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THE GREAT WINE QUAKE

by

Charles L. Sullivan

[California wine historian and longtime Tendril, Charles Sullivan, is well-known to our membership. His award-winning book, *Zinfandel: A History of a Grape and Its Wine* (U.C. Press, 2003), was first serialized in our *Quarterly*. Among his other major contributions to the literature of wine is the encyclopedic *Companion to California Wine* (1998), a must for any wine lover's library, and *Napa Wine: A History from Mission Days to Present* (1994). — Ed.]



In April, when Tendrils pick up their next copy of the *WTQ*, they will surely have been made aware by a dazzling bombardment from the news media that this month they must focus their attention and interest on the 100th anniversary of the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906 (E&F).

Recently in the pages of *California Monthly* Kevin Starr brought us an interesting review of recent revisionist historiography on the E&F. These new books stand on its head much of the heroic, cuddly, positive picture of the disaster and particularly of the three days following the quake (*Fault Lines of 1906*, November 2005).

Starr concentrates on three recent histories of the E&F which together provide a clear understanding that, until the publication of these studies, the story of the three days after the temblor had been "highly mythologized." Together these works make clear that "San Francisco was literally burnt to the ground through ineptitude." The Army, the National Guard, and the San Francisco sworn deputies "turned the city into an unconstitutional nightmare for ordinary citizens." And to add to this disturbing story the authors give a picture of a city "in the state of political civil war." They also show that in the months after the disaster there was a well coordinated campaign by San Francisco's political/business community "to suppress the history and meaning of April 1906." This

campaign is best symbolized by the casualty figures officially released, 300-400 victims, when the actual number was almost ten times as high.

One aspect of the post-quake story proves to be no myth. The rebuilding of the city was swift and well coordinated, almost miraculous in light of the ample evidence of the destruction available to us in photographs.

As an historian specializing in the story of the Golden State I could not resist the challenge of getting the E&F story straight in my mind. I quickly bought Starr's three recommended books and went to work. But I was looking for more than just their revisionist insights. As a California wine historian I had been collecting material on the E&F and the state's wine industry for almost forty years. I rejoiced at the chance to see how this exciting vinous story was made part of the new view.



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Each of Starr's three authors has a special approach. *San Francisco is Burning: the Untold Story*

of the 1906 Earthquake and Fires (Penguin) is the work of Dennis Smith, a former New York City firefighter and an expert of fire fighting techniques. Simon Winchester is an Oxford-trained geologist whose *A Crack in the Edge of the World* (Harper Collins) emphasizes the E far more than the F. *The Great Earthquake and Fires Storms of 1906* (UC Press) is Philip Fradkin's third book in his trilogy on earthquakes.

If asked to name the one of these three to read—if one were the limit—I think that Winchester's is the best book of the three, but not the one to read. He takes 200 pages to get to San Francisco and the quake. What comes before is an excellent technical explanation of how the earth's crust moves about, with colorful stories on many of these historic movements, particularly in the U.S.

Dennis Smith's books held my attention throughout. I read every word; I admit to quickly turning some pages in the others. But Fradkin's is the one if there is to be but one. In 2000 he received a three-year grant to assemble all the source material relating to the E&F and to create an online archive for public use (bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections). Starr calls it "a triumph of archival entrepreneurialism." The result is an excellent book. But I suggest that you skip the chapter titled "The Politics of Disaster," unless, that is, you can stomach revisionism run so wild as to make Boss Abe Ruef a misunderstood and persecuted victim in the graft trials that followed the E&F but were not part of the story. The chapter is a sort of historical *obiter dictum* that adds nothing to our understanding of the E&F.

How did these authors handle the exciting wine story? Dennis Smith devotes one long paragraph to the millions of gallons lost in the city's many huge cellars. Winchester doesn't seem to be aware of all this wine but does mention that people were drinking "Asti Tipo Chianti" with their "terrapin Maryland" the night before the temblor. He does claim that "the vineyard country of the Napa and Sonoma Valleys was particularly hard hit." (It was not.) He also describes vineyards taking on the appearance of the ocean as the "great waves of the shocks tumbled down the hill-sides." How could a geologist write that, and what's its source? Neither Smith nor Winchester document their studies.

Fradkin's scholarly work is fully documented with forty-three pages of notes. He even quotes Charles Bundschu's letter, produced below, but only the first paragraph, as an example of "post-traumatic stress disorder." But wine and the wine industry received but two sentences in the book's 418 pages.

Readers may wonder where best to turn for secondary works dealing with the Great Wine Quake. Years ago the San Francisco Chronicle (15 April 1979)

had a short article on the subject, as did Wines & Vines the following year (April 1980). They contain interesting information but focus on the inane idea that San Francisco history might have been changed radically if the wine in the city's great cellars had been used to fight the fires.

Under "Earthquake" in my *Companion to California Wine* I devote only about 300 words to quakes and California wine; in *Like Modern Edens*, I give E&F two pages, but with an emphasis on the events in the Santa Clara Valley. I had a bit more in *Napa Wine*, but again the emphasis was on the local scene.

By far the best secondary source on the Great Wine Quake can be found in *The California Wine Association and Its Member Wineries*, by Ernest P. Peninou and Gail G. Unzelman (Nomis Press, 2000). The section contains numerous photos of the vinous devastation in the city, none of which I could find in the previous works discussed.

The best in-print photographic treatment of E&F is *Denial of Disaster* (Cameron) by Gladys Hansen and Emmet Condon. This book should also be included in any list of E&F historical revisionism. It is most effective in setting the record straight on the E&F casualty numbers. (No person did more to help in my early years of wine history research than Ms. Hansen, when she was in charge of Special Collections at the San Francisco Public Library.)

By now the reader may have guessed that your editor and I have decided to get the vinous story of E&F out to that portion of the readers in the wine world most interested in such topics. We begin with the remarkable letter written by a noted California wine leader on the day after the fires went out. In the April issue we'll have an historical monograph on the Great Wine Quake. And in July we'll look at the seismic history of wine in California from 1868 to 1989.

EDITOR NOTE: The writer of the following poignant letter signed, "Your brother Carl," is Charles Bundschu (1842-1910), president and founder of the Gundlach-Bundschu Wine Company, Sonoma / San Francisco, and the oldest surviving member of the inter-twined Gundlach, Dresel, and Bundschu pioneer wine families. From clues in the letter, we surmise that it is addressed to Charles (Carl) Gundlach (1860-1912), Bundschu's brother-in-law, vice-president of G-B Wine Co. and longtime manager of their New York office. Charles Bundschu, born in Germany, came to California in 1862, at age twenty. In 1874 he married Francisca (Fannie) Gundlach, one of five daughters of Jacob Gundlach (1818-1894), who had founded the original Gundlach Wine Co. that evolved into the Gundlach-Bundschu firm. (From this union

of Charles and Fannie, the present-day Bundschu family has descended to continue the Gundlach-Bundschu Vineyards & Winery in Sonoma.) He was a revered citizen of the state of California, "who was always ready with pen or purse to aid in the good work of advertising to the world the merits of California wine" [P.W.&S.R., 10/31/1910]. At the time of the great quake, Gundlach-Bundschu's San Francisco winehouse was located on Bryant Street, in the area where many of the major San Francisco wine depots were located. Following its destruction, the Pacific Wine & Spirit Review reported "about a million gallons of the best vintages of California...some of them the oldest and rarest in the State" were lost. For clarification of the people and places in Mr. Bundschu's letter, endnotes have been added to the text.

Rhinefarm, Sonoma
April 22d, 1906

My dear Carl,

This is Sunday—the Lord's day of rest! His week's work is ended and He did it well. The doom of San Francisco has been branded with unrelenting, uncompromising ferocity on the face of the darkest history of all mankind. I am so utterly, physically and mentally unstrung that my mind and body refuse to act. The use of the pen is a hardship to me. Given the last four days and experiencing and seeing what we had to encounter before our hastened flight from the city of hell and devastation, has left its indelible imprints of despair on everybody's vision, haunting him to the rest of his days. The earthquake on Wednesday morning at 5:13 itself shrivels up as a casual incident of comparatively little importance; it would have soon have been over-bridged—but for its consequences!

Half an hour after the shock a mountain of heavy dense smoke loomed up behind Telegraph Hill from the heart of the City. On Sansome, Third Street in the Mission and many other locations (also in the Sulphur Works below us) fires broke out simultaneously. Walter and Carl¹ started downtown and went to the Warehouse² finding no speakable damage by the shock and foreman and crew redeeming the damage. The fire of the Mission and 3d Street location had grasped the Opera House and devoured the beautiful Aronson building, working its way towards the Palace [Hotel], but not Southward. They started out again to the Warehouse—it was then known that the city was without water—found the foreman and his nephew on hand; the crew ran out of the building when another severe shock at about 9 o'clock made the building shriek and apparently unsafe, and Carl started to pack

up the books and papers of the office. Unfortunately a puncheon of Red Wine was shaken from its saddle of the third row right above my desk and the Claret had flooded everything. Schild³ and my son Rudolph though assisted nobly and they managed to load two teams—the first one was unloaded at Schild's home ([1908] Broadway, 3 blocks west of Van Ness), which still stands. The other load went somewhere to the Potrero, where it still remains—under what conditions I am unable to say. In the meantime the fire had run out Mission Street, consumed the Palace Hotel, Spreckel's building, working its way from Sansome Street through the Wholesale Districts. From out Mission it crossed over to Brannan, then the afternoon Western wind drove it down again to Third Street like a furious wall of fire. Carl had closed the Building and sat with Chris, the foreman, on the opposite house-steps; the western fire wall stood nobly for a time, but the flames from Silver Street soon engulfed the building. The heat became unbearable and Carl found his way home, passing C. Schilling [Brannan Street] and the Mail Dock, which perhaps an hour later together with St. Mary's Hospital, Sailors' Home, and that entire corner were turned into an impenetrable furnace of flames and heat. In the meantime, Walter assisted at Aug. Schilling to check the attacks of the falling cinders with wet sacks and other precautions. He thought the old Kohler & Frohling building⁴ would protect them. Our building fell at 5 o'clock on the first day. When Carl carried the news to our home⁵ my tears flowed incessantly, and I shall never forget the thunderbolt of wrath smashing the last hope of my life forever. I need not explain to you, dear Carl, why such a business cannot be redeemed by bright hopes for the future. It meant the labor and struggle of two generations and we had just emerged from its many critical confusions and trials apparently victorious and confident of success. Our future was bright for everyone interested. We never held a better assortment of wines—never a larger stock—good orders—efficient salesmen—every nerve strained in offices and cellar to promote the good work—and now—and now? It means despair.

We went through a night of anxiety on the hill [Telegraph Hill]. The heavens stood ablaze behind the hill and the fire slowly crept on northward. It had reached upper California Street, where the Hess⁶ residence stood, attached and gulped up Nob Hill and cleared away the entire side of the hill. They were blowing up buildings continuously, especially the East side of Van Ness, but it climbed over here and there and Claus Spreckel's residence [Van Ness & Clay] was burnt to a crisp. That evening of the second day we realized the danger of our own situation. The flames swept nearer Montgomery Avenue and still we thought our isolated corner might be spared. We

began to pack things in a slipshod way, packed and buried our silverware in the garden, bundled up our wardrobe, carried out books and things, covered them, shoveled soil and grass over it; rushed and frenzied, we heard the fire was checked at Broadway and they were making a fight at the Plaza with Bay-water, but it looked as if it were already desperately near. Heini⁷ and Otto Hinz had come and assisted us and packed a few valises to Mill Valley.

We concluded towards Friday evening to leave the house, except Walter and Maury Sims⁸ should stay and watch. Carl and Gertrude had come from their home (Union and Van Ness) and presumed from remarks made by the officer of the military squad, that their house had been blown up. (It is doubtful to us whether it stands, because the Paper reports that the fire had been stopped at that corner.) So at 10 o'clock in the evening we said our farewell to our old

home, thousand reminiscences flashed up once more before our spiritual vision, I saw the gay throng around our Sylvester table. I once more felt the pleasure and joy emanating within these simple walls and parted with a feeling that I had left a dear and cheerful friend behind. Between families

fringing the houses with their bundles of household effects, some camping and lying in the open, the night, warm and balmy, lit up almost to daylight effect, we filed down Dupont [Grant] Street to the wharf and there we settled down on a lumber-pile near the seawall, watching the fall of our "house of mirth" on the hill above. The familiar lines of the trees and projecting house-fronts stood forth in somber melancholy contrast against the fire-bound horizon forming the background. Once in a while the flames engulfing another residence sent up a volume of dense smoke. But the North Beachers fought nobly; they had a supply of Bay water and the politician, Abe Ruef⁹ (owning the old Muecke house on Lombard Street), and his friends made a desperate effort to save his house. The fight was still down on Broadway. Chinatown had succumbed during the afternoon. While we waited on the lumber-pile Carl and Gertrude

from Hyde Street and then had joined us to urge withdrawal. We thought from our lumber-pile observatory, we could easily reach the ferry, in front of which was all burnt territory. Boats were taking refugees away at several wharves during the night and we were not apprehensive of being cut off. A continuous stream of all sorts of people, propelling their belongings in all sorts and manner of rigs and vehicles. Order and seriousness prevailed everywhere in the city during the fearful trial, and also on this scramble for safety as it passed our vista in a continuous stream to the Ferry; in spite of the sometimes humorous combinations of human groups, the significance of the hour prevailed. Relief-Committee men with badges offered assistance and direction and prevailed upon people to take the steamers to the suburbs. In the meantime the Tiburon steamer, "Ukiah," had swung in alongside of us and we ascer-



Watching the progress of the Fire from Lafayette Square, April 18, 1906. San Francisco, Cal.

tained that she was going over at 3 o'clock A.M. After making known our identity the Captain allowed us to go aboard between 12 and 1 ahead of the other passengers. We heard and felt the desperate struggle behind the hill. Explosions and Dynamite blasts must have taken away many buildings; they

followed with tremendous effects in short intervals, but the glare on the horizon stood and the fire raged. When the steamer pulled out the hill stood and our old home gave us its last greeting as if it meant to say: "Don't be afraid, I will not desert you!" We stayed on board the steamer until she went back to the city at 6 o'clock, camping on the floor of the cabin. Fannie, myself, Rudie [son Rudolph], and Nancy, our Italian girl, went on to Sonoma. Carl and Gertrude went back to find out what had happened during the night. They went up to the house, found Walter and Maury and a friend of Walter's rummaging around the house, carrying furniture and things to the edge of the nearby precipice. Carl and Gertrude even ventured up Hyde Street hill and saw their little Eden of bliss still standing. At about one o'clock the Chestnut Street forces withdrew; the fire had worked along Stockton and had cleared the south side of Lombard Street up to the old "Gray" house, the only residence left on the

hill. It then appeared Ruef had won the fight; but when the flames had reached the Raubinger barns and tenement house, the latter turned to what it was formerly called, a real "House of Blazes," caught the Schweizer Malt House and a westerly breeze drove it up the hill with furious rapidity, taking the block Lombard - Chestnut by storm. At about 2 o'clock Walter and Maury and the others went through Maury's (the old Eggleton) house [134 Chestnut] down to Francisco Street to make for the Ferry. Also Carl and Gertrude saw the approach of the fulfillment from Hyde Street and rushed wildly with the blinding windstorm through dust and smoke onward to the ferry. The flames soon followed in their wake—they had swept the hill by this time and now hugged the base to the water-front. Soon the lumber-piles, the wharves, the foundries, the flour mill and everything else was wrapped up to Broadway to the very point where the fire had left off before. Thus, at about 3 o'clock the home of your parents and birthplace of your brothers and sisters went out of existence, leaving an enviable record and to everyone of us a dearly beloved sweet remembrance of happy days and glorious hours.¹⁰

Also Carl Dresel¹¹ was in great anxiety about his brother, the Doctor [Gustav Dresel]; he went down on Friday and had his thrilling experiences in trying to recover the wharf. He (the Doctor) lost all his valuable paraphernalia in the Crocker Building [Market St]. Maury Sims lost his office outfit on Montgomery Street and we lost—our business! I presume that not a valuable vestige remains of it. I understand that the cellar was filled with wine. The intense heat must have burst every cask.



CHARLES BUNDSCHU (1842-1910)

April 23, 1906 (Papa's Birthday)

How happy and joyful these days passed in far away days in Sonoma and now the children and grandchildren are gathered around the old vineyard home to seek shelter and rest from the turmoil of heartrending afflictions.

Maury went to the City yesterday, which can only be entered with Military Passes. He returned in the evening and brought a few trunks. One of them had been rifled of anything apparently valuable. He describes the hill as a barren waste. A pile of valuable books and papers and other things well covered were destroyed. Some things further away, chairs and tables were undamaged. But he couldn't tell how the matter stood and whether any of my wardrobe and shoes which I stuck in pillow slips are preserved or unlooted. Evidently ghouls gave the place an overhauling and it wouldn't surprise me if the buried silver and other valuables had been ransacked and carried off. So far I have only saved what I carried on my body. It rained heavy last night, which must have spoiled many things in case they had been saved. Maury says a desperate spirit of energy prevails. He predicts the younger people will build up the City again, if possible better and in some ways superior. They have cleared Market Street from debris and a few old horse-cars are running. The Banks can not let their interests drop, they must back them up, else the loss in Real Estate will wipe them out completely.

I must close this letter. I telegraphed to our agents: "Business total loss, suspend operations." There was about \$200 in the safe and Schild gave me one-half and he kept the other half. But Maury and Carl didn't have anything ... so things are running rather close.

The family keeps up strongly and bears up well under the heavy strain. Fannie and my children try to arouse my vanishing energy and do everything to restore the confidence in my own ability to assist in the restoration of anything like a semblance of order in our affairs. Still, my thoughts will not cement sufficiently to brace my broken heart. All I can do—I will try for my children's and for my faithful wife's end, for my family's sake. I may and you may find friends to help us. For pity sake let them be generous and do it. The family sends their love to you—all they are able to give at the present time. Let the tie of mutual responsibility hold us together. May the spirit of our progenitors sustain us and strengthen our character to perform our duties towards each other with indulgence and kindness, with love and pity for the sufferings we now see plainly before us.

Your brother,
CARL

NOTES

1. Sons of Charles Bundschu, the letter writer. Charles (Carl) E. Bundschu (1878-1947) was listed in the 1905 Crocker-Langley Directory of San Francisco as "Clerk, Gundlach-Bundschu Wine Co." Walter was listed as a "Clerk, A. Schilling & Co." (wholesale dealer in coffee, tea, and spices). Charles E. would become active in the re-organized California Board of State Viticultural Commissioners (1916).
2. After some 30 years at their 2nd and Market Street location, the firm moved to their new quarters at 434-444 Bryant Street, between 3rd and 4th streets, only a few years before the earthquake.
3. Edward T. Schild (married to one of Jacob Gundlach's daughters) was the Cashier of Gundlach-Bundschu Wine Co.
4. The majestic Kohler & Frohling building (offices, wine cellars and depot), built in 1890, was located on the NW corner of 2nd and Folsom streets. Upon the formation of the California Wine Association in 1894, this building served as the Association's first headquarters. It was almost totally destroyed in the earthquake's fiery aftermath. The August Schilling & Co. building was catercorner to the K & F building.
5. 245 Chestnut Street. See also Note #10.
6. This would be Frederick Hess, publisher of the San Francisco Demokrat, who lived at 821 California Street. In 1898 Hess had built a small winery on Howell Mountain above St. Helena.
7. Heini (Henry) Gundlach, son of Jacob Gundlach, was Secretary, Gundlach-Bundschu Wine Co.
8. Maury Sims was a brother-in-law of Charles Bundschu.
9. Abe Ruef (1864-1936) was a powerful and corrupt political leader in San Francisco.
10. Since 1875 (the earliest San Francisco Directory available) the Jacob Gundlach family residence was at 125 Chestnut Street. Here Charles Bundschu and his bride also resided. In 1897, following the death of Jacob Gundlach, the residence of Charles Bundschu, his children, and Henry Gundlach, was 245 Chestnut Street. Carl Gundlach was living in New York, the Manager of the Gundlach-Bundschu Wine Co. office there.
11. Carl Dresel was the son of Julius Dresel (1816-1891) and the nephew of Emil Dresel (d.1869), founder of Rhinefarm Vineyards in Sonoma City in 1858. In 1906 Carl Dresel was manager of the Sonoma family wine estate.

Gundlach Bundschu Wine Co.

San Francisco New York

We have largely increased our facilities for storing, handling, maturing and shipping our products. We have added considerable space, and our accommodations in our new "Bacchus Cellars" are simply perfect, and our California Wines and Brandies are as choice and well selected as ever. Give us a call!

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New York Office and Cellars:
Cor. Watts and Washington Sts.

TEMPORARY OFFICE

RHINEFARM, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

[Post-Earthquake ad in the
Pacific Wine & Spirit Review,
May 1906]



NEWS & NOTES



Welcome, new Tendrils! ■ **Jerrold Mitchell** (jjwm@comcast.net), a former Tendril subscriber who, with some 25 years of experience, has found a renewed interest in wine book collecting. We also welcome back **Heidi Congalton** (heidi@betweenthecovers.com), whose collecting passion was recently re-energized when some noble wine books came her way (see notice below). We thank Tendrils **Nina Wemyss** and **Warren Johnson** for introducing three budding, enthusiastic collectors, **Larry Durham** (lkdurham@austin.rr.com), **James Pierog** (lpierog@aol.com), and **Margaux Pierog** (margauxpierog@hotmail.com)

FIVE-YEAR WT-Q INDEX

A cumulative index for the years 2001 – 2005 (Vol.11 – Vol.15) is enclosed. You will find an Author Index, Subject Index, and an alphabetical index of Books Noted/Reviewed. Your editor sends her sincerest and Tendril-est appreciation to all members who have contributed to make our *Quarterly* a notable addition to the literature of wine. A toast to all!

FINE WINE BOOK LIBRARY ONLINE

Tom Congalton, knowledgeable proprietor of Between the Covers Rare Books in New Jersey, has informed us of the recent acquisition of the wine book collection of Tendril **Jim Gabler**. Check out their website—betweenthecovers.com—there are many desirable titles listed, most with cover illustrations provided.

"UNCORKED!"

Wine: A Life Uncorked by Hugh Johnson is a splendid read—our resident critic puts this book at the top of the list for 2005! The first non-encyclopaedic book in a long time from this celebrated wine author is "peppered with personal anecdotes and infused with his sheer delight in his subject. Through his experiences he imparts knowledge, and without realising it, the reader becomes drawn into an arcane and fascinating world of wine." (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005. 383 pp., delightfully illustrated; hardbound. \$35. Available in the U.S. Spring 2006.)

A CASK OF AMONTILLADO

A very lovely printing of Edgar Allen Poe's delicious horror tale, *A Cask of Amontillado*, has been done in miniature (2½"x2") by J. & J. Sobota, Czech Republic. It was designed, published, and bound in an extraordinary leather binding, hand-numbered and signed by Jarmila Sobota in an edition of only 20 copies. The book, housed in a velvet-lined box, won the 2005 Distinguished Book Award at the Miniature Book Exhibition of the Miniature Book Society. \$280 + \$10 Air Mail shipping to the U.S. Their website has full

details and images of the book: www.jsobota.cz. As far as your editor is aware, this is only the third separate printing of Poe's classic tale, and two have been in miniature. In 1981 Bromer Booksellers (Boston) published a 2½"x2" version printed by the Amaranth Press in an edition of 150 copies. In 1904 Blue Sky Press (Chicago) printed 300 copies on hand-made Van Gelder paper (5¼"x4½") as one of their Pageant Series I. Let us know if anyone knows of others!

MANUAL FOR BOOK LOVERS

The Care and Feeding of Books Old and New: A Simple Repair Manual for Book Lovers by Margot Rosenberg and Bern Marcowitz (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2002. 190 pp., p.b., \$14). This is a most entertaining, down-to-earth, useful manual on book care. The authors, proprietors of Dog Lovers Bookshop in New York, credit their years of caring for all kinds of dogs to their approach to book care: simple and loving. The Contents include: Friends of Books, Enemies of Books, Cleaning, Repairing, How to Handle & House Books, Reflecting on Books, Glossary, Suppliers, Internet Miscellany, Index. Their advice on "Home-made Book Weights" — "We don't recommend that dogs moonlight as book weights, but when they do, check that the dog's weight is evenly distributed over the book. But only if in so doing, you do not disturb the dog."

NEW RESEARCH STUDY

Gustav Eisen, Wilderness Steward: An Appraisal by Allan Shields. Unpublished documentary, 2005. This is a newly researched study of the life of Gustav Eisen (1847-1940). He was a man of many achievements, one for whom a full biographical study remains to be written. Eisen is best known in the Fresno, California, area for his extensive experimental work with over 400 varieties of grapes: table, wine, and raisin. He has been called a horticulturist, biologist, zoologist, artist and illustrator, archaeologist, viticulturist, enologist, arborist, microbiologist, cartographer, explorer, professional photographer, and an ardent preservationist—environmentalist.

Eisen is credited with fostering the development of the avocado, with writing the definitive book on the raisin industry, a parallel work on the fig, and was instrumental in fostering the industry in California. He was a co-discoverer of the cause of malaria. By any accurate study of the historical facts in the case, he was a signal advocate for establishing the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, as well as the Sequoia National Forest and the General Grant National Park. From 1874 to 1940, he was an active member of the California Academy of Sciences. After his retirement about 1915, he produced more solid work in a variety of fields than most men produce over a lifetime.

— continued on p.8

GENE FORD [1927–2005] : IN MEMORIAM

by
Hudson Cattell

[In our previous issue we had a short notice of the death of Gene Ford. The following fitting tribute is from the September/October 2005 issue of *Wine East*. — Ed.]

Gene Ford, one of the foremost proponents of moderate and responsible drinking, died on June 10 [2005] in Seattle, Washington, as the result of complications from heart surgery. He was 77.

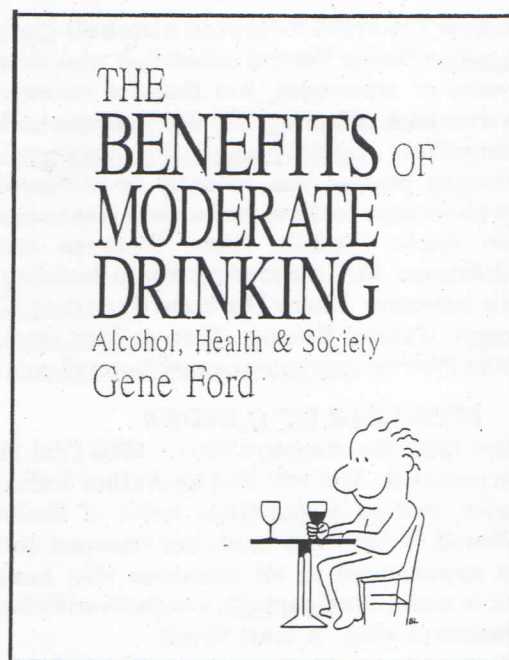
In his journal, *The Moderation Reader*, which he published from 1987 to 1994, and in his many books, he dealt with the medical and therapeutic aspects of moderate drinking, the tactics and agendas of today's Neo-Prohibitionist activities, the anti-alcohol government influence on funding research and its outcomes, and many other alcohol-related political and social topics. His last book, *The Science of Healthy Drinking*, published in 2003, evaluated the benefits of healthy drinking for thirty different diseases or social conditions, and his insistence on accuracy led him to include 700 citations in these thirty chapters. In all, the last 87 pages of the book contained approximately 1,400 references from contemporary professional journals, medical journals and other media for the benefit of interested physicians, researchers and journalists.

Gene began his career as a fund raiser at Columbia University and later spent seventeen years as marketing and sales executive for The Christian Brothers Winery. He lectured for 14 years in the School of Hotel-Restaurant Administration at Washington State University. For many years he was a member of the National Speakers Association providing lectures and seminars on all aspects of licensed beverages and the Neo-Prohibitionist movement. In 1978 he wrote a college textbook, *Ford's Illustrated Guide to Wines, Brews, and Spirits*, and before that produced a syndicated newspaper feature called "The Wine & Spirit Uncomplicator," and a series of audiotapes on wines, brews and spirits of the world.

The Moderation Reader was started in January 1987 as a four-page protest paper, but two years later, after soliciting advertising support from the industry it grew into a 48-page bimonthly journal with a circulation of 18,000 worldwide. His adherence to high standards of scientific and objective reporting made the journal one that was requested by people who wanted facts. As the journal was growing, Gene wrote several other books including *The French Paradox & Drinking for Health* in 1993.

Throughout his career, Gene Ford's commitment to the cause of moderate drinking and the health benefits of wine was complete. His role in securing acceptance

of responsible drinking in American life has been unmatched by a journalist in our time.



EDITOR NOTE: James Gabler's bibliography, *Wine Into Words* (2nd edition, 2004), lists six titles by Ford. We list them here in chronological order.

1980. *Ford's ABC's of Wines, Brews and Spirits*. Seattle: Murray. 128 pp. (Subsequent editions.)

1983. *Ford's Illustrated Guide to Wines, Brews, and Spirits*. Dubuque, IO: Wm C. Brown. 377 pp.

1988. *The Benefits of Moderate Drinking: Alcohol, Health & Society*. San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild. 337 pp. (Reissued in 2001.)

1990. *Drinking and Health: The Good News, the Bad News, and the Propaganda*. San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild. 128 pp.

1993. *The French Paradox & Drinking for Health*. San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild. 288 pp.

2003. *The Science of Healthy Drinking*. San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild. 460 pp. (A sequel to *Drinking and Health*, 1990.)

NEWS & NOTES, cont. from p.7 —

This study contains a detailed Chronology of Eisen's life and works, an extensive Bibliography, and suggestions for further research, especially in Sweden. Copies have been deposited in the Bancroft Library; California Academy of Sciences, Eisen Archive; Museum, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park; and the California History Room, Fresno Free Library, Fresno, California. ■

ROMAN NUMERALS DECIPHERED !!

[A fellow Tendril, puzzled over the Roman numerals dating an early book recently acquired, asked if we had ever printed an explanation in our *Quarterly* of these sometimes mysterious characters. We are happy to reprint the following article from our October 1995 issue (Vol.5 #4). — Ed.]

In his very interesting, informative, and well-illustrated *The American Printer: A Manual of Typography* (Philadelphia, 1889, 17th ed.), Thomas MacKellar, PhD., gives this explanation of the evolution of Roman numerals:

It has been supposed that the Romans used M to denote 1000 because it is the first letter of Mille, which is Latin for 1000; and C to denote 100, it being the first letter of Centum, the Latin term for 100. Some also suppose that D, being formed by dividing the old M in the middle, was therefore appointed to stand for 500, that is, half as much as the M stood for when it was whole; and that L being half a C was, for the same reason, used to denominate 50. But the most natural account of the matter appears to be this:

The Romans probably put down a single stroke, I, for one, as is still the practice of those who score on a slate, or with chalk; this stroke they doubled, trebled, and quadrupled, to express two, three, and four: thus, II, III, IIII. So far they could easily number the strokes with a glance of the eye; but they found that if more were added it would be necessary to count the strokes one by one: for this reason, when they came to five, it was expressed by joining two strokes together in an acute angle, thus, V.

After they had made this acute angle, V, for five, they then added single strokes to the number of four, thus, VI, VII, VIII, and then, as the strokes could not be further multiplied without confusion, they doubled their acute angle by prolonging the two lines beyond their intersection, thus, X, to denote two fives, or ten. After they had doubled, trebled, and quadrupled this double acute angle, thus, XX, XXX, XXXX, they then, for the same reason which induced them to make a single angle first, and then to double it, joined two single strokes in another form and, instead of an acute angle, made a right angle, L, to denote fifty. When this was doubled, they then doubled the right angle, thus, C to denote one hundred, and, having numbered this double right angle four times, thus, CC, CCC, CCCC, when they came to the fifth number, as before, they reverted it, and put a single stroke before it, thus, I C, to denote five hundred; and, when this five hundred was doubled, then they also doubled their double right angle, setting two double right angles opposite to each other, with a single stroke between them, thus, C I C, to denote one thousand;

when this note for one thousand had been repeated four times, they then put down I C C C for five thousand, C C I C C for ten thousand, and I C C C for fifty thousand.

The corners of the angles being cut off by transcribers for despatch, these figures were gradually brought into what are now called numerical letters. When the corners of C I C were made round, it stood thus, C I C, which is so near the Gothic M that it soon deviated into that character; so that I C having the corners made round stood thus, I C, and then easily deviated into D. C also became a plain C by the same means: the single rectangle, which denoted fifty, was, without any alteration, a capital L; the double acute angle was an X; the single acute angle, a V; and a plain single stroke, the letter I. And thus these seven letters, M, D, C, L, X, V, I, became numerals. As a further proof of this assertion, let it be considered that C I C is still used for one thousand, and I C for five hundred, instead of M and D; and this mark, M, is sometimes used to denote one thousand, which may easily be derived from this figure, C I C, but cannot be deviations from, or corruptions of, the Roman letter M. The Romans also expressed any number of thousands by a line drawn over any numeral less than one thousand: thus, V̄ denotes five thousand, LX̄ sixty thousand; so, likewise, M̄ is one million, MM̄ two millions, &c.

Upon the discovery of printing, and before capitals were invented, small letters served for numerals; not only when Gothic characters were in vogue, but when Roman had become the prevailing character. Thus, in early times, i v x l c d m were, and in Roman type are still, of the same signification as capitals when used as numerals. Though the capital J is not a numeral letter, yet the lower-case j is as often and as significantly used as the vowel i, especially where the former is employed as a closing letter, in ij iij vj vij viij dcij &c. In Roman lower-case numerals, the j is not regarded, but the i stands for figure I wherever it is used numerically.

During the existence of the French Republic, books were dated in France from the first year of the Republic: thus, An.XII (1803), or twelve years from 1792.



"Good as it is to inherit a library,
it is better to collect one."

— AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

NOTES FROM A DEPLETED LIBRARY

by
Christopher Fielden

[We enjoy another book review session with our English Tendril friend and veteran wine author (The Wines of Argentina, Chile, and Latin America and Exploring the World of Wines & Spirits are two of his latest). He seems to be replenishing in fine fashion his "depleted" library...a 30-year collection that he donated to the Institute of Masters of Wine in 2003. — Ed.]

The editor says that she relies on me to introduce books from the wilder shores of the wine world, so I hope not to disappoint her.

"...infuriating..."

Du Haut d'une Bretèche by Michel de Bustros. Beirut: Editions Dar An-Nahar, 2002.

The title of this book might be loosely translated as "Looking down from the Battlements" and is the story of the creation of the winery Château Kefraya in Lebanon, during the middle of that country's civil war. The author is the creator himself, and in many ways I wish that he had stuck to winemaking.

As a book on wine it is infuriating. As far as I can recall, nowhere does he mention even what grape varieties he planted. As a history it is infuriating: a number of the major characters are given code-names, which might mean something to a Lebanese reader, but they mean nothing to me. He suggests that the winery was forcibly taken over during the Civil War, but he does not say by whom. By reading elsewhere, I discover that the "purchaser" was Walid Jumblatt, the Druze leader. The author was kept on as General Manager, but resigned on three separate occasions, only to be brought back. As he seems to have spent more time in Paris and in conducting other affairs in Lebanon than in running the winery, one can only now wonder at the acknowledged commercial success of the wines, though this has no doubt been helped by Parker's liking for their prestige wine Comte de M.

M. de Butros is an inveterate name-dropper and the book is full of stories, and photographs, of the famous that he has wine and dined at the winery. Sadly, most of these names are now well-worn. However there is a double anecdote that I like, of a dinner that he had with the Rothschilds in France. (Sadly he does not make clear as to which branch of the family he is referring.) Apparently, both the wine and the food had been in very short supply. At the end of the meal, M. la Baronne said to one of the guests, "I hope that you can come again for dinner. When will that be?" "Straightaway," was the reply. Also, during the meal, there was a moment of silence. "An angel must be passing," a guest said. "Catch it quickly. At least we shall have something to eat," replied her neighbour.

"... a useful addition to your library..."

Antiguas Bodegas del Uruguay by Estela de Frutos and Javier Pastoriza. Montevideo: JIGG Ediciones, 2004.

In some ways Uruguay is the forgotten wine-producing country of South America. Compared to Argentina and Chile, and even Brazil, its production is small and the industry lacks the financial resources, and the wine, to make a major impact on the world wine market. Its industry, too, is comparatively recent, with the oldest existing bodega La Cruz, being founded in 1887.

This book, which is written in both Spanish and English, gives profiles of eleven of the companies—indeed, one of the authors, Estela de Frutos is also the wine-maker at one of them, Los Cerros de San Juan. The selection of the eleven is interesting, in that one of them Calvinor, which was founded as recently as 1975, in a bid to find alternative employment after the collapse of the sugar industry in Bella Unión in the north-west of the country, is now itself verging on collapse. On the other hand, some of the younger, more vibrant companies do not rate a mention.

It is interesting to compare the profiles of the various companies and to see how some of them are apparently past their commercial peak, whilst others seem to be expanding. There is also much useful information about the history of wine in the country. The book also has many good colour illustrations. For the student of the wines of South America, this is an useful addition to your library.

"... apple trees and wayward tendrils..."

Calvados—The Worlds Premier Apple Brandy. Tasting, Facts and Travel by Henrik Mattson. Flavourrider.com., 2004.

I suppose it is stretching things somewhat to relate apple-trees to wayward tendrils of vines, but Calvados is the only non-grape spirit in France to be part of the A.O.C. system and, for the English traveler in France, the *Route du Cidre* is a useful test run, before driving further south to join the wide range of wine routes in the country.

Henrik Mattson is a Swedish chef, who now writes about spirits, wine and food. Together with his father he has developed a love for Normandy and its produce. Yet again, this is a book full of wonderful photographs and intriguing information. I am sure that there are few who will know that almost as much Calvados has pears as a base as has apples, or the forty-eight different apples that are grown in Normandy to give cider and calva!

As well as detailed notes on production and the different methods of distillation, there is a list of contact details for all the producers (whether they sell internationally or just at the farm-gate) and even

mention of producers elsewhere of apple-brandy, or applejack.

As far as I know this is the only book in English on the subject. Finding and filling a niche satisfactorily is not easy. Mattson père et fils have achieved this with a book that is easier to dip into, than to read from cover to cover.

“... O that life were still so simple!”

An Alphabet for Gourmets by M.F.K. Fisher. London: The Folio Society, 2005.

This book first appeared in 1949, but the Folio Society has just brought out a handsome new edition, with illustrations by Ian Beck and an introduction by Paul Levy. This is a book of its time—and wine seems then to have played only a minor role in the life of the American gourmet.

D is for Dining Out—but when taking out a Very Important Person she can only select Louis Martini Gamay Rosé to accompany a rack of lamb and selection of cheeses.

G is for Gluttony: “Perhaps the nearest I come to gluttony is with wine. As often as possible, when a really beautiful bottle is before me, I drink all I can of it, even when I know that I have had more than I want physically. That is gluttonous.”

H is for Happiness: “Then, and this is the part I best remember, we had carafes of a rosé wine that was believed to be at its peak, its consummateness, in Berne, and indeed in that very room. Zizerser it was called. It came in the open café pitchers with the Federal mark at the top, naming the liquid content. It was a gay frivolous colour. It was poured into fine glasses (they were one of the many good things about that casino) from a height of two feet or so, and miracle! It foamed! It bubbled. It was full of a magic gas, that wine, which melted out of it with every inch of altitude it lost, so that when I took down a case of it and proudly poured it lake-side at Vevey, it was merely a pink pretty drink, flat as flat. In Berne it was champagne. We drank deep.”

O, that life were still so simple!

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JUST PUBLISHED !!

An Evening with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Dinner, Wine, and Conversation

by James Gabler (Bacchus Press) is being released on January 17th 2006, the 300th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin. This is another masterpiece from the author of *Wine into Words: A History & Bibliography of Wine Books in the English Language* (2nded, 2004) and *Pas-sions: The Wines and Travels of Thomas Jefferson* (1995). Gabler confesses to his historical passion in his Preface: “I am sure that many of us have had secret fantasies about sharing some part of history with the people who were actually there. Over the years my fantasy has been to have dinner with my two favorite Founding Fathers—Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, and that is how *An Evening with...* evolved. In this fictional but fact-based account, you are taken back in time to 18th century Paris ... In the comfort of Jefferson’s Paris residence on the Champs-Élysées, you sit down with these two great Americans, and in response to your questions, they tell you in *their own words* the most interesting stories of their lives ... [they] discuss their early years, their embarrassments, disappointments and intrigues, the women in their lives, the calumny and slander they suffered at the hands of their political enemies ... their opinions of George Washington, John Adams, John Paul Jones, Marquis de Lafayette, and others. ...[And] you hear Jefferson tell why the world’s most expensive bottle of wine engraved with his initials was never owned by him....” Illustrated, 334 pages, with Bibliography and Works Consulted, Source Notes, Appendices, and Index. Available at all bookstores through the Ingram Book Co. and at Amazon.com. \$29.95. For those who would like a signed copy, contact Jim directly at bacchuspr@aol.com (Bacchus Press Ltd., 203 Royal Poinciana Way, Ste.E, Palm Beach, FL 33480)—he will be happy to inscribe your copy and Bacchus will pay media shipping costs.

MAKING MANY WINE BOOKS

by
Valmai Hankel

[Our Aussie wine historian and retired Rare Books Librarian—after some 43 years at the State Library of South Australia, where she developed the library's wine collection into one of the world's largest—has graced our *Quarterly* with her writings on the literature of wine on a number of occasions. We welcome this latest, expressing her “down-under” view of Gabler's updated bibliography, *Wine Into Words*. A version of this article was first published in *The Australian & New Zealand Wine Industry Journal* (May/June 2005) and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the publisher. — Ed.]

Of making many [wine] books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Ecclesiastes xii, 12



he indefatigable American scholar James Gabler would surely have agreed with these sentiments when he published the 2nd edition of his mammoth work, *Wine into Words* (Bacchus Press, 2004).

When *Wine into Words. A History and Bibliography of*

Wine Books in the English Language was first published, in 1985, it contained over 3,200 entries (mainly books and pamphlets with some magazine articles) and 120,000 words, plus indexes. The second edition is more than twice as big, with some 7,800 entries and over 300,000 words. Gabler says with disarming honesty that he was “surprised and chagrined to learn of the large number of entries I missed the first time around” (about 1,000). Even so, that still leaves a staggering total of about 3,600 books in English on wine published in the last 18 years. In other words, about as many books on wine in English were published from 1985 to 2003 as appeared in the previous 417 years. And there are probably as many again published in French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Chinese It all fits in with the wine bibber's increased demand for knowledge, as the growth of wine magazines, newspaper columns on wine, lengthy back labels, wine appreciation courses, wine clubs and internet information also testifies.

Browsing through a list of old wine books may not be everyone's glass of Grange, but it's certainly mine. It's not just because I'm fascinated by the history and literature of wine that I find *Wine into Words* such compelling browsing. While not many people will want to sit down and read its 500 pages from cover to cover, that's how the book's

Introduction writer, Dr Kevin Starr, State Librarian of California, approached it. I found that one reference leads you to another, and I jumped all over the place like a wine fly, renewing acquaintance with old friends, meeting new ones, being entertained, informed, or horrified. For instance, in the entry for *A Tread of Grapes: The Autovinography of a Wine Lover* by Edward Ott (1982) Gabler tells us about an unconventional method of *pigeage*, “a routine carried out by the monks in the olden days, when on three occasions during fermentation, the monks jumped naked into the vats to stir up the grape skins. According to Mr Ott ‘it was the only occasion in the year when the monks had a bath and for many years after this unhygienic stirring was abandoned it was said that a real Burgundy expert could declare by the taste whether a wine was pre or post *Pigeage*.’” Occasionally Gabler adds his own aside. On Charles Tovey in his *Wine and Wine Countries* (1862) he comments: “His love of Claret is best expressed through his recommendation (morning joggers are you listening?) that ‘those who take exercise before breakfast ... would find one-third or half a bottle of light Medoc diluted with water far more invigorating than warm tea or coffee.’”

The first book in English solely on wine was *A New Booke of the Natures and Properties of All Wines that are Commonly used here in England* by William Turner, a physician, botanist and scientist, published in London in 1568. Only eight copies are known to exist. Thus, as Gabler points out, it is much rarer than Johann Gutenberg's *Bible* (acclaimed as the first book printed in Europe with moveable type, in 1455), of which 52 copies are known.

There is plenty to interest Australian and New Zealand readers, including a masterly and informative Foreword by Bryce Rankine. Inevitably, my critical attention turned to the Australian coverage. I was startled at the mention in Dr Starr's Introduction of Walter James as one of “the founders and giants of viticulture and wine in Australia” along with “Thomas Hardy, Alexander Kelly, James Busby, ... and the contemporaries Len Evans and James Halliday.” Great writer that he was, James was hardly a “founder and giant,” and I suspect that his ghost would be embarrassed to be considered in the same breath as those nineteenth-century worthies. It seems a piece of one-upmanship to report the omission of a couple of Australian wine books, one of them the substantial *Mining, Medicine and Winemaking. A History of the Angove Family 1886-1986* by Geoffrey C. Bishop (1986). There is at least one Australian clanger. Under “Bertolli” we read that “Bertolli is an Australian winery particularly well known for sweet wines made from

the Sémillon grape." I doubt if the De Bortoli family will appreciate being confused with olive oil. And I would query the statement that the John Fornachon Memorial Library at the Australian Wine Research Institute "holds the largest collection of wine literature in Australia." It doubtless holds the largest collection of wine *technical* literature, but I believe the State Library of South Australia's collection is bigger.

Arranged alphabetically by author, *Wine into Words* lists and sometimes describes its 8000 items. For many better-known, important or especially prolific writers there are lively, fresh, useful biographical sketches, usually brief. All varieties of material are grist to Gabler's mill, from technical reports (apparently selective, at least for Australian reports) to novels, verse and songs, and everything in-between. But he says, "The bibliography is not selective. If a book is primarily about wine, or adds significantly to wine literature it has been included. In addition, if a wine booklet or broadside was listed in a library collection, it has been included here." He has added "thousands of historical annotations covering everything wine has touched: art, literature, music, history, food, winemaking, grape growing, poetry, politics, religion, war—the entire fabric of human life." Some books are included because of "their historical association with wine and their importance to wine literature," such as Fitzgerald's famous translation of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam—but not, as far as I can see, the *Bible*, or Shakespeare. Gabler's passion for Thomas Jefferson allows him to devote some three pages to the American President and to his interest in wine—all fascinating and very readable. The biographies and the annotations are what make the work so readable, and so much more than a mere list.

Anyone who has ever tried to compile a bibliography will know that it is virtually impossible to be both complete and without error. As Dr Kevin Starr says: "no comparable form of research is as exhaustive and demanding as bibliography is. Why is this? Because bibliography is motivated by an ideal of comprehensive perfection that is, alas, impossible to achieve." Wisely, Gabler points out that his bibliography "does not claim to be complete... Despite my best efforts to include all books that contribute to the aura, mystery and interest of wine, some titles have escaped. It is, however, as complete as I could possibly make it."

Bibliographies are much easier to criticize than to construct. I have some carping criticisms—about the layout, a few typos, some missing dates. And the Subject Index which has been added to this edition, while helpful, is not easy to use because it refers the reader to a page number, on which there may be

some twenty items, through which you must trawl to find the specific reference. As Gabler has given every entry a unique number, I wonder why these were not used, as they have been in the Short Title Index.

Who should buy this weighty tome and why? Certainly anyone who collects English language wine books in any depth. Here you will find all titles and all editions by an author, so that you know what to look for to complete your collection of books by Australians such as François de Castella or Walter James, or by Hugh Johnson or Jancis Robinson, or the great and prolific André L. Simon, or all publications about Seppeltsfield, for instance. Bryce Rankine in his Foreword gives another reason: "One relevant Australian characteristic is the growth of hundreds of small wineries with their accompanying vineyards, planted to classical European grape varieties. Some of these incidentally have been established on land hitherto not ever before planted to vines. These and other endeavours both need and devour information, and it is here as well as elsewhere that James Gabler's second edition will clearly be in demand." He concludes with the belief that *Wine into Words* "will prove to be a key reference to the world of wine, and particularly to the growing number of new grapegrowers and winemakers for whom it will be a unique source of knowledge."

I cannot recommend this handsome book too highly. Complemented by a fine muscat, it's the perfect browsing companion over many winter evenings. It would make an excellent gift for the wine-lover who has everything.



EDITOR NOTE: I recently received a copy of the 2005 issue of *Bibliofile* (Volume 11 No.3, August 2005), published by the Friends of the State Library of South Australia. This handsome, well-illustrated, 36-page issue is devoted to wine, with several noteworthy articles, including "André L. Simon: Man of Sparkle" by Valmai Hankel; "Learning from History? Viticulture in the Adelaide Hills" by Geoffrey Bishop; "A Personal Journey through the State Library's Archival Wine Groups" by Mary Ryan; and "Wine and Music: A Heavenly Debate" by Elizabeth Silsbury. Copies may be had for A\$11. email: friends@slsa.sa.gov.au web: www.slsa.sa.gov.au/friends for membership / subscription information or single issue purchase. While this journal is mainly addressed to an Australian readership, the scholarly, well-written articles should be of great interest to bibliophiles worldwide. The subject of the 2006 *Bibliofile* will be food. ■



BOOKS & BOTTLES

by
Fred McMillin

SIMON SEZ

The Book: *A Wine & Food Bedside Book. Selected from Wine & Food under the Editorship of André L. Simon* by Claude Morny [Secretary of the International Wine & Food Society]. London: IW&FS, 1972. Foreword by H. W. Yoxall. Wood engravings by Yvonne Skargon.

Let's sample a few gems from this 334-page anthology of some seventy Simon-edited articles from the years 1934 to 1962.

■ "Napoleon's Wine and Food at St. Helena" was originally written in French by the reigning king of French cuisine, Antonin Carême (translated here by André Simon). In exile, Napoleon wrote to his mother in Rome asking her to send a French chef who had performed well for some member of their family. She sent her own cook, M. Chandelier, who would be Napoleon's last. But the Emperor would have no feasts: the stern British governor of the remote island of St. Helena did not allow Napoleon to bring in his own food. Instead, the governor kept the best for his own table, and Chef Chandelier had to make do with rejects. Although the text contains no hint of poisoning, the entire diet looks lethal (the flour was "full of sand from defective mill-stones," for example). But Napoleon was allowed to bring in his own wine: wines fit for a king. His inventory on June 1816 showed 240 btls Bordeaux, 60 btls Graves, 30 btls Madeira, 150 btls Teneriffe, 15 btls Champagne, 15 btls Constantia, 630 btls Cape, 180 btls of Beer.

■ "Warsaw Wine" by Antoine Deutschbein relates this Warsaw Wonder: "Shortly after the First World War... I went to a restaurant in Warsaw, Poland, where the amiable proprietor, Henryk Fukier, showed me their few bottles of 'California Wine.' Imagine my surprise when I found they were from the Franciscan missions grown during the Spanish period a century and a half or so ago. The wine was light brown, rather syrupy, resembling a sweet Malaga in taste, and in good condition." I think this wine was the brandy-laced Angelica, made from the Mission grape, that some believe came from Malaga. As to Henryk Fukier, he was a direct descendant of the Fugger banking family

of Augsburg. It was a Bishop Fugger who long ago left Augsburg to visit the Vatican. On his way, he was so charmed by the wine of Montefiascone that he abandoned the trip and settled there. He even established a fund to have some of the wine poured annually over his tomb. (When my wife and I visited the tomb, we asked the date of the annual pouring, and were told, "Oh, we don't do that anymore!" In case you haven't guessed it, the wine is known as Est! Est!! Est!!!.)

■ "The Birth-Pangs of Claret" by H. Warner Allen reveals early instructions from one of the "most conscientious" of London wine shippers to his Bordeaux partner, M. Guestier: "The clarets he shipped, even the first growths, were to be 'helped' or 'made up' with darker, full-bodied Hermitage, and the even stronger, darker Benicarlo and Alicante of Spain. After the 1801 vintage, he writes: '...I think they should be made up very lightly this year. The first and even good second growths with not more than three to four gallons of Spanish wine and about three gallons of Hermitage, and the other wines not to have more than five gallons of Spanish wine.'"

■ André Simon in "But Still the Vine Her Ancient Ruby Yields" reminds us that "Wine...is wholly a gift. The wine that we drink is ours for good: it becomes part of us; it flows in our veins; it brings new life to our heart and new light to our brain, new hope, new courage, new understanding; it liveth again in the kind act it prompteth and the spark of genius it kindleth."

My copy of *A Wine & Bedside Book* is especially treasured—not only for its remarkable reading and insights into wine—but because it was inscribed and given to me by Claude Morny when the IW&FS flew my wife and me from Tehran to London to present a program on Persian food and wine.

The Bottles: Here are some best related-bottles my class has tasted recently.

- Angelica by V. Sattui, Napa Valley.
- Est! Est!! Est!!!, imported by OPICI Co., NJ.
- A Spanish wine good enough for that 1801 Claret: Crianza Rioja, Vina Real, Cune.
- Cabernet Sauvignon must have contributed to Napoleon's Claret: Try Peju, from California.
- For an actual Bordeaux: Ch. Greysac rates well in our tastings and our budget.



Vinaceous Correspondents:
Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles
 The Third Article in a Series / Sixth Section
 by **Barbara Marinacci**

*This is the sixth section of a long article about the wine-focused yet social relationship between California's zealous, quality-promoting vintner Martin Ray and noted UC Davis enologist Maynard A. Amerine. Documentation comes primarily from their written communications in 1954, when the latter was on sabbatical leave in Europe, and includes notes from MR's second wife, Eleanor Ray (author of *Vineyards in the Sky: The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray*). The article itself is part of a continuing series about Martin Ray—the first American winemaker to produce and market pure varietal wines in the period following Repeal, begun during his ownership of the Paul Masson Champagne Co. (1936–1943), and continuing at his own much smaller, eponymous establishment—early precursor to the coming plethora of “boutique” wineries. The quoted material comes from the Martin & Eleanor Ray Papers, housed in Special Collections at UC Davis's Shields Library. Author Barbara Marinacci is Martin Ray's stepdaughter.*

PART III. MARTIN RAY AND MAYNARD AMERINE (1937-1976)

-6-



early February of 1954 Martin Ray sat down at the typewriter to compose a letter to his close friend Maynard Amerine, who had been abroad now for over a month, ensconced in Spain, where he was doing enological research along with exploring the countryside. It would be sent along with the one Eleanor had just written, apologizing for the communication delay and then reporting at length, mostly amusingly, on a dinner party the Rays had recently attended at a San Francisco wine merchant's home, in the company of several cranks. (This story was recounted in the previous issue of WTQ—October 2005.) Not having had the chance recently to converse with Amerine, MR created a marathon five-page letter, in single-space typing. In an early paragraph he said, hinting at ominous news to come later:

We were at John Esquin's, with Dr. Knudsen and his mother and father and your Dr. Luccia [*sic*] the other night, where you were discussed at some length, about which more a little further on. But Luccia did say he had heard from you and that you were now in good shape and that you have in you sufficient of what it takes to put down any attack, either physical or insidious of human origin, this last already referred to [by ER] and shortly to be explained.

But before MR launched his lengthy discourse unveiling an apparent badmouthing conspiracy in the California wine industry against Amerine and his university colleagues, he responded to a comment that MA had made in a postcard (1/31/54) about the availability in Europe of decent *vin ordinaire* and also to his passing remark about Harold Olmo, UC Davis's grapevine breeder: “He and many people do not distinguish between fine wine and wine which is sound and drinkable.”

It is interesting what you say of the table wines. It is not easy to get a good table wine to drink in California, you must always remember. In fact, we dined with Mr. and Mrs. Louis Benoist the other night and had a poor Champagne, a Riesling that had no Riesling flavor in it and a Cabernet that had in it no trace of Cabernet! [2/6/54]

Just seeing Benoist socially would have been a challenging experience in itself. In MR's last three years as proprietor of Paul Masson (1941-43) he'd dealt at times with Benoist as the new, primary owner of the nearby Almaden Winery—mostly in annoyed frustration but also highly suspicious of his and Frank Schoonmaker's motives and actions in attempting to acquire ownership of Masson from him. (This con- niving activity was described in WTQ's April 2004 issue: MR and Julian Street #4.)

Having introduced the scene, MR segued into his coverage of an extraordinary occasion that would interest, and possibly infuriate and agitate, Amerine.

An Industry Plot Against the Absent Enologist?

When the Rays first entered Benoist's home, MR was shocked to find Oliver Goulet there. Goulet had been Almaden's official winemaker for over a dozen years, and Benoist doubtless hoped that Goulet's presence might unnerve Martin, as much of the evening's talk, as reported to MA, would indicate. After MR bought Masson in 1936, he had made Goulet his head cellar man, but jettisoned him right after the old winery burned in July of 1941. Although MR believed he had solid evidence that Goulet had committed arson, he refused to press charges, fearing eventual retribution.

Benoist offered his guests martinis as aperitifs, but of course the Rays, eschewing hard liquor, declined. Instead they accepted the proffered Almaden champagne—awful though they found it. MR told MA the conversation that followed.

He then remarked that we were evidently still on the

Mountain and followed that with a declaration that good wines simply could not be made from Mountain grapes. I let it pass, not understanding how he could make such a statement, although I might have asked him why, then, his labels say, "Mountain Cabernet" etc. Now he told me in Goulet's presence that he had asked Goulet to stay for dinner thinking we would enjoy going over old times together. This, despite the fact he knows I discharged Goulet and never have any contact with him. He even got Eleanor's ear on the side during the early evening and asked her if she knew the story of why I fired Goulet. She said, of course she did. He asked her to tell him what she knew and she told him she would not tell him anything.

Well, that is how we started our evening. He was insulting at every turn but I took it at first and waited.

Finally, though, MR's forbearance ended and his fighting spirit got roused. "We did enjoy some fireworks, however! And that is where you come in!" he exclaimed. Then he disclosed to Maynard the outlines of a nefarious plot afoot.

He said something would have to be done to get rid of you and the Davis crowd who were getting too much influence and especially in judging wines and expressing opinions. He said that you had a dislike of wines from this district [*i.e.*, Santa Clara Valley and its enclosing foothills] and had never at any time said a good word about any wine except one originating in Napa or Sonoma. I told him he was mistaken and mentioned our wines and he said that that story was well known and that it was because we were friends and that Amerine helped only his friends. I told him the story of the [Masson] Cabernet 1936 you liked so much and how you had written to inquire what part of it came from Louis' own vineyard and how I had told you most of the Cabernet was from Almaden. And told him of how you had told this to others and declared that it is the wine you support, regardless of origin and not the grower. I told him I had disagreed with you on many subjects but that I would support you fully as an impartial and the most capable judge of California wines.

To this Louis said you knew nothing of French wines or German wines. He said you never drank anything else but Napa and Sonoma wines and I had a long wrangle with him over this unrelated subject which I mention here because that is a part of something else, as you will see.... As ridiculous as it seems, you must understand that a thing oft enough repeated may become for many [a] fact.

At about this point Goulet spoke up with great feeling and said that you were not competent to judge and none of the other Davis people were. I told him that it was a ridiculous statement to make and he said that at a recent meeting of some committee on which he sits he had made this statement to the group and that he was going to work toward getting all Davis men put out of judging. I

then told Louis that it had been your idea from the beginning to merely get the thing started and then educate the industry to take over. I pointed out the steps already taken but then the both of them challenged even the appointments you had made.... He was furious.

I am not going to try to go into all else that took place, although I will tell you about it when you return...

He laughed at my vintaging wines, said there is not a difference between years. He is obviously blending his varieties to the point they are not varietal. And he is trying to destroy the respect that exists for those who would keep some standards.

Ever since selling Paul Masson to Seagram in 1943, MR had mostly kept quiet—avoiding making strong statements in the public arena while he mostly concentrated on developing his own vineyard property on a mountain just northwest of the "old place," as he called his former home. But that evening at Benoist's, full of venomous debate, along with several other instances of Amerine-bashing, were causing MR to intensify his commitment to advocating the imposition of quality standards in winemaking and wine marketing—even volunteering, surprisingly, to become a proactive, vocal spokesperson who would defend the UC Davis department's honor. As he told MA in that long letter:

I'm tiring of what is going on in the industry. And I refer to that particular part of the industry in which I have been interested. But I see now that someone must meet the threats represented by Paul Masson, Almaden and their like and I intend not to remain silent. In fact, although I have never favored going outside our vineyard to express myself, I am going to have a talk with [Albert] Winkler [longtime chairman of UC Davis's Viticulture and Enology Department] and tell him that if he can place me in any position at any time where I can counter these fellows publicly I will gladly accept the responsibility.

MR also wanted to alert Amerine to other recent verbal assaults against his high reputation as a judge of wines so that he'd realize that malevolent forces were busily at work, determined to undermine his credibility as an impartial judge of wines. So he provided two more stories:

I met [Karl] Oppen ["wine master" at Paul Masson] in the post office. He said, "I see your friend Amerine is in Europe." We talked a few minutes, then he said, "You know, So-and-so tells me that Amerine can not even tell the difference between a Moselle and a Rhinegau." He used the name of their new chemist, son-in-law of some Gheisenheim [*sic*] professor—the chap you asked me to meet and about whom I have heard from Esquin. I said, "This chap said this of Amerine?" And Oppen said, "Well, I was surprised, but you know Amerine knows nothing of French and German wines, he never drinks them and his knowledge is mostly of the Napa and Sonoma wines." I

told him he was mistaken and we argued. But I came to realize it was not his chemist [who] said that. Opper, in my judgement, made up the story.

And at the dinner at Esquin's, Luccia [*sic*; Dr. Salvatore Lucia] said, "Maynard Amerine has done wonderful things for the California wine industry but he seldom drinks French or German wines except as they are served by others. It is a queer thing, but I have never drunk anything but a California wine with Maynard, except at a dinner given by others." At that young Bob [Knudsen] said, "Amerine doesn't know anything about foreign wines. He never drinks them. He drinks only Napa and Sonoma wines and I have found his knowledge of German and French wines to be lacking." Even old Dr. Knudsen spoke up and said he had met you perhaps four times at Davis and each time you spoke only of California wines. Well, there you see what can happen. Your own Friends can join your enemies in cutting you down, if the thing is organized right and if someone doesn't speak up. By God, I spoke up and I made all of them at Esquin's swallow their words. Before the evening was over old Dr. Knudsen had understood why you naturally spoke of California wines at any meeting of Davis or California people. He asked me to have a talk with Bob and put him straight and told me how Bob had gotten off on the wrong foot and how fanatical he is on subjects in which he takes interest. Finally, I told them that you had drunk more French and German wines than all of them put together, I told them the Opper story and the Benoist story and told them it was time they junked the "line" being put out and understood both your ability and background and came to your support. It all ended pleasantly and successfully, as it will elsewhere.

Throughout his career as a winegrower, Martin Ray was not averse to conveying, in talk or letters, similar tales of criticisms and backbiting to those persons who had been maligned or ridiculed in his presence—whether in actuality or in his own skewed view—and then portraying himself as their loyal friend and eloquent defender, as he did here. Tending toward paranoia himself, he was pleased to pass on fearful fixations to others. It is likely, though, that much of what MR reported here to MA was true. If so, it illustrates the extent to which both human relationships, along with the industries that engage people's strong commitments, energy, and expenditures, are apt to be fraught with and affected by skulduggery of many kinds, as well as small-minded personal attacks. It also shows that Martin Ray was hoping to engage Maynard Amerine as his ally in a coming major war against his own adversaries in the California wine industry—who were now emerging as his friend's nasty-behaving foes too. As he said:

Hope this does not upset you[,] Maynard, it need not. [] I want you, however, to understand what is afoot. I want you to realize that certain parts of the industry are bitter

against things you and I stand for. We can manage, if we understand from where comes the attack, how it is being organized and what is intended. I will be active, from now on. But just a little word let drop here and there can be like a pebble thrown into a quiet lake you know. It would be much worse, of course, if no one even spoke of us! At least we are worthy of some effort.

If Amerine commented, at length or briefly—which is likely—to MR on this lengthy coverage of the malignant attacks on him in absentia, that letter is not in the file. Probably MR forwarded it to another person who'd be interested in his reply, but then it wasn't returned. (Other response letters appear to be missing as well.)

As for MR's view of the competence of his and Amerine's most apparent opposition at the time—the men most closely involved with operating Almaden—he was to write this to MA in the following year:

I understand Benoist and Goulet and Schoonmaker are in France traveling through the wine country. One of their friends, Chuck Dilling, told me that they had gone over to try to pick up some dope on wine making! I know of no better way of admitting that they don't even believe themselves that they know what they are doing! Most likely they have come to believe that there is some magic secret to it all, as done abroad.

Mention of this notion that one could do something special to a wine to make it superb then put MR in mind of the ignorant gullibility of that young man, a UC Davis graduate, whose parents had purchased the Ray vineyard property on Mt. Eden a half-dozen years ago so that he could become a winemaker. MR had delighted then in playing an alchemist's role.

Remember Ken Kew and how I told him my secret was the "Magic Elixir" I put in into all my wine? He believed it and finally came to me complaining that he and his dad had bought the place and that he was entitled to know about the "Magic Elixir" and just what it was! I never told him and so far as I know he never knew the joke of it. A newspaper writer friend of Ken's who used to visit here phoned me this week and asked for an interview. He said what he particularly wanted to know is just what it is I put in our wines that makes them different from all others. He said he had never been able to learn this and no one seemed to understand it. I have promised to tell him. Dear me! The middle ages! [5/27/55]

No wonder Martin Ray often grew impatient with people in the wine business—and also the people who talked and wrote about wine. All too frequently whatever they did or said seemed to merit his derision, disdain, or disgust. But as for Maynard Amerine, in his university position he necessarily had to be discreet about what he said and did, for much of his work increasingly involved cordially interacting with a wide number of winemakers and winery proprietors. Let Martin Ray defend him valorously in private

arguments, such as the ones recounted in that long letter.

Soon—in the middle of the following year—MR would leap into militant actions against the California wine industry, hopeful that the ardent quality-promoting Amerine would join him as a comrade-in-arms.

On Wine Experts, Wine Writers, and Their ilk

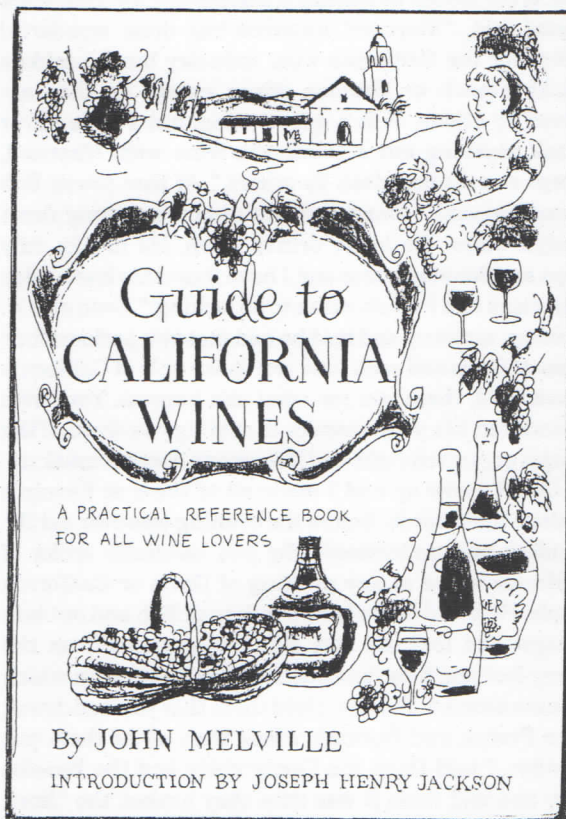
Three months after Amerine had left for Europe, a verbose letter from MR told of a recent visitor already known to his enologist friend.

There was a chap here—[John] Melville—some sort of an ex-Baron and who is writing a book on wines. He is the most persistent fellow I ever had to assist. We asked him to lunch, since he has been after an interview for many months and we have stood him off. During the lunch we could not keep him from a constant reading of his text and taking down notes—thought he would never eat. But I found out he could gulp more food than anyone I ever had at our table. He was a good drinking man but he doesn't know anything about his subject. He was calling Folle Blanche a "soft white wine that comes early to maturity." I gave him a drink of one that has been in the bottle for 12 or 13 years and it sent him scurrying to his copy. He had the idea that Sourvin [*sic*] has the best Pinot possible to make. So I had to tell him he is selling straight Zinfandel as Pinot Noir and I had the unfortunate experience of buying two cases of the same which I gave away in disgust.

Here MR obviously meant Souverain, the Napa winery that Lee Stewart had founded in the 1940s. Aware of its growing reputation for varietal wine quality among connoisseurs, MR would naturally have investigated at least one of its wines. (In a letter to a friend [4/26/60] ER later recounted how MR had sent a bottle to Amerine after removing the label, asking him what he thought it was. "He telephoned that evening saying ... that it was obviously straight Zinfandel and not an especially good one and why did we want to know about it! We told him it was a (Souverain) 'Pinot Noir,' and his reply was simply 'Oh my God!'"

Well, anyway, perhaps he will publish his book and if he does he believes it is because you read over his copy! I saw some of your pencil notes in the margins and I agree with you. Why the hell is it people want to write books on wines when they know almost nothing about which they write[?] This fellow has gotten every grower to help him, it seems. And he is quite good at squeezing out information. But he hasn't the ability to edit what he gets. I edited enough of it, if he listens. But there was so much I did not even see and I gather he has written much since you saw the copy.... Maybe he will become another Frank Schoonmaker—he has enough push if he has enough ambition and if he can sell! [3/20/54]

Toward the end of the year, MR would have amazing news to report to Maynard in Germany about what had happened with Melville's project.



Melville has sold his book. Joe Jackson sent it in to Doubleday and they bought it. I personally saw the letter from Doubleday to Melville and in which they said they were indebted to Joseph Henry Jackson for putting the MS before them. They enclosed a check for \$500.00 as an advance on 10% royalties. Melville was saying that the book could not help but be a success since Dr. Amerine had approved of everything in it. From the way Melville speaks of your aid I dare say it influenced Joe Jackson to lend aid in selling it. And Jackson is to write the introduction. Well, it seems to me that the book should not be published. Melville says in it that our wines are the finest and most expensive wines produced in California and I can not therefore be said to be grieving over his treatment of us. But Melville just doesn't know his wines. But, for all of this, Melville is going to become our agent in Monterey for that peninsula territory.... Wherever I went when down there they spoke of him as a very great authority—Gallatin [a Monterey restaurant owner who had hosted a dinner for the Rays and the Melvilles] said that Melville is a great international authority! It's the damndest thing! Well, if he is such an authority he can perhaps sell some wines. He already represents Beaulieu and various other(s).... But Eleanor almost had a stroke, I think, when she read some of the

Melville MS and then found Doubleday had gobbled it up on Jacksons recommendation. Melville told us, without the slightest qualification that he is the greatest American authority on wines. He said, "Schoonmaker knows nothing. Julian Street knew nothing. Lichine knows nothing. I have made a long study of wines and I am now ready to invade the national publications and take over the position now held by Schoonmaker in the writing for the slick publications." When we met Melville a few months back he had not acquired this self esteem to such a degree. But he has it now. It will be interesting to see how far he succeeds. I believe he possibly has the greatest brass and uncontrolled [*sic*] ego I have ever known, but such ignorance! He is now at work on writing a vintage list for California wines, of all things. Frank S [Schoonmaker] is very wrong when he says there are not vintage years in California but he would be very correct to say that there are not vintages wines outside a very few exceptional cases. Growers blend for uniformity and make such a thing as a vintage chart ridiculous. I can show you as wide a range in wines in our cellars as you might expect in any French cellar. And I have sold grapes to Martini when I would not even think to crush them myself (1940) because it commenced [*sic*] raining and never stopped. But most growers will continue to blend out the vintage differences. [11/27/54]

In response, Amerine sent off from Germany a quick reply on an airmailed postcard.

I am appalled at your letter re Melville... [W]e are obligated by UC policy to answer all reasonable requests for information. But as for approving his book—never. But have just talked to [Prof. James F.] Guymon and he and I agree that UC attorney and us (we?) will have to find a formula to protect us. He too gave advice to Melville! [12/4/54]

There would be more about John Melville and his *Guide to California Wines* in the correspondence between MR and Amerine in the months to come, and also in letters from both of the Rays to other people—including Melville himself.

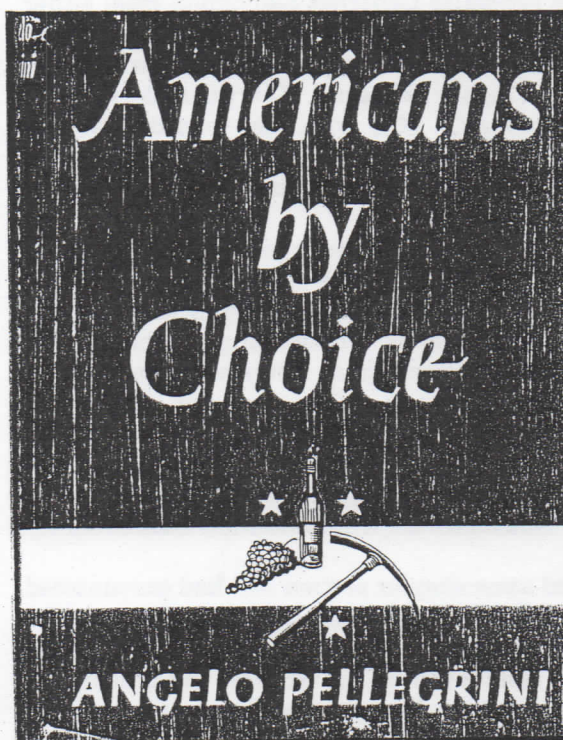
MR also expressed to MA his annoyance that his good friend Angelo ("Pelly") Pellegrini, an English professor at University of Washington, seemed intent, too, upon writing a book about wine.

I am going to try with utmost effort to get Pelly to see that he can't write about wines until he has a knowledge other than limited to his own domestic efforts. God damn it! Why is it that people seem to want to write a book or give speeches on wines almost as soon as they have recovered from their first introduction to wines[?] Just recently a young fellow named Dan Wheeler—oh, yes, you know him—came to us. He really doesn't know anything about wines. This week he phoned us saying that he is giving an address before a philosophical society in Palo Alto on Wines and he wanted to know if we wouldn't like to come! For Christ! [6/27/54]

Writing now from Florence, Amerine told MR that talking to Pellegrini about wine quality was a pointless and hopeless waste of time. (At the time, most Italian wines were shoddily made, and those being made commercially by Italians in the U.S. were mostly bulk wines or extensions of bootleggers' lucrative activities during Prohibition.)

The Pelly story will get worse before it gets better but I admire your courage and fortitude in trying to convert an Italian to the idea that quality exists in wines. Italy is a great storehouse of beautiful art (Florence is full of it) but the Italian thinks of wines as a sort of lubricant for food and Pelly showed that in his first book [*The Unprejudiced Palate*, 1948].... My own idea would be to duck and run if Pelly comes around. Or talk of art, music, nature, heaven or hell, anything but wine or the wine business—and tell him why. He can hardly quote or use you then. [7/12/54]

Then MR complained that Pelly appeared to be drawing alarmingly close to several other California vintners but wouldn't disclose their identities. He suspected, of course, that they were Italian. And when Pellegrini's new book, *Americans by Choice* [Macmillan, 1956] emerged two years later, these winegrowers turned out to be Louis M. Martini and the Mondavi family (centered on its matriarch, Rose) at the Charles Krug winery, and he had devoted whole chapters to them. After MR picked up a copy of the recently published book (by then he was almost alienated from Pelly), he investigated what had been said about Martini, as "The Dean of Winegrowers." He had al-



ways regarded Louis père as a poorly educated, coarse-mannered, crude-talking ex-bootlegger. Now he read a Pellegrini-“recorded” Martini monologue that went like this:

“[To] produce great wines we need men, both in the vineyard and in the cellar. The quality of a superior wine—let us say a Barbera ten years old—derives first of all from the cultivation of the vine. The hoeing and the pruning and the spraying must be properly done. Then comes the harvest. Then the vinification in the cellar. All of these operations are of critical importance. If any one of them is imperfectly done, the quality of the wine is diminished proportionately. Do you see what I mean when I say that to produce a great wine we need men?... “Every winegrower has a few such men working for him.... They are the core in every cellar and in every vineyard. They are the ideal workers. They know what to do and when to do it. They need no one to give them orders. Frequently they give valuable advice to their employer. No one of them carries a watch. They go home when a job is done and not when a whistle blows. In other words, Signor Pellegrini, labor for these men—as indeed for artists—is a way of life. They enjoy what they are doing. When we have a great vintage, they rejoice more than we do.”

Irritably, MR began penciling expressions of outrage in the margins. “These are all my words put in Martini’s mouth and given an Italian twist!” he said, adding, “—only Barbera is never a great wine.” (p.48). Another one was, “Martini blends all his Cabernet with Zinfandel. He admitted to me he can not even recognize Cabernet Sauvignon from either the fruit or vine!” (p.74) And toward the end of that chapter, after reading this sentence on page 75, “You don’t mind, Signor Pellegrini, if I try to make you into a wine master?” MR, with his tolerance totally exhausted, exclaimed, “Wine Master, indeed! No Italian has yet made a great wine—they do not know what great wines are.”

When Eleanor took her turn in reading the Martini profile, she zeroed in on the story about his father’s sending him, at age 19, from San Francisco to Italy in 1906 to learn about winemaking. Although his education had been minimal, Louis was admitted as a “special student” at Alba, “one of the finest oenological and viticultural schools in the world.” ER scribbled this in: “By now they’ve worked this up until he’s a graduate *cum laude* of the University of Milan!!” And for sardonic emphasis she added a smiley face.

In that same chapter section MR had encountered Pelly’s recounting of a scene in which the youthful Louis at the end of the Alba enology course had to pass two tests given by the Master: the first in the laboratory (where he got a perfect score) and the second an organoleptic one. In the latter, he detected

“a slight metallic taste” in the wine but missed, he learned, a “faint smell of twine”—both coming from a house key on a string that the Master had earlier dropped into the barrel and now fished out to show him. Still, he congratulated Louis on his “brilliant performance.” MR declared in disgust, “This is a rehash of an old story. What balderdash to tell it as a true incident! Anyway, Martini’s wines are proof of his tasting ability!” (p.51)

Would there be no end now to the persons who intended to write books about wine and therefore insisted upon bothering him? An exasperated MR complained to Amerine:

I hear Ernie Peninou has published his book [*Wine Making in California*, 2 vols., 1954] and that fellow Melville at Carmel had no trouble selling his book. There are two others that have been after us for material the last few months—understand they, too, [are] bringing out books. Knowing nothing about what they write in some cases and knowing nothing about how to write what they do know, in other cases, makes one wonder. [11/7/54]

Usually MR eventually let wine writers—for periodicals or of books—come up and talk with him, since he wanted, and needed, favorable publicity. By 1954, he was beginning to launch his new line of wines for sales outside the Bay Area. Also, ER would have urged him to make himself agreeably accessible to an interview, in hopes that it would then be published. On such occasions MR might begin by opening a bottle of Champagne and then, when that was consumed, have the visitor sample some of his varietal still wines, whether down in the cellar or even during a meal in the house or out on the veranda on a sunny afternoon. And thereby he usually managed to be a charming, loquacious, even mesmerizing host.

A Patriarchal Vintner

While engaging in his many physical labors in vineyard and cellar, MR often pondered how best to deal with the future of his fledgling wine enterprise. He had long admired the European tradition of perpetually holding a winery and vineyards as a solid heritage within a family. As he had done before at Masson, he pictured himself as having joined a California-based ancestral succession of vintners, albeit not through marriage but by default—assuming the place a son of Paul Masson surely would have taken had there been one. In a statement MR drafted by hand two decades later he proudly stated his qualifications for belonging to a California wine aristocracy.

This “family of wine growers” was established in 1852 and has continued to [be a] dominant factor in the making and marketing of California’s finest varietal wines and champagnes through the now more than 120 years during which succeeding generations of the family

have directed and adheared [*sic*] to the same objectives, standards and procedures.

First, in the family was Etienne Théé. Then came Charles Lefranc who joined the family through marriage to Théé's daughter, Adele. The third generation came into the family in the same manner—Paul Masson, who was Lefranc's right hand man, had joined the family firm in 1878 and married Lefranc's daughter Louis[e]. After Lefranc's death in 1887, Paul Masson headed up the family firm which then became known as Lefranc-Masson until 1892 when Masson changed that name to Paul Masson Champagne Company, as Resident-Owner-Director....

As age overtook Paul Masson, he introduced the fourth generation of this famous family, Martin Ray, his long time protégé. Martin Ray, like each of his family predecessors, brought the quality of their wines and the fame of the family to new peaks of perfection and far flung recognition. Under Martin Ray the wines and the name achieved worldwide recognition and he has continued to maintain the close personal relations with the foremost wine growing families of Burgundy, Bordeaux and Champagne, he and his family visiting back and forth in an international social and wine growing relationship.

(MR always made much of Théé's founding date. In 1941, when he rebuilt the entire interior of fire-ruined Masson winery, he attached a plaque to its stone façade giving the date 1852, thus causing visitors ever since to believe that this was when the old "Mountain Winery" had been constructed—though the actual year was 1906. And when selling Masson to Seagram in 1943, MR retained possession of the original corporate charter, derived from Théé. Therefore MR felt entitled to claim a 100th anniversary for his own 1952 "Centennial" vintages when he released them! Such pretensions always tended to amuse his critics.)

Having recently adopted Eleanor's twin sons, Peter and Barclay, in 1953, when they legally became adults at age 21, MR now was keen on soon starting the production of a new, replacement generation. His grandsons would be the sixth one in line, he figured, coming after Théé. And they would now bear his surname. Judging them self-absorbed and often inconsiderate, he had already begun his campaign to transform them in needed social ways, attributing their faults to their growing up without strong paternal guidance, as well as a tainted heredity from their father, his former friend and estranged business partner. (By 1954 ER's daughter, Barbara, or "Bobo," who had resisted MR's insistent interference in her life, had removed herself totally from the family.)

Like a number of childless people, MR considered himself an expert on childrearing. He drew upon his own childhood experiences, declaring that his widowed mother had utterly spoiled, and thereby ruined, his

two older brothers by indulging their every wish. Fortunately for young Rusty, though, his maternal grandparents—with whom the Ray boys had lived after their father's death in 1910—had been very strict though loving with him. He attributed his later success in life to the work ethic, self-discipline, and appreciation for fine quality that they had instilled in him. He advocated training all children from the very start of their lives—like dogs or, for that matter, grapevines. "You can spoil a puppy or a young human just by letting them get away with things," he remarked to MA. [11/7/54]

MR's letters to Barclay and Peter Ray, and his mentions of them in letters to other people (including Amerine), demonstrate how proud he was not only of their academic accomplishments but also how much he appreciated their helpful labors in wine cellar and vineyard. They also show how he worked hard to influence many facets of their lives with advice, warnings, scoldings, teasing, and motivational messages—the last particularly pushing them toward marriage, though they were only in their early 20s and still in graduate school: Peter at Harvard and Barclay at Caltech.

MR's intense desire to create and perpetuate a family winegrowing dynasty had become an abiding obsession. It was as if he'd deliberately set up a competition between the boys as to which one would marry first—though when either of them courted some girl he judged unsuitable for his purposes, he took swift action calculated to terminate the relationship. He contrived other covert contests as well, such as who deserved the greatest praise either for recent labors in assisting him or for academic accomplishments.

By the summer of 1954 MR felt he had succeeded in remodeling his adopted sons, as shown when he bragged to Maynard about his proven disciplinarian prowess with Stefan von Schorlemer, the young scion of a notable German winegrowing family, whose insouciant, even loutish behavior had greatly annoyed Maynard after he'd enabled him to enroll at Davis. But "Stef" had never even attended class, and instead took his stay in California mostly as a partying, not a learning, opportunity. As MR told MA:

Three and one third years ago our boys would not have made a better impression. They had never had a father or any discipline [*sic*]. And they were headed toward a pretty sad end. In this short time of influence that Eleanor and I have been fortun[ate] to have with them as a unit of Mother and Dad and a big stick to back up correct dicipline they have been made into completely different social beings. It is not by boasting that I say that neither of them would be today either married or engaged as they are but for our influence.

In past years MR had hoped that his nephew Willis

Ray, when out of the Army at the war's end and helping him put in his new vineyards during the mid-1940s, had some potential for future management, though he clearly lacked his uncle's fierce drive, savvy, and sharp intelligence. But then Will had reenlisted. When his tour of duty was over in 1953, he returned to the mountain and MR again had put him to work. Will showed unmistakably now that he was unsuitable not just as MR's successor in his future wine kingdom, but even as a dependable worker. MR described the situation to Amerine.

Will just hasn't it in him to carry on without constant direction. I don't know why it is but he just hasn't his mind on what he is doing, ever. We have been in the south [Los Angeles] twice of late and each time we left him three things to do. We even emphasized the importance. He did none of the things. He was to have watered Eleanor's flowers, hoe and hill up around the St George and adjust the clutch of the Caterpillar [tractor] which was slipping. He let the plants die, he did not hill up around the St. George and he did not adjust the clutch. He said upon our return that he had decided the plants needed watering only once a week and it was not necessary to adjust the clutch. The vines he had forgotten to hill up. You can imagine what it would be like to leave him in charge of the cellar or give him access to it. He doesn't take any better care of his own affairs. [6/27/54]

Eleanor's sons were obviously far more suitable candidates for carrying on Martin Ray's winegrowing legacy. By mid-1954 MR's campaign of intense urging (visible in his letters to them) had propelled both young men, who were then just 22, into engagements to marry. With Peter already scheduled to wed first, Rusty had then persuaded Barclay to fly off to Germany to woo a young German law student he had known only briefly while she was in California—and MR told Maynard how he had given him a quick course in courtship techniques, along with Elsie Ray's diamond engagement ring. Since Barclay would be coming to Germany, Amerine had graciously offered to drive around and introduce him to the winegrowing countryside, still recovering from neglect and damages during WWII. After spending two days with Maynard in mid-September, Barclay wrote home to report in detail on his attentively avuncular attentions, which had possibly enabled him to visit some wine-producing areas he hadn't seen yet. As if teasing them, Barclay saved the news of his successful betrothal for later. En route to California, he stopped off in the Boston area to serve—just in time—as Peter's best man.

In a letter to Peter written soon after his marriage to Margery (Terry) Marsden, an English biologist he'd met at Harvard while getting his Ph.D.—Eleanor explained why MR had been urging both him and Barclay to get engaged and married soon, after

searching for and finding a suitable bride: they should then start making babies. MR sorely regretted now not having had children with Elsie: "His own mistake in the past added up to bitterness, and that is why he wants to leave no word unsaid to you both on the subject." And then—

You can understand, with Rusty crumpled with tiredness as he is, how very much it means to him to have you and Barky now at the point of starting families—as he works it gives him the drive to carry on until such time as grandchildren can take over, just dreaming on it, with fresh hope for the future, making it seem worth while to make the extra effort to finish the job today.... Rusty himself dreams of grandchildren like other men might dream of inheriting a fortune from an uncle, or finding gold in the Yukon! As he works, even when most tired, the thought of future grandchildren urges him on.... And on a night when we're drinking wine out on the veranda, with the day's work finally behind us—when he lifts his glass it's more often than not to those grandchildren who will carry on this place in years to come! [9/27/54]

Pursuing Both Tradition and Innovation

Martin Ray felt ebullient when contemplating his grand design for founding a winemaking family dynasty. However, it was already evident to him that both Eleanor's sons were quite determined to become research scientists and academicians, so that winemaking could only be an avocation for them. Thus he placed his greatest hopes on their future offspring, whom he intended to introduce early to the winegrower's noble art and craft.

And in the meantime, as he had done before, MR proselytized among likely adherents, looking for acolytes to celebrate in his company the Good Life: that inestimable lifestyle made possible through living on the land where fine wine grapes were grown and harvested—concurrently, of course, with imbibing their juices that had been vintaged in the time-honored "classic" manner. MR told how his spiritual forebears in Santa Clara Valley had lived this same way, and his descriptions of the romantic continuity of venerable winemaking to visitors resembled the way he would later portray it in the drafted pronouncement written in the early 1970s, quoted earlier. Having told of his winery's interwoven family origins originating in France, he went on to differentiate his own painstaking, artisan techniques from the other wineries' vast acreages and assembly lines.

Thus, and uniquely, the same pattern has continued to reproduce itself, without any deviation from the methods and policies of the most famous French winegrowers—the same old time-proved methods, for which there is no substitute. The basket press—the identical one brought around the Horn in 1852 by

Etienne Théé—unchanged but for new oak staves (several times over the 120 years) and the addition of stainless steel in replacement of the black iron tube, bands and screw jacket. selective hand picking of the grapes, hand pressing of the must, the use of only small oak casks. Nothing is added, nothing is removed from the 100% varietal fermenting new wines or maturing and aging old wines. There is a ten year backlog of Pinot Noirs and Cabernet Sauvignons aging in bottle and making up the most valuable inventory of such wines in California—each bottle of which is hand decanted into a fresh bottle before leaving the cellars to move into trade. This entire classic method is elsewhere today unknown. With the ever increasing demand for more wines, “new methods” have been introduced of necessity by the big producers—mechanical harvesting, bulk transportation of grapes, chemical treatment and preservative additives and vast fermentations and storage. The chemist has come into his own! The wines produced in such manner and in such scale have never the less produced sound and better wines and at lower consumer costs than the secondary imports now flooding our markets—as evidenced by the great increase in sales of “huge wines,” the gallons and half gallons. But no great wine has yet been made by perennial innovators, experimenters or chemists who would by-pass or “improve” on the original age proven classic methods by which all truly great wines must be made. And such wine grower families as remain in Europe, like the Martin Ray family, look upon their efforts as the greatest possible way of life, not a money making adventure.

MR composed the above statement while still holding onto a fast-fading dream of perpetuating his wine kingdom on Mt. Eden. He continued to declare, even believe, that he was the only winemaker in the U.S. with lofty standards. But its aptness really harked back much earlier, to the 1950s, when his claim to a unique position in fine and “classic” winemaking, on a small scale and requiring hands-on, daily involvement, had been valid. Two decades later, though, Martin Ray’s egotistical tunnel vision blocked much recognition that the many-sided realities of California’s burgeoning wine industry now included small wineries that practiced quality standards for which he had so long agitated, and produced fine wines that were rivaling and even outshining his own vintages, which were increasingly erratic in quality and reception. Most of the new and younger winemakers, however, were using technologically advanced equipment not available to him and applying current research-based knowledge of viticulture and enology that he wasn’t tracking—and hadn’t really done for a long time.

But in 1954 Martin Ray had still been open to learning about the latest speculations and research-based declarations of viticulturists and enologists. He

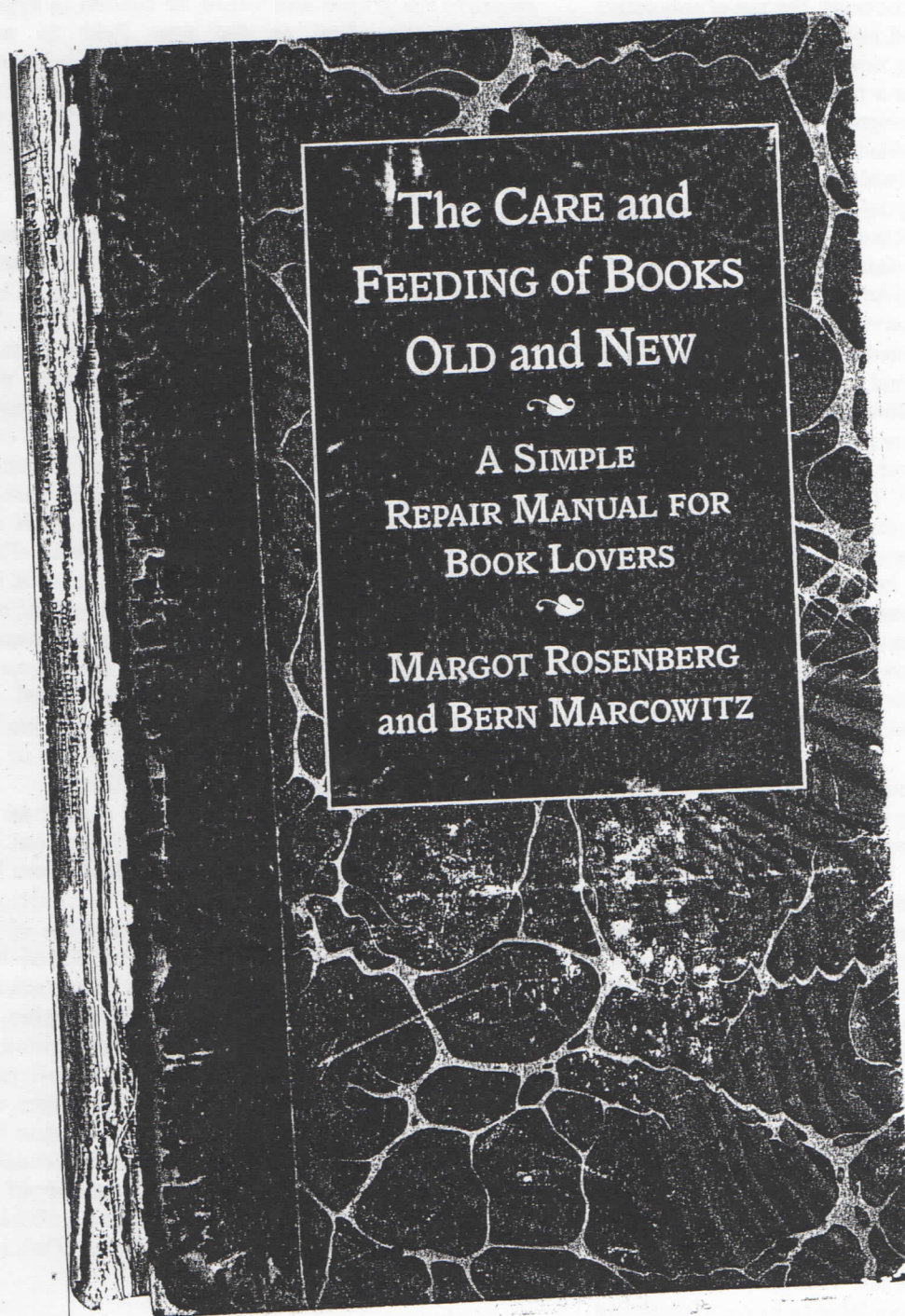
was also hearing or reading about superior new paraphernalia useful in grapegrowing and wine-making. As a traditionalist, MR couldn’t be sure that new techniques and materials would necessarily improve his grapes and wines, so tended to approach them warily. And as for new field or winery equipment, even if something was suitable for small-scale winegrowing enterprises like his and could make his work easier, he might be unable to afford it. His main assets were his land, his new family ... and that perennial drive to prove to the world that great wines could be made in California.

MR wasn’t resistant to making certain changes that might make his wines even more superlative, if they were things he himself could do. Though maintaining that he always followed the classic methods his predecessors had brought from France, he was always improvising and experimenting mostly within their confines, and sometimes discovered improvements serendipitously. He’d compare one lot of a particular varietal with another he’d made and then matured at the same time but with particular variations. He would speculate, on the basis of his careful notes and recollections, why one was definitely better than the other. And he’d plan to repeat in the next vintage season whatever he had done, but maybe with another lot introduce something different. He often shared his observations and conclusions with Amerine, and from time to time called upon Maynard’s tasting skills in evaluating both his latest and his maturing wines, during cellar visits or when MR brought wines to MA’s home in Davis.

Maynard Amerine had naturally served as MR’s best conduit for frequent news and important information ever since his return to UC Davis from WWII in 1946. He thus supplied a vital connection for Martin Ray with the much larger sphere of wine-making that was slowly being transformed in the postwar period, well beyond his own mountain in the Saratoga foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Since MR also considered Maynard his closest friend, with him he could gossip and tell tales, dissect mutual acquaintances, spout enthusiasms, vent anger, reveal fears and fixations, discuss plans and strategies for the future. Their yearlong correspondence reveals the remarkable depth, breadth, and candor of their association, especially on MR’s part, and indicates the kind of talks they always had in person, of which MR was currently deprived.

[To be continued next issue.]





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