



# WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

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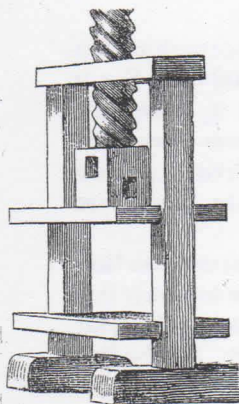
April 2005

## WINE AS A COMMUNICATOR

by **Hugh Johnson**

*An address to the Wynkyn de Worde Society, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1972,  
at Stationers Hall, London.*

[EDITOR NOTE: The Wynken de Worde Society, a society for printers and publishers founded in 1957, takes its name from the English printer, Wynken de Worde. Born Jan van Wynkyn in Alsace, he accompanied William Caxton to England in 1476, where he became Caxton's assistant. After Caxton's death, de Worde became the first printer to set up his shop in London's Fleet Street, which for centuries was perhaps the world's most famous center of printing. His place in history is that of the first publisher to popularize the products of the printing press. From 1491, until his death in 1535, he produced over 700 books, and laid the foundation of commercial publishing in Britain. ■ Wine as a Communicator was printed in Great Britain by The Stellar Press for members of the Society, 1972, with illustrations by Charles Mozley. Our sincerest thanks to the author and the Wynkyn de Worde Society for permission to reprint.]



So great and so many are the parallels between the art which I study and the one which you practice that there are times, very mirthsome times tinged perhaps only just a little on the latter edge with remorse, when a merry delightful confusion reigns in my head.

Both arts ply the press. The first slide which I will conjure from the magic lantern of your imagination is just one such—a press: the oldest you can remember seeing portrayed. Turn if you will to face the plain part of the wall above the door opposite me. See there, a little blurred is it? A preposterous wooden engine. Let me help you focus on it: a mighty wooden-screw, a daring piece of sculpture, rises from its middle-part. A bed robust enough for the guestroom at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap forms the base. Each massy member seems designed for the eternal toil.

What is the purpose of this titanic squeezer? Its function is as you fancy it. One of us has imagined a printing press. Another, focusing with all his might, a press for pressing grapes. Its purpose, though, whichever instrument you brought to mind, is the same. It was fashioned to ease, to oil and speed communication between man and man.

I would not be so unguessedly as to impute newfangledness to the press you ply. I was not long ago in the city of Mainz, where the Riesling breeze ruffles the Rhine, and in the autumn months the Sylvaner blows. There is a museum you know well there. Some of your most beautiful productions are splendidly displayed. A craftsman is sometimes enticed from the *stube* across the street to toil in the very shop—well perhaps not the *very shop*—where Gutenberg printed his impeccable texts. And it was watching this performance that the unworthy thought crossed my mind that, shall we say, our presses have a common ancestry. It was not a *printing* press which Noah made ... but then the copyright would have lapsed ... I make no accusations.

I live on Grub Street. I have an idea as inflated as anyone's of the importance of Wynkyn and his word-mongers. But the complementary role of wine in eas-



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ing, in oiling and speeding communication is less often discussed. It must have been for this reason (for my vanity has no other to suggest) that your Chairman set me in motion at this very moment when the frame, replete, naturally longs to drowse away the afternoon.

Wine and the muse. That is one promising aspect of my theme. To begin roundly with the evidence of Shakespeare's superior taste-buds: "a marvellous searching wine, and it perfumes the blood e'er one can say 'What's this?'" No further proof is needed, surely, that Shakespeare spent those mysterious unaccounted-for formative years, not as some have rashly asserted, in Italy, nor as a soldier nor indeed as a woman or an Earl, but as a wine-grower in the upper Rhône valley.

What boozy poetasters might we not touch on? Keats ordering the true, the blushful Hippocrene. Did you know, by the way, that Keat's special pleasure was sprinkling his tongue with pepper and then gobbling claret ice-cold to quench the fire? Claret. Iced.

Or Tennyson in after-dinner talk, across the walnuts and the wine. Or Fitzgerald wondering what the vintners buy one half so precious as the goods they sell. Or Belloc, splendidly and shamelessly prejudiced:

But Catholic men, that live upon wine  
Are deep in the water, and frank and fine;  
Wherever I travel I find it so,  
Benedicamus Domino.

Of all the poets we should find, and this is in spite of the fact that he sipped gin-and-water as he wrote, and nursed his head with a vile brew of hock and soda the next day, that Byron was the one who was most moved to poetry (of his own peculiar kind) by wine:

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach  
Scarcely o'er passed the cream of your champagne  
That spring-dew of the spirit! The heart's rain!  
Few things surpass old wine;  
And they may preach  
Who please, — the more because they preach  
In vain . . .

A reference that pleases me particularly. Few people, and fewer poets, appreciate the virtue of old champagne . . . creaming, not frothing; deep in flavour; eloquent in scent. Byron again:

I hate a motive like a lingering bottle  
With which the landlord makes too long a stand,  
Leaving all claretless the unmoistened throttle  
Especially with politics on hand . . .

Politics — the second theme: discussion; argument and wine. Several (I am not permitted to say how many) hundred dozen bottles of claret; only a little less of Burgundy; several hundred dozen bottles of

champagne; of hock, of sherry—that was the consumption of the House of Commons last year.

Under duress, of course, they sell ale too; to anyone who can outface Crabbe's cutting couplets:

... poor toppers whose untutored sense  
Sees bliss in ale, and can with wine dispense;  
Whose head proud fancy never taught to steer  
Beyond the muddled ecstasies of beer.

And the dire effects on the laws of the land are known to all.

There is no one here who doubts that his wit was at its sharpest, his wisdom at its most elevated, his eloquence most telling at that very moment when the Chairman called for the siesta. We have enjoyed together a glass or two of sherry, or of that bracing porcupine wine from the Grand Duchy. A glass or two of the white Loire wine, made of the Sauvignon grapes which are so *à la mode* this year. Two or three glasses of that good round earthy claret; of port, a touch; of brandy, a suspicion. We have each drunk perhaps a bottle of light wine, or its equivalent.

But this is what we expect, and what is (what is more) expected of us when we meet friends, and feel well and communicative, and have a limited time to scale the heights and survey the horizons of mutual understanding.

Wine eases, lubricates, accelerates communication. But here is a paradox. For me a crucial one. For in writing and speaking about wine—that is, the *taste* of wine, and not just its name and address—real communication is barred. What I do for a living, or more properly fail to do, is to communicate the incommunicable.

The poverty of language in words that express taste has often been remarked. Indeed, there are only four distinct sensations of the palate: sweet, salt, sour, bitter. Everything else is metaphor: full-bodied, robust, honeyed, elegant, nervy, supple . . .

Where language has let them down, those who deal in wine have had to supply themselves with a means of communication of their own. Their jargon is as vital to the conduct of their business as the jargon of the ballet, or the galley, or the turf.

Unlike these, however, wine is something which we all share with friends, often; and sharing, want to discuss. Our discussion is best when it is most uninhibited. You know the Thurber cartoon which is generally accepted as the last word on the subject. You may project it on the wall as slide number two if you wish: the mousy little chap on the right of the table; his guests leaning forward for his verdict. "It's only a naive little domestic burgundy without any breeding; but I think you'll be amused by its presumption." Do not let this impious mockery of Thurber's put you off. Our friend was trying hard, and doing well. It was



Italian-Swiss Colony 66-cent Burgundy-type from California in his glass. Which of us, with such limited inspiration, would have done better?

Since the spirit of wine, its essential nature, cannot be adequately conveyed in words of description, we must broaden the range of reference.

The legendary evening parties given by the great wine-maker Andreas von Schubert in his noble manor, at the foot of his precipice of vines, at Maximin Grünhaus, near Trier, should put us on our mettle. Herr von Schubert offers his guests music and wine. Schubert sonatas; Grünhaus wines; each illuminating the other; the two so perfectly paired that one would say the composer composed with such an *auslese*, such a *beerenauslese* in mind. Seeing, that is, that it could hardly have been the other way round ... even with German vines.

And if wines can find their soul-mates in sonatas, so they can in landscapes: North Wales in Chamberlain, surely; and what are the Fens but Pouilly Fuissé?

Or architecture: St. Peter's is Château Petrus in substance as well as name; Buckingham Palace (without disloyalty) is brewer's Nuits St. Georges.

Or actresses ... at your discretion.

Yet there are always people to lead as far as words will go: I am delighted to see that among the guests here today is the nephew of a great Irish master of the sign language of wine: Maurice Healy. I always treasure as true wit his distinction between the red wines of the Graves and those of the Médoc. Matt and glossy prints of the same photograph, he called them. I wish I'd said that.

André Simon, my own master, was another who let a natural poetry flow from him; begging analysis. This I treasure, a characteristic metaphor, in an account of a Memorable Meal at the Hind's Head at Bray in 1933. The 1926 Chablis evoked for him the grace of the silver willow; the 1919 Montrachet the stateliness of the Italian poplar; the 1920 Cheval Blanc the magnificence of the purple beech; the 1870 Lafite the majesty of the royal oak. But as to the brandy (an 1842) there was "no tree with its roots in common clay to be mentioned in the same breath."

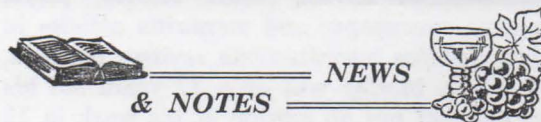
This is where wine leads. We must have no qualms in following. In identifying, for example, that classical Baskerville quality in a Pauillac; or observing that Beaune and Bembo seem to come from the same font. The Grot quality of so much Italian wine often comes home to me forcefully.

In France they are much bolder than us. When the colour of a wine stirs them with the memory of a partridge's eye, they admit it manfully. If they taste violets in a wine, or if they are overcome with the tar and truffles in its bouquet, they are not afraid to say so. A famous Burgundian priest observed that a noble wine of the Côte de Nuits was none other than the

infant Jesus in velvet trousers. And his perception is celebrated and justly quoted to this day.

Away, then, with Conventional Wisdom of Wine. Let us never again speak of St. Emilion as the most Burgundy-like of Bordeaux—an essay in non-expression; non-communication. Let us see it for what it is: a thrush's egg; rain in the headlights of a lorry; South Rampart Street Parade played on a tenor saxophone.

In the salons of the mind there is more wit than retailers' footnotes can encompass. Listen to Michelangelo on the wine San Gimignano: "It kisses, licks, bites, thrusts and stings." What is your port doing to you? Communicating something more seductive than just a big body, I'll warrant you.



**Welcome!** new Tendrils. **Louisa Hargrave**, author of *The Vineyard* (Viking, 2003), reviewed in our January issue by Allan Shields, has been "recruited" for our Society by Allan. Although not an admitted collector, she is very interested in wine literature and hopes to send us some book reviews. **Reginald Oliver**, a St. Helena, CA, vineyardist ([infor@rboco.com](mailto:infor@rboco.com)), has a special interest in material on the Napa Valley. **Orley Ashenfelter**, of Princeton, NJ ([c6789@princeton.edu](mailto:c6789@princeton.edu)), a collector for some 20 years, writes and publishes *Liquid Assets* ([www.liquidasset.com](http://www.liquidasset.com)). And, with Tendril thanks to **Chip Cassidy**, we welcome **Bill McNabb** (Piedmont, CA) and **Clark Smith** (Santa Rosa, CA).

**BEWARE! Decorator Dewey Decimal** — a new cataloguing system. Warning: Do not allow interior decorators into your library! True story. A fellow Tendril, mercifully to remain nameless, was recently commissioned by a prestigious California winery to assemble a first class wine library. One day (in the absence of our trusty librarian), after some 150 books had been acquired and properly shelved, the interior design team came in "to decorate." They removed all the books from the shelves, and re-arranged them—Yes! according to color and size. Our stunned librarian quietly asked if they were going next to Stanford University to help decorate their library!

cont. on p.7 —



## TWO BAGATELLES ON WINE BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

by  
Thomas Pinney

[Prof. Thomas Pinney, chairman emeritus of the Department of English, Pomona College, CA, has been a faithful contributor to our *Quarterly* from its beginning. His definitive work on the history of Pre-Prohibition wine in the U.S., *History of Wine in America* (U.C. Press, 1989), earned him the sobriquet "America's First Wine Historian" from Jim Gabler in his *Wine into Words*. (The eagerly awaited second volume of the history covering Prohibition to the Present, is at the publisher.) *Saluté, Tom!* — Ed.]



Christopher Morley (1890-1957) was a man of letters such as we do not seem to produce any more in this country. A Rhodes Scholar from Haverford College, PA, he produced a great quantity of varied work in his not very long but very busy life: novels, short stories, plays, essays, poems, newspaper and magazine articles in wholesale quantities, introductions, reviews, editions, lectures. When Morley was only 37 years old his publisher brought out an edition of his work in 12 volumes, and that was by no means complete. He was active in the publishing business; he was one of the founders of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and an original member of the selection committee for the Book-of-the-Month-Club. He is not much read now, but in the first half of the last century anyone with only the most marginal interest in literature would have been familiar with his name.

He was an enthusiast for literature, much more inclined to praise than to blame, and he was not afraid to be seen as a fan rather than a critic: his passion for the Sherlock Holmes stories, for example, led him to serve as one of the founders of the Baker Street Irregulars, the international organization for Holmes nuts.

So what has he to do with wine? His name does not figure in any of my wine bibliographies, nor did he, so far as I can find, ever write anything substantial about wine. He liked to arrange for limited editions of short texts that he had written, often in pamphlet or even broadside form, to be distributed to friends or to some club or organization: the bibliography of his work lists dozens of such items, which, being limited to start with, quickly became scarce. Two, at least, of these semi-ephemera are about wine: one was written during the Dry years, the other very shortly after Repeal, when Americans were nervously making themselves re-acquainted with that difficult thing called wine.

I doubt that I would ever have heard of these trifles had not a generous bookseller (James Lorson, Fullerton, CA) given me a copy of the first item, *Epigrams in a Cellar*, a little four-leaved pamphlet, uncut at the top, printed in an edition of 500 copies by Basil Blackwell in Oxford and dated August 1927. He also told me about another Morley item that he had just sold called *Esoterica Viniana*. Since both were quite new things to me, I tried to find out something about them. Here are the results.

The "Epigrams" turn out to be a series of quatrains celebrating a list of superlative Burgundian wines that, presumably, Morley had been privileged to drink on a visit to France. His biography is silent on the matter, but the visit in question must, I think, have been made in the summer of 1926, when Morley's regular column for the *Saturday Review of Literature* was a chronicle of a trip to Ireland, England, and France. And the French part of the trip must have been spent at the Château de Missery in the Côte de Nuits of Burgundy. *Epigrams in a Cellar* is dated from the Château de Missery, and Morley printed a sonnet in the *Saturday Review* (7 August 1926) to celebrate the château:

### Château de Missery

"Here is a place where poems might be made." ...  
But in the linden arch such matins twittered,  
Fish swam such curves beneath the balustrade,  
The poet paused and found himself embittered.  
Stubble was savory by the grasscut edge,  
The sun decanted Meursault-colored shine,  
And shamed by random mosses on the ledge  
He corked the inkpot and uncorked the wine.

Here every shape outrhymes the poet's wit:  
In every view such harmonies are spoken  
New-joined verses will not do, he fears.  
Bring out some strong old sonnet, polished fit,  
Plain as these grainy panels, dark and oaken,  
Rubbed and sweetened by Burgundian years.

I know nothing more of the Château than this sonnet reveals, but I suppose that it must have belonged to the family of Missery, identified as growers and merchants of Nuits Saint-Georges in Anthony Hanson's *Burgundy* (London, 1982).

The wines that moved Morley to write "epigrams" in their praise are identified as Clos Vougeot 1911 and 1923, Chambertin 1911, Chablis Moutonne 1915, Corton 1915, Pouilly 1915, Tache Romanée 1915, Nuits St. George 1915, and Musigny 1911. The verses are in that mode, now felt to be embarrassing in our technical age, that attempts to evoke the character of a wine by personifying it in a boldly fanciful way, thus:



*Clos Vougeot 1923*

This Young Vougeot, as gay as Chaucer's Squire,  
 Boyish in faults, for youth will always err;  
 But ah, what blend of tenderness and fire  
 When this our Damoiseau becomes Seigneur!

I don't suppose anyone would dare salute a wine in verse these days, when the orthodox descriptive style demands this sort of thing: "Full-bodied, with whole-grain bread, coconut and candied fruit, with a rhubarb preserve aftertaste" (said of a Champagne in a current magazine that need not be identified—I am not making this up). But extremes meet: the modern wine writer's desperate struggle to give an "objective" list of actual flavors creates just as fantastic a figure as the verse does—and which of the two is the better poetry? I think I know. Here is another sample:

*Nuits St. Georges 1915*

Oh, Nuits St. Georges! Saint George of ancient time,  
 Saint George the strong embarrasser of dragons:  
 We also spear the reptile with a rhyme  
 And celebrate his obsequy with flagons.

*Epigrams in a Cellar* was written under Prohibition and probably owes some of its spirit to the exhilarating sense that, in France, at least, one was free to enjoy a range of good things denied to the unhappy Americans at home.<sup>1</sup>

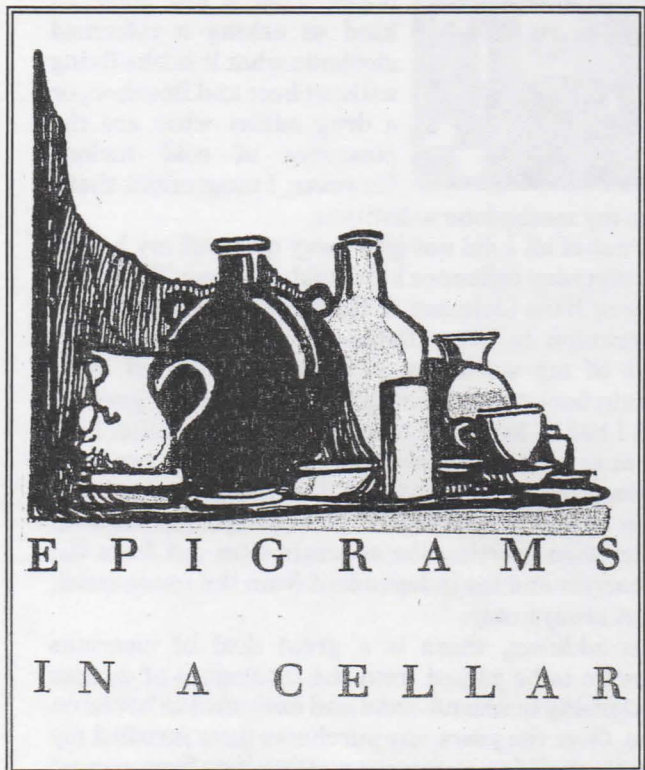
*Esoterica Viniana*, the second item, is, in contrast, a response to Repeal. I have not seen a copy of this item, which is described as a 10-page pamphlet, privately printed in an edition of 100 copies by the Prairie Press of Muscatine, Iowa. It is, obviously, very scarce and hard to come by. I have, however, read it in its original form, as part of "The Bowling Green," Morley's column for the *Saturday Review of Literature*, for 9 June 1934. Morley's theme is the perennial one of What to say about a wine? The topic had a special urgency early in 1934 as the American public groped about for an understanding of the wines that they were now free to drink again but that they suspected to be full of pitfalls for the unwary. Morley, with tongue in cheek, supplies his readers with a series of responses that he has made up for them so that they can deal confidently with the *Esoterica Viniana*.

I think that what is most striking about Morley's comic suggestions is their very timidity, as though he did not dare to be very foolish on the subject, even when he was making jokes about it. People were still too uncertain. "Remember to allude to the *gun-flint savor*" of a Chablis, he counsels; but that hardly seems very extravagant, nor do some of his other suggestions: "A *real Englishman's port*," is another proposed response, or "Is this a good year for laying

down?" Better are his comic personifications: "It has nice ankles," and "a little languid, but I daresay it has something up its sleeve." But such things fall far short of the imagination in James Thurber's famous *New Yorker* cartoon of the same era: "It's a naïve domestic Burgundy without any breeding, but I think you'll be amused by its presumption."

Slight though they are, these Morley items are an amusing part of the literature of wine in America. One wonders how many of the 600 copies printed still survive?

1. Morley reprinted the "Epigrams" in the volume of his *Poems* (Garden City, NY, 1931).

*"Compliments of the author"*

—From *Old Books Have a Future*  
 by William Safire (1993)—

I prefer to send out my complimentary promotional copies with a personal inscription, because I hate to get those little printed cards that say "with the compliments of the author." I save the cards, and sometimes slip them into the Bibles on sale at Alan Stypeck's Second Story Books in my home town of Bethesda. Alan doesn't mind; people like to get a Bible "with the compliments of the author."



## LIVING WITHOUT WINE BOOKS (Almost)

by  
*Christopher Fielden*

[In 1989, our noted wine author and longtime collector of wine books, confessed in the Introduction to his book, *Is This the Wine You Ordered, Sir?* The Dark Side of the Wine Trade, "The drinking of wine is only part of the whole pleasure. For me reading about it is another, and the collecting of old wine books on the subject yet another." In a brave moment in 2003, after some 30 years of collecting, Christopher Fielden presented his library to the Institute of Masters of Wine. — Ed.]



ur Madame Editor asked me to write a piece about what it is like living without wine books. That is just about as kind as asking a reformed alcoholic what it is like living without beer and Bourbon, or a drug addict what are the pleasures of cold turkey. However, I must admit that I

have my methadone substitute.

First of all I did not give away quite all my books. For everyday reference I did hold on to my *The World Atlas of Wine* (Johnson & Robinson) and *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (Robinson). These can answer most of my workaday problems. I also hid away certain books that I needed for research on projects that I had in hand. If I need further information I am learning to use web-sites. For someone that has been as computer illiterate as I am, this has proved to be an often exciting, and sometimes dangerous time of exploration. Sorting the accurate sites out from the inaccurate and the independent from the commercial, is not always easy.

In addition, there is a great deal of vicarious pleasure to be gained from the catalogues of dealers specialising in second-hand and antiquarian books on wine. Over the years, my purchases have justified my being included on numerous mailing-lists from around the world, including the United States, Australia and France, as well as Great Britain. I suppose that, sooner, rather than later, they will wake up to the fact that I am no longer a buyer. I find that there is great pleasure in seeing what price is now being asked for a book I bought many years ago—and have since given away. One of the true tests that my addiction has been cured will be when I also give away these catalogues. (Perhaps anyone who is interested, should apply now!)

I must also confess that in the last year I have bought a copy of the new edition of *Wine into Words* by James Gabler. I have justified this to myself by saying that it is not a wine book, but *the* book about wine books. Again, I can gain pleasure by reading about past pleasures.

Finally, there are friends who still give me books and I thought it might be interesting for some of you to read about them. Here then are three that may be the seeds of a new collection.

*Grape Man of Texas – The Life of T.V. Munson* by Sherrie S. McLeRoy & Roy E. Renfro, Jr. Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2004. 288 pp.

From the far side of the Atlantic, the view of American viticulture outside California, the Pacific North-West and, possibly, New York State, is dim. This is the story of one of America's great pioneer viticulturalists. From his base in the small town of Denison, in Texas, Thomas Volney Munson (1843-1913) sent out to the world a broad range of hybrid grape varieties. He also was the leading recorder of American grape varieties that grew in the wild. He would set off on long trips, often months long, faithfully logging details of what he found. The authors claim, with some justification, that it was due to him, and a few others, that the vineyards of the world were rescued after the tsunami of *phylloxera*. At the time, the French recognised this by granting him the *Légion d'Honneur* and by raising memorials to him in Montpellier and Cognac. His displays of vines were a major feature at a number of the International Exhibitions, then so popular.

Sadly, his legacy is slight. Whilst he created forty-three varieties he claimed suitable for making wine, few of them were of commercial importance. Beacon, Captivator, Dixie, Ellen Scott, Fern Munson and Muench have all been recommended by the BATF for winemaking, yet none of them are household names.

Volney Munson was something of a polymath—he invented a flying machine and a new form of hoe, he corresponded in French with all the leading ampelographers of his day—he was truly a man of substance. Do his authors do justice to their subject? Roy Renfro has been closely connected to preserving the memory of Volney Munson. Amongst his other roles, he is the Director of the T.V. Munson Viticulture and Enology Center and oversees the twining link between Denison and Cognac. Sherrie McLeRoy is a specialist historian on Virginia and Texas.

There is no doubt that they have researched an enormous amount of material; somehow, I feel, they have had difficulty in separating the wheat from the chaff. There is a wealth of, particularly, family material that might have been sifted out of a book aimed at those interested in wine history. The book is divided into chapters and then into sub-sections. One of these, intriguingly entitled "Solving the World's Problems," begins: "Neva's high school graduation on June 7<sup>th</sup> 1900, was a real family affair since her father gave the address..." Because of its idiosyncratic nature, I found this a difficult book to read, though I



particularly enjoyed looking at the *phylloxera* crisis, from the American point of view. There are plenty of illustrations, though the reproduction of many of the photographs leaves much to be desired. Notwithstanding these reservations, this is a book that must be in the library of anyone interested in America's early vineyard history.

*O Sabor do Vinho* by Alberto Miele & Adriano Miolo. Bento Gonçalves: Vinícola Miolo & EMBRAPA, 2003. 133 pp.

After Argentina and Chile, Brazil is the third largest producer of wine in South America. The fact that its wines have remained largely unknown to the outside world (apart from the notorious Marcus James Aurora Valley White Zinfandel) is largely due to the fact that little wine of quality is produced and that the domestic market is so enormous. Adriano Miolo is a Director of one of a small group of companies seeking to improve quality and distribution. This is a beautiful book, full of colourful illustrations and photographs. Even for someone whose knowledge of Portuguese is rudimentary, such as myself, it paints a clear picture of the wine industry of Brazil and the various wine-producing regions. It also explains the basic principles of viticulture and vinification as well as the art of wine-tasting. Though the general material you will have read before, the particular information on Brazil and its wines provides an essential, though lesser, piece in the jigsaw that is the world of wine knowledge.

*Hic! Or the Entire History of Wine (abridged)* by Julian Curry. London: Vinum Bonum, 2001. 68 pp.

Julian Curry is an experienced actor, best known in Britain for his role as Claude Erkin-Brown in the television series *Rumpole of the Bailey*. As John Mortimer says in his introduction, "Between snobbery and intoxication the great pleasures of drinking can be found." Also within those parameters lies this little book, which is the text of this 'wine entertainment' that Julian has performed around the world – when I saw it, it was in a winery in Uruguay! It is full of fun and littered with wine quotations that can pepper your conversations around the dinner table for years to come. Sadly there are too few wine books that can make you laugh out loud. This is one of them!

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NEWS & NOTES, cont. from p.3 —

### BULLY HILL

*and the Taylor Family Heritage* by Paul Sprague, historian of the Greyton H. Taylor Wine Museum, is the story of "one of the most prominent families in the wine industry" and the Taylor Wine Company, founded by Walter Taylor in 1883 in New York's Finger Lakes wine district. The 25-page booklet (8½ x 11), illustrated with old photographs from the museum's collection, is available from the author: 1950 Himrod Rd, Penn Yan, NY 14527. \$6.25 (includes S/H).

### The Madeira Heritage

*in Colonial America*, by Capt. (Ret. USN) Dr. John P. Cann, is a privately published (2004), nicely printed and illustrated, 23-page pamphlet. 200 copies. 5½ x 8½. Tendril Isaac Oelgart writes he has a few copies for sale, at \$15 per copy (+ shipping \$2.50). His email is [the-pll@valley.net](mailto:the-pll@valley.net)

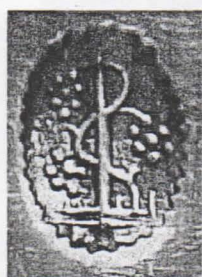
### The Definitive Cocktail Book

is the title of Tendril Jeffrey Benson's latest book. This follows his *The Right Wine with the Right Food*, both published by Elliott Right Way Publications. Jeffrey writes that it is available from Amazon.com (£5). Yes, there are wine recipes!

### Exploring the World of Wines & Spirits

by Christopher Fielden has just been released (London: Wine & Spirit Education Trust, 2004. 244pp.) This is a total re-write of the textbook for the WSET's Advanced Certificate Course, and of interest to all who wish to expand their wine knowledge.

### New Silver Reference Book!



Long-time Tendril John McGrew, who has several Society of Wine Educators books to his credit, has now studiously researched and compiled *Manufacturers' Marks on American Coin Silver* (Hanover, PA: Argyros Publications, 2004. 204 pp, 1400 illustrations). This outstanding reference work is "the first book to decipher the cryptic pseudohallmarks found on American coin silver." John warns, "the closest this comes to being of interest to W-T are the staked and fruited vines shown on p.125." One of his "some-day projects" is a book on "the many flatware patterns with grape motifs." Now this is Tendril terroir! *Manufacturers' Marks* is available from the author, 355 Park Heights Blvd, Hanover, PA 17331. \$40 + \$4 S/H.



**Vinaceous Correspondents:**  
***Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles***  
 The Third Article in a Series (continued)  
 by **Barbara Marinacci**

[This is the third segment of an article within the continuing series based primarily on the writings of California's "legendary" vintner Martin Ray (1904-1976). For 40 years he zealously promoted the cause of wine quality, particularly in the forms of planting more fine winegrape varieties, producing unblended varietal wines, and assuring their honest labeling. Author Barbara Marinacci, the stepdaughter of Martin Ray, prepared the Martin and Eleanor Ray Papers for permanent storage in Special Collections, UC Davis Shields Library. Comments about Amerine in Martin Ray's letters to Julian Street quoted herein, as well as about other principal figures in California's wine industry in the early 1940s, are reprinted with the kind permission of the Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.]

**PART III. MARTIN RAY AND MAYNARD AMERINE: 1937-1976**

-3-



y 1938, U. C. Davis's primary enologist was becoming acknowledged as an expert wine connoisseur and wine judge. Maynard Amerine's growing reputation resulted from his diligent determination, since the time of his 1935 appointment to the teaching faculty and research staff of the Division of Viticulture, to learn as much as he possibly could about wine in its many manifestations: past and present winegrowing practices in different regions of the world, research findings that might improve winemaking technology, and rational methods of sensory evaluation of many types of wines. He was ambitious in both his career objectives and a larger aim to push California into demonstrating its potential for producing excellent wines.

Amerine also understood the newly revived California (and American) wine industry's need to start and support educational efforts that would enhance wine marketing. André Simon's launching in the mid-1930s of the international network of Wine and Food Societies inspired a receptive small community of wine lovers in the San Francisco Bay area. One of Amerine's early moves in gaining knowledge of wines was to join up. He also managed to become a member of the highbrow Bohemian Club, and hobnobbed with oenophilic physicians in the Society of Medical Friends of Wine, San Francisco. In fact, Amerine himself was responsible for getting the latter organization started. He brought the idea back from his 1937 trip to France, where he had learned about just such a group. He passed the concept on to Leon Adams, the Wine Institute's public relations man, who soon put it into action with a core of doctors already belonging to the Wine & Food Society. (The Society of Medical Friends of Wine recently celebrated its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary.) These associations' sophisticates—older, wealthier, and far better acquainted than he at

first with fine wines (which most had managed to acquire, store, share, and drink during the 13 years of Prohibition)—were happy enough to take the budding young professor under their wings. Within several years Amerine knew more, and tasted more skillfully, than most of his mentors. Still, he was usually diplomatic and circumspect about it all; a full aplomb could come later on, in good time.

[ 2<sup>nd</sup> ]  
**Quarterly Dinner**  
*of the*  
 SOCIETY OF MEDICAL FRIENDS  
 OF WINE

*Wednesday Evening, May 24, 1939*

ST. FRANCIS YACHT CLUB  
 San Francisco

— The evening began with Paul Masson California Dry Champagne 1936. The speaker of the evening was Maynard A. Amerine: "Wine Growing in California, Its Present Day Status and Future Objectives." —



Deftly, Amerine had insinuated himself into positions of choosing wines for special events, partly because he was willing to spend time and effort doing investigative tastings. His admiration for wines now being made by his friend Martin Ray, proprietor of the Paul Masson Champagne Co., at times influenced his wine choices, since he totally endorsed MR's determination to produce pure varietals vintaged from the finest French grapes.

For instance, members of the Wine and Food Society of San Francisco received a letter in late summer of 1938 from its Honorary Secretary, Harold H. Price, announcing a banquet to be given on Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, at the "beautiful and commodious quarters of the Stock Exchange Club, 155 Sansome Street, well known for the quality of its cooking." The letter ended with an assurance that "The menu has been the product of much thought and discussion and will fulfill our high standard of perfection." (Note that a benevolent invitation was extended to members' spouses and significant female others: "Ladies may attend.") The letter's third and fourth paragraphs described the wine list for the occasion:

The selection of the wines has been placed in the capable hands of Dr. M. A. Amerine. There will be provided the exceptional opportunity of drinking delightful California wines twenty-five years and more of age and perfectly sound. There are few such wines in existence, and they are beyond price.

As a surprise, a relatively recent California wine will be presented, which the undersigned considers the finest California wine that he has ever tasted, and which is a refutation to those who believe that California is incapable of producing a wine of superb quality and breed. [The wine selected was the Paul Masson Cabernet Sauvignon 1936.]

Obviously, Dr. Amerine had already persuaded Harold Price that Martin Ray was the winemaker whose new wines were demonstrating, above all others, California's potential for world-class winemaking—renewing that bright promise shown in the decades before Prohibition.

### *The Quest for Quality*

By 1940 Amerine had already written several articles on wine tasting that would begin establishing a more scientific basis for judging wine quality and defining special characteristics in wines, based partly on the demanding and complex wine research that he and Dr. Winkler had begun in 1935. And as a co-author with several other enologists, viticulturists, and oenophiles he was publishing a series of monographs about different types of wine.

Undoubtedly when together, MR and MA often discussed technical issues related to winemaking,

when MR's own opinions and conjectures about cellar phenomena probably intrigued and sometimes amused his wine-scientist friend. Unlike his winemaker friend, Amerine couldn't really afford to express an adamant disdain for the many winemakers who used metabisulphite and hot-room tactics to sterilize and pasteurize wines to prevent them from going bad, and to clarify with chemicals and fine-filtering to make them suitable for fast turnover in commercial release.

This passage in an MR letter to Julian Street surely reflects the sort of talks he often had with Amerine.

No, it is not necessary to fine, filter or otherwise clarify a wine if it is of a good year and care is taken with the vines, grapes, picking, crushing and care of the wine. My experience shows that our wines are so well balanced they will and do become crystal clear for a few days in January or February, but not every wine or every year—most of them,  $\frac{3}{4}$  the whites. Then, one of those few days, we rack the wine off its lees and dead yeast cells. Soon the few remaining yeasts in the wine start to work and the wine hazes-up very slightly as it works through Spring and Summer, those yeast feeding on the little remaining sugar and struggling against the alcohol. But it is a losing game for those yeasts and after a couple seasons of it, they give up, drop out of suspension for the last time and the wine may be racked clear of them and it remains completely clear. It may be bottled in the third or fourth year, after two, three or four Christmases. But sometimes it is longer. I have some 1936 wine I will not bottle until January next. A storm side, especially a north wind, will make the wine haze-up, too. Most people tell you this is untrue but they just don't know about wines. If their wine has been killed it cannot be expect[ed] to act like it is alive. [MR disapproved of all "treated" wines, which deliberately eliminated minute living organisms.] Atmospheric pressure seems to affect the wine and I would not be surprised if the moon does although I may go too far there, I haven't proved it. I do know the wines while yet a year or two old are very easily disturbed and something does change them from month to month. Storms, winds and temperature I know effects [*sic*] them. There is not more than a very few days in the first January or February of a wine's life that it is completely clear.

MR then ends his long monologue to tell of the UC Davis enologist's sometimes amused reactions to such assertions and speculations.

Amerine laughs at some of my declarations, too. But he has a cellar controlled by artificial means. His temperature, atmospheric pressure, does not change naturally. But in general he sees with me, I think. [6/15/40]

Though based on observations and perhaps touched a bit by an almost mystical affinity for winemaking, MR's opinions weren't products of the painstaking scientific research being conducted at UC Davis. (It must be remembered, too, that little was known then



about crucial microbial activities, such as malolactic fermentation, that came after the early, post-harvest fermentation to alter wines as they aged.)

Much as Amerine at that time, and for some years afterward, respected the elemental purity of MR's approach to vintaging grapes into wine, and admired many of the results he got by using it, he would need to view this mostly past-entrenched, almost primitive methodology as restrictive and impractical when applied to truly commercial—that is, frankly profit-seeking—winemaking. After all, MA was employed by the University of California's College of Agriculture and its Division of Viticulture for two main reasons: to educate a new generation of young winemakers in the best, most practicable, and cost-effective methods of producing wine as a principal product of the state; and to conduct research into all processes of winemaking, from testing the vinous properties of a multitude of grape varieties to studying the complex stages of fermentation (and what could go wrong during them, and why) to determining the proper aging, bottling, and labeling of wines.

Amerine in the late 1930s and early 1940s saw few opportunities open up for his handful of enology students. But that would change, and then the University system increasingly would rely upon the California wine industry's most prosperous wineries to supply funds to help defray the costs of training professionals to work at their facilities, and to underwrite innumerable specific research projects that someday might well benefit their grape-growing and wine-producing and -selling abilities.

So Maynard Amerine needed to be highly politic to enable him to move adroitly through several very different realms. Primarily there was the academic one, and there he basically earned his living; corresponded and met with European enologists, whose investigative work hadn't been halted by Prohibition's stultifying 13-year hiatus; conducted his own wine research while initiating and supervising the work of others; and wrote papers and books that explicated wine technology. Then there was the aesthetic realm in which Amerine had already become a widely acknowledged judge of wines, and he could also educate lay people, in person and through popular writings, in the niceties of wine tasting. Finally, Amerine played an outreach role whereby he interacted frequently with winery proprietors and winemakers, conducting applied research projects while trying to persuade them to increase the planting and vintaging of fine winegrapes—always with the goal of improving wine quality.

He has a very good attitude toward making wines as they must be made to be fine. In fact, he has little interest, I believe, in the factory type wines. He is the only one out here, unless it be some of his friends at the University,

that really takes prides in natural methods. But he has more theoretical knowledge and it naturally makes him think differently at times than I think. This is good, too, for after all he is a teacher and he must deal with theory. But he is about as close to the soil as he could be. He has close touch with all the producers, knows all the vineyards. [7/4/40]

### *Martin Ray Takes on the Wine Industry*

Amerine's ardent quality-promoting advocacy had led to his forming a close personal friendship with the activist outsider Martin Ray, despite their personality, temperament, and lifestyle differences. They mostly traveled in very different social circles and working environments. What bound them most closely was their passion for wine and a wholehearted agreement on the changes most needed to achieve quality in the benighted wine industry: planting far more fine-varietal grapevines; not blending the wines made from them with those made from lesser, much more abundant varieties; then labeling and marketing all superior-class wines honestly so that the winegrape varieties and regional origins would be given, along with the year of vintaging; and introducing self-regulatory measures in the industry that the government could help to enforce.

Even when operating Paul Masson in the late 1930s and early 1940s, MR didn't pay much attention to the latest findings in wine research, though he must have heard a number of things from Amerine that pertained to recent technical innovations in winery paraphernalia and lab work or vineyard-tending tactics and machinery. But MR was a fundamentalist; he subscribed to what he called the "classical methods," which tended to use traditional equipment appropriate for small-scale vintaging, fermentation, and aging, and to eschew practices that sped up the natural and slow progression of a particular vintage's development toward marketable quality (which even then might require further years in wine collectors' cellars).

In his decided liking for hands-on work in both vineyard and cellar, and later (after 1941) the economic necessity to do as much of this himself as possible, MR had little time for perusing research reports. Furthermore, he resisted making any changes in his methods once he had achieved, through deliberate experimentation, results that thoroughly satisfied him. He also believed that much of what went on in viticultural and enological research didn't apply to his fine quality-focused winemaking, since it was done largely to benefit large-scale vineyard operations and wineries that mass-produced their wines—because the funds that supported such investigations largely came from the big commercial companies.

Almost from the start of his tenure at Paul Masson



in 1936, MR became a contentious critic of the wine industry's status quo. Making insulting remarks about other wineries and their wines, he wasn't at all concerned that what he'd said would create enemies or exacerbate his reputation as a curmudgeon; in fact, at times he actually seemed to glory in doing so.

Privately, Amerine clearly agreed with some or many of MR's strong opinions, and at times contributed backup evidence to sustain them, along with sheer gossip. It's evident that he supplied adverse information about other wineries and vintners' practices and results. For instance, here's an excerpt from a letter from MR to Julian Street containing one of his typical diatribes about another winery.

Why, Dr. Amerine and Dr. Winkler of the U of C shake their heads over Wente's wine, even Frank Schoonmaker suggests to Wente how to make their wines and even has now made certain definite conditions to which his purchases from them are subject. They simply don't have any top grade natural wines. But they can be bought cheap. They have hundreds of acres and are a commercial business making the best wines in their valley [Livermore], that is all, nothing more. One of these days, someone will show what can be done with their grapes and then their wines and the wines of that whole valley will be classified for what they are. [8/24/40]

MR must have frequently sent Amerine tasting reports after trying out wines made by his competitors, which he did often with his head vintner, Oliver Goulet. Fortuitously, this one letter—again the Wente winery took a hit—survives because he sent a carbon copy to Julian Street; thus it got preserved among the Street Papers at Princeton Library. Otherwise it would have been destroyed in the Masson winery fire of July 1941, and it's doubtful Amerine preserved the original.

Dear Amerine,

Today Goulet and I tasted Wente Bros.' Pinot blanc 1937 which Frank had told me was a very good wine. I had expected that they might "have something" in it as Besone wrote that it is being sold at a premium price as something very fine. (Is it \$18 per case?) But as we poured it into the glasses I told Goulet it would either be just like all the rest of their wines, else it would be a pleasant and interesting experience.

Well, it was just like all the rest, sulphur, no total, not varietal, not a natural wine and tasting like it had been cooked. And it was sweet, that is, high in reducing sugar, suggesting SO<sub>2</sub>, pasteurization, filtering. We could detect no trace of Pinot in it and it was a great disappointment to us. Looking at the wine in the bottle, before it was opened, we rather expected a natural wine as it was very dirty and we thought, "they have made a natural wine which wouldn't clear up and they bottled it anyway." Afterward, we thought it had probably gone into the bottle clear but failed to hold.

Now, what I want to know is, have they any Pinot Blanc. I want to know because I would like to know if it is possible for a Pinot to be so made and treated as to lose all traces of its varietal characteristics. I always found Wente's wines uniformly high in sulphur and that artificial cooked taste, regardless of label, and I suppose it is possible all varietal characteristics are lost in their treatment. But since they sell this as their "best" I expected more. I am, even so, very anxious to know if they actually have the grapes, so let me know. [12/12/40]

*"It is pure folly."*

MR's letters to Street often express a vehemence he must have spouted at times in Amerine's company. He especially got worked up, it seems, after his East Coast correspondent, friend, and wine authority had just written something favorable about other California wineries that were building good reputations back East—at least among wine distributors like Bellow, with whom Julian was affiliated. It's likely that a lot of MR's information actually came from Maynard Amerine, who knew the wineries, the vineyards, and the wines better than anyone around—though of course he wouldn't have carried on in this churlish manner.

I am becoming impatient with the ignorance and fraud of producers. After all, it doesn't require a lifetime to identify the varieties of the vines growing in a single vineyard, and when they deliberately refuse identifications of experts or themselves rename their grapes to comply with trade advantages, it is time that innocent bystanders seek refuge from what is sure to ultimately ensue.

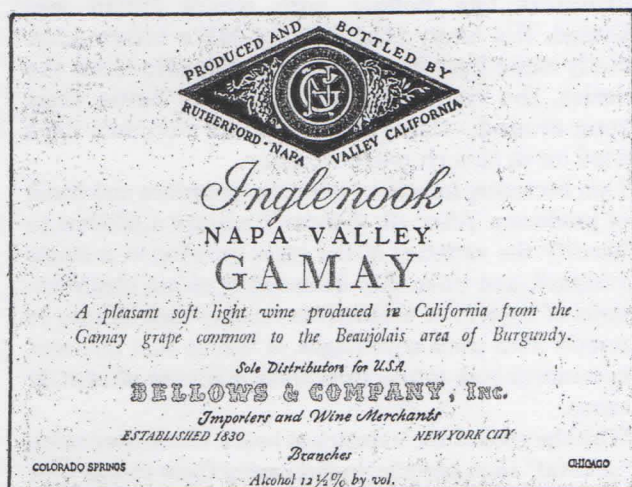
With the good of the industry at heart, I have been more "general" than specific, in discussing these things with you at times in the past but now I must tell you my opinion, just as herein above expressed. You have often wondered why, in California, the great varieties do not appear to produce wines true to varietal character, as suggested by wines claimed to have been made from such varieties. The answer is, they are not made from such varieties.

Inglenook's so-called Pinot Noir is not Pinot Noir. It is what was named by a certain leader in viticultural circles, "Pinot St. George." From that, they came to call it "Pinot Noir." It hasn't the slightest resemblance to the Pinot Noir, nor is it in any way related. Naturally, the wine doesn't taste like Pinot Noir. This is the grape scattered all over the northern part of the state and called by ignorant or fraudulent producers, Pinot Noir. Inglenook's so-called "Pinot Loire" is in fact the Chenin Blanc and two years ago they called it that. It is in no sense related to the Pinot Chardonnay and does not resemble it in any way. Bealeau [*sic*] have this same grape, also calling it "Pinot Loire." Both have been told by experts, it is no Pinot. The Chenin blanc is grown in



the Loire River Valley, Anjou. It has sometimes been called, "The pineau of the Loire," never a Pinot. Our little friend, Chellicheff [*sic*, meaning André Tchelistcheff] told one of the viticultural authorities only recently, "Oh well, we call it Pinot Loire." Chenin blanc is the Vouvry [*sic*] grape. It doesn't belong in the Pinot family....

Do you suppose anyone up there knows the difference or even, which, if any of the varieties, they have? I can tell you the answer to what they have is in their wines. I can also tell you upon authority, they do not have the true Gamay Beaujolais and it is impossible ever to make, from what they have, a Gamay wine. The character of a great, or lesser but distinguished, variety is always to be found in its natural unblended wine. To hell with all their claims! Look to the wine. Whether good or bad, the answer to whether or not they have the varieties is in their wine. I have the added advantage of being able to look also at their vines.



And Inglenook's "Johannisberger Riesling" is not Johannisberger Riesling. What I am telling you should lead you to the unavoidable conclusion that Inglenook is not the vineyard you are trying to believe it is. From it can come excellent wines, their quality varying with the ability of their wine-maker but always limited by their varieties and their soil and climatic conditions. If you will accept their limitation, you will be happier with Bellow's selection. After all, it is just what they need. Why must they covet the leadership in the commercial bottle-wine business and at the same time endeavor to ride in on our wagon [Paul Masson's reputation for pure, high-quality varietals] to an associate-position in which they enjoy none of the necessary requirements or even understanding? It is pure folly. If I were you, I'd get Mr. Wildman to employ Dr. Winkler or Dr. Olmo at the University of California to identify all Inglenook grapes for Bellows because otherwise they are going to look mighty foolish. More interest is being shown in varieties now and people find out in time. But you can always play

safe by relying on the wine. That is the only true test. Even vines growing in the field do not insure their being in the wine named after them.

I have already told you about the Cabernet grown out here. "Cabernet" is like saying "Claret" or "Burgundy." It isn't enough by which to identify a wine or grape. What Cabernet? Cabernet franc or Cabernet-Sauvignon? In California, it is likely to be the "Cabernet Pfeffer," which is not Cabernet at all—it is a grape so named by Mr. Pfeffer, upon whose acres I used to play when a youngster and which were later acquired by the late Fremont Older, a great man. Remember him? If not Pfeffer's Cabernet, it is in California probably Cabernet franc. I have yet to see in California a pure Cabernet-Sauvignon wine outside our own and every so-called Cabernet-Sauvignon vineyard I have yet visited has been one of these other varieties or all mixed up. There aren't many who can tell the difference. [10/17/40]

These pointed attacks by MR on other wineries' winegrape plantings and varietal wines would continue in the years to come, both verbally and in letters, then eventually in print. As word of such things got around, they were bound to infuriate the people thus targeted for criticism and scorn. Yet surely there was some truth in various statements he made. MR himself didn't travel around much to inspect other people's vineyards, but he spent time with the three UC Davis scientists who frequently did: Maynard Amerine, of course, but also Albert Winkler and Harold Olmo. They kept statistics on the varieties grown in specific locations throughout the state—and noted the pitiful acreage accorded to the grapes needed for making fine wines. Thus, whenever MR made forceful pronouncements about somebody else's misidentified grape varieties during his Masson years (and afterwards), whether as vines growing in a vineyard or as an erroneously labeled varietal wine, he often had an expert's expressed opinion backing him up. His University sources, though, wouldn't ever care to admit that they had given him information to use as ammunition against some winery or vintner's reputation. Over time, they would learn to be more cautious in supplying him with information they had accumulated from observations in vineyards and wine tasting experiences.

It can also be said, though, that MR himself had an exceptionally sharp eye for details in grapevines and an excellent memory, which gave him the ability to differentiate among them. (At the time, little attention was being given to clones, the varieties' variants.) Therefore he knew most varieties when he saw them in the field. Furthermore, he maintained when writing to Street that his experience with tasting fine European vintages (and therefore his ability to detect the presence of particular varietals) was far wider and



deeper than that of all other California vintners of the time. Therefore, he felt he could readily dismiss the likes of John Daniel at Inglenook, Georges de Latour at Beaulieu, Louis M. Martini, and the Went brothers.

Martin Ray, unlike many winery proprietors and winemakers of his time or all time, just wasn't a joiner. He didn't really wish to mingle with his peers. He mostly stayed close to home, entertaining a wide variety of guests before or after busying himself in his own vineyards and wine cellars. He really expected people to come to him, not vice versa, and though he could be a convivial host, sometimes his tolerance level for sociability would suddenly be exceeded, and he'd explode like fireworks. The choicest documentation of MR's behavior toward a visitor who roused his ire can be found in his long report to Julian Street of a turbulent encounter that took place some months earlier, either in late 1939 or early 1940, with André Tchelistcheff. Street must have been delighted with this telling, for at the top of the first page he wrote "Martin Ray = Bully letter" and in the left margin, "Swell!—the visit of Tchelistcheff." (Street had been a friend of Theodore Roosevelt's, and from him must have picked up that expression.)

#### *Witness to a Wine Squabble*

**M**aynard Amerine probably realized early on that maintaining a friendship with Martin Ray would be much like riding a roller coaster. There could be few if any dull moments when in his proximity. MR often mentioned in letters to Street that the Davis enologist had come with someone else, to meet him and then look around the immaculate, well-organized Masson cellars. Such occasions usually went well ... but decidedly not when he had the idea of bringing André Tchelistcheff to Masson, thus precipitating a fantastic contretemps between these two now-legendary winemakers, both of whom were still in their 30s.

The Russian-born, French-trained agronomist and wine chemist had been invited to the U.S. in 1938 by Georges de Latour to become the new winemaker at Beaulieu Vineyards. Present too for the occasion, no doubt to make the Russian expatriate feel more at home, was Prince Vasili Romanov, a member of the exiled Czarist nobility, who was the sales rep for Paul Masson Winery in the San Francisco area as well as a minor shareholder.

Julian Street, who had already heard about Tchelistcheff, apparently asked MR about him and got this reply. MR's entire account of his meeting with "Chellycheff" appears here in its entirety.

The story is, that fellow came down here one day to visit. Dr. Amerine and Prince Vasili were here. Amerine brought him. I haven't his name here for spelling but

you call it Chellycheff, so that's how I'll spell it here. Chellycheff is a wine chemist and a wine maker. He came from France to Beaulieu, is a Russian, has lived in France and is supposed to have worked in important cellars there in important capacities—you know that sort of thing! Well, I rather believe he wanted a job with me and thought he would get it by demonstrating how much he knew. This he undertook by means of attack, as you shall presently see. But whatever his objective may have been, Vasili had been telling me in advance of this visit that I should get Chellycheff for our cellars. A brilliant fellow, a fine chap, and all that. Amerine had spoken to me about him, too. So, when he arrived by appointment, with Vasili and Amerine on hand, we visited the cellars with Goulet who as you know was formerly a Jesuit Brother but does not pride himself on a formal education beyond possibly a few years in high school. Goulet is a practical chemist, trained by the Chemistry department of the (Jesuit) University of Santa Clara, respecting chemistry for what it is worth in wine making but no more. We believe chemistry has no place in wine making beyond the fact a knowledge of it permits one to better understand wine making, and when something goes wrong with a wine, chemistry may prevent its loss. But chemistry can never make that wine a fine wine again, nor can chemistry do anything to a potentially great wine other than make it less great. Or, so we feel. When all goes well and when everything is done as it should be done, there simply isn't any need for chemistry. Anyway, you will understand, there exists a feeling on Goulet's part and on my part, that anyone who prides himself on being a wine chemist, is no wine maker but a doctor of sick wines. With this feeling, with the build-up Chellycheff had had, we went into the cellar to taste wines. Chellycheff asked if he might be completely frank, in his discussion of our wines. He had, coming up the hill, asked Amerine if he (Amerine) thought it would be all right for him to speak right out to me about the wines as he found them, about cellar practices, wines in general. Amerine told him he thought it would be expected of him. Vasili also was asked, and he gave his assurance. So, the fellow had himself all set. And I rather believe he had actually mapped out a campaign to sell himself. I permitted him to see and taste all he wanted of the wines in wood and this took up all of the morning, as I recall. He is very sharp and thinks as fast as lightning, but some things he is utterly blind to. So it is with the finer qualities in wines. I doubt if it is lack of experience, although it may be. I think he is simply blind to the finer qualities in wines.

But the communication was good, he knows how to talk a great deal without either saying much or disclosing much of what he thinks. Looking back to that day, I rather think he was just getting ready, learning to know his man. For, he found the wines very nice, very clean, very pleasant, exceptionally pleasant, yes, even



exceptionally fine. He was interested to know about the alcohol content, at what temperatures they were fermented, the total acid, the pH and all that you can imagine he might want to ask of. I was a bit puzzled with him as yet because he hadn't said one thing in the whole morning to tell me if he knew anything, was able to judge the wines or if he was even enjoying himself. The only thing I then felt instinctively was that he felt this was an event for me or at least wanted me to feel so. I tried to draw him out on a couple of wines but he wouldn't go into them. He was cagey. Then we took some bottles of Champagne and went into the house. And that was the time for him to do his stuff.

We tasted the bottles as the excitement of the ensuing explosions of conversation wore off, but for all practical purposes, the tasting that day was concluded in the cellars. As the bottles were carried to the house, I had another conversation to make before joining Chellycheff and Vasili at the house, for Amerine and I had something to go into. So Vasili and Chellycheff were alone in the house for half hour or maybe an hour. Then we joined them. And Chellycheff said, "Mr. Ray, may I be very honest and frank with you and tell you what I think of your wines?" I told him he might say whatever he liked. So he said, "Mr. Ray, I am very sorry, very sorry to have to say this, but I find that your new wines are very fine wines but that you do not know how to make the most of them and that you do not know how to take proper care of them, that in the wood I find them very good but by the time they get into the bottle they have lost their quality." He kept on telling me with his hands and his voice, how sorry he was, to have to tell me this, and for a little man, I never heard a stronger, louder or more penetrating voice, as he became more sorry. He beat on his chest and put his face up under mine and thrust his whole personality at me in a most amazing way. I sensed, at once, this was no ordinary conversation but I could not tell what it was directed at or how it could be as important as I sensed it to be. So I told him I could not understand what he meant and I drew him out. He took a bottle of my still wine and told me it was not clear, that wine could not be sold if it was not clear. I told him that particular bottle was a Still Champagne, that it had undergone a certain amount of secondary fermentation after being bottled in its first spring. But he didn't understand, and I doubt if the fellow had ever tasted a bottle of Still Champagne. It was merely taken from the cellar for tasting, anyway. I told him it would be clarified in time if it needed it. Then he got onto the taste of my bottle wines, said that they were all flat, had lost all their real character, some place along the line. I was still very meek. But as he developed confidence, seeing me take it, he let out. Then all of a sudden I lit on him in a manner that he may not soon forget. I had to shout him down and it was as close to being physical violence as it could be while remaining entirely conversational. I told him

what I thought. I told him of all the Russians, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Japanese and others that had in the past 80 or 90 years come to California to make great wines. I told him that some had settled down on the land and produced grapes and learned to become growers with varying degrees of success, as wine makers. Then I told him of those others, who never learned anything about the land, the vines, the practical and essential back-ground to successful wine making—those fellows who came filled with theory, chemists like himself, who had grand ideas for doing great things, but who did not last. I called to his attention that no chemist had yet made a fine wine, that all the theories they studied and put into practice were but theories after all, tried and possibly proven in making ordinary wines, but having no place at all in the making of fine wines. I asked him what had happened to all these chaps like himself who came in an endless stream from the colleges and chemistry laboratories to tell growers how to make wine. None have remained. In no single cellar in California does a chemist direct the operations with a record of more than a year or two. I told him of examples, of what they had done with their damned fancy ideas. And I told him he didn't know anything about making fine wines, that he was unable to judge them.

You can see, it was a queer thing. He utterly jumped upon me. And I turned and jumped upon him. There was no basis for it at all, except that we had directly opposite ideas, neither would or could accept the ideas of the other. He was making a play, had to see it through. I had Amerine and Vasili here and my own honor to defend. Besides, I had come to dislike the fellow and had to have a bit of his flesh. The very idea, I thought. The whole thing was artificial and planned. I can sit down and talk about anything with anyone who will be honorable and considerate, but this sort of thing I had never seen before.

These things said were in shouts, all mixed up, first one talking, then the other. We were both talking most of the time. My voice became louder even than his and there was profanity like you never heard in such a wrangle. There were many things he had said that I had saved up to crash on his head and I find I can no longer remember much about the actual fight. But Mrs. Ray was upstairs and she thought there was hell downstairs and couldn't understand what it was all about. In the end, he became silent, almost brooded. He seemed to me to be unable to understand what had happened, so badly had he blundered. And through about three hours of this Vasili paced up and down, never said a word, Amerine sat at the table too shocked to put in a word until it had just about spent itself. As the visit ended Mr. Chellycheff was still so sorry, now that he had perhaps offended me. I told him he had not offended me at all but that by God he had better not come down here and tell me that I didn't know how to make or care for wines and that he



did. I told him that he had been at Beaulieu less than two years, had never made one wine fit to drink. I told him I had tasted them and found them all a doctored, unnatural, overworked bunch of stuff and that until he had made one natural, undoctored and good sound wine, he could not raise his voice to me. I invited him to return when he could bring one such wine with him but not before. And he was more dazed than ever. The poor fellow thought he had been taken advantage of, perhaps. He admitted he had no unsulphured white wines, that he had not as yet made the wines he expected to make. I then admitted I was but getting started myself but called to his attention, we are working in different directions. If I'd let Chellycheff get away with the conversation he undertook, it would have been all over the state, what had happened and that what Chellycheff said is true. Things are like that here in California. What people say becomes truth among winemakers and the wine crowd simply because they are unable to tell themselves and they are always ready to take up [that] which some new chap says if he has a fancy background. A year later, they accept just as readily that the fellow was a phony. But to date, Chellycheff has impressed a lot of people with his knowledge and ability, and he is getting bold. Now, he knows his place here and he knows I know he doesn't know much, certainly nothing about winemaking as we carry it on. He would be all right if he would accept the fact he is in a commercial plant making commercial wines. But he won't. He thinks he is working in the correct direction to make the very finest wines and he even thinks he will make them in this manner. Wherever he worked in France, it was clearly a commercial establishment, for he is completely ignorant of the better wines. Why, he even thinks a deposit in a red wine makes it a poor wine. He shouted at me that my Pinot Noir and Cabernet have small deposits in them and he couldn't understand how I could call them good wines under such conditions. So you have the fellow. He is an interesting little man (he is very short) but not as interesting as all this writing would indicate. I have overdone the story, so will say no more about it. It was a case of a man getting into a place where he didn't belong and of having made a blunder of selling himself. Vasili now sends word to me Chellycheff may shortly lose his job at Beaulieu, as the old man is dead and he has seen the handwriting on the wall. [7/3/40]

MR later maintained (as recounted in Eleanor Ray's *Vineyards in the Sky*) that this heated verbal argument at the Masson premises, which nearly got into shoving and fisticuffs, took place over a bottle of putative Pinot Blanc (Vrai) brought that day by Tchelistcheff. When tasting it, MR declared that it was not Pinot Blanc at all—thereby infuriating Tchelistcheff, who said that the grapevine cuttings had come from Paul Masson's own vineyard, given by the Frenchman to his friend Georges de Latour.

According to that version, after the violent altercation MR himself later went up to Beaulieu to identify the grapevines, and determined that they were the inferior Aligoté, not Pinot Blanc.

But MR's letter to Street given here surely gives the correct story. He also sent him copies of subsequent correspondence between Tchelistcheff and Goulet (although it's evident that MR in fact was the letter writer), which contribute in part to the last part of MR's story, which adds an intriguing follow-up to the winemakers' battle. This passage indicates that the conflict in the tale MR later told actually relates to a second incident—over a here-unnamed “dry white” that caused yet another dispute between the two volatile men. It also indicates how MR often used his head vintner, Oliver Goulet, as his mouthpiece, go-between, and factotum.

Goulet visited him, months later. Chellycheff showed with pride his new pasteurizing system. They tasted his wines (some of them). Goulet asked for their best Cabernet and dry white, samples to bring to me and there was a promise I would let Chellycheff know through Goulet what I thought of these wines Goulet brought home. In a little while, Goulet wrote my opinion, which is enclosed herewith. Then came the reply which brought on this letter of Goulet's to Chellycheff. You will recognize, possibly, I write the letters for Goulet, as Goulet is not much on letter writing himself and I am foolish enough to say what I want to say. Usually Goulet and I talk the thing over together as I dictate the letter, if it is for him. In this way I write for him but he is a part of it, which is better than my trying to do the thing for him. I wouldn't permit myself to get into a letter writing bout with the fellow Chellycheff. [7/3/40]

It's unfortunate that the carbon copies of MR's two “Goulet” letters to Tchelistcheff, and the original of the latter's intermediate letter conveying his incensed reaction, all obviously sent on loan to Street for his interest and then returned to MR, are no longer (it appears) extant. Doubtless they were consumed in the Masson winery fire. But is it faintly possible these three letters—two of them the originals—are all hidden away deeply somewhere in Beaulieu's archives, someday to be unearthed?

During Martin Ray's lifetime Tchelistcheff was surely the best known and widely respected California winemaker. His influential work also continued on for two decades after MR's demise. Though both were intensely interested in perfecting wine, as well as genuine lovers of hands-on vineyard care, the ways in which they dealt over the years with other people in the wine industry were wholly different. Each man had strong opinions and a hot temper. However, Tchelistcheff could get along with most people, and even compromise, in order to get the work done. He was also more patient in his expectation that the



necessary improvements in American winemaking would ultimately take place, partly through his encouragement and help. Moreover, unlike MR, he never owned a winery or vineyards; he was either an employee or a consultant, and even when opportunities to operate his own winery in a partnership were proffered, he declined them. Tchelistcheff worked for three decades for a sizable commercial winery, producing many thousands of cases of wine a year. In contrast, MR from the start *owned* both vineyards and winery.

Obviously he wasn't looking to make friends among his winery-owning peers. Amerine, though, for a number of sensible reasons, wished to establish and retain cordial relations with winegrowers, so naturally he didn't wish to infuriate and alienate them. He may have been mostly unaware of MR's inclination to turn information given him into ammunition in his attacks upon the legitimacy of fellow winemakers' honesty and honor.

As would become increasingly evident as the years went by, MR's deliberate isolation from the wine industry's mainstream, technically and socially, prevented him from exchanging useful information and ideas. This was coupled with a decidedly arrogant attitude toward the results (i.e., wines) of most other California (and American) winemakers' aims and efforts. At base, there was a savage competitiveness in him: an egoistic need to feel that no one could possibly achieve what he had achieved, and would continue to achieve—despite his clarion call for others to join his fight for wine quality and fine varietals. MR's inability to recognize and laud achievements by others inevitably led to semi-publicly expressed verbal attacks on them through self-generated publications distributed far and wide. His negative attitudes, along with information and opinions, were based on his wine industry experiences in the Repeal, WWII, and post-war periods; eventually becoming badly dated, they contributed to his irrelevance and obsolescence as a vintner by the time the Wine Revolution had begun transforming the landscape, better wineries, and consumer interests. ■

— The next two sections of this article about Martin Ray's friendship with Maynard Amerine will cover the remaining years of their relationship, which was closest in the 10-year period following Amerine's return to UC Davis from WWII military service. A house fire in 1951 consumed MR's collection of letters from MA, and MA at some point destroyed the letters he had received from MR over the years. Fortunately, though, plenty of epistolary evidence of their connection was kept by Eleanor Ray after marrying MR; she herself adored Amerine. The Rays' correspondence with MA during the first half of the 1950s reveals how MR began envisaging how to expand his winemaking enterprise, and also why and how MR launched his fervent, hard-hitting "wine quality fight" in 1955, thereby losing forever his best friend.

## SONGS OF STRANGENESS

by  
Gordon Jones

[Gordon Jones has been a *Tendril* since our founding in 1990. At that time, he and his wife, Dorothy, had been collecting wine books for some 35 years, and had formed an enviable collection. We featured this splendid library in our October 1996 issue (Vol.6 #4), "The Joneses and their Wine Books." Gratefully, Gordon periodically pulls a gem from their library shelves and entertains us. We welcome his latest contribution! — Ed.]

James James  
Morrison Morrison  
Weatherby George Dupree  
Took great  
Care of his mother  
Though he was only three.

James James  
Said to his mother,  
"Mother," he said, said he,  
"You must never go down to the end of  
the town without consulting me."



**T**his poem, written many many years ago by A. A. Milne, has caused numerous thinking people to wonder exactly what was going on at the end of the town. The answer has been available in a strange little wine book, *Ballads of the Wine Mad Town*, written and published by Florence Wobber in San Francisco, 1916.

Miss Wobber also illustrated it.

This book is quite possibly unique among wine books, as it was written by a young woman who did not drink wine, sell wine, make wine, or have anything whatsoever to do with wine. She was merely filled with a deep desire to write. Apparently she had a lot more desire than writing ability: this was her second book—she had not been able to get her first one published.

In writing this book she tried to take advantage of the strong prohibitionist sentiments of the time. In fact, a cursory glance at the book might make one think it is Prohibition literature. It is not. It simply uses wine (alcoholic beverages) as part of the plot.

Miss Wobber drew upon the settings and characters from her unpublished book, *Silver and Black*, "the



story of the cycle of time." Florien, an ancient city of the Egyptian desert about 7000 B.C., was the center for perfume distillery. The leading perfumer was Sabah Habannan, who had a seven-year-old son, Obiad. Desert wanderers stole the child, who died within the year. Sabah did not know his son was dead.

Ten years later, young villains of the desert contacted Sabah and told him he could have his son for a ransom. Sabah joyously agreed, and they planned to come to Florien. Sabah left town to go to the neighboring village to buy carpets and clothing for the reunion, and excused most of his servants.

This brought about a big problem because the servants normally took the previous day's left-over fruit juice to the end of the town in jars and buried them. It seems that fresh fruit juice was the principal drink of the time. Sabah's fruit juice did not get disposed of, so it stayed in his house, and fermented.

The evil-doers came to Sabah's house and took it over, as he had not yet returned. The only drink they could find was the fermented fruit juice. Neighbors thought this would ruin them. Instead it seemed to elate them. At this point the rest of the town joined them, and there was much merry making. Someone then remembered all of the juice at the end of the town; it was soon retrieved. Presently, the perfume makers started making wine, and the town immediately started coming apart. The wine, of course, brought out the worst in everyone. Miss Wobber wrote the ballads to illustrate the evils that prohibitionists were predicting.

The titles of some of the ballads alone indicate how desperate the situation was:

Song of the Imp of Mischieff  
The Tides of Passion  
He Has Long Been Gone  
Kiss Me, Sweet Death  
The Strangler's Song  
Nearing the Bar  
Haggard Night.

All in all, it was obvious that the consumption of wine was not all that beneficial. There is no conclusion to the book: just the direful songs.

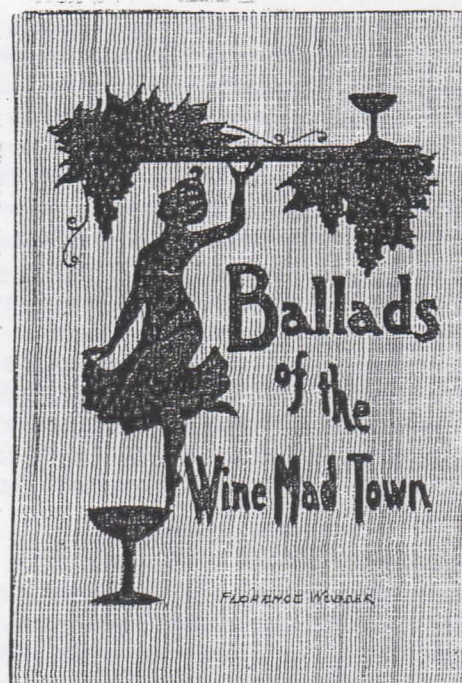
Unfortunately for Miss Wobber, few people were interested in buying her book. San Franciscans were more interested in where to eat and drink, as another book of the same era, *Bohemian San Francisco*, by Clarence Edwards (San Francisco: Paul Elder & Co., 1914), did very well and was even reprinted in 1973.

Miss Wobber, meanwhile, worked in early radio. She went by the name of Little June East. In the 1930s she moved to southern California. She tried, but could not get work with Warner Brothers Studios; she returned to radio where she once again became Little June East. She got married, unsuccessfully. About 1940 she moved back to San Francisco with a car full

of dogs. She had always liked animals and they had become her best friends.

About this time she wrote another book, *Calico Orchids*, which was published in Hollywood in 1942. It was semi-autobiographical and very light on facts. The dedication was somewhat indicative of her life: "To all dogs including the two legged kind." Little is known of her in wine or writing since that time.

Miss Wobber supervised the book's design and production at the San Francisco publishing house, Sunset. Small in size, 7" x 4½" (98 pages), it is artistically presented in a rose and black color scheme on every page. The light-turquoise cloth front cover is richly decorated in gilt and red, displaying the title and a drawing by the author. There are 8 full-page illustrations, and each page is adorned with a vinous motif. *Ballads of the Wine Mad Town* is certainly very different from most wine books, and belongs in my wine library. ■



I will hear the wit and the clever speech,  
I will garner all secrets within my reach;  
I will drink the wines of the distant lands,  
They will purge my brain of the desert sands.

I will buy a robe of a royal hue,  
And sandals all studded with pearls, like due.  
A chaplet of iris will be my crown;  
Bedight to dance in the Wine Mad Town.

[FROM: "The Call of the Wine: Temptation."]





## BOOKS & BOTTLES

by  
**Fred McMillin**

### If You Have It, Flaunt It!

*Great Wine Terroirs* by Jacques Fanet. Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2004. 240 pp. Hardcover. \$40. *The Winemaker's Dance: Exploring Terroir in the Napa Valley* by Jonathan Swinchatt and David G. Howell. Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2004.

Long ago the four elements were thought to be fire, water, air, and earth. The last three provide the physical environment for the production of all wine grapes. While this has been obvious to winegrowers for over 5,000 years, only one country, France, has given a name to the total natural environment of a vineyard. Their word for soil is *terroir* (tair-wahr), and subsequently it also has acquired the total environment meaning. Today, applied to their grand Burgundy and Bordeaux vineyards, the French are the leading advocates of the term. They've got it—they can flaunt it. However, New World vintners are wary of the word, many doubting that it can be meaningful or useful. Some feel it is merely a marketing tool. The *Wine Spectator's* Matt Kramer has quoted those who regard the concept as "viticultural voodoo." But...

### I Have a Dream

The Impossible Dream—It is the year 3005: U.C. Davis announces to the wine world a breakthrough greater than their 20<sup>th</sup> century achievement, the Heat Summation Method to classify climates. After a century of research, they now can quantify *terroir*. For example, the *terroir* of Napa Valley's Rutherford Bench for Cabernet Sauvignon is  $95 \pm 2$ .

### More Facts, Less Voodoo

That's the dream. It might actually come true if more knowledge can be developed. These two *terroir* books make rich contributions to one aspect of *terroir*—geology.

### Fanet's World View

Jacques Fanet, Assistant Director of the National Institute of Appellations in France, specializes in soil sciences and viticulture. In covering the "Wine Terroirs of the World," his book is dominated by

marvelous graphics and text on the geology-viticulture ties that bind in France. The *terroirs* of the U.S.A. are given but four pages.

- "Though it seems implausible . . . today's wine-growing landscapes were chiseled into shape two million years ago."

The book's organization is delightfully refreshing, being based on geological, rather than geographical, criteria. That is, the first section is devoted to vineyards on the edges of faults, including those of Alsace and the northern Rhône Valley. Another is devoted to the geology and grape varieties of vineyards on the foothills of mountains, including Chile and Switzerland.

- For us beginners, the study of soil is called pedology.

Learn why the soil often differs from its support rock, and why the structure of the soil may be more important than its chemical composition. And more.

### Winemaker's Dance in the Napa Valley

- "The winemaker's dance is an engagement with land, vine, and human understanding... the human element is the connective tissue that binds earth, climate, vine, and winery to form the system we identify as *terroir*."

The need for precise definition(s) is something obvious if the impossible dream will some day be achieved—perhaps we start by defining *terroir*-1, *terroir*-2, &c. Authors Swinchatt and Howell, both geologists, say that even the finest review of geology and wine they have seen (*Terroir* by James Wilson, 1999) "unfortunately further muddles the already turbulent waters of *terroir* by offering a range of vague and confusing definitions and further yet by using them inconsistently throughout the book."

- "Human intervention, particularly in wine-making, can overshadow the contribution of nature by making wines of great power and intensity."

With careful thinking, aided by outstanding graphics and photographs, the authors begin their journey millions of years ago before the Napa Valley was formed and end with the remarkable *terroir* of Stags Leap, Carneros, and many others. Along the way, you encounter such familiar wineries as Clos du Val, Beaulieu, Shafer, Duckhorn, Robert Mondavi, &c.

If you have a serious collection of wine books, here are two fascinating, highly recommended additions—possibly a step toward realizing that impossible dream.





## A BOOK REVIEW by Allan Shields

*Virgile's Vineyard: A Year in the Languedoc Wine Country* by Patrick Moon. Illustrations by Adrienne Fryer. London: John Murray, 2003, 377 pp. Paperback edition, 2004, 280 pp.



at Moon has written a charming "travel" book about the French ruralia region of Languedoc. Virgile is not the Roman poet (Virgil or Vergil), but a younger neighbor of Pat Moon, who is a central character in the work among many well-crafted characters. Virgile is the one vintner who serves as Moon's wine guru

as he learns the skills and art of a vigneron and vintner. Though the book is physically divided into twelve chapters, one for each month, it is cast as a running diary and narrative interposed with numerous asides, emergencies, trials, personality conflicts and, notably, a great deal of instruction in the history of The Languedoc, ancient and modern, as well as instruction in the differing local theories on the art of wine growing and making.

Pat Moon, on a sabbatic year from his lawyering in London, was a student of French and History at Oxford, the French especially serving him well as he, a committed Francophile, immerses himself in the rich, local culture of Southern France near the Mediterranean. All of this is made possible by his deceased Uncle Milo, an architect who developed the château Pat Moon inherited. The reader follows the author, the principal character, on his peregrinations through uncounted local wineries, and the vicissitudes as he renovates the neglected chateau. The reader learns about his olive trees and their gift of oil, a swarm of resident bees inside a bedroom, furtive ferrets, old vines, and horses meandering into the neighbor's pasture and vineyard. In a sense, this is a one-year autobiography.

Other key figures are Manu Gros and his austere, censorious wife, Mme. Gros; Krystal, a retired school teacher and gay divorcee. Krystal is assigned the important task in the book of providing a running commentary on the regional history Pat Moon has so extensively researched for his book. Much of her dialogical "conversations," ostensibly direct quotations as they occurred spontaneously, remain unconvincing, despite their informative successes. They read more like a guide's memorized spiel. Manu Gros, less expert than Krystal, and given to alcoholic over-indulgence, helps with the history. In the end, the author labors strenuously to learn every step in

the fabled process of growing wines, from soil analysis, plantings, pruning, vendange, pressing, fermenting, bottling—to into the glass. With witty, conversational dialogue, occupying nearly 90% of the text, I guess, we are carried along in the sweep of his diary. An artist's map of The Languedoc helps in locating Moon's adventures.

Starting on January 1, the months unfold as the seasons wax and wane with their special demands on vigneron and vintner alike. Accidents of weather, diseases, and equipment, not to forget mistakes of unskilled workers, provide constant realism in the account.

One less consequential thread of discourse providing a kind of barely concealed warp to the woof of wine making is the author's thinly-disguised, but nevertheless, revealed eccentric sexual orientation left unspecified here. Why is it that sexual eccentrics these days deem it necessary to make the rest of us aware of their differences and without ever being asked to make public divulgence of their uncloseted revelations? Do we really need to know if some author/artist has a hangup fetish for sadistic sex, transvestite titillations, is a lesbian enamored, or masticates his food in an exciting manner? Do we need to know, to enjoy a novel, that some hetero prefers the missionary position? Heteros I know feel no parallel compulsion to thrust their boudoir habits out of the night shadows into the limelight of public announcement. I digress.

Pat Moon's first book promises more to come even without another uncle's inheritance. His personal writing style of understatement, overstatement, liberally doused with the humor of a Brit and well-paced variety, all serve both him and his reader well. In spots, his writing rises to rivalry with Kingsley Amis, and that's a compliment. Rollicking, no?





If our books could talk . . .

A

BIBLIO - LAMENT

[*"A Biblio-Lament"* by Carl Wheat, handsomely printed by the Grabhorn Press on heavy watermarked paper, one verse to a page, with red decorative initials, is a lovely [16]-page booklet, bound in blue wrappers (4½" x 7"). — Ed.]

Once I was new, fresh off the press,  
Read, enjoyed, even sought by collectors,  
And I rated a place upon the shelves  
Of attorneys, physicians, and rectors.

In libraries great, in libraries small,  
I enjoyed the acclaim of the nation;  
But now my short-title and price are all  
That accompany my collation.

For though once I was new, my leaves uncut,  
My binding crisp and unfrayed,  
At present I'm only a number  
In a bookseller's catalogue staid.

It's a sorry fate, I'm bound to state,  
For one who has tasted glory  
To miss the sight of the erudite  
And of scholars sedate and hoary.

My leaves, they declare, are "slightly  
foxed"  
and my covers broken and cracked,  
But of course they add that for pure research  
My text remains quite intact.

I've a signature loose and one flyleaf's gone  
My hinges are weak and chipped,  
My spine is worn and my backstrip is torn  
But my insides are sound as a whip.

For utilitarian ends, in fact,  
I'm much better than volumes rare,  
With their typographic pulchritude  
To be locked away with care.

A sound working copy, that's how they  
describe me,  
And collectors who seek for "condition"  
Would surely consign my soiled old leaves  
To some bibliophobe's perdition.

My end-paper's lost a bookplate;  
I'm, in fact, an ex-library tome.  
From two-bit shelf to ten-cent bin  
I'm apparently fated to roam.

There are times when I'm filled with  
remorse and regret.  
It's easy, — that backward look.  
But then I recall, and try not to forget,  
I'm a book, not an "item" — A BOOK.

In my pride I say, it's my text that counts,  
Mere raiment the end is not.  
But even if clothes don't make the man,  
My friends, they help a lot.

*"This Trivium, lately indited by Carl I. Wheat in a moment of high bibliobfuscation"  
was "imprinted by his friends the Grabhorns  
for his friends of the Roxburghe and  
Zamorano clubs..." [1952]*





## Toyon Books and the Wine Library Associates of Sonoma County

Welcome author

### Christy Campbell

As he discusses and signs his new book:

#### ***The Botanist and the Vintner: How Wine was Saved For the World***

Saturday, June 25, 2005 — 7pm

Sonoma County Wine Library, (Piper and Center Sts., Healdsburg, CA)

Cost: \$10.00

#### **Proceeds to benefit the Sonoma County Wine Library Association**

For tickets or information, please contact: Toyon Books, 104 Matheson St.,  
Healdsburg, CA 95448, (707) 433-9270

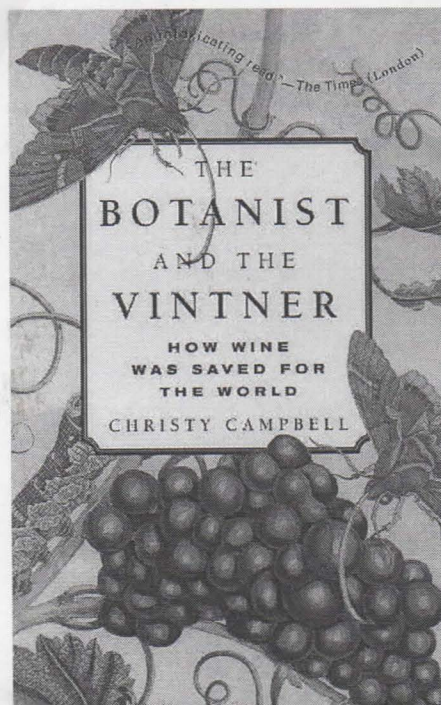
In the mid-1860s, grapevines in southeastern France inexplicably began to wither and die. French botanist Jules-Emile Planchon was sent to investigate. Magnifying glass in hand, he discovered that the vine roots were covered in microscopic yellow insects. The aphids would be named *Phylloxera vastatrix* — the dry leaf devastator. Where they had come from was a mystery.

Soon the noblest vineyards in Europe and California came under biological siege. No one could slow phylloxera's maddening, destructive pace. The French government offered a prize of 300,000 gold francs for a remedy, and increasingly bizarre suggestions flooded in. Planchon believed he had the answer, and he set out to convince the skeptical wine-making and scientific establishments. Aided by the American entomologist Charles V. Riley and a decade of research into the strange life history of the insect, Planchon at long last proved that the remedy rested within the vines themselves.

***The Botanist and the Vintner*** is an astonishing account of one of the earliest and most successful applications of science to an ecological disaster. And even now, the story continues as new strains of *phylloxera* attack vineyards in France, California, and New Zealand.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Christy Campbell is a British writer and journalist. He has written for the Sunday Telegraph since 1990, when he joined as defense correspondent. He has produced a series of special supplements for the Telegraph on 20<sup>th</sup> century history.









**NOTES ON A CELLAR-BOOK**  
**DATA NEEDED BY TENDRIL ISAAC OELGART**

DEAR FELLOW TENDRILS,

**O**NCE AGAIN I AM SEEKING YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL HELP IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE NATURE OF VARIANTS IN THE 1921 DE LUXE OR LARGE PAPER EDITION OF GEORGE SAINTSBURY'S *NOTES ON A CELLAR-BOOK* FOR A TITLE BIBLIOGRAPHY I AM COMPILING ON THE SAME.

■ I WOULD LIKE TO CONDUCT A BRIEF TELEPHONE EXAMINATION / SURVEY WITH EVERYONE WHO HAS A COPY OF THE 1921 LIMITED, DE LUXE, LARGE PAPER EDITION OF *NOTES*... PLEASE EMAIL ME [[isaacoelgart@valley.net](mailto:isaacoelgart@valley.net)] OR CALL [603.443.6159] TO SET UP A TIME THAT I MAY CALL YOU.

■ I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM ANYONE WHO HAS PRESENTATION COPIES, AND/OR ANY ODD, UNUSUAL, OR UNIQUE COPIES OR REVIEWS OF *NOTES*...

■ DO ANY TENDRILS HAVE COPIES OF THE OFFPRINT TITLED *NOTE TO THIRD EDITION*? ONLY 12 COPIES WERE PRINTED.

■ I AM LOOKING FOR COPIES, WITH DUST JACKETS, OF THE FOLLOWING PRINTINGS OF *NOTES ON A CELLAR-BOOK*— THE NOVEMBER 1920, THE 1924, AND THE 1927. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO PURCHASE OR TRADE AT FAVORABLE TERMS TO THE SELLER.

THANK YOU.

SINCERELY, CORDIALLY, AND BIBLIOGRAPHICALLY YOURS,

Isaac Oelgart

