

"Supplement" to the WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

Vol.13 No.4

A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

October 2003

CANADIAN WINE BOOKS

by
Eberhard Buehler

[Little did your Editor know that when she asked the author to write a piece on Canadian wine books—his new-found thirst—that he would produce not only a compilation of Canada's wine literature, but an interwoven history of Canada's wine industry. His carefully researched, well-written and energetic treatise demands to be presented "as a whole." Thus our first "Supplement" to the regular issue of our Wayward Tendrils Quarterly, with sincerest thanks to Eberhard Buehler. — Editor]



any of you know that I once owned a substantial collection of books on wine, which came to a sad end in 1980. It proved emotionally and financially impossible to rebuild that decimated possession, and the remains were ultimately dispersed to equally worthy collectors. However, wine books continued to run in the blood, as did wine itself. When I returned to the land of my birth in 2000 after 45 years in the U.S., I concentrated on Canadian wines, determined to make up for all the lost years. Finding today's wines more agreeable, by and large, than similarly priced European and other new world wines, and having given up the hope of ever being able to drink again all the great European growths that we "chugalugged" in the 1960s, starting a collection of Canadian books on wine seemed like an idea whose time had come.

Easier in the conception than in the execution, however. Since Canada has not had a respectable wine industry until fairly recently, there hasn't been too much for the presses to begin rolling for. Generally the press follows the wines—and the bookpress actually does owe a great deal to the winepress. A student of the history of printing at U.C. San Diego, who warns us that he is not a

scholar, reports in a study published on the internet (*Manuscripts, Books, and Maps: The Printing Press and a Changing World*) that Gutenberg's printing press represents an adaptation of three prior inventions: paper from China (12th century), block-print technology (via Marco Polo, 13th century), and the screw-type olive oil or wine press. How then does one decide which books qualify for Canadian pressings? It's all subjective, of course, but there are precedents to lean on. The earliest book in André Simon's collection was a Gutenberg bible dated circa 1450-55. We all know the reason for the inclusion of this book, but Simon devotes two pages to his justification: innumerable references to wine in both the old and new testaments.

Here are my "rules" for Canadian wine books and other printed material. They must have (should have) Canadian content—about grape varieties and viticulture, wine and winemaking, history of the wine industry, biographies of wine entrepreneurs and winemakers, cooking with wine, wine advice, fruit wines, mixed drinks, and so on. No side trips (not yet) into beer, spirits or cookery, unless there is a clear wine theme. How much content? Arbitrarily, one paragraph in pre-1950 publications, several pages before 1970, 50% before 1990, 100% thereafter—with some exceptions. If the author is Canadian, the book may well qualify if Canadian wines are conspicuous by their presence. However, in the case of *"The Heartbreak Grape,"* which has no Canadian content, not only is Marq de Villiers Canadian, he actually lives in Canada! We'll get to a few other far-fetched examples later.

First, a disclaimer. My list of Canadian wine

material is of necessity incomplete, since my research began only a year or two ago, and I am only a budding expert, like a grapevine in its second year. Some of the statements in this article, some of the conclusions drawn, are open to academic negotiation. I have a list of 200 items, of which I own about 70%. Of the remaining items, some were looked at, or copied from microfilm at the Toronto Research Library, many were found in Melvyl (University of California online library), and a few in searches of online booksellers, mainly ABEbooks (the biggest and best), based in Victoria, BC. And I scanned bits and pieces of Thomas Pinney's monumental *History of Wine in America* (Berkeley, 1989).

Early Heritage

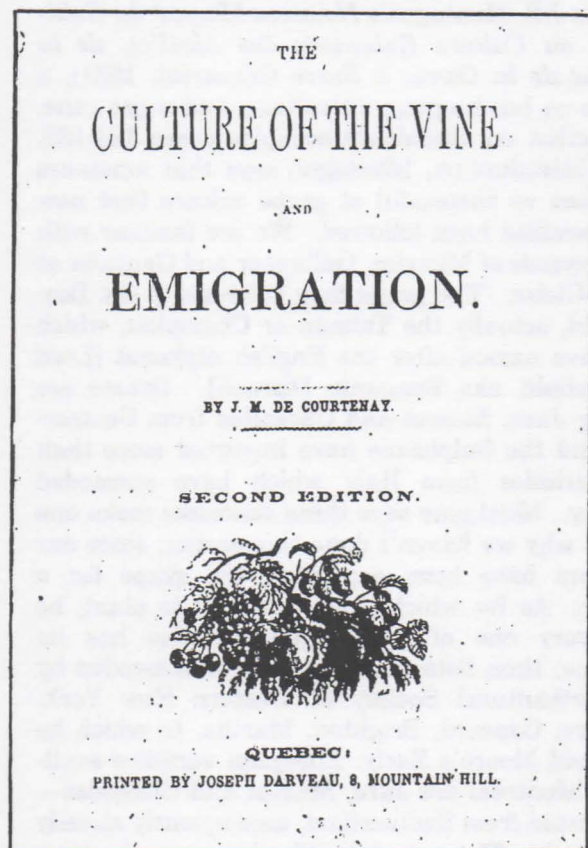
The earliest, much disputed, historical record of grapes in North America is Leif Erickson's *Vinland*. At the northern tip of Newfoundland, excavations at l'Anse aux Meadows, undertaken by the Norwegian explorer Helge Ingstad during the 1960s, uncovered remains of a Norse settlement dating to the 11th century. The site has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. Some experts believe that Erickson found only blueberries and other berries native to the area, and that he called it Vinland to rouse interest in the area for settlement. More convincing is the etymological footnote in Farley Mowat's *The Farfarers* (Toronto, 1998) to the effect that *vin* in ancient Norse meant grass or pasture, and did not acquire its later meaning until Christianity brought Latin to Norway and Iceland, leading to incorrect translations. However, Mowat also says: "Wild grapes probably grew in eastern and probably other parts of Newfoundland until the post-fourteenth-century climatic decline" (page 350, note 4, 5). Some scholars, and there are some to represent every point of view, believe that "Vinland" was somewhere near Boston—Martha's Vineyard, perhaps? Most scholars dispute some of the rather startling conclusions drawn in Mowat's work—that the Viking voyages of discovery were actually preceded by those of the Albans of Scotland. The famous Vinland map, now at Yale and by many experts considered to be a fake, is beautifully documented in *The Vinland Map* (new edition, New Haven, 1995), but the book sheds no light on the vines problem, and so it can't be counted as a Canadian wine book. Another thought: since Canadians (well, some of them anyway) are not terribly meticulous about defining wine as produced exclusively from the freshly-pressed juice of the grape (some might say *vinifera* grape to be more precise), to the exclusion of all other fruits, and since Newfound-

land is famous for, among other things, its blueberry wine, and since some believe the Vikings found blueberries rather than grapes—well, you get my drift.

More than 500 years later, in 1535, Jacques Cartier was exploring the St. Lawrence River and came upon an island downstream from the present city of Québec. In his diary he says: "... we found it full of very beautiful trees, such as oaks, elms, pines, cedars and other woods like ours; and we also found many vines, which we had not seen before in all this land, which is why we named it the *Isle of Bacchus*." Later, Cartier re-named it *l'Île d'Orléans*, its present name, in honor of Charles, Duke of Orleans, third son of Francis I. More grapes were found farther up the St. Lawrence and the men loaded some of them on board. The first recorded attempt to cultivate the indigenous vine was by Samuel de Champlain who planted them in the garden of his home at the time of the founding of Québec, in October 1608. In 1610 Champlain says that the vines were lost through neglect while he was away in France. As for European vines, they were first brought to Acadia (Nova Scotia) in 1606 by Louis Hébert. He moved to Québec and transplanted them there in 1618, well after Champlain, who was originally thought to have been the first to plant European, rather than indigenous grapes in Québec. For more detail on this and subsequent vine events, see Jean-Marie Dubois' *Introduction de la Vigne Cultivée au Québec ...1608-1670*, in "Douro—Estudos & Documentos" vi, 12, 2001, pages 175-190.

Winemaking in Canada, of one sort or another, probably goes back to those early settlements and consequently may well precede the earliest U.S. production, though perhaps not the earliest production in North America (see also Pinney: *History of Wine in America*). However, it did not become more than a blip in the agricultural life of the country until very recent times. Consider the fact that in French Canada, a good source of wine was always available from the mother country, so there was no need to expend arduous effort in wine-growing and writing about it. To this day, the province of Québec has very close ties with wine producers in France. For British Canada, there was no wine available from the mother country, and although the climate was right for wine production, at least in Ontario, the talent and the interest were absent. The final defeat of the French by the British in 1759 further delayed Canada's entry into wine respectability. In this sense, the people of California owe a huge debt to the early Spanish and Mexican settlers, for steering them in the right direction.

19th CENTURY
Count Justin de Courtenay



Grape and wine literature in the U.S. began in the 18th century and had reached flood proportions before the appearance of the earliest Canadian documents on the subject. Count Justin de Courtenay's *Culture of the Vine and Emigration* (Québec, 1863), records his campaign in Lower Canada (Québec) to promote widespread European grape culture in Canada by encouraging emigration from the European wine regions, where the summers and winters are like ours. Forget about the "ideal" Scotch farmer immigrant. He believed the German growers in Ohio simply did there exactly what they had done in Germany, not adjusting their methods to local conditions. No remarkable wine is grown south of the 40th parallel—Bordeaux is at 45, Burgundy at 50. As for Sherry and Port, they're manufactured with brandy and they're for the English market only. He felt that Québec could do better than Burgundy because of the short hot summers with superior heat and air quality. The Catawba and Isabella are worthless, he says, because they require more heat than even Cincinnati can provide—6000° for Catawba and 5000° for Isabella. De Courtenay was not able to

convince the right people and moved to Upper Canada (Ontario), where in 1864 he bought the Clair House property in Cooksville originally owned by Johann Schiller. Schiller had learned wine-making in his native Rhineland and in 1811 made wine in Cooksville from wild grapes and American hybrids. He is considered the father of the Canadian wine industry. De Courtenay expanded the property to 40 acres of grapes, making Clair House the largest operation in Ontario. Perhaps he owed his success to the truth of his own pronouncements. Ontario's wine country is located in the so-called Carolina zone—with a habitat similar to that of the American Carolinas. And I can attest to that: some of the best peanuts I've eaten are grown in Ontario. De Courtenay exhibited his wine at the Paris Exposition of 1867, where it was spoken of "in very high terms" by "the best judges to be found in Europe" (*Toronto Leader*, July 8th). This reminds me of American wines at the same Exhibition, also highly regarded. Were all these judges drunk? Or were European wines then no better than ours? Unfortunately, De Courtenay was unable to secure financing from the government of Ontario, and closed his winery.

In 1866, De Courtenay had published another interesting essay on viticulture: *The Canada Vine Grower: How Every Farmer in Canada May Plant a Vineyard and Make His Own Wine* (Toronto, James Campbell). He advises that no "foxy" grapes be used, a flavor that "belongs to almost all the grapes hitherto used in America" for wine, such as Catawba, Isabella and Hartford Prolific. Exempt from foxiness are the Clinton, Delaware and most of the wild vines of Canada. These, together with Golden Chasselas could form the basis of future vineyards in Canada, and North America. To make the best wine, you need a combination of grapes, such as Clinton for everything except water, the Delaware for better bouquet, though deficient in water, the Golden Chasselas for sugar and aroma and other elements, and the Ontario which has an excess of water. Interestingly he also suggests that Canada could be a supplier of "congealed wines" to improve other wines—leaving the grapes on the vines in cold weather. [Is this an icewine prophecy?] De Courtenay is very much down on grape culture under glass—fine for Britain, but unnatural here, and it's torture for the grapes. In the European wine regions, hot-houses are used for rare flowers and tropical fruits. "The exception to this rule has been a vinery upon the English principle, imported to France by M. de Rothschild, and to which is attributed the introduction of the 'Oidium,' that

most destructive disease of the vine..." De Courtenay would prefer to see mulberry culture encouraged, rather than grapes under glass. He said some Ontario ladies had exhibited fine silk they had produced, but were laughed at, and that was the end of that. The U.S. is groping for a better system than the German one; laborers from the Rhine prune for their northern climate (2700°C max), whereas Québec has 4200. We should use the principles of Italy, which has hot summers and cold winters like our own. De Courtenay did get the support of a few influential people, including Justice Lewis T. Drummond, who cited the example of government aid for the development of natural resources in California.

Thomas George Shaw

Another of the earliest references to wine in Canada appeared in the second edition of Thomas George Shaw's *Wine, the Vine, and the Cellar* (London, 1864). Following his coverage of California, Shaw says: "Although convinced that the climate of Canada is totally unsuited for the growth, and the making of good wine, I insert the following remarks which I have just met with:" —And here he quotes an unnamed source on De Courtenay's effort to promote Canada as a wine country for potential immigrants. De Courtenay's application was submitted in 1859 and the main French authority he had called on was Count de Gasparin who asserted that the most favorable climates for grape culture were those where the growing season is shortest and hottest, making Canada ideal.

Beaconsfield Vineyard

The next printed item on my list is a brief promotional brochure by Menzies & Co., a nursery: *The Beaconsfield Vineyard, established 1877 at Beaconsfield (the residence of Mr. Menzies), Pointe Claire, P.Q.* (Montréal, 1880). They give advice on viticulture: soil, exposure, wind-breaks. Look for areas with deep snow cover, and after autumn pruning, cover the vines with earth to a depth of 3-4 inches, using a plough between the rows. In a prefatory note they warn that a nursery a mile down the road calls itself Beaconsfield Vineyard. We "make a specialty of growing vines, and do not deal in American trees or products of any kind." The following year, a 15-page article by J.-C. Chapais: "La Vigne: sa Culture et sa Taille" from the *Journal d'Agriculture Illustré*, was reprinted (October 1881) by Auguste Dupuis, a nurseryman in Village des Aulnaies. Dupuis says that he will give a copy free to anyone making a purchase of vines from his nursery. With this as a guide, they will be assured of success.

J. B. Montagne

Next on this short list of 19th century Canadian works is J.B. Montagne's *Nouveau Manuel du Cultivateur: ou Culture Raisonnée des Abeilles, de la Vigne et de la Canne à Sucre* (Montréal, 1881), a treatise on bee-keeping, viticulture, and sugar cane. The section on viticulture occupies pages 123-162. In his introduction, Montagne says that amateurs have been so successful at grape culture that now the specialists have followed. We are familiar with the vineyards of Menzies, Gallagher and Gauthier at Pointe-Claire. The grape they cultivate is the Beaconsfield, actually the Talman or Champion, which they have named after the English diplomat [Lord Beaconsfield, aka Benjamin Disraeli]. Others are growing Jura, Muscat and Chasselas from Switzerland, and the Sulpicians have imported more than fifty varieties from Italy which have succeeded perfectly. Montagne says these successes make one wonder why we haven't done this earlier, since our neighbors have been exploiting the grape for a century. As for which grape varieties to plant, he says every one of the 10,000 varieties has its partisans, then lists the varieties recommended by the Horticultural Society of Western New York: Delaware, Concord, Brighton, Martha, to which he would add Moore's Early. European varieties available in Montréal are Jura, Muscat and Chasselas—all imported from Switzerland, consequently already acclimated. There is lots of advice on planting, pruning, training, soil, as well as grafting and cross-ing, and winemaking.

Also published in 1881 was a 15-page article in the Ontario Agricultural Commission Report for 1881, third edition: "Cultivation of the Grape and Native Wine Making." It pulls together facts and experiences and current thinking on the subject. One of them is that attempts to grow vinifera will always fail. Most agree that a large area of Ontario is suitable for grapes. And a loud and clear note is that Concord is the most reliable and profitable. But John Hoskin, a Toronto winemaker, says that the Clinton and Concord have given the wine of Canada a very bad name. You can make wine from it, but you'll never touch Concord as long as you have Delaware in the house. As for books, William Haskins of Hamilton, who had been growing grapes for some 20 years, recommends Fuller; Husmann is not quite so well adapted to Canada.

Arthur Defossè

Arthur Defossès' *Traité sur la Culture du Raisin Sauvage: la Vigne Sauvage ou Indigène du Canada Susceptible de Devenir l'une des Grandes Ressources*

du Pays (Montréal, 1889) has only 15 pages, but is a rather interesting bit of grape jingoism. The best place for the grapes, he says, is near an iron mine, "and God knows we have iron mines." He also suggests putting some iron ore at the foot of the vines. One of the remedies for phylloxera is inoculation with iron sulfate. Our native grapes are rich in iron, so they'll be prepared for phylloxera. If a native wine seems rather expensive for a Canadian wine, think of it as a medical wine, cheaper than the imported ones which contain iron and tannin, perhaps artificially. Desfossès also talks about wine-making in France from dried grapes, that Audibert had written a treatise on this subject (Marseille, 1880, 5th ed; 1886, 12th ed). At first, he says, the vineyard owners raised a hue and cry about these fraudulent wines. But when Audibert was given a gold medal by the Academy of Science for his services, they all jumped on the bandwagon and tripled their wine production—which had been reduced to one third by phylloxera.

20th CENTURY

And that's that for the 19th century. My first offering for the 20th is *The Fruits of Ontario* (Toronto, 1907), which has 24 pages on grapes. The introduction gives advice on all aspects of growing grapes, followed by a list of 37 grape varieties, with information for each on origin, vine, bunch, berry, flesh, quality, value and season. Black & white photo illustrations are provided for 17 of the grapes. All varieties originated in the U.S., except Janesville, Moyer and Northern Light, which were developed in Ontario. The Niagara was the leading white grape in Ontario at the time. The edition of 1914 has one more page and lists the same varieties, but with 5 additional illustrations.

The next sixty years are populated with Ontario and British Columbia bulletins for grape growers and winemakers, promotional brochures by the wine industry, statistical reports on imports and exports, restaurant wine menus, some of them certainly of interest to a collector. Then of course there were reports on alcoholism and the even greater risk to health of prohibition. The publication of the 1909 *Québec License Law* (Québec, 1912) probably needs to be seen in the context of prohibition.

Canadian Prohibition

And while we're on the subject of prohibition, let's look at Gerald Hallowell's *Prohibition in Ontario, 1919-1923* (Ottawa, Ontario Historical Society, 1972), a well-documented account that covers the rest of Canada as well. Prohibition in Canada had a shorter life than did prohibition in the U.S., where

the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, passed by Congress 18 Dec 1917 and ratified 19 Jan 1919 by 75% of the states, was enforced by the Volstead Act of 28 Oct 1919, passed over President Wilson's veto. Prohibition in the U.S. ended 5 Dec 1933 with ratification by the 36th state (Utah) of the 21st (Repeal) Amendment. In Canada, the Dunkin Act of 1864 had granted the right of "local option" to any county or municipality in the country. Though the first national plebiscite on prohibition in 1898 yielded a majority in favor, the government under Sir Wilfred Laurier elected not to enact it at the national level, because Québec was overwhelmingly opposed. However, the provinces were mostly dry already, and they passed their own laws, which varied from province to province. Prince Edward Island, the smallest, was the first to enact Prohibition in 1901, followed by the remaining provinces during the first World War.

Hallowell's book traces the rise and fall of prohibition in Ontario, which is of particular interest because Ontario was a major producer of alcoholic beverages. In October of 1919, a referendum was held to determine whether the wartime Ontario Temperance Act prohibiting the sale of liquor should be repealed or retained. The campaign by the prohibitionists was intense, including leaflets dropped from airplanes urging voters not to allow Ontario to become the SLUM of this continent. One argument used was that there would be dire consequences if Ontario were 'wet' surrounded by 'dry' neighbors ... With the United States 'dry' Canada would become the "Mecca for the lowest and poorest class of immigrant, the inebriate asylum of the Continent ... the army of American tramps will head this way...." Speakers such as Billy Sunday were brought to rallies in Toronto to fire up the crowd. Toronto prohibitionists also hosted a World Prohibition Convention, with delegates from the British Empire, the U.S., France, Italy, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Japan. Mrs. Oliver of Australia said that Ontario must not fail. "When we go back to Australia we will look up to you and feel that you are leading the world in this cause, and that you will become the saviours of the world ..." The result was a big victory for prohibition in Ontario, while in the same year Québec went wet. However, the manufacture and trade of alcoholic beverages, a federal responsibility, was never prohibited, and export to the U.S.—often labeled for shipment to Mexico—was common. It remained legal for individuals to import liquor from Québec for use in the home. To protect Ontario grape growers, wine made from grapes grown in Ontario was exempted, as was beer.

Further, liquor was easily available by medical prescription. Some doctors became bootleggers in effect, one of them having written over 2000 prescriptions in one month, receiving 2 to 3 dollars each. Attempts to regulate this traffic by setting limits (50 one-quart orders per month) and through self-policing by the medical associations were only partly successful.

Consequently, in 1921 Ontario prohibited the importation of liquor, and Québec cooperated by banning the sale of liquor destined for Ontario. This marked the zenith of prohibitionist success, but it was also the beginning of the end. Some had supported prohibition as long as it did not affect them personally, as it did with this new ban on imports. British Columbia voted 'wet' in 1920 and began the sale of alcoholic beverages in government stores. The fact that British Columbia and Québec were exporting liquor to the U.S., much of it made in Ontario, thus profiting at Ontario's expense, began to shake Ontario's resolve. In 1923, Manitoba ended prohibition in favor of government control and sale of liquor. By 1924, Alberta and Saskatchewan had also entered the 'wet' column, and Ontario was the only holdout west of the Maritimes. Many felt that prohibition in Ontario failed partly because Ontario was still too "British" in the 1920s to adopt what was essentially an American idea, that prohibition violated British traditions of individual liberty. It's amusing, in this context, to note that when Manitoba ended prohibition, a prominent Ontario temperance leader explained away the defeat by declaring that Manitoba was the least British and Canadian of the western provinces! The official end of Ontario prohibition came in 1927 with the establishment of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, more fondly known as the LCBO. Nova Scotia followed in 1930, but Prince Edward Island, the first province to enact Prohibition in 1901, was the last to give it up, in 1948.

First full-length Canadian wine book

After that long digression on prohibition, next on your plate (though not yet your palate) is Percy Rowe's *The Wines of Canada* (Toronto, 1970), the first full-length book on Canadian wine. In his easy-reading book, Rowe covers the history and current status of the industry. In the *Jesuit Relation* of 1636, Le Jeune had said he liked the wine made from the local grapes, but thought the weather too cold for viticulture. He was told that the vines "will be safe all winter under the snow, and that in the spring it need not be feared that the vines will

freeze as they do in France because they will not sprout so early." But Rowe says optimism is not enough. "Québec has always demanded more wine than any other part of Canada because of the French-Canadian palate, but has never been able to produce a local product." Never can be a long time, but in this case it was less than 20 years, as we will see. After prohibition, which saw some really awful wines, many of them exported to the U.S., the wines were sanitized, but the basic taste was the same (Concord), because the grape growers were hard to win over. Eventual success was due to immigrants, beginning with Adhemar de Chaunac, who became the T.G. Bright company's winemaker. The winemaker at Château-Gai Wines was Algerian, with a German assistant. In British Columbia, meanwhile, the bulk of winemaking was from imported California Thompson Seedless grapes, with added juices from hybrids to add a distinctive flavor. Most of these hybrid vineyards were so small that the vines became part of the family. One woman said of her husband that "of course he kissed each grape good morning and good night." The Vineland Research Station in the Niagara Peninsula started its grape breeding program in 1913 and by this time it had done extensive research on hybrids. At first, it had done research only on fruits—no grapes—because one of the early directors was a teetotaler.

Rowe tells us about George and Ben Chaffey, two Canadian grape growers who left their country, worked on irrigation developments in California, then in 1887 moved to Australia, where they received aid from the governments of Victoria and South Australia. They are mentioned in the Australian literature as either Canadians or Californians. Another interesting tidbit is about Mr. Girardot, born in France, winemaker in Essex County, Ontario, who took some of his wine to France to find that "French connoisseurs declared it superior to Bordeaux ... I don't think that the wines imported from France to Canada are as a rule anything like as wholesome as ours because the foreign wine is doctored a great deal." Adhemar de Chaunac, who had brought Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to Bright's, produced a Sauterne "which won a 'gold' in California [1930s?], so to prevent any tarnishing of their products by repetition, the Americans made him a judge for the following year." Bright had also produced a Pinot Chardonnay, but in very limited quantity. Final note: "In this year of 1970 ... at Jerez de la Frontera, Canada [is] for the first time recognized as a wine producing country."

Leon Adams

A surprise entry comes from California in 1973, in the form of a compact well-written and positive 17-page chapter on the wines of Canada in the first edition of Leon Adams' *Wines of America* (Boston, 1973). Do add it to your Canadian reading list, bearing in mind that much has changed since 1973. On the subject of the Vineland Research Station, Adams talks about Ralph Crowther's invention of "the Crowther-Truscott submerged-culture *flor* sherry-making process, which is revolutionizing the production of dry sherries in Canada and the United States ... Others have claimed to have invented the process, including a Spanish researcher who even got a patent on it in Spain in 1968. I can testify, however, that Crowther was making his *flor* (Spanish *fino*-type) sherry at Vineland as far back as 1955, because I was there" Adams goes on to note that "Canadian wines are seldom given more than passing mention in most wine books, and British author Hugh Johnson omitted them entirely from his most recent one, *The World Atlas of Wine*. When asked to explain, Johnson said that the one Canadian wine he had tried was the worst he had ever tasted." The second edition of *Wines of America* (New York, 1978) includes a few updates to the Canadian chapter. The fourth edition of 1990 has further updates, reflecting the big increase in the number of small wineries, but the number of pages is down from twenty to twelve. Although Adams introduces the new wineries in Nova Scotia, he completely ignores Québec, which by this time was well on its way.

"upheaval and renewal"

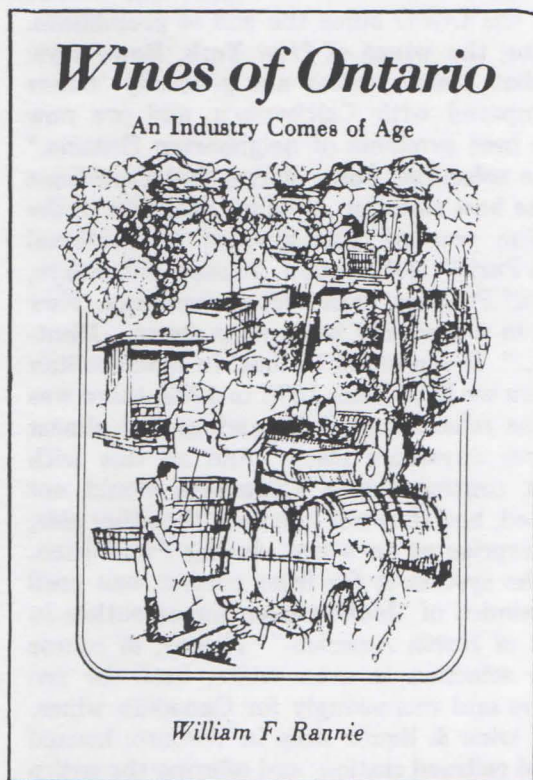
Back now to the seventies, which was a period of upheaval and renewal in the Canadian wine industry. Books of advice on wines for Canadians were generally negative on Canadian wines, but there were exceptions. Pierre Petel's *Wine: a Practical Guide for Canadians*, first published in French in 1971, says that his advice should not be construed as 'negative': "it is simply a matter of objectivity." Gail Donner and Lucy Waverman, in their *Penny-pincher's Wine Guide* (Toronto, 1974, updated 1975), commented on wines available at the LCBO. They remain cautious on Canadian wines. Though the hybrids are good, there are better buys in foreign wines. Of Brights Manor St. Davids Sauterne: "wash strawberries in it." Brights President extra dry white: bouquet "yuk!" – taste "sulfuric acid." London white dinner medium dry: bouquet of cheap perfume; "the bottle is interesting, but the wine isn't." Andrew Sharp's *Vineland 1000: A Ca-*

nadian View of Wine (Toronto, 1977) appears to sit on the fence on this issue. In their search for an unbiased opinion on Canadian versus imported, most people just turn to beer. As for "Vineland," it was a case of mistaken identity; grapes and wine were to play as big a role in Canada in the next 900 years as hockey in Mexico. Sharp tries to educate through humor, but he comes across as a smart-ass. As late as 1980, in *Chatelaine: the Romance of Wine & Food* (Rosenberg and Vaughan), Canadian wines are not included—they are characterized as all *la-brusca*. If this was not just snobbery, it was ignorance, for by 1977, as Percy Rowe points out in *Red, White and Rosé: Enjoying Wines in Canada* (Don Mills, 1978), more than half of the Ontario grape harvest consisted of hybrids or *viniferas*, mostly picked by mechanical harvesters. Gone were the grape pickers of the fifties that had been flown in annually from the Caribbean—St. Catharines and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad had become twin cities. The *viniferas* that Brights had brought in from the Rhône and Burgundy finally bore fruit—Chardonnay (from Champagne) sold for the first time in 1976. Inniskillin obtained the first wine license granted by the LCBO since the end of prohibition. In discussing the wines of New York, Rowe says: "for me, that state's wines are generally 'minor league' compared with California's, and are now behind the best products of neighboring Ontario." As for wine selection, Rowe claims that Canadians now had the best selection of wines available in the world. "Can you get this kind of international selection in Paris? No! [Berlin, Moscow and Tokyo, No!] London? Perhaps, with a lot of searching. New York? Yes, in a few very large wine stores. Montréal? Yes! ..." [I can attest to that: in cosmopolitan Milan, where we lived from 1978 to 1983, there was a stupendous selection of Italian wines, but almost nothing from anywhere else.] And all this with government control, which Canadians would not have accepted, had they not just seen the other side, private enterprise at its worst, during Prohibition. Although the system is far from perfect, one need only be reminded of "Mafia-ridden liquor outlets in other parts of North America." [Today, of course (2003), the selection is even wider, both for imported wines and increasingly for Canadian wines. The largest wine & liquor shop in Toronto, housed in a restored railroad station, and offering the entire range of LCBO products, was opened early this year. It has 21,000 sq. ft. of shopping space. Contrast this with Lavinia in Paris, billed as the largest wine store in Europe—at 16,100 sq. ft.] Before leaving Rowe, here's an interesting anecdote he relates.

Basil Hobbs was a Montréal wine importer with a distinguished war record, having shot down the first German Zeppelin over Britain in the First World War, and of course he had photographs of his derring-do hung in his office. In 1946 he was visited by Hans Steifensand, representative of Valckenberg, the German wine merchants. Steifensand, a former U-boat commander had managed to get into the Gulf of St. Lawrence during the war. Spotted by the Royal Canadian Air Force, he was chased back to the Azores, and was torpedoed. Steifensand was brought to a P.O.W. camp in Bowmanville, Ontario. When Steifensand saw the pictures in Hobbs' office, they got to reminiscing: it turned out Hobbs had been the group captain of the RCAF who had led the chase. The families became good friends.

William F. Rannie

To close out the seventies, there were two interesting Ontario works. William F. Rannie (1915-1995), *Wines of Ontario: An Industry Comes of Age* (Lincoln, Ontario, 1978), is a well-researched book on the development of the wine industry in Ontario, and its current state. It is the first book of its kind



and includes detailed historical information on grape varieties used over the years, the people and the wineries involved, and prospects for the future. Rannie was a historian and wrote a number of

books on local history, as well as a best-selling book on Saint Pierre and Miquelon. Rannie dates the "era of the Concord" as 1860-1940. In 1863 it was dropped from the list of varieties recommended by the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario, but as late as 1976, one third of total plantings were still Concord. The first serious effort at commercial winemaking was on Pelee Island by entrepreneurs from Kentucky. By 1890, twenty-three of Ontario's thirty-five commercial wineries were in Essex County (between Pelee and the Detroit River). But the bust came with temperance—by 1900, the number of wineries had dropped from 35 to 9. Essex County vineyards were converted to tobacco. During the regime of the Ontario Temperance Act (1916-1927), the Board of Liquor Commissioners—all prohibitionists—issued new winery licenses to anyone, without regard to qualification. The number of wineries grew from 20 in 1919 to 49 in 1926 and they produced a "host of truly atrocious wines." Many of them were exported to the U.S., with listed destinations such as St. Pierre and Miquelon, Barbados, Panama. One small Windsor winemaker sold 150 cases of champagne to a bootlegger at \$1.25 a bottle, only to see it retailed at \$25 in a Detroit nightclub. The LCBO, established at the end of Prohibition in 1927, tightened standards and forced most wineries out of business. The large commercial wineries bought them for their licenses, each one allowing the opening of another wine store. No new licenses were issued until the mid-1970s—to Inniskillin, Podamer, and Charal. These three small wineries, together with six large companies (Brights, Château-Gai, Barnes, Jordan, Andrés, London) constituted the entire wine industry in 1977. Not enough grapes were grown in Ontario to meet the demand. Home winemakers, accounting for a huge proportion of wine consumed in Canada, in 1976 bought an estimated 86,000 tons of California grapes, in addition to 5-6,000 of Ontario grapes. No doubt Stanley Anderson and Raymond Hull's *The Advanced Winemaker's Practical Guide* (Don Mills, 1975) contributed to that statistic. Anderson & Hull (and there were others as well), were the Turner & Berry of Canadian home wine-making. As for Québec, Rannie says "it is worth noting, perhaps, that Québec is not a wine growing province"—the kind of remark, still prevalent, that Québec viticulturists find irritating. Officially, apparently, Canada was not yet ready to endorse its wines. When asked why the Canadian Government served only foreign wines on official occasions, an anonymous official said in 1974: "If we did serve them, and we don't, we'd lose all our friends."

Regarding the foxy taste of *labrusca*, apparently many Canadians liked it, and some preferred it to *vinifera*. The thought has been posed: "what might be the state of world preferences today, had the *labruscas* been native to Asia and Europe, and the *viniferas* to North America?" The appendix of this work contains "the most complete corporate history of wineries since Confederation that it has been possible to compile ..."

Georges Masson

The last nomination for books of the '70s is Georges Masson's *Wine from Ontario Grapes: A Guide to Winemaking with the New Hybrids* (Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1979) which provides extensive coverage of its named subject. In addition, there are historical sections on the history of viticulture in the U.S., in Canada, and in the rest of the world. Masson was born and raised in France. With a veterinarian's degree and a Ph.D. in experimental medicine, he eventually became a research biologist. Grapes and wine had always been his avocation, beginning in 1935 with cultivation of imported plants at the Agricultural School at Oka (Québec). He retired to the Niagara area. His book was actually first published in English; the French edition is dated 1983.

Tony Aspler

In the flood (relatively speaking) of Canadian wine books in the last twenty years, the two main authors are Tony Aspler, based in Toronto, and John Schreiner in Vancouver. Aspler says he began wine writing in 1975. *Vintage Canada* (Scarborough, 1983; 2nd printing 1984) was his first book on Canadian wine and it came at a time when Canada was still emerging from wine as alcoholic drink to wine as gastronomic beverage. In his introduction, Aspler reports Gault-Millau's reaction (July 1982) to the decision of the Canadian government to serve Canadian wines at all official receptions in its embassies and diplomatic missions world-wide. Gault-Millau thought this would give a boost to the Canadian economy, since the diplomatic spongers would head straight for the offerings of the French and Italians, thus saving the Canadian government the expense. Aspler comments: "This kind of satiric posturing by the French is very much in keeping with the chauvinism that motivates all winemakers. The Californians damn the wines of New York. The Germans have little good to say about the Austrian products. The Italians denigrate the Swiss. The French dismiss everybody ... Only in Canada is it a national pastime for everyone to dump on all of our domestic wines and to drink instead any cheap European import..." One of Aspler's objectives in

writing this book was to educate Canadians about their own wines. The book begins with four chapters of history, followed by chapters on the wines and wineries of Ontario, British Columbia, Québec, and Other Provinces. The absence of an index is a defect. "Propagated" is consistently misspelled as propogated, and of course there's reisling for riesling, an ubiquitous error in other wine books as well—still an eyesore to me after all these years: like a fleck of Pollock on a Leonardo painting. And there's Guiseppe for Giuseppe. But, alas, I'll lose my readers if I go on like this.

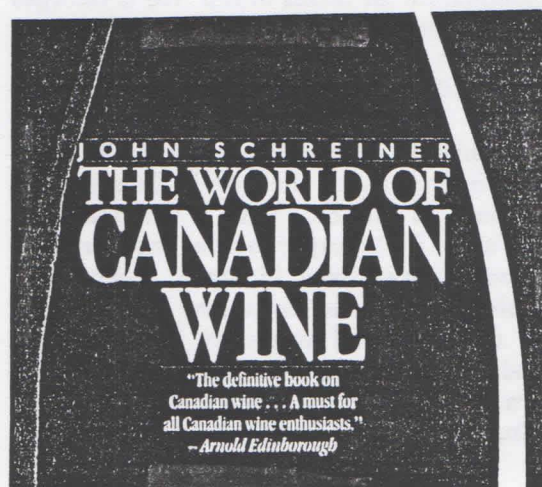
Ten years later, there was another new edition, Tony Aspler's *Vintage Canada: A Tasteful Companion to Canadian Wines* (Toronto, 1993). This is another "first" edition of *Vintage Canada*, an update of the first edition of 1983. The organization of the content is the same, the historic chapters apparently unchanged (except that photo illustrations have been dropped), but the chapters on the individual provinces have been revised and expanded, with an added section for Nova Scotia, and there are added chapters on icewine and on the rules of the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA). The number of wineries has increased from thirty-four to sixty-six. But Aspler admits that his earlier predictions about the pace of progress fell short. He had said that the Canadian wine industry was where California had been in the late 1960s. "In ten years we have not developed the way the Californians have." He feels the industry cannot sustain itself on icewine alone. On the bright side, the fact that Canadian wines have yet to be discovered "means that the best that we produce still remains within our borders for our own delectation..." Icewine presents difficulties: only thickskinned varieties can survive the predations of disease, weather and birds. "In 1983, Inniskillin lost its entire crop to birds the day before picking was scheduled. Walter Strehn at Pelee Island Vineyards had taken the precaution of netting his vines to protect them from the feathered frenzy. Some persistent blue jays, however, managed to break through his nets and were trapped in the mesh. A passing bird-fancier reported this to the Ministry of Natural Resources, whose officials descended upon the vineyard and tore off the netting. Strehn not only lost \$25,000 worth of Riesling grapes ... but ... was charged with trapping birds out of season, using dried grapes as bait! Happily, the case was dropped and with the grapes that were left Strehn managed to make a small amount of Riesling Icewine 1983." At least one of the Canadian icewine producers, Klaus Reif of the Reif Winery, has made icewine in both Germany (Neustadt,

Rheinpfalz) and Canada. Neustadt is at latitude 50, while Niagara is near 43, and although Canadian winters are colder, the heat of July and fluctuations in the Fall produce higher sugar levels through desiccation of the grapes.

Vintage Canada saw a second edition in 1995, a third in 1999. The number of Ontario wineries has grown to 51, British Columbia 54, Québec 28, Nova Scotia 5, Newfoundland has gone from 0 to 2, and there is one even for little Prince Edward Island. In the 2nd edition the total number of pages is down, partly because the chapter detailing the provisions of the "Vintners Quality Alliance" is omitted. The third edition is considerably slimmer because the extensive section on tasting notes has been dropped. It appears that if you want the complete story you need all four editions—including the true first of 1983. Over the years, Aspler too has grown—as a writer of books (wine mysteries), wine editor (*Wine Tidings*), wine columnist (*Toronto Star*) and contributor (*Wine Spectator*, *Oxford Companion to Wine*, &c). The *Vintage Canada* series would have benefitted from an index, the absence of which seems anachronistic for books of this type in our advanced computer age. Fortunately for us, the latest contribution by Aspler, with Barbara Leslie, *Canadian Wine for Dummies* (Toronto, 2000), does have an index. Thank you, Ms Leslie. Its title notwithstanding, *Canadian Wine for Dummies* is an outstanding contribution to the wine literature of Canada. Although its coverage of Canadian wines and wine history is extensive, considerable space is also devoted to wine in general, offering a great deal of useful information. Since every generation rewrites its wine books to reflect the level of existing knowledge, even the "dummies" books assume more prior knowledge, or at least wine sophistication, than books written in the fifties and sixties. It doesn't surprise me that when it comes to giving specific advice, this book would not be of much help to a genuine dummy. That gap, incidentally, has been filled by a very popular newsletter started by William Munnely in 1983. Since the early nineties, in addition to the newsletter, he publishes an annual little spiral-bound, fact-filled book, titled *Billy's Best Bottles [for 199x ... 200x]*. Every year he presents a fresh list of the 100 best wines available locally. He divides wines into four categories: A – fresh (thirst quenchers); B – bistro (wines for most meals); C – rich (the heavyweights); F – fringe (all others). Each year's new edition is peppered with all kinds of down-to-earth advice. Basically he protects people who don't want to spend more than \$10 on a bottle of wine against making bad and/or

embarrassing choices. This annual is a best-seller.

Back to Aspler. There was another little book—*Tony Aspler's Guide to New World Wines* (Toronto, 1996). In his list of personal favorites, there is no selection among Canadian reds, his favorite sources being California, South Africa and Washington, in that order by number of wines. Even among dessert wines, ice-wines notwithstanding, he picks four from New York and only three from Ontario—and two each from California, New Zealand and South Africa.



John Schreiner

The "other" major current writer on Canadian wines is John Schreiner. One year after Aspler's *Vintage Canada* came Schreiner's *The World of Canadian Wine* (Vancouver, 1984, paperback 1985). Schreiner begins on a positive note, saying that "1979 was a benchmark year in the acceptance of Canadian wines." The influential Opimian Society, based in Montréal and dedicated to tasting and importing wines, for the first time offered Canadian wines—beginning with private bottlings of Château-Gai. These were followed in 1981 by Calona of British Columbia, Château des Charmes of Ontario in 1982, and Mission Hill of BC in 1984. This happened because of conversion to premium grapes, increased technical competence, and consumer preference. The grape growers had always preferred the status quo, mainly Concord grapes. Canadian wines on Air Canada became known as "million milers" because they were seldom requested. "The president of a Canadian winery once asked for one of his products and the stewardess, who did not recognize him, gave him six bottles ... 'You may as well have them all. No one else wants them.'" As the Canadian wineries began to produce better wines and clamor for recognition, they had to

compete with wineries from Texas to Japan, from Bulgaria to New Zealand. Schreiner's book is well-written and organized. Wine enterprises are divided into three categories—the big six, the small commercial wineries, and the estate wineries. First to be discussed is Andrew Peller's wine empire, Andrés, originally established in BC because Peller couldn't get a license in Ontario, but later expanded to the rest of Canada. Every province uses preferential markups for its wines and will typically have a higher mark-up on the wines of another province than for foreign wines. Andrés was the country's largest producer because Peller understood the opportunities presented by provincial chauvinism. He later became an importer as well, saying he would rather compete against himself than have someone else compete with him. He had a feel for what the consumer wanted and when Cold Duck became popular in the U.S., he introduced it in Canada, and then in 1971, to avoid the higher tax, developed Baby Duck, a 7% sparkly mixture of labrusca and water. The number of Concord vines planted grew from 3.6 million in 1956 to 4.7 million in 1976, just as the novelty wine fad passed its peak.

Andrew Peller (1903 -), founder of Andrés Wines, published his autobiography in 1982: *The Winemaker. The Autobiography of Andrew Peller, Founder of Andrés Wines, as told to S. Patricia Filer*. Laid into my copy is a card: "Thank you for helping us Celebrate our Sixtieth Wedding Anniversary. Andy and Lena." Peller emigrated to Canada in 1927 from a small German town in Hungary. He was 58 when he started Andrés Wines in British Columbia.



THE WINEMAKER

the autobiography of
Andrew Peller
founder of Andrés Wines Ltd.

as told to
S. Patricia Filer

The card suggests to me that this first edition was given to guests at the celebration. There was a second printing in 1984. [Once, while I was in the "headquarters" LCBO outlet, we were joking about Baby Duck and what it had done to the reputation of Canadian wines. So it was rather amusing to see a duck padding about in front of the store when I left. I haven't seen one there since.]

Like Aspler, Schreiner also covers Québec wineries. "La Commission des Liqueurs de Québec" was North America's first state liquor monopoly when it was formed in 1921. It operates on a grand scale, bottling wines brought in bulk from Europe in tankers five to six times a year. At least one winemaker brought in "muted" musts from Italy, and another switched from California grapes to musts from Italy. Georges Masson planted French grapes in Oka, sent to him by his father from Lorraine. One vineyard was planted with French hybrids and vinifera at Dunham by Christian Barthomeuf from Montpellier. As for British Columbia, Schreiner talks about the German influence. One of the German immigrants in 1970 was Walter Hainle, who started making Eiswein [Schreiner uses the German name in this book] in 1973 and by 1982 he had nine vintages of eiswein in his home. Of the 1982, Hainle said "I think we made a world record eiswein." Hainle's son and a number of other winemakers in BC and Ontario, including the Canadian-born Walter Gehringer, are graduates of the wine school in Geisenheim.

Alexander Nichol

Schreiner's subsequent books have been almost exclusively about British Columbia. However, the first book on the wines of BC was Alexander Nichol's *Wine and Vines of British Columbia* (Vancouver, 1983). A glossary precedes the introduction, which makes a lot of sense, and is followed by a guide to selected wines from the commercial and estate wineries. Part 2 goes into more detail on the commercial and estate wineries, and Part 3 covers viticulture and all the grape varieties used in British Columbia. Finally, in Part 4, the author presents a view of the future in an historical context. In the section on viticulture, Nichol discusses the individuality of a wine, a factor that is very important in France. "... the complex interplay of the Okanagan's microclimates and soils suggests that its *métier* is in the production of quality wines. In this way individuality of site becomes a financial asset to the producer of premium ... wine, instead of a headache to the generic wine producer who is striving for product consistency from year to year.

Some of B.C.'s early successes point to this higher vocation." Of particular interest is that Nichol, who was a wine consultant, amateur winemaker, historian, and double bassist for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, moved with his wife Kathleen to the Okanagan, where they bought a pear orchard and started a vineyard. They make a particularly fine Syrah, of which I was able to get a bottle and which I found to be very, very nice [sorry I can't describe it in modern terms].

Atlas of Suitable Grape Growing Locations...

Before we get back to Schreiner, I should mention that 1984 saw the publication of an unusual work by John Vielvoye, et al: *Atlas of Suitable Grape Growing Locations in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys of British Columbia* (Published by Agriculture Canada and the Association of British Columbia Grape Growers, Kelowna, 1984). The format is large enough (41x48 cm, spiral bound, glossy paper covers, 141 pp) to require a map case for storage. The work includes sets of maps for solar radiation, soil groups, growing degree days, autumn freeze risk, grape site suitability for each of the areas covered. Suitability classifications for grape production in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys of BC are presented in narrative and map form. Contributors were climatologists, pedologists and cartographers. According to Vielvoye, project co-ordinator, 1500 copies were printed for free distribution to grape growers in British Columbia. Many copies of this work may have been discarded, thus accounting for its relative scarcity.

The Wineries of British Columbia

Back to Schreiner. His next book was *The Wineries of British Columbia* (Victoria, 1994), which is the book for you if you want to learn about the history and current state of wine in BC without going to sleep in the process. The foreword is by another wine writer who obviously holds Schreiner in high regard for his knowledge and his writing skills. "There are still people," he says, "who feel Canada in general and British Columbia in particular cannot produce fine wine. I call them people who have been out of town for a long time." [I agree. Quite recently, in August of 2003, I told a friend of mine—a Canadian with an impeccable pedigree, that I was drinking almost exclusively Canadian wines. He told me that his brother is a wine snob and will not drink any Canadian wine!] Some of the original plantings in the Okanagan were labrusca varieties from the Geneva Station in New York. Although European immigrants had planted vinifera varieties,

they did not set the standard, and the labruscas were replaced in the 1960s with safer hybrids. As part of the free trade agreement of 1988, grape growers were compensated handsomely to uproot undesirable grape varieties after the 1988 vintage. About 2400 acres of vines came out, leaving only 1000 acres of primarily vinifera varieties. Land prices dropped and a number of enterprising growers moved in and the recovery was on its way. The grape growers no longer controlled which grapes would be produced. "It is unlikely that there will be a fourth great pullout in the vineyards of British Columbia. Most of the pieces are in place—good grapes, experienced winemakers, quality standards..." Much of the book contains detailed descriptions of the wineries and their wines. Of particular interest to me was Schreiner's write-up on Alex and Kathleen Nichol and how their vineyard came to be (pp 138-142). "Throughout the eighteen months in which this book was being researched and written, new winery projects emerged...almost every month." Schreiner's next book, *The British Columbia Wine Companion* (Victoria, 1996) is a comprehensive dictionary of British Columbia wine—the grapes and their growers, the wines and their makers, the wineries and their history, facts and anecdotes. The industry had grown from 13 wineries in the early 1980s to about 50 at the time of writing. Two years later, another Schreiner book, *Chardonnay and Friends: Varietal Wines of British Columbia* (Victoria, 1998), has a description of forty-four grape varieties grown in British Columbia, the wineries growing them and the wines they produce—a wealth of information. Wineries are listed in "clusters" for easy touring. Some feel that since BC's wine area is so small, they should limit their grape varieties to just a few, as do most of the established vineyard areas of the world. But that was after many years of trial and error. "There is a vast selection of vinifera available. The trial and error phase is not over. That is why there is such a riotous abundance of varieties," from the well-known Gewürztraminer to the less well-known Oraniensteiner.

Icewine: The Complete Story

It seems that each book by Schreiner is more interesting than the last. So it is with his next one, *Icewine: The Complete Story* (Toronto, 2001). Because icewine has become the international calling card of Canadian wine, it seems logical that the first detailed history of this wine oddity should originate in Canada. And who better to write the story than Schreiner, wine writer extraordinaire. He reports all points of view with a straight face, and lets the

reader decide. For example, he reports Bonny Doon's Randall Grahm, who makes icewine by a method that would be illegal in Canada or Europe, saying that the Germans could avoid freezing their clusters off by simply taking the grapes to a commercial freezer and accomplish basically the same effect. Or when Tim Benedict, the winemaker at Hunt Country Vineyards, New York, plays the injured vigneron when the winery is accused of cheating for picking the grapes when they are "ready" and keeping them in cold storage until there is time to process them, rather than at the time of picking. "The key to a good icewine is hang time. 'In the end, to me it is irrelevant how it is frozen.'" After reading this book, which covers wineries throughout the world, one is certainly left with a much better understanding of what icewine is and should be and how difficult it is to make. An international icewine agreement between Germany, Austria, and Canada went into effect August 1st 2000. Details are available on the internet.

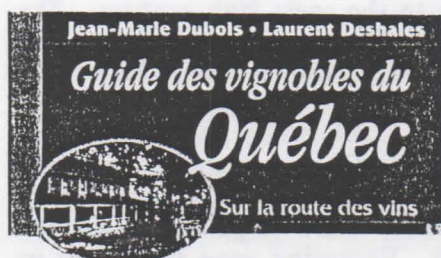
On the subject of icewine, I saw a website (managed by a native of Michigan) with newsletters devoted to German Riesling wine. In defense of German Eiswein, he speaks in worshipful tones of this special gift, of the shortage of labor in the German vineyards and how expensive it is to produce, and how there's nothing like it in the world. "In North America, in Canada and the northern United States, ice wine production often can be taken to an almost bulk-factory level. The public, not often recognizing the difference in quality, pays prices similar to that of the German product. Often lesser grape varieties are even used... However, I don't think that competition will cause the elimination of authentic German Eiswein." I agree that authentic Canadian icewine can never be authentic German Eiswein, nor would it want to be. And yes, Vidal is not Riesling, but in addition to these two, Canada also makes icewines from Gewürztraminer and Chardonnay (both delicious), Cabernet franc, sparkling icewines, and others from grape varieties I have not yet tried, such as Pinot gris, Merlot, Gamay, and more. Nothing like it in the world, if I may say so.

Schreiner's most recent work, *British Columbia Wine Country* (with photography by Kevin Miller; Vancouver, 2003) brings his British Columbia writings up-to-date—for a year, perhaps. In 1981 there were 14 wineries in BC; in 2002 there were 71, with 16 licenses pending. There is a great deal of expertise now, with winemakers trained in schools in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the U.S., as well as in Canadian colleges. The vineyards covered in this work total 108, including those

pending, and Schreiner divides them into thirteen regions, conveniently arranged for touring as much as for the similarity of the local terroir.

Blue Moose Guide

Before we leave British Columbia, I'd like to mention a very attractive five-volume series titled *BC Wine Country: The Blue Moose Guide to the Wine and Wineries of British Columbia* (Blue Moose Publications, Kelowna, 1994 to 2000). Each book has a different theme and variant sub-title. All have attractive color maps and other illustrations, and range in size from 50 to 127 pages. Volume 1 is subtitled *Growing Grapes*; Volume 2, none; Volume 3, *Wine and the Arts*; Volume 4, *Travel Survival*; and [Volume 5], *The Book*.



Dubois & Deshaies

With all this attention to Ontario and British Columbia, it's time to return to Québec, the province that has historical primacy of place and has been unfairly written off as a non wine-producing area. Two names that come up most frequently today in the French-Canadian viticultural literature are Jean-Marie Dubois, *Professeur de Géographie Physique au Département de Géographie et Télédétection à l'Université de Sherbrooke* (geography and remote sensing), and Laurent Deshaies, *Professeur de Géographie ... à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*. Their book on the vineyards of Québec, *Guide des Vignobles du Québec* (Saint-Laurent, QC, 1997, 297 pages), is packed with historic and current information. They begin with the history of grapes and wine in Québec, divided into five periods: New France (1534-1760), the misunderstood British period (1760-1867), development and decline from Confederation to the end of WW2 (1867-1945), period of experimentation (1945-1980), and the new vigneron (1980-1996). After discussing climate, meteorological vagaries, soil, selection of cold-resistant varieties, adaptation of viticultural techniques to local conditions, the move to agrotourism, etc., they describe all the individual vineyards. They are located in five regions: Châteaugay, Richelieu, Yamaska, l'Estrie and Québec. The information presented for each of the twenty-five vineyards

covered includes the names of the owners, winemakers, first year of planting, first year of production, followed by a physical description of the vineyard (altitude, geomorphology, degree-days, risk of frost and snow, predators and diseases), history, viticulture (area under cultivation, number of vines, current varieties, experimental plots, tonnage), wine production (number of bottles, types of wine), sidelines, premiums and prizes, outside opinions, future plans. A beautifully organized little book.

Eleven years earlier, the Société des Alcools du Québec (SAQ – the equivalent of LCBO in Ontario) published a history of alcohol in Québec: *L'Histoire de l'Alcool au Québec* (Montréal, 1986), with text by Robert Prévost, Suzanne Gagné and Michel Phaneuf. The first chapter (Prévost) covers history from the Vikings to the early 20th century. The next three chapters (Gagné) cover the provincial alcohol governing agencies—la Commission des Liqueurs de Québec (1921-1961); la Régie des Alcools du Québec (1961-1971); and the current Société des Alcools du Québec (from 1971). Quebecers and wine is the subject of the next chapter (Phaneuf), followed by a few pages on the current work of the SAQ. Regarding wine in Québec in 1922, we learn that Château Margaux sold for \$1.75 a bottle, while Yquem went for \$3. "... at that time, even the greatest wines had not acquired their current notoriety. Until the sixties, it was the famous spirits and liqueurs that were considered true luxury products, with great prestige. Beginning in 1970, the ever growing demand for the great wines considerably inflated their prices. The reason is simple: unlike alcohols and spirits, they are not products manufactured on demand. Wine is essentially an agricultural product, resulting from an annual harvest of grapes. It is therefore subject to the inexorable law of supply and demand."

In 1992, the Québec historical journal *Cap-aux-Diamants* published a special issue on beverages – *À votre santé!* (No. 28, Winter 1992). It has a dozen articles on historic beverages of Québec—from non-intoxicating milk and root beer to wine, beer and spirits for the adults. "And, for those men and women who have the soul of a delinquent, we take them on a tour of the prohibition era, where they can get to know authentic traffickers in *bagosse* [moonshine] in Eastern Québec ... We have also thought about the abstainers, telling them the story of an apostle of temperance, Charles Chiniquy." The following year saw a special issue of the journal *Géographes* (No. 4, October 1993), dedicated to the wines and vineyards of Québec. Nineteen articles by various authors cover the history and geography

of wine and the state of current research on various aspects of viticulture. Half of them were written jointly or individually by Jean-Marie Dubois and Laurent Deshaies. In 1998 *Quatre-Temps* (Vol. 22, No. 4, December), a journal for the Friends of the Montréal Botanical Garden, included a substantial section on grape culture in Québec. Again, Dubois and Deshaies were among the contributors. One article was about Gilles Chamberland, native of Trois-Rivières, QC, who found a second home in Languedoc-Roussillon, where he makes a Corbières "with Québec accents."

Dubois and Deshaies, together with other professors and students at Sherbrooke and other universities in Québec have been conducting viticultural research for the past ten years and documenting the results for distribution. Some of the documents have been published in a Bordeaux viticultural journal, and some have been presented at viticultural symposia in Portugal and Spain. Studies being conducted at Québec vineyards include experiments with both vinifera and hybrid grapes on the effects of hilling (earthing up) for the winter, geotextile and other protective covers, natural and artificial snow cover, melt holes. Some of the research included the use of thermocoupling devices connected to a data acquisition system. In several papers (1994, 1996), Deshaies & Dubois discuss the problems of viticulture in Québec in the framework of tourism and recreation. Québec vineyards are a very recent phenomenon, beginning in 1985. Government legislation is an obstacle. The 80% markup on wines by the provincial liquor board has been mitigated by allowing sales at the wineries, but only at the wineries, so that the vineyards need to be located near the tourists, who would be difficult to attract to areas more suitable for viticulture. The decision to grow grapes should precede the selection of a site. Under the current rules, the reverse is often true. They are therefore caught between the "cold" and the market. Dubois & Deshaies (1997) are also upset about the dismissive attitude to Québec wines, especially by oenophiles who disparage the wine without taking into account the constraints and potential of its terroir. In 1998, Dubois laments the cavalier treatment given to Québec wines in the second edition of Aspler's *Vintage Canada* (1995). Québec wines are rated dead last overall for Canadian wines, and dead last in all categories, even after Nova Scotia! "We will see in the next edition in which I am sure our wines will look better." In a paper published in Paris in 1999, Dubois tells the story of viticulture in Québec and its prospects. Currently, he says, vineyards are

72% Seyval blanc for white wines and 40% Maréchal Foch for red wine.

In an article published in *Cap-aux-Diamants* (No. 65, Spring 2001), "De la Nouvelle-France à nos Jours: Une Tradition Viticole Tenace au Québec," Dubois presents a brief history of viticulture in Québec and some thoughts on terroir. It's too early to define such characteristics for Québec because the vineyards are too young and few in number. However, it might eventually be possible to define terroirs whose distinctive factors could be inspired by those already established in France and elsewhere. According to Pierre Laville of France, a terroir is determined by criteria that a vigneron cannot easily change: climatology, morphoclimatology, geomorphology, geology, pedology and hydrogeology. Outside of Europe and South Africa, some regions are beginning to think about it—Argentina, Chile, Ontario, British Columbia—but New Zealand, Australia and California are resistant to the notion, considering it a myth. In addition to the interest in terroir, Dubois is stepping up his study of Québec viticultural history. The five periods listed in the guide to Québec wineries (see above, 1997), have now been expanded to seven: 1 – before 1608 (the indigenous vine before the French settlements); 2 – 1608-1760 (unsuccessful attempts with *vitis vinifera* by the French); 3 – 1760-1850 (decline: emphasis on importation of wine by the English); 4 – 1850-1900 (revival: introduction of hybrids from the USA and Ontario); 5 – 1900-1945 (decline: socio-economic problems); 6 – 1945-1980 (revival: renewed taste for wine and "retour à la terre"); 7 – after 1980 (development: first professional vignerons). It was this overview that Dubois and Deshaies presented at the first Symposium of the International Association of the History and Civilization of Grapes & Wine (El Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain, March 1999; documentation dated 2002). They said this was an outline and that at future symposia they planned to detail each of these periods with additional documentation from Canadian and Québec archives, and ecclesiastical archives. They also hoped to find further information in French and British archives.

The Internet

Further detailed studies on Québec viticulture are available on the internet, and this leads to another point I wanted to make about Canadian wine material. Canadian wine appears to be growing up with the internet. The fast pace of growth makes books obsolete almost as fast as they can be published. Unfortunately, the internet is not a perfect solution. Far too numerous are websites that have not been

updated in years, even though updates to websites are far more easily accomplished than are new editions of books.

Another subject that I'd like to comment on is latitude—geographical latitude. So often, the experts use the latitude numbers to prove a point about viticulture, and then, if the shoe doesn't fit, deny that it has anything at all to do with successful viticulture. What really matters is temperatures, or winds, or soils, or hills, or whatever. Of course, that's terroir. As so many Canadian growers are proving, so much of the received wisdom is now up for challenge. If you have the know-how, the technology, the persistence, the imagination, then you can make the terroir work for you, rather than collapse in a heap of pessimism. It's not the latitude, man, it's the attitude.

One more point on latitude, and we'll get on with the rest of the books. Canada is often thought of as that big white lump north of the 49th parallel. Well, yes, as land mass goes, that's true, and Wm. Massee, as quoted by Aspler, is right: "Canadian wines? You're kidding. Look at any map; it is white above the border, which means there is snow in Canada. All they have is beer and whiskey" (William Massee, *Guide to Wines of America*). But just look at a map of Canada and you can almost intuit that most of the population resides below the 49th parallel. I contacted Statistics Canada and asked them, but they said no, they didn't have any data like that, but that perhaps some company had done a study. Anyway, I did my own calculations, using population figures published by Statistics Canada, and based on details that I will spare you, I would wager Statistics Canada that 65% of the population lives south of the 49th parallel, above which Canada is generally thought to be. The Niagara wine country is at latitude 43, Pelee Island is below the top of California. And for wine of a higher latitude, there's Mission Hill's best-selling "Latitude 50" — easy drinking.

Winery Books

There are a few books about individual wineries you should know about. You've already met Andrew Peller and his 1982 autobiography, *The Winemaker*. Another semi-autobiographical book is Peter Gerhard Mielzynski-Zychlinski's [born 1922] *The Story of Hillebrand Estates Winery* (Toronto, 2001). The author immigrated to Canada in 1949 and in 1979 he started his own wine importing company. The first chapter presents some interesting material on the history of wine in Ontario. This is followed by the story of how Scholl & Hillebrand of Germany purchased a majority interest in the Newark winery.

In 1992, the author resigned because of poor health and in 1994 Underberg, the German owner, sold the winery to the Peller family (Andrés Wines). Of course, the name has been retained because of its market value. So far, I've tried only two post-sale Hillebrand wines, and regret to say they didn't live up to their billing. Another "winery" book, preceding Hillebrand's, is Donald Ziraldo's *Anatomy of a Winery: The Art of Wine at Inniskillin* (Toronto, 1995), published to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the winery—a fine addition to wine literature by any measure. Hugh Johnson's foreword has words of praise for the rapid progress of viticulture and winemaking in Ontario and the "discovery" of the Niagara Peninsula as an obvious natural terrain for wine. The first chapter presents a clear explanation of cool climate viticulture—mostly areas below 1426 growing degree days: Geisenheim has 1050, as does Epernay; Hawk's Bay, NZ 1200, Beaune 1315, Niagara 1426, same as Yakima, WA; and Napa has 1450, while Healdsburg, Sonoma County, registers 1755. The rest of the book is a guided tour of the winery, its history, climate, viticulture, winemaking and many other interesting facets. The area is at the same latitude as northern California, and is climatically similar to Burgundy. A second, expanded and revised edition was published in 2000 celebrating the 25th anniversary of the winery. There is additional material on icewine, Inniskillin's involvement in the Okanagan Valley, and their operation in the Napa Valley. All author royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to the Cool Climate Oenology & Viticulture Institute at Brock University.



Inniskillin

Newfoundland — Pelee Island

There is as yet, to my knowledge, no book on the wines of the Maritimes, nor of the Prairie Provinces, although the latter have wineries making wines from imported grapes. To give Newfoundland its first wine break since Vinland, we offer Peter Pope's *Fish into Wine: The Historical Anthropology of Demand for Alcohol in Seventeenth-century Newfoundland* (article in *Social History*, Vol. xxvii, No. 54, November 1994, Toronto). This is one of a number of articles in this issue dedicated to the "Social History of Alcohol." In addition to Newfoundland, other locations treated in this issue are Augsburg, Paris, Ireland, Britain, Gold Coast/Ghana, U.S. The articles are selected from papers presented at the [2nd] International Congress on the Social History of Alcohol in 1993 [Huron College]. The first conference was held in Berkeley, California in 1984. A book I recently ran across is Ron Tiessen's *The Vinedressers: A History of Grape Farming & Wineries on Pelee Island* (Pelee Island Heritage Centre, 1996). It has historical information not covered in other books. Another Ontario wine-growing area that has not yet been named a designated viticultural area is Prince Edward County, a barely connected peninsula in Lake Ontario, WSW of Kingston. Three wineries are already in operation, with more scheduled this year and next. And there are about fifty grape growers. Geoff Heinrichs, who has been writing wine columns on this area for several years, has also published a promotional book on the region, *Starting a Vineyard in Prince Edward County? A Viticultural Primer for Investors and Growers* (Picton, ON, 2001), a 152-page paperback with useful information for would-be winegrowers in the county. Heinrichs is an enthusiast of the St-Laurent grape, which he says is suitable for this region, and about which he wrote an article published in the first issue of the Prince Edward County Winegrowers Association newsletter. He obtained cuttings of the grape from the Nichol vineyard in British Columbia, having tracked it down through Aspler's *Vintage Canada*. Nichol had originally obtained 74 vines from John Vielvoye, of Okanagan Atlas fame and grape specialist with the BC government. They were given to Nichol free on condition that cuttings be made available to all who asked for them. In this connection, I must tell you about another item that I treasure as a "wine" book because it's the only literary item so far: a book of poetry by noted Canadian poet A.W. Purdy, titled *Wild Grape Wine* (Toronto/Montréal, 1968). My copy is inscribed "For Dennis Duffy ... Al Purdy. June 12, '69." Laid-in is an invitation to drinks

"after the poetry reading." Duffy is a well-known Canadian literary critic. The first poem in this collection is "The Winemaker's Beat-Étude," which begins:

"I am picking wild grapes last year in a field
dragging down great lianas of vine ..."

Geoff Heinrichs in *Starting a Vineyard in Prince Edward County?* says about Purdy: "Between the historic and modern eras of grape growing, Prince Edward County had one fabled winemaker—the late poet Al Purdy. Purdy made wine from wild grapes growing in Ameliasburgh during the dark and hard-scrabble years he and his family endured—often five or six garbage cans worth each Fall. The result was usually the only wine he could afford for the year; it also became art." He goes on to say that Purdy wrote a number of poems about wine and discusses this particular book.

Borderline Canadian

Some books are borderline Canadian. Among them are Suzanne Goldenson's *Vintage Places: A Connoisseur's Guide to North American Wineries and Vineyards* (Pittstown, New Jersey, 1985). Coverage of each region is fairly evenly distributed, with California getting a relatively small lion's share of 75 pages and Canada a respectable 20 pages. There is no hint yet, though, of the explosive growth still to come. Since the date is borderline, and Goldenson has a "good attitude," this book may yet qualify. Another book was published by the American Automobile Association jointly with Gault-Millau (André Gayot, ed.), *Guide to the Best Wineries of North America: A Discriminating and Practical Guide to Wineries and Wines from Canada to Mexico and from California to New England* (Los Angeles, 1993). Following a discussion of varietals and wine assessment, individual wineries are listed and briefly described by region and state: Northeast, South, Midwest, Southwest, California, Northwest and Hawaii, and last and almost least, Canada and Mexico. Understandably, California has the biggest section, with 160 pages. New York gets 15, Oregon and Washington a dozen each, and Texas and Virginia 9 each. Twelve pages are devoted to all of Canada, including an interesting introduction, but that may not be enough, especially considering the late date. *The Oxford Companion to the Wines of North America*, edited by Bruce Cass, consultant editor: Jancis Robinson (Oxford, 2000), looked like a shoo-in as a Canadian wine book, and I was even poised to meet Jancis Robinson at a book-signing in Toronto (she had to cancel because of an illness in the family), but alas, I've almost concluded that it's

basically just another book on the wines of the U.S. Finally, there's James Peterson's *Sweet Wines: A Guide to the World's Best, with Recipes* (Vancouver, 2001), which has a respectable section on Canadian icewines, but it was originally published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang. However, I may keep it anyway.

From borderline books, we go to border-crossing books. Tom Stockley's *Winery Trails of the Pacific Northwest: A Complete Guide to the Wineries of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia* (Mercer Island, WA, 1977), was published the following year as *Winery tours in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, & British Columbia*. Joe Borrello's *Wineries of the Great Lakes: A Guidebook* (Lapeer, MI, 1995), covers Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, in addition to Ontario (pages 119-150). Kevin W. Atticks wrote *Discovering Lake Erie Wineries: A Travel Guide to Lake Erie's Wine Country* (Baltimore, 2000), that includes New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and last, not least, Ontario. The Ontario wineries on Lake Erie form two of Ontario's three "Viticultural Areas"—Lake Erie North Shore & Pelee Island. Each winery description is accompanied by a recipe.

We have to have at least one book in the "annoying" category. I nominate *The TV Wine Guy. Taking the Snobbery Out of Wine ... One Bottle at a Time* (Toronto, 2002). The authors—Alan Aylward, Jonathan Welsh, and James Bruce—describe their work in Notes from the Authors: "This wine biographical touring cookbook is a hybrid compendium of stories, legends, and information about wines, winemakers, chefs, wineries, personalities, vintners, history, culture, art, and travel." [Aren't vintners winemakers?] Fifty Ontario wineries are covered, some in greater detail than others. As for "taking the snobbery out of wine," how many wine books do you know that don't make that claim in one way or another? But, if you take the snobbery out of wine, what's left for these guys? There's riesling page 94, but reisling in the table of contents. Do you beleive that if you ran that through a proofreader's seive, you'd avoid this greif and stay out of mischeif? Else fine, as the bookdealers say.

Magazines, Wine Guides

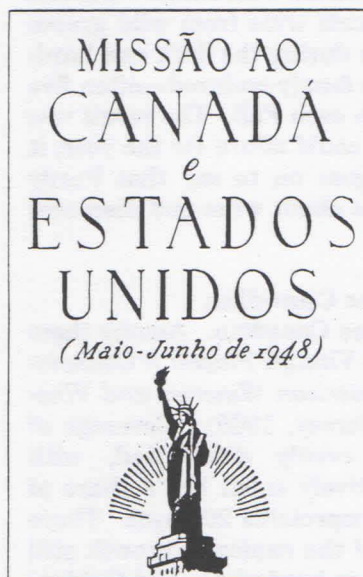
As for Canadian wine magazines, there are at least three that are currently active: *Wine Access* (Toronto), *Wine Tidings* (Montréal), and *Vines* (St. Catharines, ON), all of them I believe about 10 years old. Another magazine, *Enoteca Wine & Food* (Concord, ON [Toronto]) may no longer be active. *Wine Access* is the biggest and also has paid subscriber online services, similar to *Wine Spectator*. The

magazine has an annual issue featuring Canadian wine awards. *Wine Tidings* has Aspler as its big-name contributor. The current issue features Prince Edward County. *Vines* magazine (Walter Sendzik, publisher & Christopher Waters, editor) has also published a book, *Vines—Buyer's Guide to Canadian Wine* (Vancouver, 2001), which gives wine ratings and recommendations. It was inspired by a very successful issue of *Vines* that had rated and ranked the best of Canadian wines. A second edition was published in 2002, with a foreword by Steven Page, lead singer/guitarist of the rock group Barenaked Ladies. This enlarged edition also sports an index of wines, making it easier to reference than the first edition. The monthly catalogs issued by the LCBO also offer tasting notes and other information on specific wines. In addition, many issues feature a particular Canadian or foreign winery. Very recently made available to the public is a searchable database of all LCBO offerings, including listings of total available inventory at any outlet in the province. Until now, this had been available only at the stores or by telephone. A good source of information on the wineries of Ontario, with maps and driving instructions, is the annual *Official Guide to the Wineries of Ontario*. The 2003 issue has information on over 50 wineries. However, the same information, regularly updated, can be found at the website of the Wine Council of Ontario. Similar literature and/or websites are also available for British Columbia, Québec, &c.

For wines available in Québec, in addition to a searchable website that lists all offerings, there is also a guide by Michel Phaneuf, published annually since 1981. The edition of 2000 (Montréal, 510 pages) is the 20th of this extensive and well-written guide to the wines of the world available to the consumers of Québec through the SAQ (Société des Alcools du Québec). Tasting notes and ratings are provided for one of the widest selections of wines available anywhere. There is information on vineyards and personalities, detailed data on wine production and prices, best buys at various price levels, all-time best buys, &c. Pride of space goes to France, but other regions are well-represented, including California. In this particular edition, for example, he has a few pages on California wine history—from “the jug wines of the 1960s, the tannic and alcoholic monsters of 1970-1980, and today's much more civilized wines ...”

That's about it for Canadian wine books. Since there was a dire need to have more, I unilaterally declared three books to be Canadian wine books. The first is Maena Sussane's *Grapes—Compiled by*

Workers of the War Services Project of the Work Projects Administration in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Chicago, 1945). It includes material on wine-making. A full-page color illustration of a Viking landing in the New World is also reproduced on the back of the dust-jacket. Number two is by J.C. Valente Perfeito of the Instituto do Vinho do Porto: *Missão ao Canadá e Estados Unidos (Maio-Junho de 1948)* (Porto, 1949). This is an account of



the author's trip to Canada and the U.S. to explore the market for Port wine. He reports first on Canada, where he spent several weeks, visiting a trade fair in Toronto and the Québec Liquor Commission in Montréal. On from there to Washington and New York for the big market. The appendix has documents

regarding the Port wine trade in North America. And number three is really far-fetched—Paul de la Borie's *Le Docteur Rabelais et le Vin* (Paris, 1948, copy #226). Half red morocco binding by C.-A. Dorion & Fils, Québec. That's only one element in the decision. The other I found in *Les Canadiens d'Autrefois* [Canadians of bygone times] by Robert de Roquebrune (1889-1978), a noted Québec historian, characterized by his nostalgia for the aristocracy. The first chapter is about “the first adventurous settlers in Canada—La Roque de Roberval and his niece Marguerite de La Roque.” Rabelais (1483-1553) knew Roberval and spoke of him (as Robert Valbringue) in *Pantagruel*. The voyages of *Pantagruel* were inspired by those of Jacques Cartier [see above] and of Roberval. “The «navigations» of the *Quart Livre* owe a great deal to the relations of Jacques Cartier ... Jacques Cartier is also mentioned in all letters in the *Ouydire* episode.” Roberval's settlements in Canada, as it happens, came to nothing, and back in Paris, one night in 1560 as he and friends left a Protestant meeting, they were assailed by Catholics and killed, among the first victims of the religious wars. Another book referenced by Robert de Roquebrune is L. Lacour-

cière's *Rabelais au Canada*, which I have not seen. And there you have it. Because Cartier wrote about grapes in Canada, and Rabelais wrote a lot about wine. You're right — it is rather far-fetched.

“...time to start celebrating...”

Remember Hugh Johnson and how brutally honest he had been in his negative remarks about the only Canadian wine he had tried a number of years ago? Well, in his foreword to Ziraldo's *Anatomy of a Winery* (Toronto, 1995), he is honest once again—graciously honest: “The 1990s are seeing [Ontario] finesse its style, identify its most privileged sites and build its reputation beyond regional interest into the mainstream of the world's acknowledged fine wines.” Also quoted, following the foreword, is an excerpt from a speech at the Granite Club in Toronto, October 14, 1994: “It was those Cistercians who started it all. They tasted the soil ... they created a masterpiece for all time ... the Côte d'Or. Well, there are new masterpieces in the making, and I visited one this morning by helicopter. The other side of the lake. The Niagara Region. Nothing can be more thrilling than finding, being shown, a new wine region where these possibilities are being taken seriously.” However, these kind words have yet to be translated into more than mere passing references in the wine books. For example, the 6th edition (2002) of *Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide* appears to leave Canada mentionless. There is of course a good side to being one of the few countries that has not yet been Parkerized. On the bright side, the *Pocket Wine Encyclopedia*, first published in Australia in 2002, has a substantial section on Canada. There is also a continuing belief that Canadian wines are substandard, not recognizing that there are VQA wines and non-VQA wines (I'll spare you the details), but the rules even for the latter are not in line with some of the statements made. In fact, for a vineyard designation, VQA requires 100% to be from the vineyard, where California requires only 95%.

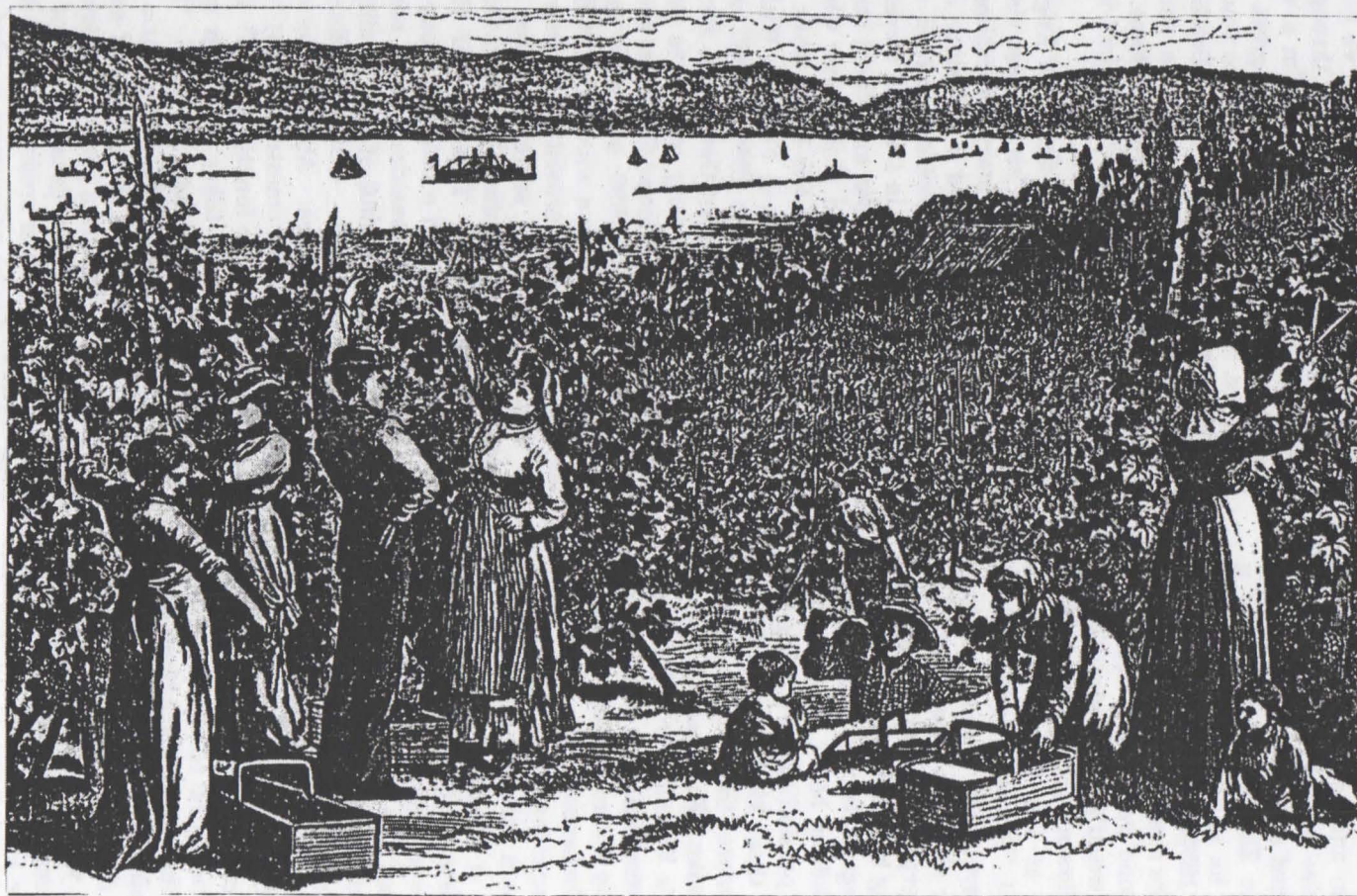
Our Canadian quality control labs are among the finest in the world, our viticultural research stations are among the finest in the world. Canadians may be their own worst enemies, self-denigration being almost a way of life. As Julianna Hayes, a BC columnist said: “I can't tell you the number of times I've heard a qualified response from people after they've tasted a B.C. wine and discovered they like it. ‘It's pretty good...for a Canadian wine.’ I don't know why we do that and apparently Ralston Saul, Aspler, Jost and Ziraldo are at a loss as well. When asked why Canadians are so humble, Ziraldo replied,

‘If I knew the answer to that, I'd find a way to make them stop.’ ... Why then has Australia, which is almost as new as we are, not had the same problem? Here, domestic wines make up about 40 per cent of our total consumption. There, it's about 80 per cent. They're darn proud of what they've got. I meet a fair number of Aussies traveling through the Okanagan and when they find out I'm a wine writer, they start yakking about how great Australian wines are. How many Canadians do you suppose do that abroad?” (*Okanagan Sunday*, October 2002)

You might say that in Australia and California the quality has caught up with the hype. In Canada it's the other way around. The time is ripe for a little hype.

Well, in any case, the Queen of England knows our wines are good, and on her last visit here last year sent at least one winery scrambling to fill her request. And, as reported in a feature interview in the LCBO's *Vintages* September 2002 catalog, the Queen's representative in Canada, Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson, has an activist husband (Ralston Saul), a writer and philosopher who became a committed oenophile in the 1960s while an “impoverished student” living in France. With Clarkson, he lived in France from 1982 to 1987, while Clarkson was Ontario's Agent-General in Paris. On his return he became an early convert to the virtues of Canadian wines. Adrienne Clarkson was appointed Governor-General in 1999, and since then, Ralston Saul has been building a wine cellar at Rideau Hall, the official residence, consisting entirely of Canadian wines. “We don't serve Canadian wines here because they are Canadian, we serve them because they are the best...” Twice a year Ralston, the Rideau Hall chefs, and a rotating group of writers, sommeliers and ambassadors do a blind tasting, which includes a handful of high-quality “ringers” from foreign countries. Only Canadian wines are served at state dinners. At least one ambassador from a non-producing country (Japan) “serves only Canadian wines at his functions now.” On visits to other countries, Saul takes with him not just the wines, but the winemakers as well. “I've said it before, but the wines of BC and Ontario are unique to here. They are not ‘like such and such's’ wine. They are ours... We are a country of high consciousness, self-control and a greater layer of complexity than we give ourselves credit for. And it is time to start celebrating the uniqueness of what we produce and where we live.”





VINTAGE AT THE BEACONSFIELD VINEYARD

[From Dubois' archives. Originally published in *l'Opinion Publique*, 30 Oct 1879, p.519. Reproduced at head of an article by Jean-Marie Dubois in *Cap-aux-Diamants*, No.65, Spring 2001.]