



# WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

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A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

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## COLLECTING WINE BOOKS : A PERSONAL VIEW

by  
**Rae Fahlenius**

[We are excited and pleased to present (in two parts) this enthusiastic essay by our first (and only!) Finnish Tendril, who describes himself as "a quite ordinary wine lover" who is "very fond of literature, languages, and books." By his own guess, his library is one of the largest wine book collections in Finland... and he always looks forward to finding the next wine book. "New books, new wines, new words!". — Ed.]

### PART I



I have been collecting wine books for some twenty-five years, not in any systematic way, but quite casually. Many of my wine books (1350 in number) are inexpensive guides for everyman's own use and benefit without any greater interest for an expert on wine

literature. On the other hand, there are also some very attractive and desirable, and even profound, wine books, older and new, for those who are more devoted wine students and wine book lovers.

The idea of collecting wine books first came to me in 1978 when I returned home from my first visit in Italy. Actually I was no great wine lover before the journey. I only knew some wines of average quality. It was in Rome that I tasted some fine wines for the first time, and that changed my attitude to wine in general. When back at home in Helsinki, I realized that I knew virtually nothing about wine. Of course, I knew that the wines with such names as Chianti, Bordeaux and Mosel come from Italy, France and Germany, respectively. But that was all. So, I made my way to a well-known bookshop with a large supply of international books in various fields, wine books among them. I

selected a paperback with a front cover showing a Chianti wicker bottle amongst other wines bottles. The book was titled *Wines of Italy* and written by Charles Bode. It was the Dover edition of 1974. The book was written with a fine sense of humour, rare to be found in many wine books of today. It was to be the first in my collection of wine books. I greatly enjoyed reading it; I decided to have more wine books. Twenty years later I managed to get the original edition of 1956 (London: Peter Owen), illustrated by David Williams.

At first I concentrated on books on Italian wines, whether published in English or Italian. Very soon however, I found that wines other than those from Italy were also interesting. When travelling, I tried to visit local bookshops to find some original wine books to take away as souvenirs, even if I did not read the language. I began to understand more clearly the great role that wine has had in the history of mankind. I have not tired of visiting bookshops, they still give me great pleasure. The latest of my purchases (in May 2003) are two wine books in Croatian: *Hrvatska Vina i Vinari* [Croatian Wines and Vintners] by a group of writers, with short English summaries (2002); and *Vina Dalmacije* [Wines of Dalmatia] by Želimir Bašić (1999). Of course, a substantial dictionary was also needed, these being my first books in Croatian.



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- QUEEN VICTORIA'S CELLAR BOOK.
- "BROWN BAG" EXPERT by Gordon Jones
- BOOKS & BOTTLES by Fred McMillin
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- NEWS & NOTES, BOOK REVIEWS!!



There is no special theme in my collection of wine books. Quite the contrary: in addition to general works on wine there are specialized books on single



grape varieties, wine history, wine humour, wine language, wine museums, wine labels, corkscrews, wine in the arts, and even on the intimidating phylloxera vastatrix, reprints of historical wine books, and bibliographies. In addition, I love to read about collecting wine books. However, I have found only a few publications that include articles written expressly about collecting wine books. Yet they all have been a valuable source of information and a great joy for me during the years. The *Compleat Imbiber*, edited by Cyril Ray, is a series of twelve books containing essays and tales on wine, flavoured by the very English humour, I think. Volume No. 3 (1960) includes Raymond Postgate's essay "Oenobibliotheca, or a wine library." André L. Simon dedicates a chapter on wine book collecting in his memoirs, *In the Twilight* (1969). John Arlott wrote an essay on collecting wine books for *Christie's Wine Companion* (1987). An article based on these essays could be a worthwhile project.

Last year I began to collect —enthusiastically and systematically—wine bookplates and their related literature: books, exhibition catalogues and written articles in any language. I count such writings as wine literature, be it correct or not.

Of course, specializing in some well-confined themes gives you a greater possibility to get precious and rare books. As for me, besides the recent specialty of wine exlibris, I am trying to get all wine books published in Finnish. That is mainly so, quite naturally, because Finnish is my native language and, as you certainly know, Finland is not a vine growing country. So it is important, and sometimes comical, to explore all that has been written in Finnish about wine. Or what has been translated from foreign languages (which is not much at all). I have all of them, not much more than 100 items, if we include different Finnish editions of such "yearbooks" as the Hugh Johnson pocket guides. Interestingly, Finland has some old connections with wine. There are Finnish roots even in Napa Valley winemaking, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a retired Finnish sea captain, Gustave Niebaum (Nybom), who founded the famous Inglenook Vineyard in 1879 (owned today by Francis Ford Coppola).

I would like to present some of the books in my library, not by any special theme but by the language.

### English Wine Books

The backbone of my collection consists of about 700 wine books in English. There are many titles by such classic English wine writers as H. Warner Allen, Charles W. Berry, Ian Maxwell Campbell, Rupert Croft-Cooke, Maurice Healey, Edward Hyams, André L. Simon, T. A. Layton, Raymond Postgate, Cyril Ray, Cyrus Redding, George Saintsbury, P. Morton Shand,

Henry Vizetelly and William Younger. I feel fortunate to have a copy of *Wayward Tendrils of the Vine* by Ian Campbell. It is no. 691 of the edition of 750 copies and signed with Mr. Campbell's own hand. Some of the well-known wine writers of a younger generation are Pamela Vandyke Price, Michael Broadbent, Julian Jeffs, Clive Coates, Nicholas Faith, Serena Sutcliffe, Hugh Johnson, Jancis Robinson, Oz Clarke, Jan Read (on Spanish wines), Burton Anderson (on Italian wines), and Richard Mayson (on Portuguese wines).

Some of my English wine books come from the libraries of these great men of wine. André L. Simon's exlibris is to be found in my copy of *A Practical Treatise on the Cultivation of the Grape Vine on Open Walls* by Clement Hoare (1837). Another treasured bookplate is that of Charles W. Berry in *The Blood of the Grape* by André L. Simon (1920).

One of the most interesting items in my English collection is William Turner's *A Book of Wines*, originally published in 1568, and the first English wine book ever published. My facsimile reprint is from 1941 and includes a modern English text. Of course today it is a mere curiosity from the standpoint of a wine book lover looking mainly for facts.

As a lover of bibliographies and catalogues on wine books I would like to mention *Wine into Words* (1985) by James M. Gabler. The work is certainly a matter of course in any collection. I am extremely fond of two books by André L. Simon. His *Bibliotheca Bacchica* (1972, reprint) opens wonderful perspectives into the very early, pre-1600 wine literature. Though it is in French, I mention it here, because Mr. Simon, as you know very well, is generally considered as an English writer. His other fine bibliographical work is *Bibliotheca Vinaria* (1979, reprint). Gail Unzelman's *Wine and Gastronomy* (1990) is a very good, very useful, short-title bibliography guide based on André Simon's three bibliothecas (*Bacchica*, *Vinaria*, *Gastronomica*) and gives an idea of how magnificent Mr. Simon's oeuvres were. An explicitly theoretic and steady approach on how to write a wine bibliography is offered by Isaac Oelgart, whose *Thoughts and Observations on the Nature of Bibliography relative to Collectors of Wine Books* [cover title: *Wine & Bibliography*] came out in 1997.

As to American wine books in particular, I have nine editions by the famous wine pioneer Frank Schoonmaker. One of the books, *Wines, Cocktails, and other Drinks* (1936), is written under the pseudonym Frank A. Thomas. The books are in English, German, Swedish and French. Mr. Schoonmaker, well-known in Europe also, should be ranked among the heavyweights of classic American wine writers. The brilliant, erudite Maynard Amerine is of course a "must" among the American wine writers in any collection of wine books. *General Viticulture* by A. J. Winkler



(1962) and an enlarged edition (1974) represent a thorough professionalism. The famous Robert Parker (recognized even by the French) with his exhaustive books is today a leading authority in wine tasting worldwide. I have also several titles written or edited by Bob Thompson, all concentrating on California wines.

One of the most eccentric wine books in my collection is *The Story of Bacchus, and Centennial Souvenir* by the American, Brigham Payne, and published in Connecticut in 1876. This Bacchus was a small wooden statue seated atop a cask, carved by four English prisoners of war in 1776. The story of the statue and the tragic fates of three of the prisoners reads like a thriller. (My copy has only 34 pages. This number differs greatly from the 111 pages noted by Gabler. A good and credible reason for this can be read in Cat. 146 of Joslin Hall Rare Books. EDITOR NOTE: Only the first 34 pages comprise the *Story of Bacchus*. See NOTE, p. 22 of this issue.)



Another curiosity is *Napa Wine* written by the famous Scotch writer Robert Louis Stevenson, with an informative introduction and notes by Brian McGinty (1974). The edition is well-commented on in Gabler.

One of the most informative and learned books on Italian wines, with tasting notes, is *Italy's Noble Red Wines* by Sheldon & Pauline Wasserman. My copy is an over-sized paperback from 1987. I have read it from cover to cover more than once and learned enormously on the subject of Italian fine red wine.

Well-worn as it is, this copy belongs to those books which will always have a special place on my bookshelf.

### Italian Wine Books

I love reprints of older wine books, even if they are quite cheap pocket books. One of them is *I Vini d'Italia nel '500* [*The Wines of Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*] by Sante Lancerio (1994). The text is based on notes made in the first half of the sixteenth century by Lancerio, the sommelier of Pope Paul III. The book was only first published in 1876 by Giuseppe Ferraro. Sante Lancerio is still an often cited name in Italian wine literature. The Italian wine pope of today, Mr. Luigi Veronelli, tasted wines originating from the same wine regions for the 1994 edition, more than 400 years later.

Another reprint is *Storia Naturale dei Vini* [*On the Natural History of Wines*] by Andrea Bacci (1524–1600). Originally published in 1596 in seven books in the Latin language [*De Naturali Vinorum Historia*], it was then reprinted in two successive years. In 1607 there was a Frankfurt edition. Then there were no printings for nearly 400 years. A fine new reprint of Book No. 1, with an Italian translation, came out in 1985 (by the Ordine dei Cavalieri del Tartufo e dei Vini di Alba). The edition is 2000 numbered copies. I only recently acquired my copy (no. 160) of this edition, and do not know yet if the other six volumes have been reprinted. At any rate, Andrea Bacci and Sante Lancerio are the most famous names of ancient Italian wine writers.

Somewhat lesser known is Giovanni Battista Croce, who is regarded as the “father” of the sweet and aromatic Moscato wines of the Asti region. His book, *Della Eccellenza e Diversità de i Vini che nella Montagna di Torino si fanno e del Modo di Farli* [*Of the Excellence and Diversity of Wines that are made on the Hills of Turin and How to Make Them*], was published originally in 1606. My copy is an inexpensive paperback facsimile from 1980. Interestingly, in Croce's description of vines and grapes, he touches on what is today called etymology. He proposes that the name of the fine Nebbiolo grape (called Nebiol in those days) could derive from the word nobile (noble) by changing the letters. Today, of course, the grape is supposed to have gotten its name from the word nebbia (fog).

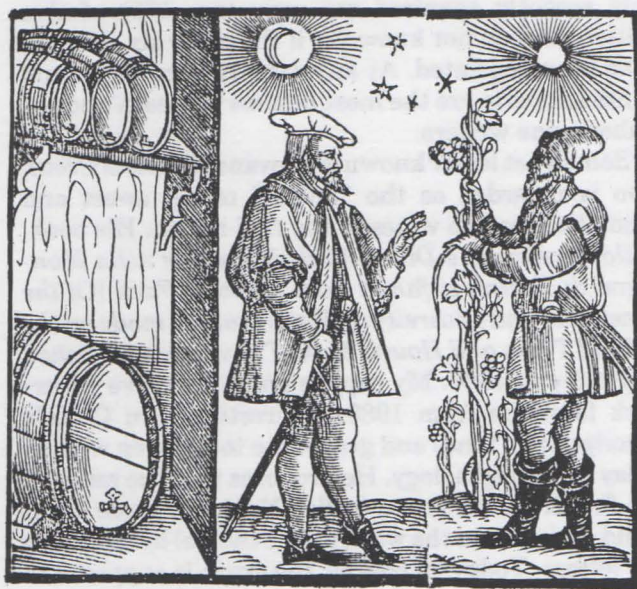
Francesco Redi (1626–1698) was a famous physician in his day. In 1685 he published not a genuine wine book but a dithyramb, *Bacco in Toscana*, after 20 years of refining the verses. This is perhaps the best known of all the Italian wine books published during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There are more than 100 subsequent editions of the work. I have four annotated editions; the oldest dates from 1890 and is edited by Gaetano Imbert. Redi describes how Bacchus samples and



praises Italian wines and mocks other beverages, e.g. English cider. He laughs straight at us who live in the very north (Norwegians and Lapps), whose drinks are good only for killing those who drink them. Maybe there is some truth in his words.

Giacomo Sormanni compiled an important catalogue of books on Italian viticulture and enology, published in Italy or in the Italian language, since the beginning of the art of printing up to 1881. The 139-page book, *Catalogo Ragionato delle Opere di Viticoltura ed Enologia pubblicate in Italia o in Italiano dal principio della stampa sino a tutto l'anno 1881*, came out in 1883. A facsimile was published in 1983 to commemorate the centenary of the original book. It is a very useful and enjoyable work for any wine bibliography enthusiast.

One of my really nice finds while travelling in Italy is *Buon Vino, Favola Lunga – Vite e Vino nei Proverbi delle Regioni Italiane* (1992, 445 p.) by Maria Luciana Buseghin and Maria Grazia Marchetti Lungarotti. Strictly speaking, this finely illustrated book is not a wine book per se, but a book of wine-related proverbs and popular sayings in different dialects, with their modern Italian versions, from every corner of Italy, thousands in number altogether.



From Rasch, 1582

### German Wine Books

There are about 300 wine books in German on my bookshelf. I must point out, above all, Renate Schoene's superb *Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Weines* [Bibliography on History of Wine], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Virtually, it contains information on every single title written in German up to 1987. It is like a treasure chest for those interested in German wine history.

One of the oldest wine books published in German is *Weinbuch* by Johann Rasch, originally printed by Adam Berg, München, in 1580, and again in 1582. The titles of the two editions differ slightly: the first is titled *Weinbuch. Das ist: Vom Baw und Pflege des Weins/...* and the latter *Weinbuch: Von Baw/ Pfleg und Brauch des Weins/...* The book, with its practical instructions, must have been a kind of bestseller of its day. My 1981 facsimile contains Renate Schöne's interesting epilogue on Mr. Rasch (c. 1540–1612) and Austrian wine culture in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Some other German reprints of older books are *Traube und Wein in der Kulturgeschichte* [Grapes and Wine in Cultural History] by Georg Thudichum (1995; original ed., 1881) and *Weinbuch* by Wilhelm Hamm (1983; original ed., 1865). Rudolf Weinhold wrote an extensive and highly professional epilogue for this Hamm reprint. Mr. Weinhold is well-known for his *Vivat Bacchus*, which came out in German in 1975. I have the English version, *Vivat Bacchus – A History of the Vine and its Wine* (1978).

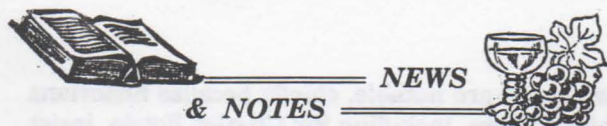
Friedrich von Bassermann-Jordan wrote his huge and often cited work *Geschichte des Weinbaus* in 1907. My copy dates from 1975 and is a facsimile of the 1923 edition. However, the number of volumes was reduced from three to two. The book is an enormous source of information on the wines of older times. (The Bassermann-Jordan family still produces excellent German wines today.)

Now back to modern German books. An extremely fine work on vines and grapes is *Vinaria* by the Austrian, Peter Oberleithner (1999). Since it is bilingual (German and English), I would like to say some more about this book. There are many and very detailed photographs describing the "Genesis of Wine" from the bud to the bunch, and on the ampelography of grapes with the help of a new technique which "rendered possible these reproductions of the leaves and grapes ... detailed and authentic in size and colour." There are also other outstanding illustrations e.g., for those who love corkscrews and those who are interested in winemaking in general.

In addition to several new wine books in the German language I have acquired many informative and interesting monographs on the history of German wines published by the Gesellschaft für Geschichte des Weines (The Society for History of Wine) that has published about 150 monographs. These often offer much detailed information on single grape varieties (Riesling, Trollinger and so on), vineyards, and the original wines of Germany. □

[In our next issue we shall conclude our international tour of the Fahlenius library, visiting the shelves of French wine books, Finnish, Spanish, Portuguese, and a few others. Join us! — Ed.]





**Welcome! new Tendrils: Wilson (Bill) G. Duprey** (14607 E. Lincoln Hwy, Van Wert, OH 45891), who has "collected books dealing with wine as a corollary to my interest in wine & sauce labels," is a retired New York and California rare book and print curator, and librarian. We welcome his expertise and enthusiasm! **Jack W. Smith** (P.O. Box 538, St. Helena, CA 94574; [JacknMarg@aol.com](mailto:JacknMarg@aol.com)), is a vintage wine writer (appreciated by us old-timers as the publisher of *J&M Smith Wine Newsletter* (Omaha, Neb.), 1968-1974), with a new novel, and some wine books for sale. See below. **Victoria & Thornton Sargent** (1044 Siler Pl, Berkeley, CA 94705), collectors for some 20 years, were introduced to the Tendrils by Barbara Marinacci. Roster change: the e-mail address for **Tony Yearwood** is [ajyearwood@aaahawk.com](mailto:ajyearwood@aaahawk.com)

#### DUPLICATE NICOLAS WINE LISTS

are offered for sale by Tendril **Jeffrey Benson** ([bensonwines@connectingbusiness.com](mailto:bensonwines@connectingbusiness.com)). He has available the Wine Lists for 1932, 1951, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1967. He prefers selling the group as a lot (\$450) but, if need be, will consider individual sales: 1932 @ \$75; the others @ \$45 each. For a comprehensive essay on these famous wine lists, see Jim Gabler's "Wine, Art and Nicolas," Vol.11 #1.

#### WINE INTO WORDS, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed!!

**James Gabler** has finished the monumental update to his 1985 bibliography of English language wine books. Noted American wine authority Robert Parker calls it "a prodigious and essential achievement, in addition to being a fascinating historical reference ... [it] is a veritable museum that catalogues virtually every book written in English about wine." Revised and expanded (double the size of the first edition), the second edition contains over 8,200 entries—500,000 words—with thousands of annotations and hundreds of biographical sketches of prominent wine writers. A very useful "Subject Index" has been added to this edition. This is an unbelievable work, being offered at an equally unbelievable price of \$75. Is there a "Wine Book of the Century" award?

#### NAPA VALLEY EXHIBITS

Two currently running exhibits are worth a visit to the Napa Valley! "Grapes in the Golden West: The Early Wine Trade in California" has been organized by Tendril **Dean Walters** for COPIA—The American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts. This fascinating, visually stunning, must-see exhibit features Pre-

Prohibition California wine advertising in all its glory. The exhibit runs from July 4<sup>th</sup> thru September 22, 2003. At the Napa Valley Museum in Yountville, "Art of the California Wine Label," a collaborative exhibit with the Wine Library in St. Helena, runs from June 28 through October 12. This magnificent display features 200 California wine labels from the Burt Wuttken Collection, donated to the Wine Library in 1998.

#### SMITH LIBRARY FOR SALE

After some 45 years of collecting wine books, **Jack Smith** deems it time for someone else to enjoy his 300-book library! The titles represent a quality selection of mid- to late 20th century wine books, and could be an important nucleus for someone who is considering a more substantial collection. Contact Jack at [JacknMarg@aol.com](mailto:JacknMarg@aol.com) for the particulars.

#### "ENDEAVOUR: Presentations—Wine, Art & History."

After seventeen years as the cultural ambassador for Robert Mondavi Winery, Tendril **Nina Wemyss**, wine historian and lecturer extraordinaire, has announced she is launching her own venture, ENDEAVOUR. Nina, with her unique, captivating slide presentations, has lectured worldwide. Her audiences have included museums, cultural institutions, historical societies, universities, professional societies, and wine & food societies. Themes include: A History of Wine from its Beginnings 7000 Years Ago; Wine and Civilization: Wine's Rich Relationship with the Arts; Wine Vessels from the Stone Age to the Present; A History of Winegrowing in California. These lively and informative programs are most highly recommended. Nina can be reached at 707.963.4349 or [ninawemyss@earthlink.net](mailto:ninawemyss@earthlink.net).

#### RATED 90 or above!

Don't miss Tendril **Jack Smith's** new (and first!) novel, *The Wine Critic's Choice* (St. Helena, CA: JM Press, 2002. 259p. \$19.95). "The most influential wine writer in America calls his newsletter *The Wine Critic's Choice*. Has he also chosen to abuse his position? What happens when wine tasting, wine growing, unchecked power, financial crisis and family secrets intersect?" A great mystery read (and not one dead body in a wine vat!). Jack has copies for sale (see new member info above for contact numbers).

#### Worthy WINE BOOKS

still available. The two lists of "noted wine books" offered last issue have not been sold out. Don't miss this chance to acquire some very desirable books! Contact **Gail Unzelman** ([nomis@ips.net](mailto:nomis@ips.net) or fax 707.544.2723).



## QUEEN VICTORIA'S CELLAR BOOK

by  
Bern C. Ramey

[This intriguing article by a vintage wine lover and recent *Tendril* originally appeared in 1969 in *Wine Illustrated* (Vol.1 No.2). "The Magazine of the Most Historic & Civilized Drink" regrettably had a very brief run. Bern Ramey, then Vice President of "21 Brands," served as "Editor, Enologist" of the publication, and truth be told, although his name is signed to very few of the articles, he wrote most of them: on the wines of the Rioja and Ernest Hemingway; American wines; vintages (with a unique vintage chart of French wines, 1926-1967); and Sherry, to name a few. Ramey, a student under and later close friend of Prof. Maynard Amerine, recalls having the precious Cellar Book in his hands, if only for a short while. We appreciate his enthusiasm to share it with us. — Ed.]



in the possession of Dr. Maynard A. Amerine, the United States' leading enologist, according to the knowledgeable opinion of the world-famous wine expert, Alexis Lichine, is a priceless gem: Queen Victoria's Cellar Book for Windsor Castle, from February 1873 through December 1874.

It is perhaps another story that Dr. Amerine acquired this treasure at Magg's bookstore in London while on active duty during World War II. There appears to be no information, now, on how the Cellar Book came into the hands of the book dealer, or why that book dealer did not sell or give the book to one of England's magnificent museums. Nevertheless, it remains that the book is safely tucked away in Dr. Amerine's library at the University of California School of Enology and Viticulture at Davis.

The Windsor Castle Cellar Book, constructed along the lines of a bookkeeper's ledger, bears the scars and stains of its antiquity, and its leather-edged binding is showing signs of senility. Inside, however, its pages are clean and handsome, and demonstrative of painstaking care and accuracy, with every entry rendered in brilliant Spencerian script.

The pages reproduced here are the record for Tuesday, 1 December 1874, an exciting day that commemorated one of Prince Albert's favorite annual occasions—the shoot at Bagshot.

On that December 1<sup>st</sup> the Royal Wine Steward's day appears to have begun with private luncheons:

Princess & Governess:	Claret	½ Lafitte	1864
Duchess of Athole:	Port	½ Chalie	1842

These entries are notable, chiefly because historians and biographers, including Sir Charles Petrie, insist that Claret—once the most popular wine in England—had long since fallen out of favor, a situation which persisted well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lack of the wine's popularity, however, does not seem to have affected the tastes of the royal family, although the Queen herself apparently enjoyed a bigger, heartier flavor:

Her Majesty's Luncheon: Red Burgundy S.P.

Although modern sources, including British associates, have been unable to provide an explanation for the cryptic "S.P.," its meaning is clear, and it seems to imply that where Her Majesty was personally concerned (and under some other circumstances), the wine should be poured "*sans peur*," without fear, to satisfy the demands of the occasion. To go on:

The Ladies: do [ditto]	Claret	¾ Luncheon
	Sherry	¾ Domecq
The Equeries: do	Claret	1½ Luncheon
	Sherry	½ Domecq
	Brandy	¼
Mr. Holmes: do	Sherry	¼ Domecq

Since the day was a special one, "The Ladies" of the court and guests obviously took luncheon separately. "The Equeries" were officers of the Royal Household who either took charge of the horses, or served a Prince. Since there is no evidence that the Prince of Wales was present at the event, the Equeries were probably concerned with the horses of the hunting gentlemen. The mysterious "Mr. Holmes," who is mentioned frequently, may well have been the Master of the Hunt.

It should be noticed, furthermore, that the Claret and Port are both identified by winery and vintage year. With certain exceptions, the Claret named is "Lafitte, 1864," universally acclaimed at the time as the finest wine-growing estate in France. The Port is identified as "Chalie," with an 1842 vintage date. [EDITOR NOTE: Michael Broadbent (*The Great Vintage Wine Book*, 1980, 1991) describes the 1864 vintage as "the most beautifully balanced of all the great pre-phyllloxera vintages" and Ch. Lafite "the most perfect, not only of the vintage but of all time." André Simon, (*Port*, Constable, 1934) declared 1842 "a fine vintage." Chalias, Testas & Haughton, a venerable 18th century Port shipping firm, later became Morgan Brothers (Charles Sellers, *Oporto, Old and New*, 1899).]

Shooting Luncheon at Bagshot:

Claret	4 Luncheon
Sherry	2 Domecq
Brandy	½

This entry, if she ever saw it, may have evoked a painful memory for the Queen. Known as the "Widow



Windsor Castle Tuesday Dec: 1<sup>st</sup> 1874

Princess & Princess	Claret	$\frac{1}{2}$	Lafitte 1864
Duchess of Athol	Port	$\frac{1}{2}$	Chalie 1842
The Majesty's Luncheon	Red Burgundy	S.P.	
The Ladies do	Claret	$\frac{3}{4}$	Luncheon
	Sherry	$\frac{3}{4}$	Downey
The Equerres do	Claret	$1\frac{1}{4}$	Luncheon
	Sherry	$\frac{1}{2}$	Downey
	Brandy	$\frac{1}{4}$	
M <sup>rs</sup> Holmes do	Sherry	$\frac{1}{4}$	Downey
Shooting Luncheon	Claret	4	Luncheon
at Bagshot	Sherry	2	Downey
	Brandy	$\frac{1}{2}$	
The Majesty's Dinner	Champagne Dry	S.P.	
10 Persons	Do Sweet	2	
	Claret	$3\frac{3}{4}$	Lafitte 1864
	Sherry	$\frac{1}{4}$	Downey
	Port	$\frac{1}{2}$	Chalie 1842
	Red Burgundy	1	
	Malaga S.P. Cherry Brandy S.P.		
	Challis	1	
The Household do	Champagne Dry	S.P.	
9 Persons	Do Sweet	2	
	Claret	4	Lafitte 1864
	Sherry	$\frac{3}{4}$	Downey
	Madira	=	Blackburn
	Port	$\frac{1}{2}$	Chalie 1842
	Challis	1	
	Constantia S.P. Paanthe S.P.		
	Linacoa S.P. Maraschino S.P.		



of Windsor" after Prince Albert's death in 1861, Her Majesty must have remembered that Bagshot Park, a former residence of the Duchess of Gloucester, was acquired through the Prince's personal efforts and stocked with Royal game. An expert shot, and a sportsman highly respected by those who hunted with him, Prince Albert enjoyed shooting more than any other pastime.

Her Majesty's Dinner, 10 persons:

Champagne Dry	S.P.
Champagne Sweet	2
Claret 3¾	Lafitte 1864
Sherry ¼	Domecq
Port ½	Chalie 1842
Red Burgundy	1
Malaga	S.P.
Cherry Brandy	S.P.
Chablis	1

It should not be surprising that dry Champagnes appeared on the Queen's dinner tables as late as 1874. Gladstone's reduction of duties on all foreign wines, accomplished in the famous Budget of 1860, brought Champagne into the forefront. With duty a diminutive 5d per bottle (about 4¢), the bubbly began to grace many a British table. On the other hand, during the early low-tariff years, the English public's taste tended toward sweet, rather than dry, Champagne. This preference once prompted George Canning, one-time Foreign Secretary, to remark that "The man who says he likes dry Champagne will say anything." Although the taste for drier Champagnes continued to develop, more stolid Britishers (such as the mysterious Mr. Holmes of the Cellar Book) retained their sweet tooth.

Here again, the taste for Claret—whether redeveloped or maintained consistently by the Royal family—is demonstrated. The use of Sherry as a table wine was common in England during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the richer, sweeter Ports were served afterward. Sherry was seldom, if ever, served as an aperitif wine during Queen Victoria's lifetime.

The Household: do, 9 persons

Champagne Dry	S.P.
Champagne Sweet	2
Claret 4	Lafitte 1864
Sherry ¾	Domecq
Madeira =	Blackburn
Port ½	Chalie 1842
Chablis	1
Constantia	S.P.
Paxerette [sic]	S.P.
Curacoa [sic]	S.P.
Maraschino	S.P.

In his book *The Prince Consort*, Roger Fulford

remarks that in earlier years both Victoria and Albert disapproved the English custom of long after-dinner periods of Port and cigar smoke (the Queen never softened in her anti-tobacco attitude, although Albert himself was an inveterate smoker), these entries seem to indicate that during her widowed years, she no longer concerned herself with after-dinner masculine behavior. The "S.P." references to Malaga, Constantia, "Paxerette," Curacao, and Maraschino cherry brandy imply a rather liberal flow of liqueurs, as well as Port and Madeira.

Madeira had been known in England since before Shakespeare's time, and it is still a common dessert wine there, and elsewhere. The same applies to Malaga. On the other hand, although William Younger in *Gods, Men, and Wine* (London: Michael Joseph, 1966) indicates that Pacaretti or Paxarete, as it was more commonly known, was not in great evidence on English tables, interestingly enough, it does make its appearance in the Royal Household. The curious spelling "Paxerette" provides a charming sidelight.

Originally, Paxarete was "much esteemed" for its light, delicate flavor and bouquet. Since it was pressed in Spain of the rich and sweet Pedro Ximenez grape, the wine itself, properly aged, is likewise rich and sweet. It may be conjectured that some enterprising English wine-buyer may have tasted the young wine in Spain and shipped a hogshead homeward in a sailing vessel—during which voyage the wine might well have attained its rich, sweet, full-bodied maturity before it reached its destination.

Constantia is another rich wine, grown in South Africa, near Cape Town, and once called Cape wine. The red was once considered better, although the white is described as having a "syrup-like body." During the entire Victorian Era, Constantia enjoyed an enormous popularity and prestige. It is still made today, but it is probably considered a rarity by most American consumers.

Some of the charm of the Queen's Cellar Book lies recorded under the heading of "Household Wine" for the day. While wines and liqueurs for the Royal tables make fairly obvious reading, entries for the "household" are delightful little mystery stories which will always remain so.

The first entries for Tuesday, 1 December 1874, are commonplace enough:

Stewards Room:	17 Port	15 Sherry	3 Claret
Kitchen:	1 Port	15 Sherry	3 Claret
Pastry:	1 Port	15 Sherry	1 Claret
Returned from Stewards Room, Bad "corked":			
	1 Port	15 Sherry*	1 Claret

[\* Returned all 15 bottles as "corked"?! Must be a ditto-mark error here...]



Household Wine Dec: 1<sup>st</sup> 1874

		Port	Sherry	Claret
	Stewards Room	17	15 <sup>1</sup>	3
	Kitchen	1	.	.
	Pantry	"	"	1
returned from Stewards Room	Bad "cocked"	1	"	.
	Wine Butist	"	$\frac{1}{4}$	.
	Panry Purse Clerk	"	$\frac{1}{4}$	.
	Meals & Refreshments	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	.
Stewards Room	Brandy	1		
W <sup>m</sup> Macgregor	"Pot still" Brandy	1		
J. Macgregor	D <sup>r</sup> order Whiskey	1		
Quinn's Flask	Whiskey	$\frac{1}{2}$		
W <sup>m</sup> J. Brown	Whiskey	$\frac{1}{2}$		
Quinn's Flask	Shooting Whiskey	$\frac{1}{4}$		
W <sup>m</sup> Holmes	Brandy	1		
Smoking Room	{ Sherry	$\frac{1}{2}$	brandy	
	{ Brandy	$\frac{1}{4}$		
Governess	Claret	$\frac{1}{4}$	Lafitte 1864	
Quinn in charge of Page	Whiskey	1		
J <sup>r</sup> Marshall Dunn	Claret	$\frac{1}{2}$	Lafitte 1864	
W <sup>m</sup> Holmes	Champagne Secured	1	Pint	
Governess	Claret	$\frac{1}{2}$	Lafitte 1864	
Returned from Messrs Schaeffle & Co <sup>y</sup> charged in Mr <sup>r</sup> account				
	15 Dozen Soda Water			
	3 Do. Potass Do			
Returned to Do	18 Dozen Bottles	4 Cases.		



One Artist: 1 Port ¼ Sherry 1 Claret  
 Privy Purse Clerk: 1 Port ¼ Sherry 1 Claret  
 Negus & Refreshment: ½ Port ¾ Sherry 1 Claret

The notation regarding "Negus & Refreshments" refers to a celebrated punch-like beverage invented by Col. Francis Negus, who died in 1732. It was originally composed of wine, water, sugar, lemon, and nutmeg, but in later years, "negus" came to mean a hot drink made with Port; sometimes beaten eggs were added to it. Variants of negus employed toasted oranges in the wine, and still other variations utilized Burgundy, Claret, Hock or Tokay. These variants were christened "Bishop," "Cardinal," and "Pope," according to the color of the constituent wine.

The remainder of the page almost calls for impertinent commentary. The tiny unknown factors, the serious but amusing entries, the long-forgotten incidents virtually compel American audaciousness:

Stewards Room: Brandy 1 [He's had a long, hard day.]

Mr. MacGregor "Porter III": Brandy 1 [The Porter needs a whole bottle of brandy?]

J. Kranssalcah, Dr's order: Brandy 1 [A likely story!]

Queen's Flask: Whiskey ½ [Remember Her public image!]

J. Brown: Whiskey ½ [Easy there, Mr. Brown!]\*\*

Queen's Yager Shooting: Whiskey ¼ [A yager, or more correctly jaeger, assists in the hunt, usually beating out game for the hunters. This man needs a bracer at the end of day.]

Mr. Holmes: Brandy [He knows his way around!]

Smoking Room: Sherry ½ Domecq / Brandy ¼ [Slim pickings for the Boys in the Back Room tonight!]

Governess: Claret ¼ Lafitte 1864 [This one she doesn't share with the Princess.]

Queen in charge of Page: Whiskey 1 [Can the Page be a tippler?]

Dr. Marshall, Dinner: Claret ½ Lafitte 1864 [A doctor is hardly better off than a Governess!]

Mr. Holmes, Dinner: Champagne Sweet 1 Pint [Holmes, you sly old dog!]

Governess, Dinner: Claret ½ Lafitte 1864 [What, again?]

Although gin had been the common man's drink in England from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whiskey is not generally supposed to have been a common part of the English scene during the Victorian Era. The Cellar Book belies the idea, particularly the last entry of December 1:

Received from Messrs. Schweppe & Co., charged in November account: 15 Dozen Soda Water / 3 Dozen Potass. Water [Potassium Water]. Returned: 18 Dozen Bottles, 4 Cases.

The Windsor Cellar Book is a treasure trove of information about Her Majesty's day-to-day life which has never been made public. For Dr. Amerine, it offers source material for a book of great interest to Anglophiles and wine-lovers alike, with new light upon the private life of the most beloved Queen the world has ever known. Perhaps, one day, Dr. Amerine will write it.



EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT: It is our loss that Dr. Amerine, who contributed many valuable works to the literature of wine before his death in 1998, did not write this hoped-for book. Upon his retirement from the University of California, Davis, most of his private library was given to the university. His treasured Queen Victoria's Cellar Book was not included: he sold it at auction for a princely sum through Christie's, London. Perhaps it found a befitting home in a British museum. Does any Tendril know?

\*\* NOTE: According to the 1997 movie, "Mrs. Brown" starring Dame Judi Dench, Mr. John Brown was the Queen's horseman. They shared "an extraordinary friendship that changed the destiny of the world's greatest empire." Most highly recommended.

### "FAVORITE OCCUPATION"

"Dreaming over a catalogue is probably a booklover's favorite occupation. A lively sense of adventure accompanies the reading, and sometimes a light temperature. One is always coming upon books one



would buy if one could—that is to say, if one were a Huntington or a Morgan. But it is exciting just to read about them and no sin to place a little pencil check against them, in the margin. This is called catalogue fever and it is an incurable disease. It develops no immunity and, although seldom fatal, it is progressively violent."

— Vincent Starrett, *Catalogue Fever*



## DON'T BRING A BROWN BAG TO OUR HOUSE

by  
**Gordon Jones**

*[Gordon Jones, an active Tendril since the Society's first budding, has often educated and amused us with his facile pen. It is a pleasure to present his latest entertainment. — Ed.]*



We were having dinner at a friend's house. Great expectations, for the lady has a reputation as a great cook. (This was before chefs.) The first course of scallops, à la Baumannière, was wonderful, and was served with a California rarity, a Chardonnay that was not oaky.

Then the serious part of the dinner began. A succulent-looking, roasted leg of lamb was brought to the table. So was a bottle of wine concealed in a brown paper bag.

As our host pointed out, all I had to do was identify the wine, and dinner would proceed.

Visual acuity helps. Does the capsule look familiar? Is the wine red or white? Be careful, old red wine can fool one. I once had a 1906 Inglenook Pinot Noir which had faded to almost clear. (It still had character.) At any rate, I announced our bagged wine a red Bordeaux. This didn't satisfy anyone, so I had to proceed.

"This tastes a little like the satiny wines of the Château Latour area."

"Very good, but there are lots of possibilities—which one?"

"Well, I don't think it's Latour, but I'll bet it's nearby."

"Again, very good, but which one?"

Another carefully swirled sip. "I'd say it was next door, possibly Pichon-Longueville."

"Very good, but which one and what year?"

"1966. I feel sure of that, and I believe that it is Ch. Pichon-Longueville, Baron. Am I close?"

"That's it exactly. Don't know how you did it. Guess you are a Wine Expert."

That's it. I am a Wine Expert complete with oohs and aahs. I still wonder what the dinner was like. The first course was excellent, but from then on I don't remember the meal. I was too busy being a Wine Expert. And being a Wine Expert means waiting for the big failure. There are no infallible experts.

Luckily for me, I knew a little about our host, and where he worked. His office was on Montgomery Street. A sea chantey will help explain my expert feat.

As I was a-walkin' down  
Mont-gom-ery Street  
way-hey blow the man down

A bottle of wine I  
just happened to meet ...

A sea chantey seems appropriate for a seaport like San Francisco, and Montgomery Street is in the heart of the city's financial district. So is the fine wine shop of John Walker. In the window was an eye-catching display: a bottle of Ch. Pichon-Longueville, Baron, 1966, at a most reasonable price.

It's all so easy—just like the magician's trick once it is explained.

I would like to resign as Wine Expert. We are now fearful of all dinner invitations. My wife accepted one the other day and then learned they had a special surprise for me.

Times have changed. Brown Baggers now usually look for little known wines, from little known areas, made in a poor vintage year, and sold for remarkably low prices.

If I can resign, then I can join in humiliating the Wine Expert.

Twas many and many a year ago  
in a city by the sea

I gave up being a Wine Expert  
and went back to being just me.

If I am served a perfect dinner  
All that I can ask my host  
is for Dr. Pepper on the rocks  
to celebrate a winner.

[EDITOR NOTE: For those of us who still aspire to be a Wine Expert, there are numerous books to help guide the way. To name a few: *How to be a Wine Expert* by James Gabler; *Wine for Dummies* by Ed McCarthy and Mary Ewing-Mulligan; *Wine Tasting* by Michael Broadbent; *The University Wine Course: A Wine Appreciation Text* by Marian Baldy; *The Taste of Wine: The Art and Science of Wine Appreciation* by Emile Peynaud.]







## BOOKS & BOTTLES

by

Fred McMillin

### WELBY WISDOM

*I seek but to offer, to those who will accept it temporarily, the guidance of an amateur, of a mere and inconspicuous man of letters interested in wine.*

**The Book:** *The Cellar Key* by T. Earle Welby. London: Victor Gollancz, 1933. 133pp.

Thomas Earle Welby (1881-1933), this "inconspicuous man," was a literary journalist in India until he came to London in 1919 and shortly joined the *Saturday Review* staff. Subsequently, while writing such works as *A Popular History of English Poetry* and editing *The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor*, he was bitten by Bacchus. It culminated in *The Cellar Key*, with wine wisdom that contradicts the humble introduction above. For example, while the 20<sup>th</sup> century conversion to varietal labeling had not yet started, he wrote: "This is advice I have never heard or read ... The novice should not attempt to differentiate between great wines of the same type. Rather he should seek to acquaint himself thoroughly with the savour of the dominant grape that makes the merit of each type of wine. The red Hermitage owes its distinctive magnificence to one great grape, the Sirrah." Similarly, Bordeaux's Cabernet Sauvignon, "and to some extent, Merlot" ... Burgundy's Pinot Noir ... Germany's Riesling are to be studied, a "process immensely easier than trying to differentiate between great wines of the same type."

The "amateur" wrote: "I am much honored in being invited by the young men of Oxford to [describe] the matching of food and wine, a task of extreme difficulty." Welby was modest. In the previous year (1932) he had contributed two appreciable books to the literature of gastronomy, *The Dinner Knell: Elegy in an English Dining-Room* and *Away, Dull Cookery*, in addition to the Oxford essay, "The Food for the Wine" (reprinted in *The Cherwell Wine Book*, edited by A. Goldschmidt, G. Playfair, and D. Hudson. Oxford: The Cherwell, [1933]). André Simon described Welby as "one of the most discriminating critics of English literature, and one of the best-informed gourmets of modern times," adding, "his books are strongly recommended" [*Wine & Food*, Autumn 1936].

Welby dedicated his *Cellar Key* to "My Dear Warner Allen" one of his "honoured friends of vinous learning." In his lengthy dedicatory letter, Welby reminisces (and gives us a bit of wine book lore!): "What need, again, to remind you that the vivid historian of English prosody [Saintsbury] long contemplated writing a History of Wine and was persuaded by me (the boast of my life!) into at least producing his delightful *Notes on a Cellar-Book*?"

But, on with the book and some Welby wisdom.

■ Of the 1911 Pol Roger Champagne, "one should write only in verse."

■ Port: When buying a bottle round the corner in an emergency, select Sandeman or Dow. Stilton is the ideal precursor of a great vintage Port.

■ Sherry: Mr. George Saintsbury...has dallied with the idea of a Sherry dinner: I must respectfully dissent. In my view...Sherry is a one-glass wine.

■ Fish: Minor white Burgundies [Chardonnay] are very safe. Mornay sauce with fish helps the wine.

■ Vinegar and carrots are fatal to all wines; mint sauce is the chief enemy to wine, and lamb served with mint sauce amounts to a crime.

■ Duck: the flavour is too strong for fine Clarets; pour a robust Burgundy or Rhône.

■ Dessert, apart from salted nuts, was invented for women and children. Vintage Port cannot be relished after eating candied fruit and what not. A biscuit or some cheese straws should be substituted for those dainty nastinesses.

**The Bottles:** Here are five California Chardonnays and Syrahs (one French), the finest recently tasted by my picky panel.

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Jarvis 1999 Reserve Chardonnay. \$58.  
Hagafen 1999 Syrah, Napa Valley. \$27
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Beringer Founders' Estate 2001 Chard. \$12.  
Baystone 2000 Shiraz, Dry Creek Valley. \$24.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Husch 2001 Chardonnay, Mendocino. \$14.  
Clos du Bois '99 Shiraz, Alexander Valley \$16.
- 4<sup>th</sup> - Acacia 2001 Chardonnay, Carneros. \$20.  
M. Picard 2001 Syrah, France. \$9.
- 5<sup>th</sup> - Rodney Strong 2001 Chard. Sonoma Co. \$14.  
Beaulieu Ensemble (Syrah) 2000. \$25.

Welby closes his book: "The greatest and kindest vinous compliment ever paid me was when my friend André Simon invited me, on the publication of a book of mine, to consume: Brane-Cantenac 1909, La Mission Haut-Brion 1905, Mouton Rothschild 1875 (Magnum). The Magnum of Mouton Rothschild was the very last in my friend's cellar. It was a wine fit... 'for the tables of kings and the altars of gods.' What a sacrifice to make for a mere amateur of wine!"



## Vinaceous Correspondents: Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles

THE SECOND ARTICLE IN A SERIES

by *Barbara Marinacci*

*[This article follows the Introduction published in the April 2003 issue of *The Wayward Tendrils Quarterly*. The author, a book writer and editor, is the stepdaughter of winegrower Martin Ray. Her mother was his second wife, Eleanor Ray. After arranging in 1998 to donate the Martin Ray & Eleanor Ray Papers to UC Davis Special Collections at the Shields Library, she spent a year compiling them and summarizing (on her computer) many of their letters, in a chronological framework. The correspondence excerpted here, however, is not contained within that collection. Much of the quoted material comes from the Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. It is published with permission of the Princeton University Library. Luckily, Julian Street kept the letters and telegrams Martin Ray sent him, and they were among the papers given by his widow to the university. The author is grateful to Thomas Pinney for alerting her to their existence. A few additional Street-associated letters, also quoted here, are extant withing the Ray scrapbooks.]*

### PART II. JULIAN STREET AND MARTIN RAY: 1939-1947



reliminary note: This coverage of the trans-continental epistolary friendship between these two men, as well as the wine-connected circumstances initiating, surrounding, and sustaining it, was originally intended to be printed as one unit. However, as I read in

detail the many long and expressive letters that Martin Ray had written to Julian Street, and then began writing about their relationship, and included excerpts from correspondence, it became apparent that I couldn't easily make the story fit into a single piece. Doing so would require omitting not only background information but also materials that might well interest wine scholars—especially those intrigued with Martin Ray's influential early role as both pure-varietal winemaker and wine-quality agitator, and possibly also with psychological factors behind his undeniable zealotry.

By the late 1930s and early 1940s, the period of this correspondence, Martin Ray had already taken up a combative stance vis-à-vis the California wine industry and its practitioners of all kinds—including misguided or pretentious wine consumers. Furthermore, his idiosyncratic viticultural and enological practices were well entrenched, involving traditional methods that rejected techniques developed for larger-scale, risk-reducing commercial winemaking. Most of his vehement opinions and problematic behaviors in later years—professional, financial, litigious, social, emotional—are actually foreshadowed in his letters to Street. Yet many passages in these forthright, articulate letters also reveal MR's admirable side, such as an intense dedication to his new vocation, a genuine and abiding desire to achieve perfection, a

robust sense of humor, and the sheer joy he took in strenuous or painstaking work in vineyard and cellar. To present adequately the two men's friendship and correspondence, along with tales about and opinions of other wine-associated personalities and events of the times, necessitates splitting a long piece into several sections.

Unfortunately, most of Street's letters to MR, especially handwritten ones, are missing from the Princeton archive; the originals, so precious to Martin Ray, would have been consumed in the 1941 or 1952 fires at his two premises, except for a few preserved in scrapbooks. However, Street's letters that were typed, with carbon copies made, along with various notes made prior to his writing to MR, are more apt to be in the Princeton collection. Much of what JS wrote to MR, and the amicable tone in which they were written, must be inferred from MR's responses to the letters he received. It is regretful that most letters haven't survived, for it's evident from MR's replies that they were surely intriguing, informative, and almost as loquacious as the winemaker's. The few existing letters reveal a highly literate, congenial fellow who offered helpful advice and shared happy memories of his cosmopolitan past. He was also endearingly modest about being regarded as a supreme wine expert—and frequently protested against MR's fulsome adulation.

On the evening of January 17th, 1940, a telegram was sent from Connecticut to California winemaker Martin Ray—the proprietor, for four years now, of the Paul Masson winery and vineyards, located in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains that hovered above the town of Saratoga. The message had been composed out of its sender's impulsive enthusiasm rather than any urgency.

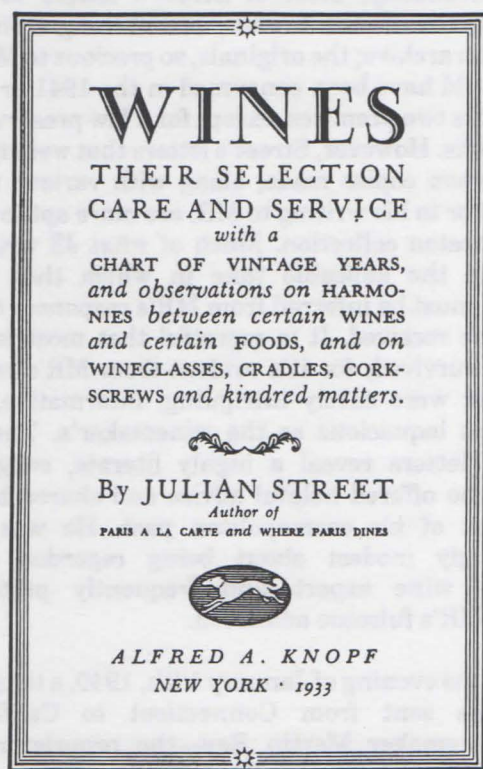


Though lacking punctuation between its sentences, the wire succinctly conveyed a clear pronouncement:

YOUR PINOT NOIR 1936 TASTED TONIGHT IS FIRST AMERICAN RED WINE I EVER DRANK WITH ENTIRE PLEASURE COLOR SUPERB BOUQUET BEAUTIFUL FLAVOR UNMISTAKABLY PINOT NOIR BIG AND FULL WINE STILL SOMEWHAT HARD WITH SLIGHTLY BITTER AFTERTASTE NEVERTHELESS REMARKABLY FINE I AM ASTOUNDED WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS.

JULIAN STREET

Thirty-five-year-old "Rusty" Ray was overjoyed with his great good fortune, for this approval had come from the man whom many oenophiles considered America's preeminent wine authority. Six years earlier, as Prohibition ended, Alfred A. Knopf had published Julian Street's engagingly informative *Wines: Their Selection, Care, and Service*. The book came right when it was needed, for it reintroduced the nation's public to the pleasures and rituals of drinking fine wines. (In a letter to MR, Street would reveal that, under deadline pressure from the up-coming Repeal, he had written his book in a marathon stint of just eighteen days; "I lost twelve pounds or so over it, and my wife about ten. It was terribly exhausting. Sometimes we worked 18 and 20 hours at a stretch.")



Street, a facile author of popular stories and plays, had been a frequent traveler on the Continent as well as a connoisseur of people, food, and wine—writing about them in books and columns in periodicals. An

acknowledged wine expert, he served as a director with a major alcoholic beverage distributor, Bellows & Co. He also chose the wine list for New York's stylish Hotel St. Regis—which reputedly had the nation's best selection of European vintages. Additionally, Street had designed a line of elegant goblets for serving different types of wine.

In a section of *Wines* entitled "The American Drinking Habits," Street had discussed his countrymen's historic predilection for hard liquor, which minimized most people's experience with fine wines, whether U.S.-made or imported from Europe. Then he blamed the thirteen years of Prohibition for wretched experiences with ubiquitous, badly made booze—including, of course, vinegarish bootlegged or home-fermented wine, made or kept under adverse conditions. But he already saw hopeful signs of the public's improving taste, remarking: "At no time in our history has the general interest in wines been so great. Few Americans know wines, it is true, but very many want to know them." Street added an observation that would have characterized even better the period of the great American wine boom of the early 1970s, three decades later: "I do not overlook the fact that our childish love of novelty is one reason for this. Wine is something new for us to play with."

Street then drove his own trenchant nail into the coffin of Prohibition:

But my greatest hope for the future is based on the conviction that as a nation we are genuinely ashamed of the excesses of the period just past. The Repeal vote proves that. We have been wallowing, but we are sick of it. We long to pick ourselves out of the gutter, brush off our clothes, and get back to decency again.

If we succeed in doing that, the Prohibition orgy will not have been in vain.

But Street hadn't been at all pleased when he sampled the new wines currently made in America. Then, six years after the publication of *Wines*, in August of 1939, Street had received a letter from his California-living, wine-loving son-in-law, Hunt Lewis. He penciled a note to himself about this letter's contents, which had told him about—

a Mr. Martin Ray, former San Fr. broker, bought the Paul Masson company after repeal and set out to do a real job. A common friend of Hunt & Ray brought Hunt 2 bots of Cabernet Claret from Paul Masson Vineyards, Saratoga, Calif. Ray fascinated by viticulture—retired to country (for health). Studied viticulture at U of Cal sc [short courses] —Last year (1938) first believed he had arrived at something. Hunt thinks first of the good stuff not yet on market. Find out about this.

Street was familiar with Paul Masson's fine pre-Prohibition Champagnes, but this Claret of course was a still wine. Wishing to taste and judge this new, supposedly "good stuff," he contacted a California



oenophile acquaintance in San Francisco, who in turn contacted Ray. MR regarded the relayed request as an excellent opportunity to test the caliber of his new wines—and then publicize them ... *if* Street liked them. He arranged delivery of a mixed case of selected wines to Street's home in Lakeville, Connecticut, through wine broker (and author) Frank Schoonmaker in New York City. The vintner wrote a separate introductory letter on the Paul Masson stationery:

My dear Mr. Street:

Mr. Harold Price [an officer of SF's Wine & Food Society] has very thoughtfully asked me to send you samples of a few of my wines, that you may try them. Having known you by name so long, and having had the opportunity to meet others who know you, it is now a distinct pleasure to be able to direct this letter to you, and particularly to send you the following case of twelve bottles ...

MR then listed the six wines from the 1936 vintage, of which he was providing two fifths of each. There were three Champagnes—Brut, Demi-Doux, and Still, all made from the Pinot Chardonnay grape (as it was then called); and three of MR's dry table "Signature Wines"—Cabernet, Pinot Noir, and Gamay. After mentioning the favorable reception given these Paul Masson wines by many visitors, MR said:

You may rest assured that, any wines made at my cellars, beginning with and including the year 1936, will be found uniform in quality and type as labeled.

This property was acquired by me following the 1935 Vintage, at which time the development of our inventories was undertaken.... *Having grown up on land situated at the foot of this vineyard, my efforts will be directed to the making of the finest wine that it is possible to make in California*, and any business which is not so included, will not be a part of our operations. [Emphasis added.]

When you have tasted the wines, I would naturally like to know how you like them.

After receiving a friendly response from Street prior to his receipt of the wines, MR felt encouraged. Toward the end of 1939 he wrote two more letters about his still wines, explaining why they were put in Champagne bottles. He also offered winemaking opinions, explaining, "I wish to be able to describe fully to you some of the conditions in California which I am certain will interest you."

MR already hoped that the oenophile would take a valuable role in his urgent campaigns: to encourage more Americans to appreciate fine wines by purchasing and getting to know them; and to demand, as a wine authority, future adherence to wine quality standards and honest labeling from those wine producers in California who claimed they were making premium wines. As MR set down his uncompromising

visions in his third letter, a six-pager dictated to and typed up by his secretary, he introduced some of the main themes of his entire winemaking career—which still stretched ahead of him for more than thirty years:

I sincerely believe that a great burden rests upon the shoulders of you and a very few people who are capable of assisting in the re-education of American people in matters pertaining to wines and their usages. It is my wish that I may be able, in some small way, to assist in this most important educational program.

Actually I see many results already coming from the efforts of such people as Harold Price and Dr. Maynard A. Amerine [of UC Davis] here in California, but there is still the tendency to classify all California wines as simply California wines. Sooner or later it must be understood that here, as elsewhere, there are ordinary wines and fine wines.... I am willing to admit that there are not very many fine wines made in California, but it is my hope and belief that with the passing of a little more time there will be others who will enter the industry and who will devote themselves to the making of the fine wines which it is possible to make here. But thus far it has been mostly conversation and it is difficult to find a single producer who does not claim to make fine wines.

It has been my observation, however, that in creative undertakings those who excell [*sic*] as a result of natural ability, facilities and extensive industry do so because they can't help themselves rather than because of any program which they have set out for themselves. In other words, I think that the fine wines of the world are made by people who could not permit themselves to undertake to make wines other than the best possible for them to make and I do not believe such people are ever satisfied with their results. [12/18/39]

Aiming for greatness, Martin Ray had espoused the "classic" European method of making fine wine. It involved a great deal of skilled handwork in both vineyard and cellar, and disparaged his California peers' prevalent mass-production tactics in growing and harvesting grapes and in vintaging the wines from them.

I know that what goes on here at our establishment [Paul Masson] is deemed by most observers to be unbusiness-like and in many instances absurd, simply because there are other methods of raising grapes and making wines which are shorter, less expensive and which may be entrusted to ordinary employed help. I know that many of the things which are done here result in extensive work and expenditures and involve the passing of a great deal of time, all of which I frequently find is difficult to justify, which causes me no end of concern and yet which I cannot do otherwise. It is very clear what decision should be made and what action should be taken all along and no concessions can be made, if it is truly fine wines that are to be made.



But, the producer must feel this way about it, else the temptations along the way are too great and in the end he will succumb to the practices which result in the production of ordinary wines....

Many of these producers of the better California wines are only a step away from making fine wines; but the trouble is the wine makers actually don't know what it is to follow the procedures necessary in the making of great wines. It is into these Cellars [of better wines] that I expect ultimately will be introduced a man here and there capable of initiating the leadership necessary to get the most out of the varieties of vines they have in their vineyards, the climatic and soil conditions.

Thus far people like to use machinery, employ chemists and systems and more or less operate as factories, rather than wine cellars.

MR then brought up issues that would always dominate his attacks on other wineries: the blending in wines and fraudulent varietal labeling, as well as misidentifying grapevines, through ignorance or deliberate deception. His commentaries and accusations were already creating resentment, ire, and enmity with the other winegrowers as they were circulated along the industry's active gossip grapevine. Thus to Street he said:

The Pinot Noir does not exist in any commercial quantities any place in California outside of our vineyard. I have visited every vineyard that I have ever heard of possessing this variety and I have found them, in its true, but not in sufficient quantities to make a commercial amount of wine. In one such vineyard I found one row of vines, possibly totaling 30 vines and yet the vineyard had the reputation of making a large amount of Pinot Noir wine, which explains why you do not find the Pinot Noir taste in the Pinot Noir wine you have drunk heretofore.

There is one vineyard said to produce a very large tonnage of Pinot Noir and the man who bought those grapes this year boasted to me of having acquired them at \$15 per ton, yet these grapes are not Pinot Noir. I was reared at the foot of this vineyard and I have friends who own vineyards abroad and have entertained here French vineyardists. From the education derived from these sources, I can say that I definitely know the Pinot Noir variety....

Those who have fine varieties here in California have not, in many instances, made the most of them, blending them with certain other varieties and passing down the untruthful saying that blending is the true art of wine making, which of course is absurd, although it has its place....

It is my personal belief that the grape does not change its character either in California, Chile or France, but soil and climatic conditions certainly alter it to an extent and under extreme conditions no doubt materially. It is carelessness and fraud which usually are responsible for

your not finding a similarity through wines sold under a given label.

Apparently in a previous letter (not extant) JS had admitted that he knew little about how grapes were grown and wines made, and expressed the desire to learn much more about the production side from his new correspondent. This elicited MR's response:

You are very modest in saying that you know nothing about the producing of wines. It is, however, certain that I have none of the knowledge [of wine connoisseurship] which you do possess, however you are to classify it, in which it is the more important knowledge so far as the world is concerned. *The world is chiefly interested in the result, not the cause.* [Emphasis added.]

Should you visit here any time I would like to contribute in my small way to the great knowledge of wines which you have acquired, toward the end that you might increase your interest in the actual producing of wines.... Possibly we may continue this correspondence should it be found mutually desirable to do so, in which event I have no doubt there would be some interesting letters which I would obtain from you.

It took time for Street to try out all six wines sent to him. He started with the Champagnes. Then in mid January, after opening the first bottle of Pinot Noir 1936, Julian could scarcely believe that he was actually drinking a wine made in the U.S.—which is why he wired his enthusiasm (quoted above) to Martin Ray.

Delighted with Street's reaction to his Pinot Noir, MR felt like sending off a responsive telegram, but curbed the urge. Instead, he composed a grateful statement that was added to a letter already dictated to his secretary. In it MR let Mr. Street know how much he appreciated his opinions.

Recognition of my wines is really one of the compensations for which I work. It is not enough to enjoy them myself and know about them; nor is it sufficient to sell them for money; and the friends who come here so often, and speak so favorably of them, do not help a great deal either, when I know that their authority is lacking, as is sometimes the case.

It seems as though the greatest satisfaction really comes from putting forth the best efforts we possess, and knowing that our own satisfaction that we are doing our best, and then having this recognized by someone who is a great authority. You can understand then, why I keep thinking about your wire, because it makes me feel that now I must go on, each year that nature permits, making if possible a better wine, and one which you will feel justified in continually holding up to others as an example of what can be done.

It is odd, that I should get my pay from someone who is not a commercial customer, but on the other hand, if wine-making is to be developed as an art, it removes it from commerce. In any case, I am indebted to you and I shall endeavor to send you our wines of which you will



think equally well, or better. [1/19/40]

When Rusty told his wife about having squelched that first impulse to send off a wire, Elsie told him he should still do it. The letter would get to Julian Street later. During their ten years of marriage, Rusty Ray had learned to trust Elsie's judgment.

### ***Background to the Street-Ray Correspondence***

Elsie Ray was as pleased with Julian Street's opinion as her husband, for it confirmed the rightness of having radically changed their lifestyle. She had met and married Rusty when he was the high-earning owner of his own San Francisco brokerage. Several years after the Stock Market Crash of '29, with the nation deeply mired in the Depression, MR's doctor warned of his perilously high blood pressure, caused by stress. Around 1933, MR suffered what he afterwards called a nervous breakdown. However, it had all the symptoms of a major stroke: severe pain at the back of the neck, followed by collapse and coma; and when finally regaining consciousness, he was partly paralyzed and had both amnesia and aphasia.

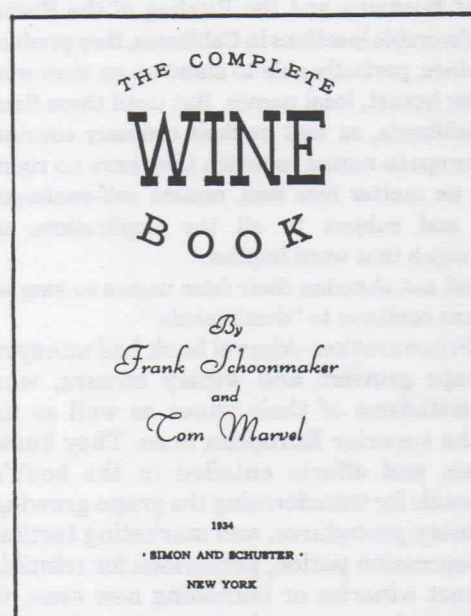
Elsie nursed Rusty through two difficult years. Intensive sessions with a psychiatrist during the recovery period convinced them that Rusty should now live quietly out in the country. Though the brain trauma hadn't affected his intelligence, apparently it had permanently damaged his nervous system. He was advised to take up a less nerve-racking career, simplify his life, focus on only one issue at a time, and avoid conflicting opinions. He might even work outdoors. As a boy, Rusty had liked farming when living with his maternal grandparents near Saratoga. As he later told Street:

When a fellow gets in a weakened condition, all sorts of strange things can happen. Thats [sic] the way it was with me. So I had to get back to this sort of life and start over again, building a life of reality, living as my people had lived always and living as people are perhaps meant to live. Or at least, living as I was trained to believe people should live.... Anyway, it is a good life. And Mrs. Ray and I could never go back to the City and its life willingly. We feel we are where we belong. [7/16/40]

MR now decided what he'd do: acquire vineyard and winery property, and become a winegrower. He always declared that all previous money-making endeavors had been done anyway to accrue assets that would enable him someday to live much as vintner Paul Masson did. During his boyhood Rusty had known the French-born winery owner and admired his way of life, which combined hard physical labor with elegant entertaining. From his grandparents' ranch he could climb up trails leading to Masson's lofty La Cresta *domaine*, and there he earned pocket money by doing odd jobs on the premises, such as trapping rabbits and gophers, and helping out in

vineyards and cellar. Hanging around, he learned basic things about vines and wines, and sometimes he even talked with the Burgundian himself. All the while he had ignored his widowed mother's rigid Temperance stance.

Once MR had decided upon this new vocation, he methodically educated himself, reading books and articles on the history, aesthetics, and technical aspects of both viticulture and enology. He also took short courses in vineyard care, wine evaluation, and winemaking offered by the extension division of the University of California, whose wine-connected activities were being transferred from Berkeley to the younger campus at Davis, in agricultural land near the Central Valley.



### ***Schoonmaker and Marvel***

Surely a potent influence—though MR would *never* have willingly acknowledged it in after-years—came from reading Frank Schoonmaker and Tom Marvel's recently published *The Complete Wine Book*. Schoonmaker aimed to make a good living by selling fine wine, both imported and domestic. Wishing to become known as a wine expert, he had enlisted Marvel's help in writing this book. The chapter on American wines had several pages (pp 44-46) criticizing the misleading and ill-advised ways in which the motley blended-varietal wines from California were being marketed, using French and German wine-region names and European-looking labels. According to the authors, a wine label should be truthful and simple, and should clearly state:

The wine's name, identified by the particular locality it comes from.

The wine's year.

Grower's, or proprietor's name (address if necessary).



The grape variety from which the wine is made.... [Note that variety is singular here, indicating that blending wasn't recommended.]

By means of the honest label, the dozens of vineyard districts in California would soon become identified all over the country with their distinctive and characteristic wines....

Schoonmaker and Marvel then asserted that the current dishonesty in the making, labeling, and marketing of American wines would persist if consumers themselves didn't educate themselves and start demanding from wineries better ways to produce and sell their wares. They declared:

As with the Pinot vine of Burgundy, so it is with the Cabernet of Bordeaux and the Riesling of the Rhine. Planted in favorable locations in California, they produce excellent wines, perfectly able to stand up on their own merits under honest, local names. But until these finer wines of California, as well as their ordinary cousins, abandon European names to which they have no right, they must, no matter how fine, remain self-confessed imitations and subject to all the implications of inferiority which that word implies.

And they will not abandon their false names so long as we Americans continue to "drink labels."

The 1934 Schoonmaker-Marvel book had annoyed California grape growers and winery owners, who resented its criticisms of their wines as well as its advocacy of the superior European ones. They knew the huge costs and efforts entailed in the book's rigorous proposals for transforming the grape-growing landscape, winery procedures, and marketing tactics. In this mid-Depression period, precarious for rebuilding near-defunct wineries or launching new ones, it was difficult enough to persuade Americans to drink wine at all—let alone *fine wine*! At least one reader, though, thought the book's arguments made good sense. As his course of action proved, Martin Ray took its proposals to heart and intended to apply them. (More will be said in a later article about MR's subsequent seesaw business dealings with Schoonmaker, as reported to Street.)

In early 1935 aspiring winegrower Martin Ray heard that Paul Masson wanted to sell his winery business and mountain vineyard property. By this time the Frenchman was elderly, in his mid-seventies. The long dry period of Prohibition had exhausted him, even though his enterprise had managed to survive. During those thirteen years he could legally make Champagne, sold as a prescriptive medicine for pregnant women and people with dyspepsia. He also had earned good money after replanting many acres to shippers' grapes, especially Salvatore—a grape yielding an inky red fluid that home winemakers and bootleggers added to white grape juice, or even to

sugared water, to produce ample red wine. After Repeal finally came, though, Masson's company faced a bottomed-out national economy. His Champagne was considered a luxury—and was taxed accordingly. He also struggled to compete with a flock of both new and revived wineries. Some old ones, unlike his, had capital which enabled them to update and expand their facilities.

Moreover, the Frenchman had no son to succeed him—only a daughter who took no interest in her father's company. But when Masson's former "protégé," Rusty Ray, now grown up, approached him as a prospective buyer, he was refused. Purportedly Masson advised him not to buy an aging vineyard property and winery that needed costly new equipment and renovations. MR, however, knew the value of a long-established, well-respected business name. And he had loved La Cresta since his boyhood. Intent upon his objective, he created an investment company with a small group of shareholders; having retained control, he made himself president. Using a third-party representative, in the fall of 1935 MR at last succeeded in purchasing the Masson property. Masson was furious when he learned that Martin was behind the deal. (In letters to Street MR would describe his uneasy connection with his crusty "mentor," Masson.)

By the spring of 1936 Martin and Elsie Ray were making their home in the small hilltop *château*, which Masson had used for midday naps, cleaning up, entertaining customers, and (it was rumored) extramarital trysts. Only about a hundred feet away stood the four-story winery building that Masson had begun constructing in the early 1900s, adding a Romanesque façade, which had originally come from Europe around the Horn to front St. Patrick's Church in San Jose. After that building collapsed in the 1906 earthquake, Masson hauled the medieval sandstone pieces up to La Cresta and reassembled them to adorn his winery. (The historic structure is familiar to contemporary summer concertgoers at the Mountain Winery's amphitheater.)

Adjoining the town of Saratoga, on the west side of the Santa Clara Valley and near the city of San Jose, the Masson winery property that MR now owned was on a mountainside. It was reached by driving up a long, winding, dirt road with daunting drop-offs and only a single car's width in most places. Visitors were asked to telephone before coming up, to make sure nobody else would be driving down.

In an early letter to Julian Street MR eloquently described the unique place chosen and developed by Paul Masson almost a half-century earlier. This was the special region he would later call *Chaîne d'Or* (but attributing the picturesque naming of this "golden chain" to Masson)—claiming that nowhere else in California (or even the world) were conditions so



favorable for winegrowing.

High in the foothills of Saratoga, overlooking the Santa Clara Valley, is situated what would be a peninsula running north and south, were the sea level a thousand feet higher. This long mountain actually rises to an altitude of two thousand feet at its peak. The eastern slope supports our vineyards in a position both unique and practical. For, during the months of Spring and early Summer, it is often that the Valley below is filled with fogs, come in from the San Francisco Bay, into which the Valley opens, and at such times, we have here on our slopes, the bright warm sunshine which, in the later months of the year, turns hot. But by mid-day or afternoon, the rays that do the damage are behind the hill or strike only at an angle.

More often, the valley is not filled in the morning with actual fog, but just sort of a haze, or the small particles of moisture rising from the still damp earth, and to be about in the valley, you would think only of it being yet a bit early or not as bright as it might be. But up here, looking down on it, the sun's rays reflect upon it, making it look sometimes as if the sea level in fact, had risen a thousand feet during the night. At such times, it is quite apparent why in the vineyards below, they produce results quite unlike those we expect here. I have never known our grapes to be burned by the sun nor suffer from the fogs that permit so much mildew below. When the fogs rise, they are drawn into the big valley inland (San Joaquin) if it is summer time, for it is always hotter there than here. If the movement is not away from our location and into the big valley, it is most likely south, into the warmer Salinas Valley.

At times, the fog does move upward, and the atmosphere seems to absorb it near the vineyard levels, and it never but rarely remains. When you have seen this, year after year, and when you have seen snow in the vineyard, and frost all about, but without damage here, you come to appreciate what nature has done for these acres. Cool breezes that never touch the lands below, pass through our vineyards every day when it is very hot, on their way to the hotter big valley. There is an opening in the higher mountains between us and the Coast, and it is from this pass that these breezes come in Summer to cool us, and it provides in the coldest weather an air movement that guards the vines from freezing; especially is this air movement important in the early Spring when frosts often nip the new shoots of the vines below us. [2/8/40]

MR's letter also provided a glimpse of Elsie Ray, his co-equal partner in both marriage and the winery proprietorship:

From the highway below, we have a private road that is a mile and a half long that brings you up rather sharply to this elevation. It is not everyone who would like to live here, certainly not everyone who has known another sort of life. But my wife loves it. She likes to think of herself as a country girl, and she did grow up in what was then

country, and has since become a part of San Jose, only a few miles away. But we lived in the City for many years and know both lives [*sic*]. During the Vintage season, sometimes I do not leave the cellars for hours at a time, and she has sometimes set up a card table and served there a dinner, all the while as interested in the new wine being made as though she were the Head Vintner. To operate a place like this requires a lot of sacrifice from my wife, but she has accepted them as opportunities and loves it all. When your letter came the other morning, I brought it over to the house and after she had read it with full enthusiasm and appreciation, she came down stairs and stood in front of the fireplace while we talked. I have the feeling that my wife thinks more of me because of the way we are operating this place, and I know that it is the way she would do it. So you see, we are running it together, for she loves to share in what is being planned for the future.

MR's emotional dependency on his first wife was deeply rooted, and it belied other characteristics. A male chauvinist who disapproved of women's ever wearing pants or espousing feminist ideas, he prided himself on ruling his roost. Yet he seemingly worshipped Elsie—relying upon her strength of character and always paying close attention to her gently uttered directives. Knowing well his many virtues, she was also aware of his various vulnerabilities, and tried to protect him, as much as possible, from overextending himself.

### *The Wine Perfectionist*

The fledgling winemaker at Paul Masson was an idealistic maverick from the start. Martin Ray aimed simply to make the best wines in America, and ultimately to match their French models. He determined to grow wine grapes with excellent pedigrees. His plan was to establish a "brand name" for his best wines, to reflect the winery's new management. His "Signature" labels would identify the varietal grape that went into each wine made on the premises. MR also intended to pursue what he called the classic approach to winemaking, as undertaken in Europe's small estate vineyards. Making strictly limited vintages to maintain high quality standards required painstaking handwork. It avoided the mechanization in farming and harvesting and the quick mass processing that typified the production of grapes and wine at the other established wineries, which aimed for increasing volume and quantity and continuously amplified sales.

Before his first vintage season in 1936, MR had set his *modus operandi*, which he regarded as commandments for all first-class vintners. First: have available a vineyard with grapevines that bore fine varietal grapes—either French or German in origin—or else graft over or replant to them; or start a new vineyard



having only one or several of the recognized supreme varieties (and these were very few in number). Second: *never* combine different varieties when crushing grapes or, later, when making finished wine. Such blending was a commonplace practice among winemakers, who merged the juice or fermented wine from superior wine grapes with those from inferior, abundant varieties, considerably expanding the amount of wine. Also, blending mellowed the reds, making them market-ready quickly, bypassing prolonged cask- or bottle-aging that traditionally subdued harsh tannins and sharp acids, which were especially off-putting to novice wine imbibers, who wanted something pleasant and somewhat sweet. But over time the organoleptic factors resulted in the complex flavors and aromas that appealed to true wine lovers.

Moreover, MR intended to make totally “natural” wines that contained living cells (beneficent yeasts and desirable bacteria)—as he would detail at length in letters to Street. He refused to use metabisulphite to chemically sterilize the grape must after crushing, or to pasteurize it by heating, or even to filter or fine the young wines. Success, he declared, required using perfect grapes, free of damage, rot, dirt, and microbic contaminants; using immaculately clean equipment at all stages; avoiding undue exposure to air; and maintaining constant vigilance over the developing wine.

When Martin Ray made his first vintage at Masson in the autumn of 1936 he focused his main attention on several of the fine winegrape varieties he found among the jumbled assortment grown in the 60-odd acres of Masson’s developed vineyards. He had identified the desirable grapevines with help from old Masson workers and from studying ampelographies. He went out among the blocks of vines and checked depictions and descriptions against growth habits, leaves, inflorescences, grape clusters, and the ripening grapes’ hues, shapes, and dimensions. Near them or even in their midst were many lesser varieties—often there because they had been prolific sources of grapes during Prohibition. Grapes that MR chose not to make into wine, or wines he made but did not want to keep, were profitably sold to other wineries. Certainly he would *not* do as the other commercial wineries did in these years following Repeal: make mongrelized products that combined the fermented juice of premier winegrapes with the far more abundant lesser kinds, then give the bottled results deceptive French- or German-looking names.

With the reds, he selected for special vintaging that year Pinot Noir, Gamay [Beaujolais], and Cabernet [Sauvignon]. With the whites, Pinot Blanc (“Vrai”), Pinot Chardonnay (as it was then called), and Folle Blanche. (He asserted that the latter grape, grown in France as a component of cognac, ripened much more fully in California and made a refreshingly tart wine.)

Not surprisingly, these six MR-favored varieties had been developed long ago in France. Five had been propagated at La Cresta from grafts of cuttings brought back by Masson after visits to his native Burgundy. The grapes for MR’s Cabernet, however, at first came from Almadén’s vineyards, since Paul Masson, as a Burgundian, had been prejudiced against growing any Bordeaux varieties. After taking over, MR began investigating the best source for superior Cabernet Sauvignon budwood to use in starting his own vineyards.

MR also continued Masson’s predilection for producing Champagnes. His first three, in 1936, had been made from Chardonnay, but he was already eyeing his Pinot Noir grapes as a new source for Champagne material. (Masson had used it in his celebrated pink champagne, Oeil de Perdrix [eye of the partridge], but blended it with white varieties.) And he was becoming convinced he could make a better “natural” (undosed) Champagne than was possible in France.

For providing practical winemaking knowledge and hands-on help, MR had hired as his “Head Vintner”—as named on the Masson letterhead—young Oliver Goulet (renowned later as Almadén’s longtime winemaker). As a Brother at the nearby Novitiate in Los Gatos he had worked for some years in their sacramental wine-producing facility, before leaving to marry. Probably MR initially learned much from working closely with Goulet in the wine cellar. Also, MR often asked him to investigate other wineries’ facilities and vineyards for him, and even had him represent the winery at special events. The two men often talked intensely far into the night about technical issues (MR preferred Champagne dry, Goulet *doux*), as well as MR’s lofty aims for the Paul Masson line of wines, both still and sparkling.

### *Correspondence Begun*

Toward the close of 1939, after three years of Martin Ray’s waiting, tasting, and testing, his new Masson wines traveled out more widely among wine connoisseurs. That was when Julian Street first heard of them, and then arranged to get samples. After the initial exchange of telegrams and letters between them, the two men began what became a frequent and intimate correspondence. Never before, and seldom again, would Martin Ray enjoy such a sustained opportunity to express himself to a wine-knowledgeable person—especially one who admired his fixation on achieving the highest possible wine quality.

Enthralled over this new epistolary connection, MR sent off letters, sometimes long ones, every few days. The letters streamed out of him in the early months of 1940. Between January 15 and April 27, a period of about four months, there were no less than 26



communications from MR to JS: 11 typed letters, 11 handwritten ones, and three telegrams. Some of his letters went on for many pages—notably the ones that he handwrote, in large, rounded, easily legible script, usually on legal-size lined paper, in the evening instead of dictating during the day for his secretary to type up. The longest runs to 31 pages; two others are 16 and 18 pages in length. Much of the time he ignored any need to create paragraphs or use apostrophes in contractions.

The letters range from mostly technical discussions about vineyard care and winemaking, to being emotionally revealing, eloquent, chatty, or speculative, to portions that ranted about the sorry condition of the California wine industry and the ignorance or malice of most of its practitioners. He also described how farm properties in Santa Clara Valley (now “Silicon”) had badly deteriorated since his boyhood; no longer practicing sustainable agriculture but growing single “money” crops, owners had no pride in land stewardship. Then, as later, MR expressed a nostalgic attachment to the past and its threatened or lost lifestyle “quality” values.

Street’s enthusiasm for the new Masson wines made an important endorsement and validated the direction MR had decided in 1936 to take in wine-making: to adhere to the standards followed in the great (but small in output) European wine producers, and limiting the production of each wine type to 500 cases. He would crush for his premium vintaged wines *only* 100% fine varietal grapes; and upon releasing them several years later he’d label his bottled wines as pure varietals, marketing them at a price considerably higher than his competitors dared to impose on their best wines. This was two to four dollars a bottle retail, or twenty to forty dollars a case—shockingly pricey at the time. (The current dollar equivalents would be about \$16-\$32, and \$160-\$320.) When JS criticized these high prices, MR told him they were justified because of the far greater handwork and attention they had required. Moreover, the wines were selling well—directly to consumers, as well as to retailers and distributors. Whenever demand for a wine increased, so did the price, so as to protect the limited supply. (Already, too, MR was archiving a portion of his best wines.)

And while the winemaker revealed and explained to Street his own vineyard and cellar practices, or exchanged opinions about French and German wines, he also informed this sometimes naïve connoisseur about the California wine industry’s often nefarious winemaking and business tactics. Encouraged by the enterprising Schoonmaker’s wine brokering, the better wineries now marketed their own varietal wines, too—and had raised their prices accordingly. But MR declared these wines all blends, and “dead,”

with no life remaining in them.

And what was Julian Street’s reaction to this deluge of letters from his deferential, opinionated, and verbose California correspondent? He expressed it in a long letter sent on March 20, 1940: “You are a great fellow. I am proud to know you. I can’t tell you how much I want you to realize your dreams.” And the copy of *Wines* he sent was inscribed “For Martin E. Ray—with admiration, warm regard and the highest expectations for the products of his vines.”

Meanwhile, Street was working pleasurably on finishing up the case of Masson wines that he had received (and more was on the way). On March 11 he had written emphatically and effusively about the wines to Harold Price, the San Francisco oenophile who had set up the connection:

I am still thrilled when I think of them, not only because of what they are, but because of what they prove California can do if it ever gets around to it. I don’t have to wonder any more. I jolly well know that California can make admirable, pure, unadulterated, uncooked, un-fooled-with wines of excellent quality—wines that a critical person can truly enjoy.

Ray has already set California growers a mark to shoot at, and I predict that within a very few years quite a number of them will be greatly improving their products; for the question whether it is worthwhile to follow the best practice of the finest European vineyards is no longer debatable. Ray has done away with any doubt on that subject.

On the following day Street sent out yet another appreciative letter to his son-in-law, who had indirectly brought the Paul Masson proprietor and his wines into his Eastern sphere of influence:

I feel much indebted to you for putting me in touch with Martin Ray, a man I admire and respect in the same way I admire and respect any other artist seeking perfection in his particular field. I have been fortunate, in the course of a life that now covers more than sixty years, in knowing a fair number of such men, and they are the salt of the earth and the hope of the world. I have never seen Ray, but I hope to see him some day and really know him, for I firmly believe that he has made the best wines that have ever been made in the United States.

Of course MR cherished the opportunity to get close to this influential wine expert and to voice his aims for the great wines he would make in future years, surpassing the ones in which Street had tasted such promise. Equally enticing was the chance to discuss with someone with a sensitive and knowing palate the inferior and deceptive varietals that the other California wineries were turning out and calling *fine*. Street might then stress, in print and in other places where his words might have good effect, that to achieve high quality vintners should vintage only the pure fine varietals in the small-scale, classic way—just



as the purist MR was doing.

There was another aspect to MR's attachment to Julian Street. His elder by twenty-five years, Julian was the sort of intelligent, articulate, and urbane fellow Rusty Ray would have loved to have as a father. Having lost his minister father to diabetes when he was a young boy, while growing up and then as a young man he had sought mentors and role models—men he emulated, all the while trying to impress them with his aspirations and accomplishments.

MR's continuing compliments about Street's wine wisdom and fame often took an over-the-top, worshipful tone. Noting how their connection chanced to come from a mutual friend of his and Street's son-in-law who had been impressed with his wine, he rhapsodized:

I see that lake into which a pebble has been cast. Every bottle that goes out starts the ripples, in theory. But in fact, only when it reaches the hands of someone who both knows wines and cares. That is why what you do and say is so important. By comparison, you are a giant and you heave a mighty stone into the ocean which is caused to boil.... It is not possible to estimate the full importance of your word. People who know nothing about you whatsoever, or even that you write about wines, know you as an authority on wines, and I have never heard of you other than as the greatest American authority. [2/8/40]

Meanwhile, Street discounted his great wine authority reputation that MR insisted upon. Mostly stranded for several years in a town in the northwest corner of Connecticut, a trip of many hours to or from Manhattan, Julian no longer felt in the mainstream of anything; he was virtually superannuated. A heart condition, angina, had forced this retreat from leading an active professional and social life in New York City. It also restricted his consumption of wine. Moreover, he regretted that financial constraints prevented his reciprocating MR's generosity with wine gifts, including choice European vintages. But he obviously appreciated all the attention and compliments MR lavished upon him. Above all, he relished receiving Martin Ray's informative letters, and he responded in kind.

The two men had a symbiotic need for each other's epistolary company—and their mutual admiration society thrived.

[The next two segments will continue exploring the MR-JS friendship, through the prism of their correspondence providing more information about MR's winegrowing practices, tales of interactions with notable personalities and disputes with the wine industry's establishment, self-insights into his psyche, the coming of WWII, and why MR sold Masson and started his own eponymous winery.]

#### EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Story of Bacchus & Centennial Souvenir* (see page 3)

Betty Proper of Joslin Hall Rare Books (Concord, MA) graciously sent me their Catalog 146 description of the book:

Payne, Brigham. *The Story of Bacchus and Centennial Souvenir*. Hartford, CT: A.E. Brooks, 1876. 6" x 8", 34 pages, 2 lithographed plates.

The "Bacchus" statue was a carved pine figure of a singularly plump and dissipated youth seated atop a cask, holding a basket of fruit (grapes?). It was carved in 1776 by a quartet of imprisoned English seamen as a way of thanking a tavern-keeping widow who had treated them kindly during their stay in the Windham, Connecticut, jail. Shortly after presenting her with this gift, the four contrived to escape and three of them were drowned while crossing the bay in a small boat during a storm. The Bacchus figure, part folk-art, part prisoner-of-war carving, remained as their last work. Touching. Mr. Payne treats the whole episode with the sort of breathless wonderment the Centennial tended to engender in Victorian amateur historians, but the facts that the tale rest on seem sturdy enough.

This copy is evidently a separate offprint of another book by the same name, noted by Gabler [*Wine into Words*] as having 111 pages. The present copy contains simply the portion relating to the Bacchus carving, and does not include the unrelated Revolutionary War battle story or the Centennial Celebration survey. A clue to the reason behind this abridgment is contained in a tipped-in note which states that this edition is being sent to descendants of "the three persons mentioned that they may learn more of their ancestors' final history."

Our sincere thanks to Betty for this bibliographical bounty!



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**"2001 Best Book on Wine History" Gourmand  
World Cookbook Award:  
*Icewine: The Complete Story*  
Reviewed by  
Hudson Cattell**

*Icewine: The Complete Story* by John Schreiner. Toronto: Warwick Publishing, 2001. 344 pp. Illustrated with black and white photographs and wine label reproductions. Softbound, \$18.95 (Canadian).

First things first. "Icewine" is spelled as one word in Canada but as two words in the United States. John Schreiner, a Canadian writer living in Vancouver, uses the one word form, and this will be followed by the reviewer except where a direct reference is made to a U.S. ice wine or where the German "Eiswein" seems more appropriate.

The spectacular success of Canadian icewines in the 1990s led to an increased interest in icewine around the world. Icewines have not been produced commercially nearly as long as one might think. Most of the early icewines were accidents of nature, and what is generally accepted as the world's first icewine was made in the Franconia region of Germany near Würzburg in early November 1794, when a no longer remembered grower's Riesling grapes were unexpectedly frozen on the vine.

Eiswein was not made consistently in Germany until the late 1960s and was not given a regulatory class of its own until 1983. With reference to such pioneering figures in the early 1960s as Dr. Hans Ambrosi and Dr. Dirk Richter, Schreiner shows how an understanding of producing Eiswein gradually evolved.

Two important events for the production of Eiswein occurred in Germany in the early 1960s: the development by Willmes of the high-pressure bladder press and the use of nets or perforated plastic sheets to protect late hanging grapes from birds, wind, and rain damage.

Approximately 275 profiles of icewine producers in Germany, Austria, Canada, the United States and nine other countries are an important part of Schreiner's book. These sketches of individual wineries include details of their icewine production and are made all the more interesting by recounting their successes and failures, and incorporating winery and family history. The profiles in the section on Germany combine to bring their icewine story up through the year 2000.

Austria's first icewine was made in 1965 and the rapid expansion in the amount made is attributed to the fact that tourists from Germany asked for it. As many as twenty grape varieties are used for icewine in Austria, the largest number in any icewine producing

region.

Schreiner gives two reasons why Canada is the largest producer of icewine. First, Canada's cold winters give assurance that icewine can be made every winter, something that cannot be done in any other country. The second reason was the discovery that Vidal was an ideal grape for making icewine. In the vineyard it is thick-skinned, meaning that it resists disease and is not as appealing to birds as other varieties. The berries remain healthy and cling to the stalk better than any other grape variety used for icewine. As far as the wine is concerned, the powerful aromas of tropical fruits and flavors contribute to making icewines consumers are happy to buy.

Credit for being the first commercial icewine winemaker in Canada belongs to Walter Hainle, who came to British Columbia from Germany in 1970. As the result of an unexpected freeze in 1973 he made between 30 and 40 liters of icewine from Okanagan Riesling.

According to Schreiner, no one has been more responsible for turning icewine into Canada's signature wine than Karl Kaiser at Inniskillin Wines. His 1989 icewine won the prestigious Grand Prix d'Honneur at the 1991 Vinexpo in Bordeaux. This international success started the icewine boom in Canada.

John Schreiner does not give a date for the first commercial ice wine in the U.S., nor does he mention the winery involved, Montbray Wine Cellars in Silver Run Valley, Maryland, 1974.

Icewines in nine other countries—Australia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Romania, Slovenia, and Switzerland—are also discussed through winery profiles. Most of the icewines in the southern hemisphere are not naturally frozen.

Also included in this book are technical tables giving harvest dates, residual sugar, acid and alcohol.

John Schreiner is a Canadian journalist whose wine columns appear in several publications, and he has written a number of books including *The World of Canadian Wine* (1984), *The Wineries of British Columbia* (1994), and *British Columbia Wine Companion* (1996).

The twin virtues of this book on icewine are thoroughness, which includes accuracy, and an engaging writing style. If I were asked to nominate a wine book of the year for 2001, this would be my choice. It's that good all the way around.

[Our Tendril thanks, once again, to Hudson Cattell and his *Wine East* magazine for gracious permission to reprint his consistently well-written and informative book reviews. Almost two years later, Hudson's comments remain timely. This is a must-have wine book.  
— Ed.]



# QUEEN VICTORIA'S



# CELLAR BOOK

SEE "Queen Victoria's Cellar Book" by Bern Ramey, p.6  
[From Wine Illustrated, Vol.1, No.2, 1969]