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THE MAN WHO ATE, AND DRANK, CALIFORNIA: MAJOR BENJAMIN C. TRUMAN

by
Marvin Collins

[In our April issue we were introduced to Ben Truman, 19th century California booster, gourmet, journalist, and popular author of adventure stories, fiction, and a book on wine. We continue our journey of exploration into the 50-year writing career of this remarkable man. — Ed.]

CONCLUSION

The Writer—Ben Truman



Due to the wonders of optical character recognition and the Internet, I have been able to search out a representative sampling of Truman's work for the New York Times and for other journals in California and elsewhere. I was also able to browse many original Truman

volumes in the Bancroft library. Truman scholar Gary Kurutz's short, but elegant, 1984 biography, *Benjamin C. Truman, California Booster and Bon Vivant*, shed much light on our rotund friend and showed me where to look.

With this mass of Trumaniana before me, I ask myself what kind of writer was Ben Truman? And I can answer that he was actually two somewhat different ones, the first being a very good journalist who looked deeply into whatever he was writing about and very often made his reader care personally about his subject or theme. The second was an engaging story teller who I wouldn't trust with historical facts as far as I could lob his well-filled waistcoat. An historian follows Truman's versions of what really happened to his or her peril.

I found out how elusive the truth for Major Truman could be. In researching the United States purchase of Alaska and the period of American exploitation that followed, I became aware that one of

Truman's travel stories was included in the footnotes of several respected histories. Truman had published "A Summer in Alaska" as a chapter in his 1881 *Occidental Sketches*. He presents his account of a steamer cruise to Sitka and the westward islands in July 1869 as a dated itinerary framed around a number of events and historical figures that I had been following in my work. I read with pleasure his descriptions and included his chronology into my time line.

As other material accumulated from primary sources, I came to see that Major Truman was completely wrong, that the dates were false and that he had conflated events and reports from numerous sources to make a better story. Four vivid pages record his eyewitness account of killing fur-seals on the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea. Truman had



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never visited these islands. He had borrowed the sealing material from the report of Treasury Agent Charles Bryant and so mixed the language of Bryant's official study with his own that the reader can have no other conclusion than that Major Truman was actually on St. Paul Island.

However, the story has a basis in fact: Truman had visited Sitka on official business as a U.S. Postal Agent in January 1868, and had sworn-in the first Post Master in America's new possession. Why then the displacement of eighteen months. Perhaps he did not want to appear as having grand adventures on Government time, but more likely he feared that somebody would remember that Bryant's well-publicized report had been first issued in 1870. He certainly wanted to claim a greater knowledge of Alaska affairs than he himself had experienced. This makes me question the veracity of much of his travel and adventure writing, particularly when the author purported to tell of his own adventures.

Truman crafted hundreds of articles and books (Kurutz states over six hundred) and he was repetitive in constructions and phrasing. Fortunately for his enduring reputation, most readers don't digest double helpings of an author's short works in one go. Truman loved the voice of authority. He included his reader with a well-placed "of course" or "it is generally known," but he seemed to say, "Come to me, mon ami, if you want the truth" (or a good laugh).

Gary Kurutz, who is a California State Librarian and a fan of the expository journalism of California's first half-century, told me that Truman would have made the best of dinner companions, that his stories expanded in drama with each retelling. I found that the Major's long reminiscences in the *Times* after 1890 in which he reprised his Civil War and Wild West days were no longer the unembellished reports of the same events from his writings of the 1860s and '70s. By the 1890s, Major Truman was creating his myth.

Major Truman's Titles

A quick review of some of Truman's titles is appropriate here:

Campaigning in Tennessee, 1866. The insider information that Truman loved to write, as much about what was going on inside the officers' tents as about troop movements on the battlefield.

The South After the War, 1867. Truman's recollections of the success and failure of Reconstruction, still on-going, and his views about the future of the Southern Americans, black and white. The book was based on the eight months of research he conducted in eight southern states in preparation for his report on Conditions in the South for Pres. Andrew Johnson.

Winter Resorts of California, 1880. One of a series of destination guides that Truman produced for the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Tourists' Illustrated Guide to the Celebrated Summer and Winter Resorts of California, 1883. Listed the principal seaside resorts of the Pacific Coast as Monterey, Pacific Grove, Santa Cruz, Aptos, Capitola, Pescadero, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles. Truman estimated that one Capitola campground had accommodations for 600 people. His actual report, however, focused almost entirely on the French-style "stunning bathing costumes" worn by the "pretty country girls who congregate in large numbers" near the shore.

The Field of Honor, Being a Complete and Comprehensive History of Dueling in All Countries, 1884. Reprinted in French and German. At 600 pages, this is one of the weightiest of Truman's tomes. He dedicated this study of the etiquette and consequences of pistol dueling to Leland Stanford. Truman declared that there had been more fatal duels in California than in all the Northern States combined. He figured that interest in this subject would find the book a large market.

History of the World's Fair: Being a Complete and Authentic Description of the Columbian Exposition from its Inception, 1893. Again, a book developed out of his newspaper reporting at the Chicago fair and a classic work that helps to explain the interest in world fairs at the close of the nineteenth century. 610 pages.

Southern California at the Turn of the Century. A look back to see how many of his predictions had come true. He noted that the great Southern valleys were beginning to fill up with little look-alike townships.

Missions of California, 1903. Truman urges their preservation and laments "that the hungry tooth of decay has been permitted to gnaw at them." His interest in the missions produced reports for the *Times* in the 1860s and a major series in the 1890s.

Truman's writings don't have the legs of those of Jack London or Mark Twain, and I am not sure if that was ever his intention. His juicy commentaries on popular culture were his stock in trade. His interest in high level gossip reminds me of the columns and books of Herb Caen, and his travel writing of the works of Barnaby Conrad. He found an audience for a very long time and I think readers actually enjoyed his pronouncements. In sum, Major Truman was a working journalist possessed with a large curiosity and a gift for telling great stories in the vernacular of his day.

Truman as Wine Man

His wine reportage, as opposed to the wine writing, is another thing, less hyperbolic and grandiose and most importantly, still useful to wine historians today. He started reporting on the California wine industry in 1867, and regularly wrote long surveys throughout the seventies and eighties that have great veracity and detail. His descriptions of the flavor and appearance of wines from the point of view of a consumer are some of the best left to us and strike the reader as uniquely modern. He often looks at what was in his glass in comparison to the French wines that had opened his eyes in 1866. Truman always found something good to say even if it was only a small compliment to one wine out of a wretched batch. He also slapped the dishonest merchants that threatened the reputation of pure California wines by foul adulterations.

Some Truman Wine Quotes

- 1868 — "If California is not at present, indeed, the favorite grape growing country of the world, it is destined certainly to attain that rank, and also to become one of the most extensive."
- 1868 — "The Riesling would make a most delicious wine for dessert and general use, but would not be very acceptable with meats. The Zinfandel is exceedingly generous and would, I think, be a good dinner wine for those who habitually add water ... A man may drink a bottle or even more of the light French or German wines with no more effect than so much water; it is not so with our wines, they operate differently, and will make the eyes sparkle, the nerves jingle and the tongue active before the bottle has hardly been tampered with."
- 1868 — "While on a visit to Los Angeles last fall [1867, at the winery of Kohler & Frohling], it was a great novelty to me to see hundreds of half naked, nasty-looking bucks and squaws treading out grapes with their great flabby-looking feet, with rivers of perspiration running down their legs — the juice that was to make many an eye sparkle and grace many a festive board."
- 1874 — "Some writer has truthfully declared that the landed estates of European noblemen sink into insignificance when compared with some of the ranchos of Semi-Tropical California. Mr. Rose has 1200 acres, 135,000 Mission vines and 45,000 choice foreign vines. He admits to failures and discouragements, but claims he has overcome these obstacles ... I do not hesitate to say that Rose's hock from the Blue Elba Grape and his claret from the Zinfandel are both destined to rank among the very highest table wines known to commerce."
- 1876 — "In the great California valleys, many are engaged in the business of wine-making, more

especially foreigners, French and Southern Italians. Their results are not only bad, but from a stomachic point of consideration, atrocious—absolutely unequaled in villainy by the worst efforts that have been made in the same direction in New Jersey or Nebraska. In both these States, I have tasted wine that was excruciating, that left a memory on the palate like a great sorrow... But I have never been swindled into swallowing anything half so vile as some claret made by a Frenchman in the old Mission of San José.

1878 — "It is but fair to say that many New Yorkers are yet in doubt to the future of California wines, though they are open to conviction."

1879 — Truman quoted Arpad Haraszthy on adulterations: "If no one cared about color, which is really of no true consequence, the greatest temptation to resort to aniline dyes and other adulterations would cease to exist. A deep ruby tinge is desirable and to obtain it dishonest dealers stop at no adulteration short of out and out poison."

Monumental Wine Series

In 1887, the *Times* turned him loose to report extensively on California wines, reflecting the increased status and worth of West Coast wines in the Eastern market. Truman seemed to be everywhere at once. The series ran to nine installments in which he covered the winegrowing districts of Southern California, Napa and Sonoma, Alameda and Santa Clara counties, and the Foothills. He conducted interviews and made vineyard visits, tasted and described dozens of wines as to their intended purposes, varieties and blends, defended his favorites, and constantly reminded Eastern readers that California wines were indeed wines of consequence.

The series opened on January 16, 1887, under the heading "Prejudices against Pure Native Wines Rapidly Disappearing."

In gold, wheat, and wine, California contributes largely to the wealth of the country, and she is the most extensive producer of the three products above named of all the States. While there will continue to be great gold and wheat yields annually for many years to come, it is chiefly in the vineyards of California that the people of the Eastern States are at present interested.

Using language honed through years of promoting the State in general, Truman crafted a set of stories that are today historical documents. He lauds the developments of twenty years passed since he first ventured into the cellars of Los Angeles, grapples with the weaknesses in the market that he perceives to hold California back from its rightful place and describes the wines of Napa Valley in terms familiar to those trying to obtain small-allotment wines today:

I am not quite prepared to yield the point that the most

exquisite claret that I have ever drank, although not yet for sale, was made at the San Gabriel Vineyard Co. of Los Angeles Co. I am not unmindful of the fact that there is an increasing call from all over the State for Clarets and Rieslings from Napa and Sonoma districts. The Wine-makers of Southern California and Fresno concede that these wines contain a much smaller percentage of alcohol than the same character of wines made elsewhere in the State. Napa and Sonoma produce the most satisfying red and white table wines made in California. [See note below.] Indeed, there are already exquisitely blended Clarets in many a cellar in Napa county laid away in great tanks, in excavated tunnels leading from model stone storehouses, which are being permitted to age properly in a temperature that only varies from 3° to 5° and which will not be offered for sale for a year or two to come. And when these presumably "rare California wines" are put into bottles and offered for sale, I shall be greatly mistaken if their virtues do not revolutionize the character of American Clarets throughout wine drinking countries on both Continents.

This set of articles totaled over 10,000 words. The work predated Frona Wait's *Wines and Vines of California* by two years, and her special section on wine in the Sunday *S. F. Chronicle* by three. Truman showed with these pieces that he was still capable of excellent reporting that informed rather than exhorted. Wine researchers would be greatly favored if the *Times* collected and reprinted these reports. By comparison, his later wine work seems over the top.

See How It Sparkles

In 1896 Truman issued the first wine title published in Southern California, a charming, if faintly ridiculous, ode to the wines in his life called *See How it Sparkles*. The slender brown volume opens with the quote, "Drink best while you have use of your breath — there is no drinking after death." All of the greatest hits of a lifetime of drinking are rhapsodized in near breathless prose. We learn which are the greatest wines of the world and which are the favorite wines of Mr. Truman, and that mostly they are usually the same ones. His comparisons of American wines and vineyards with those European were genuine; he had seen and tasted on both continents. His greatest approval is reserved for the beverage referenced by the title:

The monarch of all potations. Champagne is the monarch of all wines. Ah me! How it bubbles, how it sparkles, this the most ravishing of all wines! It is at once the most fascinating, the most enticing, and the most exhilarating. It is genial, comforting, stimulating, irradiating and divine. It refreshes, regales, cheers and transports ... God bless ... the pious cellarer who taught the nectarous juices to effervesce, and gave to the world its newest and most enchanting wine.

SEE HOW IT SPARKLES

BY MAJOR BEN C. TRUMAN

Author of "The Field of Honor;" "Occidental Sketches;"
"Semi-Tropical California;" Etc., Etc.

"Drink best while you have in use your breath—
There is no drinking after death."

LOS ANGELES, CAL.
GEO. RICE & SONS, PUBLISHERS
1896

His choice for best bubbly in America was the Eclipse made by his friend Arpad Haraszthy and named for a race horse. He would not turn away bottles of Perrier-Jouët, Mumms, Veuve Clicquot, or Moët & Chandon. It is interesting to contemplate that the Eclipse brand is long gone; it died with its creator. The French houses all remain and have gone from strength to strength these last 110 years.

While Truman's relations were cordial with any number of individual wine men, they were apparently not so warm with industry leaders. The influential trade journal *Pacific Wine & Spirits Review* on May 21, 1892, stated in no uncertain terms, "Truman Not The Man."

It is reported here that Mr. Ben C. Truman is likely to receive the appointment of Chief of Viticulture at the Chicago Fair. Mr. Truman is most decidedly not the proper person for the place. He represents nobody but Ben C. Truman. He had held somewhat similar offices with little or no success, and so far as his knowledge of the wine business is concerned, he is ignorant as any other person who has never given it consideration. His appointment to the position would be an insult to the wine men of this State, as it would indicate that there was no one in the industry properly fitted for the office.

It is not clear how Major Truman had offended the editors of the *Review*, or the State Board of Viticultural Commissioners, for whom the journal often served as a mouth piece, but he was not wanted. It is likely that he had failed to deliver on some earlier promise or self-promotion. He did attend the fair as both journalist and author, and he produced his

history of the fair the same year. It was not his last chance to represent California abroad for he was a State commissioner at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900, where California wines carted off several dozen medals. Ah me! How sweet it must have been for Benjamin C. Truman to have been there to see it happen.

He later did for the cocktail what he had done for champagne. In 1905, the Major declared the Mint Julep as "the enchantress of liquid concoctions – 'the star eyed goddess' of all." His mourning of the great fire of April 1906 centered on the losses of the eating and drinking places where he was a regular, like the famed Poodle Dog restaurant. San Francisco, for him, would never be the same.

San Francisco poet Edward O'Day celebrated Truman the gourmet in the pages of *Town Talk*:

Major Truman is the premier gastronome of the West. We haven't a man who can approach him in the accurate appraisal of wine, a sauce, an entrée or a piece de resistance. Nor are we likely to see the rise of anyone who will threaten his laurels. He belongs to an era that is passing....the race of Bon Vivants has not been perpetuated.

The Final Decades

Only in 1894 did the Trumans buy a proper house. His income was pieced together from many sources including returns from real estate investments. He had taken his own advice and was now able to move into 1001 23rd Street in Los Angeles. Truman had become a true burgher; he held dinner parties, lectured at the Sunset Club and the Loyal Legion of Honor and joined the Historical Society of Southern California.

In 1895 Truman became a regular contributor to the *Overland Monthly* with stories about the Civil War and the untamed West. He reshaped his earlier adventures into exciting narratives that re-examined the strategies and what-ifs of great battles of the Rebellion. He published "Gossip about the Presidents" in October 1898, where he dished up his personal memories of Chief Executives living and dead. He wrote a passionate account about legendary stage coach drivers of the West Coast, entitled "Knights of the Lash," serialized in the March and April 1898 issues. "Time was when the man who held the ribbons of a six-horse team on the summits of the Sierras and the cañons of the Coast and Cascade ranges was more highly esteemed than the millionaires and statesmen who rode behind them." He also noted that mothers warned their boys against hanging out with drivers at the stables.

Truman was adept at repackaging his stories, and similar material appeared as the "Memories of an Old

Stager" in the *New York Times*, compressed by the needs of newspaper journalism. The *Times* complimented its old correspondent by mentioning that Truman "has been a contributor who was privileged to write over his own signature," rare when most articles were printed unsigned.

On Thanksgiving Day 1896, Truman and his veteran colleague Joseph D. Lynch, late editor of the *Los Angeles Herald* and an associate from their San Diego days twenty-five years earlier, launched the weekly *Greater Los Angeles*. He had found the time and energy to plunge once again into the pressures of deadlines and management. The paper was lauded in the *Overland Monthly* that said in February 1897, "Both Lynch and Truman are veteran writers of acknowledged standing ... The succeeding numbers have improved from week to week until today *Greater Los Angeles* ranks second to no weekly in the State."

As the century turned, Truman's output continued onto the pages of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Sunset Magazine*, a new vehicle launched in 1898 by the Southern Pacific Railroad to develop its market. The railroad had helped push through the bill that made Yosemite a national park and Truman responded with a nicely illustrated article for *Sunset* on the "Waterfalls of the Yosemite" in June 1908, and followed it the next summer with a glowing assessment of the beauties of Lake Tahoe.

Between 1903 and 1904 he wrote three pictorial guides to the attractive features of Santa Monica, Los Angeles, and Southern California. His tone never changed, his words still had the flair of a chamber of commerce booster and it is easy to see the early writer in the prose of the much praised older author and civic leader. My guess is that Major Truman would have held forth on the glories of his adopted state until that moment his breath began to falter, still in a hotel, the Leighton, at 6:45 in the morning of July 16, 1916, in his 81st year of a stirring life.

Titles by and about Benjamin C. Truman

The Press of Southern California 1873, by Muir Dawson. Los Angeles, 1951.

See How it Sparkles (1896) was reprinted in 1973 by *Wine World Magazine*, with a Foreword by Roy Brady (who owned one of the very few copies of the 1896 original edition).

The Observations of Benjamin Cummings Truman on El Camino Real. Spanish Mission Buildings. Edited and Annotated by Francis J. Weber, 1978.

Field of Honor was re-issued as *Dueling in America*, Edited by Steven Randolph Wood, 1992.

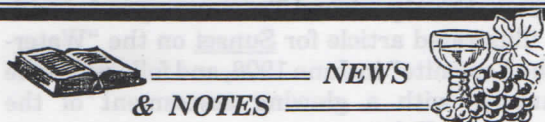
Benjamin C. Truman, California Booster and Bon Vivant, by Gary F. Kurutz. Book Club of California, San Francisco, 1984. 90 pages. Kurutz, California State Librarian, Special Collections, is the reigning

apassionato of Truman lore. Kurutz also co-wrote a fine history of California boosterism, *California Calls You*. Windgate Press, 2001.

Knights of the Lash, The Stagecoach Stories of Major Benjamin C. Truman, by Gary Kurutz, has just been published by The Book Club of California.

"A Spectacular Battle and Its 'Ifs'" was included in *Crucial Moments of the Civil War*, edited by Willard Webb. Bonanza Books, 1961.

NOTE, p.4: Riesling was the first great wine produced in Northern California, largely in the care of German winemen such as Krug, Pohndorff, Beringer, Lachman, and Gundlach who set the mark for this varietal. Known as Hock wine, it was produced in a full range of styles from dry to dessert. Chardonnay was not even a gleam in the valley's eye; wines from the shy-bearing Burgundian grapes were the standards of comparison, but only the independently wealthy could afford to commercially experiment with these vines. Early California-German vintners actually knew what to do with Riesling. In 1868 Truman reported that Kohler and Frohling's "California Hock, is, so far, the best, and really the only successful wine yet made in this State."



Welcome, new Tendrils! We are pleased to have the **St. Helena Historical Society** (Napa Valley) as a new subscriber to our *Quarterly*. We also welcome **Phillip Freese** (pfwine@cs.com), veteran viticulturist with a world-wide interest in vines and wines, and **Erica Hannickel** (erica-hannickel@uiowa.edu) who is writing her PhD dissertation on 19th century viticulture.

"SONOMA COUNTY WINERIES"

by Gail Unzelman and the Wine Library Associates of Sonoma County is scheduled for release in late August. This new 128-page history of Sonoma County wine is one of Arcadia Publishing's "Postcard Series" of local history. Most Tendrils are aware of the "collecting bug" that has plagued *WTQ* Editor Unzelman for a lifetime ... so what better way to use some 200 postcards of early Sonoma County wine scenes! Proceeds from the sale of this picturesque book benefit the Sonoma County Wine Library, Healdsburg. Send your order to Gail at nomis@jps.net / P.O. Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA 95405. \$20 + \$2 S/H. California orders, please add sales tax (\$1.60). Requests for autographed copies gladly accepted! Let's show our Tendril support for the Sonoma County Wine Library! (Also, you might want to circle and save the day of Saturday, Sept. 16th, to attend the Wine Library's

annual fund raiser, The Sonoma Odyssey of Food & Wine. Come sample some of Sonoma County's finest wines and tastiest foods, enjoy the exciting live and silent auctions, bounce to the music, and indulge yourself in the over-sized booth stacked and packed with a vast selection of wonderful wine books at truly bargain prices! Information at sonomaodyssey.org.)

GRAPE & WINE STAMPING

In addition to books on wine, various Tendril members are known to also collect other wine-related printings (wine labels, letterheads, bill-heads, post cards, menus, wine lists, trade cards) and antiques (wine glasses, decanters, bottles, bottle tickets, corkscrews, ancient coins). If you haven't yet thought of collecting postage stamps with a wine or grape theme, there is no better time to begin this inexpensive, satisfying collecting hobby! The Wine on Stamps Study Unit has been reactivated, with David Wolfersberger—knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and energetic long-time collector—at its head. A recently updated 46-page "Wine on Stamps Checklist" (1700 entries!) is now available. David is also reviving the quarterly wine stamp journal, "Enophilatelica," and should have a new issue ready by August. For membership and Checklist ordering information, email David at dewolf2@swbell.net. The Wine on Stamps Study Unit is affiliated with the American Topical Association, which publishes a very informative bi-monthly, "Topical Times." For ATA membership application, email americantopical@msn.com.

THE BEDSIDE READING TABLE

History in a Glass. Sixty Years of Wine Writing from Gourmet, edited and with an Introduction by Ruth Reichl (New York: Modern Library, 2006). This 374-page anthology includes essays from the "cream of the crop" of *Gourmet* wine writers from the 1940s to the 21st century—Frank Schoonmaker, Hilaire Belloc, Roy Brady, Gerald Asher, Hugh Johnson, and more. Some classic writing, and reading, here!

VINEYARDS IN THE SKY:

The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray by Eleanor Ray and Barbara Marinacci is going into its third edition! Mountain Vines Publishing ("fine books on regional wineries") in Aptos, CA, has copies available at \$24.95—a vintage price for a 424-page book, illustrated. Mountain Vines also carries Charles Sullivan's fascinating history, *Like Modern Edens. Winegrowing in Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains 1798–1981*. See www.mountainvinespub.com.





BOOKS & BOTTLES

by
Fred McMillin

DR. PENFOLD, I PRESUME

The Book: *Rewards of Patience: A Drinking and Cellaring Guide to Penfolds Wines*. 2004, 5th ed. Sydney: Penfolds Wines Ltd. 288 pp.

This is the story of the rise of Australia's largest winery and its production of arguably Australia's most acclaimed wine.

The colony of South Australia was founded in 1834. Eight years later, Dr. Christopher Rawson Penfold, son of the Reverend John Penfold, left Brighton, England, and applied for a land grant four miles outside Adelaide. His wife's family home in England was named "Grange." In 1844 Christopher and Mary Penfold arrived with selected French cuttings (whose ends had been sealed with wax to retain the sap in the canes until they could be planted). The variety Grenache dominated, because Dr. Penfold believed its wine had medicinal benefits.

The next year the couple built a stone cottage, naming it "Grange" — which became an historical landmark that still stands today. Then they got busy on the vineyard. However, the doctor had to scurry off on his medical practice, leaving Mary to tend to the vineyard and winery.

So successful were the wines that the doctor finally discontinued his medical practice to work full time on what was now the largest winery in the colony. Dr. Penfold died in 1870, but Mary lived another twenty-six years; by then, Penfolds was well on its way to becoming the largest wine firm in all of Australia.

1955 Grange Hermitage

When introduced in Australia, the wine (90% Shiraz, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon) was described as "A concoction of wild fruits ... with crushed ants predominating." When evaluated much later in the *Wine Spectator*, the wine was rated "one of the top 12 wines of the 20th century!"

Why such a difference? In the 1950s, Australia was still focused on fortified wines. In fact, another review of the 1955 Grange actually said, "A very good

dry port, which no one in their right mind will buy—let alone drink."

With such a reception, management ordered winemaker Max Schubert to stop Grange production. When they later rescinded the prohibition, they learned that Max had such faith in the wine that he had secretly continued making it each year. In the thirty pages of the book devoted to Grange Hermitage (which after 1989 was called simply "Grange"), Schubert gives a fascinating account of this struggle.

Another tidbit: Penfolds Block 42 vineyard was planted around 1888, and is still producing "remarkably balanced fruit" from vines thought to be the oldest Cabernet Sauvignon in the world. They have survived biological and economic threats from phylloxera, a gold rush, and a depression.

The Rewards of Patience was first issued by Penfolds in 1986, with revised editions following every four or five years. The fifth edition showcases more than 50 years of Penfolds winemaking, and features a four-day tasting in 2003 of some 350 Penfolds wines. All of the editions are interesting and valuable references on Penfolds and its wines.

NOTE: Two other fine books on the history of Penfolds and Australian winegrowing are recommended: *Penfold—Time Honored. The History of Dr. C. R. Penfold and Penfolds Wines* by Dr. Philip Norrie (Sydney: Apollo Books, 1994), and *Vine and Scalpel* by Max Lake (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1967), a history of the physicians who pioneered much of the development of the Australian wine industry (and Dr. Penfold is the first one mentioned!). I might add that there was one vintner who opposed the terrible "crushed ants" reviews of the 1955 Grange, and praised the wine: Dr. Max Lake, a pioneering wineman himself.

The Bottles: Since we have given Penfolds kudos galore, we'll present some good wines from other Australian firms. All are recent releases at very affordable prices.

- REDS: 1st — Black Swan Shiraz-Merlot
2nd — McWilliam Shiraz
3rd — Black Opal Cabernet-Merlot
4th — Jacob's Creek Merlot
- WHITES: 1st — Reynolds Chardonnay
2nd — Jundalee Sauvignon Blanc
3rd — Wyndham Chardonnay

[Fred McMillin just might have amassed more man-hours as a wine educator and wine writer than anyone else in wineworld. This veteran wine aficionado has taught wine history and wine appreciation on three continents, and has received numerous achievement awards. For 15 years, he has also contributed his "Books & Bottles" column to each issue of the *Wayward Tendrils*. Cheers, Fred!]

WINE TALES

by Warren R. Johnson

[In the magnificent, large world of wine books, new, used, & rare, Warren Johnson, proprietor of Second Harvest Books, finds a special pleasure in wine fiction. With the internet book search services that are now available, it is much easier to find wine novels than ever before, and Warren is an excellent sleuth. He carries a good stock of wine fiction titles, and "in his spare time" he is creating a database that should prove useful and fun for all. While Warren will send the *WTQ* updates and tidbits, the full story will be available on his website, secondharvestbooks.net. — Ed.]



inaugurate a new *WTQ* column focusing our attention on wine-related fiction and other non-technical wine writings. As the love of wine grows in our society, so does the literature of wine. Currently, my still-growing database holds just short of 300 titles in the genres of Novels, Mysteries, Romances, Songs, Poems, Toasts, Quotations, Anthologies, Plays, Children's, and some sub-genres. As this column takes shape, I will attempt to cover as many areas of writing as I can, old and new. What follows is a representative sample of more to come.

Poetry

Gordon, Alvin J. *Of Vines and Missions*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1971. Illustrations by Ted DeGrazia. Hardcover, 89 pp.

A n often neglected area of wine writing is poetry. A beautiful example is *Of Vines and Missions* by Alvin Gordon, a former vineyard operator in the Sonoma Valley. Writing with a glass of wine, from a perch above the Valley, he recalls the history of the development of the vineyards alongside the Missions. Starting with Padre Kino on the Baja, the journey proceeds northward with Padre Salvatierra and finally with Padre Serra, until the line of vines and missions ends in Sonoma.

The poetry is presented from page to page in narrow columns, broken up only as a paragraph might be. Each opposite page has warm watercolors depicting the story line, the illustrations equal to the poetry, both telling the history of the early California vineyards and the founding of the Catholic Missions.

This is an historically accurate presentation in a striking format.

Murder Mystery

Drummond, John Keith. *Thy Sting, Oh Death*. NY: St. Martin's, 1985. Hardcover, 240 pp. *'Tis the Season to be Dying*. NY: St. Martin's, 1988. Hardcover, 277 pp. *Mass Murder*. NY: St. Martin's, 1991. Hardcover, 344 pp.

O ne of the largest areas of wine fiction writing is the murder mystery. The relationship with wine may be the plot, the setting, the characters, or the wine talk. San Franciscan John Drummond has written three mysteries that take place in the town of Jolliston, situated in the Jolliston Valley (read St. Helena in the Napa Valley). These are cozy mysteries in the style of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple. In this case, there are two protagonists, women in their eighties, who have developed skills for solving murders which the local police cannot. The author clearly has a background in classical music and the Church, written with a vocabulary that begs for a dictionary or at least some mind searching. The wine connection is much lighter; it arises from the general terrain, a drinking of the local product or the occurrence of murder at the harvest season.

These are delightful mysteries. The only regret might be that Mr. Drummond has not written more (he is currently writing a work of fantasy). A reading of the three books is best done in order of publication, as the same major characters are developed throughout. If time allows only one, the first is the best of story, while the third is best with wine references.

Romantic Suspense

Roberts, Nora. *The Villa*. New York: Putnam, 2001. Hardcover, 432 pp.

T his romantic suspense novel tells the story of two California winery families who join together to form a new winery. Three generations must now face the changes in family relationships and in the business of producing wine. This includes the love and hate between the sexes, the advent of a new C.O.O. from outside the family, the threat of takeover by a large wine conglomerate, and a murder. Women play strong roles in Roberts' works and this one is no exception. The "merger" is spearheaded by the grandmother; the reason for this new winery and the resulting shift in responsibilities is not clear to the family members. The power struggles seem to preclude the demise of the winery, while the love interests seem to rise. After several tragedies culminate in murder, the family realizes someone is trying to destroy the winery. But who?

Novella

Scott, J. M. *The Man Who Made Wine*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1953; New York: Dutton, 1954. Hardcover, 125 pages.

Human geniuses may make their mark in youth; but not wines" (page 34). Michel Rachelet, vintner for more than 50 years along the river Gironde, is retiring. Sitting alone in the dark at the long banquet table following his retirement celebration, he recalls his years with the wine. He was born during the time of the phylloxera, lived through World War I when there were few men to work the harvest, and fought the importation of American resistant stock to save the French wine. M. Rachelet recalls all these years, moving along the table tasting the samples of his half-century of winemaking. What was the best year?

The work is illustrated with wonderful black and white wood block illustrations by B. Biro. A significant reprinting of this work was done in 1996 by the Yolla Bolly Press; it includes a biography of the author. This small novel is a gem, a classic when written and still alive today for the picture of its times.



Recent Releases

- Baxter, Cynthia. *Hare Today, Dead Tomorrow*. NY: Bantam Books, 2006. [Mystery: Long Island, NY]
 Ink, India. *A Blush with Death*. NY: Berkeley, 2006. [Mystery]
 Ivey, Jamie. *Extremely Pale Rosé*. NY: St. Martin's, 2006. [Novel: France]
 Mallery, Susan. *The Marcelli Bride*. NY: Pocket Star, 2006. [Romance: California vineyard]
 Mallery, Susan. *The Seductive One*. NY: Pocket Star, 2006. [Romance: California vineyard]

IN MEMORIAM:

ALEXIS BESPALOFF (1934–2006)

by Bo Simons

[Bo Simons, a founder of the Wayward Tendrils in 1990, is the Wine Librarian at the Sonoma County Wine Library, Healdsburg. Over the years, he has generously graced our pages with book reviews (new, old, rare, fiction ("Lust in the Must..."), bibliography (including "Oak in Winemaking," "Pinot Noir," "Champagne"), and appreciations (Columella, Roy Brady). — Ed.]

Introduction

We should all offer up a toast of gratitude and remembrance to Alexis Bespaloff—author of the *Signet Book of Wine*, compiler of the *Fireside Book of Wine*, and up-dater of *Frank Schoonmaker's Encyclopedia of Wine*—who died on April 22, 2006. He should be recalled for his warmth, wit and style as well as his informed and graceful writing. Since his student days at Amherst where he organized wine tastings, he favored the wine world with knowledge and humor. He spent most of his adult life in New York, reveling in the urbane and cultured milieu, but spent his last few years in New Mexico. Friends remember him as a cultured man, always willing to mentor, always ready to share his dry, but never cruel, wit.

Life

Alexis Bespaloff was born in Bucharest, Romania, on November 15, 1934. In the years preceding World War II, his family moved first to Belgium, then to Brazil, and finally to New York City. He went to Amherst College where he majored in literature. After graduating, he went to Harvard Business School, but he dropped out to pursue a career. He worked first for Simon and Schuster as a publicist, and then in the wine industry operating out of New York and Bordeaux.

He began writing about wine, and, as the tastes of the nation became more sophisticated about wine in the decades from the 1960s to the '90s, he helped spur and inform the increasing savvy of Americans. From 1972 to 1996 he was the wine critic for *New York Magazine*. He wrote *The Signet Book of Wine*, which stands as a milestone in wine appreciation and understanding. First published in 1971, and subsequently revised and expanded bearing Bespaloff's name as part of the title, this book served as a point of entry for generations of people newly intrigued by wine, while also used by more experienced wine lovers as a handy reference. He edited *The Fireside Book of Wine*, one of the most cogent and cultured anthologies of wine writing. He took on the mantle of the Dean of American wine writers, Frank Schoonmaker, when he revised and updated the *Frank Schoonmaker's*

Encyclopedia of Wine in 1988, and it became *The New Frank Schoonmaker Encyclopedia of Wine*, with the author statement, "Completely Revised by Alexis Besspaloff."

He married later in his life, in his sixties, to Cecilia Lewis, described by Jancis Robinson as "a talented, vivacious and beautiful photographer, English by birth." This ended Besspaloff's long career as one of the most sought-after dates in New York City. Because his bride's father required a dry climate for health reasons, Besspaloff—described by many friends as a deeply cultured man, an urban, urbane, New Yorker who reveled in the glories of Manhattan—moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico, in 1995.

Besspaloff possessed a wonderful acerbic wit that never contained a hint of malice. His telephone answering device had the message: "I am unable to take your call at this time. If this is an emergency, remember, white wine with fish, red wine with beef." He was very serious about the accuracy of his wine facts, but playful, and never too serious about himself or his subject. His favorite bit of wine advice was, "try not to let your lips touch the brown paper bag." He mentored many writers and his coaching and advice are remembered in the prefaces and forewords of some of the outstanding wine books of today.

Besspaloff was 71 when he died in Las Cruces. He had been suffering from cancer for several years. At his memorial service on April 28, his wife was touched by the remembrances he received. "He was a modest man and he knew he had a lot of old and loyal friends, but I think he would have been amazed by this outpouring."

WORKS by ALEXIS BESPALOFF

Books

Alexis Besspaloff's Complete Guide to Wine. New York: Signet, 1994.

Family Circle Guide to Wine. New York: Family Circle, 1973.

The Fireside Book of Wine: An Anthology for Wine Drinkers. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1977.

Subsequent edition. NY: Simon & Schuster, 1984.

First Book of Wine. New York: World Pub., 1972.

Guide to Inexpensive Wines. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973.

Alexis Besspaloff's Guide to Inexpensive Wines. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975.

The New Frank Schoonmaker Encyclopedia of Wine. Revised and updated by Alexis Besspaloff. New York: Morrow, 1988.

Subsequent edition titled: *New Encyclopedia of Wine*. Revised and updated by Alexis Besspaloff. New York: Century, 1990.



Signet Book of Wine. New York: New American Library, 1971.

Subsequent edition titled: *New Signet Book of Wine: A Complete Introduction*. New York: New American Library, 1980.



Alexis Besspaloff's New Signet Book of Wine: A Complete Introduction. New York: New American Library, 1986.

Magazine Writing

It is beyond the scope of this remembrance to attempt a systematic bibliography of Besspaloff's delightful and long lived magazine writing. Some brief numbers and names will have to suffice. He wrote about wine from the 1960s through the 1990s for *Connoisseur*, *Elle*, *Food and Wine*, *GQ*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *House and Garden*, *House Beautiful*, *Penthouse*, *Travel and Leisure*, *Viva*, *Vogue*, and *Wine Enthusiast*, but more than any other magazine, he wrote for *New York Magazine*. Of the 209 articles attributed to Besspaloff in the Gale Group's *Magazine Database*, all but 25 were for *New York Magazine*. Like most great wine writers, he knew wine with the assurance and completeness of a fastidious connoisseur, but he never intimidated, never flaunted his savvy, always sought to communicate his joy.

THE FIRESIDE BOOK OF WINE

SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST WINE LOVERS
...—WITH HERE AND THERE A DISSENTING VOICE—
CELEBRATE THE GLORIES AND PLEASURES OF WINE
AND THE MANY ROLES IT PLAYS IN LIFE ITSELF
—AMONG THEM—

James Joyce • Benjamin Franklin • Ernest Hemingway • Thomas Jefferson
Byron • Joseph Wechsberg • James Bastwell • Colette
Baron Philippe de Rothschild • Henry James • Blanchard • Anton Chelmon
François Villon • André Simon • A. J. Liebling • Michael Flinders
C. P. Snow • Roald Dahl • Evelyn Waugh
George Saintsbury • Art Buchwald • Francis Mannix
and more and more

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

Alexis Besspaloff

NOTES FROM A DEPLETED LIBRARY

"books from the wilder shores of the wine world"

by Christopher Fielden

[Tendril and wine author Fielden, a long-time member of the British wine trade, recently donated his 30-year collection of wine books to the Institute of Masters of Wine. Now, quietly refilling his library shelves, he keeps us abreast of some very interesting new wine books. — Ed.]

I would like to begin with two very different books written by long-standing friends of mine in the British wine trade. When I first met David Copp, he was marketing manager for a leading British vodka brand, which was renowned for the wackiness of its promotions. We collaborated on more than one of these. When the brand was sold, he moved to the management of sports personalities and somehow finished up in Budapest selling advertising in sports stadia. During the six years he spent there, he fell in love with Hungary and its wines; the result of this love affair is *Hungary: Its Fine Wines and Wine-makers* (Budapest: PrintXBudavár, 2006, \$45). This is a lavishly illustrated book, which profiles all the leading wine-producing regions, estates and growers of the country in Eastern Europe whose wines must have the greatest potential. Twice recently I have been at fascinating tastings of wines from Tokay, which Michael Broadbent describes in his Introduction, as "the greatest, but least-known classic wine of Europe." Here foreign investment and conscientious growers and winemakers have turned the industry round in a way that must be the envy of their neighbours. All this is lovingly recounted by Mr. Copp. He personally has invested a small fortune in the production of this book. It deserves to be repaid as it adds much to our appreciation of Hungary and its wines. Its exuberance is in direct contrast to the more staid, but also informative, *The Wines of Hungary* by Alex Liddell (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2003).

A very different story is told by *The House that Jack Built*, a centenary history of the Hull wine-merchants, Townend's, by John Townend (Beverly: Highgate Publications Ltd., 2006, £8.95). Like many companies of its kind, it based its early business on bottling beer and has during the past century owned chains of hotels and retail wine shops. Now its major role is as a wine wholesaler throughout the north of England and the owner of one of the leading hotels in East Yorkshire. The John Townend, who has written the book (and there are a number of them appearing in the story), ran the company for many years, whilst also gaining some notoriety as a right wing Conservative Member of Parliament. This latter role did not enamour him to some wine writers. Malcolm Gluck,

who wrote a column for the liberally-inclined *Guardian*, roundly praised a Cabernet Sauvignon that the company imported from the Lubéron. Some weeks later he urged his readers to boycott the wine on the grounds that the Chairman of the importers was a racist. Though advised that this article was libelous, John Townend did not pursue the matter as he had suffered on a previous occasion in the English law courts. This was when his company had started producing an advocaat (egg-nog in American?) with a wine base, rather than the more traditional spirit base. This gave it a lower duty rate on the British market and it quickly threatened to knock the market-leader off its throne. The latter sued him for passing-off and was awarded substantial damages, with the judge rejecting pleas that on certain markets the product had long been made with wine. For me, one attraction of this book is that I know many of the cast of characters, for others it forms part of the social history of the trade.

Sara Matthews is responsible for two wonderful photographic portraits of South American vineyards, *Mendoza—Our Terroir* (no publisher, no date, ISBN 987-96558-2-6) and *Chile—The Art of Wine* (Santiago: Origo Ediciones / So. S. F.: Wine Appreciation Guild, 2003). Both of these capture the beauty of the vineyards, the wineries, and the cellars. In the Argentine book, there are also relevant comments from many of the leading authorities and, for the student, this creates a more useful whole. I can heartily recommend both, though, for their striking images of countries whose importance as suppliers to the world's markets is constantly growing.

Finally, it is not often that I have the opportunity of mentioning sex in a wine book review. If this is something you enjoy reading about, I can heartily recommend *The Story of Bacchus* by Andrew Dalby (London: British Museum Press, 2003, £10.99). We are scarcely into the story when the question is posed, "How does the king of the gods make love to a royal virgin who, until that very moment, had thought she would still be a virgin next morning?" The answer is that it is not as easy as it might seem. "Zeus changed his shape many times during their lovemaking: he was a lion, a panther, a serpent, winding himself about her. Then again he was a bold young man with ivy and vine leaves in his hair. His breath had a heavenly aroma, and his mouth had the taste of nectar, or an even more unearthly and intoxicating taste which, in time to come, would be known as the taste of wine." This was the conception of Bacchus.

It is a fascinating biography, brief and racy, created by a historian out of the Greek myths. It is illustrated with coloured plates of relevant treasures from the British Museum. It would make a slightly different present for any collector of wine books. ■

IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by **Bob Foster**



A Life Uncorked by Hugh Johnson. Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2006. 383 pp. Hardback. \$34.95.

"by far the best wine book..."



I have always believed that Hugh Johnson is the wine writer of our era. With the publication of this fabulous work, I believe there can be no possible dispute of this title: this work is superb, by far the best wine book I've reviewed in years.

Johnson begins with the questions most often asked of him by fans, "How did you get into wine?" He recounts how one night while studying in his room at Cambridge his roommate suddenly returned with two glasses of wine; both were Burgundies. One had been made from a vineyard on one side of the road while the other came from the opposite side. Johnson noticed considerable differences and began to wonder about the reasons for the differences. Thus, began his fascination with wine.

Rather than go region by region, or year by year, Johnson introduces the reader to his cellar at his 17th century home in Great Saling in England. He shows the reader each part of the cellar, explains what it contains and then uses this as the starting point for his discussion. In doing so he cleverly covers not only the major events in his life, but also the wines of a region or style and his experiences with the various producers. He does this in typical Johnson style filled with wit and clever observations. Even his commentary accompanying the profuse color photographs that fill this book is entertaining. For example in one photo someone in a white lab coat is holding a glass of wine. Johnson remarks, "Don't be fooled by the white coat. The scientific looking person is not tasting but drinking; there is far too much wine in the glass."

The book begins with a lengthy section called Prospects. This covers much of the early development of his career and his philosophy about wine. Then follows four major sections covering red, white, sparkling, and dessert wines.

Again and again, his insights are deep and accurate. For example, he notes that to appreciate wine, "you don't have to swallow an encyclopedia, but you do have to pay attention." He notes the paradox that we taste wine by itself but normally consume it with food. "Wine for me is essentially what I drink while eating

which is not at all the case for my children's generation. I can only respect their capacity for wine unmixed with solid matter. If they want wine which itself tastes more solid, if that's the word, I can hardly be surprised." He recognizes something many wine reviewers miss: "It is easy for someone who drinks for a living to become detached from the realities of a budget." If only the California winemakers and American wine critics could take this lesson to heart. New-release California Cabernets at more than \$100 a bottle are detached from the economic realities most American face.

Johnson is clearly concerned that wine is changing and not for the better. As he makes clear the drive to attain high scores from American wine critic Robert Parker is changing the face of wine around the globe. The wines are becoming massive in size and flavors that are devoid of both balance and any sense of place. He notes that often times he will try a massive wine and be able to consume only a sip. "The bottles that get this summary treatment are the ones they call blockbusters. My block is too precious to me: I taste them, but one glass is plenty." Johnson believes that there are four critical aspects of a wine: fruit, terroir, the maker's mark of character—"But the great wine works in four dimensions, and the fourth is time." The implication is clear. The new universal style wine with gobs of fruit, massive extract, and higher alcohol levels will not age.

Johnson's passions are for German wines and Bordeaux. His interest is reflected in the length of each section in book. For a period of time he was on the board of directors for Château Latour. Reading the benefits and responsibilities that came with that job are fascinating. Johnson goes into great detail about the land he owns in France and his attempts to make top quality wine. The section proves, yet again, that making good wine is very difficult. This is a fact often lost on wine critics and wine drinkers.

Having heaped all this praise on Johnson and his book, I do have a couple of very small reservations. While the book tells us much about Hugh Johnson and his work, there are only brief mentions of his wife and children. I was hoping for a bit more of a glance behind the public person. Secondly, Johnson repeatedly refers to his monumental work, *Wine*, published in 1966, as his "first" book. But serious book collectors know that his first book was a small piece he wrote in 1965 under contract with wine merchants Hedges and Butler and titled *The Best of Vineyards is the Cellar*. When asked about this, Johnson has said that he didn't consider it to be one of his books because it was produced as a commercial work for a particular company. That may well be his belief, but I would have liked just the tiniest mention of this rare volume.

Nevertheless, *A Life Uncorked* is top notch. Printed

on thick paper, it is filled with color photographs and wonderful stories from Johnson's life and keen observations about where wine has been and where it seems to be going. There is a detailed index that covers not only the text but also the photographs. This book is an absolute must-buy for any wine lover. Very highly recommended.

[EDITOR NOTE: *The Best of Vineyards...* is a [36]-page book printed by Westerham Press in an edition of 1000 hand-numbered copies on "Charles I hand-made paper" and illustrated with 18 full-page drawings by wine artist Charles Mozley. Bob Foster recently told your Editor: "There seems to be two different editions of the book. Besides the 1000 numbered copies printed on hand-made paper (and so indicated on the verso of the rear endpaper), there are copies printed on another paper, lacking this statement."]

An English autumn, though it hath no vines
Or red grapes like the sunny lands of song
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The claret light and the madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her,
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

From Lord Byron: *Don Juan*, 13, LXXVI



[From *The Best of Vineyards is the Cellar*, 1965]

Champagne. How the World's Most Glamorous Wine Triumphed over War and Hard Time by Don and Petie Kladstrup. New York: William Morrow, 2005. 286 pp. Hardback. \$23.95.

"a struggle of epic proportions . . ."

It's a shame. It's a crying shame. The authors do a fabulous job of showing the development of Champagne from a sweet, pale liquid into the wonderfully dry, sparkling wine adored by millions around the globe. They show time and again how the Champagne district was ravaged during wars such as the Franco-Prussian conflict, the First World War and the Second World War. They are so scholarly that they include eighteen pages of detailed footnotes documenting their sources. But they demolish the book's value as a reference tool by omitting any index at all. I don't understand. If you take the time to carefully show the sources for critical pieces of information, why not make that information readily available to the reader looking for material on a particular point. In all my years of writing book reviews, I can't recall another book with lengthy footnotes and no index. It's a shame because there is so much great information in this work.

The authors simultaneously trace the development of the region and the wine. Champagne started as a still wine that was normally a pale reddish color. Indeed rather than inventing the sparkling component in the wine, the legendary Dom Perignon spent his life trying to understand fermentation and trying to get the bubble out. The Kladstrups carefully show the slowly gained understanding of fermentation (and thus the source of the sparkling component) and the development of Champagne as a sweet sparkling wine. It remained a sweet beverage until the mid-1800s. The story of how Louis Pommery struggled against difficult odds to first make and then to sell a dry Champagne is captivating.

The book abounds with classic stories of resilience as invading army after invading army swept through Champagne. Some armies were careful not to harm the vineyards because their rulers wanted not to destroy but to capture the region, and have an uninterrupted supply of the bubbly. How the Champenois survived these waves of invaders is a struggle of epic proportions.

Some of the marketing events are amazing. Today we'd call them dirty tricks. In 1902 the Moët & Chandon agent in New York learned that a yacht purchased by German Kaiser Wilhelm I was to be launched in New York. The Kaiser was notoriously dedicated to the German sparkling wine *sekt*. President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt were to help launch the yacht, and cases of German *sekt* had been prepared. But somehow, when Mrs. Roosevelt broke the bottle across the bow, it turned out to be a bottle of Moët & Chandon. Each table for the guests had a magnum of Moët on it. Pictures of the launching with

continued, page 19 —

**Understanding Wine Technology and
The Science of Wine Reviewed
by Will Brown**

[Tendrill Will Brown, a retired physician, lives in southern Oregon wine country, where he is fast accomplishing his life-long dream of having a winemaking certificate from U.C. Davis. When not studying for his examinations, he can be found in the lab of Roxy Ann Winery. — Ed.]

Understanding Wine Technology: A Book for the Non-Scientist that Explains the Science of Winemaking by David Bird. Great Britain: DBQA Publishing, 2002. 226 pp., p.b., \$40.

I came across this gem of a book while preparing my review of *The Science of Wine* by Jamie Goode (following). I read the first edition of 2002, but later learned that The Wine Appreciation Guild had released the 2nd edition in 2005. The new edition will be reviewed for a later appearance in the *Tendrils*, but for the moment it will suffice to say that this little book is a good summary of wine science for readers without science in their background.

The author David Bird is trained as an analytical chemist and became a Master of Wine and a Chartered Chemist in 1981. Bird has established himself in the field of quality assurance and consults widely in Europe. The material in this book was originally prepared for students of the Diploma examination of the Wines and Spirits Education Trust in the U.K. and for students of the Master of Wine examination as set by the Institute of Masters of Wine.

Since this book was written with the non-scientific reader in mind, it was necessary to explain concepts of wine technology in an easily understandable way. In this the author has succeeded. He states "winemaking is an art and the winemaker an artist, but if an understanding of the basics of the science that lies behind the transformation of grape juice into wine can be grasped, then the potential of the grape can be realized" (p.2). He continues, "the application of science has given the winemaker choices at every stage of the process, and there are options, many of which have only become available because of scientific research" (p.4). The bulk of the text relates to these premises.

Bird discusses the taxonomy of grapes, cultural factors and constituents of grapes. He describes the winemaking process step by step from the crusher to the bottle. The role of oxygen, sulfur dioxide, and wine faults is included. All of this is pretty standard stuff in a book about winemaking, but he makes it very easy to understand, and it is a pleasure to read material so well organized. Even after many years of studying wine and working in the industry, I found the text

refreshingly clear and the organization quite logical.

My *raison d'être* in reviewing this book was to suggest that it be prerequisite reading for *The Science of Wine*, but it should have far greater appeal as a good lucid book on how wine comes to be what it is. I would recommend it for all friends of wine, scientifically trained or not, and I look forward to reading and reviewing the new edition.

The Science of Wine: From Vine to Glass by Jamie Goode. Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2006. 216 pp.

The University of California Press published *The Science of Wine* by Jamie Goode in March 2006. It originally appeared in Great Britain in 2005 as *Wine Science*, published by Mitchell Beazley. It apparently could not be released in North America with its original title because there is a pre-existing publication, *Wine Science* by Ron Jackson (Academic Press, 1994 and 2000). The distinction is important because although both books cover the field of wine science, they represent considerably different approaches to the material. The latter is encyclopedic and exhaustive while the former, the subject of this review, occupies a different niche.

Author Jamie Goode was unknown to me before this review, but I have learned that he is well known in Great Britain, where he maintains a popular wine website www.wineanorak.com, is a member of the U.K. Circle of Wine Writers, and a former scientific editor and current wine writer for the *Sunday Express*. He has contributed to *Harpers*, *Decanter* and *Wine International* and has earned a doctorate in plant biology. A rare breed indeed, he is a trained scientist who has become a wine maven and writer.

In his introduction, Goode discusses the fundamentals of the scientific method, and he tells us, "I'll be exploring how science is a useful tool in the fields of viticulture, winemaking, and also in terms of helping us understand the human interaction with wine" (p.11).

Viticulture

The first ten chapters cover topics in viticulture. Included are discussions of the biology of the grapevine, terroir and soils, and precision viticulture. There is a fine section on global warming and its implications for viticulture, citing material from Dr. Greg Jones of Southern Oregon University. Also covered are genetically modified vines, phylloxera, integrated pest management, biodynamics, and concepts of partial root drying as a style of irrigation. Biodynamics merits discussion "not primarily as an agricultural system, but as an altered philosophy or world view, that impacts on the practice of agriculture in numerous different ways" (p.68). Based on the teaching of Austrian philosopher and scientist Ru-

dolph Steiner, biodynamics seems more like a religion than science, but Goode looks for a scientific basis for the success of the method. The section ends with a good discussion of pruning, trellising systems, and canopy management. The bottom line for all of the viticultural issues and techniques is grape quality. "It used to be that vineyard work was seen as a dull, relatively unskilled prelude to the work of celebrity winemakers, now it is the vineyard managers that get the attention" (p.39).

Winemaking

The author begins the section on winemaking by discussing the polarity in approaches to that art, where some allow the wine to "make itself," and others manipulate extensively. He advocates a policy of freedom in winemaking coupled with honesty in disclosure. Several leading-edge and controversial techniques, micro-oxygenation, and reverse osmosis for alcohol reduction, receive thorough attention. These methodologies are based in the science of wine, and are increasingly being used to modify the basic structure of finished wines. Winemaking is applied chemistry and microbiology, and these sciences receive the author's full attention. There are chapters on the use of sulfur dioxide, without which few wines are made, and on the chemistry of reduced sulfur compounds in some flawed wines.

Microbes and wine are covered thoroughly and the role of yeasts, both "wild" and cultured is discussed, along with that of the malo-lactic bacteria. Brettanomyces, a spoilage yeast, deserves and receives his attention as well. Other topics explored include oak-aging and its manifestations, and the use of cork and alternative closures. There is a thorough discussion of the cork taint (TCA) and strategies to avoid it.

The final section explores the interactions of humans with wine. Here he considers the sensory aspects of wine with an erudite discussion of the physiology of taste, and the ethics of the manipulation of wine flavor by addition. He concludes with a section on wine and health and the benefits of moderate wine drinking.

Leading-edge Material

The material covered in this book is very leading-edge, so that much of it has not yet reached the mainstream of grape growing or winemaking. Much of the technology discussed here has only gained a foothold in the upper echelon of the winemaking community, and the cost of their wines reflects those innovations. Of course today's leading edge is tomorrow's mainstream, but how much manipulation is acceptable before winemaking is no longer an art but an applied science approaching that of the production of biologicals or pharmaceuticals?

A futuristic scenario from this material is already upon us. Because of a warming trend (read global warming), the grapes in many California regions are ripening early, and reaching unprecedented levels of sugar (brix) before achieving full flavor maturity. When the latter is finally attained the sugars are so high that the wines reach alcohol levels well in excess of 15%. The wines are then subjected to techniques to reduce the alcohol and bring them back into balance. This technology is expensive and not readily available, but the number of California wineries employing it is on the ascendancy.

Winemaking minimalists will abhor much of what is presented in this book, but it is the present and the future of winegrowing and winemaking in the world, and comes from some of our finest academic institutions, and leading practitioners.

Throughout the book, where scientific advances have raised ethical issues, such as genetically modified grapes, and alcohol reduction, the author weighs in on the side of reasoned and ethical solutions, and places himself squarely on the side of disclosure. He believes strongly that the consumers are entitled to know how the wines they are drinking have been manipulated. Perhaps even now we should be disclosing manipulations of sugar, acid, and alcohol, but that is rarely done.

I recently enjoyed the documentary wine movie *Mondovino*, where the peripatetic French wine consultant Michael Rolland is often seen on the telephone in his limousine on the way to visiting yet another client. He is heard making the recommendation "just micro-oxygenate it" ... reminding me of the physician telling the patient to "take two aspirin and call me in the morning."

This book is highly recommended for wine lovers who want to know what's going on in the field. Readers without a scientific background might find it hard going unless they start with a basic introductory book as noted above. All wine professionals should read it as a fine summary of leading-edge scientific practices in their constantly changing world. ■

EDITOR NOTE: Jamie Goode's book has received nothing but rave reviews. Be sure to read Hudson Cattell's review in the May/June issue of *Wine East*, where he concludes, "For many readers this may be the most important book they will read all year." Bob Foster, in the June/July 2006 issue of *California Grapevine* begins his review, "This book is fabulous, simply fabulous," and highly recommends "This superb book ... a must read for all wine drinkers. Buy this book."



LESSER WINE QUAKEs

by
Charles L. Sullivan

[In our January and April issues of this year of the 100th anniversary of the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906, wine historian Charles Sullivan presented Parts I and II of the vinous story of this catastrophic event. This concluding installment brings us up to date. — Ed.]



hen the Spanish moved into Alta California in 1769 their chief purpose was to establish a buffer zone against possible Russian encroachment from the north. They intended to accomplish this with a string of coastal forts (presidios) and perhaps with an extension of the

line of missions already established in Baja California.

After arriving in San Diego the new governor, Gaspar de Portolá, set off overland to find Monterey Bay and to build a presidio there. On July 28, 1769, his overland party learned that California was earthquake country. While crossing a little stream in what is today Orange County a heavy quake hit, knocking a soldier off his horse. A Franciscan father, accompany Portolá with an eye on possible mission sites, wrote that it lasted "half as long as an Ave Maria." He added that it was "horrifying" and was "repeated four times during the day." He named the stream "Rio de los Temblores."

The padres also noted in their diaries the lush, floral condition of the land here, with wild roses and freely flowing (in July!) streams, whose banks were adorned with wild grape vines. Here and in the coastal valleys to the north they would plant their agricultural colonies, the missions of Alta California.

Most of these missions from San Diego to Sonoma were agricultural successes, part of which included viticulture and winemaking. Life at the missions and the ranchos before the American Conquest in 1846 was continuously punctuated by earthquakes, some extremely violent. But in my research of those years, I cannot find mention of as much as one burst wine barrel. Even in the 1850s and early 1860s, when the young state had several great tremors, the public record affords no evidence of damaged wineries or burst wine casks.

October 21, 1868

Before the great quake of 1906, when California referred to the "big one" they meant that of October 21, 1868. It ripped the East Bay along the Hayward Fault and caused heavy damage in San

Francisco. As yet, northern California's great wineries and San Francisco's cavernous wine cellars had not yet been built. But the psychic shock-reaction to the temblor of one East Bay winegrower did set in motion a series of wine related events whose story has only recently ended.

Clement Colombet came to California from France in 1844 and made enough money in the Gold Rush to buy a large piece of land in the East Bay foothills just south of the old Mission San José. He took advantage of the four hot springs on the property and built a spa/hotel. In 1858 he planted 85 acres of vines and built a small winery. When the quake hit in 1868 he was in the process of fermenting 15,000 gallons of wine. He was so shattered by the resulting mess at the winery and hotel that the following April he sold it all to an Alameda real estate man for \$65,000. Five months later he sold it to Leland Stanford, the former governor, for \$112,000.

Stanford fixed up the winery and installed his brother Joshua to manage it. Their label was "Warm Springs Vineyard." (Today that area, Warm Springs, is one of the districts of the city of Fremont.) By the 1870s the winery was celebrated for its Riesling. But Stanford and his wife decided to settle across the bay on a "farm" they purchased in 1876. He deeded the Warm Springs estate to Joshua, who built a solidly constructed winery on the property that came through the 1906 quake with little damage, while just down the road the Gallegos Winery, the largest stone winery in the world, built at the same time as the new Warm Springs facility, was so badly damaged in 1906 that it never returned to operation. (See photos in the April WTQ.)

Joshua's son ran the Warm Springs operation until the 1920s. From 1919 until 1943 the Stanford structure was used for many things, including stables for race horses, but not to make wine. In the latter year the Weibel family bought the property, brought the winery back to life and replanted the vineyard. The Weibel list of wine products over the years was a long one, but sparkling wines were their most notable products.

In the 1990s the vineyards were ripped out and replaced by about 200 homes. The great old Stanford winery also quietly disappeared. A different use of this historic land today is unlikely, but its use between 1869 and 1990 would probably have been very different if a certain French winegrower had not been so frightened by the 1868 quake.

Rigid Construction

As California expanded in population after the 1860s, the amount of rigid structures susceptible to the force of earthquakes grew exponentially. Great wineries of rigid construction were built throughout the North

Coast area. California continued to have its seismic events but there were really no big ones in populated areas. The few we had were scattered about in the southern half of the state. Actually, between the great Tejon quake in 1857 and 1907 there were thirteen shakes in Southern California of a 5.5 magnitude or greater; but none of them has made it into our earthquake history books.

In Northern California there was a seismic calm, punctuated by the 1906 disaster and followed by another relative calm. The two big ones after 1906 weren't very big but happened in Southern California in places with plenty of rigid structures ready to be knocked down. One hit Santa Barbara in 1925, and the other was centered near Long Beach in 1933. That one had the power to shake Santa Monica so severely that my mother just caught my high chair as it went over. But from these there was no winery damage reported.

The Walking Winery

The calm in the north continued until 1980, but wine production and the movement, or creep, along the San Andreas Fault did catch the public's attention in the area near Hollister, in the hills southeast of Monterey.

The historic Almaden Winery, east of Los Gatos, was silent during Prohibition and, after a false start in 1934, was back in full production in 1942. The man in charge of the revived operation was San Francisco financier Louis Benoist. By the 1950s he could see that the Santa Clara Valley would not be keeping its famous orchards and vineyards for long. (Now few know it as anything other than Silicon Valley.) He, like several after him, saw the Central Coast as the place to plant new vineyards. In 1955 he began this move by acquiring the historic Valliant Winery and vineyards in the Cienega Valley, where winegrowing had dated from 1856. The winery had been built in 1939 after the old structure had collapsed due to what appeared to be some kind of movement of the earth. The new structure had just been christened when on June 24th it was hit by a real quake. The adobe walls pulled away from each other and girders separated from the brick work. New cracks opened in the ground around the building. The damage was repaired but over the years cracks continued to appear in several places in the structure. After Benoist bought the place in 1955 he had a geologist examine the property. Soon there were seismologists prowling the area. As yet the creeping nature of the San Andreas Fault was not fully understood. But unexplained damage to the main storage cellar led to the discovery that the structure sat right on top of an active branch of the main fault. The movement was gradually pulling the cellar apart.

Instruments were put in place to measure the

creep, which appeared to be moving about 12mm per year. In 1964 the Oakland Tribune reported that "only at the Almaden Winery ... has man discovered a sport where creep can be seen on the surface."

The wily Benoist did not bemoan his fate but broadcast the remarkable discovery. Soon high school science classes were making field trips to what was soon known as the "Walking Winery." Geology professors and their students were soon to follow. Benoist built a lavish tasting room and reception area to take care of the growing public interest in winery touring in the 1960s and '70s. There was always a powerful seismic component in his tours.

When Almaden closed shop in 1989, the historic property was acquired by a partnership and became the Cienega Valley Winery. When I recently asked one of the owners how things were going at the winery, he knew what I was getting at, and replied, "Everything's moving along as before. The place keeps us jumping."

The Shaking Eighties

California earthquake history since the Gold Rush did not follow the "cluster in time" pattern common in the rest of the world. But since 1980 northern California has had a noticeable cluster of winery rattling tremors. We shall see that in the long run they have tended to be more instructive than destructive.

The first, on January 24, 1980, was hardly noticed in the Bay Area, except in the Livermore Valley, seemingly right under the Wente Bros. Winery. They lost 25,000 gallons of wine, which one of the owners called "the least of our problems." Tank damage ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. "The winery sounded like a sheet metal shop, with the tanks buckling. It looks like the ground dropped six inches and came up again."

The next one, on April 24, 1984, was more widely felt and was awarded a name by the seismologists and the press. The Morgan Hill Earthquake shook the entire southern end of the Santa Clara Valley. East of San Jose, Mirassou lost almost \$100,000 worth of spilled wine when six large tanks buckled. The San Jose News reported that "160-ton casks danced like thimbles." To the south near Morgan Hill, the Pedrizzetti and San Martin wineries were also battered. Again, the great hurt was to the stainless steel tanks. The mess at Pedrizzetti moved the winemaker to a lively description: "It looked like the Jolly Green Giant went in there and crushed some monster aluminum beer cans."

The 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake seemed like another "big one," but it wasn't. It unleashed only 3% of the energy of the 1906 quake. Nevertheless, sixteen thousand residences were rendered unlivable; the total value of all structural damage was about \$12 billion.

Because the epicenter of the quake was located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, wineries there were rocked as never before. Just north of Los Gatos in the Monte Bello area the quake was hardly felt. Ridge winemaker Paul Draper reported that, "Nobody on this mountain had even a glass broken in their kitchen." In Los Gatos it all depended on which side of and how close to the fault you were. Just above town, Mirassou suffered huge sparkling wine losses at their facility in the old Novitiate. Two miles to the east most of the empty bottles in my red Bordeaux "1855 Classification" collection flew off their narrow north-south perch. Next to them on the east-west wall my old Sauternes bottles were undisturbed.

As you moved south toward the epicenter, winery damage increased. The San Jose Mercury News gave details of the damage at twenty-five wineries, thirteen of them serious. The heaviest loser earned a four-column spread in the Washington Post under the exaggerated headline, "Suddenly, for Wineries 1989 is a Very Bad Year." The story focused

on Silver Mountain Winery which was smashed by the jolt and gutted by the resulting fire. (The story was illustrated by the collapsed barrel racks at the David Bruce Winery.) Like the San Francisco wine merchants in 1906, owner Jerold O'Brien had no earthquake insurance, but like those merchants he was helped greatly by his fire insurance.

To the south at Felton, the Walker Winery was a total loss, having collapsed after being shaken off its foundation. But the main victims all over the district were barrels, tanks, and stacks of case goods. Ken Burnap's Santa Cruz Mountain Winery was a jumble of barrels and cases, but he noted philosophically, "In the department store of life, wine's pretty much in the toy department."

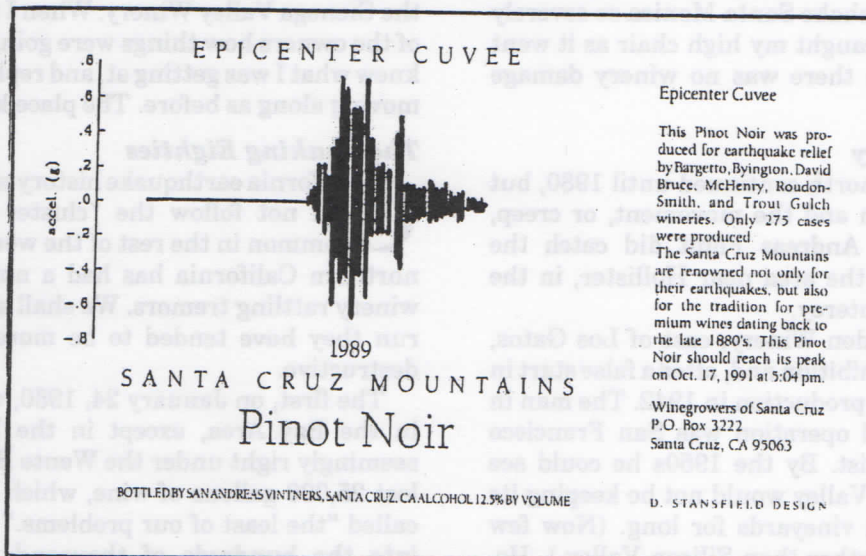
Next year a group of Santa Cruz Mountain wineries brought out an Epicenter Cuvée of 1989 Chardonnay, and in 1991 another of 1989 Pinot Noir. The profits were donated to earthquake relief. [EDITOR NOTE: Our special thanks to Santa Cruz Mountain Wine Growers and to Bargetto Winery who graciously supplied images of the Epicenter Cuvée labels.]

Seismic Protection in the Winery

The decade after the "shaking eighties" was a period of relative seismic calm in the California wine country. But the quakes of the previous years had served winery owners with an instructive series of insights and warnings. Well-built structures were *sine qua non*. But protecting the wine product by protecting its containers was generally seen as the best way to get ready for next "big one." Earthquake insurance was out of the question with its huge monthly payments and monstrous deductibles.

Industry publications such as Wines & Vines, Practical Winery, and Wine Business Monthly began publishing technical articles on seismic protection in

the winery. In 1999 the creation of the industry's Seismic Hazard Reduction Project was announced. In 2000 U.C. Berkeley's giant earthquake simulator in Richmond subjected an 18-foot-high stack of filled barrels to the effect of a 7.2 magnitude earthquake. It was obvious that safety restraints



were necessary to prevent the pile from collapsing.

As if Nature wanted to emphasize the U.C. Berkeley findings, the 6.5 San Simeon quake struck the Central Coast wine region December 22, 2003. Its center was located in the sparsely populated area about 25 miles west of Paso Robles. Yet more than fifty wineries in the general region sustained damage, almost entirely to wine containers and their contents. Structures came through in good shape. It was a day when barrel stacks went flying. At the historic Pesenti Winery, now Turley Wine Cellars, "700 barrels toppled like dominoes," with an estimated loss of about \$1,000,000.

The Next "Big One"

Seismologists think that the next "big one" will be along the Hayward Fault, whose last great shake was in 1868. It is the Rodgers Creek Fault, an extension of the Hayward Fault, that most directly threatens the Napa Valley. In recent history this area has suffered little more than toppled chimneys while the rest of the Bay Area was shaking. According to

the U.S.G.S., the Rodgers Creek Fault has a 32% probability of experiencing a quake of 6.7 or greater magnitude in the next 30 years.

On September 3, 2000, Mother Nature finally seemed to give the lower Napa valley a "wake-up call." It has been labeled as the Yountville quake since it was centered in the hills to the southwest of the famous wine village. Yet a seismic engineer on the scene reported that wineries near Yountville, Oakville, and Rutherford "didn't even lose Champagne flutes from their shelves." Down the road, the city of Napa experienced serious damage on soft sediments near the Napa River. Estimates of losses ran as high as \$50,000,000, but none of this damage was wine industry related.

But what of the Hayward Fault, which lies in menacing slumber under the East Bay homes and workplaces of about 1,250,000 from the city of Fremont up through Berkeley and Richmond? The Bay Area press, local governments, and U.S.G.S. have been working overtime for the last four years to awaken people to this danger "threatening at any moment to rupture with a cataclysmic jolt." In a park in Fremont a 15-foot pit has been dug, exposing the Fault, and affords visitors a 9000-year view of the Fault's history.

And the wine industry there? The Livermore Valley wineries are far enough away from the fault to avoid disaster if a 7.0 quake hits. And the East Bay wine country south of Hayward, which U.C.'s Eugene Hilgard thought the best in the state, is long gone.

But there is one winery of great importance on some fairly soft land in Alameda. I called Rosenblum Cellars to see if their precious barrels of Zinfandel were properly protected. I breathed a tentative sigh of relief to learn that their seismic engineer was the same who had conducted the collapsing-barrel experiments for the University in 2000.

FOSTER, *continued from page 13* —

a bottle of Champagne were flashed around the world. The event sparked an international incident in which Germany recalled its American ambassador.

There are numerous stories equally fascinating in the book. The problem is that there is absolutely no easy way to find individual events because of the lack of an index. The book is well worth reading; it is just not the stellar reference book it might have been. Highly recommended.

[Bob's reviews originally appeared in the February-March and April-May 2006 issues of *California Grapevine*. Visit their website calgrapevine.com for subscription information and/or a sample issue. — Ed.]

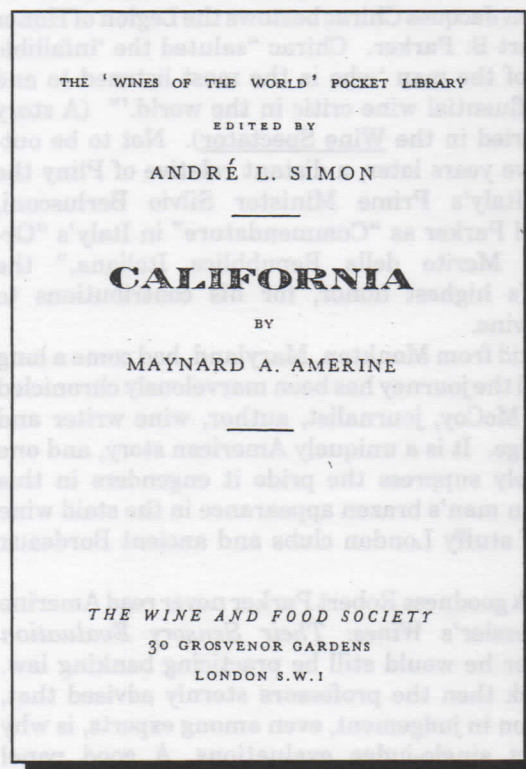
MARINACCI, *continued from page 31* —

better-known growers . . . which we have been asked to join, but which we are determined to fight and about which you will hear in another letter shortly." [4/20/55]

It would be the biggest war that Martin Ray ever waged with the California wine industry at large—but aimed in particular at a few of its best-known, most-respected practitioners. And Maynard Amerine and his friendship with MR inevitably would get caught in the crossfire.

[This story will be continued in the October 2006 issue.]

EDITOR NOTE: During his long and distinguished career as an enologist, Professor Maynard Amerine authored more books on the technical aspects of wine and winemaking than any other author in the English language. Amerine also enjoyed the history and bibliography of wine, and wrote on both. See *Gabler Wine into Words* (2004) and the *Wayward Tendrils Newsletter* (Vol.8, Nos.2, 3, 1998) for appreciations of Maynard Amerine and his works. The book illustrated below is unique in that of the seventeen books in the André Simon-edited "Wines of the World" Pocket Library series, only the *California* volume named an author other than Editor Simon.



DE GUSTIBUS NON EST DISPUTANDUM

A Book Review

by Jack Fairchild

[Tendrill Jack Fairchild is a Napa Valley wine enthusiast with a vintage thirst for wine history and wine appreciation. He has taught local courses in both. This is his second contribution to our WTQ. — Ed.]

The Emperor of Wine: The Rise of Robert M. Parker, Jr. and the Reign of American Taste, by Elin McCoy (HarperCollins, 2005.) 342 pp. (including 13 pages of Sources, and an Index). \$26.

“... can't wait for the movie version”



ake yourself back to the vintage year A.D. 80. Wine critic Gaius Plinius Secundus raves about the Falernian, giving the Faustus Vineyard a perfect “C” score. The amphorae are flying off the shelves in Roman wine shops. Emperor Titus proudly pours it at state dinners. There hasn’t been a vintage like this, experts say,

since Nero’s time.

Fast forward 1,919 years to the Elysee Palace in Paris. As wife Pat and daughter Maia look on, French President Jacques Chirac bestows the Legion of Honor on Robert B. Parker. Chirac “saluted the ‘infallible palate’ of the man ‘who is the most listened to and most influential wine critic in the world.’” (A story NOT carried in the *Wine Spectator*). Not to be outdone, five years later, a distant relative of Pliny the Elder, Italy’s Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, anointed Parker as “Commendatore” in Italy’s “Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana,” the country’s highest honor, for his contributions to Italian wine.

The kid from Monkton, Maryland, had come a long way, and the journey has been marvelously chronicled by Elin McCoy, journalist, author, wine writer and wine judge. It is a uniquely American story, and one can barely suppress the pride it engenders in this American man’s brazen appearance in the staid wine world of stuffy London clubs and ancient Bordeaux castles.

Thank goodness Robert Parker never read Amerine and Roessler’s *Wines: Their Sensory Evaluation* (1976), or he would still be practicing banking law. Way back then the professors sternly advised that, “Variation in judgement, even among experts, is why we reject single-judge evaluations. A good panel should have five or more qualified judges.”

My, my, how far we have come. Wineworld mirrors the world of religion; from polytheism to monotheism. The Amerine book is instructive in other ways, mostly negative. Over half the book, Part II, is “Statistical Procedures,” replete with Frequency Distributions, graphs, mathematical formulae, Analysis of Variance and other mind-numbing arcana that can only appeal to the nerdiest of statisticians. Talk about snob appeal! Is it any wonder that ordinary citizens flock to someone who simply says in understandable English, “Drink this.”?

Parker’s big break came in 1982 when he early-on recognized the brilliance of the vintage in Bordeaux, while his competition—Bob Finigan, Dan Berger, Terry Robards for the *Wine Spectator*—did not. The ’82 vintage was a watershed for Bordeaux: “Lafite’s prices started at 70 percent higher than the year before and quickly escalated” and “the speculators who listened to Parker made money. According to the *Wine Spectator*’s auction correspondent, Peter Meltzer, between 1983 and 2002 the wines rose 2,012 percent in value—far outperforming the 770-percent return of the Dow Jones during the same period.”

Most wine-writers soon fell into line. The *Wine Spectator* adopted Parker’s infamous 100-point system in 1985 and Captain Marvin Shanken soon put the S.S. Spectator in full reverse regarding the 1982 Bordeaux vintage.

Of course, much of this is of purely voyeuristic interest for the great majority of us who drink vin ordinaire and have shallow pockets; and the dreaded fear of homogenization of \$200/bottle Burgundies is hardly going to send Hearty Burgundy drinkers to the barricades. Still, as H.L. Mencken replied when asked why he remained in the United States when he found so much of its culture puerile, “Why do people go to zoos?” To be fair to the Great Man, he regularly runs “Best Buys Under \$20” in the *Wine Advocate*.

Parker’s influence is slightly less in California due to the wider accessibility of the wines and the plethora of competing wine writers. His annual Big Northern California Report is must reading for Californios. Elin McCoy accompanied The Man on his 2002 visit to Napa, and her report of it is alone worth the price of admission.

The crux of the whole business—smell and taste—is acutely surveyed by McCoy. She has consulted Ann Noble and the other sensory sleuths at Davis, coming down firmly on the side of the fifth basic taste, the meaty taste the Japanese call umami, in addition to the old favorites of sweet, sour, salty and bitter.

Assigning “Parkerpoints,” however, is not without some risk. The fall 1993 issue of Parker’s *Wine Buyers’ Guide* contained two sentences not taken lightly by Francois Faiveley, one of the richest, most beloved and powerful figures in Burgundy. Faiveley

sued Parker, et al, for libel. The case was settled out of court, but essentially Parker lost. As with most things in the Great Man's charmed life, it only redounded to his benefit:

One of the ironies was that although the lawsuit ended up costing Parker more than \$100,000 in legal fees, the publicity caused the book to sell like crazy in France. Essentially the extra royalties paid off most of the legal bills, and the exposure probably boosted sales of all his subsequent books published in France.

Parker's taste in wine is well-known, perhaps expressed best in his now-famous December 2000 *[Wine Advocate]* excoriation of Tim Mondavi:

His use of the word "nerve" and expressions such as "clarity of focus" are used to justify what appears to be increasingly light and, to my way of thinking, indifferent, innocuous wines that err on the side of intellectual vapidness over the pursuit of wines of heart, soul, and pleasure. As I said last year, I believe he is going against what Mother Nature has given California, the ability to produce wines of exceptional ripeness and gorgeously pure, intense flavors. Tim Mondavi, who produced profound Cabernet Sauvignon Reserves in 1987, 1990, 1991, and 1994, seems to have repudiated that winemaking philosophy in favor of what Europeans call "delicacy" or "finesse." All of this is perplexing, and to my palate, the wrong way to go. The pursuit of elegance and finesse is certainly a laudable goal, but many other wineries seem to be accomplishing it without compromising the hedonistic richness and multilayered textures that California can achieve as easily as any viticultural region in the world, assuming yields are kept low and ripe fruit is harvested.

Think it over, should California try to duplicate what is being produced in Bordeaux, Burgundy, the Rhone Valley, Tuscany, or Piedmont? Should anyone in California really want to? Approximately six dozen or so of California's 800+ wineries are producing world-class wines of ultra-ripeness, majestic richness, and provocative intensity. This is what California does best, and few viticultural areas in the world can match such advantages in climate. To try and compromise Mother Nature's gift of power and richness for some notion of Euro-elegance seems dead wrong.

Robert Parker, Jim Laube, et al, have presided over a paradigm-shift in wineworld, where focus has shifted from the wine itself to the numerical points ascribed to that wine by wine critics. Ergo: Enologix, a Napa/Sonoma company with 10,000 wines in its database, "specializing in helping winemakers 'cross the 90-point break.'" And they deliver. "Enologix held a symposium in Sonoma to advise clients on how to deal with this year's (2005) cooler weather. The upshot? An astonishing 39 client wines scored 90 points or higher in a recent issue of Parker's *The Wine Advocate*."

Leo McCloskey, the company's founder, considers himself an artist, "who some might say has turned to the dark side."

Withal, the Emperor has been good for wine, and Elin McCoy has been good for biography—this is must reading for anyone seeking to understand wineworld in the twenty-first century.

I can't wait for the movie version. Orson Welles would have made a great Parker. On the other hand, there is a vigneron in the Loire, near Angers, who I hear is making a decent wine, who might do just as well, feller by the name of Depardieu. ■



"t.e.g." / "a.e.g."

A worthy Tendril recently wrote asking about "t.e.g." and "a.e.g." — "I am sure we all have books in our collections with special gold treatments to their page edges, either the top edges only, or all three sides. How is this done?" The *Encyclopedia of the Book* by Geoffrey Glaister (2nd ed., Oak Knoll Press / British Library, 1996) provides a good definition and explanation. GILT EDGES: "Book edges which have been covered with gold leaf. For this binding process the trimmed book is put in a simple screw press where the edges are shaved in order to obtain as smooth a surface as possible. The surface is then primed with paste and Armenian bole [a powdered red clay that gives the gold a greater depth and lustre] and polished with paper shavings or something similar. A diluted solution of albumen or gelatine is spread on as a medium, and then the gold leaf is applied. After a short period for drying, glazing is done with a burnisher, if necessary, at first through waxed paper and then directly on the edges. Different qualities of paper call for slight variations of treatment. It is usual to dust the sheets with talcum to prevent them sticking together. When gilding is wanted on the edges of cased books the work is done by automatic machines using reel-fed gold foil."



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Vinaceous Correspondents:

Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles

The Third Article in a Series / Eighth Section

by **Barbara Marinacci**

This is the eighth installment of a long article about the friendship between the "legendary" and contentious California winemaker Martin Ray and the eminent enologist Maynard A. Amerine, of UC Davis. It takes up the main features in the period of their reconnection in early 1955, following the latter's return from his sabbatical year in Europe. It also sets the stage for the Rays' all-out war with the American wine industry in what, then and afterwards, they would usually and proudly call their "Wine Quality Fight," for which they had sought Amerine's approval. Documentation comes primarily from the Rays' letters to and from Amerine, and from selections from other letters written at the time. Author Barbara Marinacci, who is Martin Ray's stepdaughter, thanks John L. Skarstad, Archivist, Special Collections, and Axel Borg, Wine Bibliographer of the Viticulture & Enology Collection housed in the Maynard Amerine Room at U.C. Davis Shields Library, for their frequent assistance in this writing project. Also, above all, she appreciates editor Gail Unzelman's dedicated work and patient indulgence in publishing this lengthy series, which is intended not only as an MR portrait but also to amend, even correct, the historical record—mostly concerning Ray's combative involvement in improving the nation's production of fine wines.

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

- 8 -



fter Maynard Amerine returned to Davis at the close of 1954 from his sabbatical year abroad, it took him several weeks to settle back into his house, reoccupy his office on the university campus, and resume his faculty responsibilities and research projects. During that time Martin and

Eleanor Ray pinned down the time and place for their get-together with him in the new year.

Much of the information about Amerine's contacts with the Rays during the first months of 1955 would get embedded in the Rays' letters to other people. Ceasing now were the numerous postcards, some crammed with observations conveyed in tiny script, and the occasional letters that Amerine had sent the Rays from Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, France, and other places along his 1954 sabbatical route. After all, they could readily communicate again either by phone or, better yet, in person—when Maynard came up the mountain in Saratoga or the Rays drove over to his home. In both places, as before, they enjoyed their customary wine-tasting and -drinking sessions and long-enduring dinners (for all were cooks, epicures, and oenophiles).

On January 20th Maynard joined the Rays at their home on top of Mt. Eden, to help celebrate ER's 51st birthday. Right away he would have been given a tour of the new house they'd moved into after his departure more than a year earlier. Almost fortress-like with its indestructible poured-concrete walls, it replaced the redwood house they'd lived in for only a week before it burned to the ground.

With just the three of them there, the relaxed and

intimate atmosphere was conducive to the good talk, tale-telling, and laughter that had abounded in the trio's past socializing. Far into the night, Maynard regaled them with stories of his adventures in Europe, including observations of vineyards and wineries visited, and opinions of wines imbibed, and Rusty would have shared his experiences during a just-finished selling trip in southern California. Of course plenty of wine was served too. "Every minute was delightful, fat with stories of Maynard's, and many many wine thoughts and observations," ER wrote to her son Barclay on the following day. It had been a prolonged reunion event, for Amerine stayed overnight in the guesthouse—the oak-shaded redwood cabin that had been the Rays' first home together on the mountaintop.

MR naturally had been anxious for his enologist friend to taste an array of his variously vintaged wines, in both cask and bottle, and next day they entered the cellar to start in. Some wines would be new to Maynard, others matured and bottled since his last acquaintance with them. After the tasting, Rusty wrote to his good friend Angelo Pellegrini—a professor of English at the University of Washington.

Had a welcome-home dinner for Amerine. There were just the three of us, but we sat at table from 6 until 12:30, and it was an eight-bottle night—not bad, what? But Amerine's astonishment at tasting through our cellars was perhaps the highlight of the whole visit. This was the second day, and he had never tasted any of our Pinots and none of our recent Cabernets. We started, as the German do, with our oldest Pinot Noir, the 1948 (excluding, of course, the old 1941 [made at Masson] with which he is very familiar). We then tasted the 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, and 1954. He agreed with me that the 1948 and 1950 were not nearly as big wines as the 1951—but it was the 1952 and 1953 that really bowled

him over. He said without hesitation that he considers them in character and quality unlike any other reds heretofore made in the country, and ranked them with the greatest French Burgundies, saying, "If no one else ever makes a great Pinot Noir in California there will have been these two." I never have seen Amerine quite so astonished over wine.... The 1954's are a little new to judge yet with the more finished wines and if they do not come up to the two previous vintages I will not be unhappy because there is no uniformity in vintages—each year is different—even the 1952 and 1953 while perhaps comparable in quality can easily be distinguished one from the other. Naturally we are quite happy about all of this. [1/24/55]

Altogether, it made an auspicious beginning to the resumption of the two wine lovers' close connection, and the Rays anticipated sharing many more happy events and superlative wine evaluations with Maynard in the years to come.

Back to Selling

In several letters sent to Amerine in 1954 MR had mentioned the urgent need to amplify his income—and hence his business—by expanding both winegrowing and sales. The first involved long-range planning for developing more vineyard areas; and since Maynard's advice had already been requested, when together again they surely touched upon the matter. The second activity required selling off suitable portions of the wine inventory MR had built up during the past seven years, vintages now stored within the capacious cellar below the new house.

Selling, though, for MR meant doing driving trips away from Mt. Eden, to make personal calls on wine retailers. Since establishing his eponymous bonded winery in 1945, he hadn't conducted ambitious sales campaigns, but instead sold modestly through a few local stores and to loyal private customers. His wine production during the 1940s and early 1950s, anyway, hadn't been large. He'd also wanted to age these wines before releasing them—especially, of course, his reds.

MR would have told MA how toward the year's end he had first started going out to various localities in the San Francisco Bay area, reactivating connections with places (primarily liquor stores) that in past years carried his wines made at Masson, then some new Martin Ray ones, and also setting up new outlets. Before taking to the road, MR had carefully plotted the wine-vending stores he would visit, determining what he'd say and do. Years earlier, he had perfected his persuasive powers first as a super-salesman of magazine ad space, then of stocks and bonds. When becoming proprietor of Paul Masson in 1936 he had to build a sales network, so he adapted these skills to another commodity. Now he was reviving and honing

shrewd sales tactics. He was confident of his ability to talk winningly to retailers, getting wine-shop managers to purchase and stock his wines—though they were more expensive than any other higher-end California wines, with some priced as high as the better French and German imports (if not the stellar-ranked ones). He could also work on charming restaurant and club managers, even deal cannily with wholesalers or distributors if necessary.

But actually Martin Ray *hated* selling. Years earlier, he had told Julian Street how it adversely affected him both physically and emotionally. Much as he recognized the crucial importance of vigorous sales to business success, he would far rather design campaigns and direct other people's efforts. Yet now his small, under-financed, and labor-intensive winegrowing enterprise could scarcely afford to hire or commission sales reps. Nor would MR, anyway, have trusted even experienced wine salesmen to know how to sell *his* wines properly.

Possessor of great physical and mental energy, MR usually gave the impression of indefatigability and indestructibility, and indeed his stamina, along with his determined willingness to participate in all sorts of labors required in both winegrowing and mountain living, was admirable—downright amazing. However, as numerous Ray letters disclose, in a stressful state he would get overwrought, at such times variously experiencing dyspepsia, a racing pulse, high blood pressure, insomnia, headaches, backaches, and allergy flare-ups. (It didn't help, either, that he often drank too much wine, whether in an exuberant mood or an angry, nervous, or depressed one.)

ER described MR's abiding tension over selling, as both prospect and activity, to her son Barclay, making it clear that family members should coddle him during stressful times.

Rusty knows that selling always has been very hard on him, it gets him worked up terrifically, always did even when he was very young and before his nervous break—but he can handle it, tho at a heavy price today. Since it is necessary for him to do it himself, at least for several years now till he gets thing established, the rest of us must realize how very very hard it is on him, the high tension about him, and try to keep it in mind at all times and ease him in every way we can.

Then she added this, relevant to recent explosive household ambience:

One thing is worst of all, controversy of any kind. From now on there must not be ANY. And we can tell when he feels especially edgy, and strained and tired—and at such times we must go out of our way to soothe him, no matter how we may feel, or what our own troubles or complications at the time. [2/20/55]

Around Martin Ray, though, it was often hard to avoid controversy.

A Discordant Family Drama

When Maynard visited the Rays in mid-January, during some of the time on those two days spent in their company he probably heard a lot about the disastrous holiday visit, a month before, of their son Peter Martin Ray and his new bride, Terry (whom he had married several months earlier).

Several months later, in purposeful retrospect, ER would trace what had happened to Rusty's nervous system back to his first forays at becoming a wine salesman again.

He started out selling in the pre-Christmas period when nobody wants to have anything to do with wines, their big profits in the year hinging on spirits business at that time—and he had to put just terrific pressure on to make sales. He did make it, when nobody else could have done it. But it almost killed him, and none of us realized his precarious condition, or we certainly would have joined in canceling all parties & all the strain. [4/3/55]

Eleanor was becoming accustomed to blaming herself, and others too, for not being sensitive and sensible enough, when it was evident that Rusty was very tense or riled up, to prevent horrible scenes from happening. Twenty years later she would describe to his physician a chronic mental disability caused by the “nervous breakdown” (most likely a stroke caused by cerebral hemorrhage) MR had suffered in the early 1930s: “There was permanent brain/nervous damage that remains, though not observable. It is vital to understand this, to keep him calm and operating at his usual affable level,” she said, then told how the psychiatrist had counseled Elsie, urging to “avoid all noise, confusion, and controversy.” ER went on:

Then when she was gone, and I tried to take her place, I lacked the psychiatric understanding and guidance. When he stated opinions I'd pop up with some diverging idea of my own, thinking we were just DISCUSSING. He would cry out NOT TO ARGUE!

Over the years I've learned that any divergence from his expressed point of view must be handled WITH EXTREME CARE, realizing fully that due to the damage he sustained he was simply unable to grasp divergence as anything but OPPOSITION. In a flash his nervous system reacts with angry belligerence. Any further conversation should then be stopped, for if pursued it worsens, for his state deteriorates. [1/17/76]

When the Rays shared with their close and trusted friend their distress over their recent experiences, unresolved as yet, during the recent Christmas-to-New Year's family get-together, they described the course of events from their own perspective—which of course always had to be MR's. Even before Peter and Terry's arrival they had been upset with them for various reasons, which MR would soon detail in an eight-page, single-space typed letter. The fact that he wrote it on the very day that Amerine left Mt. Eden

indicates that MA had urged him to record the grievances he'd been hearing about, then send them off to Peter to consider.

“Dr. Amerine was here late last night, and ... we were in high spirits because the atmosphere was conducive to happiness and celebrating. There was no emotional torment, and we all retired in good condition, and arose feeling fit and fine. I mention this to contrast the celebration that marked your coming home for the holidays,” was how MR started out. Then—

Your Mum and I haven't had a single argument about anything since you threw that bomb in our lap, about Terry not liking a lot of things around here. When Terry made the mistake of criticizing your family to you, when you made the mistake of permitting her to do it, when your Mum and Barclay made the mistake of not supporting me as head of the family, and when I made the mistake of turning on your Mum for having sided with you, you can see how the love and harmony of a family can be shattered so quickly. We are all part of this family and we have to work together just as your Mum and I have learned to work together.... The main thing is to face the issue, and then set about solving it. [1/21/55]

MR's letter was meant to launch this problem-solving, and in it he complained about many dissatisfactions with PMR and with Terry, separately and together. Readers detached from the scene can understand how the newest Ray family member, with British reserve in her upbringing, might react to a highly charged environment that demanded instant bonding. Nor had her spouse seemingly prepared her for excessive wine consumption and the apparent scrutiny inevitably watching her every move, recording her every word. Appalled and on the defensive, she quickly became withdrawn and glacial. Rusty Ray, who took immediate dislike to women who struck him as cold, condescending, and controlling, showed dismay and disapproval of Peter's spousal choice. Erupting, it was followed by Peter's more measured outrage. At some point in the domestic melee Eleanor came to her son's defense—to Rusty an intolerable act. The newlyweds exited the unhappy household when they accompanied Peter's twin to Pasadena (where Barclay was completing his doctorate in geology at Caltech), before returning to their Cambridge home (where PMR was finishing his PhD at Harvard, in botany—Terry having just received hers).

In his long epistolary diatribe (interspersed with comments about his own and Eleanor's childhoods) MR made such comments as these, which showed suspicious alarm that Peter might be removed from the winegrowing family's circle—interfering with his dynastic plans.

There is no people on the face of the earth more narrow, arrogant, bigoted, suspicious, and dictatorial than this dreary middle class of England, always trying to impose their narrow views on everyone about them.... All of us have to constantly look at ourselves and our ancestors with the idea of making some improvement as we go along. You now have to consider Terry's background ... Since you permitted Terry to criticize your family, and since between the two of you you built up just about the biggest emotional disturbance any family ever suffered and survived, it would only be a further step to have ... you finally settled in England, where it's just about as certain as anything that everyone is going to be wiped out when they begin dropping hydrogen bombs.... She doesn't want you to have a close family tie so far from England. Such things happen every day. Men find themselves in strange positions, perhaps living in foreign lands, or devoting their lives to pursuits they never intended, and all because their wives willed it that way, and took them step by step away from what was their original wish, training or intention. [1/21/55]

Yet in the same letter MR at times seemed fatherly. For instance, inappropriately discursive, he wrote about his own childhood and family members with mingled praise and blame, ostensibly to deliver both guidance and warnings to his stepson. Altogether, MR's letter is fascinating in its documentation of a peculiar psychopathology—as most of his tell-off letters are apt to be (and sometimes ER's too, in their long-sustained *folie-à-deux* partnership).

PMR responded by taking Rusty himself to task—in a forthright way presenting his own views about the recent family discord, explaining the deeds misjudged and inactions resented—all the while lobbing in his own accusations. For someone who was both a young man (aged 23) and a highly focused scientist, this letter was a remarkable accomplishment in both human observation and angry rationality. What PMR said would apply well to numerous altercations, furious and prolonged, or abruptly truncated by an exit, that he and others—family members, erstwhile friends, business associates—were bound to have with MR in years to come.

I have noticed in the past your morbid tendency to observe, select, judge, remember and accumulate small ordinary happenings of no significance, and later collect and present them in a scheme wherein, fitted together, each contributes significantly to the positive proof of some sinister trait. All indications to the contrary are discarded and forgotten. It is not unlike the current tactics of certain government "security" boards and congressional "investigating" committees. [Reminder note: This was the time of loyalty oaths and HUAC—McCarthy's rampaging House Un-American Affairs Committee.] . . .

Because the expression of our attitudes is not at every

moment equal to your exact desires you generate, in the fashion of manic depression, an emotional state so grave it "has hit you even harder than the fire." Talk constantly to me about selfishness, this is the very essence of your behavior.

I have had enough of bullying and misrepresentation. Frank advice, given considerately and lovingly, I earnestly desire, and that part of your letter's contents based on fact rather than your imagination I take seriously to heart, even if it was couched in language so despising as to provoke this reply instead of the appreciative one just a little sense on your part would make possible. And I am no longer so naïve as to think that writing at such length will do any good towards bridging the gulf of misunderstanding you have chosen to place between us; your response on the night of your big blowup proved to me how the sticks are stacked. My humble suggestions brought to you respectfully in the simple interests of family harmony were condemned, twisted and warped before morning into an example of impudence and effrontery which has given your souls no peace since. You operate on the principle that our shortcomings are liable to abusive criticism while yours are susceptible of no suggestion, however gently made, and ridiculously thought I was challenging your authority or leadership, just as if the President should try to refuse to allow a congressman to disagree with his views, on the basis that he might take control of the government....

I doubt not that you will view this as another example of ghastly impudence and just the kind of thing you were trying to warn me against: effrontery it certainly is, and such of the like which provoked it could have no other answer.... In your final fury perhaps you will remember that it was you who raised the tomahawk. Terry and I are going to live our lives as human beings, not pasture animals. If you choose to herd us like swine you can hardly expect less placid consequences, nor to perceive that improvement in our personalities towards which your remarks, unless I am badly mistaken, were really directed. [1/28/55]

Peter managed to end his four-page letter with "much love, and hoping for a brighter future." Now that both sides had delivered their volleys while expressing views and misgivings about the awful holiday brouhaha, the outward stress and unhappiness between them began to dissipate. Right after Peter's letter arrived ER wrote to her son on her own, accounting for what had gone wrong during his visit.

Rusty is away all day selling.... He really hated to start out this morning, it is a tough job.... It takes a great deal out of one, starting out to sell something new to new customers, at this stage of life—and as you know, dealing with liquor men is dealing with a tough racket—so I'm very proud of Rusty, being so successful. I don't think

many men could do it, what he is doing. And think of the prices he is getting, too! Amazing accomplishment, I say. Three times he has started out, now, starting sales of his wine from scratch—which makes it even harder for him to start out, of course.... But Rusty has great spirit, so necessary to such a task. Nevertheless this big job (that he says will take him 3 years to establish) takes an awful lot out of him. To do the job he gets keyed up to a terrific nervous pitch—and that is terribly tough on his nervous system, which sustained a complete breakdown when he was in the bond business (and nerves are never the same after such a break)—all of which I have to keep in mind at all times, to protect him against irritations of all kinds.

Though ER sorely regretted having failed to be, as yet, the perfect wife, she also wanted her sons to share in the future responsibility of protecting MR from his own mental quirks and demons.

Sometimes I don't do as well as I should. It's easy enough to say this in talking, but difficult to follow through on—and to see that he meets relaxation at every turn, and plenty of sleep.... After Rusty's nervous break [Elsie] learned exactly what she could and couldn't say and do, and at what times, to keep him from being nervous and irritated—and that seems a wonderful accomplishment for a woman, to my mind—I haven't had much chance to practice all this in the past, and realize I could and should have done better. For Rusty by nature is the gayest, happiest and most enthusiastic of people, so quick and warm in his reactions to others—but when worn out, with his nerves frazzled, irritation drives him mad, almost beyond all endurance.

I mention this in reflecting especially over the holidays when you were here, when I feel all of us had we been fully aware of how terribly over-tired Rusty was could have done so much for him we failed to do, and consequently protected him and made him happy and in return made us all happier. I'm sure we can do better in the future. [1/31/55]

At this time the Rays worked out between them an understanding about the proper division of power in their relationship. In the Ray Papers a document handwritten by ER—dated February 13, 1955 (and therefore several weeks after Amerine's visit)—and signed by them both, states: "In all matters of importance we will advise and discuss with each other, but if we cannot agree between us then the ultimate decision will be made by Rusty." Rarely in the future would she ever question his authority, and probably she never again consciously challenged it.

For some years, Peter and Terry usually managed to be both attentive and pragmatically circumspect in their communications and visits with the Rays. Living at a considerable distance—first in Cambridge, then in Ann Arbor—decidedly helped maintain the peace. However, a spin-off soon occurred from the spectacle

of Rusty's behavior—overwrought, dictatorial, drunken and loutish, harshly reproving—that December of 1954. Barclay realized that he dare not ever bring his German fiancée, Maria, into such family mayhem. He allowed their engagement, effected under MR's progeny-seeking pressure the previous summer, to fizzle. It was also clear to him that finding any woman guaranteed to please Rusty Ray, then sustain his liking, might be an impossible assignment.

This account of an early Ray family conflict indicates how periodic ruptures could, and eventually would, undermine Rusty Ray's dream of perpetuating a winegrowing kingdom on Mt. Eden. Furthermore, over the years the intra-familial disputes were paralleled by numerous relationship conflicts and their terminations, with discords and dissolutions precipitated by MR's erratic disposition and behavior. Ever lurking beneath his bonhomie social demeanor was a distrustful paranoid who could become savagely critical of people, particularly when something done or said, perhaps unwittingly, set him off. Whenever people left his circle, or just displeased or disappointed him, he was likely to predict their doom, financial or otherwise. He also had the autocrat's (or cult leader's) need to control the thinking and actions of others in his personal or professional life—and the closer the connection, the more intensive and intrusive his efforts would be.

Thus far, though, Maynard Amerine had done nothing to rouse MR's dark side. But certainly he had witnessed it directed toward others, as it had been toward Peter.

Moving into Springtime

When two of Amerine's purchases on MR's behalf in France and Germany arrived at Mt. Eden, they were soon put to use. The new French oak barrels coming from Louis Latour were deposited at the port of San Francisco in mid-February. After MR promptly picked them up and took them into his cellar, Eleanor told Barclay about them:

Our six casks just arrived from France, and they are most exciting looking. We shellacked and rubbed them, and they are golden wonders. Shorter than our barrels, but much fatter at the bulge, very heavy fine old oak, beautifully made, so sturdy and handsome. Rusty has been washing them now for several days, put hot water in several that leaked so they are now "taking up." Evidently they couldn't water-test them before shipping, or they would have molded inside if damp. [2/18/55]

Two weeks later ER wrote to PMR:

Rusty has the French casks all taken up by now, one was a big job, the one that had a knot in one stave, looked hopeless for many days. He was smart to work on just one at a time, otherwise it would have been a mess in the

cellar. Rusty has figured out why he thinks they put so very few nails in those wooden hoops on the casks—so you could take them off now and then without causing too much trouble, to drive in the metal hoops [beneath them] when necessary. He hasn't had to do this so far, as the maker anticipated the amount they would expand. Tomorrow we're going to filter the Madame Pinot blanc de noir 1954 champagne material using the new German filter pads, we're anxious to see how they work. [3/2/55]

ER's last sentence mentioned the fine-filter Seitz pads that Amerine had acquired at MR's request for use in clearing his white wines. She wrote Barclay next day to report that they had continual problems with clogging, and that they didn't finish the filtering job until 4:15 a.m.—having gone through the process five times and using a total of 45 pads. Still, she pronounced themselves "thrilled with the filtered wine, which was tart and beautiful. It is going to be a champagne out of this world."

Several letters ER wrote at this time, like this one to PMR, told how she and Rusty had taken time off to go and see Amerine—not without a painful consequence.

We had a fine visit with Maynard last week in Davis, a beautiful dinner at his house and stayed over with him. Maynard and I were dancing, he loves that kind of dancing where you whirl in circles both together and separately—but what he doesn't understand, when you turn separately you don't hang onto the girl's hand or you twist her fingers off. He kept grabbing my little finger in a vise-like grip as I turned, as if afraid he'd lose me—and to my horror I found my little finger damaged so badly it seemed broken for a couple of days! However, it was just badly sprained—imagine!!! It has caused me no end of pain and trouble, I can just begin to type again now, after a week, but my p's still are touchy and delicate. [3/2/55]

Two months later it was Maynard's turn to visit the Rays, and ER happily reported on it to PMR.

Maynard dropped by for lunch the other day—Friday. And we had a wonderful time. He has a beautiful new convertible which we loaded with wild clematis for a dinner he was giving that night—also an exquisite bird's nest found among the clematis, with two very lovely turquoise eggs in it. He was using this as the natural motif for decorating his table. What do you think of that? He drove off wreathed in smiles almost as fetching as was the clematis itself draped about him! [5/2/55]

Spring had arrived and both Rays were feeling ebullient about any number of things in their life. For instance, MR's wine-selling trips, previously dreaded, were almost becoming heady sprees. By now they had gone down several times to the Los Angeles area to try opening up a few high-end outlets for Martin Ray wines, and to their surprise MR did nicely in what was now the West Coast's best wine market. A raft of

incoming wine orders, however, meant that the Rays now had to fill them themselves. Wines that were bottled-aged had to be decanted and rebottled, then labeled, packed in cases, and shipped off. There were also the vineyards for MR to take care of, with only nephew Will's imperfect help. As he wrote to Maynard:

We will start to plow just as soon as we get back from the trip we are leaving on tomorrow—Los Angeles, Palm Springs, Las Vegas....

Well, anyway, there has been a stepped up number of visitors, too. But from the day we got home about the first of this month, we never lost a single day and kept to a schedule that got the shipments off yesterday. We sent out 50 cases that net us about \$1600, or average \$32 per case net to us. There will be other shipments that will run the months sales to \$2000. Not bad considering everything. But I can't last at this pace forever, as has oft been said. And we should get together and discuss the subject toward some solution. We must either get larger so as to support an organization of sorts of crawl back into the womb. But, damn it, I haven't even the time to think, there is so much to do. All I know is that sales and acceptances are improving and wines are coming along well.

Success signaled an unexpected rise in consumer interest—field observations MR surely shared with an interested Maynard Amerine. MR also saw real promise in encouraging private wine tastings. As he told "Pelly" (Angelo Pellegrini, in Seattle) just before heading off on another selling bout:

We are hardly back from a sales trip before dashing off on another tomorrow. Sales are phenomenally successful. Times have so changed since I was actively engaged in selling wines in the 1930s. Even in the smallest communities there are people, often of French or Italian background, who appreciate and are willing to pay for something finer than just an ordinary bottle of wine. There is also an intellectual interest in wines not known a decade or two ago other than in a limited circle of snobs. For instance, right now we have all of our retail dealers proposing to their customers that they buy not just a single vintage of our Pinot Noir but a bottle of each of the vintages 1950, 1951 and 1952, all currently available—and that they serve them simultaneously at a dinner built around the occasion of tasting one against the other and discussing their relative merits and perhaps arriving at opinions as to which is the most satisfying and to whom.

With this in mind, if we are going to go national! What about your having a dinner up there having a few of your friends who will appreciate this sort of thing and additionally who might wish to buy? (Mustn't overlook the trade angle, you know!) I had in mind that I could make you up a case to include say four bottles of each of these three varieties and send them along with our

compliments if you could carry on with the dinner.... As an important part to this sort of thing, the difference in these vintage years of a wine of a given variety and a single vineyard should be brought out in full discussion so as to refute completely the propaganda of the entire California wine industry that all years are alike in California. Obviously their claim is based on the fact that they blend for uniformity and they do this deliberately and without exception. [4/20/55]

MR had suggested this tactic for good reason. As he'd told Pellegrini earlier: "The majority of [our] sales are to consumers. It is a matter of word-of-mouth recommendation, one friend to another. At one time I could trace directly to Julian Street a very large number of the consumer customers we had, although many of them he did not know about himself." [1/24/55]

Something like this, and more, would soon start up with another kind of celebrity who enjoyed wine.

Entertaining Actors

In this springtime of 1955 a new and significant social and publicity connection came unexpectedly and dramatically into the Rays' life upon Mt. Eden, actually to start shaping the form of their future there. When they were in L.A. in April, they'd heard from wine writer Robert Balzer that Hollywood and stage actor Burgess Meredith had asked him where he could buy Martin Ray wines. Direct contact was soon established, and the Rays invited Meredith to a luncheon on Mt. Eden on May 8th—his day off from the road show of the popular *Teahouse of the August Moon*. Accompanying "Buzzy" Meredith were his fellow actor Scott McKay and their two wives, as well as Shakespearean actor Rollo Peters.

Next day, MR wrote to Barclay ("Bark") detailing the thespians' visit. Always attentive to the fare—both food and wine—served to influential visitors, he first described the meal:

We had champagne at 2-o'clock, grapefruit & avocado salad with Schloss Johannesberger (lilac seal, this is the dry one). And a 16-pound rib roast of beef cooked on the rotisserie (to the fascination of all guests!), whipped potatoes, and jumbo asparagus served on side plates, made up the main course, with which we had Pinot Noir 1952. Each serving of asparagus was 8 huge spears covered with butter and salt and pepper. Then, Rippe's famous cheesecake served with coffee but no wine—but followed by Louis Latour's Chambertin 1947. We were at the table from 2:30 to 10:30, and it was a 10-bottle night! [He added in handwriting: "Plus 1 bottle champagne at the gate as we bid them good nite."]

It had been raining a lot and the mountain top was "completely enclosed in a cloud until just before they came." Worrying that their guests might not safely drive upon the slippery dirt road, MR arranged to

meet the visitors in Saratoga and transport them. Just as they arrived, the weather turned benevolent.

... and we had a beautiful sunny afternoon, brilliantly clear, and a full moon in the evening—so that occasionally we could leave the table for a stroll around the house, glasses in hand. When bringing them up the hill I stopped long enough to bring Eleanor some wild clematis for a centerpiece. It was so wet I had to shake the rain off of it. I brought her also a bird's nest, an exquisite one, with four beautiful blue eggs in it, which Mrs. Scott McKay carried home with her as a great treasure. You will note this wild clematis-bird's nest with eggs has become the latest thing in centerpieces, we having given Amerine the same as he left last week, for a big dinner he was giving at home and which he reported a great sensation with his guests.

Late this morning we were awakened by the phone. It was Burgess Meredith calling from San Francisco. He said the Scott McKays ... had left a note under his door saying that they had agreed between them that it was the most wonderful day they had ever had in their lives. Burgess said he and Kaja felt the same—they loved every minute of it.... He said they'd give anything if they could have this kind of life.

Such rapturous feelings and the desire to live life as Eleanor and Rusty Ray appeared to live it had often been expressed, and would be in the future, by visitors to Mt. Eden, just as it had been when Elsie and Rusty had reigned on Paul Masson's mountain.

Then MR added something else:

An interesting sidelight was this: They had been to Louis Benoist's at Almaden some weeks ago, and came to us confessing that they thought they'd find a little man with his back against the wall struggling to survive and they wanted to help! And they said, "And here we find you living in luxury, with a magnificent situation like none we've ever known!" So you see, you just have to have a position of entertaining or else those damned bastards who like to think of themselves as our competitors would push us out of a respectable position with their conversation alone.... The wines taken alone, no matter how fine, are not enough. But the big room, luxuriously carpeted, the food, the wines, the view, and our own personalities together make up the full picture which is carried away by guests, and through them presented to wine-loving people at large as something fabulous.

"This dinner was just about as near to perfection as we have ever come," MR had concluded earlier. Now having stressed the crucial importance to ambitious winegrowers of creating just the right ambience in presenting themselves and their wines in the context of their lifestyles, in a paternalistic vein MR began expounding, in this three-page letter reporting on the actors' visit, upon the topic of perfection-seeking—which of course he felt he knew about, since he always did it with his wines. This was the sort of discourse he

might well have had at times with Maynard, far into the night.

When you are young and filled with idealistic ideas you actually expect to find perfection wherever you turn—at least you do expect to find it ultimately, and certainly at least in some things. And it comes as a shock to meet shortcoming and failures.... As you grow, you gradually come to realize that perfection, like security, is what you seek and what you never get. I do not mean you should become cynical or actually settle for less than you seek. You must, rather, drive on—always in search of perfection.... Just remember no one is ever fully prepared to accept the reality of death, and most of the populates [*sic*] of the earth actually go through life preferring to believe the most fantastic of all dreams—that of a future life somewhere in some sort of paradise where perfection will exist. This is the final proof I offer you that perfection does not exist in anything, certainly in no family life—and so in the end we dream (most of us) of it for some other day and life. [5/9/55]

The Rays' new friendship with Burgess Meredith moved into high gear. "Buzzy" invited them to come up to San Francisco for a lavish luncheon he'd set up just for them at Trader Vic's at a mid-afternoon time when the restaurant was closed to other customers. Next day MR wrote to Amerine describing the menu and wines served, and also told how he had "arranged" for the Merediths and McKays to go to Amerine's home in Davis for a dinner when the play would be appearing in nearby Sacramento. "I told them that you are the man that has done the most for California wine," he said, "and I told them you are our best friend." [Undated, May 1955]

Whenever he talked with MR, Buzzy expressed a keen desire to have a place like the Rays' on Mt. Eden. And as MR reported to Amerine:

He is quite a person and we do like them all. They are good company and they really like and drink a lot of wine. He even wants to go into business with me. But, then, you can't say sure! That is just what I am waiting for. We will have to await a more opportune moment. It must be hard to get else he would not want it. Or if he thought I want money he would not like it. I will try to keep an open door and something might just possibly come of it. He buys our wines and a lot of them, that is something.... He likes imports and drinks the best and, I think, only ours in Californias.... He is not a snob. And he would love seeing your Davis lab and cellar. [Undated, May 1955]

One of MR's lengthy letters sent to Amerine in Germany, written toward the end of the previous year, had expressed his vision of an "angel"—the sort of person he'd like to have as a winegrowing partner on Mt. Eden.

... some one who would like to put up [\$100,000—the

figure MR had figured was needed] and have either an interest in all the expanded development here or own himself an interest outright in the newly developed vineyard land which would be tied permanently to what we now have so far as a right to the grapes grown. He could have a vineyard home on this quarter section and take up the life either of a grower or a part owner of the vineyards or of the whole thing, as he might wish and as we could arrange between us. We would then have a larger thing with which to work and yet not too large. I once thought of ten acres as ideal but I have learned a few things I did not then know and conditions have changed too until now I am inclined to think of a somewhat larger development as ideal, so approaching even 100 acres. I would be in a position to offer such a prospect a home and a life as a part of a wine growing development that I believe I may say would be recognized as First among all American Vineyards (as I have so long said—Jurgensen's of Pasadena, now with seven stores is sending out shortly 12,000 printed pieces that says in part "Martin Ray wines—Everywhere recognized as First among American Wines"). There is really no competition in just the sort of thing we have always done. Now, that would be worth something to a few people if we could but know each other. Then, I would be able to give such a person leisurely responsibilities, if it was wanted, such as many retired people like. It could be a social advantage to one so inclined also. And at last, there should be a sound return on the capital invested. And under any conditions however trying that may come, such a property could be the source of pride to the right sort of person and it would be investment in land and in income producing land. It goes without saying that I would not discuss any division of management or responsibility. [11/7/54]

Would Burgess Meredith now fill the bill? The Rays were beginning to think so. Eleanor, who did most of the entertainment scheduling in the Ray household as well as the letter writing, obviously enjoyed sending breezy notes to Meredith—like this note describing the pets and some of the wildlife up on Mt. Eden, where he too might dwell one day:

The latest news in my dept. is that bluejays have just pushed all the baby linnets out of their nests all around the house and I've been picking up the birdlings trying to get them back in their nests but some nests are squeezed in such narrow slots between beams that I can't reach in. Frosto [the Rays' white Samoyed dog] has just broken the kittens' china milkbowl—and the kittens have been playing with all the laundry on the line so it's crisscrossed with muddy tracks. Aside from this the linnets have eaten most of my lettuce, the wind has blown over my fine pea plants, and a big fat frog has been sitting on most of my cucumber seedlings breaking them smack off. But I've just washed and dried a bunch of fine Baccarat glasses and didn't break a one, so I guess

that evens up the score for the day, what? [6/2/55]

In coming months Meredith would talk further with MR, in person and over the phone, about his desire to buy property on the mountain, build a home there, and have MR create a vineyard for him around it—after they'd formed a winegrowing partnership. Burgess would soon undertake several extraordinary occasions useful in promoting Martin Ray wines. However, the Rays all the while held onto some reservations about the wisdom of setting up a satisfactory permanent business connection with their friend Buzzy, just on the basis of the following experience alone!

A Midnight Champagne Cruise around S. F. Bay

As *The Teahouse of the August Moon* was nearing its departure from San Francisco, Burgess Meredith decided to put on a gala event, on May 23rd, that would be a thank-you to friends and supporters in the Bay area. Of course he invited the Rays to attend. As MR was wont to do with Maynard, he reported fulsomely on the experience in a letter to Maynard—and as he often did in his near stream-of-consciousness typing, he neglected to create some needed paragraphs.

Meredith and McKay do not know much about wines, I find. But they want to know. As we have seen them now several times we learn more of them. They live a hell of a life, in every way abnormal. It is apparently the price of their kind of success. Surrounded always by hangers on who kiss their boots and put up with what no real man or woman would[,] they are in a way isolated from all normal existence [*sic*]. They must have their parties after midnight, they must eat their dinners at 2:30 and be sober by 8:30. Everyone watches everything they do. They have no free days. To carry on they must somehow get 9 hours sleep and it must be in noisy stuffy apartments that are within a block or so of where they must eat and get to the theatre. They can not trust taxis or street cars to get them there in time. They must be able to walk if they are to get the most out of their hours. They somehow seem to like our kind of life and the fact we do not make over them. But at their midnight boat party on the bay the other night there were actors, musicians, restaurant men and just plain hangers on. Burgess kept rushing about shouting, "Isn't it wonderful! Arnt we having a wonderful time!" Everyone was drinking champagne like mad out of paper cups and soon everyone was drunk. Finally, three hours later he came up to us on the top deck. Eleanor and I were the only ones up there enjoying the beautiful night and almost fantastic night scenes as we passed all the government docks and dry docks in the lower bay. Work was going on full blast—on a 24 hour basis the captain of the little excursion boat told us. We are taking out of storage all our world war II merchant boats and hurriedly putting

them into condition! Welders could be seen welding on new plates and men swarmed over the fully lighted ships. It was the first I had known of this. Burgess said, "No one is having a good time. Aren't people awful. They refused to come out on deck, they are all huddled below, just drinking." They were. Many were asleep already. And when we docked a boat boy looked under all the benches. He told us usually there were people under them passed out. Finally Burgess leaned way out over the water and peered ahead and shouted: "To hell with the rich." I don't know why the rich. That is what he said, though. Then he went into the captains cabin and blew the whistle time after time as he had been doing all the trip. It was not a successful party. But these people dont seem to expect any other kind of party. They did drink great quantities of Champagne—Almaden.

Now I come to the explanation of one of the greatest surprises I have ever had in wines. That Champagne was the greenest, poorest wine I have ever tasted. It was for me undrinkable. On top of every conceivable fault it was sugared and sulphured to high heaven. I never realized that the quality of Almaden had sunk so low. Nor can I see any reason except no one over there knows what a good wine is. Certainly they could make a good champagne if they knew what one is like and wished to do it. Even the tin foil was unglued to the bottle neck and I noticed the moment any one grasped a bottle the foil fell away leaving the neck naked. This disclosed a plastic cork, the first one I had seen. The entire bottom of the ship was covered with champagne. Every bottle opened shot out from a quarter to half its contents, so wild was it despite being iced fully. One girl was completely bathed in champagne early in the party when her boy friend opened a bottle and it gushed all over her even at four or five feet distance. Finally they learned to just let the cork go and what wanted to went on the floor or overboard. I opened several bottles and found, being experienced, I could hold back the wine by quickly slipping my thumb over the opening at the moment the cork was twisted out by the other hand. But it was all I could do to hold back the pressure! No inexperienced person could have managed a bottle. Eleanor and I had at the last moment wondered what champagne would be drunk and we brought aboard two bottles of Madame Pinot and that is what we drank, sharing some with Burgess and Scott. But as Burgess got into his cups he told everybody that the champagne was ours and finally introduced us over a loud speaker system from the captains cabin and nothing we could do could ever convince anyone it was not our Champagne. For good measure, we ran out of Champagne. So we put ashore and picked up a couple more cases—this time it was Criberi's [*sic*] Saratoga brand Champagne. Then people started coming back to us telling us they now had our champagne. As they were by then drunk we could not tell them anything. They just asked, "You come from Saratoga, dont you?" Then they

would hold up the bottle and say, "See, it says so right on the bottle. It is your champagne." I told Burgess over the phone yesterday I would not forgive him for serving such vile wine. He said, "I know. But I had already bought it and what could I do?"

The only way to give these people a good time and enjoy them is to get them away from all the people who hang on and treat them as human beings and equals. This is what they want but somehow they seem unable to manage. Burgess could have made it a wonderful party. But he seemed somehow removed from all the guests unless it was us. He just wandered about and wherever he went people kissed his foot. He did nothing at all to make the party a success. He then complained it was a failure. And he said, "I have had so god damned many wives I cant remember them all. Isnt it hell?" I don't know what he had in mind....

If they had had the salomi [*sic*] and French bread and cheese with a simple red wine and if they had all been drawn together by seating them at a table and if Burgess and Scott had been hosts in fact, the party would have been a success. But drinking champagne out of paper cups and large ones at that and eating salomi and cheese was hardly fit. The champagne would not pour into the paper cups. It simply filled the cups with foam. I tried several times and thought it might be the roughness of the paper. But our champagne did not froth up. So it was just that Almaden was so green and wild. And [Oliver] Goulet [MR's cellar master at Paul Masson, until the winery fire in 1941] always did say you should have a very maximum amount of pressure in champagne. He has it, apparently! [5/27/55]

(Not long afterwards, MR felt validated when he learned that consumers had widely complained not only about the foul taste of this champagne but also of injuries received from its wildly shooting corks; therefore Almaden had to destroy their remaining inventory and recall any bottles on wine dealers' shelves.)

Burgess Meredith's improbable dream in 1955 of winegrowing with Martin Ray inspired and set the conceptual form for the Rays' creation of Mount Eden Vineyards four years later. Its much-expanded shareholding membership would ultimately lead to the collapse of their glorious hegemony on Mt. Eden.

A Provocative Invitation

In early February of 1955 Martin Ray received a letter from wine industry consultant Louis R. Gomberg that contained a long memorandum "on the proposed cooperative action by premium wine producers to combat foreign competition." Named in the group were Almaden, Beaulieu, Buena Vista, Christian Brothers, Cresta Blanca, Inglenook, Charles Krug, Paul Masson, and Wente. Apparently MR didn't think much about it, and busy with other things, he

put it all aside. (Gomberg's initial letter and the memorandum haven't been found among the Ray Papers.)

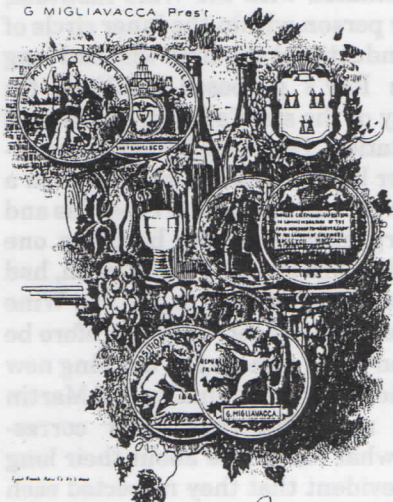
Gomberg, long affiliated with the Wine Institute, was possibly the only person within the inner circle of the California wine industry at the time who had long agreed with Martin Ray's proposed solutions for improving the quality of the state's better wines, and therefore their reputation. Gomberg had an interesting background. After being a concert pianist, then a lawyer, he made a career out of his wine expertise and enthusiasm. Gomberg may well have been the one who, years before, when MR owned Paul Masson, had urged him, though in vain, not only to join the Wine Institute but to serve as an officer—and therefore be in line to take the lead there someday in devising new winegrowing strategies. It appears that he and Martin Ray never actually met. But from their correspondence, and from what MR wrote about their long telephone talks, it's evident that they respected each other.

On April 5th Gomberg telephoned MR to ask him what he'd thought of the memorandum and to invite him again to consider joining this small group of winery proprietors who prided themselves on producing high-quality wines. MR declined. He had already had disagreements with some of the wine men involved, because he disapproved of most of their wines and their winemaking and marketing methods, and had often said so. He wasn't one who ever belonged to groups anyway.

However, MR soon began viewing this project of Gomberg's as an extraordinary opportunity to assert his opinions in such a way that these wine producers would be pushed into making the necessary changes to bring about quality standards. So on April 20 he sent a three-page letter to "My dear Lou." In the first paragraph he reiterated that he couldn't join the named wineries "in any effort to keep out of this market the fine European wines. Nor will I permit the use of my name as favoring your organized effort, which I believe ill-directed." The rest of MR's long letter followed this statement: "But with the passing of time I have given more thought to the real problem of these growers, and it is with this in mind that I now am writing you."

During the next several months Martin and Eleanor Ray together would be greatly occupied with what they usually called their "Wine Quality Fight." Much of their correspondence during that period, and afterwards as well, was taken up with plans for battles on particular fronts and then conducting them. Few letters indeed went out to friends and family members that didn't mention their fixation, as when MR told Angelo Pellegrini, after talking that day with Gomberg, about "a movement on foot [*sic*] among the

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Napa, Cal. July 16 - 1906.

*Mr. John Batto and Sons,
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Gentlemen,*

*Kindly be advised
that on account of the great loss wine and dam-
ages suffered the several large wine houses, prices
have advanced.*

*We will quote you Claret @ 35¢ per gal.
and Zinfandel @ 40¢ per gallon.*

*Kindly let us know if satisfactory and
we will gladly fill your esteemed order.*

In the meantime, we remain

*Very truly
Migliavacca Wine Co.*

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