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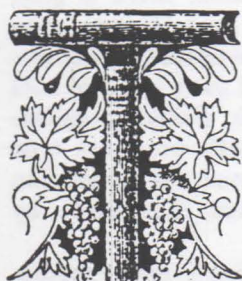
A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

April 2004

ROBERT DRUITT'S JOYOUS, FORGOTTEN CLASSIC

by
Valmai Hankel

[Since her retirement after 43 years at the State Library of South Australia, Valmai Hankel does not sit idle. She contributes regular wine columns for *The Adelaide Review* and the *Australian & New Zealand Wine Industry Journal*, and writes a column on wine history for *Winestate*. Valmai has given the *Tendrils* informative articles on the early 19th century Australian wine writers (Vol.11#3, 4) and her personal selection of the "top twenty" 20th century Australian wine books (Vol.12#2). She also breeds horses, and is researching a book on her wine drinking experiences in the Australian outback. — Ed.]



he term 'classic' is often bandied about haphazardly. In almost any field of literature there are books described as 'classics', deservedly or not. André Simon, George Saintsbury, Maurice Healy, Warner Allen and, more recently, Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson are among those who

would qualify for inclusion in most people's lists of wine literature classic writers.

Every one of these writers is, or at least was, quite well known. One who preceded them all is Robert Drutt. Drutt (1814-83) was a London physician and medical writer who wrote two editions of a book on wine which has rightly been described as a classic. But unlike most classics the books and their author are all but forgotten today.

The first edition's lengthy title, typical of the time, conveys its contents. *Report on the cheap wines from France, Italy, Austria, Greece and Hungary; their quality, wholesomeness and price, and their use in diet and medicine. With short notes of a lecture to ladies on wine, and remarks on acidity* immediately became a best seller on its publication in 1865. A revised edition, including wines from

Australia, appeared in 1873. As far as I know neither has since been reprinted, and both are today extremely rare, with most of the few fragile copies in existence being in libraries.

I first met Drutt's little books about twenty years ago when I was Rare Books Librarian at the State Library of South Australia. After much searching I am now fortunate enough to own both editions.

If Drutt is remembered at all today it is probably for another book, *Surgeon's vade-mecum*, popular with nineteenth-century medical students, and whose eleven editions between 1839 and 1878 sold more than 40,00 copies, a lot for the time. Or perhaps the name is familiar because he was the uncle of Montague John Drutt, who was for many years a prime suspect of being Jack the Ripper. But unlike his nephew, Robert Drutt was so popular that when he retired his friends and colleagues presented him with a cheque for £1215 in a silver cup. Sanitary reform, church music, geology, botany, chemistry, languages, and not surprisingly temperance reform, were among this wise, witty, humane man's other interests.

Drutt's admirable argument is that 'the proper use of light wines' is health-giving. An obituary put his intent this way: 'He set himself the task of find-



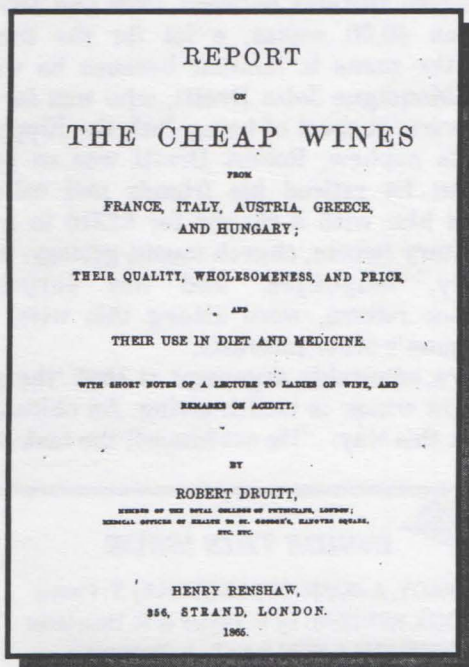
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ing forms of alcoholic food which should meet and satisfy the just and reasonable appetite'. He aimed to convince his readers that wine does not have to be

expensive to be good, and that it can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of their station in life. Druitt 'bought cheap wine...for my own table, at such a variety of shops as should enable me to form a notion of what the public could really get at a moderate price, that is, at or under half a crown a bottle...I have bought and drunk not for gratification of the palate, but for real professional study, specimens of most of the wines available'. He continues, 'like all great artists, I am drawing from the live model. I write with a bottle before me, which I am sacrificing for my own inspiration and my readers' profit...' He then made 'memoranda of the qualities' of these wines. To prove his point he discusses not only as many natural wines as he can get hold of from all over the world, but also fortified wines, beer, tea, cider and mead.

In 1863-64 Druitt published his findings in a series of articles in *The Medical Times and Gazette* (of which he was, conveniently, editor) under the nom-de-plume of 'Our Special Empirical Commissioner'. Encouraged by his medical brethren Druitt then published the articles, sometimes slightly altered, as a book. The second edition added later articles, also altered.



We need to remember that Druitt was writing soon after the Methuen Treaty was lifted. The Treaty, between Britain and Portugal, lasted from 1703 to 1860, and gave Portuguese goods, including port wine, preferential treatment in Britain at the expense of imports from the rest of Europe, notably France. When Chancellor of the Exchequer William

Gladstone signed a trade treaty with France in 1860 the duty on French table wines was dramatically reduced to a twentieth of what it had been in 1815 – and the British could again afford to drink claret, burgundy and champagne. But after nearly two centuries of drinking a lot of port and sherry and other 'strong' wines they and their palates needed educating.

Appropriately, Druitt dedicated the first edition of his book to Gladstone, who 'first...put pure wine within reach of the English people'. The book 'sold furiously and was soon out of print', so Druitt 'plucked up heart to make a second edition...in which not much of the original work remains', as he wrote in the preface to the 1873 edition.

Dr. Druitt is no dry-as-dust writer. His prose is vigorous, forthright, effervescent, entertaining, and extremely quotable. While many of his opinions read quaintly and humorously today they were to be taken seriously at the time. Bordeaux wines, for instance, are 'free from sugar and other materials likely to undergo imperfect digestion and provoke gout or headache; and they are admirably well adapted for children, for literary persons, and for all whose occupations are chiefly carried on indoors, and which tax the brain more than the muscles'. On the other hand, 'for persons whose occupations are carried on in the open air, and require much exertion of muscles and little of brains, there is good beer to be had in abundance'. And 'A lady complained to me that her daily governess, when she came to her house, always asked for a glass of cold water. It is very common with sickly, bloodless milliners' girls. Fruit, or food with wine, are true remedies for the foul tongue and nervous exhaustion which the poor creatures delude themselves by calling thirst'.

Milliners, dressmakers, teachers and 'needlewomen of all sorts', that is, 'poor [persons] who lead indoor lives', as well as 'town children' and nursing mothers, come in for Druitt's special concern, and are among those whom he believes will benefit most from 'fine light wines'. But he has some reservations about the abilities of ladies to appreciate fine wines: 'For ordinary Englishmen of the class for whom I write, to give 10s a bottle of wine is absurd and iniquitous; to hand round such wines to ladies and promiscuous people at dinner (who would infinitely rather have cheap champagne) is a sheer waste. Such wines should not be dribbled out to young women as a foil to fish and entrees, but be reserved for the deliberate after-dinner judgement of philosophers'. Like the clergy, ladies, Druitt believes, 'need a good deal of education about wine; they should be taught the difference in nature, flavours and effects; highly sensitive and gifted as women are

with perceptivity of odours, they have never been taught to look for the juice of the grape and its admirable bouquet; they know only the effects of alcohol'.

To provide some of this education the first edition of Druitt's book contains notes of a practical lecture on wine for ladies, with suggested tasting samples such as specimens of spirit mixed with water to represent various strengths of wine and beer (from 42% to 6%), and fresh and dried grapes and 'grapy wine to match'. It is possibly the first instance of wine writing specifically for women. Its reception must have been lukewarm because it is omitted from the 1873 edition.

The enlightened Druitt urges physicians to prescribe light wine for children, especially to 'entice the languid palate to demand an additional slice of mutton'. Children aged seven to ten should sip 'some kind of light, clean tasting, sub-acid wine - Rhine, Bordeaux, Chablis, or some of the clean, dry wine of Greece and Hungary' freely at dinner, so that they won't have to take 'puncheons of cod-liver oil' at sixteen to twenty.

By the time of his second edition Druitt had tasted several Australian wines, and writes enthusiastically about them. But he confesses 'Of the wines of America I know nothing, but witness with delight the effort to make them take the place of the firebrand whisky, and so to deliver that great and energetic people from the incubus of intemperance'. He adds a footnote of references for any of his readers wishing to know more about American wines, and lists *The new west, or California in 1867-68* by Charles Loring Brace (1869), *The cultivation of the native grape, and manufacture of American wines* by George Husmann (1868), and *Three seasons in European vineyards* by William Flag (1869). He is not impressed with Husmann's advocacy of 'the system of making sham wine by fermenting sugar and water with the pressed husks of grapes'.

Druitt strongly asserts that wine should be drunk with meals, and then gives some damning example of mismatching: 'You may see grown men...drinking sweet Champagne with mutton! And reserving a fine bottle of Bordeaux, worth perhaps ten shillings, till after dinner, when a parcel of Yahoos sip it whilst they are munching sweetmeats, biscuits, preserved ginger, damson cheese and raw fruits!' He then asks, very reasonably, 'How can Bordeaux wine ever be popular if put to such silly, not to say wicked, uses?'

There are plenty of examples of Druitt's lyrical exuberance. At Montrachet he 'heard the young wine chirping in the casks, like an infant Bacchus in its cradle' He compares Bordeaux and Burgundy

wines: 'we may admire the rosebud and the snowdrop, but there is a place in our affections for something fuller, warmer, rounder and more voluptuous'. And about the effects of champagne: 'There is something excitant in the wine; doubly so in the sparkling wine, which the moment it touches the lips sends an electric telegram of comfort to every remote nerve'.

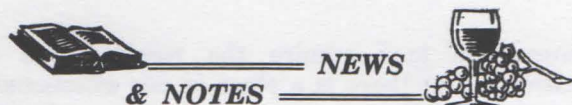
Much of Druitt's advice is practical, and just as pertinent today as it was nearly 140 years ago. 'Wine should have an absolute unity, it should taste as one whole' is advice that every modern wine-maker should heed. And, in appreciating wine: 'The only questions we need ask are, not what is the chemical composition, but do you like it, and does it agree with you and do you no harm? The stomach is the real test-tube for wine; and if that quarrels with it, no chemical certificate and no analysis is worth a rush'.

As someone who does a fair bit of public speaking I have found his counsel especially useful: 'When one sees a man "unaccustomed to public speaking", humming and hawing, and in vain trying to lubricate his tongue with a glass of cold water provided for public lecturers, it is plain that a more advanced knowledge of physiology would have caused that glass to be filled with wine, to oil the brain, which was the really dry place, whereas the jaws might have been left to themselves'.

Several twentieth-century writers have noted Druitt's talents. Raymond Postgate (whose 'Oenobibliotheca - or, A wine library' was reprinted in the January 2004 *Wayward Tendrils Quarterly*) and Gerald Asher both praise him in their essays on wine books. Moray McLaren wrote an appreciative little book, *Pure wine or in vino sanitas. A centenary celebration of, quotation from and comment on Dr Robert Druitt's remarkable book, A report on cheap wines 1865* (Edinburgh: Alastair Campbell, 1965), which is almost as scarce as Druitt's own books. As McLaren writes, Druitt's 1865 book 'is informative, readable, full of that uncommon thing, "common sense"'.

For the last 16 years of his life Druitt suffered from a gradually worsening and debilitating illness. I hope that it did not prevent him from enjoying to the very end the wines about which he wrote so eloquently. He was a man ahead of his time. His message is just as relevant today as it was in the nineteenth century - that moderate drinking of reasonably priced wines is both pleasurable and good for you. His books deserve to be reprinted and made available to a new audience.





NEW TENDRILS: A VINTAGE CLASS!

We are pleased to welcome the **Biblioteca—Museo de la Cultura del Vino** of Bodegas Dinastía Vivanco (Briones, La Rioja, Spain). The librarian is Nuria del Río (biblioteca@dinastiavivanco.es). We look forward to learning more about this multi-language wine library of some 6,000 volumes. From So. Australia, **Chris Pfeiffer**, Whistler Wines (cpfeiffer@openbook.com.au), has joined us. **Steve Matthiasson** (steve@premierevit.com), a budding young Napa Valley collector, has a special interest in books on pomology and viticulture. **Dan Fredman**, Malibu, CA. (probono@earthlink.net), while studying for the MW, discovered “some wonderful older books” and looks forward to learning “more about the whole wine book genre.” **Howard Keith**, Saratoga Springs, NY (hkeith1@nycap.rr.com), has been collecting for some thirty years; he especially enjoys “anecdotes, memoirs, and essays” about wine. Our thanks to Bill Dickerson for introducing the W-T to **William Siegel**, his long-time fellow admirer of fine wine and food. **Edward Bronson** (ed@bronson.org) has been collecting wine and beverage books (in most languages) for some ten years and wants all the back issues of W-T. **Andrew Cheese** (andrewcheese83@hotmail.com) is our first Swedish Tendril. And, we now have a “Z” member! **Joe Zugelder** (K & L Wine Merchants joez@klwines.com) learned of the ongoing Martin Ray “Vinaceous Correspondents” series by **Barbara Marinacci**, and quickly signed up. Welcome to all!

BONUSES!!

The updated **2004 Membership Roster** is enclosed with this issue. We are pleased to also include a 16-page **Supplement** containing the next installment of Barbara Marinacci’s “*Vinaceous Correspondents*.”

RUNNING OUT OF SPACE HERE!!

From London, **Jeffrey Benson** (bensonwines@connectingbusiness.com) writes: “I have a collection of wine auction catalogues dating from their inception in 1966 to the present from most of the auction houses, most with results, &c. Would any Tendril be interested in making me an offer for them, as I am running out of space here.” Contact Jeffrey for further details if you can help him out.

“BIBLIOMANIA:

A Documentary Film of the World’s Largest Antiquarian Book Fair,” presents the ABAA’s (Antiquarian Booksellers’ Assn of America) California International Antiquarian Book Fair held in San Francisco in February 2003. “...a vivid and unique peek into the

world of rare books—those who collect them...those who sell them. ...a rare glimpse behind the scenes, as dealers set up their booths and also as they pack up when the fair is over. Even if you have been to a hundred book fairs ...you will be charmed and engaged by this film.” Copies of the film (running time: 58 minutes) are available in DVD format for \$10 each, plus \$4 shipping. Send check or money order to: ABAA, 20 W. 44th St., Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10036-6604. Or, use the secure order form at www.ilabdatabase.com/secure/abaa/ordercd.php.

NOTES ON A CELLAR-BOOK

Our fellow Tendril and indefatigable bibliographer, **Isaac Oelgart**, of the Port Lover’s Library, is compiling for future publication “bibliographical observations” on George Saintsbury’s wine classic. He is looking for just three dust jackets to complete his collection of all the editions of *Notes on a Cellar-Book*: the November 1920, the 1924, and the 1927 editions—he is willing to buy, sell, or trade. Isaac also asks: How many Tendrils have a first edition (July 1920), and of those, how many have dust jackets? Also, does anyone have an inscribed presentation copy of the first edition? E-mail him at the-pll@valley.net, or phone 603.443.6159. He thanks us all in advance.

ON THE BEDSIDE TABLE

If you don’t already have a copy of Frank Prial’s *Decantations: Reflections on Wine* by *The New York Times* Wine Critic (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin Edition, 2002. 304pp, p.b.), you should. A winner of the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, this “robust” collection of some of Mr. Prial’s finest columns—informative, humorous, sometimes unorthodox observations on wines, wine personalities, and the wine business—makes for delectable reading.

RAUDINS REPRINTS

have been brought to our attention by Tendril and bookseller, **John Thorne**, Raudins’ UK and European distributor. Raudins “Classic Brewing and Distilling Series” of reprints (five titles so far) include the rare Samuel M’Harry’s 1809 *Practical Distiller* (the second American book on distilling), M. L. Byrn’s *Complete Practical Distiller* (1875) and *Complete Practical Brewer* (1852), W. Brande’s *Town and Country Brewery Book* (c1830). These books, printed in “extremely short-runs, around 500 copies,” are handsome productions, bound in bonded leather with gold-foil stamping on the spine and front cover, and are very reasonably priced. Contact John (liquidliterature@aol.com) for UK orders, or in the US, click on Raudins website: www.raudins.com or email: brewbooks@raudins.com.

A Perfect Way to Promote Wine & Health!

A BOOK REVIEW

by Ronald Unzelman, M.D.

Mon Docteur le Vin, the classic 1936 French book published by the famous Parisian wine merchants, Nicolas, has been recently translated and published in English! This extraordinary book, with text by Gaston Derys and unsurpassed watercolors by Raoul Dufy, is a pure delight.

In an advertising scheme, Nicolas desired to promote wine as healthy and natural, as well as chic. The firm engaged the renowned artist Dufy to contribute a series of vibrant watercolors to illustrate stylish people at leisure, who lightheartedly offer comments on the pleasures and benefits of drinking wine. The text is mainly quotations from prominent physicians and professionals of the day expounding the case for the healthful, moderate use of wine. (See *WTQ*, Vol.11 No.1, January 2001, for an excellent history and description of the Nicolas catalogues and publications, "Wine, Art, and Nicolas" by James Gabler. Also, see *Wine Into Words*, 2nd ed., p.406.)

This 45-page, lovely reproduction is approximately 8" x 10" and loaded with the Dufy paintings. The Henry McBride Charitable Trust and Yale University Press are responsible for this English-language edition, translated by Benjamin Ivry, and with an introduction by Paul Lukacs (author of *American Vintage: The Rise of American Wine*). At the end of the book the very interesting story about the making of this book, and the personalities involved, is told. Profits from the sale of *Mon Docteur le Vin* go to support young artists and children's charities. It can be ordered online at www.henrymcbride.org.

The original French edition, now very scarce, commands hundreds of dollars, if you are lucky enough to find a copy. This stunning new edition is priced at \$19.95 — every wine lover (and wine-loving physician) should order a copy for himself, and extra copies to be given to friends (and patients)!



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BOOKS & BOTTLES

by
Fred McMillin

... AND MOTHER CRIED

The Book: *Harvesting the Dream. The Rags-to-Riches Tale of the Sutter Home Winery*, by Kate Heyhoe and Stanley Hock. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2004. 235 pp. Hardback. \$24.95.

Arriving at the Oakland, California, depot on 5 December 1948 after a three-day train ride from New York City, the Trincherro family then drove two and a half hours to St. Helena, in the Napa Valley, to begin their new lives at the winery they had purchased, Sutter Home. Bob Trincherro recalled: "We pulled into the winery, which was a dilapidated old barn that hadn't operated [for 30 years]. It had been abandoned and was waist high in weeds at the front, with dirt floors and no electricity. My mother, Mary, started to cry."

By the mid-1980s, Sutter Home would be the fourth largest winery in the United States. *Harvesting the Dream* is the story of that astonishing accomplishment.

The Cast

We began counting the Trincherros in the story, and stopped at twenty. We'll concentrate on these two sets of brothers.

The Senior Pair, John and Mario. John was the first Trincherro to leave the Northeast and land in the Napa Valley. He convinced brother Mario to join him three years later (with his wife in tears). Mary and Mario's sons were...

The Younger Pair, Bob and Roger. Bob, born in 1936, became the winemaker, learning mostly from Uncle John, and augmented by some courses at University of California, Davis. Roger, ten years younger, was the tall athlete of the family (who accepted a football scholarship to U.C. Los Angeles and was later offered a semi-pro contract in San Francisco).

White Zinfandel

Grab the book and read the fascinating story of how the accidental creation of White Zinfandel catapulted Sutter Home Winery to national leadership—told

beautifully by authors Kate Heyhoe and Stanley Hock. Kate Heyhoe has an award-winning food and writing background, with several cookbooks to her credit. In 1994 she co-founded, with her husband Thomas Way, the Web's first food and wine "e-zine," Global Gourmet (www.globalgourmet.com). Stanley Hock, former communications director for Trinchero Family Estates has twenty-five years of experience in the California wine industry. In 1998 he wrote a shorter (96 pages) commemorative *Harvesting* for the winery entitled *Harvesting the Dream. The Trinchero Family of Sutter Home. Fifty Years in the Napa Valley*, that was published by Sutter Home Winery.

In the present volume, categorized as a "business analysis book" by publisher Wiley, the authors had several specific goals in mind:

- Showcase the rags-to-riches success story of a unique American family business.
- Illustrate how they've founded their success on honesty, strong moral values, and philanthropy.
- Outline the steps the Trincheros are taking to maintain or expand their profits.
- Document a case study of a large family winery hovering between consolidated corporate giants and Napa Valley's artisan wineries.
- Identify the global and consumer trends shaping the future of the wine industry.
- Illuminate the U.S. wine industry as a prosperous commerce sector facing increasing competition from imports and globalization.

It is not dull, as you can see from the following quotes.

- Bob Trinchero: "When I was about nine in New York, my parents offered me red wine mixed with 75% 7-Up, in a cup. I really enjoyed it and wanted it every time I'd sit down at the dinner table."
- Sutter Home was literally a Mom and Pop winery. That is, "mother bottled it and dad [Mario] sold it." So daughter Vera had to take care of her little brother, Roger. "He was only two and a half. I'd put him in a cardboard box and roll him back and forth on the conveyor belt to keep him amused."
- Returning from Air Force duty in 1958, Bob asked his dad for advice on selecting a civilian career. Mario told him, "Bob, there really isn't much of a future in the wine business, but we'll give you a part-time job at the winery until you can find something with a [better] future." Bob's still looking.
- We now know that the winery was so rundown in 1948 that Bob's "mother started to cry." It's a good thing she didn't see it in 1906, when it was in such bad shape that prior owners sold it for a total of ten dollars in gold!

Whence the name Sutter Home

The \$10 was paid by Caroline and Emil Leuenberger, a Swiss couple who had arrived in the U.S. twenty years earlier. In 1890 they purchased 80 acres on the lower slopes of Napa Valley's Howell Mountain. They built a winery and named it after Caroline's father, San Francisco merchant and former sea captain, John Sutter. So the first Sutter Home Winery was located on Howell Mountain. When they made the purchase in 1906, they took along the Sutter Home name, and painted the name in "horse-high" letters on the roof of the barn, where Mary Trinchero would later shed her tears. The letters were so dominant that the Trincheros decided to retain the name Sutter Home, rather than call it the Trinchero Winery and repaint the roof! But enough of the past. Here are some Trinchero tidbits about the present.

Roger notes that an outstanding Sutter Home value is "our Gewurztraminer" and the varietal that is now getting a lot of attention is Pinot Grigio.

The company now has five labels, each in a different price category and each with a full range of varietals: Sutter Home, Trinity Oaks, Montevina, Reynolds (Australian), and the highest-priced Trinchero. Thus the company is poised to expand production in any category that enjoys a growth spurt.

The Bottles: From our past twelve months of tastings (where all Trinchero family wines were rated good or better), here are the top eight.

- Trinchero. Mario's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, 1999.
- Reynolds. Chardonnay, 2002.
- Montevina. Pinot Grigio, 2002.
- Montevina. Zinfandel, 2001.
- Montevina. Terra d'Oro Zinfandel, 2001.
- Reynolds. Merlot, 2001.
- Trinity Oaks. Pinot Grigio, 2002.

POSTSCRIPT — Oakland, California Train Depot: The Trinchero family arrived there warily in 1948. My maternal grandfather also arrived there warily about 1905. Living in Minnesota, he had been offered the chairmanship of the University of California Art Department. After one look at the rather robust environment, he concluded it was no place for his wife and daughter (my mother). He left on the next train—without knowing that the Sutter Home property was for sale for \$10. Rats!!

[Fred McMillin—teacher, writer, researcher, and wine taster—has been honored by the Academy of Wine Communications as one of America's 22 best wine writers. Fred has graced the pages of the *Wayward Tendrils* with his "Books & Bottles" since our first issue in 1991. He also teaches a monthly wine course in San Francisco. For the "delicious details" fax him at 415.567.4468. — Ed.]

IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by
Bob Foster



"... amazing tribute ..."

The Brady Book. Selections from Roy Brady's Unpublished Writings on Wine. Edited, with an Introduction by Thomas Pinney. Santa Rosa, CA: Nomis Press, nomis@jps.net. 199 pp. 10 x 7. Cloth. Limited to 250 hand-numbered copies. \$100.

Roy Brady was one of the very first intense collectors of wine and wine related materials in the 20th century in California. He was a mathematician by training but became involved with wine in the 1940s. He immersed himself in all aspects of wine—the wines themselves, the winemakers, wine labels, restaurant menus, almost anything related to wine. He collected all that he could. (Indeed, his collection of 3,500 books is now at Fresno State University, while his collection of 50,000 wine labels was donated to the University of California, Davis.) In 1971-1973 Brady was the editor of *Wine World* magazine and after that he wrote numerous articles for a variety of magazines. But at the time of his death in 1998 his friends realized there was a wealth of material he had written that had never been published. Working together, and with financial assistance from renowned wine merchant Darrell Corti, they have published this amazing tribute. (Profits from the work go to the Wine Librarians Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the history of wine.)

Brady's writings cover an astonishing array of topics from around the globe, and even offers the reader rare glimpses into the California wine world in the 1950s through the 1980s. It quickly becomes apparent that Brady had sharp powers of observation and a keen wit. The book is divided into ten major sections covering topics such as Old California, Emerging California, Judging Wine, Wine Books, and Wine Labels & Lists. He wrote on a myriad of themes as wines or events piqued his curiosity. In the Emerging California section, Brady carefully details his first meetings with André Tchelistcheff, Louis M. Martini, Martin Ray, and the Ficklin family. Since most current wine lovers never had the opportunity to meet these near legendary founding fathers of the modern wine era, seeing them through Brady's eyes is a real treat.

In the section All About Wine, Brady has an essay on the greatest wines he never tasted. I know I've always had such a list in the back of my head and

seeing his list and reading his reasons for including certain wines is fascinating.

Brady's wit and humor shine through again and again. When I first opened the shipping package containing the review copy, I was surprised that there was no dust jacket. I thought perhaps the publisher had sent out the first copies for reviews without awaiting the arrival of delayed dust jackets. Wrong. A small note on the copyright page states, "This special limited edition of 250 copies is issued without a dust jacket. As Roy Brady liked to explain his library of jacketless books, 'I like my women and my books bare.'" Once at a dinner party, the host called on each of the guests to comment at length on each dish and each wine served. The evening dragged on until after midnight. When the host called on Brady, he stood up and solemnly surveyed the table. He raised his glass and drained it. After a "suitably contemplative pause" he said, "Mighty tasty" and sat down.

The work begins with a lengthy essay from noted wine author Thomas Pinney that chronicles the events of Brady's life and his passions and pursuits. The book is augmented by 24 illustrations including fourteen tipped-in color reproductions of wine labels from the Brady Collection. Seeing the colored label from the 1948 Mayacamas Zinfandel, which originally sold for 50 cents a bottle, is a rare treat. The time, energy, and effort that went into this book is a clear reflection of the love and admiration Brady's friends had for him. Very highly recommended.

"... *the bible for wine book collectors* ..."

Wine Into Words. A History and Bibliography of Wine Books in the English Language, Second Edition, by James Gabler. Baltimore, MD: Bacchus Press Ltd., bacchuspr@aol.com. 503 pp. 11½ x 8½. Cloth. \$75. Available in the UK and Europe from John Thorne (liquidliterature@aol.com), £43 + post.

My wife, Laurie, hates Jim Gabler. Laurie has never met Jim Gabler. But she knows that before I read the first edition of this work in 1985, I had only a few older wine books on a single shelf in my study. After reviewing the first edition of this wine book bibliography and realizing how many antiquarian wine books existed and how enticing they were, I was hooked. Gabler's listing and descriptions were so detailed, so enthralling, that the same collecting bug that pushed my wine purchases was also turned to old wine books. Our house is now crowded with more than fifteen hundred wine books, some dating back to the 1800s. We've run out of room. And now, it will probably just get worse because this second edition of the book is even better. It is *the bible* for wine book collectors.

It is some two and a half times the size of the first edition and contains over 8,000 entries with thousands of annotations covering any kind of printed book on wine—either wine itself or wine as it relates to other fields such as art, literature, music, and even politics. The entries in the book are arranged by author. For the more notable writers, there are biographical sketches of their lives at the beginning of the entry. For some of the more interesting or important books there are quotes or illustrations for the works themselves. The depth and breadth of the works that Gabler has uncovered are astonishing. In the back of the book there is an index by the title of each work. An added bonus over the first edition is a subject index. Given the wealth of information, and the amount of work that clearly went into this edition, the price is very reasonable.

If you are a wine book collector, this is the ultimate reference book. It is an absolute must buy for your collection. You can't claim to be a serious wine collector unless you have a copy of this outstanding book in your library. Even if you are not a wine book collector but just a wine lover, you will want *Wine Into Words* for its fascinating look at how wine has been regarded for the last three centuries. By the way, autographed copies are available from the publisher. Very highly recommended. (And my wife still hates Jim Gabler.)

[Bob's reviews appear regularly in the excellent wine tasting bimonthly, *California Grapevine*, edited and published by Nicholas Ponomareff (858.457.4818). Our Tendril thanks for their generous permission to reprint the above reviews from the February / March 2004 issue. — Ed.]



[Brady's "Birdie," used on his bookplate and stationery, is from LeClerc's *Principes sur la Culture de la Vigne en Cordons*, 1822]

BORDEAUX LABELS

by
Edward A. Bunyard

[Edward Bunyard, author of *The Anatomy of Dessert*, with a Few Notes on Wine (London: 1929, 1933; New York, 1934 First American Ed.) and, with Lorna Bunyard, *The Epicure's Companion* (London, 1937), was a frequent contributor to André Simon's *Wine & Food Society's* quarterly, *Wine and Food*, until his death in 1939. In our *W-T* Vol. 4 No. 4, we reprinted his delightful "The Wine List" (*W & F*, Winter 1936). The following—for the enjoyment of those who have succumbed to the collecting of wine labels—is reprinted, with grateful permission, from *Wine & Food*, Spring 1939. — Ed.]

We are told that there are collectors of almost everything, and we know that matchbox labels have their rarities and incunabula prized by many. I suppose that there must therefore be collections of Claret labels. And why not? What could be more pleasant than to recall our notable bottles of the past in the tranquility of our study; the friendly discussions they aroused, and the good company they had called together?

Unfortunately, the rules of politeness forbid any careful study of them at table, but a substitute is at hand, the admirable and anonymous *Clarets and Sauternes* published in 1920 by the Wine and Spirit Trade Record. [EDITOR: G. A. Keeler is now identified as the book's author; it is so catalogued in James Gabler, *Wine Into Words*. In *W-T* October 1996, Mannie Berk, "Wine Literature Reviewed," lists this book as one of the major early 20th century books on Bordeaux.]

In its pages we can turn in leisure to the reproduction of Claret labels in all their varied typography and periods. What a problem must confront the proprietor of an ancient château when the question of a new label is mooted, and who would dare to moot it, I wonder? I suspect the daughters-in-law. Figure for yourself the family discussions, which it would arouse. "Le conseil du famille" summoned; the heart-breaking, never-ending struggle between conservatism and progress.

Needless to say, in France conservatism usually wins, but new labels are not unknown.

The decision must have to be made at some time, whether the château is to be depicted or not. In some cases this probably settles itself. How wisely did Château Mouton-Rothschild decide to suppress its small bow-windowed villa, such as may be seen any day on Blackheath Common, and confine itself to dignified print. "Mouton. Hers. Du Bon de Rothschild Proptres." Need more be said?

Even the palatial Palladian front of Château Margaux is suppressed on their label on the principle that good wine needs no bush. Fortunately, Cos d'Estournel had so such scruples, and boldly show you

that surprising building in the Chinese style which stands up so exotically above the plain of Medoc. Can we wonder that Biarnez, the poet of Bordeaux, was inspired by it to some of his finest lines [*Les Grands Vins de Bordeaux. Poème...* Paris, 1849]:

Avec des minarets groupés sure ses coteaux
 Etalant jusqu'aux cieus ses fronts orientaux
 Fiers d'être des nababs le suprême régal
 Voilà Cos d'Estournel qui peut marcher égal
 De tous les plus grands crus classés de la Gironde
 Brillant d'un vif éclat de gloire dans le monde.

All the same, I should have liked to hear the comments of the local vignerons when they first gazed at its sky-piercing minarets.

The Château Lafite label must be very old. In fact, it might well be a Bewick woodcut, even to the two ladies in the foreground taking the air. We would not have it changed for all the scarlet and gold in Burgundy.

When photography came into vogue the vignette was much favoured. Château Batailley, white behind its shading trees, Ch. Le Teret, solid and low with a circular drive approaching, Ch. Nénin, and others followed suit. But vignettes, alas, show the march of time, and instead of fading gracefully, develop a hard line around them. A point, no doubt, for revolutionary daughters-in-law.

The Exhibitions of the last century also left their trace. The Grandes Médailles d'Or could not be resisted, and so on the label they had to go. Ch. Pétrus Arnaud had two, and Domaine de Puyblanquet went four better; but wiser growers saw the limitations of space and did not enter into this particular competition.

A coat of arms lends distinction to many labels, as on Grand-Puy-Ducasse; Pape Clément with the Papal keys, or even a coronet which the Marquis de Terme had the right to use. Branaire-Ducru with its Countess, Marquis and Vicomte proprietors put up four, but two are obviously duplicates.

Château Rauzan-Gassies has a charming label in the Moreau le Jeune style, with chaplets of flowers tumbling about. Here one would suspect the feminine hand, and rightly so. Madame Veuve Rigaud purchasing the Château in 1887 set her own mark upon it.

Château Olivier's label fails to please me—the silhouette of the old château is as admirable as the wine it enshrines, but the Walter Crane-ish border of vines is unseemly to my eye. Perhaps I am prejudiced by the early memories of pre-Raphaelite ladies with bare feet who always seemed to choose to walk round blackberry bushes. My youthful heart bled for them; why didn't they put on their shoes?

The owners of Léoville-Las Cases had a difficult problem before them: a mere bungalow is their

château; should they choose the bottling cellar, far more imposing, though prison-like? They chose neither; but an imposing Gateway was at hand surmounted by a Lion couchant, and so it is this we see today on their label—a gate we would willingly crash.

Hard must have been the way of label designers when seeking something distinctive to put on their bottles, but the ingenuity of man surmounts all obstacles. Let us congratulate Ch. Palmer in Margaux on a brilliant conception. A black label printed white—no one would forget that, and so it is today, I fancy, the only red Bordeaux which is so labelled. Or was it Château Guiraud, the famous Sauternes, which first registered this device?

But with all such conceptions let us be thankful that Bordeaux has resisted the temptation to which Burgundy succumbed: the rather German style of the old "Hostellerie," coloured, and often gold-dusted. Any such label would scare away any true Claret lover. Vines creep round the label, and I fear that before long red-cheeked damsels will be added, dreadfully chocolate-box-y.

Let us clear our palate with a glance at Ch. Yquem—there's dignity for you! A coronet, "Château d'Yquem-Lur Saluces," the year in slender gold letters, and a narrow golden border. Need more be said?

And, looking back, I see I have said nothing about Latour. Let us leave it so, "on ne badine pas avec Latour."

[For further wine-label (the paper variety) reading, see *W-T Vol.12 No.3 July 2002 "California Wine Labels" by Roy Brady, and Vol.4 No.1 Jan 1994, "Collecting Wine Labels: A Wealth of Information," by Angela Stewart. — Ed.]*



A BORN COLLECTOR: ROY BRADY (1918 – 1998)

by
Thomas Pinney

[In our last issue, we announced the publication of a special wine book, The Brady Book: Selections from Roy Brady's Unpublished Writings on Wine, edited and with an introduction by Thomas Pinney. The following was written for fellow members of the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles, and printed in their quarterly publication Hoja Volante, November 2003. We appreciate their kind permission to reprint. — Ed.]



Roy Brady's name is not among those of the celebrated book collectors, but I think that he may claim to be among the real Collectors, with a capital C. Roy grew up in San Antonio, Texas, where he showed the sort of collecting precocity that marks the real thing. He began, conventionally enough, with stamps,

but then moved on in his high school years to collect books on astronomy and books on mathematics; even odder were his efforts to form collections of all the chemical elements, and of one-celled animals. In college he made a collection of pipes.

After a false start at the University of Michigan and brief stints at St. Mary's in San Antonio and at the University of Texas, Roy blossomed at the University of Chicago, where he studied mathematics and philosophy under such teachers as Bertrand Russell and Rudolph Carnap. He became a PhD candidate in mathematics, and supported himself, his wife, and his young family by teaching, first at the Bronx campus of Hunter College, and then at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.

It was in Chicago that the crystallizing moment in Roy's life came. One hot afternoon in the summer of 1947 he was browsing in Kroch's bookstore on the near north side. He idly took down a book called *American Wines* by Frank Schoonmaker and Tom Marvel (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), began paging through it, and found himself transfixed. He determined at that moment to be, as he put it, a "student of wine," and, for the rest of his life, that is what he was. He was, of course, many other things as well: husband, father, friend, colleague, tax-payer, neighbor, and all that. But mainly he was a student of wine.

What did that mean, particularly in 1947? The Repeal of national Prohibition had been accomplished at the end of 1933, but the American wine trade, having been ruined by Prohibition, had not made

much of a recovery through the following years of economic depression and war. California produced large quantities of fortified wines called port, sherry, and muscatel that were shipped out of the state in railway tank cars and bottled under thousands of different labels by regional bottlers. New York produced a small quantity of strangely-flavored wines from native American hybrid grapes, and there was a scattering of wine production in Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, and North Carolina. But on the whole wine was an unknown quantity to most Americans. Those who took a serious interest in it, or who were accustomed to drink it, took for granted that the only good wine was European—mostly French. The newspapers did not print articles on wine; no magazine featured it; winemakers were not yet celebrities; no experts advised the rich on how to build their cellars; the Napa Valley Wine Auction was undreamed-of. In short, America was a wasteland so far as wine was concerned when Roy Brady decided that he would become a student of wine.

He at once set about to teach himself and so entered upon his fulfillment as a collector. He began to buy wine in as much variety as he could manage—always difficult on an instructor's pay, and not so easy in the Chicago of those unenlightened days. He began to buy books so that he could learn all that was to be known about wine, its origins, its hierarchies, its social and technical history, its connoisseurship, its lore. No other substance that we eat or drink has generated so extensive and varied a literature. But, Roy soon found, contemporary writing was dominated by an English school—George Saintsbury, André Simon, H. Warner Allen were among the leading names. This school, formed by college, club, and country house, worshiped claret and port, and acknowledged burgundy, sherry, and Rhine wines ("Hock," the English mysteriously call these) as lesser deities. Beyond this they rarely ventured; they studied vintages carefully, and they made a fetish of bottle age: no young wine was worthy.

Roy Brady, as an eager novice in provincial Chicago, took all this in and attempted dutifully to follow the approved pattern. Within weeks he was drinking his first classified Bordeaux. But he pretty quickly realized that his style would not be to follow tamely in the narrow path laid out by the English school; he would instead be a Ulysses of wine, eager to try everything in the world. As a student of wine, he would embrace the whole field, not some special corner of it. And so with the literature of wine. He was interested in every printed scrap having to do with it. Brochures, fliers, advertisements, posters, menus, restaurant lists, merchants catalogs, labels, postcards, souvenirs—all had something to teach the student of wine.

At the beginning of the 1950s the Brady family migrated to California. At first they thought that they would stay only briefly. Roy pretended that Chicago had the ideal winter climate, and he never did like the heat of California, but he remained in California to the end. He lost no time in exploring the wine-growing regions of the state, from Escondido to Ukiah, and he was soon acquainted with the notable people in the trade—Herman Wente, André Tchelistcheff, Louis Martini—and with those amateurs who loved wine and who were a great deal thicker on the ground in California than in Chicago. He became a member of the Los Angeles Wine and Food Society shortly after moving to Los Angeles. Later, he became one of an unofficial group meeting weekly at a Los Angeles restaurant for the simple purpose of sampling wines. By 1991, Roy estimated, this group had tried some 20,000 wines, and, since he was faithful in attendance, he had had the greater part of that number.

In 1959 Brady moved to what became his permanent residence, in the San Fernando Valley near Cal State Northridge, where his wife was teaching. Here the student of wine found a secure base on which to build his collections. He arranged to have a cellar built in the spacious back yard: a machine dug the hole, but Roy did all the finishing. It turned out well: quiet, sound, and steadily cool. By the early 1960s it held some 2,000 bottles. Roy wrote that the wines that went into his cellar were “more or less for the long haul,” but he certainly did not mean to keep them undisturbed: “any wine that was mature and well rested might be called to the table at any moment.” So the contents of the cellar were in a steady process of depletion and renewal, hundreds of bottles being emptied each year and each year replaced. He relied mostly on Los Angeles merchants, but bought directly from many wineries and extended his contacts to the old-line wine merchants in England. On business trips to the East Coast he would take a specially-constructed brief case capable of holding eleven bottles.

Roy kept a record of his purchases in a series of cellar books in which he entered the name of the wine, the name of the merchant, the bottle size, the date of purchase, the price, and the date that he drank the wine. Each entry is numbered, and when the series comes to an end in 1991 Roy had reached number 17,290. Added to the 20,000 tastings achieved by his wine group, and to the innumerable wines that he sampled through the Wine and Food Society and at the tables of his friends, this might add up to, say, 50,000 wines that he had some experience of—an estimate certainly far too low. In 1966 he wrote that he was then sampling about 2,000 wines a year. I think he could claim to be a Ulysses of wine.

Officially, his wine studies were only a side-line. Shortly after coming to California Roy had been hired at Northrop Aircraft in operations research and systems analysis (jobs for which, he said, “a little mathematics goes a long way”). Later he would work for Thompson-Ramo-Woolridge, Lockheed, and the RAND Corporation. By 1964 he had enough of what he called the “death industry” and left it. He had no settled employment after that, but did much writing, editing, and teaching in his character as a student of wine.

Roy was anything but a snob about wine. He liked most wines that were good of their kind, and he knew the whole gamut, from the most ordinary to the most exalted. For him, wine was good to drink; it was also a noble subject for study, but first it was good to drink. He enjoyed the rituals that surround wine, but he had no patience with the affectations of the self-appointed experts, nor did he accept any of the clichés until he had approved them for himself. And he greatly enjoyed drinking wine with others. After I published my *History of Wine in America* (Berkeley: U.C. Press, 1989), which he was kind enough to like, he invited my wife and me to lunch. We began with an array of six or eight Madeiras, from the late 18th century (!) to the late 19th, some of them with labels that identified the ships that had carried the wines back and forth across the equator to mellow them. I had never had anything so splendid. They had all come from his cellar, and he was eager to see what my responses were, not as a test, but simply because as a student of wine he was interested even in such naïve judgments as mine.

At lunch, a simple affair that he had cooked himself, he presented a bottle of CWA Burgundy, no date but certainly before Prohibition in 1920. I had written in my book that the CWA (California Wine Association) had had a good reputation for its wines but that we couldn't know them today. So Roy found one in his cellar and brought it out to confound me in a good-humored way. The wine was long past the point at which it could be drunk, but that didn't matter. Then, as the proper accompaniment to the meal, he opened a bottle of 1961 Château Mouton-Rothschild—a new experience at lunch for me, but for Roy, as I have said, the purpose of wine was to be drunk, and that included expensive, fine wines just as much as the humblest ordinaire ('61 Ch. Mouton-Rothschild was listed in a recent Twenty-Two Wine Merchants catalog at \$1595). Roy was pleased when I agreed with his suggestion that the Mouton-Rothschild, at some thirty years, was already too old: it was good, but it had been better. He was firmly convinced that the cult of age in wines meant, more often than not, that wines were kept too long. As a student of wine he had learned the truth of this

proposition, despite what most experts were saying.

Roy's cellar books are quite impressive in themselves; even more impressive is the long series of tasting notes that he faithfully kept from the outset of his wine studies. There are 37 volumes of these, written in ink in Brady's neat hand, recording what he thought of many thousands of bottles of wines that he drank, and why. Moreover, he indexed the tasting notes in a separate card file, so that he could tell after a moment's inquiry when, for example, he might first have tasted a Riesling from Hugel, or a 1957 Château Gruaud-Larose. The range of the notes is from the humblest Cucamonga red to the rarified heights of Romanée Conti; there are notes on the wines from almost every winery then operating in California, as well as from the other states of the Union, and from Bulgaria, Israel, Brazil, and Japan in addition to the more obvious countries. He sampled wine from every grape variety grown in this country—Beclan, Flora, Baco, Carnelian, Mourastel, Peverella, Rabosa Piave (a favorite), Veltliner and a long list of others.

Roy's collecting began with the cellar, was organized by the cellar books, was reflected upon by the tasting notes, and was then extended by a huge accumulation of wine labels. But "accumulation" is the wrong word, for this was a work of high design. The labels were all carefully mounted, enclosed in protective plastic, dated, classified by country and region, and, finally, indexed. As he could quickly locate any one of his thousands of tasting notes, so he could put his hands on any one of his labels by consulting his index. He needed it. By the time that he at last ceased to work on the collection he had on the order of 50,000 labels. There are no doubt larger ones in the world, but few can be more carefully arranged. He studied the labels with a bibliographer's care, looking for variations and for clues as to forgotten or deliberately obscured histories and identities. The labels, as a form of print, make a link to the last aspect of his collecting activity, the literature of wine.

In some ways, the library that he formed is the most impressive of his collections, partly because he made it at a time when there was almost no guidance or assistance available in that field, and partly because he was able to create so comprehensive a

collection in so short a time, roughly in the decade 1955-1965. There were a few, very few other Americans collecting the literature of wine at the time: California bibliophile, Marcus Crahan, was perhaps the most eminent among those few. But mainly Brady had to work alone. There were fairly good guides to the older, classic items, but hardly anything for the collector of *Americana*. A few eastern book stores specialized in food and wine, but the collector's net had to be cast in every direction, likely and unlikely. He had fruitful connections with dealers in England, France, and Germany, where these things had then been more studied than in this country.

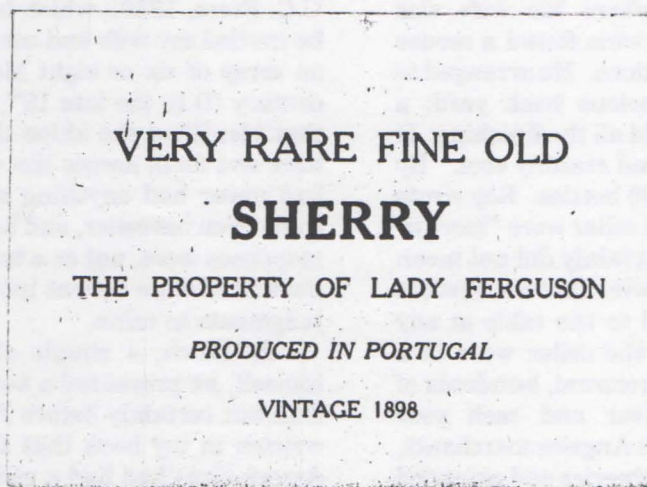
Roy's principle as a book collector was to buy whatever was "interesting," not necessarily old or rare. But of course, to him, nearly everything was "interesting." He made a special point of collecting everything published in the United States, and succeeded to the extent that a complete history of American wine down to the middle of the 20th century could be written from the sources he assembled. He

had nearly as complete a collection of wine books published in England, which grows little wine but produces a large literature about it. These are the main pillars of the collection, but it includes material in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Hungarian, Flemish, Latin, Greek, Catalan, and Japanese.

By 1967 Roy had run into the familiar contradiction of the assiduous collector: the more successful he was as a collec-

tor the less able he was to sustain the collection. He began to run out of room; he had neither the time nor the training to care for the more delicate and costly items in the collection; and the cataloging of the collection became more and more a burden. And, of course, the books he sought went up and up in price.

He began to look about for a buyer and found one in Henry Madden, then the librarian at Fresno State University. In 1968 the Brady collection moved from the San Fernando Valley to Fresno. Roy described it then as consisting, "roughly," of 1500 books, 2000 pamphlets and other such items, 900 wine merchants' catalogs, 200 volumes of periodicals, and 200 restaurant wine lists. After the transfer of the collection, Roy continued to take an active part in developing and promoting it. Anyone interested in getting a distinct idea of Roy's achievements as a collector may do so by



visiting the Department of Special Collections at California State University, Fresno.

Roy was a gifted writer in an easy, plain style through which the qualities of intelligence and good sense showed clearly. But he knew so much that it was almost more than he could manage. He started a number of ambitious books about the history of wine, and though he was eminently well-qualified to write them, he never finished one. Instead, he wrote a great many articles about his subject (I have an incomplete checklist of some 200 items), most of them published in regional magazines. For a few years in the early 1970s he edited the journal called *Wine World* and made it stand out from the competition. It is a pity that he did not manage to concentrate all that he knew in some one or two substantial books: they would have made his reputation as a student of wine and as a writer on a level with, say, Frank Schoonmaker, the best and most literate of the experts writing in Roy's generation.


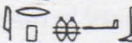
Roy's failure to do justice to his own achievement has now—to some extent at least—been repaired. A generous sampling of largely unpublished material from his papers has now been published under the title of *The Brady Book: Selections from Roy Brady's Unpublished Writings on Wine* (Santa Rosa, CA: The Nomis Press, 2003). It may seem indecorous in me, as the editor of this selection, to praise it. But the book is Brady's, not mine; it is varied, intelligent, well-informed, amusing, and always interesting. The section on wine books, for example, includes entries on "Stealing Books," the "Pleasure of Bibliographies," and "A Lost Library"—but, as the ads say, there is much, much more. The book is published in a limited edition of 250 copies and is illustrated with a selection of wine labels and several title pages from Roy's collections.

The manuscript material that Roy left behind, the files of his correspondence, his cellar books, his tasting notes, and his great label collection are now in the Department of Special Collections at the University of California, Davis. Earlier, he had given a large collection of restaurant menus to Special Collections at UCLA. So the corpus of his collecting (he drank all the wine himself before his death) now lies divided between three institutional libraries up and down the state: Los Angeles, Fresno, and Davis. I have a few volumes from his working library, given to me after his death, and I treasure them in memory of a really great Collector.



ANCIENT WINES: CLEOPATRA, COLUMELLA, and the FARMER

by
Gordon Jones

"Well, Cleo, what do you want with your Nile duck tonight? Red wine  or white wine ?"¹

In other words, wine has been around a long time.

"The invention of wine, like the origin of many other important arts, is enveloped in the obscurity of the earliest ages of the world. It has generally been ascribed to those heroes who contributed most to civilize their respective countries." Thus starts the introduction to *The History of Ancient and Modern Wines* by Alexander Henderson (London, 1824).

Time for a quiz: You have been invited to a symposium. Which of the following will you need?

- A. Pen
- B. Pad of paper
- C. Wine glass

If it is a classical symposium, you will need C. Definition No.1 in *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (1969): A drinking party, especially following a banquet.

Plato and Xenophon both wrote of symposia as they might have been in Athens in 421 B.C.: spirited affairs complete with entertainment and philosophical discussions. Music and dancing were a part of the activities. These parties were the subject of many paintings on Greek pottery during the fifth century B.C.



Getting ready for a symposium, c500B.C.²

Meanwhile, back at the farm, progressive farmers were reading Columella.

Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, born early 1st century A.D., Gades (Cadiz), in southern Spain, was the most extensively read wine and agricultural writer for hundreds of years. He covered all aspects of farm production from acquiring the land to the development of farm products. His twelve books of *De Re Rustica* (completed circa 55–60 A.D.) were very advanced for the era. He firmly believed in rebuilding the soil as you farm: a radical idea at the time. Columella devotes much more space to grape culture than he does to wine making. The Third and Fourth Books (some 54 chapters) are devoted to the vine and its culture: he discusses grape buying, planting, grafting, fertilizing, and harvesting. Book V contains further information on vineyard pruning and cultivation. But Columella does not go into wine making until Book XII, which includes, “Duties of the overseer’s wife, manufacture of wines, pickling...”.

Wines of the ancients are often spoken of rhapsodically—but of course we have no way of knowing what a wine of 50 B.C. would be like.

Cleopatra’s wine would probably not be recognized by many modern wine drinkers. The farmers considered wine as another farm product and prepared it to go to market. This frequently meant boiling down the must and adding preservatives: the most usual was sea water (taken not too close to shore). Other possibilities were salt, savory, mint, rue, coriander, chives, onions, fleabane, colewort, cheese, or, if you were really fortunate, Syrian asafatida. Wines made in ancient days undoubtedly were sweeter—and had additional flavors. However, this was necessary if the farmer was to be the complete supplier: from vine to market. Years later, of course, wine making became an art in itself, and better methods discovered for preservation allowed wine to be made in a fashion recognizable to us and ultimately approach the wines we have today. As techniques developed, wine making became a specialty and was separated from other farm products. But it was the farmer who started it all.

The world was changing and the Athenian wine influence was changing with it. Rome had become dominant in the world of wine. Italy, indeed, to some people was *Italia Oenotria*. Wine was moving west and north. Farmers were no longer the source of all wines. Grape growers were taking over and would become the purveyors of wine in the future. As wine became an important product, improvements in bottling, storage, and handling came rapidly, and prices went up.

(If Greek and Roman writing had any logic, the writings of Agricola would have followed Columella’s. But Agricola was distinctly disappointing as a wine writer. Born Georg Bauer in Germany in 1494, he changed his name to Georgius Agricola and wrote *De*

Re Metallica (1530), which was translated in 1912 by Herbert Clark Hoover (American president). The book didn’t help wine, but became vital to mining engineers. Obviously Greco-Roman literature would have profited if someone had written *De Re Vinicola*.)

Ancient writings on wine are interesting but sometimes hard to follow. For example, we wondered if Dionysus and Bacchus were the same or different persons. It turns out that when a person becomes Olympian, he is addressed by a number of names. Dionysus has been associated with Isis and Osiris, but was more commonly known as Bromios, Bacchus, Iacchos, Eleuthereus, Zagreus, Sabazios, and many others. By any name, he has helped the world become well started with wine.

Agricultural writers are few and far between. It is an area that seems to have inspired few, which makes Columella’s efforts remarkable. His writings are as fresh today as they were when written. Perhaps the Dark Ages would not have been so dark if more people had read Columella and other Roman writers.

NOTES

1. Wine symbols from Lutz, *Viticulture and Brewing*...
2. Illustration from Seltman, *Wine in the Ancient World*.

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[EDITOR NOTE: The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) has published an excellent English-language, three-volume set of Columella’s *De Re Rustica*. Volume I (461p, Books I–IV) has an introductory chapter on the “Life and Works of Columella” and lists his “Manuscripts and Editions.” Volume II (503p) contains Books V–IX. Volume III (435p, Books X–XII) features three useful indexes: General, Proper Names, and Months. Highly recommended reading. And—for a most interesting look at the wine making techniques of the ancients, visit Tendril Sean Thackrey’s website, www.wine-maker.net.]



I DON'T COLLECT WINE BOOKS...

by
Gail Unzelman

When I stumbled upon the following article in an old gardening journal, it brought a chuckle—and then amazement—to my Wayward Tendril soul.

"The Compleat Gard'ner"

by
ALBERT EDGAR LOWNES
Providence, R.I.

Excerpted from *Bulletin of The Garden Club of America* (9/1947)



e don't *collect* garden books. There is really no logical reason why we should. My wife is, by her own admission, a Dirt Gardener. She traces her way back to the *Mayflower* through a long line of green-thumbed individuals; the three generations of her family that I have known carried the family talent to a notable degree. She

doesn't *need* books. She knows instinctively when and how to plant for best results. Her horticultural reading is confined, for the most part, to seedsmen's catalogues and half a dozen periodicals.

I have gardeners on my side of the family, too. I still cherish a picture of my grandfather digging vigorously in his Long Island garden at the age of 80, but his skill did not come down to me. I do collect books, but I don't collect garden books any more than I collect books on blacksmithing. My field is early science, technology, and natural history [GU: See NOTE ON LOWNES at end]. I explained this very carefully to the persistent Program Chairman of the Garden Club one day.

"Well," she snapped, "maybe you don't collect them, but you have them." That silenced me. I sputtered a bit, but in the end I promised meekly that I'd see what we could do. To my amazement, we could do very well, thank you. Although we don't consciously collect garden books, a good many had found their way to our house.

A quick count showed that we had about seven hundred volumes, printed before 1800, that had garden interest. Sometimes the connection was rather tenuous, but there were enough solid volumes to prove that our Garden Club friend was right. The trouble was with my own classification. I knew about the

books that were shelved under "Technology: Horticulture," but I hadn't given a thought to "Medicine: Herbals"; to botanical books, which included beautifully illustrated records of plants growing in specific gardens; to the books on tools and implements, on garden design and structure, to the reports of travelers on the horticulture of distant lands; to a dozen and one subjects that all added up to "old garden books." When we began to look at them with a garden-minded eye, we found that we had many of the historical classics of horticulture.

Suppose, then, that we take a few volumes from our shelves to see what our great-great-grandparents may have read.

Theophrastus, who lived at the time of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C., wrote the oldest garden book that has come down to us. A few earlier fragments survive, but they are of small account. In his book, Theophrastus described about five hundred plants that flourished in the fields and gardens of classical Greece. For 1800 years his book was handed down from father to son in manuscript. Then, in 1483, it became the first printed book on plants [*De Historia et Causis Plantarum*]. Our copy of the *editio princeps* is a sober folio, bare and unadorned, but it is a thrilling book to hold—the cornerstone of horticultural literature. [GU: Book III contains detailed information on selecting, planting, and tending grape vines.]

The ancient Romans were essentially practical people and they left us the agricultural treatises of Cato the Censor, Columella, and Varro, which are represented in our library by editions of the 16th and 17th centuries. From the 1st century of our era we have the great *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder. Although it covers much else, about half of the work is devoted to plants [GU: In *Food & Wine. An Exhibition of Rare Printed Books*, assembled and annotated by André L. Simon (1961), Simon is more specific regarding Pliny: "Book XIV deals with the vineyards and the cellar: how to grow grapes and how to make wine. It is divided into twenty-two chapters which deal with the various species of vines, the nature of the soil and the influence of climatic conditions." In his *Wine into Words*, 2nd ed., Jim Gabler also includes these agricultural writers as important sources of viticultural and vinicultural information, and gives lengthy annotations on them and their works.] Pliny was a lively writer, who filled his work with anecdotes and rarely let truth interfere with a good, tall story. Our earliest edition is the beautiful folio printed in Venice in 1497, but we read it with greatest delight in the sonorous Elizabethan prose of Philemon Holland.

An even more important book written in the 1st century is the *Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, which remained the unquestioned authority for 1,500 years. [GU: Simon, *Bibliotheca Gastronomica*: "Book V is almost entirely devoted to the vine and ... different wines, with

special attention given to their use in case of sickness.”]

From the Middle Ages we have early illustrated editions of the herbal attributed to Macer Floridus and the agricultural treatise of Pietro Crescenzi. The latter has quaint pictures of pleasure gardens, complete with peacocks and lute-playing lovers. [GU: Simon (*Gastronomica*) especially praises the “very interesting” 1493 edition of Crescenzi’s treatise, *Ruralium Commodorum*, with its “313 wood-cuts illustrating many phases of agriculture, viticulture, gardening...&c”]

From this period, too, we have the great encyclopedia of Bartholomew the Englishman, written about 1250. This was a mediaeval “best seller.” Numerous manuscripts exist and no less than 24 editions were printed in most of the languages of Europe in the 15th century. Our most interesting copy was printed by Caxton’s successor, Wynken de Worde, about 1495 [London]...and it has the first English plant illustration, a crude woodcut. [GU: Simon (*Gastronomica*) calls Bartholomew’s work “probably the most important of the early Encyclopaedias. [It is] divided into nineteen books, one for each department of human knowledge...wine and food are treated by the author at length, and with an obvious appreciation of both...”]

Early in the 16th century the first modern garden books began to appear. Before that time, there had been only the ancient agricultural treatises of the Romans and the few mediaeval works like that of Pietro Crescenzi. Now men wrote in their own language and from their own experience.

Fitzherbert’s *The Boke of Husbandry*—our copy was printed in 1534—was one of the first English books to treat of gardening. A good part of this little volume is devoted to the housewife’s duties, and the author’s complaint of the high cost of “delycious meates & drinkes” has a familiar ring. [GU: In *Food & Wine...Rare Printed Books*, André Simon credits this as “...the first book published in England and in English dealing with husbandry.”]

Thomas Tusser puts his advice into rollicking verse in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*. This book has remained consistently popular down to the present time for its sound sense and great good humor. Rudyard Kipling wrote a “Benediction” for an edition in 1931. [GU: In *Food & Wine...*, Simon, exhibiting the 1573 edition, notes that “Tusser (1524–1580) was the ‘farmer’s friend’ of Queen Elizabeth’s reign.”]

In 1539 Charles Estienne issued his little treatise, *De Re Hortensi Libellus*, which ran through many editions in nearly every European language during the next hundred years. Enlarged by his son-in-law, Jean Liebault, it was translated into English in 1600 as *Maison Rustique, or the Countrie Farme*. This was a book for the gentleman farmer. [GU: Gabler, 2nd ed., provides an interesting annotation for this book, and notes “Book Six ... discusses The Vine ... and mentions individual

wines from France and elsewhere.”]

[GU: Mr. Lownes then discusses several other very early gardening treasures, including “the first English book wholly devoted to gardening, Thomas Hyll’s *Brief and Pleasant Treatise* of 1563” and Parkinson’s *Paradisi in Sole*, 1629, “the best account of the plants grown in English pleasure gardens.” [GU: It must have included grapes?] He cites the earliest book on the subject of garden tools, Peter Lauremberg’s 1632 *Apparatus Plantarius*, which describes “hoes, rakes, spades, trowels, watering-pots, and wheel-barrows...” Mr. Lownes then proceeds to the 18th century works. We continue.]

In 1731 Philip Miller brought out his *Gardeners Dictionary*, the first book of its kind. It must have filled a real need, for it was repeatedly enlarged and reprinted and it remained the standard work for more than a century. [GU: Miller’s *Dictionary* includes significant sections on vineyards and wine making. An English translation of Claude Arnoux’s 1728 *Dissertation sur la Situation de Bourgogne et sur les Vins*.. appeared in the 2nd edition of 1733. Much of Jacques Boullay’s early 18th century work, *Manière de Bien Cultiver la Vigne...*, is incorporated into Miller’s text (with no credit to Boullay), as he describes winemaking in the Loire Valley.]

Here then has been a sampling of the earlier volumes in our library. We don’t believe, even now, that we *collect* garden books, but we know that they have a fatal fascination for us that makes it hard for us to leave them on the booksellers’ shelves. We try to be resolute about it. We are positive that we collect nothing but solemn scientific tomes. We point with pride to Copernicus and Vesalius, to Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton—and then we come upon a charming edition of old Thomas Tusser and we know that we are lost.

GU: Little did Mr. Lownes know that he also “collected” wine books!

[NOTE: There are, of course, numerous other early agricultural works that include significant information on grape growing and wine making. Take a stroll through Tendril Sean Thackrey’s website (www.wine-maker.net) ... he has posted many of them.]

[NOTE ON LOWNES: Albert Edgar Lownes (1899–1978), over a period of some forty years, formed one of the three most important private American collections of “Significant Books in the History of Science.” In 1979, this collection of “over 5000 volumes, plus hundreds of prints and manuscripts, spanning the centuries of scientific thought from Ptolemy to Einstein” was bequeathed to his alma mater, Brown University (Providence, R.I.). Mr. Lownes “defined significance as being ‘books that have changed the world or man’s way of seeing it. Significance also meant books that I found interesting.’” Which included garden books.]