built upon the theme of wine:

I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

I think of the delightful snob Mr. Mountchesney in Disraeli's novel *Sybil*, remarking to his hostess, "I rather like bad wine; one gets so tired of good wine."

Wine has been celebrated in moving prose and poetry by Shakespeare, Chaucer, John Gay (whose very first poem, published when he was but twenty years old in 1708, was called *Wine*); by Herrick, Peacock, Scott, Thackeray, Meredith, Keats, Dickens, Byron—remember Don Juan's splendid couplet:

Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.

The wonderful Frenchwoman Colette has written beautifully about wine; and the best essay on Port I know is by our own American historian, Samuel Eliot Morison. One of the finest of contemporary poets, William Empson, calls his longest poem *Bacchus*. It deals very seriously with wine considered simultaneously on three levels: the experience of drunkenness, the myth of Bacchus, and the actual processes of fermentation and distillation.

But one should not make one's point at too great length. As is only proper in this distinguished company, let the final note I strike be a medical one. Somewhere I once heard that the palate is among the last of our organs to decay, and perhaps later in the evening you will tell me whether this is so. I should like to believe it, in any case. Common observation shows us that our muscles give way at last to gravity's quiet pull. The eye, the ear lose some of their fine quick power to seize upon the world. The limbs begin to ask, What's the hurry? And, worst of all, the most joyful of our glands, no matter how conscientiously one exercises them, in the end wither. But I know men of 80 whose infirmities, for the brief space of a bottle's emptying, vanish as they sip their wine. Their taste-buds are as lively as when they were one-and-twenty—perhaps livelier. I can wish this jocund company nothing better than the preservation to the very last day of a palate for wine.

[Clifton Fadiman's address was published in the February 1969 issue of the *Bulletin of The Society of Medical Friends of Wine*. We appreciate permission to reprint. — Ed.]

"Wine a Loyal Friend" by Duff Cooper

I have already made mention of the happiness I have derived throughout my life from literature, and I should here, perhaps, acknowledge the consolation I have never failed to find in the fermented juice of the grape. Writing in my sixty-fourth year, I can truthfully say that since I reached the age of discretion I have consistently drunk more than most people would say was good for me. Nor do I regret it. Wine has been

to me a firm friend and a wise counsellor. Wine has lit up for me the pages of literature, and revealed in life romance lurking in the commonplace. Wine has made me bold but not foolish; has induced me to say silly things but not to do them. Under its influence words have often come too easily which had better not have been spoken, and letters have been written which had better not have been sent. But if such small indiscretions standing in the debit column of wine's account were added up, they would amount to nothing in comparison with the vast accumulation on the credit side.

I am proud that Hilaire Belloc's *Heroic Poem in Praise of Wine* should have been dedicated to me. I transcribe the first lines:

To exalt, enthrone, establish and defend,
To welcome home mankind's mysterious friend:
Wine, true begetter of all arts that be;
Wine, privilege of the completely free;
Wine, the recorder; Wine the sagely strong;
Wine, bright avenger of sly-dealing wrong—
Awake, Ausonian Muse, and sing the vineyard song!

This mysterious friend has proved a very loyal one to me and to all those, I believe, who do not abuse friendship...

[This excerpt from *Old Men Forget*, the autobiography of Duff Cooper (Viscount Norwich), was gleaned from *Frank Schoonmaker's News from the Wine Country* (August 1957). Duff Cooper, "statesman, diplomat, ambassador to France, writer, a figure in two World Wars, and close friend of Winston Churchill, was married to the most renowned beauty of his day, actress Lady Diana Manners Cooper." — Ed.]





BOOKS & BOTTLES

by
Fred McMillin

THE WAY IT WAS IN ... 1951

The Books: "Champagne drinks well out of a pint crystal mug." None other than the highly distinguished André L. Simon said this! In 1951, at age seventy-seven, Simon completed publication of the absolutely charming seventeen-volume "*Wines of the World*" *Pocket Library* (London: The Wine & Food Society). Each handsomely designed and printed miniature book (11x16cm, 15 pages in length and illustrated with a map), treats a particular wine or wine region. One volume is given to the "most versatile spirit" Rum. The first two booklets, *Champagne* and *Port* were issued in 1949. By Autumn 1950, the other eight booklets of the "First Series" were available: *Sherry*, *South Africa*, *Claret*, *Sauternes*, *Burgundy*, *Hocks & Moselles*, *Brandy*, and *Rum*. The "Second Series" of seven booklets was issued in 1951: *Alsace*, *Arbois & the Loire Valley*, *California*, *Italy*, *Madeira*, *Rhône*, *Provence*, *Languedoc & Roussillon*, *Switzerland*, and *Yugoslavia*. For one Guinea, a set of any eight titles could be had, housed in an "attractive little case [cloth bound]—navy blue with gold lettering" or, later, "in a gaily coloured gift case" [decorated paper].

At mid-century, the *Pocket Library* revealed good news and bad news, kudos and condemnation.

Kudos and Condemnation

The best white wines are Germany's Riesling and Burgundy's Chablis. The best Rhône is Côte Rôtie. No dessert wine is superior to Ch. d'Yquem.

Bordeaux's white Graves is a first-course wine, to be followed by a wine of "greater breed." Over half of the wines of South Africa are doomed to be distilled to brandy ... and their new varietal, Pinotage, does not merit mention. The Beaujolais Nouveau phenomenon is too new to be included. Omitted entirely: Australia, Chile, Argentina, and New Zealand. It seems Simon was not impressed by the Southern Hemisphere.

What a Difference Five Decades Makes

The *California* volume was written by Maynard A. Amerine (and is the only book of the series to have an author, other than editor Simon, named on the title page). The year 1951 finds the California wine scene only 18 years after Repeal: in the Napa Valley, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir vines make up only five percent of the total. Amerine

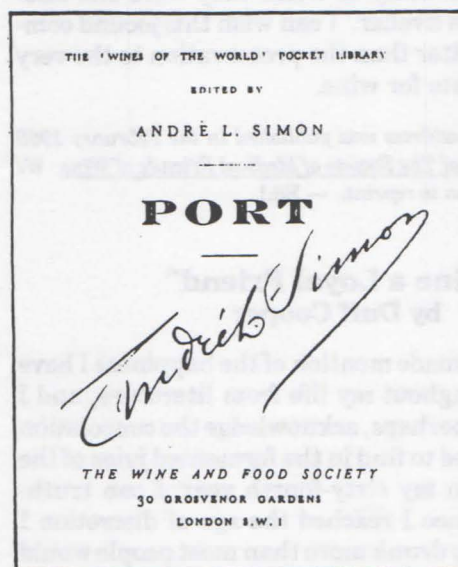
observes [painfully?] that "three-fourths of California wine is fortified or dessert wine—18 to 21% alcohol." Only 5% of the state's production is white table wine; red table wine is 20%. Undaunted, Prof. Amerine confidently wrote, "The foundation for future greatness of the industry is being solidly laid by a number of vineyardists and wine makers." Thirteen years later he will confirm this by praising the 1951 vintage Napa Valley reds as "magnificent, full of color and with delicate bouquet." [Charles Sullivan, *Napa Wine: A History*, 1994.]

The Bottles: Here are some Napa reds, the best my classes have recently tasted, some fifty years later.

- 1st – Corison '98 Cabernet Sauvignon, Kronos Vineyard. \$90.
- 2nd – Sterling '99 Reserve Merlot. \$65.
- 3rd – Whitehall Lane '99 Merlot. \$26.
- 4th – Beaulieu '99 Georges de Latour Cabernet Sauvignon. \$100.
- 5th – D-Cubed Cellars 2000 Howell Mountain Zinfandel. \$35.

Special thanks to my sterling indexer, Mrs. Diane Bulzomi, who found, and presented to me, a boxed set of André Simon's "*Wines of the World*" *Pocket Library*.

[Editor's Note: *Some years ago my husband and I attended a food and wine program given by Fred and his wife Ruth. Here's what the late, Pulitzer-winning San Francisco columnist, Herb Caen, wrote about them: "...I don't know what you're up to, but Ruth McMillin is at Cambridge studying early English baking for a course on the history of bread and wine that she and her husband, Fred, will teach at the Ft. Mason Art Center. 'Her only problem so far is the library,' reports Fred. 'It seems that visiting bread scholars may use it only on a knead-to-know basis.'"*]



[title page, reduced, this copy with Simon's signature]