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PRINTING CALIFORNIA'S WINE LABELS

by *Bruce L. Johnson*

[Your Editor first met retired librarian Bruce Johnson in 2008. He had come to San Francisco to speak on one of his favorite subjects, the history of the book and printing, and his recently published *James Weld Towne: Pioneer San Francisco Printer, Publisher, and Paper Purveyor*, a Book Club of California production. Bruce was formerly Curator of the California Historical Society Kemble Collections on Western Printing & Publishing, one of the most complete collections of materials documenting printing and publishing in the western United States. In his now leisure time, he is the very capable Editor of *Enophilatelia*, the quarterly journal of the Wine on Stamps Study Unit. If you have wine philatelic interests, email Bruce at indybruce1@yahoo.com. We welcome his essay on the early printers of California wine labels. — Ed.]

CALIFORNIA HAS RANKED FIRST AMONG all states in farm income since the 1930s. Its agricultural prosperity is also the most diversified—118 different types of agriculture producing nearly 300 different agricultural commodities, including one-third of the country's fruits and one-fourth of its vegetables; wine grape production is arguably the best known of these. The Golden State accounts for nearly 90% of the country's total wine production; if it were a separate country, it would be the world's fourth-largest wine producer.¹



he relationship between winemaking and printing history in California is significant, if not immediately obvious. It lies in the wine label. California printers, especially those in the San

Francisco Bay Area, who specialized in the production of food and wine labels, have played a vital role in spreading the popularity of California products to all parts of the world.

Before the mid-19th century in the eastern United States and elsewhere, wine in unlabeled bottles was often sold from bins, which were themselves marked or labeled in some fashion. As the production of bottled wine continued to increase, however, and as adhesives were developed that assured winemakers their labels were permanently affixed, labels on wine bottles quickly became standard. Much of the label printing was utilitarian, however, typographically imitative of European printing in general, and not especially interesting—display lines invariably set on a vertical axis, text set closely and in fairly narrow columns, with only an occasional ornament or modest border to add “flair.”

Job Printing

Wine labels fall under the general category of “job printing,” work of an incidental or ephemeral nature that is intended to be

discarded after use. Wine labels were (and are) designed for their eye-catching appeal—the function of any label affixed to a product that is racked or shelved and offered to the public for sale is to attract attention. The success of a job printer was often measured at least in part by the ability of his labels to attract attention and sell products, and utilitarian gradually gave way to labels with color, typographic innovation, and elegance.

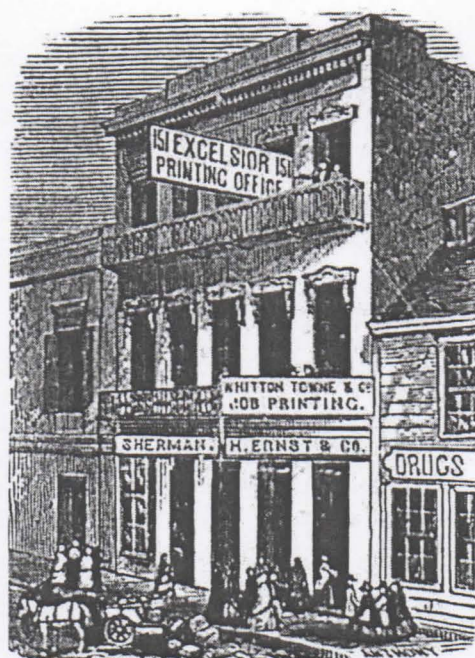
Newspaper offices in San Francisco produced most of the city's “job work”; firms such as Jobson, Sterett & Painter, and Whitton, Towne & Company, in fact, relied on job printing for more than half of their annual gross income.² Pascal Loomis of Loomis & Swift, wood engravers at 617 Clay Street, produced label art for Whitton, Towne & Company on a regular basis, and that printer in turn produced labels for



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numerous companies, including Mercado & Seully, merchants and agents for Sansevain's Wine and Bitters (506 and 508 Jackson Street, San Francisco); David Spencer, proprietor of a saloon at the northwest



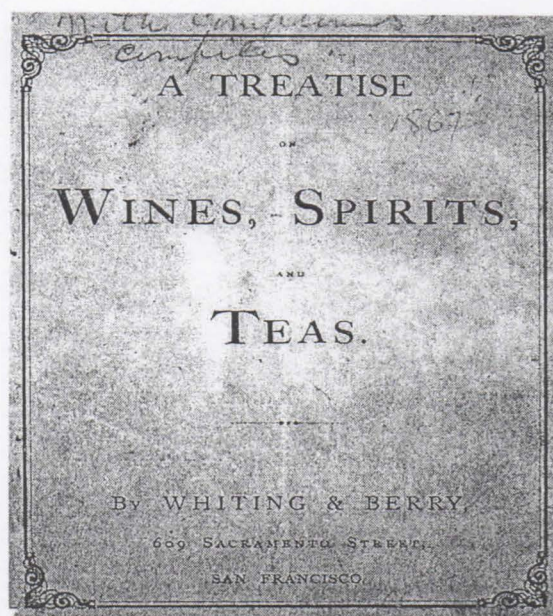
Whitton, Towne & Company Print Shop

corner of Folsom and Beale streets; and Whiting & Berry, tea, wine, and spirit merchants at 609 Sacramento Street.³ The most common method of producing color images in this early period was hand coloring images printed in black-and-white.

In 1867, Towne & Bacon, formerly Whitton, Towne & Company, also published the 4th edition, "tested and enlarged," of Whiting & Berry's *Treatise on Wines, Spirits, and Teas*, a 32-page anti-adulteration screed promoting the "peace, health and vital energies of the people" by avoiding the consumption of "bogus mixtures under the various high-sounding names of 'Otard,' 'Sazerac,' 'Cognac,' 'Bourbon,' 'Bitters,' 'Schiedam,' 'Old Rye,' etc." Whiting & Berry believed that the health and strength of California's citizens could be enhanced by "the moderate use of pure wines and unadulterated beverages," and avoiding "the vile compounds and poisonous mixtures vended to the thoughtless and unwary purchaser, under the various bogus bands and names with which they are labeled."⁴

To that end, Whiting & Berry "established a House in San Francisco . . . with such facilities for importing and procuring Pure Wines . . . dispensed by us in bottles [with] the impress of the fac simile of our signatures on the labels, [and] our firm name burned on each cork. . . ."⁵ Since many native California wines were "rushed to market too young, too fresh from the grape, and in too many instances before fermentation [had] ceased," much of the wine offered

by Whiting & Berry was imported. Even so, the firm was interested in "introducing and recommending all pure, sound California wines," which, if found suitable "after examination and due trial," . . . would be given "the endorsement of our own label, with our firm name burnt on each cork."⁶ Whitton, Towne & Co. printed Whiting & Berry's wine labels.



Ephemeral Printing

In the mid-19th century, wine labels were often printed by a relief or "letterpress" process using delicate wood engravings on small job machines, including several varieties of the Ruggles card and billhead press, which was considered the best, and several styles of Gordon presses. Whitton, Towne & Company also used "one of R. Hoe & Co's Patent Card Presses, which will print, with ease, 1,200 labels per hour, . . . and at a very low price."⁷ The economic advantage of printing multiple copies of labels on larger sheets of paper, however, rather than one or two at a time on a small job press, soon became apparent, and the firm ordered a powerful "Mammoth Adams Power Press" and steam engine from Isaac Adams & Company, Boston.⁸ The Adams press featured an ingenious adaptation of hand-press principles that could be operated by steam power; the entire complicated series of movements was automatic, except for the hand-feeding of paper. Somewhat later, Frederick Koenig's steam-powered cylinder presses, and the advent of electrotyping, both based upon new principles, affected job printing by speeding up the process and permitting longer press runs without breakage of engravings or type.

Besides letterpress, labels were often printed lithographically, literally by "writing on stone," originally using a particular kind of stone (carbonate of lime-

stone), the best ones quarried from the Solenhofen quarry in Bavaria. Subsequently, metal plates made from zinc and aluminum replaced the unwieldy stones, and eventually the plates could be curved to fit on cylinder presses. Lithography also spawned a new breed of artist who was to profoundly affect the graphic arts and wine-label design.

Charles Hackleman offers this succinct description of early lithographic printing:

The principle involved in [lithographic printing] is based upon the well-known fact that grease . . . and water will not mix. The lines that form the [image] to be printed are laid upon the plate or stone [by an artist] with a greasy ink, and during the process of printing the remaining surface is kept constantly dampened with water. As the ink roller, which carries the same greasy ink as used in making the design, passes over the surface, the ink adheres to the lines in the design, but is rejected by the remainder of the surface, which is damp. The paper to be printed is then placed upon the stone or plate, pressure is applied, and the design [is] thus imprinted upon the sheet [though in reverse of the artist's drawing]. The plate or stone is then re-dampened and re-inked for each printed impression taken.⁹

Properly applied and treated, the greased surface could be used to produce thousands of reproductions before the original pattern deteriorated.

Following the introduction of lithography into the United States in 1828, it eventually took the lead in the use of color in printing. The accurate registration of overprinted inks remained a major problem, however, and color lithography was not used commercially in Europe until the late 1830s. In the United States, Currier and Ives, the most popular printmakers of their period, published full-color lithographic cartoons as early as 1848. Prints of average quality used about 5 inks, but complex prints used upwards of 25 and more colors to produce the quality images desired.

Modern offset printing and other methods of planographic printing—printing from a flat surface—are direct descendants of this lithographic process. Offset printing, however, derives its name from the fact that the printed impression is not taken directly from the printing plate, but rather that the image is first printed upon a rubber “blanket,” which in turn “offsets” the image onto the paper.

Ephemeral printing in the late 19th century used the greatest possible variety of decorative and display type faces to attain the typographic effects then in vogue, and these were reflected in label design and production. To keep abreast of the times, printers stocked new faces being offered by type-foundries, in addition to countless families of assorted type ornaments and embellishments. Letter forms were twisted and distorted, compressed and squeezed into slim shapes, and again extended into fat versions,

sometimes outlined, at other times thrown into three-dimensional variants. The resulting wine labels ran the gamut of elaborate ornamentation.



Edwin Valliant's San Benito Winery Label, printed by Crocker-Union, displays a multitude of typefaces

Photography completely revolutionized wine label production in the 1870s and '80s. The camera's lens made it possible to photograph an artist's wine label drawing to a different size, and in reverse, then transfer it to a copper or zinc printing plate as many times as necessary to fill it up. The halftone technique was extended to full-color reproduction by means of camera filters that separated the wine label image into four printing plates, one for black and one for each primary printing color—magenta, yellow, and cyan.

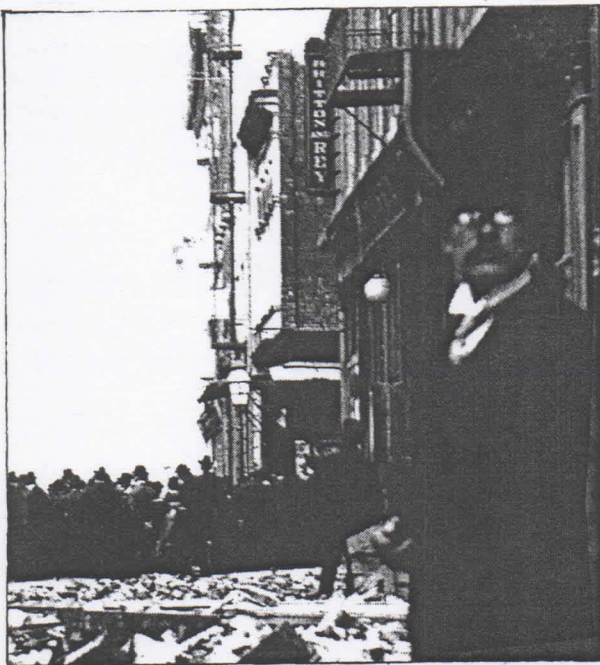
As mechanization replaced slow hand-operated presses with high-speed steam-powered presses, lithographic printing offered special challenges. The problems of protecting lithographic stones from breaking, paper registration, and uniform inking were all solved by companies such as Cottrell & Sons and Robert Hoe in New York, and the Babcock Company in New London, Connecticut. The stones used for these machines were immense, up to 38 x 48 inches in size, and each one could hold several copies of the same image depending upon its size.

After about 1870, large commercial printers began to use lithographic cylinder presses or platen machines that printed in full color, and which required the use of sheets of paper, often as large as 24 x 38 inches in size. When printing wine labels, each printing plate and each printed sheet contained many copies of the same label, the sheets could have a dry adhesive applied as the end-step of the printing process, and they were subsequently cut multiple times to produce individual labels. Stamping, embossing, and other “fancy” effects on labels relied on additional devices that were used simultaneously with or subsequent to printing.

San Francisco Printers

City directories reveal that at least 35 lithographers established companies in San Francisco in the 19th century, and the production of wine labels for California wine constituted at least a portion of their respective outputs. Exact production figures are difficult to establish under the best of conditions, but the dearth of printing records for San Francisco firms was compounded in 1906 by the massive Earthquake & Fire. It destroyed most downtown businesses and virtually all of the city's lithographers, who were located on or near Clay Street. Several of the most prominent firms included the following:

Britton and Rey was a firm of lithographers in San Francisco, the oldest west of the Rocky Mountains, and the largest producer of lithographs in California for many years. Joseph Britton (1820–1901), the senior partner, was an Englishman who came to California in 1849 to prospect. His brother-in-law, Jacques Joseph Rey (1820–1892), an Alsatian, joined him to establish a company in 1852 that lasted well into the 20th century. Rey had studied art and lithography in Europe before coming to California in 1850. Known for its pictorial letter-sheets, scenic views, maps, postcards, and posters, Britton & Rey did its share of commercial lithography as well, including wine labels.¹⁰



Front facade of Britton & Rey, April 1906, with rubble in the street and the fire advancing toward the building

H.S. Crocker, Lithographers, began in Sacramento; Henry S. Crocker and his first partner, John D. Yost, opened the San Francisco branch of H.S. Crocker & Co. in 1871. Charles H. Crocker and H.J. Crocker eventually joined the firm. The company was quickly

rebuilt after fire destroyed it in 1885. Max Schmidt and Crocker combined their label lithographing interests in 1899 as the Mutual Label & Lithographic Company. Through growth and the acquisition of other companies, Crocker grew throughout the 20th century, which included the purchase of the Strobbridge Lithographing Company in 1960.¹¹

The Union Lithograph Company was organized by Jennison Hall and B.S. Hubbard. Hall, who had been a lithographer in Providence, Rhode Island, founded J.C. Hall & Company in San Francisco in 1888. Hall and Hubbard changed the name to Union Lithograph Company in 1890. The company was destroyed by fire twice in a single year, first in early 1906 and again, after being rebuilt by March, in the great Earthquake & Fire of April. Quickly needing new production facilities, Union purchased the Los Angeles Lithographic Company. Union continued to operate independently until it was purchased by H.S. Crocker & Company in 1922, although the Union name was used until about 1936.¹²

Schmidt—Roesch—Lehmann: Label Specialists

Several printers in San Francisco have made the printing of labels their specialty, and the success of Schmidt Lithograph Company, Louis Roesch & Company, and Lehmann Printing & Lithographing Company in the late 19th and 20th century can serve as typical examples of how California wine labels were produced and used.

Schmidt Lithograph Co.

Beginning in the 1870s, as California's canning industry continued to grow under the guidance of Francis Cutting, Mark Fontana, E.W. Hume, and others, Max Schmidt took advantage of a ready opportunity when he began printing labels to be used on their canned goods. Born in Danzig, Germany, in 1850, Schmidt came to San Francisco 21 years later. He took a position as a "transferrer" at the daily *Stock Report*, a publication specializing in mining and stock market news. Knowing nothing about printing, Schmidt thought the job would entail "transferring" boxes of publications from one place to another, but instead it involved the transfer of impressions in lithographic printing. Schmidt consequently learned the art of engraving in the *Stock Report's* lithograph department. He later worked for Grafton T. Brown & Co., a printer on Clay Street, and for Francis Korbel and Brothers, a cigar box and label manufacturer. When Korbel discontinued business, Schmidt felt he knew enough about printing and the kinds of printing most in demand in San Francisco to go into business for himself.

[As an aside, the Korbel brothers—Francis, Anton, and Joseph—born in Bohemia, began their careers in San Francisco as box makers and lithographers. They opened the first cigar box factory in San Francisco in 1862 and printed the lithographic labels for the boxes. On 5 August 1876, they published the first issue of *The Wasp*, which

became known for not only its satire, but also its color lithographs, which the Korbels printed. In 1881, the brothers sold *The Wasp* and, although they maintained the cigar box factory and advertised as lithographers, they began to concentrate their energies on timber land they had purchased in the Russian River Valley, north of San Francisco, where they began to plant vineyards. They experimented with different varieties of grapes, including Pinot Noir, the favorite of winemakers in France's Champagne region. At first they supplied grapes to other California winemakers, but eventually the brothers shifted gears, kept their grapes, and became winemakers themselves. The Korbels were producing as much as 30,000 gallons of wine from Pinot Noir grapes by 1882. Two years later they hired Frank Hasek, an experienced Prague winemaker, to become their champagne master. Hasek used the *méthode champenoise* approach to making champagne and spent the next decade blending the results of different grape harvests to produce a distinctive house style for Korbels champagne. By 1894, the Korbels began to sell their champagne, and by the end of the century, Korbels was an award-winning, internationally recognized label.]

Schmidt's printing shop, offering design, lithography, and zincography,¹³ was a 10 by 12-foot room at 535 Clay Street. He began making pictorial cuts for local newspapers using new zinc-etching techniques, which replaced the wood engravings previously in use. At first he had Frederick Buehler as a partner, but in 1875 Schmidt & Buehler became M. Schmidt & Co., then incorporated as the Schmidt Label & Lithograph Co. in 1883, and Mutual Label and Lithograph Co. in 1899. Finally, after the Earthquake & Fire of 1906, the name Schmidt Lithograph Co. was adopted, and the name remained unchanged for the next eighty-eight years. Schmidt expanded and set up branch offices to sell labels in Southern California, Texas, Florida, Hawaii, Utah, and the Pacific Northwest. Bucking the trend elsewhere in the trade, Schmidt continued to use stone lithography well into the 20th century. (The company was acquired in 1966 by Stecher-Traung Co. to form Stecher-Traung-Schmidt, which remained in business until 1994.)

Wine labels and mining company stock certificates comprised the greatest volume of Schmidt's business in the early period, but the growth of fruit and fish industries on the Pacific Coast eventually opened up several new possibilities for other kinds of clients. Schmidt also began to acquire other firms that had label printing as their specialty—Pettit & Russ, label and theatrical show bill printers, in 1880; and the label and job printing shop of Alfred Chaigneau & Co., five years later. In 1903, Schmidt's company produced more than 300,000,000[!] labels of various kinds, mainly for the burgeoning food, wine, and agricultural industries of California, plus ten million commercial letterheads, 35 million cartons, and 100,000 poster sheets.¹⁴ [See "A Visit with Max Schmidt..." following this essay. — Ed.]



Schmidt Litho & Co. — Early El Molino Riesling label [reduced]

Louis Roesch & Co.

Louis Roesch, who emigrated from Germany in 1873, established his own printing company on Kearny Street in 1879 after having worked in the printing office of the San Francisco *Abend Post*. After a brief partnership with William Knopf, Roesch purchased an interest in the printing business of Ludwig Rosenthal, which became known as Rosenthal & Roesch. Rosenthal had established the business by purchasing the printing office of the *California Demo-*



Louis Roesch Co. — Willow Glen Angelica Label [reduced]

krat, founded in 1852 by Frederick Hess. (Hess continued as publisher / proprietor of his newspaper, and would later in the 1890s found a fine stone winery on Howell Mt. in Napa Valley). In 1888 Rosenthal sold his interests to Roesch, and the company name was changed to the Louis Roesch Company. It prospered under Roesch's guidance. In 1896, it was outfitted with nearly all new equipment, including "two power presses; two steam cutters; two bronzing machines; die cutting, embossing, and other machines."¹⁵ By 1905, Roesch advertised the firm as book and job printers, lithographers, engravers, publishers, and wine label and show printers. After Roesch's death in 1916, the firm was managed by Louis Roesch, Jr., and continued in business well into the 20th century.¹⁶

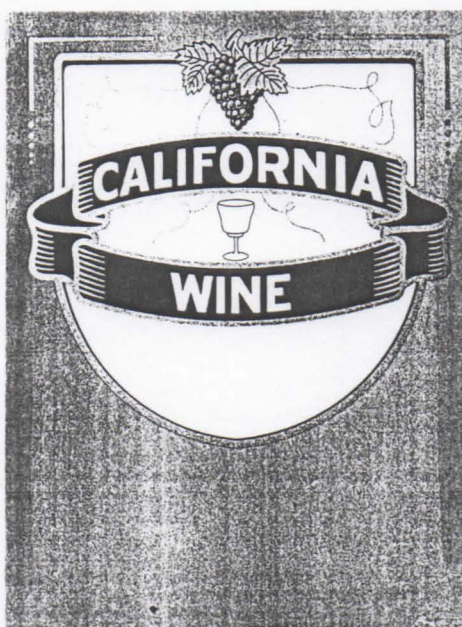
Lehmann Printing & Lithography

Lehmann Printing & Lithographing Co. was established in San Francisco by Adolph Lehmann, and under his leadership became one of the most successful lithography firms in the city. It specialized in the designing and printing of labels on an international scale; the company employed several translators to handle correspondence and orders for labels from customers in Central and South America and Europe.

Lehmann is especially interesting today because of a sample book of labels it published in 1941. [See illustration rear cover this issue.] It was used by Lehmann's agents to entice wineries and other companies needing labels to choose label styles and order lithographed labels prior to bottling. The sample book contains "beautiful designs for wines and liquors" that were "in stock for immediate delivery." Wine labels could be custom designed for individual wineries, but stock designs were often used as a quick and less expensive option; Lehmann carried almost 200 million stock labels and promised same-day shipment upon the receipt of an order, unless temporarily out of a particular item.

Stock labels feature an image with open areas on which a winery's brand name and address could be imprinted. Often stock labels were used when a winery ran out of its custom label, or when it needed a different brand name for a lower-quality bottling. The price for 1,000 labels from Lehmann could vary from \$2.50 to \$6.75 depending upon the complexity of lithography needed to produce it, often involving the number of colors needed for reproduction—the more colors, the more expensive.

See the following two illustrations of labels, both printed by Lehmann. The blank stock label, showing a padre holding up a glass of wine, has been chosen by the Pioneer Wine Company for its Old Pioneer Brand California Muscatel.



One of numerous "California Wine"
Blank Stock Labels
from the Lehman Catalog
[reduced]



20th Century Labels

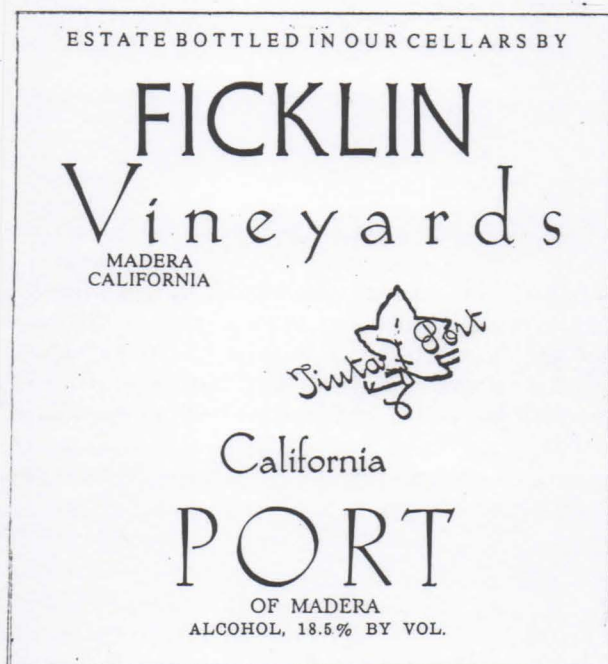
In a 1984 essay on "The Art of the [Wine] Label," Doris Muscatine observes that "the label on a bottle of wine is the transitional communication between maker and drinker, the merchant's guide to an orderly stocking of shelves, a means of identification of the bottle in storage, a discreet advertisement, and in some splendid instances, a work of art." She then presents the comments of three noted designers—David Lance Goines, Adrian Wilson, and Andrew Hoyem—who include wine labels in their oeuvre.

If 19th-century wine labels can be characterized as lavish, gilded, bemedalled, embossed, ornately lettered, and even seductively shaped pieces of paper, as many of them certainly are, then Muscatine's featured designers represent the other side of the spectrum—designers noted for their use of textured papers, subtly modeled typefaces, hand-lettering in classical styles, rich inking, and deep impressions into the paper, with ample surrounding space to increase legibility, all "elements of the art of the label."¹⁷

Like William Morris, who reacted through the arts and crafts movement to the industrialization of the 19th century by returning to an honesty in design not to be found in mass-produced items, these designers and others—among them, Robert Grabhorn, James Robertson, Bruce Montgomery, and especially Mallette Dean—reacted to the stock-label sameness of the wine labels then in vogue, and produced works of art instead. Their craftsmanship extends to the printing—the use of meticulously produced wood engravings and hand-cut type faces, hand-set and

mounted on the beds of small job presses, to produce wine labels of clarity and distinction.¹⁸

The following label was designed by the Grabhorn Press, founded by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn of Indiana, in San Francisco in 1920. The Press was noted for printing with striking design and fine craftsmanship. Robert Grabhorn designed this two-color wine label for Ficklin Vineyards Port in 1951. He handset and printed it at the Press using three distinct typefaces, Weiss Titling, Koch Antiqua, and a 19th-century script.



Grabhorn Press: Ficklin California Port Label
[reduced, actual size: 4¼" x 4"]

The nature of the wine label today seems reflective of the wineries themselves. If the winery is a multinational corporation, then its labels, lithographically printed in enormous quantities, are an important part of its corporate branding and marketing. The standard information is present—the country of origin; the percent of alcohol; the type of wine and its producer; perhaps the bottler of the wine; the year of bottling; and warnings about sulfites and the consumption of alcohol by pregnant women. Some of the content reflects mandatory regulations set forth by the federal government, but the overall impact of design and production tends to be corporate and impersonal.

Smaller operations may opt for a more personal touch, producing labels that feature the favorite artists of the vintner, for example, or, if the wine-maker is a philatelist, reproductions of his favorite postage stamps. The variety of labels and their artwork is astonishing, and that's why wine label collecting remains a growing hobby among wine aficionados.

NOTES

1. Jancis Robinson, Editor. *The Oxford Companion to Wine*. Third Edition. [Oxford and New York]: Oxford University Press [2006], pages 123-126.
2. Based upon a statistical analysis of the Records of Towne & Bacon, Printers, Manuscript Collection JL010 held by the Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, CA.
3. Towne & Bacon, Printers, Records, Journal Vol.9, 2 January 1865—7 January 1865.
4. *A Treatise on Wine, Spirits, and Teas*. San Francisco: Whiting & Berry [1867], pp. 3-4.
5. Ibid., pp. 6-7, 12.
6. Ibid, p. 17.
7. Advertisement for "Whitton, Towne & Co," in *The Christian Recorder*, 10 October 1855, p. 2.
8. James Towne to Mr. Bassitt, 4 February 1856, in Letterbooks held by the Kemble Collections on Western Printing & Publishing, California Historical Society, San Francisco.
9. Charles W. Hackleman. *Commercial Engraving & Printing...* Indianapolis: Commercial Engraving Publishing Company [1924], p. 483.
10. Jay T. Last. *The Color Explosion: Nineteenth-Century American Lithography* [Santa Ana:] Hillcrest Press [2005] pp. 44-45.
11. Ibid., p. 177.
12. Ibid., p. 235.
13. Zincography is a technique similar to lithography except that the illustration or design is engraved on a plate of zinc. Schmidt's brother Richard, living in Germany, sent a pamphlet describing the process, and Schmidt began to use it to produce letterheads and labels.
14. Bruce L. Johnson, "Schmidt Lithograph," in *The Pi-Box*, Volume 58, No. 9 (May 1980), p. 9-10.
15. *Blue & Gold, 1900*. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 1900, p. 345.
16. Charles A. Murdock, "History of Printing in San Francisco," *Kemble Occasional*, No. 36 (Summer 1986), p. 4.
17. Doris Muscatine, "Note: The Art of the Label," in *The University of California/Sotheby Book of California Wine*, edited by Doris Muscatine, Maynard A. Amerine, and Bob Thompson. Berkeley: University of California Press/Sotheby Publications, 1984, pages 320-326.
18. See, for example, Yolande Shephard, *Mallette Dean, Artist & Printer: His Influence on Napa Valley & California Wine Labels*. San Francisco: Richard A. Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco, 1982 (below).



A Visit with Max Schmidt, Printer of Wine Labels

[Adapted from Idwal Jones' *Vines in the Sun*, 1949]

ONCE, FOR A FEW BRIEF YEARS, I hunted California wine labels, and it was a lone hunt, for I knew no other hunters, except the late Max Schmidt, who had his shop in San Francisco, a printer of labels for more than sixty years. A relative of mine, who was the first in the wine trade to resume business after the Great Fire and Earthquake—he put up his own tent amidst the ruins with a brandy keg for a desk—gave me my earliest specimens. One was soaked off a bottle of Schramberger Hock, bottled in 1880, and another was a black-and-white lozenge: "Rebello Valente. F. Hawks, Los Gatos." An imitation port, it must have been ... but the label, black and white off a wood block, was a work of art. Printing on the Coast in those days was often in advance of the vintners' skill.

I know of no California sketches so absorbing as *Silverado Squatters*, in which Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of the grape country about Calistoga. He made immortal in prose the figure of Jacob Schram, the itinerant barber from Johannisberg on the Rhine, who turned vinegrower and made that Schramberger Hock which was drunk at the Carlton Club in London in the bleak years of phylloxera. That wine I had often heard an old editor speak of with praise some thirty years after he had last tasted it. It must have had a quality of its own to be so long and warmly remembered. The label I had was perhaps the only visible proof that wine had really existed.

How many names of superior growers and farms have dropped out of memory when the tutelary gods of these hillsides fled into their thirteen-year-long exile? Crabb's To Kalon Burgundy, the Chablis of Ben Lomond Farm, the Edge Hill Napa Pinot from vines planted by the old Indian fighter, General Keyes, and Jacob Schram's Hock—they sound as legendary now as the red Pramnian that Sophocles drank from a silver bowl at sunset. And they were more than ordinarily good wines; some of them were famous.... Those were wines bearing on their labels the names of the hand-tended farms where they grew.

Max Schmidt printed those labels. I knew him in my journalistic days; he was in his late eighties then, a jovial, incisive, small man with a cheroot, a cane over his shoulder and wedge of marble-white

beard. He looked more like a Scot of the Carnegie type than what he was, a German from the port of Danzig. More than anything else, he was a San Franciscan. He was a fount of knowledge on vineyards, and in the matter of their labels, he was a savant, *facile princeps* in his field.

He had much sound history binned away in his head. Max was not only a connoisseur of labels, but also of the thing labeled. "The best winemakers were German, from around Johannisberg," Max would say. "What about Drummond of Dunfillan?" I ventured. That was the laird who brought vines from Ch. Lafite and Margaux to Sonoma County a little over 70 years ago, and planted them at his farm of Dunfillan, near Glen Ellen. Drummond's Claret was sumptuous; half of it was drunk at the Bohemian Club, the rest was sent to Europe. It has disappeared now. "That was a gentleman's claret, Dunfillan," averred Max. "It had nose, it had breeding. I remember the labels I printed for Capt. Drummond: white Gothic on black, with the two Maltese crosses and shield of his regiment, the 34th Cumberland. The wine never shamed the label."

Max continued, "There were five or six such vineyards in Sonoma Valley. They were owned by good people who made good wine, and spent fortunes to make it even better. Winemaking is a matter of honor. I had to print labels for wineries that were just crushing and bottling plants. But I took extra care with the labels I made for the right people. And there was William Hoelscher. His vineyard is gone now, too. I made him a sticker with two unicorns rampant."

When still a young boy, Max shipped aboard a brig as cabin boy, and came to San Francisco, where he became a printer's apprentice. He learned type. Label printing was even then a flourishing and imaginative art. Besides the wineries there were two hundred cigar factories in the city. The printing was done from that medium which turned the Middle Ages into light, the wood block.

Later, apprised by a newspaper sent him from Germany that zinc printing had been invented, he made experiments, and soon was printing off labels from zinc plates, the first instance of this in the west.

Max recalled those days from 1871 on to 1878 when the flood of French wines reduced California growers to penury so that they hawked their wines from door to door at fifteen cents a gallon. "Our best proprietors, doing their own bottling,

continued on page 13—



"I was printer
to them all."



NEWS & NOTES



*Whatever Fortune sends,
Let me have a Good Store of Wine,
Sweet Books and Hosts of Friends.*

Welcome, new Tendrils! Ted Kotcheff (tkotcheff@hotmail.com) has been brought into our membership by George Caloyannidis and his delectable series on "True Wine & Food Lovers." A hearty "welcome back" to John Buechsenstein (johnb@pacific.net), a wine educator who has been collecting wine books for some 30 years, with a special interest in viticulture, enology, wine & food, sensory evaluation, and now, terroir. He notes that his latest project is "compiling an anthology of writing about winedom's favorite subject, terroir." He welcomes suggestions for inclusion from his long-lost Tendril members. Please email him for details.

GOLD and WINE:

A History of Winemaking in El Dorado County, California is a welcome new history by Tendril Eric Costa, who previously authored *Old Vines. A History of Winegrowing in Amador County* (1994). *Gold and Wine*, a visually stunning book of 136 pages, is divided into two parts: The Pioneers and The Rebirth of El Dorado. The informative Foreword is by Tendril Darrell Corti, Sacramento Wine Merchant, who helped pioneer the rebirth of wine in the Sierra Foothills. Published by the El Dorado Winery Assn., this well-researched history is presented in a large format (10½ x 8½) with stiff glossy covers, and is richly illustrated with historic and present-day wine scenes. Informative maps, appendices (new and old statistics and winegrowers), endnotes, sources, and a very detailed Table of Contents are provided (but no Index). Eric is graciously offering copies to Wayward Tendril members (signed / inscribed if you wish!) at a pre-publication price (until January 31st) of \$20 + shipping. Contact him for details at costa@volcano.net.

vinglorious.com

merits our attention. It is written by Tendril Louisa Hargrave, a pioneer of the Long Island (NY) wine industry and author of *The Vineyard. The Pleasures and Perils of Creating an American Family Winery* (Viking, 2003). Louisa has been active in many fields of wine—writing, judging, consulting, educating. In her December column, she recommends a selection of "Gifts for the Literary Wine Lover" ... including The Wayward Tendrils.

Th. Jefferson – Wine & Conversation

is the engaging theme of Jim Gabler's newly revised website (www.thomasjefferson.net). Log-on and enjoy weekly visits with Mr. Jefferson at Monticello, the White House, his Paris residence, Mount Vernon, &c. You will meet his friends: Benjamin Franklin, Dolly and James Madison, Abigail and John Adams, George Washington, Marquis de Lafayette, Maria Cosway, Meriwether Lewis, Philip Mazzei, and many others. Jefferson will evaluate the "wine-of-the-week selection" and share with you some of the most interesting experiences of his life.

FICTION: NEW and OLD

Death of a Wine Merchant by David Dickinson (London: Constable, 2010), the latest in the mystery series featuring the Edwardian, Lord Francis Powerscourt, gentleman-sleuth, is a cunning and intriguing read. You will be surprised to learn "the horrific truth." ■ *Mr. Donaghue Investigates* by Anna Shone (New York: St. Martins, 1994) is set in the south of France at a restored 12th century abbey where sixteen people, including private investigator Ulysses F. Donaghue, are gathered for an exclusive retreat. Beautiful Provençal vineyards, an ancient wine press, and several dead bodies contribute to a clever story. ■ Sir Henry Mortimer Durand (1850–1924), writing as Mortimer Durand, brings us *Sincérité* (London: Longmans, 1924). Sir Henry is as interesting as his book: born in India of distinguished British parentage, he enjoyed a wide-ranging diplomatic career for Great Britain (colonial India, Persia, Afghanistan, America). Upon his retirement and return to England in 1906, he devoted his time to writing—biographies, history, novels. Our remarkable story revolves around a grand dinner-party weekend at the country estate of Sir Adrian Wentworth-Spukes. For his guests he has saved the finest wine in his magnificent cellar, a rare Burgundy called *Sincérité*. The morning after, the party is rudely disturbed by the discovery of the body of one of the guests, apparently murdered on the lawn, and with certainty that the murderer is one of them. *Sincérité* seems to be one of the author's scarcer titles, but it is worth a search. ■ *Arigato* by Richard Condon, author of *The Manchurian Candidate* and other popular titles, is an entertaining winner (New York: Dial Press, 1972). Capt. Colin Huntington, Royal Navy (retired), is a man who has absolutely everything, plus one fatal flaw: he is a compulsive gambler...who loses. Everything. To save himself he undertakes the most extravagant robbery in the annals of fiction: the theft of 22,000 cases of classic French wine, weighing four tons, from the greatest warehouse in Bordeaux.



BOOKS & BOTTLES

by
Fred McMillin

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In earlier quizzes, Fred, always the wine educator, has tested our knowledge of wine facts using Prof. Pinney's *History of Wine in America—From the Beginnings to Prohibition*, Angelo Pellegrini's *Wine and the Good Life*, and Dr. Silverstein's *Smelling and Tasting (Senses and Sensors)*. To begin the new year, Fred provides us with a few highlights, in the form of questions and answers, from another favorite book in his library. In each set, one statement is false. If you get three right, Fred awards you an A.]

THE SUBJECT: AMERICAN WINE HISTORY

The Book: *A History of Wine in America—From Prohibition to the Present* by Thomas Pinney, U.C. Press, 2005, 532 pp.

Wine in the War Years (Chapter 6)

- a) In spite of World War II there was a surge in American wine exports during that time.
- b) By 1943 the United States was importing less wine than it ever had in time of peace.
- c) With the fall of France to Germany, the supply of French wines began to dry up.
- d) In August 1942, the War Food Administration of the War Production Board ordered the entire crop of Thompson Seedless, Sultana, and Muscat grapes be made into raisins.

WHICH IS FALSE?

- b) By 1943 the United States was importing MORE wine than it ever had in time of peace.

The Big Change: California (Chapter 10)

- a) In 1966 there were 490,000 acres of grapes in California, of which 142,000 acres, or less than a third, were planted to wine grapes.
- b) In 1976 acreage of California vineyards had leaped to about 600,000 acres.
- c) In 1976 more than a hundred additional wineries were operating in California than had been in 1965: 345 compared to 231.
- d) The regions regarded as superior for table wines showed little growth from 1966 to 1976.

WHICH IS FALSE?

- d) The superior regions for table wines led the way in growth from 1966 to 1976. Acreage had gone from 12,000 to 23,700 in Napa, from 12,700 to 25,000 in Sonoma, and from 5,700 to 9,000 in Mendocino.

The West Without California (Chapter 13)

- a) In 1938 Erich Steenborg, an early champion of vinifera in Washington state, had imported half a million cuttings of German varieties into eastern Washington, including Gutedel, Riesling, Sylvaner, and Müller-Thurgau.

- b) It was true that Washington could profitably grow native American grapes as well as vinifera. A labrusca variety known as Island Belle had been the basis of a small grape-growing industry along Puget Sound going back to the 19th century.

- c) In the early 20th century in the Yakima Valley, Zinfandel quickly became king in Washington.

- d) In 1941 Frank Schoonmaker wrote that although Washington was in its "embryonic" state, it sooner or later "will produce fine wines and rank among the best viticultural regions of the U.S."

WHICH IS FALSE?

- c) It wasn't the Zinfandel that became king in the early 20th century in Yakima Valley, it was the Concord that reigned.

California to the Present Day (Chapter 14)

- a) Acreage devoted to wine grapes was 157,000 in 1970 and 480,000 in 2000, so that there are more than three times as many wine grapes in the state as there were thirty years earlier.

- b) The leading red variety in 1970 was Carignane, with 27,000 acres; French Colombard led the whites with 18,000 acres.

- c) By 2000, Cabernet Sauvignon had become the leading red variety with 69,000 acres (up from 7,000 acres in 1970), and Chardonnay was the most planted white variety with 103,000 acres (up from 3,000 acres in 1970).

- d) Sonoma County led with the improbable figure of 259 wineries operating in 2000, up from a mere 27 in 1970.

WHICH IS FALSE?

- d) It was Napa County that led all winegrowing counties with 259 wineries, up from 27 in 1970.

continued on p. 13—

The Language of Wine in English

by Thomas Pinney

[In earlier issues of our *WTQuarterly* we have explored the etymology of a few select wine words: "riddling," "winery," "enology, oenology, or œnology," "Rehoboam or Nebuchhadnezzar." In his Appendix 2 of *History of Wine in America. From the Beginnings to Prohibition* (1989), Prof. Pinney presented an overall view and discussion of English-language wine words. We reproduce this enlightening study with his "up-to-date" introduction. — Ed.]



MORE THAN TWENTY years after I wrote a short appendix on the language of wine in English, our Editor is giving me the chance to comment on what I said then. What would I add? Nothing, really. My prophecy about the "lively growth of novelty" in our stock of wine words looks like most prophecies—quite false. Or perhaps I have not been paying attention. At any rate, I can't think of anything to add, and I would be glad to hear of eligible nominations.

What would I change? A couple of things. The word "terroir," which I classified back in 1989 as one of those French words "still felt to be alien" is now, alas, part of every wine writer's word hoard. I say "alas" because I think, when it is properly understood, it means no more than "place," and why should one not simply say that instead of "terroir," which no native English speaker can pronounce anyway? Most of the time, the word is used to mean anything and therefore nothing. The plague of all writing on esthetic matters—such as all non-technical wine writing is—is the plague of nonsense. "Terroir" is a word that carries the plague.

I made a bad blunder in my treatment of "winegrower" or "wine-grower"—I was too much influenced by what Jefferson Peyser and Leon Adams had written about it. After my ignorant remark had appeared in print I got a polite note from Philip Wagner pointing out that he was following a well-established usage when he published *A Wine-Grower's Guide* in 1945. It is not what I called it, a "tendentious" word. So let's change that. "Winegrower," by the way, is much to be preferred to the now-standard (and to my ears foolish) usage of "vintner," but I know that no one will listen to that argument.

★ ★ ★

ONE CANNOT TALK OR WRITE long about wine in English without discovering that the language is weak in words for the activities of vine growing and winemaking. The solution is either to Frenchify one's language, since French is rich in just those words that English lacks, or to invent English equivalents, or, most often, to strike some sort of compromise.

It was not always thus. In the days when England had vineyards and made large quantities of wine, there was a considerable stock of wine terms both in Old English and in Middle English: *wintre* (vine),

winberi (grape), *wingetred* (press), *winegeard-naem* (harvest), *win-cole* (vat), *winwyrce* (vine dresser), *drosna* (lees), *awilled win* (new wine), *win-aern* (wine cellar). In the days of King Alfred it was possible to speak of the *winegeard-naem* of the *winberis* from the *wintre*, the result of which went through the *wingetred* and was stored, as *awilled wine*, in the *win-aern*.¹ Now we say that the harvest (*vintage*) of grapes from the *vine* goes through the *press* and, as *new wine*, goes into the *cellar*. All of the Anglo-Saxon terms have been driven out by French.



Early Winemaking Scene: *winegeard-naem* – *winberis* – *wingetred* – *awilled win*

The triumph of the French was double. Not only did the Norman conquest impose the French language on the Anglo-Saxon, but French winegrowing put an end to that of the English. The process of borrowing into English had been going on since a much earlier time than these events, however. It is notable that there was no Anglo-Saxon term for wine itself: Anglo-

Saxon *wine* is the Latin *vinum*. Other terms borrowed at a very early time include *barrel*, *bottle*, *cellar*, *grape*, *press*, and *vine*, all of which were known in Middle English. Some words that were borrowed early from the French have not survived into modern English, evidently because the things they named no longer existed in England: *vigneron* (winegrower) and *vynour* (vine dresser) are instances.

What was true of the language in England was even truer of the language in the North American colonies. The English colonists came without a winegrowing tradition, and were, for centuries, unable to build one in the New World. The vocabulary of wine would continue to wither away without anything to feed it. But we have now developed, or are developing, a tradition of our own, so that we can at least expect the possibility of a lovely growth of novelty in our stock of wine words. The state of the vocabulary as it stands at this moment may be briefly outlined.

1. WORDS TAKEN FROM THE FRENCH, either replacing older English terms or having no English equivalent.

There are two levels in this category: the first level consists of those terms that have been accepted so long that they are no longer perceived as foreign; the second consists of words that are still felt to be French and therefore regarded as somewhat affected. Sometimes this is so because we lack the *thing* as well as the word.

ACCEPTED TERMS INCLUDE: *barrel*, *bottle*, *butt*, *cellar*, *claret*, (and a whole range of equivalent wine names used as typical), *ferment*, *funnel*, *gallon*, *gauge*, *graft*, *grape*, *press*, *puncheon*, *raisin*, *ullage*, *vine*, *vintage*, and *vintner*. Such words can change in interesting ways. *Vintner*, for example, is an instance of a specialized meaning becoming generalized. Originally a vintner was a wine dealer, a seller of wine; now the word and its derivations are used to mean not only a seller but one who has to do with the entire process of winegrowing, as in the phrase now common American wine labels, "vinted and bottled by."

Vintage is an instance of the opposite process of narrowed meaning: originally *vintage* meant harvest, but it is now generally understood to mean "good harvest," as in "vintage year" or "vintage wine."

FRENCH TERMS STILL FELT TO BE ALIEN but in fact used by writers in English, include: *appellation*, *brut*, *cave*, *cépage*, *chai*, *chambrier*, *chaptalization*, *climat*, *clos*, *cru*, *cuvage*, *cuvée*, *éleveur*, *marc*, *négociant*, *ordinaire*, *remuage*, *sec*, *sommelier*, *terroir*, *vigneron*, *vignoble*. One of these terms,

vigneron, was anglicized as *vinearoon* in the days of Shakespeare, but it did not survive long. A word like *négociant* is an instance of a name for something unfamiliar but not quite unknown in the United States: the *négociant* is a merchant who selects young wines, then stores, ages, and blends them, before bottling and labeling them to sell wholesale. He thus performs many functions under one comprehensive name. *Terroir* is another unfamiliar concept; it refers, literally, to the contribution of the soil to the character of the wine, but in application it sometimes takes on almost mystical attributes. The French take *terroir* seriously; the Americans so far remain skeptical.

A few French terms may be regarded as on the borderline between naturalization and foreignness: *Château* used in American winery names is perhaps one of them; so, too, is the technical term *must* (French *mout*) for the yet-unfermented juice that comes from the crusher.

2. WORDS OF MODERN ENGLISH ORIGIN NOW ACCEPTED AS STANDARD.

This is a category containing, as far as I know, only two words: *winery* and *winegrowing*. *Winery*, formed on the analogy of *tannery* or *creamery*, is an American invention whose first recorded instances go back to the early 1880s. Before that time, Americans were likely to call their few winemaking establishments "wine houses" or "wine cellars." *Winery* obviously filled a gap, and has become absolutely standard.

Winegrower is a more tendentious word, perhaps not yet fully established. I have used it as one of my conventions in this book, but not without some hesitation. Its use is encouraged by the California Wine Institute, which recognizes in it the valuable implication that wine is not a manufactured, but an agricultural, product. Its currency goes back to the days not long after Repeal, when California winegrowers sought a marketing order under the Agricultural Marketing Act. Such an order gave legal authority to the wine trade association to collect mandatory assessments from all California wineries in order to pay the costs of research and promotion. But the enterprise had to be demonstrably agricultural. The wine people were at first refused as not qualified under the act, but later won recognition, partly through the "evidence" for the character of their work provided by the name *winegrower*. Jefferson Peyser, for many years the legal office of the Wine Institute, claims the credit for having suggested the term when the marketing order was being sought.² The term was used as early as 1851 in Cincinnati, and

doubtless elsewhere as early, or earlier than that; the *Oxford English Dictionary* records an English instance from 1859. Thus Peyser cannot claim the invention of the word; but he may have been responsible for bringing it into wide and recognized use in this country.

3. WORDS OF MODERN ENGLISH ORIGIN NOT YET ACCEPTED.

I exclude from this category the technical terms of modern viticulture and winemaking—terms, mostly compounds, such as *T-bud grafting*, *mechanical harvester*, *dejuicer*, *field crushing*, and *ion exchange*. *Shermat* (from “sherry material”) and *mog* (for “material other than grape”) are genuine new words. Besides those, I know of only a very few instances of deliberate coinages, all of them efforts to solve the same problem: What do you call a person who takes a general interest in wine? *Oenophile* is one suggestion, from the Greek *oinos*, “wine.” The variant *enophiliac* also exists.³ Leon Adams has suggested *oenenthusiast*, with the same beginning but concluding not with the Greek *philos* (“loving”) but with the Greek *enthousia* (“being possessed by a god”). I have also seen *vinophile*, mixing Latin and Greek. Whether as *oenophiles*, *enophiliacs*, *oenenthusiasts*, or *vinophiles*, we should be seeing an efflorescence of new terms for wine and its lore.

NOTES

1. See Eero Alanne, “Observations on the Development and Structure of English Wine-Growing Terminology,” *Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki* 20 (1957): 30.
2. Jefferson Peyser, in *Wines and Vines* 64 (March 1983): 24. Leon Adams says that he introduced the term into the language of post-Repeal California winemaking (“Revitalizing the California Wine Industry,” California Wine Industry Oral History Project. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1974). Both Peyser and Adams were active in the effort to get a California wine marketing order after Repeal.
3. *American Wine Society Journal* 17 (Winter 1985): 107.



McMILLIN, *cont. from p. 10—*

The Bottles: Here are a few related wines that sparked a lot of interest in my classes at the Fort Mason campus of San Francisco City College.

- 2009 Lexia Moscato. Alice White, Southeast Australia, \$7.
- 2009 Riesling. Targovishte Winery, Black Sea, Bulgaria, \$9.
- 2009 Riesling. Bonterra Vineyards, Mendocino County, CA, \$14.
- 2008 Zinfandel Estate Reserve. EOS Estate Winery, Paso Robles, CA, \$18.
- 2008 Moscatel. Bodega Ochoa, Navarra, Spain. \$20.
- 2007 Carignane. D. Gehrs Wines, Santa Ynez Valley, CA, \$24.
- 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon. R. Mondavi, Napa Valley, \$28.



MAX SCHMIDT, *cont. from p. 8—*

pulled through,” said Max. “Their names were on their own labels. Names like the Widow Finke, Lachman & Jacobi, Gundlach, Charles Krug, Jacob Schram the barber who went about from one farm to another with his razor and shears while his vines grew up, I. Landsberger, the Korbels who grew wine around redwood stumps up Russian River, and Paul Masson who took over the Lefranc-Thée vineyards at Almaden and made his champagne under a black-and-gold label. I was printer to them all.”

“Those German growers in Napa were thrifty. I charged them only a dollar for a thousand labels, ten for a cent. ‘Buccaneer!’ they grumbled. ‘Danzig pirate!’”



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IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by Bob Foster



Dead in the Dregs by Peter Lewis. Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2010. 271 pp. Paperback. \$14.95. Also available in hardback.

"... it is the body of the wine critic,
but it smells like *brettanomyces* ..."

WHAT A CLEVER PREMISE for a wine-related novel. Wine critic Robert Parker is murdered while visiting Napa Valley, his right hand is cut off and the body is dumped into an open-top wood fermentation tank in the middle of harvest. Of course, the victim in this piece of fiction is named Richard Wilson and his publication is called *The Wine Maven*. But the physical and psychological description clearly show the link to Parker. Wilson is described as never having experienced "any qualms over his judgments. He considered himself completely objective and never apologized for anything he wrote." Winemakers made wines to match Wilson's palate, not their own. For me, that's a partial profile of Robert Parker and today's wine world.

After the murder, suspicion first falls on those winemakers that have been given horrible scores by the legendary wine critic. But after two other wine critics are murdered, suspicion turns elsewhere. The story of Wilson's brother-in-law's hunt for the killer becomes a bit too complex and takes on aspects of *Someone is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe*. I don't want to ruin the mystery but, in a way, old school wine techniques play a large role in the murders.

Given the author's detailed knowledge of food, wine, and the geography of both Napa and France, there are delightful bits along the way. I was laughing out loud as the protagonist walks by the open-top fermenter, prior to the discovery of the body, and smells an off odor. It is the body of the wine critic but it smells like *brettanomyces*. Long-time Parker readers will appreciate this ironic twist given Parker's apparent inability to detect brett at low levels and his affinity for it at higher levels. I think it is a classic inside joke.

This book is a really fun read especially if you have an appetite for mystery, good food, and wine. Highly recommended.

Matt Kramer on Wine: A Matchless Collection of Columns, Essays and Observations by America's Most Original and Lucid Wine Writer by Matt Kramer. New York: Sterling Epicure, 2010. 334 pp. Hardback. \$19.95.

"Intelligent, insightful, interesting...a good read..."

I USED TO BE A BIG FAN of the *Wine Spectator*. But in recent years I had the feeling it had become *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. I didn't really care what some famous new actor thought about wine or what he had in his refrigerator. I found it ironic that a magazine that critically reviews wine would cut off review copies to a book reviewer who gave poor reviews to their regional wine "guides" when he had the temerity to point out that a guide should give guidance, not simply be a virtual set of yellow pages.

Be that as it may, I always enjoyed reading Matt Kramer's columns. I may not have always agreed with him but I found his writing interesting and thought provoking. I adored the opening sentences of his commentary on the ever increasing prices on new Bordeaux wines: "Dear Bordeaux Lovers, Are you folks nuts? (Ahem, let me start over.) My dear brothers and sisters in wine buying (that's better). You're really wacko aren't you? I can't help it. Try as I might to be a kinder, gentler columnist, it won't work and today's Bordeaux market proves it."

This book is primarily a compilation of his columns over the years from the *Wine Spectator*. Sometimes when wine writers put together a book of their prior writings the material is old and out of date, but is used nevertheless. Here Kramer has added a thoughtful postscript updating the material or explaining why his prognostication went astray.

Kramer covers everything from terroir to wine glasses with wit, insight, and a bit of a cynical eye. In his section on Wine Hokum he goes after many myths of the wine world including the Vacu-Vin, estate bottling, and corks.

The very end of the book is a long profile that Kramer was hired to write on legendary Italian winemaker Angelo Gaja, in 1992 for *The New Yorker* magazine. The piece never ran in that publication but they still paid for it. Although the material is nearly two decades old, it does a fine job in portraying this amazing winemaker.

Intelligent, insightful, interesting. This stuff is a good read. Highly recommended.

[With sincere Tendril thanks to Bob and the *California Grapevine* for permission to reprint his reviews published in the October/November 2010 issue. — Ed.]

BOOKS FOR TRUE WINE & FOOD LOVERS

by George Caloyannidis

Part III — DARLINGTON & ASHER

[In the past two *WTQ* issues, we have enjoyed a lingering feast at the sumptuous table of friend Caloyannidis. Our first two courses brought us delightful titles from H. Warner Allen, Richard Olney, Joseph Weschberg, A. J. Liebling, Angelo Pellegrini and Kermit Lynch. We will not be disappointed with our dessert course herewith served. As Gerald Asher reminds us, "The magic of the wine experience depends on the most elusive and precious things in life, fleeting as they are, and just as a bottle of wine—never twice the same. We also realize the experience can pass us by if we don't approach it with the right attitude, a degree of knowledge and especially the necessary sensitivity." — Ed.]

**ANGELS' VISITS. AN INQUIRY INTO
THE MYSTERY OF ZINFANDEL**

David Darlington

New York, Holt & Co., 1991

"A bottle (preferably two) of old-vine Zinfandel and a cumin-laced lamb stew will have six strangers predicting the Academy Awards, solving the problems of the ecosystem and discussing the lives of people they don't know." — Gerald Asher.



HERE IS A SIDE of me that kept telling me that this book does not belong in this series, "Books for Wine Lovers," and yet, there is a magnetic quality about it which kept pulling me towards it. While Darlington is definitely fascinated by wine, even enamored by it, he ultimately relates to it with a journalistic

detachment which appears to take it out of the realm of love. Seemingly, most of its value lies between the lines.

Darlington sets out to tell us the story of Zinfandel, the grape which has come to be considered the "American grape." In so doing, the grape's history aside, he opens a window into the unique way America relates to wine. Had that been the primary purpose of the book, Darlington could not have done a better job and chosen a better grape through which to tell that story. Though he touches on a number of wineries, his book is primarily devoted to profiling Ravenswood and Ridge.

We will not meet old, grumpy *vignerons* who refuse to sell their wine unless they like the buyer, or multi-generational descendants who carry on the tradition. We will not find moldy caves, or ancient vineyards just outside the kitchen where a pot of *cassoulet* is simmering on the stove. We will not find wines which have long evolved to be drunk with the local food, or ones which have developed a personality—sometimes a refreshingly odd one—committed to a limited, local appeal, waiting for the wine lover to discover and appreciate. And we will not meet winemakers who are content with what they have, not worrying about ways

to expand their market, never losing their compass. If all that is missing, what is left?

We are left with the inside story of a wine frontier, a frontier which for reasons we all know got a late start, and we follow it through its frantic pace to compress the centuries Europe has had to sort out what grapes grow where, and how best to handle them. This is the story of pioneers, dreamers and adventurers in search of the Holy Grail as each one of them envisions it. Their journey is full of obstacles and their dedication endearing. We follow their inspired dreams as they gradually change, until very little is left. It is a suspenseful read because all along we keep hoping that some of the original romantic intentions survive "success."

Good wine has a life span roughly that of a human being's and we relate to it on a human life-scale. Our own longevity, power, elegance, restraint, patience, individuality are qualities we appreciate in wine as well. At the same time we instinctively appreciate qualities such as endurance, tradition and continuity in wine estates as we do in our families. Wine lovers are in heaven whenever they come upon such confluences.

While it lasts, pioneering—a difficult substitute for tradition—has an undeniable romantic side to it as do the lives of the pioneers which Darlington weaves into a superbly written account of their search for the "best" Zinfandel this grape can make.

With the exception of Dave Rafanelli, a second-generation Italian farmer and winemaker in Sonoma's Dry Creek Valley, the characters are new to the game. They are cancer researchers, dermatologists, airline pilots, engineers, nuclear scientists, even global adventurers. They happen to fall into winemaking almost by chance while in search of a joint family retreat with friends, of a romantic wine life-style, or even of their own identity, or because of some fortuitous encounter at the right place at the right time with an old, wealthy classmate.

Yet, once they are engaged, they are fully committed. Dave Bennion, Paul Draper, Joel Peterson, Joseph Swan, Doug Nalle, David Bruce, Jerry Seps—all the icons of Zinfandel. Thanks to Darlington, we get to know their backgrounds, their winemaking goals, and philosophies in making and marketing

their wines, and especially, sourcing their Zinfandel grapes from Paso Robles, to Santa Cruz, to Napa, Sonoma and Amador. As they evolve, some have settled in one place and make small production wines in pre-fabricated steel buildings, others keep moving from facility to facility or have their purchased grapes custom crushed wherever they can find space to receive them.

Darlington takes us along for the ride with wine-making cowboys in the West; with Joel Peterson on his Peugeot, driving through bramble and poison oak in search of old vines, checking on the harvest at vineyards half a day's trip apart or stopping at the Owl Cafe in Cloverdale for a milk shake and a piece of pie. "I keep discovering vineyards in places where I never expected them to be and getting good grapes from people I never expected to be interested in quality." At the same time they are modern day marketers anxiously preparing to receive Robert Parker Jr. or the *Wine Spectator* or submitting samples to county fair competitions or hosting an army of Japanese sommeliers.

This marketing environment shapes the wine culture itself in profound ways. In the many incarnations of the grape, from table wine to late harvest, we even experience the invention of new ones as we follow Sutter Home's white Zinfandel story or their development of the *Tosca* brand (wine-branding is a whole other story) for Darrell Corti's store in Sacramento. Wine, branded as a fashion item, gives us insight into the emergence of an entire industry and culture committed to sorting out winners and losers, firsts from runner-ups, gold from silver, 95 points from 87, in comparative line-ups. In the odd wine auction world, this hierarchy may be claret territory but it is against everything Zinfandel stands for. Nevertheless, we watch the pilgrims conform.

In spite of all this, as we follow these pioneers struggling to identify and bring to the surface the character of the individual vineyards they discover, hope is alive. We hear Joel Peterson trying to capture the wildness of the Old Hill or the manicured character of the Dickerson vineyards: "when Dickerson is no more than a song in your mind, the Old Hill will still be drudging along giving you more and more." And Paul Draper admires the "excitement in those European handmade wines with more mistakes which tend to come up with earthy, contradictory, surprising flavors." One wonders whether in this nervous environment any semblance of *wine-gemuetlichkeit* is still possible. Are these people, including the author, who are always on the move, capable of having a relaxed time and really enjoy wine?

Only twenty-five years after its founding on a shoestring, and after the book was published,

Ravenswood became an index in the portfolio of Constellation Brands for \$148 million without actually owning a vineyard. Its single-vineyard Zinfandels which had become a cult, have now joined some 40 other wines the winery produces. It sources grapes, even ready-made wine from all over California. Its wines are wonderful, cleaner than they used to be, even different from vineyard to vineyard and yet they have traded part of their soul for a reliable cookie-cutter quality.

Ridge, who was striving to make "handmade, exciting" wines and is owned by Otsuka Pharmaceutical also produces reliable, pleasant, squeaky-clean Zinfandels, vintage after vintage. According to a 2005 Darlington article, it had engaged the services of Enologix, a company which specializes in analytically guiding the winemaking process modeled to entice 5-point higher scores from the palates of the influential wine critics—who not surprisingly, mirror one another. Handmade? Exciting?

As I was about to give up on Darlington the wine lover, he endears us with a few precious accounts. He has declared his preference of Ravenswood over Ridge Zinfandels, but during one of his "cherished bachelor rituals—namely a solo steak dinner, a common devotional practice that includes as a sacrament the better portion of a bottle of wine," the bottle was the '84 Geyserville Zinfandel, "which single-handedly rearranged my personal view of Ridge." He experienced profound perfection.

Seven men—Rod Berglund, Darrell Corti, Paul Draper, Charlie Myers, Doug Nalle, Joel Peterson, Charles Sullivan—were gathered and presented "blind" by the author "two dozen of the most lauded wines of recent years," among them his favorite '84 Geyserville. "The next-to-last place wine was my darling, the '84 Geyserville." Right then and there, just as it was staring him in the face, I was hoping that Darlington would have drawn the obvious conclusion that wine, especially Zinfandel, is not about crowning Miss America—an equally odd cultural oddity.

Then finally, when along with Joel Peterson they visit the one who knows—the pope of Zinfandel, Joseph Swan, under whom Peterson had apprenticed—there it was: a *cassoulet* simmering on the stove for dinner! As Swan gradually got in the mood, he started bringing up one precious bottle after another from his cellar. "Sitting there, drinking transcendent old Zinfandel from vines growing outside the door of his farmhouse, surrounded by a tableful of his friends and family and pictures of his scattered children, I began to swell with a euphoria I've seldom known before or since." Everyone listened to the story each bottle had to say. No gold, no silver; nothing to disturb the wine lover's bliss.

The Wine Lover's Story of Zinfandel is waiting to be told. It still lives in the likes of Dave Rafanelli, and Rod Berglund, who continues the legacy of Joseph Swan, his father-in-law. Hopefully, Darlington is no longer having his ritual "solo," as it would pose a serious impediment to its telling.

VINEYARD TALES : REFLECTIONS

ON WINE, 1996

THE PLEASURES OF WINE :

SELECTED ESSAYS, 2002

Gerald Asher

San Francisco, Chronicle Books

"We get from a glass of wine what we ourselves put into it...it is not defined by pH and the taste of green olives but by people, place and time."



IT IS SAID THAT political parties can never win elections when they abandon their base. Shortly after Ruth Reichl took over *Gourmet*, she yanked Gerald Asher from writing the "Wine Journal"—the most brilliant essays on wine in any magazine of its time—and delegated to him the rather mundane task of matching wines with featured recipes. It was a tremendous waste of a unique talent—Fred Feretti and his "Gourmet at Large" was another—which caused

me to cancel my subscription. It took several years of *Gourmet's* move to the amorphous "center" of consumerism with its ephemeral financial success, before it was booted out of office.

Within the broad spectrum between knowledge and sophistication at one end and the guttural, simplicity at the other, there is a fine line which one must tread in trying to sort out wine's essentials. After all, not many would disagree that the enjoyment of wine is a sensory and intellectual interplay and I can't think of

a better initiation than following Gerald Asher as he explores the world of wine.

Like no other, he has the ability and confidence to tell us that his most memorable wine experience was not a Cheval-Blanc '47 or a Mouton Rothschild '45, not even the 1771 and 1791 Château Margaux, but the one he had while on a wine buying trip in the early 1960s. Stopping at an inn, while crossing the Alps on the Swiss-Italian border: "The deliciously simple lunch of sautéed veal scallops and buttered noodles with a salad of green beans was typical of what one finds in the mountains. My glass was filled with a light red wine poured from a pitcher, left on the table. I was relaxed, carefree and happy. Oh, how ruby bright that wine was; it gleamed in the sunlight. I remember clearly its enticing aroma—youthful, but with a refinement that surprised me. The wine was sweetly exotic, lively on my tongue, perfectly balanced, and with a long, glossy finish...The young woman who had poured it for me was amused when I asked what it was. It was, she said, *vino rosso*."

One notices "youthful but refined...enticing aroma...lively on the tongue...perfectly balanced...long, glossy finish." I never found the U.C. Davis "Wine Aroma Wheel"—the current, much-in-fashion descriptor—of particular use in choosing a wine to buy or to drink; neither does Asher. He too—just like the authors I previously reviewed—prefers to concentrate on structure and personality: amiable, assertive, blunt, throaty, fleshy, firm, bony, boisterous, robust, slim, simple, patrician. In the case of Zinfandel—"the most companionable wine"—an economy of words right to the character, one that tells me what the wine is like and if it is right for the occasion.

Asher's two books are collections of sixty-two "Wine Journal" essays—regrettably, not individually dated—as they appeared in *Gourmet* over the years. They not only span the globe from France, Spain, Chile and Australia to Monterey, Lodi and Santa Cruz, and much in-between, but they also include experiences, reminiscences and contemplations from lunches, dinners, travels, serious research and even books, all woven together into compelling wine experiences.

Asher will use history, culture, occasion, place, food to inspire one to summon friends, start cooking, pull some corks; or better yet, pack up a suitcase and go in search of the wines he hardly described in what most people today would misguidedly characterize "accurate" terms.

What we eventually realize is that the magic of the wine experience depends on the most elusive and precious things in life, fleeting as they are, and just as a bottle of wine—never twice the same. We also realize the experience can pass us by if we don't approach it with the right attitude, a degree of knowledge and especially the necessary sensitivity. To

put it simply, Asher teaches us the wine experience is always within a context.

VINEYARD TALES

WHO CARES FOR A Corbières today, let alone a decade and a half ago? Coming from the mountains on the French Mediterranean coast, "It is the oldest wine region in France. Its story is virtually the story of French wine," he told his inquiring companion while on a "quick stop for lunch" near the Place de la Madelaine. The "quick stop lunch" says everything we need to know about the character of the wine. But our curiosity is already piqued for more!

"The region, first planted by Roman veteran soldiers who settled there," he tells us, "turned out wines superior to those of Roman estates owned by the most prominent families, until in A.D. 92 they convinced emperor Domitian to order half the vineyards ripped out."

Asher follows the fate of the region's wine through the Middle Ages, Arabs, Visigoths, Charlemagne, the Catholic Church, the French Revolution and to modern times, through the succession of grape varieties to the prized few surviving ancient Carignan vines, now supplemented with Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre. "They are richly colored, sumptuous wines...after all, the Languedoc is *daube* country, the region honored for the slowly braised beef dish of which Robert Courtine says in his *Hundred Glories of French Cooking*, 'one finds oneself talking in terms of music, of poetry.'" Asher had appropriately ordered a *tarte provençale* for the quick lunch and when the companion wanted to know more about the region's sweet wines, he "waved to a passing waiter to bring another carafe of Corbières..."

Most believe that Barbaresco as we know it, has been around forever, but when Thomas Jefferson visited the region in 1787, Asher tells us, he found the Nebbiolo wine to be "about as sweet as the silky Madeira, as astringent on the palate as Bordeaux, and as brisk as Champagne." Only as late as the 1880s did modern Barbaresco start its transformation into a dry wine, and the fifty-seven-member cooperative Produttori del Barbaresco—still producing some of the appellation's best examples—helped shape it.

And what is the wine like? "I've never been much interested in the latest food fad. Nouvelle, Cajun, southwestern, Thai...I prefer familiar dishes; they talk to me. I'm happiest with lentil soup, good risotto, a roast bird; lamb cooked almost anyway, beans, green peppers, a wild mushroom sauté and *stracotto*, that slowly cooked Italian stew that gives a glimpse of paradise... When I eat one of those comforting old favorites, the wine I most enjoy is Barbaresco, preferably one with a little bottle age."

With all the current fashion, and fuss, of trying to match all kinds of cuisines and dishes with wine, Asher comes to the realization that traditional dishes developed in the traditional winegrowing regions of the world are the most rewarding ones. He has trouble, for example, "imposing wine on the carefully self-contained balance of most Chinese dishes."

With the exception of a handful of obvious rules, "the perfect fit of wine and food risks becoming one more complication thrown in the path of those who simply want to enjoy a bottle of wine. The few traditions we lean on, though reassuring, are of dubious value. It is a subject that none of the gastronomic writers of the past, from third-century Athenaeus to nineteenth-century Brillat-Savarin, have even cared to discuss." He makes the case by showing the historical food-wine-culture differences between "the ceremony of Paris, the monotony of London, the ambiguity of Vienna and the rich bourgeoisie of Hamburg," not to forget Petersburg.

He is less interested in the presumed subtleties of wine and food than he is on "Wine on Wine," where one wine may overshadow a subsequent one if not served in the proper order. "Ideally, the first two wines should establish a frame of reference for the second, even introduce, if possible and need be, any stylistic imperfection that might divert attention from the qualities of the older, finer wine that follows." Case in point: Asher tells us that in 1934, Charles Walter Berry had the opportunity to drink the 1899 Haut-Brion at a dinner served with a fresh truffled *paté de foie gras*. It was, he wrote "a dream—I would like to be Rip Van Winkle, and take a bottle of this to bed with me." Asher had the opportunity to taste the same wine at the end of a three-day tasting marathon on a millionaire's Texas ranch. "Finally, we came to Charles Walter Berry's dream wine...it was faded of course...the flavor, too delicate to analyze was astonishingly long. By the end, as one might have expected, we were tired and exhilarated." Not the most sensitive sequence!

Asher manages to keep our interest by giving us details we feel we ought to have known. Because of the Thomas Jefferson connection to Ch. Haut-Brion, we feel that we have a good grip on its history. Asher takes us through its evolution within its cultural and historical framework. After Cromwell's "grim constraint of compulsory godliness" and the Great Fire of 1666, London was being rebuilt, giving rise to an energetic and opportunist society which met in coffeehouses and taverns out of which its important financial institutions and clubs evolved. And so is it that Arnaud de Pontac, Haut-Brion's owner at the time, brought the wine to its premium prominence by sending "his son Francois-August along with the chef from his Bordeaux mansion, to open London's first

restaurant. It was elegant, expensive, and roaringly successful; and in that perfect setting the Pontacs presented their Haut-Brion wine to a clientele best able to appreciate it, to pay for it, and to further its cause." This marketing success induced none other than John Locke—Jefferson's ideological mentor—to visit the estate in 1677 and report in astonishment that its soil was "scarce fit to bear anything." Drinking a bottle of Haut-Brion can never be the same!

I don't know how anyone can possibly resist boarding a plane to Portugal after reading Asher's essay on "Vinhos Verdes." Inspired by an 18th century postcard harvest scene depicting "several men on rickety ladders leaned perilously to pick from a tangle of vines trailing from elm to poplar to olive tree," he tells us of Pliny's note that "a hired picker expressly stipulates in his contract that he will be entitled to the cost of a funeral and a grave." Luckily, when he travels to the Minho Valley, he finds the vines still stretching from tree top to tree top. "They would make Virgil, Martial, Catullus, yes, even Pliny and the rest of the gang—were they ever to return—feel absolutely at home," leaving the ground beneath open, "preventing mold, discouraging thieves" and for growing cabbage. "The fan-leafed cabbage is picked leaf by leaf, shredded finely and then thrown into a hot broth thickened with potato and flavored with a slice of smoked sausage. Even more so than the salt cod, this cabbage soup is virtually the Portuguese national dish."

Vinhos Verdes are strictly controlled; the grapes may only come from each grower's property, and may only be vinified and bottled right on the premises, no matter how small the plot. "No freelance bottlers arriving with a truckload of equipment once a year... The wines are youthful, fresh and tartly crisp. The liveliness of a Vinho Verde is part of its charm: it is one of the few wines in the world for which there is a minimum acidity imposed by law." Perfect for the thick cabbage soup and the infinite variety of strong-flavored salt cod dishes!

THE PLEASURES OF WINE

SIX YEARS SEPARATE this essay collection from the previous one and one senses an ever so subtle shift in style. We no longer accompany Asher as a close friend with whom he shares emotions, feelings and the experiences of the moment. He is now more of an observer, a journalist if you will, from whom we learn; an infinitely more difficult task because while knowledgeable people are plentiful, talented teachers are rare.

As diverse as the essays are, there is a thread connecting them: there are always two messages in every bottle of wine. The first, an obvious one, is the

taste of the liquid itself. The second is that it always contains a written note which has the ability to influence the appreciation of the liquid for anyone who can fish it out and read it.

"Priorato's secret lies in its schist—a crumbly gray-green slate that forces the Grenache and Carignan vines traditionally grown there to send roots down forty feet or more in search of water. The nutrients and minerals they draw from that depth contribute to the intensity of the wine, giving it a strength that throws into relief the rich fruit and ripe, velvety tannins that are Priorato's hallmark."

Or, Albarino from the Rias Baixas in Spain's Galicia region on the Atlantic produces wine predominantly from three sub-regions: Val do Salnes, O Rosal and Condado do Tea. "The differences between them is enough to illustrate most of what one needs to know about Albarino... The vineyards of Salnes form an open bowl facing west to the ocean... The individual shelves and terraces of vines face this way and that to catch the sun, but all are exposed to whatever blows in from the sea. The vineyards of Rosal and Condado also turn about, to accommodate the rise and fall of a terrain shaped by the streams and rivulets that feed the Mino. Rosal is affected by the ocean less directly, and Condado—because it is further upstream—even less." And the note in the bottle concludes, "A Salnes Albarino is bolder than one from either Rosal or Condado. It has good acidity, pungent aroma and flavor (some say of pineapple), and it gives a powerful, fleshy impression. Its focus is intensely varietal. Rosal wines—and to even a greater degree those from Condado—are more graceful and more supple. Their flavor steals across the palate and lingers there. If a Salnes wine tends to express the varietal more than the site, a Rosal or Condado wine does the opposite."

Now, imagine two bottles of Albarino wine. They both may taste wonderful, satisfying every inch of one's palate. One is from the Salnes, the other—a concoction of a modern winemaker—is a mixture of Salnes and Condado. Where a wine drinker may be enamored with the taste of this anonymous drifter, a wine lover has lost something, like a child having lost its parents. Nonetheless, this is the winemaking culture as it emerged away from Europe and wholeheartedly embraced by wine critics.

Asher takes us to Chinon at around 1980 where a group of wine professionals had gathered to discuss the question whether "a wine should be created for consumers, or should consumers be created for a wine." In his opinion, "No matter how delicious the wine that took its place, the classic wine itself would then cease to be." Today, the debate is raging louder than ever, but sadly for the wine lover, the remaining icons of European traditionalism are dying off one by one.

Taking us by surprise, Asher uses this event in Chiron to lead to the story of Napa Valley's Beaulieu Vineyards in a romantic account, written in a style reminiscent of Idwal Jones, in which we can see how this culture, driven by initial necessity, found its roots in California. "Such questions would have been irrelevant to [BV founder] Georges de Latour," he tells us.

Undeterred, and ever the wine lover, Asher was perhaps the lone voice of his time trying to identify typicity of character in the various regions outside Europe. And whenever he found them, he laid a rational foundation for them. Mount Veeder, Monterey, Sonoma, wandering Syrah, Russian River, Lodi, Australia and Chile.

Robert Mondavi is considered the father of Napa Valley wine, but his Woodbridge label has always been viewed as a money-making wine factory. Very few know how Woodbridge, single-handedly gave thriving families to the beautiful Zinfandel orphans of Lodi, a region with hundreds of acres of ancient Zinfandel vineyards. Prior to the Woodbridge arrival, farmers were selling their grapes to wineries—who knew the high quality of Lodi grapes but paid cheap prices—and used them to add power and complexity to their anonymous bulk-wine blends. The growers never had the chance to know how good their grapes were.

Mondavi changed all that, by keeping separate the wines made from the grapes of each grower and then bringing the growers together to taste their individual wines. "We work with two hundred growers in Lodi," Bradley Anderson, the winery's general manager told Asher. "The winery arranges seminars for its growers and fosters their deepening knowledge by taking them on trips to other regions, even other countries." Today, almost a decade after Asher wrote the essay, Lodi, having sorted out its vineyards, is a thriving wine country with many small wineries producing some of the most succulent old vine Zinfandels in California. If Mondavi deserves a bust in the Napa Valley, he equally deserves one in Lodi.

I am always delighted to introduce something new to my 27-year-old wine-tasting group; not an easy task. But I got inspired by Asher's essay on Franconia, whose wines come in the "odd, flattened, round-bellied flagons" and are some of the most sought after and difficult to source, even in Germany. As Asher tells us, "in the 18th century, growers were forbidden by decree of the prince-bishop of Würzburg from selling any wine at all outside his territory." The predominant grape is Sylvaner—Riesling being planted only on the very few most favored sites, "where summer starts earlier and finishes later.... When a Franconian Riesling succeeds, however, whether thanks to site or summer or both, it succeeds with rare magnificence." And, "from early May until

June, German restaurants vie with each other to see which can offer the most tender, the most creamy-white, and thickest asparagus stalks...downed with a glass of Franconian Sylvaner."

Echoing an anonymous sommelier blogger, "after reading Asher's essays, I must run to the store and find the wines he just described," I can not wait for my turn to surprise my wine-loving friends with Franconia wines and asparagus. At the same time we shall lay the cliché of asparagus as a killer of wine to rest—one which still persists though André Simon had already done so on numerous occasions six decades ago. And we will all raise a glass to Gerald Asher!

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Vineyard Tales* also contains the superb essay, "Between Hard Covers: Wine Books in English" (pp.62-71) reprinted in *Tendrils*, July 1994 (v.4 #3).



BOOKS ARE BOTH OUR LUXURIES and our daily bread. They have become to our lives and happiness prime necessities. They are our trusted favourites, our guardians, our confidential advisors, and the safe consumers of our leisure. They cheer us in poverty, and comfort us in the misery of affluence. They absorb the effervescence of impetuous youth and while away the tedium of age. You may not teach ignorance to a youth who carries his favourite book in his pocket; and to a man who masters his appetites a good book is a talisman which insures him against the dangers of overspeed, idleness, and shallowness.



HENRY STEVENS
Rare Book Seller

1882

A NEW YEAR'S BUNDLE OF BOOKS

by Christopher Fielden

[A vintage Tendril who established a fine library during his 40-plus years in the wine trade, Christopher Fielden is also a gifted wine writer, with several notable titles on a number of topics, including Burgundy, wine waiters, pocket guides, wine frauds through the ages, and Latin America. — Ed.]



It is time for me to empty my intray, which is bulging with wine books eager for my attention. Whilst most wine-writers in Britain are complaining that publishers are no longer interested in what they have to offer, they still seem however to be able to bring their product to the market, not always by the most conventional of roots.

“... my wine book of the year...”

Inside Burgundy by Jasper Morris MW. London: Berry Bros. & Rudd, 2010. 656pp. £50.

Jasper Morris MW is the Burgundy buying director for fine wine merchants Berry Bros. & Rudd and it is they who have published his book. Of course, this is not their first venture into publishing; in 1933 they produced a slim work on Tokay, and in 2000, in association with the *Financial Times*, a further slim work, *Wine Cellar Wisdom*. This, however, is on a much vaster scale. The author and his American wife have lived in the Burgundian village of Bouilland for almost twenty years now and he has been part of the wine scene, as the title of the book suggests, truly from the inside.

The locals regularly make the point of differentiating between *le Bourgogne*, the wine, and *La Bourgogne*, the region, and there are few writers who have truly understood, and managed to impart the flavour of both. Jasper has certainly achieved this, with what must be the most complete book on the dual subject. It gives profiles of individual growers and vineyards from Côte Saint Jacques, at Joigny in the north, to Pouilly-Fuissé in the south. Beaujolais is not included (in France it is considered to be a separate viticultural region) and the author is very critical of proposals now under consideration, for it to be brought further into the Burgundian *appellation contrôlée* system. Whilst the Beaujolais might be omitted, there are details—that I have seen in no other book—of the *Vins de Pays* of Ste. Marie la Blanche, in the plain to the east of Beaune, and of the Coteaux de l'Auxois, north of Dijon.

One great merit of this book is that, whilst it offers a mass of information, it is clearly presented and is

written in a very easy-to-read way. Mr. Morris has a quirky eye for detail. For example, in describing the oldest *négociant* house in Beaune, Champy Père et Fils, he says, “Winemaking has been in the capable hands of Dmitri Baza since 1999.” To this plain statement of fact, he adds the footnote (or rather the side-note, for it appears in the margin of the page), “Since 28th June 1999, at 8 o'clock in the morning, to be precise. Dmitri likes to be precise.” It is touches like this that fill out the body and provide interest.

Yet a further outstanding feature of this book is the cartography of Sylvain Pitiot, who has provided detailed maps to accompany all the village profiles.

For me, this is my wine book of the year. Burgundy has long been a fascination for me and this goes a long way to quench my thirst. For the price of a bottle of good Burgundy, I have something that I can go back to regularly in so many ways: I can use it as a work of reference, I can dip into it for a minute or two, or I can settle down for an enjoyable evening's read. This is a must-have for every collector of wine books.

“A book for your library?...possibly”

Grand Cru – The Great Wines of Burgundy through the Perspective of Its Finest Vineyards by Remington Norman. London: Kyle Cathie Ltd., 2010. 239pp. £40.

I must admit that this book is not what I expected. I thought it would give a detailed analysis of each of the *grands crus* of Burgundy, their producers and the wines that they make. Yes, it is all, or almost all, there, but that accounts for no more than a third of the book. The balance is made up of more general information about Burgundy and its wines. The problem is compounded by the fact that the third edition of Remington Norman's *The Great Domaines of Burgundy*, updated by Charles Taylor MW, came out earlier in 2010, and there appears too much overlap. Thus in *Grand Cru* we have a chapter entitled “Buying Burgundy Intelligently” and one in *Great Domaines* called “Buying and Enjoying Burgundy.” Similarly, we find “The Influence of Climate” and “Climate and Microclimates of the Côte d'Or,” and even more directly a chapter in each book on “Pinot Noir” and on “Chardonnay.” This leads me to the conclusion that the book has been somewhat artificially inflated. I have said that it is “almost all there,” for one Burgundian Grand Cru receives no mention at all—Chablis Grand Cru. This is all the more confusing because profiles are included of certain vineyards which are not classified as *grands crus*, but which, in any future classification might well be so rated. These include, for example, Chambolle-Musigny les Amoureuses and Meursault les Perrières.

I find interesting the historical part of the book which shows how some, possibly undeserving,

vineyards came to have this classification, and how some deserving ones did not. Regional politics and pride, for example, seem to have played their role. Apparently, at the time, the town of Nuits considered that its reputation was high enough for it to have no need of any vineyards with this new-fangled status of *grand cru*. It is interesting that the vineyard of Les Saint Georges has put under the way the lengthy process of elevation to such a height!

The profiles of the individual *grands crus* include headings on 'Statistics,' 'Principal Owners,' 'Origins,' 'Topography/Geology' and 'Wine.' However, these are somewhat lacking in detail. For example, that on Le Montrachet runs to just over a page, whilst at least two whole books have been written which deal with just this one vineyard. It would be useful to have, as is provided for Clos Vougeot, a map of the vineyard showing the holdings of the individual proprietors.

I have further reservations about the maps that are used. These are aerial photographs, with contour lines and vineyard names super-imposed. Sadly, the effect of this is not as clear as one might desire.

What do I like about the book? The chapters on the grape varieties are particularly useful, with a family tree showing their, often putative, relationship, and profiles of the various clones available with their merits and demerits. Credit also must be given to the excellent photographs illustrating the book, most of which were taken by John Wyand.

A book for your library?—possibly, but it is a pity that the author, or the publisher, has brought it out so soon after Dr. Norman's other book and just a month after that of Mr. Morris.

Le Guide des Vins de Bourgogne Beaujolais 2010-2011 by Thierry Gaudillère and Christophe Tupinier, eds. Beaune: SARL Ecrivin, 2010. 255pp. 19.50 euros.

This annual guide is rather slimmer than the last one I bought two years ago, though it now includes the Beaujolais. It has cut down its list of recommended wines from around 3,000 by about a third, but, nevertheless, remains a valuable reference book for the current purchaser of Burgundies. It also gives profiles of many domains and has a star rating system for the exceptional ones. Currently, it gives twenty-six producers a three-star rating, nine of whom are newcomers. The range of laureates is broad, including not just the great names of the Côte d'Or, but regional stars such as the Goisot domain at Saint-Bris in the Yonne and Saumaize-Michelin in Pouilly-Fuissé.

I would suggest that this is a book only to buy if you are in Burgundy and want to know where to go to buy the best wines at all price-levels.

The Finest Wines of Champagne – A Guide to the Best Cuvées, Houses and Growers by Michael Edwards. London: Aurum, 2009. 320pp. £20.

"thoroughly informative book ... of great use"

This is an important addition to the literature on Champagne and its wines, which seem to have a fascination for British wine-writers. Perhaps it is because it is the nearest major wine region to our shores and its vineyards are readily visited. There can be few who have studied the region so assiduously as Michael Edwards and he provides us with detailed profiles of all the major houses and their wines, as well as many of the growers, whose wines are now becoming more readily available of the markets of the world.

There is always a danger when an author includes the word 'finest' in the title of a book, for this reflects his appreciation of what is finest and this may not necessarily agree with that of the reader, or, indeed of other writers. Particularly as far as growers' wines are concerned, we all have our favourites and I was disappointed not to see mine included!

When I was last in Champagne, I visited Les Riceys, renowned for its still wines as well as its Champagnes, and picked up the fact that it has the largest acreage under vines of any village in all Champagne. Sadly, no producer is thought worthy of a mention.

Despite these two minor concerns I found this a thoroughly informative book and one that I will find of great use. Once again, there are outstanding photographs by Jon Wyand.

Le Chemin des Vignes, Vallée de la Loire. Paris: Editions Sang de la Terre, 2010. 238pp. 19.90 euros.

"a wine guide that sets itself apart"

I must admit that I had never heard of the French wine magazine *LeRouge& leBlanc* until, on a visit to the Loire Valley earlier this year, I bought this book. It appears that it is a quarterly that accepts no publicity and is dedicated "to work for the defence of *vins de terroir*."

This guide is, therefore, one to growers who refuse to machine-harvest, use chemical herbicides and cultivated yeast, chaptalise, thermovinify...—in short, who make totally natural wines. This, then, is a wine guide that sets itself apart from the majority. Many of the well-known names are missing, but you are introduced to many growers who are, for the most part, young and determined to blaze their own way in the world of wine.

All the vineyard regions along the Loire from Muscadet at its mouth up to the, hitherto unknown to me, VDQS Côtes d'Auvergne are described in detail, together with the regulations that control them. You are also given the names of domains to visit and hotels and restaurants where you can stay and eat. This is not your normal guide, it is more a voyage of discovery.

The Wines of Madeira by Trevor Elliott. Gosport: The Author (trevorelliottwines@tesco.net), 2010, 192pp. £13.99.

"the author ... has succeeded admirably"

This book is a labour of love. Trevor Elliott is a retired secondary school teacher, who has emerged from his chrysalis as a wine educator. As he writes, "This book is intended for the person who is interested in finding out about the wonderful wines produced in Madeira, for those who already know and enjoy these wines but wish to learn more, and for students preparing for wine examinations."

This is basically a "what is happening today" book about Madeira and its wines. Whilst there is a brief chapter on the history of the wines, the author suggests anyone who wants to know more about this, and particularly the importance in the past of the United States as a market, should consult Alex Liddell's book *Madeira* (London, 1998).

Sadly, now there are only eight companies left producing wines (and the wines of one of these are not exported), but Trevor points out that there are more than 1300 growers who provide them with their grapes. Every aspect of the production is dealt with in detail and there are a host of interesting statistics. Each grape variety, each company, and the wines that they sell, is profiled. There is also a chapter on the 'light' wines that are now being produced on the island, though from my limited experience, they scarcely represent true value for money.

This book also contains many details of use to the tourist to the island and much other fascinating information. I have long been intrigued that the wine-trade in the United States came under the same authorities as firearms. In Madeira, however, the responsible governmental body is IVBAM—the Madeira Wine, Embroidery and Handicraft Institute!

One situation in Madeira that the author does not discuss is the dual aspect that it presents on export markets. He does say that the most important export market is France, but does not point out that nearly all the wine that goes there is of the lowest quality and is shipped in bulk for eventual use as a flavouring for sauces. On the one hand you have the true classic image of fine old wines, and on the other is its appearance way down the list of ingredients in a

French recipe book. Of course, the same is true of Port, but this does not lessen the potential danger for both.

Earlier I quoted what the author hoped to achieve with this book; I feel that he has succeeded admirably in this goal and this is a very useful work of reference for any wine lover.

Been Doon So Long – A Randall Grahm Vinthology by Randall Grahm. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 318pp. \$34.95.

"a wonderful collection of the eccentric Mr. Grahm"

I have only met Randall Grahm on one occasion, but I suppose that I have been aware of him almost since he first planted a vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1980, for publicity has always been one of his strengths. I admired his efforts to produce fine pinot noirs, his aspirations as the Rhône Ranger, with as by-products the wacky labels of Old Telegram and Le Cigare Volant, his circumvention of the ice-wine regulations with his ice-box *vin de glacière*. What I had not realised that in addition to his role of the Fool in King Lear, mixing humour with prescient good-sense, he was the equal as a wordsmith to Smitty, the journalist narrator of Philip Roth's *The Great American Novel*.

This is a wonderful collection of the eccentric Mr. Grahm's writings. The breadth of these is staggering. They range from the factual and the historical—such as how the Bonny Doon labels were created over the years—to the reflective, such as the difference between the wines of the northern and southern Rhône, the Continental and the Mediterranean, between butter and olive oil, intellect and emotion, Cary Grant and Anthony Quinn. The whole is interlarded with such absurdities as a *haiku* on Blossom Hill, surely one of the least pleasant wines in general circulation, and some wonderful illustrations.

This is a wonderful book, a bran-tub to be dipped into and where you will always win a prize. It is too rich a mixture for one sitting. It has to be taken in small, but regular doses.

Biodynamics in Wine by Beverley Blanning MW. London: IW&FS, 2010. 64pp. £3.99.

For those who do not understand what biodynamic wines are all about, and I am one of those, this is a useful source-book and is probably the most thought-provoking in the series of booklets that have come out under the imprint of the IW&FS in the past few years. The author, herself, confesses to not fully understanding all the whys and wherefores, but like many in a similar position, supports those who "make every reasonable effort ... to minimise the potentially negative effects of viticulture on the Earth."

She clearly outlines Rudolf Steiner's original thoughts and how these are currently applied to produce biodynamic wines. She gives arguments both for (and here, amongst others, she quotes Randall Grahm) and against. She gives details of the producers around the world who have become convinced and now produce such wines. Like most of us, she may not understand, but is happy to profit from the most enjoyable resulting bottles.

Vignerons Rebelles by Jean-Claude Ray. Paris: Ellébore Editions, 2004. 222pp. 20 euros.

I purchased this book some time ago and have never got round to reading it, but it falls in well with the works of both Randall Grahm and Beverley Blanning, not to mention the guide to the wines of the Loire. When it first appeared some seven years ago organic farming was considered to be dangerously risky and anyone with thoughts of biodynamism was a rebel to be feared. This book primarily consists of interviews with 44 growers from all over France who were prepared to defy tradition and do their own thing. Now the wines of many of them are highly rated around the world. The rebels of those days include Nicolas Joly from the Loire and Marc Kreydenweiss and André Ostertag from Alsace.

This book is in part a reaction to the fierce competition that was being posed to French wines by those from the New World. As Stéphane Tissot, a grower from the Jura, said "Terroir is the one thing that can protect the French vineyards against the success of the 'technical' wines from the New World, because we cannot produce ours any cheaper."

Everyday Drinking by Kingsley Amis. London: Bloomsbury, 2009. 302pp. £7.99.

"I do have reservations..."

This book is a collection of the writings on drink by Kingsley Amis and, however much I have enjoyed his novels, I do have reservations about his rather brutalistic approach to alcohol. His favourite tipple appeared to be a cocktail, and the more exotic the ingredients the better. It is no surprise that a considerable proportion of the books deals with hangovers, how to avoid them and how to cure them.

I rather get the impression that he considered wine was not for real drinkers and was scarcely worth the bother. As he says, "The point is that wine is *a lot of trouble*, requiring energy and forethought." (His italics not mine.) On the other hand he appears to have put a lot of energy into the construction of his cocktails and their consumption.

Elsewhere he writes, "Make up your mind to drink wine *in quantity*" (he was fond of italics). "I am not exactly advising you to add three bottles of vintage

claret to your daily intake, but even when drunk to excess, wine has less severe short-term and long-term effects on your condition than an excess of spirits or fortified wines."

A wine lover can approach this book in a spirit of amusement or anger—the former will have less severe short-term and long-term effects on your condition.

Pocket Wine Book 2011 by Oz Clarke. London: Pavilion Books, 2010. 360pp. £9.99.

"... 7500 wines and 4000 producers..."

I was attracted by the cover of this book, which describes Oz as "Britain's best-loved wine-writer." As a claim, this may be hard to quantify in a number of directions, but I have not the slightest desire to challenge this title in any of them.

The covers of this genuinely pocket-sized book enclose an enormous amount of information. It claims to give notes on 7500 wines and 4000 producers and is particularly strong on New World wines, which is a fair reflection of what the current English consumer is seeking. I can heartily recommend this as a gift and will keep my copy by my side for a base reference.

A Wine Miscellany by Graham Harding. London: Michael O'Mara Books Ltd., 2005. 176pp. £9.99.

This is a book designed to provide ammunition to counter the wine-bore. You can respond to his harangue with "But did you know that..." On each occasion that you expect to meet one, you prime yourself with four or five anecdotes from this book. Included are a selection of wine names, and quotations from Randall Grahm; the fact that coriander was added to historic Egyptian wines as an aphrodisiac; that St. Amand is the patron saint not just of bar keepers, but also, brewers, innkeepers and wine merchants. A week or two with this book and you might almost become a wine-bore yourself!



Wine in California: The Early Years Pueblos, Ranchos, and the End of the Missions 1822-1846

PART II
by Charles L. Sullivan

[In this continuation of the third installment of Charles Sullivan's history of the early years of wine in California, he continues the "unhappy history" of the secularization of the California missions and the subsequent end of mission winegrowing. Of the twenty-one missions, all but one had vineyards and produced wine. Sullivan tours these twenty missions and surveys their individual fates. Extensive, informative footnotes, with a substantial library of sources, are provided at the end. — Ed.]

THE YEARS FROM THE BEGINNING of secularization to the American Conquest, 1834-1846, saw California society in a rapid state of flux. The huge, sparsely populated land, dominated by Catholic missions and a somewhat authoritarian civil rule, was quickly transformed to one controlled by large landholders with a rather feckless provincial government looking on. The popular image of this "pastoral California" is a fairly accurate picture of that part of life centered in settled family ranchos. But this was also a time of political, economic and social tumult. It is the last of these three on which this study will now concentrate for these years, since a product of viticulture did much to exacerbate many of the unsettling aspects of social change. That product was brandy. Years before Mexican Independence, Spanish provincial authorities attempted to enforce rules "against the moral and physical evils of intemperance." Brandy was brought up from the south from the earliest years, but after 1800 stills appeared all over settled Alta California, heralding what H. H. Bancroft termed the beginning of "this deadly industry."¹

THE DEADLY INDUSTRY



he drinking habits in California were regularly commented on by foreign visitors. From his visit in 1827 Auguste Duhaut-Cilly wrote of Californios, "If gambling ruins them, drinking degrades them even further.... At their festivals brandy is almost the only refreshment.

And to put on a ball ... all they need is a few gallons of brandy and some candles." Fifteen years later Charles Wilkes, an American naval officer, wrote of California in the early 1840s, "Although California may not boast of its dense population, every intelligent person I met there agreed that it consumed more spirits in proportion (per capita) than any other part of the world."²

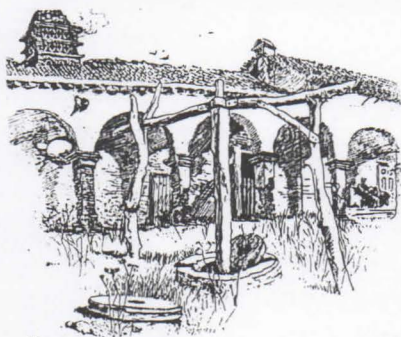
On those well-established ranchos, life could appear to be very good. From Southern California at Rancho Cañada de Santa Ana, Robert Glass Cleland gives us a vivid picture of life there. The main house had thirty rooms with twenty more around the central courtyard. The skilled workers included a shoemaker, wool-combers, tanners, a harness maker, a plasterer and a carpenter. The place was full of servants with various tasks. Outside on the rancho were gardeners, dairymen for the fifty milk cows, a sheep herder, and, of course, vineyardists "and a man to make wine." More than a hundred Indians looked after the herds

of cattle and tended the wheat fields and orchards. At Sonoma, Mariano Vallejo's situation was similar but more complex. His two great ranchos, Petaluma and Soscol, had none of the conveniences one found at many such ranchos. But the true center of operations was at the young pueblo of Sonoma. In 1844 visitor Manuel Torres stayed at the *comandante's* home there. The place was full of Indian servants. Each Vallejo child had a personal attendant. Ten worked in the kitchen and a few did nothing but laundry. Mrs. Vallejo was proud to declare that none expected wages. "We give them all they need ... we trust the servants as friends rather than as servants." But Sir George Simpson left a different picture from his visit there two years earlier, when he visited Vallejo's Indian village, where the bulk of his workers lived. The Indians were "the most miserable race I ever saw ... every face bears the impress of poverty and wretchedness." He was more impressed by Vallejo's vineyard, whose five-year-old vines that year had yielded "twenty barrels of wine and four of spirits."³

However settled life might appear on many of the ranchos, it was in the pueblos of San José and particularly Los Angeles where the debilitating effects of ardent spirits were most obvious. In the 1840s public drunkenness had become so serious a problem that provincial governors and local magistrates attempted to codify temperance through numerous regulations and proclamations, to little or no effect. The observations by visitors suggest that there was hardly a downtown block in both pueblos without a grog shop. Drunkenness, often associated with

gambling, frequently led to violence. H. H. Bancroft's lengthy and detailed annals for Los Angeles in these years are replete with knifings and shootings. In an 1835 incident a saloon keeper discovered that a newly purchased barrel of wine was sour and tried to return it to the producer. In the knife fight that followed the wine man had the end of his tongue cut off. One can imagine the incidents that preceded a Los Angeles ordinance making it illegal to ride a horse into a saloon.⁴

The arrival of a certain young man to Los Angeles in 1834 affords us a symbolic event that helps make the area's growing liquor consumption more understandable. Augustín Janssens was born in Brussels, but his parents brought him to live in Mexico City when he was a child. There as a youth he learned and practiced the art of distilling, and when he arrived in California he put this knowledge to work and taught others the means of technically improving their operations. One of these was Jean Louis Vignes, who already had worked as a distiller. Janssens made wine and brandy at the San Gabriel mission as it went through the early strains of secularization, and also worked for several producers in the Los Angeles area. In 1840, when Juan Bandini was the administrator at Mission San Gabriel, Janssens made him four hundred barrels of wine and a hundred-thirty-five of brandy. Next year he was appointed administrator at Mission San Juan Capistrano, where he



At Mission San Juan Capistrano, 1890

met the now aged Father José Zalvidea, who, Janssens well knew, was until 1826 responsible for the great success at the San Gabriel vineyard and cellar. At San Juan Capistrano the two worked together producing wine and brandy from grapes and pears. Janssens dearly loved the old padre, but his picture of the holy man makes us better understand his forced removal from San Gabriel. "The padre experienced religious exhalations and some-times twitched as he undertook to drive away the devil, but otherwise he was sound of mind.... The goodness of his heart had no limit." After 1841 Janssens headed north, married and acquired a rancho in the Santa Barbara area, where he lived until his death in 1894. We hear no more of his brandy exploits, but his early years in southern California surely added to the technical success of that "deadly industry."⁵

Strictly speaking, Bancroft's use of the term

"deadly" is not aimed at the bibulous urban life in the pueblos of California, nor to the occasional violence in the gambling halls and saloons. He was referring to the effect of the easily acquired liquor, particularly brandy, on the large number of Indians set free by the secularization after 1834. Robert Glass Cleland has written that drunkenness was the "special curse of the domesticated Indians of southern California, and in Los Angeles, especially."⁶

Statistics on California brandy production are few, but Janssens had eight stills at his disposal at Mission San Gabriel. Mission San Fernando may have been even more important, its brandy finding an easy and accessible market at nearby Los Angeles. Between 1838 and 1841 under the appointed administrators, brandy production there doubled. At that time at least ninety percent of the mission's grapes going to wine was distilled into brandy. In town Vignes and Wolfskill steadily raised their brandy production to meet the growing demand. And after 1834 this growing demand was clearly related to the rise of the Indian labor force in and around the pueblo.⁷

Benjamin Wilson

Benjamin D. Wilson had come to California with an overland party from Santa Fe in 1841. By the 1850s he owned shares in four Los Angeles area ranchos. He knew the country well. In 1852 he was appointed U. S. Indian Agent and made a report that looked back on Indian life in the eighteen years since secularization began. To him it was a period of "neglect, misrule, oppression, slavery, and injustice." They were afforded "every opportunity and temptation to gratify their natural vices." And yet, he noted, Indian laborers and servants had become a necessary part of the domestic economy. Although they tended to avoid ardent spirits during the work week, on weekends they flocked to the city's liquor shops. "In some streets of this little city, almost every other house is a grog-shop for Indians." He chided his fellow Americans by reminding them of the debt Californians owed the Indians. They "built all the houses in this country, and planted all the fields and vineyards." First at the missions, and now on the ranchos, they have been "agriculturists, horticulturists, viñeros (vintners), vaqueros.... They understand the mysteries of irrigation, the planting season, and the harvest.... And yet we follow policies that are destroying their lives."⁸

Horace Bell left a vivid description of the degrading cycle in which Los Angeles Indians were caught up during the 1840s, the condition Wilson alluded to. In the view of this lawyer-and-editor-to-be the pueblo had its own slave mart. When the Indians finished work on Saturday in town or on the outskirts, they were paid in cash or brandy. For this policy Bell laid

special blame on "the cultivators of the vineyards," for "paying their Indian peons with aguardiente, a veritable fire-water." They came to town Saturday night and drank away through Sunday. The result was "gambling, drunkenness and debauchery." Sunday evening the town marshal and his deputies swept the streets of the drunkards and placed them in a large corral especially constructed for the purpose. Monday morning, to pay their fines, "they would be sold for a week and bought up by the vineyard men." Historian Douglas Monroy notes that it was not only the Indians who were guilty of public drunkenness. Californios and Anglos were also a large part of the weekend debauchery, but they, unlike the Indians, tended to violence, and the marshal was "too discrete to arrest them."⁹

According to Professor Monroy conditions were equally fatal for the Indians on the southern California ranchos. There "alcohol forged the chains that held the Indian workers on the ranches until they so deteriorated that they died." He used the diary of Henry Dalton and the account books of B. D. Wilson to illustrate this observation. Dalton owned the Rancho Azusa in the San Gabriel Valley and Wilson established an important wine operation in the valley on former mission lands. This is the same Wilson whose report I previously cited. Dalton's diary entries are full of reports of Indian drunkenness on into the 1870s. His accounts show that the Indian workers were paid little cash. They were given practical items such as shirts, soap and hats; there was always wine and brandy. Wilson's books show that he regularly paid his Indians with "cognac and wine." Monroy wrote, "I could not help feel the death contained in these 'Indian Books' as I perused them in the Huntington Library."¹⁰ The fate of the former mission Indians was not determined by brandy, but it was that deadly concoction which sped them to their ruin.

THE END OF THE MISSIONS

The law to effect the secularization of the missions was enacted August 17, 1833, and began going into effect in 1834. In that year ten missions had commissioners appointed to oversee the transformation. The vast lands were to be granted half to citizens and half to the resident Indians. Virtually all the land ended up in the hands of the rancheros. The mission church and the attendant land were to come under the control of the provincial bishop, who would appoint the parish priest for the Indians and the little villages that had grown up around some of the missions. Things did work out this way in some places, for a short while. In 1835 and 1836 the remaining missions received their commissioners. By 1843 the looting had become so deplorable

that the governor technically restored temporal management to the padres of what little remained of the property at twelve missions. In 1845 Andrés Pico was appointed to inventory what was left at the missions and to rent or lease the real property for whatever money that could be had.

During the eleven years of this unhappy history there were twenty-one separate histories, twenty that involved property related to winegrowing. Each is worth the few words provided in this survey of the winegrowing missions from south to north. [Please refer to the Map of California Missions last issue, p.22.]

San Diego

Mission reports through 1827 indicate an abundance of grapes that made satisfactory wine. The year after secularization began, Richard Henry Dana visited the mission and had a meal and a decanter of the padres' wine, "a regal banquet." But by 1839 the mission's two sizable vineyards, although still alive, were run down and neglected. The official inventory numbered the vines at 5,680 and 8,000. The same year Edward Belcher, an Englishman, reported that little wine was being made, "and that little of inferior quality." In 1841 de Mofras reported that the vineyards appeared abandoned, but still alive. By then they were probably in the hands of new grantees, but no record remains.¹¹ When the property was sold to Santiago Arguello in 1846, no vineyards appear in the inventory and none appear on the surveyor's map of 1854.¹²

San Juan Capistrano

Here California's first wine was produced. The mission maintained a good reputation for its red and white wines, developing a small trade after 1810 with its surpluses. After secularization began, the Indian population at and around the mission remained high, even into the 1840s. They had four of their own small pueblos in the area (rancherías) and some individuals had their own vineyards. The influence of Father José Zalvidea can be seen in this regard. His long service here (1826-1842) was complemented by that of his major-domo, Agustín Janssens, who also made wine and brandy at the mission. In 1839 there were about 2,000 vines in the enclosed vineyard with its little watch tower. What was left of the buildings and the gardens was sold to Englishman John Forster in 1846. In 1855 the ownership of the mission church and forty-four acres of land was returned to the Catholic Church. Next to the chapel was a large vineyard.¹³

San Luis Rey de Francia

The "King of the Missions" produced a substantial quantity of wine and brandy with a good reputation. Duhaut-Cilly in 1827 thought the vineyard produced "the best wine in California." But a few years later

Father Durán warned that their wines were “not the best suited to place before a friend.” Like San Juan Capistrano, San Luis Rey did not suffer the heavy looting so common during secularization. In the 1840s de Mofras found that the padres had “saved something from the wreckage of the mission.” There were about 16,000 vines near the mission center and 7,500 at the Pala *asistencia* tended by the Indians. In 1847 Edwin Bryant found that the vineyards were still fairly well kept, as did Americans who stopped at the mission during the war. The great buildings and gardens survived through the 1840s, more substantially than at any other mission, which probably accounts for the Americans’ use of the place as a station during the war. The Indians, particularly at Pala, were encouraged to tend their crops, and they did for many years. Colonel J. D. Stevenson, the U. S. military commandant of the southern district in 1847-1848, wrote that their settlements show “more evidence of comfort than most of the ranches of the rich Californios.” These vineyards survived into the 1850s, but after that we read no more of them. The Catholic Church recovered the mission and the surrounding fifty-three acres, where there were an orchard and a garden, But there was no sign of a vineyard in the Cleal survey map (1854).¹⁴

San Gabriel

Much of San Gabriel’s vast and fertile lands became ranchos soon after 1834. In that year a survey counted 163,579 vines in its four vineyards. The mission’s profitable wine and brandy production continued at a high level under Juan Bandini and Agustín Janssens until 1842. Nevertheless little work was done in the vineyards after 1834 beyond getting in next year’s crop; many of the old vines were pulled up.¹⁵ In 1846 what was left of the mission property was sold to Hugo Reid and William Workman. Reid had already acquired a huge piece of mission land in 1841, his Rancho Santa Anita. I have already noted Victoria Reid’s acquisition of the little (128 acres) Huerta de Cuati, which contained old mission vines. Benjamin D. Wilson bought this piece of land in 1852, a purchase that would have historic consequences in years to come.

In 1855, 190 acres of the original mission land were returned to the Church. Included was the old vineyard at the center of the mission complex. William H. Brewer was the principal assistant to Josiah Whitney for his geological survey of California (1860-1864). His letters to his

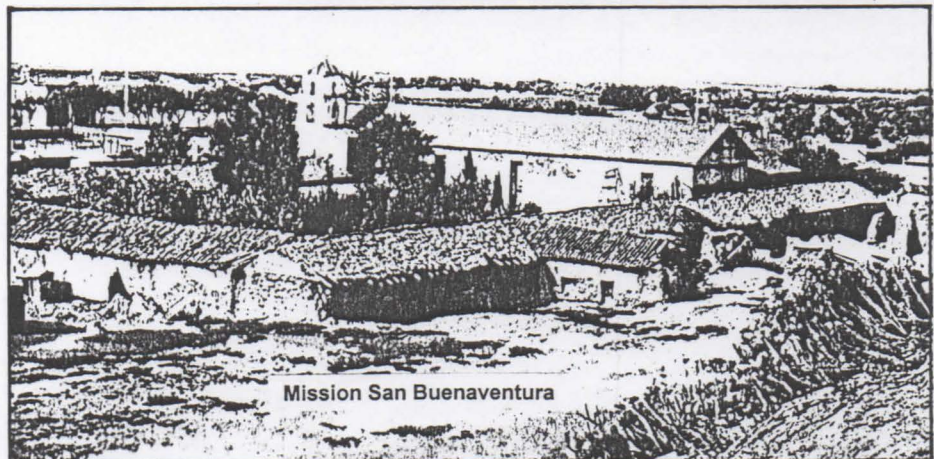
family give a vivid and detailed picture of many places in California in these years. In 1861 he visited Benjamin Wilson and rode over to the mission. Mass was being said and the six remaining church bells were “by far the sweetest I have heard in California.” The land where the central vineyard had stood, surrounded by its adobe wall and cactus fence, was “now a waste.” But the fathers had kept up the garden, where he found oranges, lemons and limes growing. They “produced a beautiful effect.”¹⁶ Viticulture on the vast mission lands of California had all but disappeared by the 1850s, but on the former lands of the great San Gabriel Mission and in adjacent areas there was steady continuity.

San Fernando

Wine and brandy production at this mission kept right on going through the years of secularization. There were two vineyards, one outlying in the valley and a much smaller one in front of the church. We have already seen Mrs. Webb’s description of the excellent cellar. Inventories of wine and brandy, mostly the latter, were high well into the 1840s. When Bryant visited in 1847, just after the vintage, he described a flourishing agricultural operation. The red wine he drank there he rated “of good quality.” In 1845 Andrés Pico leased the portion of the mission lands not yet granted. A few months later he led the California forces that soundly trounced the American troops at the Battle of San Pascual. At almost the same moment the governor was selling the remains of San Fernando to Eulogio Célis, a wealthy Los Angeles businessman. For years these lands were subject to litigation by Pico. Not involved were the seventy-seven acres returned to the Church in 1855. Jacob Bowman indicated that both vineyards were included, but I find only the smaller one on the Cleal survey map.¹⁷

San Buenaventura

In 1792 when Capt. George Vancouver visited the California missions he found San Buenaventura, but



Mission San Buenaventura

ten years old, the most impressive for its flourishing gardens and orchards. In years to come this impression was also made on occasional visitors. The padres made wine and eventually had two stills for brandy production. Secularization was fairly orderly here. In 1840 the huge Santa Paula rancho had not yet been granted and the Indians on this *estancia* were keeping it up nicely. Through 1845, agricultural production at San Buenaventura was remarkably steady, probably more so than at any other southern mission. Through these years the two vineyards kept their approximately 10,000 vines. But wine and brandy inventories were modest. The 1854 survey shows that the fathers were able to keep one of the two vineyards, about a mile north of the mission church. But there is no record of its fate in later years. In 1861 William Brewer found the great gardens in ruins. He went to mass, well attended, mostly by Indians, and thought the church was in good condition.¹⁸

Santa Barbara

A few months before the secularization law went into effect Father Narciso Durán was transferred to Santa Barbara from Mission San José. At his new post he continued to effect the same admirable general order he was noted for in the north. And he brought his skill and interest in making good wine and great brandy. He also brought his deep concern for the welfare of the mission Indians, which helped delay the secularization process here for eleven years, to 1845. Some of the large, outlying tracts of mission land with their vineyards had already been granted. But there remained several other pieces of land nearer the mission complex with three vineyards. Surviving records indicate that together they still had only 6,000 vines in 1845. But there were surely more. The largest of these vineyards was the San José Vineyard with nine acres located just west of the pueblo. There was also another large vineyard on the San Marcos *estancia* and one west of town at Goleta.

Another factor extending the life of the mission was the appointment of a bishop for the province, a necessary official for the supervision of the parish priests that were supposed to be taking over in place of the Franciscan fathers. García Diego arrived in January 1842 and made Santa Barbara his episcopal see. The reception for the new bishop was lavish and brought out the whole town. A few days later Captain George Simpson, an official of the Hudson Bay Company, dropped anchor at Santa Barbara and was received in a manner commensurate with the mission's reputation, in Bancroft's words, "famous for its choice wines and profuse hospitality." Durán served Simpson and his group a "sweet wine of excellent quality." And as one might expect, Simpson

found Durán's brandy even better, "a perfectly colorless cordial flavored with fruit." The padre's hostess that afternoon was none other than Concepción Argüello, she of the famous 1806 romance with Nicholas Rezanov. It was here in 1842 that she learned from Simpson of the death of her lover on his way home to Moscow from California in 1807. Later Durán took Simpson out to one of the mission's vineyards, near the mission church. The next day, before the English ship sailed away, Father Durán sent Simpson a barrel of wine. The captain later wrote that he was sorry to take it from the padre "in the present state of his cellar."¹⁹

Durán continued to resist attempts to lop off pieces of what was left of the mission land. But in 1845 he gave up and agreed to lease the remainder to Nicholas Den and his father-in-law, Daniel Hill, whom he rated as "worthy and reliable persons." Hill had lived in Santa Barbara since 1823; Den, an Irish physician, had arrived in 1836. Durán first placed the San Marcos rancho in their hands. Then he assigned to Hill La Goleta rancho and its vineyard. The 1860 census indicates that Hill still had forty acres in vines then.²⁰ Eventually the mission church and thirty-eight acres around it were returned to the Catholic Church. The 1854 survey map shows three vineyards in the church's claim. Two of them were near the old mission complex. The third on La Goleta Rancho of Daniel Hill was probably not turned over to the Church. When William Brewer visited in 1861 he found a working parish church but no vineyards, only an old orchard with a few broken and dilapidated olive and fig trees. Even the palm trees were dead.²¹

La Purísima Concepción

Coastal fog and flooding by the Santa Ynez River forced the padres in 1812 to move the mission center from its original site to the east and up from the river. They also found they needed to be very selective in laying out *estancias* well-removed from the center. In all there were seven of these little ranchos, two with vineyards. Grapes did not ripen at the first Purísima vineyard, Salsacupi. It was moved to higher land near Jaloma Creek, six miles to the south of the mission church. This was the San Francisco Vineyard of about five acres and was farmed on shares by the Ortigas, who sent workers up the coast from their Rancho Refugio to tend the vines. It had its own little winery with the Catalán press, of which Father Payeras was so proud. Edith Webb found the winery ruins there in the 1930s. She wrote that some of the vines had somehow survived and from these some cuttings were taken in 1935 to recreate La Purísima's garden. This was part of the great reconstruction project performed by the California Conservation Corps. Farther up Jaloma Creek was the seventeen-acre vineyard of that

name. It is understandable that one might wonder at the provenance of these cuttings, that is, until one has read the following, written in 1911 by a man who toured the California coast from San Diego to Oregon on horseback. "I had been told that I ought to see the old Jaloma ranch.... A romantic trail led to it.... I passed an old orchard where vines still grew rampant of leaf, though fruitless, and a little farther on the remains of a cellar-like wine vat of masonry, overflowing now with bright-eyed lizards."²²

Secularization was swift in the hands of the mission administrator, who had disposed of most of the mission property by 1842. In 1845 smallpox slaughtered most of the few mission Indians who had remained and by the next year the place was totally abandoned. In 1855 only fourteen acres were returned to the Church. Since the State of California acquired the land, La Purísima Concepción has become a 507-acre part of the State Park system, by far the most completely and authentically reconstructed of all the California missions.

Santa Inés

This mission was the latest founded (1804) south of San Francisco. Then it was destroyed by the great 1812 earthquake. The reconstruction took place between 1817 and 1820. One who took part in this work was Joseph Chapman, later of viticultural renown in Los Angeles, who built a grist mill here in the New England style, unique then in California, adjustable for both wheat and corn. In 1822 he also built one at Mission San Gabriel.²³ There was a vineyard and a still on the property when secularization began. The vines were still alive in 1845 but work in the vineyard had ended years earlier. The last relevant inventory showed one barrel of brandy there in 1839. The Cleal survey does not include a vineyard in the twenty-seven acres of land returned to the Church. Six years later William Brewer saw no sign of a vineyard, although the old church was operating again.²⁴

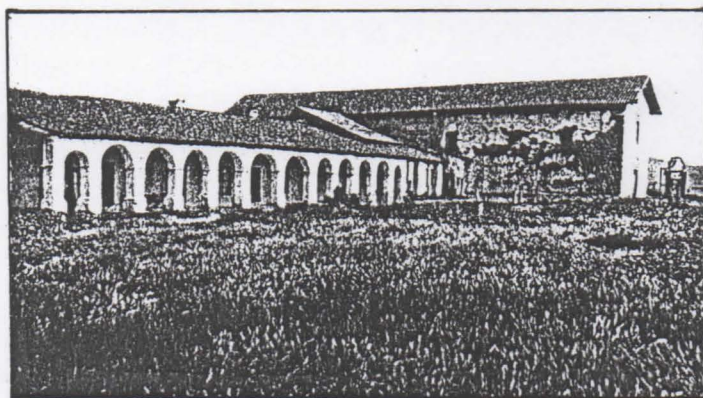
San Luis Obispo

Edith Webb wrote that the mission's vineyard covered forty-four acres, on San Luis Creek, directly across from the mission church and enclosed by a wall and a row of olive trees. Yet information about winemaking there is next to non-existent. We do know from Duhaut-Cilly in 1827 that officers at the San Francisco presidio were drinking brandy produced at San Luis Obispo.²⁵ The mission lands were quickly gobbled up during the early years of secularization and the place was reported deserted in 1844. Yet in 1846 Bryant thought the vineyard, though neglected, was still in fair shape, as John Bidwell had noted the year before.²⁶ The 1854 Cleal survey map shows no vineyard, and yet Mr. Cleal made reference to the

vineyard in the mission's "garden" in his oral testimony. Jacob Bowman found in an 1858 San Luis Obispo County patent survey that there was a vineyard located just where Mrs. Webb indicated. When the Church was handed back a little piece of its property by the Land Commission in 1855 the total of fifty-three acres probably would have included at least part of this vineyard. If it did cover forty-four acres in earlier years, it would have been the second largest in the old mission system.²⁷

San Miguel

This mission had two large vineyards. That at Rancho El Aguage was located three miles northeast of the church and covered twenty-two acres. The San Isabel Vineyard was near the church and appears in the 1854 Black survey. It had 5,500 vines. A third, named strangely La Major, had but 166 vines and was inside the enclosed garden next to the church. That garden appears on the Black survey but by that year the vines must have been gone. The padres produced good wine and brandy, in "considerable quantities," according to Alfred Robinson. But there is almost no record of the mission's winegrowing activities.²⁸



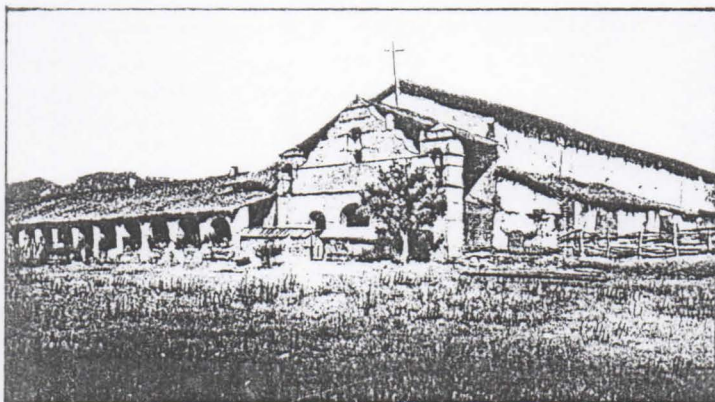
Mission San Miguel, founded 1797

Secularization of the mission's lands was "very rapid and the record very meager," according to H. H. Bancroft. By 1842 virtually all the land away from the church had been distributed in grants. Nevertheless, John Bidwell found vines growing there in 1845; in 1846 Bryant found the church in poor shape. That formerly fine edifice was inhabited by an Englishman, William Reed, and his wife, who came to California in 1837. He moved into the building in 1845 and, with a partner, was allowed to purchase all the remaining buildings in 1846. Reed prospered and by 1848 had a full staff of servants and two small children. In December of that year four discharged American soldiers sought his hospitality and rewarded it by committing one of the most monstrous yet little remembered domestic massacres in California history. They killed Reed and his pregnant wife, their

small children, several of his wife's relatives, her midwife and all the servants, eleven in all. When the posse sent up from Santa Barbara caught the thugs, justice was swift. Thirty-four acres around the mission complex were returned to the Church in 1855. Included was the San Isabel vineyard, but there is no record of its later history.²⁹

San Antonio de Padua

Founded in 1771, San Antonio was older than all other missions except San Diego and San Carlos (Carmel). Its church and main buildings were located about twenty miles west of the Salinas Valley in an oak-covered valley in the Santa Lucia Mountains, well off the beaten path of El Camino Real. But its huge land holdings extended to the east of the church, well across the Salinas Valley. Its agricultural activities were scattered among no fewer than ten outlying ranchos. There is clear evidence of viticulture, winemaking, and brandy distilling, but there is scant precise data on these activities. The first vineyard was not planted until the 1790s, but eventually there were at least three, perhaps others. The 1854 Black survey map shows a large vineyard of about 4,000 vines near the church, and there was a small garden of fruit trees and 175 vines nearby.³⁰



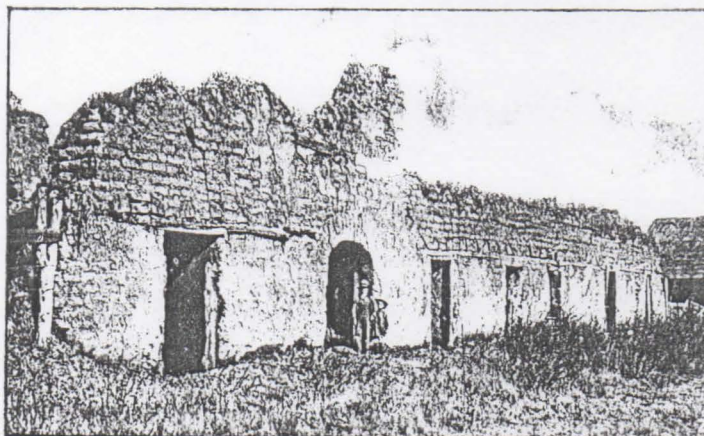
Mission San Antonio de Padua

In 1835 all the good land away from the church was handed out as land grants. Life at what was left of the mission became chaotic, but de Mofras found the buildings in good condition in 1842. There were still two vineyards in 1844, and an inventory next year counted two wine presses and two stills. When what was left of the buildings was put up for sale in 1846 there were no takers at any price. In 1855 the church and thirty-three acres were returned to Catholic religious authorities.³¹

The mission complex is even more isolated today than it was two hundred years ago, surrounded by a huge military reservation. But it vies for top marks today for its large scale and authentic restoration which began after the 1906 earthquake.

Soledad

Father Antonio Jaime is responsible for the success of winegrowing at this mission. Of Catalán birth, he served here from 1796 to 1821. He planted a vineyard of nearly twenty acres about three miles southwest of the mission church in a small canyon looking out on the Salinas Valley. At its height it contained about 5,000 vines. We know next to nothing about the wine operations here, except that the padres were able to trade wine for goods and credit at Monterey.³²



Ruins: Mission Señora de la Soledad

Secularization divested the mission of all its land except a few acres around the church. De Mofras noticed that the vineyard was looking run down in 1838.³³ When the Church received full title to thirty-four acres of land, it still included the canyon winery. I can find no record of further viticultural activity here. Yet in 1934 publisher Horatio Stoll noted in his *California Grape Grower* that the Soledad mission's old vineyard then was probably the oldest in the state. I have been unable to find any information that might shed some light on the basis for this claim.³⁴

San Carlos (Carmel)

Mission San Carlos de Monterey was founded by Father Serra on June 3, 1770. Within a year it became San Carlos de Carmelo after Serra established a permanent site near the mouth of the Carmel Valley and well away from the corrupting influence of the soldiers at the Monterey presidio. I find no evidence that the move was made to take advantage of the longer growing season at the new place. But it certainly was easier to ripen crops in the valley, where the summer fog burned off earlier than at Monterey.

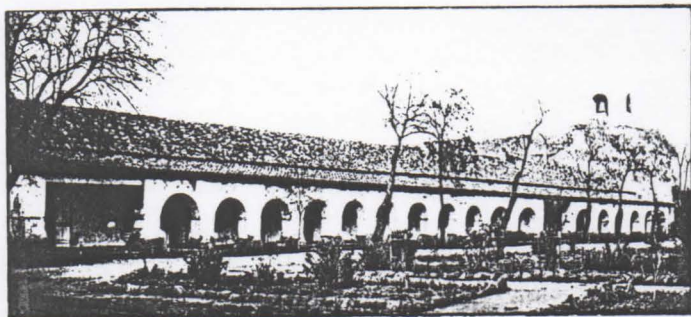
The mission was Father Serra's headquarters until his death in 1784, but up to that date he had no wine grapes planted. Jacob Bowman believed that an attempt at viticulture was made in the 1790s. He wrote, "The grape undoubtedly was planted but it proved to be a very unfavorable site and no attempt

was made to plant a new [vineyard] farther up the valley or inland." If there was a producing vineyard on the San Carlos land it was not consequential enough ever to have been entered in the mission reports. Nor did one appear in the surveys of the 1850s. Secularization was swift here, the mission buildings deserted by 1840.³⁵

San Juan Bautista

Located a few miles from the southern end of the Santa Clara Valley, this mission certainly had a viticultural history, but almost no one took notice of it. The first of its vineyards was planted around 1800, but it and its products never entered the mission's numerous reports. An 1835 inventory listed two vineyards; ten years later one near the mission church still had 5,200 vines.³⁶

Secularization was rapid here, but not devastating, since the church was able to keep operating to serve the local Indians. Bryant noted the mission buildings and gardens were in fairly good shape in 1846. A small pueblo grew up quickly around the church, later developing into the pioneer town, many of whose early buildings still surround the plaza facing the mission church. In the 1850s the vineyard was still operating and appears on the Black survey map. One of the early American settlers many years later remembered the thirty-six-acre "orchard" with its pears and grapes. It was part of the fifty-six acres retained by the Church after 1855. William Brewer passed through town in 1861 and described services at the church, filled with about two hundred worshipers, Mexican, Irish, French, German, but predominately Indians. Unfortunately he made no horticultural observations.³⁷



Mission San Juan Bautista, est.1797

Santa Cruz

Located in cool land on Monterey Bay with much coastal fog, this mission made no serious efforts at winegrowing. But inland from the mission center a small garden did contain 1,210 vines, according to the 1835 secularization inventory. That land was apparently granted away, since no vineyard appears on the Black survey map. At the hearing before the Land Commission, Padre José Anzar testified that the

Santa Cruz mission had had no vineyard. However, he was a non-resident administrator stationed at San Juan Bautista and had no connection to the Santa Cruz mission until 1844, when it was deserted and in ruins. In 1855 seventeen acres around the church were recovered by the Catholic authorities.³⁸

Santa Clara

Several aspects of this mission's winemaking history are unique. No other mission was situated so close to a settled urban area. Within walking distance of the San José pueblo, Santa Clara's neophyte population was ever attracted by the distracting aspects of town life, particularly the wine and brandy available at its several grog shops. No history of mission viticulture has ever overlooked Father Palóu's claim that the mission's vineyard was propagated by seed in 1785. If this were true the vineyard would have been full of mismatched vines, since vinifera do not breed true by sexual propagation. We know that the good wine made at Santa Clara after the 1790s came from the ubiquitous Mission variety, not from a mismatched assortment of its seedlings. Santa Clara's wine production was not great, but we know that the mission's physical situation was perfect for viticulture. And we can be fairly sure that its grapes were supplied on occasion to the mission at San Francisco.

No mission's secularization process was more of a madhouse than that at Santa Clara, much of the chaos brought on by priests themselves. Yet in 1842 de Mofras visited and found the wine "superb," and in the same year John Bidwell found the vines in good condition. Jacob Bowman found one vineyard with 1,600 vines in the 1845 inventory, but Bancroft, apparently reading the same document, finds far fewer vines and in two separate vineyards. The Black survey map may clear up this apparent discrepancy. It was made at a settled moment in time at Santa Clara, three years after the Jesuits had taken over the old mission. On that map there is a sizable area marked "orchard." I believe that most of the Santa Clara vines were in this large plot, whose vineyard in 1846 Bryant thought a "melancholy spectacle." Black marked a small walled garden next to the church, "vineyard." Here were the 250 vines Bancroft counted separately, and which survived after the coming of the Jesuits in 1851.³⁹ In fact, that vineyard survived for at least another half-century, for it is depicted in rather rundown condition in a 1905 photograph I found in the Santa Clara University Archives. Grapes grown in this vineyard probably became altar wine for the Jesuit fathers at least until the 1880s. By then a larger vineyard had been planted in the Cupertino foothills at the college's Villa Maria retreat. There was also a small winery there whose ruins can still be seen.⁴⁰

Mission San José

This mission maintained its reputation for orderliness and good management during the troubled years of secularization. H. H. Bancroft wrote that of all the missions it was probably "the most prosperous in California both before and after secularization." The administrator and the padres were able to maintain at least a semblance of San José's winemaking tradition, although we read nothing more of its great brandy after Father Durán left in 1833.⁴¹

The 1837 inventory showed two vineyards, one with 6,029 vines. By 1839 the government inspector reported a general improvement in the physical assets of the mission. De Mofras in 1842 reported that about four hundred neophytes were still residing there "enjoying the spoils of the former mission wealth." Fruit, and particularly grapes, made up a good portion of these spoils. So much did they love the grapes that only forty barrels of wine had been produced the previous year. Such a total in 1841 would have placed the old mission in the front rank of provincial California wine producers, outside of Los Angeles, of course. When Edwin Bryant visited the mission in 1846, the vintage had just finished and the vines appeared "healthy and vigorous." John Bidwell figured the vineyard located behind the church covered five or six acres.⁴²

Although life at the mission and its little pueblo was, by comparison, orderly, land titles in the area were not. Matters were not finally settled until 1867. In 1847 conquering American military officials insisted that ungranted mission land before the Conquest belonged to the Catholic Church. Technically this rule was adhered to both at Santa Clara and at San José, although squatters at both missions added to the confusion. In 1849 title to the buildings, vineyard and orchard at San José were purchased by Elias L. Beard, recently arrived in California from Indiana. Father José Real, then the Church administrator for both Santa Clara and San José, officially objected to the sale, but for practical purposes granted a lease to Beard. For the next few years the American made a fortune selling fruit from the mission vineyard and orchard, as the world rushed in to California in search of gold. In 1851 his fresh grape crop sold for \$16,000. By 1853 he had sixty acres of fruit trees and vines on the property. Two years later the sale and lease were declared illegal by the courts, but by then Beard and his partners had made enough money to buy 30,000 acres of legally granted land, formerly part of the mission estate. The twenty-eight acres returned to the Church in 1858 included the old vineyard, with all of Beard's improvements.⁴³

San Francisco de Asis (Dolores)

There were grape vines in the mission garden but the fruit was only for the table. What wine was ever produced here on occasion was from grapes brought up from Mission Santa Clara or San José. The padres had their wine and brandy to the end, but it was almost always made elsewhere.⁴⁴

San Rafael

This mission was founded in 1817 as an extension of the San Francisco mission, but by 1820 it was functioning independently. Father Juan Amorós took charge here in 1819 and served until his death in 1832. Another of the many Catalán priests in California, he was a friend of Father Durán with whom he had entered the Franciscan order at Gerona. Father Amarós probably planted San Rafael's vineyard in 1820 from cuttings sent him by Durán. We know nothing of winemaking at San Rafael, but we do know that the vineyard was well-managed by Amarós. We also know that it was well-maintained during the period of secularization and in the years to come. The inventory of 1845 counted 210 vines.⁴⁵

The man appointed administrator of secularization was certainly one of the most interesting and capable of all such officers in the province. Timothy Murphy arrived in California from Ireland by way of Peru in 1828. Edwin Bryant describes him as a "scholastic Irish bachelor," whose wit was often "keenly caustic and ironical." After serving Bryant a hearty dinner during an 1846 visit, Murphy brought out the brandy. Bryant wrote that "a draught or two ... seemed to correct the acidity of his humor." The Irishman was still in charge of what was left of the mission in 1848 when he was appointed justice of the peace (*juez de paz*) of the little pueblo that became the town of San Rafael. Later he was elected *alcalde*. All the time he was paying close attention to his little vineyard. In 1848 John Bidwell had acquired his Rancho Arroyo Chico, the site of the town of Chico today, and decided to plant a vineyard there. So far as he was concerned, Don Timoteo's little spread produced the finest grapes in California. In praise of the San Gabriel vineyards, which he saw in 1845, he later wrote that their vines were "even as thrifty as those of San Rafael." In the first week of March he rode down to San Rafael and acquired vine cuttings and pear trees for his soon-to-be famous ranch.⁴⁶ In Black's survey map of 1854 the little San Rafael vineyard is clearly rendered, just to the east of the mission church. But it is doubtful that it was included in the six acres of land returned to the Church in 1855.

San Francisco de Solano (Sonoma)

The Sonoma mission's vineyard was planted soon

after this last of the missions was founded in 1823. The vines had been brought up from Mission San José. By 1830 the fathers were making about a thousand gallons of wine per year, but even as early as 1827 Duhaut-Cilly thought the gardens and vineyard were not being well maintained.⁴⁷

Under the control of Mariano Vallejo, the Mexican *comandante* of the *frontera del norte*, secularization in 1835 was swift. Mission lands were parceled out to his friends, acquaintances, family members, and to himself. The mission church became a parish church for the Indians who remained and for the settlers at the new pueblo Vallejo had founded there in 1835. It was in this year that he also planted his first vineyard on the north side of the plaza. The mission vineyard, located a short distance east of the church, was surrounded by a stone and tiled adobe wall, and was watered from a good spring whose water was brought down by an irrigation ditch. But its wall was torn down for its building materials after 1835, leaving the vines at the mercy of the free roaming cattle. It was in this state when Edwin Bryant passed by in 1846.⁴⁸



Mission Wine Cellar

Almost all the land near the plaza was granted or sold to settlers, but not the twelve acres that made up the vineyard. Why is not clear, but the tangled condition of local land titles was perhaps the cause. In 1846 the vineyard land was granted to José Berryessa, the pueblo's *alcalde*, but the transaction was later deemed illegal. In 1853 the Church presented its claim to the Land Commission for the return of a portion of the mission land. The claim asked for the 2.6 acres around the church and the twelve acres of what was the vineyard, both of which appear on the 1854 survey map. Later than other missions, Sonoma's claim was not confirmed until 1859. Finally in 1862 Archbishop Alemany received the U.S. Patent for the two pieces of land. It still referred to the large piece of land as a vineyard,

although there is no evidence any vines had survived. Years after the Church sold the twelve acres, a small part of that land was acquired by a Sonoma wine producer, whose label for a while boasted that its "vineyard heritage" dated from 1823.⁴⁹

★ ★ ★

By the spring of 1846 the California mission system was formally dead, as were most of the missions' old vineyards. But by the summer of that year California had been "conquered" by a handful of antique naval vessels and their marine complements. For California it was the first of five years that almost totally transformed the sparsely populated Mexican province into a well-populated American state.

We read little of California viticulture, or of wine and brandy, during these five years. But about these topics there are some interesting stories to be told. More importantly, in spite of the unsettled land situation, there was a gradual settling process in land tenure. We can look back on this process from the vantage point of the late 1850s to see a gradual spread of the roots of the wine industry already well set in southern California. In northern California we find a similar process, but on a smaller scale.

NOTES



Please refer to the Notes in previous installments, Vol. 20 #2, #3, #4 for complete citations to the sources.

1. Bancroft, *History*, I, 641.
2. Duhaut-Cilly, 159-160; Bowman, *Wine Review*, June 1843, 20; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 247-248; Monroy, 148.
3. Smilie, 77-78, 84; Teiser and Harroun, 28-29.
4. Rhoades, 11-12, 95; Bancroft, *History*, II, 612; III, 604, 638-639; Irving McKee, "Early California Wine Commerce," *Wine Review*, January 1947, Wine Institute reprint.
5. *The Life and Adventures of Don Augustín Janssens, 1834-1856*, San Marino, 1953. This book is taken from Janssens' "Vida y Aventuras," which he wrote for H. H. Bancroft in 1878 and was published by the Huntington Library. See also Rhoades, 63-64; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 624-628, 691; V, 620-621.
6. Cleland, *Cattle*, 57-60.
7. Bancroft, *History*, III, 647; IV, 638-639; Monroy, 132-133.
8. John and Laree Caughey, Los Angeles, *Biography of a City*, Berkeley, 1976, 26-28.
9. Horace Bell, *Reminiscences of a Ranger*, Los Angeles, 1881, 35-36, 48-49; Monroy, 190-192, 208.
10. Monroy, 242-243, 317.
11. Bancroft, *History*, III, 619; IV, 421, 553, 647-648; V, 558, 655; Leggett, 20; Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, New York 1965, 95.
12. John G. Cleal's survey covered the missions from San

- Diego to San Luis Obispo. Those to the north were surveyed by George Black. Their surveys and maps were part of the documentation collected to support the Catholic Church's claim to recover the mission churches and the land around them. These claims were mostly confirmed in 1855. Where vineyards could be identified and were part of the claim they were clearly depicted on maps that are today kept at The Bancroft Library. They can also be accessed and copied on the internet.
13. Bancroft, *History*, III, 625-628; IV, 422, 553; Webb, 89; Leggett, 19; Bowman, *Wine Review*, April 1943, 24.
 14. Duhaut-Cilly, 113-115; Eugène de Mofras, *Travels on the Pacific Coast*, M. E. Wilbur, ed., Santa Ana, 1937, 2 vols., I, 177; Bryant, 407; Bowman, *Wine Review*, April 1943, 24; June 1943, 24; July 1943, 18; Bancroft, *History*, V, 620.
 15. Caughey, *Los Angeles*, 1102-1104; George Wharton James, *In and Out of the Old Missions*, Boston, 1905, 147; Bowman, *Wine Review*, April 1943, 24.
 16. William H. Brewer, *Up and Down California in 1860-1864*, Berkeley, 1966, 21-23.
 17. Bowman, *Wine Review*, April 1943, 24; Bryant, 391; De Mofras, 188-189; Bancroft, *Pastoral California*, 191-194.
 18. Bryant, 137; Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 24; Webb, 86; Bancroft, *Pastoral California*, 372; Brewer, 49-51.
 19. Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of a Voyage to California Ports in 1841-42*, San Francisco, 1930. This is a "California" edition taken from Simpson's two-volume work of 1847; Bancroft, *History*, II, 77-78; IV, 218-219; Maynard Geiger, *Mission Santa Barbara*, 120-125. Historian María Raquel Casas has written that Concepción had learned of Rezanov's death many years earlier than this event. See her *Married to the Daughters of the Land*, Reno, 2007, 73-84.
 20. Peninou and Greenleaf, 45-46.
 21. Brewer, 56-58.
 22. Bancroft, *History*, II, 123-124; Webb, 97-98; J. Smeaton Chase, *California Coast Trails*, Boston, 1913, 121-122.
 23. Webb, 155-157.
 24. John Bidwell to E. J. Wickson, November 16, 1887, in *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 11, #65 (May 1888), 503; Brewer, 76-77.
 25. Webb, 98; Duhaut-Cilly, 52.
 26. De Mofras, 198; Bryant, 374-376; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 421; Bidwell, *Loc. cit.*
 27. Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 9.
 28. Bancroft, *History*, III, 684; IV, 424, 659; Alfred Robinson, *Life in California*, Santa Barbara, 1970, 93.
 29. Bancroft, *History*, IV, 659-660; V, 639-640; Bryant, 371-372.
 30. Bancroft, *History*, III, 686; Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 9.
 31. Bancroft, *California Pastoral*, 372; *History*, IV, 660.
 32. Bancroft, *History*, III, 690; Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 9; Janssens, 26.
 33. De Mofras, 205.
 34. January, 1934. Stoll's trade journal dates from 1919, today's *Wines & Vines*. I shall cite it as such hereinafter, although it appeared under several titles.
 35. Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 10; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 657.
 36. Bowman, *Wine Review*, May, 1943, 10; Bancroft, *History*, III, 692; IV, 661-661.
 37. Bryant, 364; Brewer, 127-128; I. L. Mylar, *Early Days at the Mission San Juan Bautista*, Watsonville, California, 1929, 21.
 38. Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 10; Bancroft, *History*, II, 699; III, 693-694.
 39. The school founded here by the Jesuits became Santa Clara College, now University, the first in the state.
 40. De Mofras, 220; Bidwell, *loc. cit.*; Bryant, 318; Bancroft, *History*, III, 726; IV, 683; V, 561, 564; *San Jose Times*, February 3, 1881.
 41. Bancroft, *History*, III, 723-724.
 42. Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 10; Francis Florence McCarthy, *The History of Mission San Jose, California, 1797-1835, with an epilogue by Raymond F. Wood covering 1835 to 1855*. Fresno, 1958, 238-241; Philip Holmes, *Two Centuries at Mission San Jose, 1797-1997*, Fremont, California, 1997, 33-34; De Mofras, 222; Bryant, 309-313. The account of a visit to the mission by a U.S. naval officer two months before that harvest illustrates the dangers of relying on a snapshot generalization from short-time observers. To him the gardens and vineyard presented "a singular appearance of desolation." Marius Duvall, *A Naval Surgeon in California, 1846-1847*, San Francisco, 1957, 42-43.
 43. McCarthy, 241; Holmes, 73-75, 101; Bancroft, *History*, V, 689-690. Contrary to Bowman's report, the mission vineyard did appear on George Black's 1854 survey map. *Wine Review*, May 1943, 10.
 44. Bowman, *Wine Review*, April 1943, 10.
 45. Bancroft, *History*, III, 715-716; IV, 677.
 46. Bryant, 338; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 750; V, 669-670; Bidwell, *loc. cit.*
 47. McKee, "Historic Sonoma County Winegrowers," 2; Smilie, 20-22; Duhaut-Cilly, 133.
 48. Smilie, 37-38; Bryant, 335.
 49. Smilie, 105-108. For mission land matters related to secularization and the return of Church property see W. W. Robinson, *Land*, 29-32. Here the author gives the precise confirmation data for each mission.



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LABELS. BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS FOR WINES AND LIQUORS, 1941.

A 250-page sample book of 'blank stock' labels, printed in full color, from one of California's early printers of wine labels. See "Printing California's Wine Labels" by Bruce Johnson, p.1-7.