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WORKING WITH ANDRÉ:

MY APPRENTICESHIP WITH THE FOUNDER OF THE WINE & FOOD SOCIETY

by

Hugh Johnson

[Vintage Tendril Hugh Johnson needs no introduction to the world-wide fellowship of wine. For over thirty-five years his celebrated contributions to wine literature have earned him virtually every honor from the wine industry. He is currently working on a new edition of The Story of Wine, *while the 5th edition of his* Wine Companion, *with Stephen Brook as editor, is scheduled for an October release. We are quite pleased to present this personal memoir.* — Ed.]

I was twenty-two when we first met; André only eighty-four. His name was already a legend to me: I had joined the Cambridge University Wine & Food Society as an undergraduate. His presidential presence loomed behind our activities. And active we were; London's finest wine merchants made regular visits to indoctrinate their future customers; the annual Varsity Tasting Match celebrated its 50th year in 2002.

Nor were we raised on a strict diet of the classics. In 1959 we had our introduction to the wines of California—remarkably avant-garde in those days. California was already my El Dorado; I had spent the summer there, aged eighteen, and I knew I would be going back.

But in 1961 I was a very junior hack at Condé Nast Publications when I was sent to interview the great André in his office in Grosvenor Gardens. I remember my first impression clearly. He sat with his back to the window, the sunlight making a halo of his curly white hair. His hand was huge; his accent as studied as Maurice Chevalier's, his figures of speech and choice of phrases deliciously oblique. He was fond, whether speaking or writing, of parables. I can't remember by what parable he let me know that I could be useful to him.

André had been carrying the Society on his broad shoulders for a long time. During the Depression he had achieved miracles of morale-boosting gastronomy, holding dinners at the Café Royal which showed how good "fare," as he called it, need not be expensive. Through his friendship with Oliver Simon of the Curwen Press, high quality printers hidden down in Plaistow near the Docks, he had even found paper to keep his quarterly *Wine & Food* going throughout the war.

At eighty-four he was looking cautiously around, I suspect, for the means to assure that his Society survived him. He also had wanderlust; he wanted to see the world rather than sit in an office. One of the means of release in sight was Condé Nast, whose chairman, Harry Yoxall, had started the English edition of *Vogue* and was a discriminating lover of Burgundy. I never heard them discussing me, but I

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am sure Yoxall must have said "I'll let you have young Johnson," or words to that effect.

Another thought, which certainly never occurred to me at the time: André had started his career in what used to be called Grub Street during his French military service, aged 20, as sub-editor of the *Revue de l'Artillerie*. Did he perhaps see in this fresh-faced Englishman an echo of his own start? Or even a means of revenge?

Whatever he thought, I found my duties as a copy-writer on *Vogue*, and subsequently *House & Garden* too, increasingly steered towards wine, and specifically the Wine & Food Society. I wish I could find my diary for 1962. The 1963 one is pretty laconic, but increasingly includes meetings with André and lunches with Madeleine Heard, the Society's formidably matronly Secretary, often at Verrey's, a robustly old-school French restaurant at Oxford Circus.

My copy of the Winter 1962 *Wine & Food* reveals (I scribbled all over it) my deeper involvement. In the Spring 1963 number I am named as Editor, André as Editor-in-Chief and Harry Yoxall as Consultant. It was the first ever to have illustrations (they were line engravings I scrounged where I could). And it included its first article by Elizabeth David, whom, my diary reminds me, I took to lunch at the United University Club in Pall Mall (whatever did she make of that?) on André's 86th birthday, February 28th.

That was quite a day. In the afternoon I went to The Sunday Times to see another famously formidable lady, Ernestine Carter, to begin my stint as the wine man on that paper (on the fashion pages). And in the evening it was André's birthday dinner at the Savoy, where the menu was Consommé riche au Fumet des Pommes d'Amour; paillettes dorées au Chester; Quenelle de Saumon Neptune; Suprême de Volaille Favorite (Pommes Amandines; Broccoli Milanaise); Parfait Glacé Prâliné Savoy; Le Gâteau Anniversaire; Café. And the wines La Riva Fino, Wiltinger Klosterberg 1959, Ch. Ducru-Beaucaillou 1952, Pol Roger White Foil, Bisquit Dubouché VSOP. What a history of change there is in that wine-list: sherry, hock, claret, champagne . . . it sounds like the 19th century. And I suppose it was.

My diary, alas, only gives me glimpses of that year. I can tell you what I gave my father for his birthday (stogies). I went to Bristol to see Harry Waugh and Bordeaux to do a story on the châteaux for *House & Garden* – and met the Marquis de Lur Saluces, the old-school grandee of Yquem. In September I went to New York (I was writing for American *Vogue*) and met yet another formidable lady, and André's sparring partner for many years, Jeanne Owen. There were, shall I say, political difficulties between the New York chapter of the Society and headquarters. I wish I could say that my visit did anything to reduce them.

Suddenly, on November 18th 1963, my diary notes "made Gen. Sec. of W&F. Soc." The entry for November 20th goes some way towards explaining the suddenness, or at least the date: "André S. to Australia, Canberra, Waterloo, 3.30." That for November 22nd has a totally different resonance: "President Kennedy assassinated."

At this point, at least for a while, I wrote almost daily entries. They record a life among the fleshpots I can scarcely believe was mine. André had just moved the Society's office from Grosvenor Gardens, where he was the tenant of the Rev. Marcus Morris and his National Magazine Company, to the offices of another well-wisher, George Rainbird, at 2 Hyde Park Place. Rainbird was a successful publisher; his books incorporated colour photography in ways that changed international coedition publishing. 2 Hyde Park Place overlooks the Park, a few doors down from Marble Arch; a dignified and leafy setting, and only ten minutes walk from the Connaught Hotel, which began to play a surprisingly large part in my life.

André has often been described as having a peasant's instincts. He certainly knew how many postage stamps there were in the desk drawer. He counted them on each morning's visit to the office; he remembered each letter coming in and going out. How to reconcile this with my diary entries: "lunch Quaglino's," "lunch Ivy," "dinner Mirabelle," "lunch Trader Vic's," and, frequently, lunch or dinner Connaught, is a bit of a puzzle. At the age of 24 I was signing the bill at places I now visit at intervals of years. But then I was learning a rather odd kind of trade.

Before he disappeared to Australia André gave me some basic training in how to negotiate with a banqueting manager. They are not lessons you could apply today, when there are waiting lists at every restaurant you would want to go to. One lesson I vividly remember applied to a magnificent room at a hotel I will not name. A canny organizing secretary was well advised to sit in a strategic seat to keep an eye on proceeding in a mirror. The mirror reflected the doorway behind the service screen, where waiters bring bottles in, and sometimes take them out.....

André was away four months, travelling on from Australia to New Zealand, and home by sea. We had a Christmas dinner at the Ivy two weeks after he left, then dinners at Martinez, a Spanish restaurant famous for its tiled patio (we drank a 1933 Rioja and an 1830 Oloroso); at Quaglino's, at Trader Vic's—my special favourite—with Paul Masson's new 'varietal' wines, and a Hungarian dinner at the Law Society, an odd arrangement in retrospect, but an exciting introduction to the beauty of Tokay.

The happy pattern continued on André's return in

March 1964. By this time *Wine & Food* was becoming more ambitious. We were publishing Philippe de Rothschild's poetry, translated by Christopher Fry, a sad goodbye to the bars of Les Halles as the market heart of Paris was demolished, more Elizabeth David and the first work of Alan Davidson, then a diplomat in North Africa, on Mediterranean Seafish. Evelyn Waugh on Champagne, a gourmet gardening series, even short stories, and of course André's epic account of what he ate and drank and with whom in the Antipodes.

Memorable Meals was still our equivalent of Jennifer's Diary—the spiritual heart of the magazine, the place where hospitality, generosity and occasionally plain vulgar ostentation were chronicled. Although one meal, and not the least memorable, consisted of bread and margarine and cocoa on the deck of a warship about to land troops in Italy. My most memorable meal at the time (the competition was stiff) was a lunch at André's home in Sussex, Little Hedgecourt. He invited Elizabeth David and Jim Beard, America's food guru, a genial giant with Humpty Dumpty's figure and just as much hair. I collected Jim at his hotel in my mini. I don't remember how we got him in and out of it, but I do remember his laughter. Lunch was in André's much-loved garden (gardening, after books, was his off-duty passion), and an example of his creed of simplicity, not always observed in the Society's banquets. We ate a roast chicken and drank Château Lafite.

To André the acts of writing and editing were almost sacred. He loved printer's ink, as he said, almost as much as wine, and would take rare books from the shelves of his amazing library in Evelyn Mansions to caress them with his huge hands. One day he showed me his one page of a Gutenberg Bible, the first European printing, which lived in a leather folio. The jet black precision of the impression was almost startling; its perfection strangely moving. "Printing was perfect at the start," André said. "It has never been better than this."

Back from Australia and New Zealand he was working on the *Wines, Vineyards and Vignerons of Australia*, to be published in 1966; an incredibly far-sighted project, when Australian wines beyond the Invalid Port variety were still unknown in Britain. He instigated the 100 guinea André Simon Award for the literature of gastronomy in February 1965 at the Fanmaker's Hall, and awarded it to Cyril Ray for *The Compleat Imbiber Number 7*. Then he set off for a tour of South Africa: "11.20, Waterloo. ALS to Pretoria Castle."

My life was also changing. I was writing more for American magazines, I had met my future wife, Judy Grinling (vintage time 1964, at Château Loudenne) and I was aiming to write a book. To my future father-in-law's alarm I proposed to his daughter and resigned my job at Condé Nast—which meant the editorship of *Wine & Food*—in the same month.

I continued to work on the Society's affairs, organizing dinners, but André and Harry Yoxall had already lined up my two successors, John Hoare as General Secretary and Julian Jeffs as Editor. My diary records little let-up in the browsing and sluicing; visits to Claridge's, the Caprice, the Ecu de France, Wolfe's (the mould-breaking restaurant started by David Wolfe) continue. So do tastings at shipper's offices, hotels and livery halls. And I'm happy to see, almost daily riding from livery stables in Hyde Park. Would my liver have stood the strain without? How did André's?

I stepped down officially from the Society's affairs on June 21st 1965, when Judy wrote in my diary "André to lunch. What shall we give him?" I wish I had recorded the answer, but I suspect it was Judy's favourite, poulet à l'estragon. I was signed up to write my first book, *Wine*, and we set off together to do the research all over Europe. The total immersion it entailed kept me away from the Society, though not from occasional lunches and dinners with André. When our first daughter, Lucy, was born, and duly taken to Little Hedgecourt for inspection, André gave her a basket of pullet's eggs; one for each week of her just-beginning life.

And there was a working sequel, too. In 1967 André confessed he dreaded the coming winter. His sight was too poor to read any more—and just as bad he could no longer see the food on his plate. I suggested he look for local help with a dictaphone and a typist to dictate a fresh batch of memoirs. (His first, *By Request*, came out when he was only 80). A week or two later I called to ask about progress. "I can't manage the new-fangled machine," he said, "but Hallelujah, I find I can still type on my old machine." It certainly was old: a stand-up model from the 1920s. And it had a problem: when the carriage came to the end of the line the bell didn't ring. I asked to see the already plump manuscript, only to find that the last word or two of each line had been typed on the roller rather than the paper.

But the memoirs were marvellous; much better, in my view, than *By Request*. His memory, though spasmodic, was in overdrive. He asked me to help with what came out, in 1969, as *In the Twilight*, printed by the Curwen Press with the fine paper and binding that George Rainbird had promised, and André richly deserved.

NEWS & NOTES

"From the BIG APPLE to the APPLE ORCHARD..." **Ben Kinmont, Bookseller**, has moved to Sonoma County, California: 1160 Pleasant Hill Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472. 707.829.8715; FAX 707.829.8719. Bkinmont@aol.com. Welcome to wine country, Ben!

BOUNTEOUS HARVEST!

Tendrils will find enclosed with this October issue, a 20-page "Supplement" entitled *Canadian Wine Books*, compiled and written by **Eberhard Buehler**. Our heartfelt thanks, and a Toast! to Eberhard for another outstanding contribution to the lore of wine literature.

WINE INTO WORDS, 2nd ed.

by **James Gabler** (ISBN 0-96113525-5-8), is scheduled for a November 12th release. Wayward Tendril members can order pre-publication copies from Bacchus Press Ltd., 1751 Circle Road, Baltimore, MD 21204. $75, shipping included. Jim will be happy to inscribe your copy. DON'T MISS THIS WINE BOOK OF THE CENTURY! See Bo Simon's review this issue...

ZINFANDEL

A History of a Grape and Its Wine by **Charles Sullivan**, originally serialized in our Quarterly (nine installments, 1999–2001) has been expanded and published in book form (Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2003, 224 pp. Illus. Cloth. $24.95). Charles has brought the history up to date, and has added valuable notes on the Zinfandel vintages from 1990–2002, statistical tables (by counties and regions) showing tons crushed 1974–2002, Zinfandel acres 1936–2001, price per ton 1972–2002, tons per acre 1982–2001, and more. Illustrations, Chapter Notes, Select Bibliography, and an Index complete this definitive reference for Zinfandel. Cheers, Charles!

JUST RELEASED

and highly recommended is ***Ancient Wine. The Search for the Origins of Viniculture*** by Patrick E. McGovern (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, 365 pp. Illus. Cloth, $29.95). In 1991 Robert Mondavi Winery, Napa Valley, CA, sponsored a unique, international symposium, "The Origins and Ancient History of Wine," which resulted in a book by the same name, with Patrick McGovern, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology & Anthropology, serving as editor-in-chief. This was the "seedling" of the present book. Prof. McGovern's passionate interest in the beginnings of wine is clearly evident throughout his well-researched history. (NOTE: In a future issue of our Quarterly, we plan to examine the library bookshelf of "ancient wine history" literature.)

J. J. DUFOUR'S CLASSIC TREATISE

The American Vine Dresser's Guide (Cincinnati, 1826) has been re-issued by Editions La Valsainte/ Purdue University Press (2003, 210 pp., $39.95 USD). Previously reprinted in facsimile by La Valsainte (Vevey, Switzerland) in 1999, with a French translation edition in 2000, the present edition contains three informative introductory essays: "America in Dufour's Time" by Yves Bordet (the enthusiastic Swiss producer of these Dufour reprints); "The Actuality (Modernity) of Dufour" by Bruce Bordelon, Associate Professor of Horticulture, Purdue University; and "The Importance of the Vevay Experience" by James and John Butler, authors of *Indiana Wine, a History* (2001) [See review Vol.12 No.1]. Dufour's original treatise, the "first truly American book on grape culture," has been enhanced with editorial notes, maps, and historical color photographs.

DUPLICATES!!

Thanks to a lucky find, **Gail Unzelman** (nomis@jps.net) has duplicate copies (to sell or trade) of some rather scarce books. ■ M.F.K. Fisher, ***The Story of Wine in California*** (U.C. Press, 1962). A truly fine copy, both book & jacket. $85. Tom Pinney's excellent three-part article (W-T Newsletter, Vol.10, No.1-3) covers the making of this remarkable book, and identifies (for the first time) many of the Max Yavno photographs. ■ A surprisingly hard-to-find title is ***Wine: Celebration & Ceremony***, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum's lavishly illustrated catalogue published to accompany their 1985 exhibit. It contains a 35-page essay, "Gift of the Gods" by Hugh Johnson, plus two other essays. 12 x 7½, 127 pp., glossy card covers, v.g. $50. Two classic wine-label books: ■ Norman Penzer, ***The Book of the Wine-Label*** (London, 1947), near-fine in edges-worn d/j. The "definitive work." Bookseller Ben Kinmont (Cat.4, 07/01) surmises the edition is "possibly limited to 100 copies." $175. ■ Herbert C. Dent, ***Wine, Spirit and Sauce Labels of the 18th & 19th Centuries*** (Norwich, 1933). #190 of 250 copies, signed by author. Joslin Hall Cat.151 (02/02): "a book of legendary renown within silver circles for its sheer scarcity...$500." Gail will take $350 for her copy (with minor foxing, slight cover wear, Unzelman bookplate).

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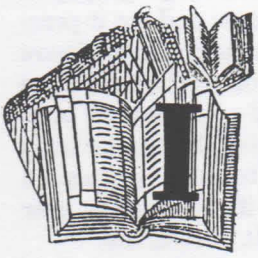
A BOOK COLLECTOR'S PASSION

by

Christopher Fielden

[Christopher Fielden became a "first edition" Tendril in 1990, the year of our Society's founding. During his forty years in the wine trade, he has written almost a dozen books on wine (see last issue) and gathered together a most resourceful library of wine books. He shares his "obsession" with us. — Ed.]

"No matter how many bookshelves you empty, they are always filled up immediately."



I am not sure when I started collecting wine books: I suppose it must have been very soon after I joined the wine trade in 1958. I can remember that one of my early purchases was a first edition of George Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellar-Book* (London, 1920). I think I must have paid about $2 for it! My serious collecting of antiquarian books, however, must have started about twenty years later largely as the result of a good lunch in the Toque Blanche Restaurant in Abingdon Road in London. After lunch I visited a bookshop across the road and came away with *Les Délices de la Campagne* by Nicolas de Bonnefons. From then on the urge took over. I soon discovered that I was on a dangerous path and I tried to narrow this by restricting myself primarily to books on Burgundy, a region in which I had worked and lived for some years. Indeed this came to be the backbone of my collection and over the years I managed to build up a broad range including most of the classics, and a number not mentioned in any of the leading bibliographies. In all, there must be something over three hundred and fifty Burgundian items including sixty-two numbers of the bulletin of the Beaune Winegrowers Association, from 1894 to 1904.

Over the years, though, I developed other interests. At one time I considered I might write a book on chaptalisation, so the collection includes a number of books on the French sugar-beet industry! For a time, too, I flirted with phylloxera; I likewise am proud of my early Australian material. Ultimately, the library has turned out to be a widely based collection with books published in more than thirty countries and covering almost four centuries.

"two great joys of collecting..."

For me, the two great joys of collecting have been fossicking about in book shops and making discoveries, and finding in a catalogue a book that I have been seeking for some time. I can remember discovering a 1922 edition of the Bordeaux classic, *Cocks & Féret*, in a bookshop in Ludlow, marked 50p—because it was in French and no-one would understand it! At the other end of the range, I came across the oldest book in my collection, the 1605 edition of the translation by Richard Surflet of Etienne & Liébault's *Maison Rustique*, in a bookshop on the Charing Cross Road. This contains a surprising amount of detail on the wines of Burgundy and other French wine regions.

"favourite books"

What are my favourite books in the collection? They must include *The Maxims of Sir Morgan O'Doherty (Bart.)* by Maginn and dated 1849. This has some very perceptive aphorisms on wine-drinking in Victorian society. Then there is Philip Miller's *The Gardener's Dictionary* (2nd ed., 1733), with an incredible amount of specific information on wines and viticulture. Duncan M'Bride's *General Instructions for the Choice of Wines* (1793) is claimed to be the first specialist book in English on wine, but it is largely a puff for the author's secretly sourced Spanish Toc-kay, which he claimed had remarkable restorative properties. Indeed many members of European Royal families would not have died if they had only bought a bottle or two from him! Finally, there is André Jullien's *Topographie de Tous les Vignobles Connus* (1816), a surprisingly wide-ranging book for its time—and always a useful source for quotations.

"take away my books [please!]"

Some years ago I took the decision to pass my collection on to the Institute of Masters of Wine, largely as the result of an approach by Clive Coates. The Institute has its own very fine collection at the Guildhall Library in the City of London, which is partly based on André Simon's library. I thought that, as my books were of no interest to my children, they might be of use to wine students. At the time, there was also a suggestion that daughter libraries might be established in Australia and California. As a result, about three years ago, the books were nominally given to the Institute, though they remained in my home.

About six months ago, I became aware of something that I should have realised years ago: collecting wine books had become an obsession with me. Even though nominally I owned no books, I was still buying them. My eyes were finally opened when, on an impulse, I paid £900 for a copy of André Simon's first book, *The History of the Champagne Trade in England* (1905), signed by the author. The following day I telephoned the Institute and asked them to take away my books.

They have now gone, all thirteen hundred of them, and my feelings reflect a mixture of sadness and relief. There is certainly more space in my house, but the

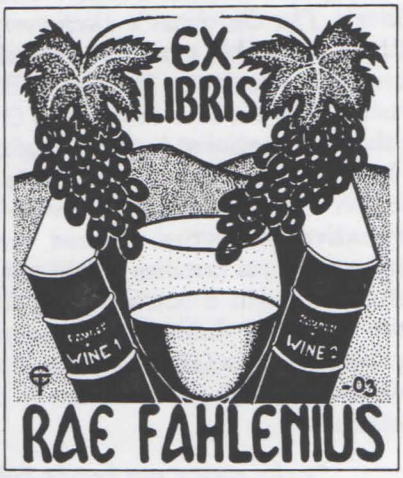
first law of book collecting has come into force: "No matter how many bookshelves you empty, they are always filled up immediately."

What is going to happen to the books? Jane Carr, the Director of the Institute (who has come there from The British Library), has plans for them. The Institute has to move premises within the next eighteen months and the plans are that the new offices will incorporate a library where students can study. My books will be much more readily available than if they had gone to the Guildhall. I am happy that they have gone to a good home.

COLLECTING WINE BOOKS: A PERSONAL VIEW

by

Rae Fahlenius



[The author has pursued his two favourite hobbies, wine and the literature of wine—from most countries and in most languages—for some twenty-five years. With his new-found passion for wine bookplates, he has become an active member of the Finnish collector's society, Exlibris Aboensis. We are delighted to continue our visit to Rae's international wine library. — Ed.]

PART II

French Wine Books

France is of course a superpower in the world of wines and gastronomy. The number of wine books in French in my library is about 120. To me, the most important and useful of all of them is *Le Goût du Vin* [*The Taste of Wine*] by the renowned Emile Peynaud (1980). With this book, I was well able to learn how to taste wine correctly (almost) some eighteen years ago.

Another fine French wine book is a very limited leather-bound facsimile edition of the celebrated *La Vigne. Voyage Autour des Vins de France* by Bertall (1989; orig. ed., 1878). ("Bertall" was the pseudonym of Charles Albert d'Arnoux (1820-1882), a leading Parisian illustrator.) This book is one of the most coveted wine books ever published, due in part to its fanciful illustrations, which are often reproduced in today's wine publications.

I have also a nice book titled *Manuel Pratique et Elémentaire d'Analyse Chimique des Vins* by a certain Mr. Édouard Robinet. It must be one of the earliest books on chemical analysis of wine. My copy has on its leather spine the year 1866, as well as the whole title, printed in golden letters . But Mr. Simon's *Bibliotheca Vinaria* knows only the editions of 1872 and 1884. Is my copy a lovely rebinding with a false year, or an earlier printing unknown to Simon?

One of my first wine books in French was *Naissance du Champagne – Dom Pierre Pérignon* [*The Birth of Champagne*] by René Gandilhon (1968). It is an ambitious work of cultural history illustrated with many fine photos and documented with very detailed notes. I found it among some books on geography in an antiquarian bookshop in Helsinki and got it practically free (like the Robinet mentioned above). There is a photograph of the certificate of baptism of Pierre Pérignon. The ceremony was held on 5 January 1639 in the village of Sainte-Menehould. Oddly, the book seems to be relatively unknown to many writers on Champagne and its history; it is hardly ever mentioned in lists of references. It puzzles me.

Quite an amazing catalogue, almost a kind of bibliography, is *Une Bibliothèque Bachique* by Gérard Oberlé, Paris. It is based upon the collection of rare and antiquarian wine books of Kilian Fritsch and is, in fact, the 1993 auction catalogue of this valuable collection. The work is quite big and luscious with more than 300 finely illustrated pages, while the entries are detailed and very informative.

Some other, maybe the best known, French wine book writers on my bookshelf are Pierre Andrieu, Pierre Brejoux, Raymond Brunet, Maurice Constantin-Weyer, Raymond Dumay, Henri Enjalbert, Pierre Forgeot, Bernard Ginestet, Joseph Hémard, E. de Moucheron, Maurice des Ombiaux, Pierre Poupon, Gaston Roupnel, Georges Rozet, Albert de Sallengre.

Finnish Books

The first Finnish wine books were issued soon after Prohibition had been abrogated in 1932. These books were written by Finnish writers up to the 1960s. Since the 1980s more and more of the wine books published in Finnish are translations, mainly from English. There are, for example, Finnish translations of Hugh Johnson, Oz Clarke, Jancis Robinson, Jim Ainsworth, Michael Schuster, Miguel Torres, and Tullio de Rosa. However, during the same time, the number of the Finnish wine writers and columnists has increased notably. So the future looks quite good to wine book lovers.

Here are twelve of the most interesting Finnish wine books, in my own personal estimation, from the beginning until now.

The first of the Finnish wine books was *Viinikirja* [*Wine Book*, 150 p.] by Erkki Kivijärvi in 1932, subtitled, *Instructions and suggestions on how to use*

wines. Maybe it was not considered worthy for a writer to publish a wine book in those early days, because Mr. Kivijärvi decided to write his book under a pseudonym, Bagheera. (Unfortunately, I just realized that I have no idea what his pseudonym may imply.) This is a general wine guide, with information on French, German, Italian and Hungarian wines, and on such fortified wines as Madeira, Port, Sherry and Marsala. Only a very few lines are dedicated to the wines of Spain, Greece, Austria, Czech, Slovakia, Dalmatia, North Africa, South America, and California. There are passages on the usage and customs in connection with wine (how to toast, &c.).

As to California wines, Mr. Kivijärvi writes that there were Pre-Prohibition sweet Muscat wines that challenged Greek and Spanish wines, and also red "clarets" enjoyed by gold diggers after the hard day's work. He concludes that Prohibition may have put an end to the winemaking of California, at least in public. If I have read *Viinikirja* carefully enough, the only writers cited are Paul de Cassagnac, Harry Craddock and "Diner Out" (A.E. Manning Foster). The very scarce illustration consists of pictures of wine glasses of the famous Finnish glassworks.

The next year (1933) produced *Ihminen ja Viini* [*Man and Wine*, 150 p.] by Eino Palola. The book tells about French wines only. Mr. Palola cites mostly the noted French wine writer de Cassagnac.

Viini ja Kulttuuri [*Wine and Culture*, 263 p.] was published by the Swedish-speaking Finn Emerik Olsoni in 1938. This is a scholarly work on wines that includes lists of sources including names of well-known wine writers, such as L. Pasteur (*Études sur le Vin*), H. Goethe (*Handbuch der Ampelographie*), André L. Simon (*The Supply, the Care and the Sale of Wine*), H. Warner Allen (*The Wines of France*), A. Marescalchi (*Vini d'Italia*) and *Old Sherry...the first hundred years of Gonzales Byass, 1835-1935*.

After the turbulent war years, a new wine book was issued in Finnish by Kauko Kula in 1956 titled *Uusi Viinikirja* [*New Wine Book*, 233p.]. The book is a classic of Finnish wine literature. It is written with witty humour, and provides a long list of reading sources, of which I mention only a few names, Maurice Healy, Hermann Jung, Alexis Lichine, Raymond Postgate, Pierre Poupon, Pierre Forgeot, André L. Simon.

In 1966 the small-sized *Viinien Kirja* [*Book of Wines*, 138p.] by Armas J. Pulla was published. The writer was the leading Finnish gastronomist of his day and a well-known Francophile who belonged to a number of French wine fraternities. The book is filled with anecdotes, but there is no list of sources. The book is now a collector's item with other literary works by Mr. Pulla. (A society was recently founded to cherish the memory of Mr. Pulla's life-work.)

Prof. Jaakko Suolahti published his highly original wine book *Viiniretkillä Italiassa* [*On Wine Tours in Italy*, 236p.] in 1970. Prof. Suolahti stayed in Italy, mostly in Rome, for ten years carrying out his scientific studies on ancient Roman history, even on the taverns. The book is not meant to be a systematic textbook presentation of Italian wines, but is the professor's personal wine-related recollections during his stay in Italy. The sensitive drawings were made by the famous artist and writer Henrik Tikkanen.

In 1987 the Finnish connoisseur of Spanish wines, Matti Larres, wrote his very informative *Espanjan Viinejä* [*Wines of Spain*, 207 p.]. This was a welcome book: Spain, thanks to her sun, light and beaches, had been the most popular resort of Finnish tourists for many years.

Now back to Italy again. Prof. Unto Paananen wrote with Dr. Simo Örmä a very detailed textbook on Italian wines with the title *Viinien Italia* [*The Wines of Italy*, 370 p.] in 1992. The writers are recognized scholars who lived in Italy for many years. The illustrations are mostly original.

Juha Berglund was a young Finnish wine enthusiast making wine at his own château in Bordeaux when he wrote his *Viiniä Mieli* [*Yen for Wine*, 128 p.] in 1994. The book is a stylish introduction into the world of wine. Mr. Berglund, who has many contacts with the great names of the French and English wine societies, is surely the most powerful name on the Finnish wine scene of today.

In 1998 Dr. Ilkka Mäntylä tried to find "truth in wine" in his path-breaking book *Viinissä Totuus – Viinin Historia Suomessa* [*In Vino Veritas – The History of Wine in Finland*, 188 p.]. This is the first comprehensive attempt to write the story of wine and its use in Finland from the Middle Ages up to the time of World War I.

Jukka Sinivirta is very a dedicated amateur of Champagne. He published his tempting and very ambitious *Elämäniloa ja Samppanjaa* [*Joy of Life and Champagne*, 199p.] in 1999. This book, with all its detailed information on Champagne and many original photographs, could be very well worth translating into other languages.

Jaakko Heinimäki is a young Lutheran priest and a freelance writer. In 1999 he wrote a wine book titled *Harrasta Viiniä* (139p.). The title is a nice play on words: it could be translated as "pious wine" or, on the other hand, "devote yourself to wine." The subtitle *Makuja ja tarinoita – pulloja ja pyhimyksiä* [*Tastes and tales – bottles and saints*] is easier to understand. This entertaining book consists of vignettes about all the wines then obtainable in Finland whose labels refer to Christianity in some way or another.

Other Books

Very few wine books written by authors living in the Scandinavian countries have ever been listed among the references in those books published in wine growing countries. In fact, the only one I know of is H. Gyllenskiöld's compact Swedish book, *Att Tempera Vin – Chambrera, Värma, Kyla, Frappera Vin* (1967, 34p.). The writer examines how to get the right temperature for serving wines. The French wine expert *primus inter pares*, Emile Peynaud, included this book in the list of sources of his great *Le Goût du Vin*.

Carl A. Andersson, Anders Björkegård, Svante Löfgren, Lennart Thölén, Sten Wikland, Oscar Wieselgren and Tore Wretman are celebrated names to Swedish wine lovers. These winemen and their books have played a role in Swedish wine literature that cannot be exaggerated. Some of Carl Andersson's wine books were translated into Finnish. Lars Torstenson is a winemaker at a wine estate owned by the Swedish in Provence, Southern France. In 1997 he wrote a highly qualified and educational wine book, *Att Tillverka Vin – från Plantering till Buteljering* [*Making Wine – from Planting to Bottling*, 166p.].

My thirty-five wine books in Spanish are mostly general guides to the wines of Spain or special works on the wines of a certain region, and they are quite new, all published within the last 25 years. I mention here only some of them. My first Spanish wine book was *El Libro del Vino* by Leandro Ibar (1980, 384p.). It has a large (27p.) and useful glossary on wine terminology.

Some of the Spanish books concentrating on special wine regions are: *Viñas, Bodegas y Vinos de Navarra* [*The Vines, Wine Cellars and Wines of Navarra*, 211p.] by Jorge Sauleda, 1988. *Nuestra Bodega – Vinos con Denominación de Origen La Mancha* by René H. Montarcé-Rieu (1990, 205p.) tells about the wines of La Mancha, the huge region in the centre of Spain known, of course, for Don Quijote de La Mancha as well as its famous Manchego cheese. *Vinos de Aragon* by Miguel Lorente and Juan Barbacil (1994, 240p.) is an extensive work on the wines of Aragon, a region whose wines are much less known than those of nearby Navarra. *Los Vinos de Cariñena, la Casa de Aranda y la Ilustración Económica Aragonesa* by Alberto Alcuten (1998, 160p.), is a detailed economic and social history.

One of my wine books is in Catalan. It is *Els Vins de Catalunya* [*The Wines of Catalonia*, 192p.] by Jaume Ciurana, 1980. I am still trying to learn how to read Catalan.

Most of my wine books concerning Portuguese wines are in English, but I have about thirty that are in Portuguese. The oldest is actually a book on agriculture and dates from 1789, the year of the French Revolution. The title is *Livro da Agricultura, ou Agricultor Instruido, e dividido em nove repartimentos. Recompilado de graves authores*. There are some practical passages on wine. Antonio de Mattos Cid published in 1944 a brief 23-page essay on the history of Port, *Antiguedade do Vinho do Pôrto*. The American Susan Schneider wrote an academic dissertation (University of Texas, 1970s) about the social and economic history of Portugal and Port wine in the 18th century. I have her book, translated into Portuguese by Jorge Oliveira Marques in 1980, and titled *O Marquês de Pombal e o Vinho do Porto– Dependência e Subdesenvolvimento em Portugal no Século XVIII* (289p.).

When I began to collect wine books 25 years ago, I could not know or divine how many wine books there were already available in the world. And every year more and more are published. So, a critical eye is needed if one hopes to be able to pick even some of the pearls in the myriad. My fellow Tendrils, I am sure that the information published in the Society's *Quarterly* greatly helps in this respect.

NEWS & NOTES, cont'd.

NOVEL READINGS

A title or two to add to your bedside reading table —

■ ***The Villa*** by Nora Roberts (New York: Putnam's, 2001, 421 pp. Cloth). Roberts, number-one New York Times best-selling author and American Romance Hall of Famer, writes a credible story ("riveting tale of family conflict and deadly secrets") that shifts between the "lush vineyards of Napa Valley" and "the ageless beauty of Venice." Well-written, entertaining.

■ ***Champagne for One*** by Rex Stout (Viking, 1958; numerous subsequent p.b. printings), a Nero Wolfe mystery. Wolfe might "quibble" over this being categorized as "wine fiction," but the murder weapon is a glass of champagne. Enjoy! No quibbling over this one: ■ ***Death Cracks a Bottle***, a mystery by Kenneth Giles (New York: Walker, 1970), is set in the cellars of a 200-year-old London wine-merchant firm, where the much-despised manager's head is "smashed in by a fancy, three-litre bottle of red Cinzano vermouth." You can figure it out.

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WINE INTO WORDS:
A History and Bibliography of Wine Books in the English Language by James M. Gabler. Baltimore: Bacchus Press, 2003. 503 pages. $75. [See "News & Notes" for ordering information.]

Reviewed by ***Bo Simons***

[Bo Simons, a Wayward Tendrils founder and avid supporter, is wine librarian extraordinaire of the Sonoma County Wine Library, Healdsburg, CA. — Editor]

his is it, fellow Tendrils. This is the work of great moment. This is our Mecca, our Jerusalem, our Great White Whale, our obscure object of desire. This is the Hokey Pokey. This is what it's all about for us who enjoy wine books. James Gabler has done it again. He has come out with a second edition of *Wine Into Words: A History and Bibliography of Wine Books in the English Language.*

The first edition set the standard for wine bibliography; the second edition continues that standard. If anything it raises the bar. The work has grown, more than doubling the number of entries, yet due to skillful typography and layout, adds only a quarter to the total number of pages. The first edition came out 18 years ago in 1985 and contained 3,200 entries, of which (Gabler stated in the introduction) over 1,000 were annotated. The present edition boasts 7,800 entries and "thousands" of annotations. The page has grown larger in the second edition, and the text split into two columns, the better to contain the 300,000 words (up from 120,000). While the first edition numbered 402 pages, the new one weighs in at 503 pages, quite a feat when you consider that the word count grew 250%. The layout, the way the text rides the page, the ease with which the reader's eye can lift the information is improved in the 2nd edition.

I have had a very hard time reviewing this book. The problem is putting the book down long enough to think and to write about it. Unlike the historian and California State Librarian Kevin Starr, who says in his introduction to this book that he read it "item by item, page by page, in alphabetical order," I flitted about, like a bee in a field of flowers, like a sot in a great cellar. (Imagine being turned loose in Saintsbury's or Simon's cellar when those cellars brimmed with year-of-the-comet Burgundies and pre-phylloxera first growth Clarets.) That is somewhat how I feel with this book: I just want to buzz around and sample everything. Who has time for making notes and forming critical responses?

But let me try. Gabler deserves praise and recognition first and foremost for his comprehensiveness. I am astonished at the scope and breadth of his achievement. Does he list every wine book? No, but he comes very close. Librarians like me are pretty good at testing the comprehensiveness of a bibliography, at finding a reference to some obscure book the compiler has failed to include. This kind of "gotcha" can be pretty petty, but even when I try really hard to catch a reference to either a modern book so obscure or marginal, or an older book as yet unearthed, Gabler does very well. The newer, more obscure wine books are there. He has *Superplonk* by Malcolm Gluck, a book that in its earlier editions eluded the great collector Roy Brady. He includes both *Sonoma Wine Tour* and *The Long Memory* by Millie Howie. He has the two Jack Florence books concerning Sonoma County wine history, *A Noble Heritage* and *Legacy of a Village*. I was able to find a few entries I think he perhaps ought to have included, but few, damn few, and not worth mentioning.

His achievement in listing the older books on wine is stunning. I pitted Gabler head-to-head with the most comprehensive library catalog in the known universe, OCLC, and Gabler won easily. OCLC is the bibliographic utility that is available on the web to those with accounts or library connections. I looked up the subject of "Wine and Wine Making," the official Library of Congress Subject Heading for books dealing with wine, and got 15,098 hits, of which only 13,337 are books. Limiting these to English language books, the number comes down to 7,511. Now if you limit further by date, and ask only for those published between 1400 and 1700, OCLC spits back reference to 86 entries. When I cross-checked these title by title against Gabler's bibliography, I found only three possible items that Gabler did not include. But when I go the other way, and make a slow and careful comparison of Gabler's entered early wine books against OCLC entries, I find many more that Gabler has located and described that have eluded cataloging on OCLC, the catalog of catalogs of libraries.

Gabler also deserves praise for the excellence of his annotations: they state what you need to know, clearly and with elegance. Sometimes the annotations are brief and straightforward. Witness the annotation to *Knee Deep in Claret*: "Covers the history of the development of the wine trade in Britain, particularly in Scotland, from the earliest times to the present. The book's title is taken from a Robert Burns poem." Sometimes the annotations grow longer, more rambling and anecdotal. Describing Andrew Kirwan's 1864 book *Host and Guest*, Gabler goes into great detail on one chapter where Kirwan describes wines from the ancients: "In addition to seawater, the Greeks added hepatic aloes to improve the color, flavor and strength

of their wines..." and describes 18th and 19th century wines, "relying on Barry, Henderson, Redding and Shaw, as well as his own experience." At times Gabler lets his feelings toward the subject show. When I agree with him, I find these annotations witty and sagacious, and when I disagree, I find them less so. The annotations—the "history" of the title—remain informative, relevant, and a valuable resource. I only wish he had had time (and space!) to annotate much more.

There are numerous other points to praise about *Wine Into Words*. Gabler provides numerous excellent biographical sketches of selected authors. Again I wish he had done more, but this is, I remind myself, a bibliography, not a biographical dictionary. His Short-Title Index allows one to find a work by title. His Subject Index is a valiant attempt to provide access by subject to the books listed. One small quibble: while his Title Index refers users to the entries by entry number, the Subject Index refers only to a page number, where a user has to search through the more than 20 entries on that page.

Speaking of quibbles, earlier I said I had a hard time reviewing this book, and I would like to repeat that here, and add this reason. I am supposed to be critical, to point out flaws and shortcomings. In a book this magnanimous, there are some, but it seems mean-spirited to do so. Nonetheless I am compelled to point out the one thing I see as a flaw worth mentioning, insisting that this is more like a beauty mark or an artist's intended imperfection. Gabler suffers charmingly from scope fuzziness: He does not include cookbooks, "unless they contribute in some significant way to the service or use of wine." Pamphlets and ephemera are not included unless the item is listed in a library collection, so as "not to second guess librarians on what they consider significant acquisitions." He includes some technical books and papers on grape growing and wine making, but not others. He admits that "selective judgements" were made with respect to proceedings. Non-book items—videos, CDs, CD-ROMs, &c.—are excluded "except where they provide historical information not to be found elsewhere." He provides the excellent example of Hugh Johnson's video series, *Vintage: A History of Wine*. Literary works not about wine, per se, are included "because of their association with wine and their importance to wine literature." While his examples of Rabelais and the *Rubiayat* are unarguable, why did he exclude "Babette's Feast"? Yolla Bolly Press has separately published this short story in a sumptuous edition, and the motion picture made from it is "one movie that got all its wine references right," according to Roy Brady.

Wine into Words II stands as a noteworthy successor to the first edition. Pick it up and spend time with it. Read it, open it up to any page and get lost in a subject that never fails to delight. Read Kevin Starr's excellent introduction: it brings to light many of the rich cultural treasures embedded in the book and is a rhapsody about the joys of bibliography. Use it as a reference, build your library with it. Treasure it.

UPDATE: NORTHWEST WINE BOOKS
A Book Review
by *Will Brown*

[See our October 2002 and January 2003 issues for Will Brown's "Northwest Wine Books..." and "Review of Northwest Wine Periodicals....". We welcome this update. — Ed.]

Northwest Wine Guide: A Buyers Handbook by Andy Perdue. Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2003. 228pp. Paperback. $14.95

The key word here is "Buyers" since the book is directed at wine buyers of all levels. This is a small book (7¾x4) which one could sneak into a wine store and peruse at the bins without attracting the proprietor's notice, or use as a reference on a trip through any of the wine regions of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, or Idaho. In the latter case, though, one would also need good maps since directions to the wineries are not provided.

In the main text the author provides a thumbnail sketch of each of over four hundred wineries in the region and lists what he feels are the best wines from those establishments. Fifteen hundred wines are thus rated, from over five thousand tasted. The numbers from the Northwest are becoming rather formidable.

Although for the most part I have little disagreement with the author's ratings of wines I have tasted, the reviews of both the wines and the wineries are rather innocuous and non controversial. (I know there are some marginal wineries out there.) The author is the founder and editor of the periodical Wine Press Northwest and is thus sort of a wine industry insider. Little he said in this book will jeopardize his status.

Why another book on Northwest wine? Well, these guide books become out of date in about the same time it takes to produce and bottle a Pinot Gris, and some of the best titles of the past have not been revised, thus a niche is temporarily filled.

I liked this book and would take it with me to an unfamiliar region. However, as a work in the field of Northwest wine, it does not carry the gravity of Lisa Shara Hall's *Wines of the Pacific Northwest*, the standard to date. Nevertheless, I would recommend it precisely for what it is: a handy guide for the buyer of Northwest wines.

WINE IN PRINT

by

Hudson Cattell

Vinos Chilenos para el Siglio XXI / Chilean Wines for the 21st Century. Bilingual Edition. Santiago, Chile: Libros Antartica S.A., 2001. 243 pp. Hardbound, $69.95.

This is a big book, 10" x 11¼" in size, completely bilingual, and with more than 100 superb color photographs, some of which are fold-out three-page panoramic views of important winegrowing valleys. Included in the long list of credits are a main editor, Hernan Maino Aguirre, nine writers, and three principal photographers. Most of the writers are specialists associated with Chilean universities, and the information given is both accurate and very readable. As the title implies, efforts have been made to make this view of Chilean wine and culture as up-to-date as possible. All of the maps, photographs and illustrations were produced in 2001.

One chapter describes 25 wineries and their best wines, and another discusses the valleys, climate, appellations of origin and the main wineries. In addition to viticulture and enology, there are sections on key people in the industry, wine and food, and wine and health. An interesting chapter has the Robert Mondavi family, Philipine de Rothschild, Miguel Torres and others comment on why they chose to operate in Chile and what their experiences have been.

Of particular interest in the chapter on grape varieties is a discussion of Carmenère, an ancient Bordeaux variety that went out of favour in France in the middle of the 19th century and eventually disappeared to the point where there were 15 hectares left in Bordeaux, 4500 hectares in northeastern Italy, and a few small plantings elsewhere. Carmenère was brought into Chile about 150 years ago and until recently it was taken for granted that what they had was a different clone of Merlot. In 1994 the French ampelographer Jean Boursiquot discovered the error while doing DNA testing in the vineyards. According to Tony Aspler, writing in the March 2003 issue of *Wine Tidings*, it was estimated in September 2002 that between 60 and 90% of the older Merlot plantings in Chile were actually Carmenère and that vineyards with as little as 10% Carmenère interplanted among Merlot would produce wines with identifiable Carmenère flavors. Once discovered, Carmenère became a signature Chilean variety. The wine was well liked, the grape was a prolific grower in Chile and the fact that it was scarce internationally was an added advantage. It is estimated that there are now 4576 hectares planted in Chile under the correct name.

In his Prologue, written in September 2001, Douglas Murray stated:

> Starting from 14 traditional wineries in 1980, by the year 2000 we had over 100 exporting wineries, without anyone in the world yet understanding our system of Appellations of Origin, or the brand "Chile" being clearly recognized. Considering the lack of books and information about Chilean wines, we should not be surprised to find that the appearance of our first "ultra Premium" wines (or "Superchileans") should have confused the majority of international wine writers. If they know next-to-nothing about our development and progress, it will obviously be difficult for them to understand and accept that Chile has moved, almost without a transition, from providing supermarket wines ... to levels of superlative quality...

This book gives a clear and useful picture of where the Chilean wine industry stands at the start of the 21st century and, importantly, this is the base on which the Chilean wines of the 21st century will be made. For this understanding alone, the book is highly recommended.

New World of Wine from the Cape of Good Hope: The Definitive Guide to the South African Wine Industry by Phyllis Hands and Dave Hughes. Somerset West, South Africa: Stephen Phillips, 2001. Hardbound, $50.

First of all, a bibliographical note is in order. In 1983 *The Complete Book of South African Wines* by John Kench, Phyllis Hands and David Hughes was published, and in 1992 a revised edition was published as *South African Wine* by Dave Hughes, Phyllis Hands and John Kench. About two-thirds of each of these books was devoted to the wine regions and wineries of South Africa. In 1997 *Wines and Brandies of the Cape of Good Hope* by Phyllis Hands and Dave Hughes was published, and the present book builds on the 1997 volume. This latest book which, incidentally, is the official textbook of the Cape Wine Academy, differs from the first two in that the emphasis is not on the winelands and their wineries.

The seven chapters, each with one word titles, are Introduction, Viticulture, Varieties, Vinification, Virtuosi, Eau-de-Vie, and Vignerons. Half of the Introduction is devoted to the history of the Cape of

Good Hope; the remainder is largely concerned with exports and a comparison of South Africa's wine industry with other winegrowing countries of the world.

For this reviewer, the chapter titled Virtuosi was of particular interest. A prefatory note at the beginning states: "Wine from South Africa tends to fall between the solid structures of 'Old World' wines and the upfront fruit and soft tannins of the 'New World.' What has emerged over the past few years is an awareness that the Cape can produce new blends that are drawn from varieties from many regions. This awareness has matured into a serious debate over where Cape winemakers should be heading in the new millennium. The interviews in this chapter are focused on this debate...." Eight virtuosi representing viticulture, winemaking, and marketing are interviewed at length and give readers their insights into the contemporary South African wine scene.

The other chapters are straight-forward presentations of standard viticultural and enological practices as they are currently being carried out in South Africa. Both authors are well-qualified to write this book. Phyllis Hands is the director emeritus of the Cape Wine Academy and Dave Hughes is a distiller by trade and a winemaker by passion. Each has lectured and judged worldwide.

Wine, Food & the Arts: Works Gathered by The American Institute of Wine & Food. The Wine Appreciation Guild is offering volumes 1 and 2 for $19.95 each.

These volumes were published in 1996 and 1997 by The American Institute of Wine & Food in San Francisco, and were intended to be part of an annual series, which never happened. The purpose of these volumes was to celebrate gastronomy by publishing the "imaginative fare" of writers, painters, and photographers. These lovely soft cover volumes are a little over 100 pages each, 9 x 12 inches in size, and are recommended for anyone interested in the art and pleasure of wine and food.

[For the always generous permission to reprint his reviews, we send our Tendril thanks to Hudson Cattell, co-editor and publisher with Linda Jones McKee, of the noteworthy bi-monthly publication, Wine East: News of Grapes and Wine in Eastern America. The above reviews are excerpted from the July/August 2003 issue. For subscription information, see their website: www.wineeast.com .— Ed.]

18th CENTURY AMERICAN ALMANACS
An Untapped Source for Wine Material?

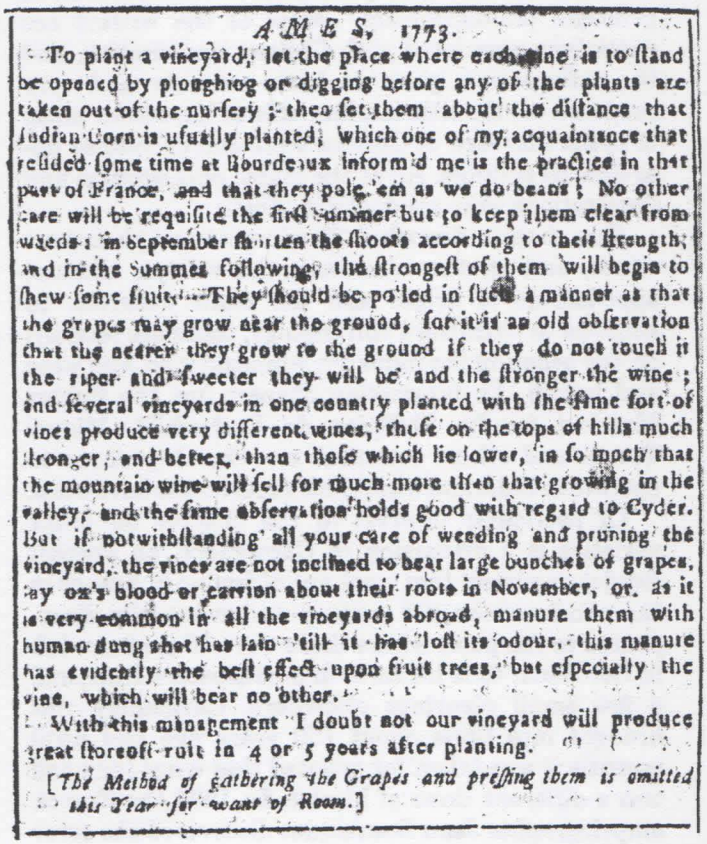
by

Mannie Berk

Tendril Mannie Berk sends an inquiry: "Recently I came across an almanac (Nathaniel Ames) published in Boston in 1772 whose 'lead story' is a fairly detailed 3-page article on grapegrowing and winemaking in America, with a number of references to European practice. Ames is a real booster for Americans to make wine, though I don't know if he had written on the subject in his *Almanac* before.

It raised the question of whether anyone has gone through the various 18th century American almanacs for similar material and whether there are references that pre-date this. I recently saw a notation that in the 1743 *Poor Richard's Almanac*, Franklin wrote about adding brandy to Madeira that was imported into the colonies, but that's obviously a different subject entirely.

Have any Tendrils researched this?"



AMES, 1773.

To plant a vineyard, let the place where each vine is to ſtand be opened by ploughing or digging before any of the plants are taken out of the nurſery; then ſet them about the diſtance that Indian Corn is uſually planted; which one of my acquaintance that reſided ſome time at Bourdeaux informed me is the practice in that part of France, and that they poſle 'em as we do beans; No other care will be requiſite the firſt ſummer but to keep them clear from weeds: in September ſhorten the ſhoots according to their ſtrength; and in the Summer following, the ſtrongeſt of them will begin to ſhew ſome fruit. They ſhould be poſted in ſuch a manner as that the grapes may grow near the ground, for it is an old obſervation that the nearer they grow to the ground if they do not touch it the riper and ſweeter they will be and the ſtronger the wine; and ſeveral vineyards in one country planted with the ſame ſort of vines produce very different wines, thoſe on the tops of hills much ſtronger, and better, than thoſe which lie lower, in ſo much that the mountain wine will ſell for much more than that growing in the valley, and the ſame obſervation holds good with regard to Cyder. But if notwithſtanding all your care of weeding and pruning the vineyard, the vines are not inclined to bear large bunches of grapes, lay ox's blood or carrion about their roots in November, or, as it is very common in all the vineyards abroad, manure them with human dung that has lain till it has loſt its odour, this manure has evidently the beſt effect upon fruit trees, but eſpecially the vine, which will bear no other.

With this management I doubt not our vineyard will produce great ſtore of fruit in 4 or 5 years after planting.

[The Method of gathering the Grapes and preſſing them is omitted this Year for want of Room.]

BOOKS & BOTTLES
by
Fred McMillin

A GLANCE AT FRANCE

The Book: *A Notebook for the Wines of France* by Creighton Churchill. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961. 386 pp. 10 x 7. Illus. $8.50 (original price).

e are warned that in this book, getting the names and places correct "is fraught with pitfalls." Agreed! Let's start with the author. The name of his father is Winston Churchill. His wife's name is Camilla. Sounds British ... but this Winston is the American historical novelist, born in St. Louis in 1871, three years prior to the birth of the future Sir Winston.

The son's name (our author) is Creighton Churchill (born 1912). A staunch American with military service in both World War II and the Korean conflict, he nevertheless said, "Were I not an American, I would choose to be French. I seem always to have lived or lingered in France on any conceivable excuse. I recently spent another year there with my family, during which I collected much of the basic data for this book."

The full title of Churchill's grand tome is handsomely printed in red and black on the double title page: *A Notebook for the Wines of France. A Wine Diary or Cellar Book listing the nine hundred most important French wines and / or their vineyards, with space for the wine drinker's own records and notations. Including an introductory explanation of each of the eight major wine districts, their differing nomenclatures and comparative classifications, together with notes on the selection, care, and serving of wines.* [See also Vol.13 #1 article on Knopf wine publications. — Ed.]

Churchill arranged his "basic data" by chapters, beginning in Alsace and then traveling clockwise in France, ending in Loire. We'll follow his route.

ALSACE—"Alsace has always made wine—for a great many centuries, at least—but not necessarily always good wine... [for example, extant records document that] the year A.D. 585 was a very bad vintage."

CHABLIS—In A.D. 1280, the visiting monk Salimbene described the wine of the region as a "white wine, sometimes golden, with aroma and body and an exquisite, generous savor, and fills the heart with joyous assurance." Churchill observes that if one substitutes "green-tinted" for "golden" and adds the word "dry," one has the Chablis of today. He titled this chapter "White Wines 'Seven Hundred Years Old.'"

CÔTE d'OR—Mr. Churchill devotes over 40% of his text to the "Slope of Gold." He seems to agree with the description heard centuries earlier by the Archbishop of Paris: one of the Burgundian reds was "bottled velvet and satin."

BEAUJOLAIS—The adage: "Three rivers bathe the town of Lyon—the Saone [water], the Rhône [water], and the Beaujolais [wine]. Churchill is underwhelmed by most of the wines. The "nouveau" phenomenon was not yet significant enough to be mentioned.

RHÔNE VALLEY—In 1787, on a donkey-back tour "to see for myself," Thomas Jefferson wrote that a southern Rhône red "possessed a quality which keeps well, bears transportation and cannot be drunk under 4 years." When Jefferson returned to the U.S. two years later, he presented George Washington and John Jay hampers of French wine that included bottles "from Avignon."

BORDEAUX—Ch. Mouton-Rothschild was omitted from the top group of châteaux in the historic 1855 classification. This prompted the Baron to exclaim: "Not first, I deign not second—I am Mouton!" It was printed on their labels.

LOIRE—The Loire Valley had a great publicist for its wines, Rabelais (1490–1553). A genius of literature and other fields, he is described by Churchill as "history's most illustriously loud-mouthed vinophile." Rabelais' admiration for Loire red apparently did not extend south to Bordeaux: his description of Bordeaux clarets included the word "fluttering."

CHAMPAGNE—The sprightly, cassocked Benedictine Dom Perignon has been credited with the "invention of the cork stopper, the glass bottle, and even of sparkling Champagne itself. Recent researches have cut wide swathes through most of these legends, yet the fact remains that it was the studies of this illustrious monk that are responsible for the quality of Champagne today."

That's the flavor of the book. . . a rewarding read for Tendril types. Two other classic wine titles by Creighton Churchill are *The Great Wine Rivers* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), "a connoisseur's guide to the vineyards and vintages of the Moselle, Rhine, Rhône, and Loire, of Burgundy and Bordeaux, with expert

***Cont'd on* p.24 —**

Vinaceous Correspondents:
Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles

SECOND SECTION OF THE SECOND ARTICLE IN A SERIES

by ***Barbara Marinacci***

[This segment follows two earlier pieces: the Introduction in the April 2003 WT *and the initial section, printed in the July issue, of this long article that will cover winegrower Martin Ray's remarkable epistolary relationship with wine authority Julian Street.]*

PART II — 2. JULIAN STREET AND MARTIN RAY: 1939-1947

The previously published piece explained that I had found it impossible to condense the extraordinary correspondence between Martin ("Rusty") Ray and Julian Street into a single printed article. Ray's original letters to this East Coast writer and wine expert of the 1930s and early '40s are many, with some amazingly lengthy. These letters, begun in late 1939 and fortuitously preserved among Street's papers at Princeton, amply express the California winemaker's passionate commitment to creating superb wines in the difficult years following Prohibition.

The comments and stories that Martin Ray provided in his lengthy letters to Street were either dictated to his secretary, who typed them on Masson letterhead stationery, or else typed or (more often) handwritten by him—at times, it seems, in a state of rapt concentration, with these ones particularly intimate and discursive. Street wrote in response to MR's letters but he also elicited the winemaker's opinions or information, provided advice, or simply chatted about his life. Unfortunately, though, few of his letters are in the Princeton collection. The existing ones are carbon copies of letters that he typed, not handwrote. MR's letters often enable one to figure out questions asked or comments made earlier by JS in missing letters. There are also some notes by JS about MR and his wines. Additionally, there are carbon copies that MR or JS made of letters written to other people, as well as clippings from periodicals and several wine industry documents that MR believed would interest Street, some of which may even interest present-day readers.

At the start of their correspondence, each man addressed the other formally as "Mr" in the salutation—the polite habit that mostly ended after people started using first names when communicating with total strangers. (Occasionally JS would drop the "Mr" nicety and simply use "Dear" plus the Ray surname.) But in October of 1940, nearly a year after they started exchanging letters, Street began with "Dear Rusty: How did you get that name?" (In his youth MR had rust-colored hair.) So in his next letter MR boldly called him Julian, saying, "If you are going to take liberties with my name, I shall do the same with yours, in spite of your seniority." However, he volunteered to be addressed as Martin instead of the nickname by which he was always widely known to others. "I am more concerned with what I do (and therefore am) than what people call me," he said. So he was Martin in Julian's subsequent letters.

This #2 segment will focus on Martin Ray at the peak of his tenure at the Paul Masson Champagne Company, in 1940.

Publicizing the Masson Wines

From the start of his contact with Julian Street at the end of 1939, when sending him a case of six different 1936 Paul Masson wines to sample (two bottles of each), Martin Ray recognized that the Paul Masson winery—and his own proprietorship of it, of course—would surely benefit if this renowned East Coast wine author approved heartily of any or all of these wines. Since the Masson winery lacked an effective national distribution setup—it could scarcely compete with the aggressive sales efforts mounted by the major wine firms—MR believed that the best way to build a reputation and steady customers for his fine wines was to gain favorable attention from highly influential persons. A favorable reaction from Street could boost his sales by getting them talked about and sought by connoisseurs. Also, Street's position as a director with the reputable wine and liquor distributor Bellows & Co. might enable them to be marketed eventually far beyond the San Francisco Bay area, where the new Paul Masson wines were already earning gratifying attention from fine-wine devotees.

Initially Street sampled approvingly the Masson Champagnes he'd received, but he allowed the three still wines to rest before decanting. Then on January 17 of 1940, he opened his first bottle of the Pinot Noir '36 that Martin Ray had vintaged soon after taking over at Paul Masson. And he tasted a wine that not

only closely resembled the authentic French Burgundies that he knew so well and loved, but, unbelievably, had come from California. It was indeed Pinot Noir, as its label indicated. Street impulsively sent off a congratulatory telegram to the vintner. Never before had Julian tasted a young American-made wine that held such promise for the future. Up to now, whenever he opened a bottle claiming to hold a genuine red Burgundy, he detected barely a trace, if any at all, of Pinot Noir, that supreme red grape and wine of Bourgogne. Moreover, California wines rarely seemed made by vintners who took great pride in their winemaking. And true enough, by then Julian had already received three long letters from Martin Ray—priming him for appreciating the Masson wines by detailing his perfectionist approach to wine-making. So Street was already entranced by his California correspondent's spirited eloquence and obvious devotion to his chosen art and craft.

In his earliest letter to Street, who would quickly become his confidante, MR had said [11/27/39]: "I hope that you will find it possible to visit here some day, at which time I would like you to taste other of our varieties and vintages. If I am ever in the position to be of any service to you here in California, I would consider it a distinct pleasure to be permitted to so assist you." Julian Street would not come soon—though come he would someday. In the meantime, he served Masson wines to fortunate friends and associates and urged others among his acquaintances to get them, somehow. Wine connoisseurs weren't rife even in Manhattan society in the 1930s and '40s, so they were apt to know each other. By the late 1930s, though, Julian, because of a heart condition, had left New York City, and with his wife Margot had taken up quieter living in rural Connecticut. But he still kept in close touch with his urban friends as well as the management at Bellows & Co. and had frequent visitors.

In the early '40s Street also sent emissaries to Martin Ray. They joined the growing pilgrimage of people—either involved in the wine business or else just lovers of wine (but usually having some celebrity status)—who came to the Paul Masson hilltop premises in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, not only to drink the wines, but also to enjoy stunning vistas of Santa Clara Valley and the southern reaches of San Francisco Bay. At first Rusty and Elsie Ray's visitors had tended to be either local to the Bay area (such as former President Herbert Hoover, novelist Kathleen Norris, and Romanov family members—exiled Russian nobility); or high-profile show-business people coming up from Hollywood (like comedian Charlie Chaplin and actresses Gertrude Lawrence and Ina Claire). Increasingly, though, "name" visitors from the East Coast (such as Alexander Woolcott and Alfred A. Knopf) arrived too, when the Masson wines became better known there—mostly thanks, it seems, to Julian Street's proselytizing. The Ray scrapbooks hold a number of browned and tattered newspaper clippings attesting to the Rays' ability to attract and then publicize visits from well-known personalities. Several national magazines, featuring stories that included photographs of the picturesque winery, the lush vineyards, and the glorious views, added to the allure of the place.

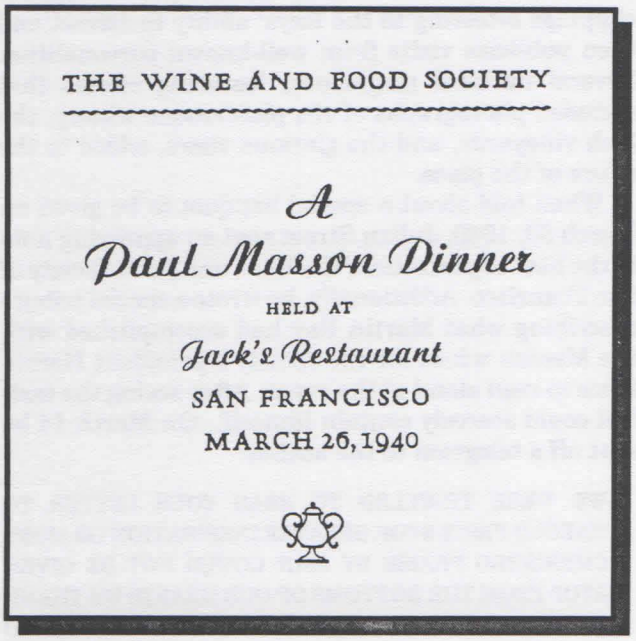
When told about a special banquet to be given on March 30, 1940, Julian Street sent an approving note to the host organization, the Wine and Food Society of San Francisco. Additionally, he wrote a special tribute describing what Martin Ray had accomplished with the Masson wines for the society's president Harold Price to read aloud at the event. After seeing the text, MR could scarcely contain himself. On March 14 he sent off a telegram to the author:

> WE WERE THRILLED TO READ YOUR LETTER TO HAROLD PRICE STOP GREATER INSPIRATION OR MORE CHERISHED PRAISE BY MAN COULD NOT BE GIVEN STOP FROM THE BOTTOMS OF OUR HEARTS WE THANK YOU STOP YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WINE AND FOOD SOCIETY HONORING US WITH THE DINNER STOP YOUR DISCOVERY RECOGNITION AND PRAISE OF OUR CALIFORNIA WINES WILL BE THE MAKING OF THE WINE INDUSTRY IN THIS STATE STOP FOR WHILE OTHER PRODUCERS MAY RESENT IT TO SOME EXTENT AT THIS TIME THEY WILL COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT THEY MUST IMPROVE THEIR WINES THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT WILL BE SHARPENED BY THE NEWCOMERS WHO THUS ENCOURAGED WILL COME ON TO ULTIMATELY MAKE THE GREAT WINES AND YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LAUNCHING A NEW ERA IN CALIFORNIA VITICULTURE OF WHICH NO ONE ELSE IS CAPABLE = MARTIN RAY

The dinner was attended not only by the Society's wine-aficionado members but also by a number of persons prominent in the wine industry. Curiously, though, MR himself had declined to come, explaining that attendees would feel uneasy about discussing his wines if he were present. (Actually, MR habitually stayed away from large gatherings, since he would likely become overstressed, as the stroke suffered in the mid-'30s had permanently damaged his nervous system.) In his place he sent his principal cellar man, Oliver Goulet, who afterwards reported most favorably on the event, as did some of MR's acquaintances in the wine trade.

In addition to reading Street's praises, Price had also given a talk of his own—which was, as MR reported it to JS, "inspired by your letter and in which he spoke out freely without regard for personal feelings of wine men present. It was bold and without

precedent." Reportedly, overall good spirits prevailed among the attendees, who feasted and drank Masson wines far into the night.



Later, JS asked MR whether other wine men resented his widely circulated ardent appraisals of the Masson wines and their maker. And the vintner replied:

> No, they do not wish you had kept your mouth shut, they feel that somehow or other what you have said has been intended for all California wines, and they are very happy to enjoy that part of your praise which they individually feel may be intended even for them. It is a very nice, chummy thing which you have done for them, they feel. [5/16/40]

Numerous MR letters gave JS glimpses at his interactions with people who drove up Paul Masson's mountain road to spend time with the innovative winemaker. Especially fascinating are his frequent reports to JS on his close friend John Steinbeck, who at the time lived close by, in Los Gatos. With his wife Carol he was a frequent guest, and when taking breaks from his writing he often worked alongside Rusty Ray in the Masson vineyards or cellar. MR later said that when Steinbeck's own small house became too hot in the summertime, he would come up to write in the cool winery. His major project at that time had been finishing *The Grapes of Wrath*. (The copy he gave to the Rays was fittingly inscribed "My vintage for yours.")

MR told Street that he hoped these two writer friends might meet someday.

> [John] envies you both the great experiences which he knows you have had in a period now gone from the world, and which was filled with a certain richness which is no longer here. John's real interest is history, and whether recent or ancient, it all holds a thrill for him. He is a great man, and you will hear of him plenty in the future. At first, I thought that he would swing too far to the left, but the money which he is earning, and the friends which his success is bringing him, are, for the most part, a good influence, and I find that he is swinging constantly more to the right, although I do not think the influence of those hard years of struggle which he passed through will ever leave him. I think you will find it running all through his work in the future, as well as in the past. He is sincere and genuine, and they don't make them any better. [5/16/40

So not all celebrities who loved the Masson wines and praised them to their friends had been introduced to them by Julian Street, though his East Coast placement and durable reputation as a wine authority produced an intense interest that began affecting the bottom line: wine sales. One of MR's letters contains the words that his wife had dictated—having wished to tell Julian Street of their great gratitude (the quotation marks are his):

> "Our wines have been recognized by many people but what we have tried to point out is that they 'whispered' about them and were afraid to come out and talk about it until you found them good. Then they jumped on the band wagon and started shouting.
>
> "We must give due credit to Dr. Amerine, who has visited about every winery in the state and even when our 1936 wines were but a year old he told us they were the finest in the state. Through Amerine, Price became interested. However, they were afraid to talk out loud.
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> "Steinbeck became interested in how we are doing things here, not that he knew much about wine but that we are making wines honestly, as they should be made. He brought Charlie Chaplin here and he left to praise. He (Chaplin) says our champagnes are the only completely dry wines in this country that he could enjoy as he did the dry Champagnes in France, that he had ordered them (French) in this country but when they arrived here they had always had a dosage added to them. Chaplin drinks very little but he has ordered quite a good deal of our wine which he distributes to his friends. He seems to feel that he 'found' or 'discovered' this place and our wines. Through Chaplin and his converts, W.R. Hearst came to hear of them and telephoned an order from San Simeon. Doesn't that sound like him?
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> "We have many friends but thanks to God we have you, a man who came right out in the open with his opinion. Now all the little fellows can say, 'Why, we knew it all the time—I was the first, etc., etc.' It is all so interesting."

Then MR took over the letter again:

> And now I'm back on the air with a flash—this is as you said it would be only it is already true here and will spread out to all corners of the country because of the momentum it has. You have made a difference between our wines being recognized under cover and having them recognized on the surface. You have made it possible for people to speak out. Recognition is as important as producing the wines. One without the other is not sufficient. You have saved us years.

He also added a marginal note: "Hearst has ordered again, still wines @$24 and Champagnes at list prices. I first sent him the prices." His Masson wines were now ending up on the tables and in the cellars of some rather impressive people, known for their affluence or influence, or both.

Paul Masson and Martin Ray: As Men and Legends

Martin Ray often attributed particular influences upon him as coming from Paul Masson. He first became acquainted with the Burgundian vintner during a boyhood spent mostly in Saratoga, at his grandparents' ranch at the foot of Masson's mountain. He revived the connection during later years, before buying Masson's vineyards and winery. MR afterwards claimed a close relationship with the vintner, and was amused by the rumor being circulated that he was actually Masson's out-of-wedlock son. He traced his winemaking lineage even further back in time than Masson, to two earlier vintner pioneers in the Santa Clara Valley: Charles Lefranc (Masson's father-in-law) and Etienne Thée (Lefranc's father-in-law), who had started making wine in 1852. Rusty Ray made much of this "founding" year. Commemorated by brass numerals prominently placed above the handsome doors of the old Masson winery, the date is deceptive since that structure, built a half-century later, has no connection at all with Thée.

But did the Frenchman actually teach Rusty Ray special winemaking secrets after he sold him his vineyards and winery? MR's letters make few references to things he had learned directly from Masson. Nor do they provide evidence that the two men truly had a mentor–protégé relationship, as MR construed it later. Before and after acquiring Masson's La Cresta property MR got most of his technical knowledge about vineyard care and the making and bottling of wine from other sources: a few short courses taken at the University of California (at Berkeley or Davis); available books and manuals; several former Masson employees who now worked for him; an old book of Masson's cellar notes, containing such things as a recipe for adding syrup made from rock sugar to Champagne cuvées; and particularly his experienced head vintner, Oliver Goulet, who had worked at the nearby Novitiate Winery (though apparently he knew little about vineyard care). Also, beginning in 1938—most importantly—Dr. Maynard Amerine of U.C. Davis offered knowledgeable advice and even hands-on assistance.

But it was Martin Ray himself who decreed from the start that his premium wines should *never* be blends of different grape varieties—a decision that surely originated from reading Schoonmaker & Marvel's *The Complete Wine* Book (1934). The most notable legacies coming to MR from Masson were his always continuing to plant vines singly and at some distance apart, so that that the soil could be deeply plowed in both directions (not possible in trellising), and his accustomed use—rare at that time—of small oak cooperage (preferably French in origin) in aging wines prior to bottling.

In fact an MR letter to JS indicates that MR's relationship with Paul Masson was scarcely as close as the legends portray it. Realizing that Masson could be an asset if he remained associated with the winery corporation he had founded, MR asked the Frenchman to serve as nominal president of the Paul Masson Champagne Company. But the two men actually had little social or business contact. MR had learned early to keep the cantankerous, unpredictable old man at a safe distance from his former property, unless there were extraordinary reasons to invite him up there, such as posing for photographs to appear in periodicals.

MR sometimes told stories that adversely portrayed Masson. One he bitterly recounted twice to Street. When negotiating the final purchase price for the Masson premises, he needed to evaluate the wines in the cellars' inventory. Not yet trusting his own judgment, he hired the highly reputable A.R. Morrow to taste them, and all were declared superior. But the expert's palate was either superannuated, accustomed now to inferior wines, influenced by his friendship

with Masson, or—as MR later learned—entirely dependent on an assistant's opinions (and he hadn't been asked to judge the Masson wines). When MR finally tasted the wines given Morrow's great approval, he realized that he had bought a large quantity of casks and bottles filled with defective wines. All had to be thrown away or sold off to be distilled into brandy. But a costly lesson (MR said it amounted to $100,000) was learned: MR soon taught himself to become an expert wine taster. From then on he wasn't inclined to respect and trust anyone else's judgment—except Dr. Amerine's. Furthermore, he always wondered whether the sly Burgundian was fully aware that his wines were spoiled.

Knowing Street's penchant for character sketches and colorful stories, MR provided two rather humorous but revealing tales about Paul Masson:

> You will enjoy this one on old Paul Masson. He was the grand master when it came to propaganda. He carried with him for years his own wine wherever he went to dinner, not excluding the homes of other wine men. To all he said, "When you make a wine that is fit to drink, I will drink it." And to this day honest people say, "You know Paul Masson won't drink any other California wine." Then he was shipping by bottle some wine presumably intended to go east and so he started another story, and made great capital of it. The story was that the French bought Paul Masson Champagne, shipped it to France, re-labelled it as French Champagne and shipped it again as their own, in order to have the excellent quality nowhere else comparable to Paul Masson's. And the story still goes on. People ask me quietly if the French are still buying.
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> But to even things up, I must tell you about the incident where Paul was bettered. When the old Lefranc (his father in law) place [Almadén] was sold and the new owners had made wine, he came to taste it. But these chaps were ready for him. They knew Paul Masson never found anybody else's wine fit to drink. With him there was no half-way. He sat down, got himself all ready to taste it. Then he inspected it for color. "Not bad, boys, not bad at all. Well, you have everything here in your favor, soil, climate," he said. But as he held it up to the light he decided that it was a little light. Then the bouquet was not entirely what he had expected. He was becoming alarmed. He tasted it, but as the wine touched his lips he seemed to explode. He spit it out, swore and cursed the men who made it. He demanded a glass of water to rinse his mouth and told them they were doomed to failure like all the rest of California wine men. In rage and disgust he shuffled off with his stick. It had been his own wine he had tasted, wine made by him. They had baited and caught him.

MR then concluded the report on Masson with a disclosure of some of his own troubling experiences with the irritable Burgundian.

> After my 1936 vintage here he came to taste and tried to repeat the same thing [as at Almadén] but I only laughed at him and told him of my knowledge of the former incident. This further enraged him so he turned loose all he had when we were with his old employees. He was very insulting and he roared disapproval of everything. I merely left him and after he had gone I told my brother (who was here temporarily then to help me get things in hand) to tell him he could never return. I didn't mind what he said to me but his old employees both feared and respected him and they were now my employees.
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> My brother delivered the message and Paul said to him, "Yes, Martin is right. I don't blame him. I don't know how I could ever have done what I did. Martin has done all the things I wanted all my life to do (improvements) and it enrages me to see him have what I couldn't. But don't you ever tell him I said this. I wouldn't want him to know I said this." So Paul was kinder than it seemed on the surface. Too late to change, he preferred to have it as it is. He tells everyone the place has gone to ruin and all his fine old wines have been turned into money to finance my poor management. But I know what he really thinks and it is pathetic for he loves the place and would give everything he has to have a son doing what I am. When we pass on the road, he has his driver stop me and he asks me why I do not come to see him. Yet, before we talk long jealousy gets him and he starts to insult me. The last time we fought he had a stroke and almost died. So we are parted by a spirit that will not die in him, however poorly it may serve him. At about 88 [Masson's age is given wrong, for he would have been younger, in his early 80s] he is planting a small vineyard and making a few bottles of champagne each year which either don't ferment or break all the bottles. So he buys from me. I gave him my best Champagne first but he hated (my) vintage and demanded a replacement. So I gave him some 1927 (his old vintage—I had a few labels) and he had his secretary phone me that it was excellent. He is a dandy. But impossible to associate with. [4/19/40]

Paul Masson died on October 23, 1940, a half-year after this letter was written. It appears that MR didn't even mention his death to Julian Street; however, it's possible that a note or letter about it wasn't kept and filed, so hasn't survived. The breach between the two men, then, was apparently never truly healed prior to Masson's death. This epistolary evidence contradicts Eleanor Ray's fictionalized, endearing depiction in *Vineyards in the Sky* of their rapport toward the end of Masson's life.

Rusty Ray's early admiration of Masson, though, was permanently embedded. Especially as he grew older he felt entitled to mimic many of Paul's attitudes and behaviors since these marked characteristics suited him just as well: a prideful willfulness

that made it impossible ever to admit, perhaps even to himself, that he had ever made an inferior, let alone defective wine; a jealously authoritarian inability to appreciate, and to refrain from savaging, most wines made by other California vintners; a stubborn and shortsighted resistance to consider doing something in vineyard or cellar that differed from (and possibly improved upon) any procedure already firmly set by him as the *only* way to get optimal results; and a tyrannical tendency to precipitously order people "down the mountain" after they did or said something that had offended him, such as interrupt, contradict, or argue with him, or even offer gratuitous advice.

Educating the Connoisseur

Since not long after their correspondence commenced Street ingenuously admitted that he—like many wine devotees then and now—knew little indeed about the physical processes of growing wine grapes and from them producing delectable wine, he often asked his vintner correspondent to clarify a number of puzzlements. MR usually responded at considerable length, as with this passage concerning nature vs. nurture.

> I have promised to write you further about vines, and the story which you have told me about the Burgundy vines moved to Bordeaux ultimately producing grapes which made wine indistinguishable from the local Claret has been bothering me and I cannot dismiss it from my mind.
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> It does not bother me because I think that there could be any factual basis for such a story, but rather because the story exists, and may be accepted here and there....
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> You have no doubt long enjoyed many of the romantic tales associated with wines and vines. It seems the subject has no end of appeal to people possessed of both vision and imagination and the facts and fancy left behind them have often been confused.
>
> May I urge that you consider if it is not true that vines are products of heredity and environment. If, then, such be true, do you think that it could be possible for an environment to completely eradicate the effects of heredity in a mere matter of a few years? [1/24/40]

MR then offered Street examples from his own vineyard experience at Masson:

> My Pinot Noir vines are now forty years old, and the visitors I have had here who are natives of Burgundy see no difference in either the vines or the fruit from those growing in Burgundy, unless it be that in this richer and more virgin soil they are sometimes inclined to give out more foliage and to have the appearance almost of being healthier vines, certainly more vigorous. The Marquis de Lur-Saluces told me, on the occasion of his visit with me here last summer, that the life of a vine in the Bordeaux District was fifteen to twenty years, possibly twenty-five years, and he marveled at the fact that our vines are still going strong and are, in fact, at their best now when forty years of age....
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> It was my explanation and his belief that it was due entirely to the fact that our soil has only been worked for the approximate life of the vines which grow in it and in no case for more than one hundred years, whereas the soil of the Bordeaux District has, as you know, been worked for hundreds of years, as has been that of Burgundy.
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> There are many explanations for the story.... But, first I will ask you if you have not at times heard it said that the wine produced by a given vineyard is no longer comparable to what it was in earlier vintages, say twenty or thirty years earlier. I refer to the character of the wine, not its quality.

MR gave an example of two Masson wines vintaged from the same grape variety grown in a particular vineyard section: one made in the early years of the century by a former cellar man, now the aged vineyard manager, and the other of recent vintage. The first was "certainly not like any wine which is today made from that block and it is even possible to tell that the two would never be alike." He had then learned from the old man that many of the original vines had been replaced over time. So he concluded that although replacements might resemble their predecessors, they could be from a "different stock" (i.e., clone) of the same varietal grapevine, so that the new wine to which they contributed grapes would differ considerably from the older one. MR went on to the important influences of both environmental variables and heredity upon the making of great wines:

> As for environment, the environment here is not greatly unlike that of some of the vineyards in Burgundy, either as to soil or climate. Understand, I do not claim them to be alike, but merely that they are more alike than might be the case. Certain it is, that the heredity is the same in our vines as those now growing in Burgundy, since these very vines were brought here originally from Burgundy direct to this vineyard.
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> I believe that of the hundreds of different vine varieties there are only a very few which are capable of producing the finest wines. It has been demonstrated that only a limited number of varieties possessed of certain specific hereditary characteristics have produced fine wines. It remains, then, only to discover under what conditions of environment these hereditary qualities are at their best. I believe that we can say in the beginning that we have learned what certain of the requirements are with reference to both soil and climate, but beyond this, "discovery" must be made of the little sections of the world where these favored varieties will produce the finest wines....
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> It is my conclusion, then, that both heredity and environment are important and that their influences are

> in this vineyard not antagonistic, but the opposite.... The wines I will produce here from Pinot Noir grapes will certainly be different from those produced in Burgundy from the same variety, but they will at the same time be definitely related in a way that it is possible to trace to the variety of the grape, as you have found in tasting my Pinot Noir.

MR ended this impromptu essay with a look toward the future and the posterity who would come after the two of them—whether in the making of various wines, the judging of them, or scientifically investigating their characteristics and nuances.

> I conclude with the declaration that if forty years environment has not destroyed the influence of heredity it is not likely that another forty years will dissipate the character of the vine. As a matter of fact, we might pursue this sort of thing indefinitely, for the climate is never the same one year as another, either here or in France, and it is most certain that the soil is continually changing. If we want to look far enough ahead, I am willing to admit that great changes may come to the wines produced in Burgundy as well as those produced in my vineyard, but there will no longer be any record and if there be, the words which we set down now will not have the same meaning that they will have in the distant future when others study them.

When considering these remarks, it must be remembered that when Martin Ray was the master at Masson many fundamental issues about winegrowing were only beginning to be investigated scientifically. The era was a challenging one for vintners. Although viticulturists had long been studying the different grape species and varieties and producing ampelographies for distinguishing them—notably among the Vinifera, of course—little as yet had been proven, beyond speculation, about the origins of and connections among the particular varieties. The DNA evidence was still six decades away. Research, however, had actively begun in European and American universities and institutes about the influence of such variables as *terroir*, macro- and micro-climates, and soil additives, along with vine age, spacing, pruning, and trellising methods, upon winegrape growing and the ultimate product: wine. Equally as many issues in cellar practices were being investigated by enologists, to await answers that eventually would come from close observation, laboratory work, and much painstaking experimentation.

In the Masson Wine Cellars with Martin Ray

As might be expected, MR provided his East Coast wine connoisseur pen pal with a plenitude of commentary about what he did to produce, from the varietal grapes grown on the Masson property or occasionally purchased from other vineyards, the wines he had made beginning in 1936, was making right now, or intended to make in the coming years. He let it be known that he did not do as the other vintners did; he was already a diehard purist.

> Of course we eliminated the bacteria in the beginning by sorting the grapes, in picking out all the discolored or unhealthy berries, and crushing only the healthy ones. The usual practice is to add metabisulphite to the grapes as they are crushed, and again to the wine when it is first racked, at which time the wine is filtered, and at which time tannic acid, citric acid and even tartaric acid is added artificially. Beyond this, there is the treatment of both heat and freezing, and additional filtration. One of the men in California who is generally regarded the most outstanding producer of fine wines says that it is impossible to keep his white wines clear even after filtering without adding sulphur. And so it goes.
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> But in our cellars, each year we have made steps forward by concentrating on individual varieties until today, all of our varieties may be made and matured without resort to the usual practice[s]. And I am happy to say that this year, the last of the white varieties to be perfected, and the most difficult one of all to ferment has already become brilliantly clear of itself....
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> When wines do not clear up by themselves, we sell them to others in bulk. If a wine does not clear up by itself, I do not want to [intercede] because something is wrong and if that something cannot be found by microscopic inspection, it is certainly chemically out of balance and I am not interested in wines which must be artificially balanced by the addition of the things which they have not naturally. To be having to make all of these additions and subtractions would be like running a reformatory for children, and if I am to get pleasure and satisfaction from my work, I cannot devote my time to such efforts. [2/8/40]

When Street mentioned that for ordinary purposes he preferred drinking the Masson Gamay '36 to the Pinot Noir '36—the MR-vintaged wine that had bowled him over—MR understood, since he knew the Pinot needed more bottle-aging time. Yet he felt it necessary to generalize about some aspects of winegrowing probably unknown to most wine drinkers:

> Normally the history of a wine, so far as the consumer is concerned, begins when it is bottled, or includes only a brief part of reference to its childhood, much the same as it is with individuals; their history includes so little of childhood, which has been lost with the passing of the parents, but is of great importance. When I think of the Gamay '36 and the Pinot Noir '36, I think of the weather which preceded and was a part of that year's vintage. I think even of the way the vines were pruned, months before, and I think of how the grapes were harvested, how hot they were when they went in the fermenter, how

they fermented in the tank, at what temperature and at what sugar the free run juice was drawn off from the pommice [sic], how the fermentation finished up. Then, too, there is the manner of how the wine cleared up, its chemical analysis, its analysis by taste and inspection, every three months thereafter. As a matter of fact, we keep a record of the different puncheons to which each wine is racked and each individual puncheon actually changes the personality of the wine, for in the end, no puncheon is identical, although they are all virtually the same fine varietal. You will understand, then, that I cannot go through all these steps with you. I would like to, if we talked together. [2/8/40]

Because the Paul Masson Champagne Co. had been best known for its sparkling wines, MR couldn't neglect giving attention to creating new products in that area to demonstrate his own high standards. He wanted to improve upon those made by the firm's founder and his predecessor. Also, despite his touting the traditional or "classic" winemaking, he intended his new Champagnes to be different from—and surpassing—those made in France, which provided the models for vintners everywhere. MR, seemingly unawed by the famous foreign sparklers, wasn't averse to experimenting on his own, aiming for a more "natural" product. Here again MR persisted in staking his claim on the future. For instance, he detailed to Street why his new Champagnes could eventually outshine those from France:

You said that old Mr. Knight thought a touch of brandy might aid my 1937 Brut. I understand him fully. The taste of Champagne in France has that taste in it and he quite naturally looked for it; they add it because they have to, not because they want to. You have not heard of adding any brandy to white Burgundies to improve their taste. French Champagnes need something they don't have. The dosage is the answer—sugar and brandy cover a multitude of sins. I add a dosage to my Champagne if it can't stand on its own feet, too. It is no different there, in the matter. But I have here a climate far more suitable to grape growing (of Pinots) than the Champagne district. You no doubt recall, they had trouble in the beginning raising grapes there. It was not until they learned to make their artificial Champagne which they build from whatever they get naturally that the district really became important. We have now become accustomed to the taste of the product they produce and I admit is good enough because it has its points and it is uniform. All French Champagnes are very much alike and because they are made, not grown. And, as I say, we have become accustomed to them. But that does not mean they would have more appeal than the wine I make, and I believe the opposite is true. My Champagne will taste like wine, the grape. Their Champagne does not taste like wine.

Moreover, MR projected a similar outcome for his table wines further ahead, while also acknowledging that the great French wines were indeed the models he emulated: "I claim I can make a better, natural and more delicious Champagne than France. I claim I can ultimately make still wines as good as the best French. I know now how to do the former now. The latter I shall learn to do."

Then, too, a Martin Ray letter expressed his notoriously adamant proscription against *ever* combining varietal grapes in making wine or subsequently blending together the wines made from them:

Blending has never appealed to me and I do not believe it ever improved a naturally great wine to blend it with another like wine of another district or a great wine of another variety. Well, the practice is so wide of blending wines that I have never found anyone to agree with me but I have never found any real basis for believing blending improves any wine, whereas the opposite I have proved repeatedly. They would blend in France out of necessity. The free-run juice of a Pinot Noir is so little they could not afford to make Champagne out of it straight as a regular thing. The white grapes give more juice because they can be pressed. Sometimes, they press the Pinot Noir fully to get all the juice and then discolor the juice which is done with charcoal but that alters the wine, too. The French use this practice a lot more than is realized.... But when you have a truly great Burgundy, it is unblended. The finest red Bordeaux is unblended. [Note that MR was already maintaining that only Cabernet Sauvignon was worth using when making a fine Claret.] The finest Rieslings are unblended, and right down the line, if the wines are great, they are unblended. When you get into Champagne as made in France, it is not even close to being a natural wine....

You must taste the bottle of 1939 [Still Champagne] soon as I want you to see it now while it is new. It is a case of a completely natural wine, to which nothing was added, nothing taken from it. [4/30/40]

MR adamantly resisted the growing tendency among vintners to view winemaking primarily as applied chemistry and microbiology. (His rowdy dispute with Beaulieu's new "wine chemist" André Tchelistcheff, recalled for Street's entertainment, will be presented in a future piece.) Sometimes, inevitably, unfortunate consequences resulted in his wines from his usual refusal to utilize modern science as knowledgeably and fully as he might have done. Like his Methodist minister father, Rusty Ray had an inherent fundamentalist streak, but his had gotten applied to winemaking.

MR's Early Battles with the Wine Establishment

Early in their correspondence Martin Ray began trying to enlist Street as a major standard-bearer in his campaign to induce the better California wineries to produce, as he was already doing, pure varietal wines made wholly from fine wine grapes. The first step was to persuade all premium-aiming wineries to recognize the necessity of using *only* the supreme or superior varietal grapes in making their best wines.

MR had good reason to believe that he was already impacting the California wine industry. His new pure-varietal table wines, as well as various Champagnes—dry, still, and pink—made to carry on the Masson tradition, were sold at the highest prices for American wines. Also, MR's winery became the first in the U.S. to institute the European practice of barrel tasting, which enabled advance ordering by both distributors and select customers. MR introduced this new "Paul Masson System" in an article written for the December 1940 issue of *Wines and Vines.* He had published several other magazine articles in the same period; one described the classic methods in making wine, another discussed Champagne. They demonstrated his intention to educate both people in the wine trade and consumers about fine wines.

It initially appeared as if Martin Ray intended to assume leadership of the premium end of California winemaking. This role, if successfully undertaken, would require a willingness to work actively, diplomatically, and cooperatively with owners and vintners within a small group of wineries that wished to produce and market a better class of wines. But by 1940, as his letters to Street show, MR had already taken an impatient and even belligerent stance that inevitably alienated him from most other wine-growers. MR detailed to JS many problems experienced in his relations with other wineries and vintners, as well as their main trade organization, the Wine Institute.

After taking over Paul Masson, he had declined —"on principle" as he put it—to become a member of the Wine Institute (WI), created in 1934 to represent the various interests of the state's wineries, such as trying to ease burdensome taxation and regulation issues, and promoting consumption of California wines around the nation. Its pragmatic goals and large-group-focused means scarcely matched the rarefied ones that MR intended to advance at Paul Masson. And though he could hope for a change in the WI's emphasis over time so that it would encourage the development of premium wines, he did not realistically expect it. The bulk wineries—with their cheap jug wines and sweet fortified wines, and their large and rapidly expanding facilities mostly located in the Central Valley—had very different aims and methods than those of the better, and much smaller, commercial wineries. If the latter did aspire to make quality wines, they couldn't expect much help from the Institute, since they had no real clout there, where they constituted a minority of its membership. The dues they paid, based on annual sales, were considerably less than those of the big firms. Bulk producers weren't seeking a reputation for making fine wines, either for themselves or California; they were only interested in high-volume sales, earning large net profits, and outdoing their competitors.

Although MR resented the dominating power and influence of the big wineries on the WI's policies, even while remaining critical he could see usefulness in some of its functions. Perhaps Masson and MR might even benefit from the increased national publicity and advertising of California wines in general now being carried out by its associated promotional organization, the Wine Advisory Board. As he commented to JS:

> Membership in the Institute permits many things objectionable, some very obviously beneficial. I will join when other[s] raise their standards, which is indefinite, and probably I will actually never join. They are beginning to help me anyway. Their personal [*sic*] is however, not good, and their directors are a rough lot, hardly interested in what is best for our interests. [4/19/40]

For a while MR made efforts to get along with the organization's people, especially in situations advantageous to him, or when receiving wine writers whom the WI had sent to the Masson premises. It was as if he were operating a picturesque showcase for high-caliber California wines. "The Institute crowd keep bringing their visitors here, and I make it very easy for them to continue doing so," he told Street.

After JS asked MR to provide candid opinions about wine people, generally and specifically, the vintner began a response by saying rather tactfully (for him):

> I have written you a letter about personalities who are our leaders in the industry in California but I cannot send it. What is in it you either know or will know in time and much of it you no doubt suspect already. The reason I cannot tell you about them is, they are perhaps doing their best, aren't we all? I'll have to tell you about it gradually, as indeed I am, and in such a way that I will not appear to tear them down. After all, many of them are my friends and some of them have done many things to help me, and others have tried. Their mistakes are in

a sense my mistakes for, after all, I am one of them. And I can do more good by working with them than against them. Here and there one will turn against me and that will identify his interest and it may gradually bring about a division of these people which would be good. It is foolish to expect bulk producers and members of the Wine & Food Society to have common interests. And here and there some of these people may be eliminated, and that will improve the general atmosphere and make room for those new-comers that must come. This will be a far more dignified way than a destructive attack from within. [4/13/40]

Then in the same letter MR, in spite of his intention to be circumspect, went on to vent various grievances. Seeming even less tolerant and forgiving of the current generation of winery owners than he was of the Wine Institute that represented them, he expressed the radical's urge to demolish the status quo, along with a sense of profound isolation, since his winemaking aims and methods were at such variance from those of his fellow vintners.

[As for] a description of all our so called leaders of the wine industry here. They are not "leaders" at all, they are "followers." Add to these that group dominated by the big producers of vin ordinaire and you have them all in two lines which you can size up readily....

I keep trying to explain to you why it is necessary that new men come into this industry. Those here are neither capable or willing. But I have feared you would think me angered at the whole lot, bitter or prejudiced. I am none of this. I am merely observant and I see proof of my conclusions all about me. If I have now been so fortunate as to establish myself with you to the point where I may tear down all these old structures. We can then get about rebuilding new and better ones that will be enduring. Upon this assumption I shall, then, write you very shortly of the personalities who never should be possessed of such authority.

Until then, I can only think of gain, and say there is not in the entire industry one man who has vision, industry and spirit and who is able to employ these things so necessary to progress. I get mighty lonesome at times for one man to talk to about wines and I tell you they are so damned shallow I am profoundly depressed whenever I undertake such a discussion.

Then MR mentioned briefly an incident which he later magnified into an iconic event: "Mr. [Joseph] Concannon came to see me a year or so ago to ask me to take some leadership among the wine men but it was an army I didn't care to lead and a war which I preferred to fight on the opposite side.... The right kind of personel [sic] is necessary."

Apparently this actual event involving Concannon was less dramatic than the story MR often recounted in later years. He would tell how a delegation of vintners visited him one day at Masson. Their desire to produce better-quality wines, they said, had put them in a difficult position with most other Wine Institute members. Thus they were forming their own special group. Not only did they urge Martin Ray to join them, but they also wanted him to serve as an officer—and therefore a principal spokesman.

As MR's oft-told tale had it, instead of graciously accepting this proffered leadership position, he asked his visitors whether members of the fledging group would go "on record" by publicly declaring themselves ready to change how they made and labeled their best wines. If so, he would join them and offer guidance. This commitment would, of course, involve replanting their existing vineyards and getting their grape suppliers to do it too, so as to be able to vintage far more fine winegrapes—and from them making wholly unblended wines. This was the *only* way, MR informed them, for California to achieve superior, even supreme wines. It would then become widely acknowledged at last that the state was indeed a great winegrowing region, and its prevailing reputation for producing imperfect or deceptive wines would be cast aside. But as MR later told it, the vintners declined to submit to these demands, citing the prohibitive costs involved and also how long such a changeover would take. To add to MR's disgust, when he served them some of his pure (and very dry) varietal wines, they acted unimpressed, thereby revealing their real ignorance of excellent table wines. It was a hopeless situation.

Unlike his comparable winemaking peers in the other "better" wineries, MR did things on a small scale. Operating what virtually amounted to an early boutique-type winery, he usually made only 3,000 cases altogether of still wines of his six best varietals —500 each of Pinot Noir, Cabernet-Sauvignon (he usually hyphenated it), and Gamay [Beaujolais], as his reds; and Pinot Blanc ("Vrai"), Pinot Chardonnay (as it was called then), and Folle Blanche, as his whites. (The latter, crisp and refreshingly tart, indicated to him the potential in this underrated secondary variety.) His several different Champagnes, made from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, were produced in similarly small quantities. Though MR sold to other wineries most of the undesirable miscellaneous grapes he harvested from the Masson vineyards (these plantings dated back to Prohibition or earlier times), he did produce some batches of unpretentious *vins ordinaires* for local people, mainly French and Italian, who bought them at the winery.

During the uncertain period when California's wine industry was being resurrected, did Martin Ray's insistence upon maverick and elitist-appealing winemaking ideas actually make good business sense? The other proprietors of self-declared premium wineries

believed they could ill afford to do things as he demanded that they soon be done. How would they stay afloat financially? Wineries were only now beginning to emerge from the disastrous effects of Prohibition, and to complicate things the Depression was lingering on. Still, a few wineries were beginning to pay more attention to achieving quality. After 1935 they could legally label and market wines as varietals even though they might legally contain only 51% of the named varietal grape. They found they could charge, and earn, appreciably more for them. Rarely if ever, however, were they 100% "pure," as the Paul Masson wines were—and as Martin Ray insisted that others' varietals also be. But after all, winery managers could rationalize, only a miniscule population of Americans were true wine connoisseurs who could tell the difference between pure and blended Cabernet Sauvignons or Pinot Noirs ... and really care about it.

As their often voluminous letters crisscrossed the continent in 1940, the two men came to regard each other as close friends—making confessions, exchanging gifts, and even swapping their wives' recipes. Apart from many back-and-forth discussions about wines and the wine industry, they wrote about books as well as the authors each of them knew, reported on their social lives, fretted over the American political scene, and commented on the ominous world events certain soon to engulf the U.S. From time to time Martin revealed to Julian a gentler, more introspective and philosophical side of himself than he displayed to the wine industry, where his relations were becoming increasingly acrimonious.

The most prominent and persistent facet of their correspondence, though, concerned MR's continuous quest to secure a partnership with a suitable national distributor for his premium wines, and naturally he hoped Julian Street would help him accomplish this.

[The third segment of this coverage of the Ray–Street correspondence will be published in the next issue.]

BOOKS & BOTTLES, ***cont'd from*** **p.13 —**

advice..." and *The World of Wines* (New York: Macmillan, 1964; revised 1974, 1980), an "all-inclusive guide designed for easy and practical reference."

The Bottles: Here is the best wine, from each of the above regions, that my tasting panel has pondered recently. The ratings: 80 is good; 90 is unforgettable.

Alsace: Trimbach Frederic Emile Riesling, 1999. 85pts
Chablis: Michel Picard, 2001. 82pts.
Burgundy: Domaine Des Perdrix Nuits-Saint-Georges, 2000. 93pts.
Beaujolais: Ch. De la Chaize Brouilly, 2000. 88pts.
Rhône Valley: Paul Jaboulet Parallèle 45, 1999. 83pts.
Bordeaux: Rothschild Mouton Cadet, 2001. 89pts.
Loire: B & G Tradition Vouvray, 2001. 83pts.
Champagne: Lanson Brut Gold Label, 1996. 88pts.