



# WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

Vol.21 No.2

A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

April 2011

## ATLAS DE LA FRANCE VINICOLE L. LARMAT

### A CARTOGRAPHIC POEM

by *Nina Wemyss and Gail Unzelman*

[Wine historian Nina Wemyss is the librarian for The Napa Valley Reserve and its notable wine library of over 1200 books (including a rare set of the first and second editions of our subject Atlases). Nina's entertaining presentations on "wine, art & history" have been enthusiastically received around the world, while Wayward Tendril readers have enjoyed two previous articles by Nina, "Wine & Civilization. Wine's Rich Relationship with the Arts" (Vol.14 #4) and "Ex-Library: Otherwise Fine—Book Provenance" (Vol.18 #2). *WTQ* Editor Gail Unzelman is pleased to be able to collaborate with her on this pioneering study of the Larmat Atlases. — Ed.]

"The relationship between maps and wine is a very intimate one. Wine is, after all, the unique agricultural product whose price depends entirely on where it comes from. ... There is one classic wine atlas, Louis Larmat's *Atlas de la France Vinicole* ... published with the help of the French wine authorities in the 1940s. It is incomplete, even of France, but some of its maps are masterpieces which will not be surpassed."

— Hugh Johnson, *World Atlas of Wine*, 1971



FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS these splendid Atlases have fascinated us—their sheer size and physical beauty, incredibly detailed and finely colored maps, and treasury of information. And, not least, because they were published in the midst of the deprivations of World War II in Nazi-occupied Paris.

The Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) is France's system for defining and controlling geographically based names, developed and administered by the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine (INAO), a branch of the French Ministry of Agriculture. The first modern law was established May 6th, 1919, specifying merely the geographical boundaries. Further laws were passed 1935–1939, and the AOC became a national reality—an attempt to end widespread adulteration and fraud following phylloxera and economic depression in France.

Joseph Capus, Minister of Agriculture, and Senator from the Gironde (1930 to 1941, when he relinquished power to Marshal Pétain) spearheaded the revision of

the AOC. When Capus first entered Parliament in 1920, as he later reminisced, he began a campaign to amend the concept of origin, as a condition of the right to an appellation, no longer as merely geography, but also to include the elements of quality itself: that is, the nature of the soil, the grape variety, and the methods of production. This was controversial, but Capus and others courageously persisted to protect, with laws, one of France's greatest treasures and renew the prestige of French wines throughout the world. As Chairman of the INAO until his death at age eighty, M. Capus worked ceaselessly to this effect.



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Following the Appellation laws of the mid-1930s, a set of Atlases was commissioned under the patronage of the Comité National des Appellations d'Origine des Vins et Eaux de Vie; Comité National de Propagande en Faveur du Vin; Syndicat National du Commerce en Gros des Vins, Cidres, Spiritueux et Liqueurs de France; and regional organizations. Eleven Atlases were proposed, with six published: TOME I—*Les Vins de Bordeaux*, 1941; TOME II—*Les Vins de Bourgogne*, 1942; TOME III—*Les Vins des Côtes du Rhône*, 1943; TOME IV—*Les Vins de Champagne*, 1944; TOME V—*Les Vins des Coteaux de la Loire. Touraine et Centre*, 1946; TOME VI—*Les Eaux-de-Vie de France. Le Cognac*, 1947. In this last volume it was announced that the following tomes were “en préparation”: *Les Vins des Coteaux de la Loire. Anjou-Muscadet*; *Les Eaux-de-Vie de France. L'Armagnac*; *Les Eaux-de-Vie de France. Le Calvados*; *Les Vins d'Alsace, de Franche-Comté et du Jura*; *Les Vins Doux Naturels et les Vins de Liqueur*. One can only speculate why the series was halted: the death of M. Capus in 1947, whose guiding hand saw the Atlases published? Were the Atlases not selling? In 1958, a “Tarif” from Louis Larmat-Editeur listed five of the albums and numerous individual maps still available for purchase.

These legendary, and still-vibrant, over-sized atlases were issued in loose signatures in colorful, artistically designed paper portfolios. Joseph Capus introduced every volume with a magisterial preface, and Heads of the Regional Syndicates—often figures of historical distinction such as François Bouchard, Burgundy; Baron Le Roy de Boiseaumarié, Rhône; Comte Robert-Jean de Vogüé, Champagne; and Maurice Hennessy, Cognac—wrote descriptive statements. The articles of the various decrees of AOC were enumerated in detail for the individual regions, followed by general and regional maps—some double and triple fold-outs. The maps are most precise with the contours of the land and elevations noted—so significant in terroir. Parts of the descriptive text are in French, German, English and Italian; in certain volumes, Spanish and Portuguese are added.

In his introduction to Volume I, Monsieur Capus called the Atlas very comprehensive and precise, laid out with elegance and clarity, and created with the utmost integrity by Louis Larmat—publisher, editor and cartographer—who was entrusted with this immense work.

Surprisingly, little is known of M. Larmat or his Parisian publishing firm. We do learn from his personal dedication in Tome VI, *Le Cognac*—the only volume to have such a dedicatory page—that he was born [1890] in the village of Saintes, in Saintonge, in the center of the Cognac appellation. He wished to pay special “hommage” to his “esteemed Père and dear Maman,” his respected collaborators in the publica-

tion of the Atlases—the artists, printers, dignitaries, and other contributors—and to Saintes, in “light-filled” Saintonge. He writes of his “great gratitude, pride, and affection for glorious Cognac,” and in further tribute, includes a historic 1753 map of the region—the only antique map in the series.

We remember that M. Larmat also published two fine, post-war wine volumes (on a far less grand scale than the Larmat Atlases) in the series *Vignobles de Vins Fins & Eaux-de-Vie de France*, produced for the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine des Vins et Eaux-de-Vie. The first, *Le Vignoble Girondin* by Germain Lafforgue (1947), carries an introduction by Joseph Capus. In 1951, *Le Vignoble et le Vin de Champagne* by Georges Chappaz was published, with an introduction by Baron Le Roy Boiseaumarié, who succeeded Joseph Capus as President of l'Institut National des Appellations d'Origine. Of the intended series, only these two titles were published. A third Larmat wine publication, on the history of the legislation of the AOC (*L'évolution de la Législation sur les Appellations d'Origine, Genèse des Appellations Contrôlées*, 1947), was by our eminent M. Capus.



he Larmat Atlases, in recognition of their excellence, were honored with the Prix d'Agriculture—Gold Medal of the National Academy of Sciences, Literature and Arts of Bordeaux; and the Gold Medal of the Academy of Agriculture of France.

Highlighting Larmat's work, Dr. Walter Ristow, Assistant Chief of the Division of Maps at the Library of Congress, reviewed “Some Recent Regional Atlases” for the American Geographical Society journal, *Geographical Review* (1951), including the six-volume *Louis Larmat Atlas de la France Vinicole*. In his introductory remarks, he noted that “general regional” and “topical regional” atlases “are invaluable for comparative studies, and for obtaining a comprehensive picture of the distribution of specific commodities or commercial activities. Because they concentrate on a specific region or a specific product or industry, and were often published by official government agencies, they are the specialized tools of the scholar and serious researcher. The most ambitious and noteworthy of these regional atlases is the six-volume *Atlas de France Vinicole*.”

In further praise, a French reviewer of Jean-François Bazin's 2002 *Histoire du Vin de Bourgogne* stated, “The 1942 vintage represents an important date in the cartography of the [Burgundy] vineyards: Louis Larmat of Paris published Volume II of his *Atlas de la France Vinicole*, dedicated to Burgundy. This extensive work establishes five classes and notes the first growths...”

In addition to presenting a written and cartographic record of the AOC, the Atlases were meant for



the market worldwide, to highlight the riches of France's wine regions and the virtues of the vinegrowers, who love their land, and labor with valour. In Vol.I, *Bordeaux*: These Atlases are an incomparable artistic pilgrimage through France. Formerly, photography presented a particular attraction and was sufficient, but today, with the help of precise direction maps, the amateurs of our wines will be able to guide themselves before they judge. And from Vol.IV, *Champagne*, M. Capus gives poignant tribute to this work "whose success in France and abroad is increasing ... reflecting the interest that continues to bear on our great wines, which will constitute a not negligible part of our exports once peace returns."

Publishing in Europe during the war years was troublesome. Petie and Don Kladstrup, co-authors of *Wine and War* (2001), responded to our request for information: "We have no real knowledge of paper or publishing during the war. What we do know is that the quality of paper during that time and right after the war was extremely poor and now deteriorates quickly and brutally leaving little hope for restoration." [Yet the overall quality of paper in the Larimat Atlases is very fine indeed; though, as tactile evidence of the difficulties, several different grades were used.] "Germany's goal in taking over France was to preserve the wine regions. It viewed them as the 'golden egg' that would help re-launch the economy at the end of the war. In addition, the prestige factor was a major part of the Reich's eagerness to maintain the French vineyards in as good a condition as possible during the war. This may help explain why the *Atlas* could be produced at such a difficult time. Vichy France, although nominally independent, was very much the tool of the Nazi regime in its few years of existence, and it had very little to do with the wine regions. All of the major wine areas fell under direct German control; hence, the so-called *weinfuhrers* who bought wine for the Reich and essentially ran the wine industry in France by determining how much wine they wanted and at what price."

It is interesting to remember that the largest and oldest of all French wine merchants, Établissements Nicolas, did not issue their graphically celebrated annual catalogues, *Liste des Grands Vins Fins*, from 1940 through 1948. Does this mean they had no wine to sell, or had hidden it in the country from the Germans, or could not get paper to print with? Edmund Penning-Rowsell says in a *Wine & Food* article on the Nicolas catalogues, "wartime conditions caused a suspension [in publication] from 1940 to 1948." He does not elaborate.

In London, André Simon and the Wine & Food Society struggled, but he was most proud that the

Society's quarterly journal, begun in 1934, never missed an issue, even during the "short-paper war years." In the middle of the war, Simon continued to hunt down odds and ends of paper supplies for the Society's publications to keep "alight the torch." At this time, the Paper Control Board came on the scene and reminded him that any "found paper supplies must be reported at once and surrendered to the Board." He carefully "found no more."

Though publishing in France was arduous under war-time conditions and Nazi censorship, Maynard Amerine, in his *Check List on Grapes and Wines 1938-1948*, lists an astonishing 160 works on wine published in France. (In Italy there were a notable 150 wine publications, and a mere 21 in Great Britain.) In his preface, Dr. Amerine also noted how "the Second World War almost completely cut off the normal exchange of [scientific] information between Europe and the rest of the world. During the war almost no periodicals and only a few books on viticulture and enology were received from Europe. This is unfortunate because, although research in these fields was necessarily limited during the war, important contributions to the literature were made."



he Atlases abound with little treasures: in *Champagne*, there is an extraordinary graph charting the shipments of bottles of Champagne in France and abroad, the hectoliters of wine harvested in the Department of the Marne, and the quality of the wine (*très bon, bon, assez bon, mediocre, mauvais, très mauvais*) for each of the ninety-nine years from 1844 to 1942. One notices, at a glance, the effect of war—severely reduced shipments in 1870-71, 1914-15 and 1915-16, while the highest number of bottles shipped in a hundred years occurred in 1936-37. Added to the graph was a bitter-sweet notation: after 1940, quantities shipped inside France included those delivered to the Occupying Authorities. Clearly, this was almost the entire production.

Héliogravure illustrations first appeared in the *Champagne* tome in 1944. The héliogravure process of reproducing photographs on metal plates for printing was invented in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although a more expensive technique, it was the method of choice for reproduction in high-quality books. Among the lovely full-page photogravures are stunning images of L'Abbaye d'Hautvillers and one of La Cathédrale de Reims *avant* 1914. In the *Loire* atlas there are many evocative vignettes of country life—a tranquil river bank, horse-drawn wagons, women in local costume harvesting grapes in Vouvray, Sancerre from across manicured fields, and sailboats in the harbor of La Rochelle. The immense charm and beauty of the regions are revealed in these many images. Sturdy initial letters entwined in vine tendrils and grape



clusters add interest to the text as do the little woodcut engravings interspersed throughout.

The *Atlas de la France Vinicole* is a benchmark in the history of wine cartography, defining all that followed. This monumental work—the first cartographic study of the wine regions of France—endures, securing Louis Larmat a place of honor in the literature of wine. The volumes, now quite scarce, are a worthy and important addition to a distinguished wine book library. The Atlases are a testament, as well, to courage, endurance and optimism.



### ATLAS de la FRANCE VINICOLE: THE TOMES

**B**ibliographic listings for the Larmat Atlases are few, none complete: Gérard Oberlé's *Bibliothèque Bachique* (Paris, 1993, #247) lists a complete set of six, all first editions except *Bordeaux* (nouvelle ed.). A brief, basic description is given—number of pages, number of maps, general illustration information. Maynard Amerine & Louise Wheeler, in their *Check List of Books and Pamphlets on Grapes, Wine...1938–1948* (U.C. Press, 1951), provide a bit more information, although some of it does not correspond with the published set. James Gabler's bibliography, *Wine into Words* (2004), does not include these volumes.

The first editions of the six tomes, and the nouvelle (2<sup>nd</sup>) edition of *Bordeaux* (1944), were issued in loose signatures in portfolio, 18" x 13" (45cm x 33cm). Subsequent editions (*Bordeaux*, *Burgundy*) were issued in a smaller format, 12½" x 9½" (31cm x 24cm), and bound in card covers. It was announced in Tome VI—*Cognac* (1947) that five more volumes were to follow. As noted earlier, these volumes were never published. [From scattered evidence, it seems likely the series was issued in both a trade edition and editions De Luxe, but it will take a separate, further survey to document these specifics.]

In addition to the patronage of the national wine-growing organizations, each volume was published under the auspices of the organizations of the particular viticultural region addressed, with the introductory essays being contributed by prominent winemen of the regions. We have not listed these for each tome.

NOTE: In Volume I (1941), the Larmat publishing house is listed at 10 bis, Rue Duhesme, Montmartre, Paris-18<sup>e</sup>; by 1944 Larmat had moved to 80, Boulevard Haussmann, Champs Elysée, Paris-8<sup>e</sup>.

The following descriptions are gathered from the holdings of the Larmat *Atlas de la France Vinicole* in several prominent wine libraries.

### TOME I – Les Vins de Bordeaux, 1941. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.

First edition. 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris.

Printed by Georges Girard, Paris.

Published under the patronage of the [national associations] Comité National des Appellation Contrôlée d'Origine des Vins et Eaux-de-Vie; Comité National de Propagande en Faveur des Vins; Syndicat National du Commerce en Gros des Vins, Cidres, Spiritueux et Liqueurs de France. [Bordeaux associations] Fédération des Syndicats des Grands Vins de Bordeaux à Appellation Contrôlée; Comité Départemental du Vin de Bordeaux; Syndicat des Négociants en Vins et Spiritueux de Bordeaux et de la Gironde; Syndicats Viticoles Régionaux. Preface by Joseph Capus (former Minister of Agriculture, Président of the Comité National des Appellations d'Origine des Vins et Eaux-de-Vie).

Parts of text in French, German, English, Italian and Spanish.

[44]pp. (folded sheets) + 8 fold-out color maps; woodcut vignette illustrations throughout.

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of rose-colored, textured heavy stock, decorated with two embossed clusters of grapes. Another copy viewed had a portfolio of beige-colored stock.

Maps: [Carte Générale] Vins de Bordeaux; Médoc – Haut Médoc; Graves – Graves Supérieures – Cérons; Région de Sauternes et Barsac; St. Émilion – Pomerol – Néac – Côtes de Fronsac – Côtes Canon-Fronsac; Entre-Deux-Mers – Graves de Vayres – Sainte-Foy-Bordeaux; Loupiac – Sainte-Croix-du-Mont – Premières Côtes de Bordeaux – Côtes de Bordeaux-Saint-Macaire; Blayais – Côtes de Blaye – Bourgeais – Côtes de Bourg.



### TOME I – Les Vins de Bordeaux, 1944. Nouvelle ed.

Nouvelle ed. 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris.

Printed in France [no printer named].

Parts of text in French, German, English and Italian.

With an essay by Marquis de Lur-Saluces (Président de Syndicat Viticole de la Région de Sauternes et Barsac).

[8], 40pp. (folded sheets) + 8 fold-out color maps. Illustrated with 11 pen & ink drawings by "Bartho" of the great châteaux (including Lafite, Latour, Margaux, Haut-Brion, Yquem) and other Bordeaux scenes.

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of greyish-beige, textured heavy stock, decorated with the coat of arms of Bordeaux.

Maps: [Carte Générale] Vins de Bordeaux; Médoc – Haut Médoc; Graves–Graves Supérieures–Cérons; Région de Sauternes et Barsac; St.Émilion–



Pomerol-Néac-Côtes de Fronsac-Côtes Canon-Fronsac; Entre-Deux-Mers-Graves de Vayres-Sainte-Foy-Bordeaux; Loupiac-Sainte-Croix-du-Mont-Premières Côtes de Bordeaux-Côtes de Bordeaux-Saint-Macaire; Blayais-Côtes de Blaye-Bourgeais-Côtes de Bourg.



**TOME I – Les Vins de Bordeaux, 1949. Nouvelle ed.**

Nouvelle edition. 12½" x 9½". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris. Printed by Le Moil & Pascaly, Paris. Numbered edition of 800, plus a trade edition.

Parts of text in French, German, English and Italian. [82] pp. of text, + 24 pp. of héliogravures + 16 leaves presenting 21 colored maps, 6 of which are fold-out *à grand échelle*. Bound in cream-colored heavy stock card covers.

Essays by the Marquis de Lur-Saluces (Président de Syndicat Viticole de la Region de Sauternes et Barsac), George Portmann (President of the Association of Medical Friends of Wine), among others.

Maps: [Carte Générale] Vins de Bordeaux; Haut-Médoc; Médoc; Graves-Graves Supérieures; Cérons; Sauternes et Barsac; St. Émilion; Lussac-Montagne-Parsac-Puisseguen-Saint-Georges-Sables-Saint-Émilion; Pomerol; Lalande-de-Pomerol & Néac; Côtes Canon-Fronsac; Loupiac-St. Croix-du-Mont-Côtes de Bordeaux-St. Macaire; Premières Côtes de Bordeaux; Entre-deux-Mers-Graves de Vayres-St. Foy-Bordeaux; Côtes de Bourg-Bourgeais; Premières Côtes de Blaye-Blayais.



**TOME II – Les Vins de Bourgogne, 1942. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.**

First edition. 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris. Printed by Georges Girard, Paris. 800 numbered copies.

Parts of text in French, German, English and Italian. 56 pp (folded sheets) + 5 large fold-out color maps; illustrated with numerous engraved woodcut vignettes (black/white héliogravures would appear in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. of 1953).

Essays by George Portmann (President of the Association of Medical Friends of Wine), and other illustrious wine persons.

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of red-colored heavy paper stock with a woven-like texture, decorated with a gold, two-handled, footed cup.

Maps: Chablis Grand Cru-Chablis; Côte de Nuits; Côte de Beaune; Côte Châlonnaise-La Mâconnaise; Le Beaujolais.

**TOME II – Les Vins de Bourgogne, 1953. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.**

Second edition. 12½" x 9½". 800 numbered copies: 100 on Vélin Marais, I-C; 700 copies on Vélin d'Art, 101-800. Printed by Desfossés-Néogravure, Paris. Parts of text in French, German, English and Italian. [68] pp. of text + 16 leaves of 75 héliogravures + 9 full-page color maps (4 fold-out).

Short essays by noted wine figures, including Camille Rodier (Nuits-St. Georges négociant who authored noteworthy books on Burgundian wines and co-founded the Conférie des Chevaliers du Tastevin).

Bound in buff-colored heavy stock card covers, decorated with coat of arms of Burgundy.

Maps: Carte Générale; Grand Cru Chablis-Chablis; Côte de Nuits; Côte de Beaune; Rully-Mercurey; Montagny-Givry; La Mâconnaise; Beaujolais (2).



**TOME III – Les Vins des Côtes du Rhône, 1943. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.**

First edition. 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris. Printed by Georges Girard, Paris. 1500 numbered copies: 30 "hors-commerce" on Vélin d'Arches, I-XXX; 970 on Vélin Crêvecoeur du Marais, 31-1000; 500 on Vélin Maunoury, 1001-1500.

Parts of text in French, German, English and Italian. Essays by Joseph Capus (former Minister of Agriculture, Président of the Comité National des Appellations d'Origine des Vins et Eaux-de-Vie); Roger Descas (Président du Syndicat National du Commerce ...Vins, Cidres, Spiritueux et Liqueurs de France); Baron Le Roy de Boiseaumarié (Président du Syndicat Général des Vignerons des Côtes du Rhône).

23 pp (folded sheets) + 4 large fold-out color maps + 8 pen & ink drawings by "Bartho."

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of forest-green, heavy textured paper, decorated with a golden chalice.

Maps: Groupe Septentrionale; Côte Rôtie-Condrieu-Château Grillet-Hermitage-Crozes-Hermitage-Cornas-Saint-Péray; Groupe Méridionale; Châteauneuf-du-Pape-Tavel.



**TOME IV – Les Vins de Champagne, 1944. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.**

First edition, 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris. Printed by Georges Girard, Paris. Copies 1-80 on Vélin d'Arches, 81-150 on Japon. [Champagne seems to be the rarest of the series.]

Parts of text in French, German, English, Italian and Spanish.



30pp (folded sheets) + 11 full-page héliogravures + 1 full-page black/white illustration + 7 large fold-out color maps + one fold-out color graph (1844–1944 Champagne statistics).

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of buff-colored, textured heavy stock, decorated with an armorial crest.

Maps: Les Vins de Champagne [39"x25½"]; Montagne de Reims; Vallée de la Marne; Côte des Blancs; Montagne de Reims–Vallée de l'Arde; Vallée de la Marne–l'Aisne; Vignobles du Bar Séquanais–Bar-sur-Aubois.



**TOME V – Les Vins des Coteaux de la Loire. Touraine et Centre. 1946. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.**

First edition, 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris. Printed by Georges Girard, Paris.

Parts of text in French, German, English, Italian.

38pp (folded sheets) + 14 pp. héliogravures and village coats of arms + 4 large fold-out color maps.

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of sky-blue heavy stock, illustrated with a grape cluster between two armorial plates.

Maps: Pouilly-sur-Loire–Sancerre–Quincy–Reuilly; Bourgueil–St. Nicolas–de-Bourgueil–Chinon–Montlouis–Jasnières; Vouvray; Coteaux de Touraine.



**TOME VI – Les Eaux-de-Vie de France. Le Cognac. 1947. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.**

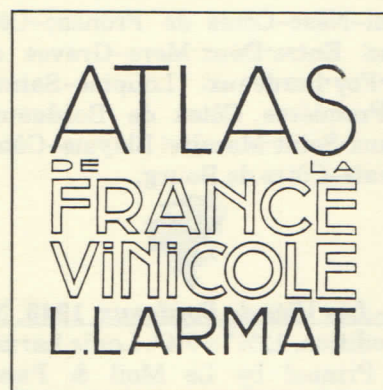
First edition, 18" x 13". Louis Larmat, Éditeur. Paris. Printed by E. Desfossés–Néogravure, Paris. Limited numbered edition of 1500: I–XXX on Vélín d'Arches; 31–1000 on Vélín Crevecoeur du Marais; 1001–1500 on Vélín Maunoury.

Parts of text in French, German, English, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

47pp (folded sheets) + 6 large fold-out color maps and one fold-out 18<sup>th</sup> century map in sepia (Gouvernements Généraux du Poitou, du Pays d'Aunis, et de Saintonge-Angoumois), + 1 fold-out graph (Cognac statistics); 71 sepia-toned héliogravures + village coats of arms.

Binding: Loose signatures in a portfolio of cream-colored, non-textured heavy stock, decorated with three crests.

Maps: Carte Générale; La Grande Champagne; Petite Champagne et Borderies; Fins-Bois; Bon Bois; Bois Ordinaires et Bois Communes dits a Terroir.



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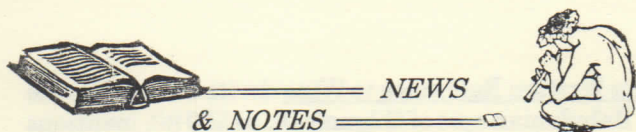
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We would like to extend a special thank you to Don and Petie Kladstrup, Eberhard Buehler, Hugh Johnson, Richard Nybakken, Lorence Johnston and Claudine & Michel Perret for their kind responses to our queries.

[All illustrations are from the Atlases, slightly reduced. See also rear cover illustration.]





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

Welcome! new Tendrils. On the recommendation of Tendril Charles Sullivan, David Schildknecht ([dschildknecht@vintnerselect.com](mailto:dschildknecht@vintnerselect.com)), of Cincinnati, Ohio, has joined us. Lorence Johnston, the proprietor of Lok Man Rare Books ([lj@lokmanbooks.com](mailto:lj@lokmanbooks.com)) in Hong Kong, has a special interest in wine books. Check his website: [www.lokmanbooks.com](http://www.lokmanbooks.com). At the San Francisco Antiquarian Book Fair we met exhibitor Sophie Schneideman of Sophie Schneideman Rare Books, London ([sophie@ssrbooks.com](mailto:sophie@ssrbooks.com)). She has an excellent selection of wine & gastronomy material ([www.ssrbooks.com](http://www.ssrbooks.com)). Marty Schlabach and his wife Mary Jean Welser ([mls5@cornell.edu](mailto:mls5@cornell.edu)), both at Cornell University, Ithaca/Geneva, have signed up for their own personal membership/subscription (finding time at work to read the *Quarterly* was not working!). John Maher ([john@winesofvalencia.com](mailto:john@winesofvalencia.com)), Valencia, Spain, has a passionate interest in Valencian wines—and Fróna Eunice Wait, one of the heroines of the California wine industry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. (An article is brewing!)

#### NEW TENDRILS EMAIL ADDRESS!!

■ Please note our new Wayward Tendrils email address: [waywardtendrils@att.net](mailto:waywardtendrils@att.net). Please also note the new home-email for Editor Gail Unzelman: [nomispress@att.net](mailto:nomispress@att.net). Your correspondence is welcome at either address!

#### WINE INTO WORDS UPDATE

■ Enclosed with this issue is a 4-page Supplement, "Gabler's *Wine into Words: A List of Updates—No.2.*" We recommend you slip this into your copy of *WTW* for ready reference. If your library does not have this invaluable bibliography of English language wine books, contact Jim Gabler for a copy (inscribed if you wish!). [bacchuspr@aol.com](mailto:bacchuspr@aol.com)

#### MISSION WINES 1698–1846

■ The first four installments of Charles Sullivan's history, *Wine in California. The Early Years: Mission Wines 1698–1846*, published in our *WTQ* (April 2010–January 2011), have been compiled into booklet form, with an added index. A valuable reference, it is available from [waywardtendrils@att.net](mailto:waywardtendrils@att.net). \$20 including shipping.

#### COMPUTER CATALOGUING OUR COLLECTIONS

■ Different Data Bases? MyLibrary? David Campbell ([wineguy@cereswine.com](mailto:wineguy@cereswine.com)) would be interested to hear what systems Tendrils use to keep track of their vinous book collections. Send us your computerized methods. Does any brave soul still use only a card catalogue system?!

#### MURDER MYSTERY UPDATE

■ Joe Lynch, who admits to almost one hundred (and growing) wine novels in his collection, reminds us of the great similarity between *Dead in the Dregs* (2010) by Peter Lewis (reviewed in our January issue), and Peter May's *The Critic* published in 2007 (Poisoned Pen Press)—two gruesome and wine-chilling murder mysteries featuring the "world's number one wine critic." (Do not be duped when you also see *A Vintage Corpse* by May; it is not a new thriller, it is *The Critic* in paperback.)

#### THE LEATHER BOTTEL

■ In our October 2010 issue, we were introduced to ancient drinking vessels in Oliver Baker's fine book, *Black Jacks and Leather Bottels...* (London, 1921). Another title on this subject we might consider for our library shelves is *The Leather Bottel* (1903), a small "Christmas book" (4¼ x 3¼) designed and published by Will Bradley. Bradley (1868–1962), a master of graphic design specializing in the book and periodical arts, was one of the premier American graphic artists of all time. Between 1901 and 1904 Bradley issued four of these little volumes from his "Sign of the Vine" (Concord, Mass.), to be distributed as Christmas gifts. He designed each little book, executed the illustrations, and hand-set the type before sending them to the Heintzmann Press in Boston for printing. This little gem is a fine production of the early drinking ballad "The Leather Bottel" (discussed at length in Oliver Baker's book).



The  
Leather  
Bottel



Title page & frontispiece illustrations by Will Bradley



#### CHARMING FRENCH CHILDREN'S WINE BOOK

■ *La Nature Révélée aux Enfants (II) Petite Histoire d'une Grappe de Raisin* (Paris: J. Tallandier, c1900, 12 pp., card covers, 9½ x 6¼). This anonymously written "Petite History of a Bunch of Grapes," is delightfully illustrated by Raymond de la Nézière (1865–1953), an early French comics artist and versatile book illustrator. The enchanting story is about Paul, Jacques, and Zozote, who go to the country to spend a year with their grand-papa. They help till the vineyard, pick the grapes, make the wine ... and enjoy it at the family table. Nézière's playful drawings capture their vintage year perfectly. There exist very few books about wine written for children, and this is one of the best.



#### TO TICKLE YOUR FANCY

■ *Wine by a Nose at the Finish* by Sidney Berger (Fullerton, CA: Lorson's Books, 2008) is a fascinating little book that should tickle the fancy of miniature wine book collectors. The edition is limited to 50 numbered copies, signed by Berger and the illustrator, C. O'mara. Within its 2¼" x 2¼" x 1¾" dimensions are 63 pages, with 5 pop-up illustrations and 10 tipped-in full-page illustrations. Brightly bound in lavender cloth boards, with endpapers of a painted vineyard/mountain scene in further shades of purple, the book is magically housed in an elaborate folding box and case covered in matching book cloth, and tied with a lavender ribbon with a corkscrew ornament attached to the end. Amazing feat of book arts dexterity.

#### WINE BOOK FACTS

■ Harvested for your pleasure from *Wine Fact & Fiction. Facts, Legends and Advice for Wine Lovers* by Andrew Jones (UK: Wine on the Web Ltd, 2003) are the following tidbits:

**First Written Reference to Wine:** In its 10<sup>th</sup> tablet, the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, c1800 BC, mentions a mystical vineyard.

**Roman Wine Writing:** Cato [233–149 BC], Varro [118–29 BC], Virgilius [70–19 BC], Columella [2 BC–65 AD] and Plato [23–79 AD] all wrote of wine and vines, with Columella's works being regarded as the most significant on the subject.

**First Wine Books:** Expert opinion varies, but the two generally recognised claimants for this position both date from 1478 AD. They are *Tractatus de Vino et Eius Proprietate* (whose author is anonymous) and *Liber de Vinis* (by Arnaldus de Villanova). Copies of both are held in the British Museum. [Facsimile copies can sometimes be found on the Internet. Both are extremely handsome publications. The Arnaldus title (with an English translation and an Historical Essay by Henry Sigerest) was printed in 1943 in New York by the Press of E. Colish, limited to 350 copies. The original Latin text of *De Vino* was translated into French and published in Paris in 1939. It is the ornate woodcut initial letters of Valentin Le Campion (1903–1952) throughout the book that immediately catch one's eye. We have used these initial decorations to enhance the pages of our *WTQ*; in the near future we hope to do a feature article on this celebrated artist and his wine- and book-related work. – ED.]

**First English-Language Wine Book:** *A New Booke of the Natures and Properties of all Wines that are Commonly used here in England*, by William Turner, and published in 1568 in London, was the first English-language book to deal solely with wine. [In 1941, Scholars' Facsimiles, New York, published *A Book of Wines*, a reprint of the original text, with a Modern English Version, and an Oenological Note by Philip Wagner. A 2<sup>nd</sup> printing, 1980. – ED.]

#### A GRAND EXHIBIT CATALOGUE

■ Our art-minded fellow Tendril, Bill Duprey, has sent a note about a new find. *Vinum Nostrum—Art, Science and Myths of Wine in Ancient Mediterranean Cultures*, edited by Giovanni di Pasquale (Firenze: Giunti, 2010), is the 382-page catalogue of a major exhibit at the Palazzo Pitti, Museo degli Argenti, held 20 July 2010–30 April 2011. This is a magnificent book, bound in sturdy card covers, with 29 essays on the numerous topics of the exhibition and illustrated with breath-taking color photos. The English edition is available from M. Shamansky, Bookseller, for \$65 + S/H ([michael@artbooks.com](mailto:michael@artbooks.com)).

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**THE PORTENT**  
by Thomas Pinney

[Thomas Pinney, well-known to wine lovers as the author of a number of noteworthy books on the subject, is Professor of English, Emeritus, Pomona College in Southern California, and a renowned scholar of Rudyard Kipling. We welcome his latest contribution to our Quarterly. — Ed.]



AMONG THE LATER STORIES of Rudyard Kipling is one called "The Prophet and the Country," first published in Hearst's Magazine, October 1924, and collected in the volume called Debits and Credits, 1926. Kipling, at this late point in his career, had developed a method of story-telling so condensed, so packed with unobtrusive hints and suggestions, that a quick run through such a story will miss most of its meaning. "The Prophet and the Country" is such a story. It is also furnished with an introductory and a concluding poem which are, one supposes, intended to provide a sort of commentary on the story that they accompany. This practice of bracketing his stories with a couple of poems is one that Kipling began way back in his Indian years and that he continued more or less regularly to the end of his career. "The Prophet and the Country," and its introductory poem, called "The Portent," are of interest to readers of The Wayward Tendrils because they deal with the subject of Prohibition in America.

To give you an idea of the story first. The narrator is driving north from London when his car breaks down. A passing American stops to help, and as things develop we learn the story of his life. He was a successful real estate man in Omaha; then his wife died; and then he had a revelation. Prohibition, it was shown to him, was a great mistake, for it sought to protect a people against alcohol, not by immunizing them through its therapeutic use, but to keep them wholly innocent of it. That meant that, sooner or later, they would be overwhelmed by alcohol as by a plague, just as the red Indian had been destroyed by the firewater against which he had had no defense, no acquired immunity. The American, Mr. Tarwater, in response to this revelation, has sold all his property and spent the money to make a film that will, he hopes, show the American public the error of its ways. We do not get the impression, from what we are told of him, that he has much chance of success. There is much more in the story, which is partly farcical and partly serious, but that is enough to give you a key to the introductory poem, which follows:

The Portent  
Horace, Book V. Ode 20

Oh, late withdrawn from human-kind  
And following dreams we never knew!  
Varus, what dream has fate assigned  
To trouble you?

Such virtue as commends the law  
Of Virtue to the vulgar horde  
Suffices not. You needs must draw  
A righteous sword;

And, flagrant in well-doing, smite  
The priests of Bacchus at their fane,  
Lest any worshiper invite  
The God again.

Whence public strife and naked crime  
And—deadlier than the cup you shun—  
A people schooled to mock, in time,  
All law—not one.

Cease, then, to fashion State-made sin,  
Nor give thy children cause to doubt  
That Virtue springs from iron within—  
Not lead without.

A few details may be explained: the sub-title—"Horace, Book V. Ode 20"—continues a joke that Kipling had begun a few years earlier, when he and some Oxford dons had put together a little book called Q. Horati Flacci Carminum Liber Quintus—that is, Book 5 of the Odes of Horace. There is, of course, no Book 5 of the Odes. The book contained a number of Latin poems in Horatian style, each of which was followed by a "translation" into English. The joke was that the English poems were the originals and the Latin poems were the translations. Some of the originals were by Kipling, who loved to share in such learned japes. After the book was published he continued to produce "Horatian" poems, such as "The Portent," though the later poems were never thought to be anything but Kipling's original work. His love of Horace was strong and genuine. Imitation was, in Kipling's case, the sincerest flattery. The Latin names, the condensed syntax, the short line snapping each quatrain shut, all evoke Horace.

As often happens, the poem that Kipling attaches to a story is not really a version of that story, but something rather different. That is the case here. Tarwater, the American visionary in "The Prophet and the Country," is convinced that Prohibition, by shutting Americans off from booze, will render them helpless should booze ever reappear—they will have been "virginiz'd" instead of "immunized," to use his language. But in "The Portent," the danger is something else, and the perception seems to belong to Kipling himself rather than to his fictional character.



If I read the poem aright, it is a warning against the contempt for law that the notorious evasions of Prohibition would lead to. Speakeasies, bootleggers, bathtub gin, moonshiners, the hip flask, rum-runners, organized crime, Al Capone—the litany might continue at great length—would in time produce the result outlined in stanza four:

Whence public strife and naked crime  
And—deadlier than the cup you shun—  
A people schooled to mock, in time,  
All law—not one.

The “Varus” who is addressed by the poem is not a version of Tarworth but rather of the spiritual type that foisted prohibition upon the American public, men and women who have drawn a “righteous sword” to “smite / The priests of Bacchus at their fane.”

Before the end of Prohibition a great many Americans had come to the same conclusion as Kipling, that an unenforceable law commanding virtue would bring all law into contempt. And, though the idea could not be embodied in the legislation that created Repeal, I imagine that many Americans at the time agreed with Kipling’s conclusion, which is not quite what Tarworth had in mind but is close enough: “That Virtue springs from iron within— / Not lead without.”

As for Kipling’s own ideas about drink, it is perhaps enough to say that, though always moderate in his habits, he was happy to accept the dedication of George Saintsbury’s *Notes on a Cellar-Book*.

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## IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by *Bob Foster*



*The Finest Wines of Bordeaux: A Regional Guide to the Best Châteaux and Their Wines* by James Lawther, MW. Fine Wine Editions. Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2010. 320 pp. Card covers. \$34.95.

“... a fascinating tale well told”

**T**HIS IS REALLY AN INSIDER’S guide to Bordeaux. The author, a Master of Wine, has lived in Bordeaux since 1995. He knows the region well and it shows in this book.

As Lawther insightfully notes, if you were looking for a region to produce magnificent red wines, Bordeaux would not be at the top of your list. The climate and soil are not ideal; Bordeaux owes its pre-

eminent position to geography, history, and human intervention. The author enlarges on this hypothesis in explaining why Bordeaux has become the center of the wine universe. It is a fascinating tale well told. Interwoven with the story is a detailed explanation of the emergence of new techniques (many of which are really a return to techniques of long ago) and methods used to make the wines from this region. There are small sections on the impact of climate change, the impact of nearby bodies of water, soil management, use of green methods, and when to harvest.

The newest methods in vinification are covered with subsections on sorting and handling, fermentation, barrel aging, and blending. There is even a small section on the major wine consultants who work in the region with a short description of the styles of wine each prefers.

Chapters on each of the major growing regions in Bordeaux is the core of the book. There is an overview of the region, detailed maps, and discussions of the appellations within the region. The author then has small sections on each of the major producers. For each château there are several paragraphs summarizing the winery’s history, ownership, location, and role in the region. In a side-bar Lawther gives his overall impression of the best wines from the producers as well as specific tasting notes for recent vintages.

At the back of the book are charts showing the various rankings of the châteaux that have been offered over the years, assessments of the vintages since 1982, a detailed glossary, a good index (but one that only includes the names of the châteaux), and a bibliography.

Special note must be made of the superb photography by Jon Wyand. The book is crammed with his color photographs that reveal oft-pictured regions in a new light. He has a keen eye for interesting details and has the ability to photograph a person so you have the feeling you immediately know their personality. Great stuff.

There is a wealth of information here that is available nowhere else. An essential book for a lover of Bordeaux wines. Very highly recommended.

EDITOR NOTE: *Bordeaux* is the third book in the Fine Wine Editions series. Also published: *Finest Wines of Tuscany & Central Italy* by Nicolas Belfrage (2009) and *Finest Wines of Champagne* by Michael Edwards (2009).

“... perfect to scare off the novice wine drinker”

*Wine Tasting Uncorked: Guided Tasting Courses and Tips* by Michael Schuster. New York: Potter Style (Random House), 2010. 40 cards. \$14.99.





**O**DD, VERY ODD. This is not a book; it is a set of 40 cards, each measuring 4" wide by 5" tall. They all come in a box that looks like an oversize Marlboro cigarette hard-pack box complete with flip-top lid. Each card is chocked full of wine information. The first 31 cards cover the basics leading up to nine tasting lessons in which the author gives the specific format to allow a novice to taste, observe, describe, and evaluate wine. Lessons are set up to cover most major wine styles from dry wines to dessert wines.

There is lots of good information in this box, but the primary question that must be asked is whether the format assists or detracts from the curriculum. While these cards might seem clever at first blush, I think the real answer is they get in the way of the material. The cards are so crammed with data there is no room for maps, photos, or charts. In the section listing the various grape varieties photographs could have been of great assistance to the reader instead of just the encyclopedic listing that is used. The cards have little space to spare so the type size is small; they are not numbered, making any sort of index impossible.

So the format is a detriment, but putting this problem aside what about the content itself. Parts of it are fine, but parts of it are puzzling or superficial. The author at one point criticizes all wine competitions because they miss lighter, more delicate wines and favor big, assertive wines. Oh? I have judged more than ten wine competitions a year for many years and have found the judges well aware that light, delicate wines can be lost amongst big, extracted wines and have seen them repeatedly look for and find these lighter gems. I have yet to see this author on the judging circuit, so I question the basis for his claim.

There is a card for each of the major varietals. At the bottom of the back side of the card the author gives suggested wines to try. But here I think he loses sight of the fact that the cards are designed for the beginning wine buff. The recommendations are almost all for very expensive wines. For example, on the Pinot Noir card the recommendation is for La Tache from Domaine Romanée Conti (currently selling for over \$1000 a bottle). No American Pinot Noir is even listed. On the Bordeaux cards he lists first and second growths and four California Cabernets all selling for more than \$100 a bottle. Perfect to scare off the novice wine drinker.

Interesting format, but one that hampers rather than aids learning. Not recommended.

[Our sincere thanks to Bob Foster and the *California Grapevine* for their generous permission to reprint Bob's reviews from the February/March 2011 issue. — Ed.]

#### MEMORABLE INSCRIPTION

■ Charles Walter Berry penned this lovely quotation from Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780–1857), French poet and songwriter, as a presentation inscription in his 1935 classic book on wine, *In Search of Wine: Flow wine, Smile woman, and the Universe is Consoled!* (Our thanks to Nina Wemyss.)

#### VALENCIA. LAND OF WINE:

*A Winemaker's Selection* by Joan C. Martin, edited and translated by new Tendril John Maher (London: Anaconda Editions, 2007, 125pp), is an informative and entertaining read on the Spanish wines of Valencia. Author Martin, a winemaker and a prize-winning wine writer, has been writing about Valencian wines for 25 years. In these selections from his newspaper column, he brings alive the wines, the people who make them, and the landscape where they are made.

#### MANZANILLA

by Christopher Fielden and Javier Hidalgo (London: Grub Street, 2010) is the first book in English on the "delicious wines known as 'Manzanilla–Sanlúcar de Barrameda.'" Tendril Fielden, a pioneer importer of Manzanilla, and Hidalgo, a bodega owner, write affectionately and with enthusiasm about this fascinating wine, its bodegas and production. They include Hints for the Visitor, and how to pair food with Manzanilla (with recipes).

#### BOOK CARE TIP?

■ Did anyone else see the headline? "IS OLD-BOOK MOLD HALLUCINOGENIC?" The antiquarian book community is abuzz following the publication of a paper in the British medical journal, *The Lancet*, stating the possibility that "fungal hallucinogens" in old books could lead to "enhancement of enlightenment." "Experts on the various fungi that feed on the pages and on the covers of books are increasingly convinced that you can get high—or at least a little wacky—by sniffing old books. ... It would take more than a brief sniff [to reach enlightenment]," reported one health authority, but "there are no studies to tell how much or how long before strange behavior takes hold." Haven't you always wondered why the smell of old books is so captivately delicious?

THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly Membership / Subscription to the WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY (ISSN 1552-9460) is \$25 USA and Canada; \$30 overseas. Permission to reprint is requested. Please address all correspondence to WAYWARD TENDRILS, Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA. 95405 USA. E-m: waywardtendrils@att.net. Editor / Publisher: Gail Unzelman.





BOOKS &  
BOTTLES  
by  
*Fred McMillin*

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In this *Books & Bottles* column, Fred provides us with highlights, in the form of questions and answers, from one of his favorite wine books. In each set, one statement is false. If you get three right, Fred awards you an A.]

### A 1960'S CLASSIC BOOK ON WINE

The Book: *Wines and Spirits: A Complete Buying Guide* by William E. Massee. New York: Bramhall House, 1961. 427 pages.

William Massee [1919–2006] was one of America's first wine writers in the post-WWII era. His work in the 1950s, '60s and '70s coincided with the beginning of the country's preoccupation with the "art of good living." In addition to his many articles on food and wine for *Harper's Bazaar*, *Esquire*, and others, he wrote almost a dozen guide books to wine, this being one of his first, and still a classic.

#### Wine Words (Chapter 1)

a) The pipette is a slightly bent glass tube over a foot long and about an inch in diameter, tapering to a point at one end, with a thumbhole at the other.

b) The first smell of the wine after a bottle is opened is called aroma.

c) After contact with the air for a time, the various alcohols in the wine take on slightly varying smells; this is also referred to as aroma.

d) A great wine is consistent year after year and it is long-lived.

WHICH IS FALSE?

c) After contact with the air for a time, the various alcohols in the wine take on slightly varying smells; this is called original bouquet.

#### Champagne and Sparkling Wines (Chapter 7)

a) All Champagne worth the name comes from about 20,000 acres of Marne vineyards eighty miles west of Paris.

b) The development of the cork made Champagne

possible. This is attributed to Louis Pasteur [1822–1895], whose discoveries on fermentation inaugurated a new era in the winemaking industry.

c) Brut is the driest of all Champagnes, less than 1.5 percent alcohol by volume.

d) Champagne labeled Sec contains as much as 4 percent sugar.

WHICH IS FALSE?

b) The development of the cork is attributed to Dom Perignon, the cellar master at the monastery of Hautvilliers at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and made Champagne possible. [Fred remembers a fascinating visit to Dom Perignon's cellar.]

#### American Wines (Chapter 13)

a) Georges de Latour came to Napa Valley from Bordeaux in the 1880s, and by the turn of the century his vineyards were producing wines from Bordeaux cuttings.

b) For the past thirty years (in 1961) the cellar master at Latour's Beaulieu Vineyards has been Andre Tchelistcheff, a Russian who learned his lore in Burgundy.

c) Just beyond the town of St. Helena to the north is the von Strasser Winery.

d) The Martinis are particularly proud of their mountain vineyards, some 600 acres in the Mayacamas range between the Napa and Sonoma valleys.

WHICH IS FALSE?

c) Massee wrote of the Beringer Winery, located just beyond the town of St. Helena, not the von Strasser Winery.

#### American Wines, cont. (Chapter 13)

a) In southern Sonoma Valley the vineyards were founded mostly by Italian families.

b) In 1961 Mumm Napa made the most famous sparkling wine in California.

c) The smaller wineries of Sonoma, whose production was consumed almost entirely in California or whose wines were shipped east for bottling under local brand names, regularly produced good wines.

d) Around the town of Ukiah the wines were generally fuller than those of Napa.

WHICH IS FALSE?

b) In 1961 the most famous sparkling wine of California was made by F. Korbel & Bros., west of Santa Rosa, in the Russian River Valley.

– continued on page 14



**THE FRUIT OF THE VINE:  
VITICULTURE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL**

A Review by  
Will Brown

*The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* by Carey Ellen Walsh. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2000. Harvard Semitic Monograph No.60. 294 pp. Hard cover. \$30.

The author opens this book about ancient Israelite viticulture with the statement, "viticulture and wine are ubiquitous in biblical imagery, yet interpreting their meaning within the texts is incomplete without an historical analysis of the practical aspects of ancient viticulture." She proceeds by stating her hypothesis "that viticulture, no less than drinking, marked the social sphere of the Israelite practitioners, and its details were often listed to describe the social relations in the Hebrew Bible. The present study then is devoted to a reconstruction of the practice of viticulture in ancient Israel through an analysis of biblical and archaeological evidence." The task at hand, she continues, is "to illuminate Israelite cultural attitudes toward wine, shorn of anachronistic biases by analyzing the practice of viticulture by the Israelite farmer." She goes on to say that "a gap currently exists between archaeological and biblical interpretation."

Author Carey E. Walsh received her Th.D. from Harvard University in 1996; her dissertation led to the writing of this book. Walsh is currently Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University (Philadelphia). She is also the author of *Exquisite Desire*, a study of eroticism in the Bible.

The first chapter, "Viticulture as a Vital Facet of Israelite Culture," describes the ecologic niche of ancient Israel where viticulture was practiced as part of a polyculture farming of grain, olives, grapes, and figs. The semi-arid Mediterranean climate is of the same latitude as Greece, and parts of Italy, France, and California. The triad of wine, olive oil, and grain is a constant motif throughout the Bible

and reflects how central these products were to agriculture.

In the second chapter, on the Sociology of the Vintner, the ancient Israelite viticulturist and vintner is profiled as an individual male farmer with a family who helped with the work of the farm. Inheritance of vineyards was patrilinear and was a way to transmit economic livelihood through succeeding generations. A biblical dispute between Naboth, a peasant vineyard owner, and Ahab a king who covets Naboth's vineyard, is narrated on this motif of patrilinearity.

The third chapter is on The Cultivation of Grapevines. The Israelites lived on an agricultural regimen that determined their lives and fundamentally shaped cultural attitudes about labor, family and land. Tasks for starting the vineyard are listed: the site is chosen—"a valued hill," the soil is loosened and cleared of stones, the vines are planted and a tower and wine press are constructed. Grape vines and olives were often planted in the same area and terracing was practiced. Also discussed is vineyard size, vine spacing, vine support, pruning, and vine pests including worms (probably caterpillars) and foxes (but bird pressure is not mentioned). None of these practices would be inimical to the modern viticulturist. Rock walls and a tower were constructed for security reasons.

Chapter four describes the Installations in the Vineyard, including the tower and the wine press. The press, carved out of bedrock, was basically a shallow, flat-surfaced space roughly 10' x 10' where

grapes could be trod to break the skins and release the juice in order for fermentation to take place. Many of these presses were connected by a narrow channel to a collecting vat, also carved from bedrock. There is a fascinating and detailed account of the archaeology of the wine press.

The fifth chapter offers a graphic description of the

Grape Harvest and its component winemaking activities, which I shall address further in a moment.

Finally, the sixth chapter is on Wine Consumption, the social component in its various iterations; but the bottom line was that wine was produced to be consumed. Sustenance, enjoyment, and celebration were significant elements in the biblical scenes of wine consumption. Since water was scarce and subject



ANCIENT WINE PRESS

[Unzelman Collection]



to contamination, wine drinking was a safer alternative. The author estimates the yield of a typical family vineyard to have been 330–694 liters per year.

It is important to reiterate that the author's approach to this subject is a careful analysis of biblical and archaeological evidence. Not unexpectedly, this scholar of the Hebrew Bible frequently uses biblical passages referring to viticulture or wine. She includes the Hebrew scripture with her translations thereof, which are impressive to the non-biblical, non-Hebrew scholar. The archaeological material seems well researched.

With the bias of a winemaker I found the chapter on winemaking to be the most engaging. Grape ripeness and picking time were determined by taste, and harvesting employed the same metal tools used for pruning. The grapes were trod in the press and fermentation started there within 6–12 hours, not unexpected in the warm days of August and September at that latitude. It is unclear how long the fermenting must remained in the press, as the juice was diverted eventually to the collecting vat where fermentation continued in the presence of the native yeasts. Although the must was "stirred" at least daily, if skin contact was short, the resulting wine would have been closer to a rosé than a fully colored red wine. The wine presses as described are not functionally presses but are analogous to our modern crushers. The ancient Israelites had no counterpart to our modern high pressure presses consequently the vintner would have been unable to fully express the juice or achieve maximum color. From the collecting vats the wine was scooped into jars (stoppered with unfired clay) or wineskins for transportation and storage.

What would this wine have been like? It probably would not have been very good due to the inherent difficulties of making stable wine in primitive conditions. Contamination with vinegar-producing organisms and oxidation would have conspired to make it undrinkable after a few months, although the vintners may have acquired a taste for these kinds of wines, not having been exposed to better ones.

The text of this book numbers two-hundred-fifty-eight pages. There is also a detailed table of contents, a table of abbreviations, an extensive bibliography, a scripture index, and a subject index. Footnotes are extensive, sometimes taking up much of the page, but are essential in support of the text.

I found a few things to quarrel about in this book. The author's definition of the practice of viticulture, "from planting vines to drinking wine," is too broad and misleading. Consequently she uses the term to describe virtually any phase of the process while our

modern understanding would limit it to grape growing alone. The term viniculture is more encompassing and more contemporary. There are some errors relating to the scientific explanations of winemaking but they are not substantive and do not require enumeration. There is no reference to the wine trade of ancient Israel, which would have been no less a component of the industry than wine production and consumption, assuming that some farmer-vintners produced wine in excess of their needs.

*The Fruit of the Vine* has probably found, and will find, a limited audience although it should appeal to biblical scholars, archaeologists, scholars of ancient history, and particularly to historians of wine. Students of the history of viticultural and wine-making technology would find it irresistible. It belongs in every academic wine library.

For those who appreciate this genre of research, fine companion volumes can be found in Patrick McGovern's three books: *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine* (1996); *Ancient Wine: The Search for the Origins of Viniculture* (2003); and *Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages* (2009). The latter two have been published more recently than our subject book.

[We send our sincere Tendril thanks to retired winemaker and active historian of Oregon wine, Will Brown, who has been a frequent reviewer for our *WTQ*. — Ed.]



McMILLIN, cont from page 12 —

**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:

- 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon. Beaulieu Vineyards, Central Coast, \$11.
- 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon. Ferrari-Carano Vineyards, Alexander Valley, \$30.
- 2005 California Champagne–Natural. Korbel, Russian River Valley, \$16.
- 2004 Lake William Blend. Jarvis Wines, Napa Valley, \$75.
- 2009 Muscat–Red Electra. Quady Winery, California, \$13.
- 2008 Sauvignon Blanc. Handley Cellars, Dry Creek Valley, \$15.
- Zinfandel Old Vines. Ballentine Vineyards, Napa Valley, \$20.



## FICTION, BURGUNDY & NEW ZEALAND

Book Reviews by  
Christopher Fielden

[With appreciation, we welcome a further batch of wine book reviews from our chief British correspondent on these matters. — Ed.]

THIS IS A MIXED-DOUBLES of an offering: two works of fact, two works of fiction; two books about Burgundy, two which are not; two books with New Zealand connections, two without; two books I would recommend you buy, two I would not.

Let us deal with the fiction first:

*Death of a Wine Merchant* by David Dickinson. London: Constable & Robinson, 2010. 327pp. £7.99.

This is the first time I have come across gentleman sleuth Lord Francis Powerscourt, who apparently has solved a number of previous mysteries at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the fact that his creator acknowledges one of my books [*Is This the Wine You Ordered, Sir?* — ED.] as being the source for some of the inspiration for this work, I must admit that I did not warm to it.

The background is the death of a wine-merchant at the wedding of his son. All the evidence would point to the murderer being his brother, who was found with the murder weapon in his hand, but....

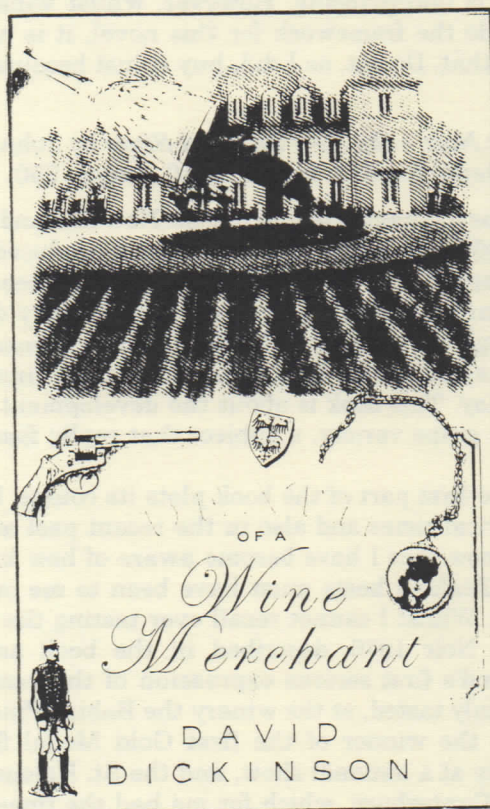
What do I dislike about the book? Firstly, I find it to be sloppily written. Characters are introduced that appear to have little or no role to play in the plot. Perhaps the most interesting of all, the Alchemist, a Frenchman, who makes his living by creating fraudulent wines for the ever-thirsty London trade, disappears without trace in the middle of the book, just when he had mobilised an international team of thugs to get the noble detective out of the way. This leads to Lord Powerscourt being consigned to a lunatic asylum in Beaune as a Burgundian peasant with delusions, despite the fact that our nobleman speaks flawless French, presumably without a Burgundian accent! One wonders why he did not speak English; this might have persuaded the authorities that there were some doubts as to who he might really be.

There are also some facts quoted that are just not true... for example, just two minutes' research showed me that the Palace pier at Brighton is, and was, nearer a third of a mile long than the mile claimed for it. Such little mistakes upset me.

Similarly, one basic premise that we are asked to accept is that this major wine-importing company buys large quantities of Burgundy, through an agent out there, whom nobody has ever met. Thus, there is

a crisis when a shipment of wine from Chanson Père et Fils (coincidentally a company I once worked for) does not arrive. Nobody seems to think of contacting them directly, though elsewhere in the book, telegrams flow back and forth. Characters are given surnames from the current-day wine-trade; thus we have a Bouchard, a Drouhin and a Thevenet. I hope the present members of these families do not know what their (fictional) forebears were up to.

It turns out that a sub-title for this book might be *Or, A Case of Bigamy in Burgundy*.



*The Vintner's Luck* by Elizabeth Knox. London: Vintage, 2000. 241pp. £7.99.

If the last book tells of bigamy in Burgundy, this one has a much more complicated sexual plot, telling of the developing relationship between a peasant winegrower from the Côte Chalonnaise, called Sobran Jodeau and an angel called Xas, who appears one June evening and promises to come back on the same night each year. The story begins in 1808 and continues until 1863, with each succeeding year being given a chapter, headed by a wine expression, *vin bourru*, for example. Sobran takes part in the Napoleonic retreat from Moscow and returns home to develop the family domaine, to such an extent that one plot becomes the first, and only *grand cru* on the Côte.



It turns out that the angel is not just an ordinary one, but rather a lapsed one, who misbehaves enough to have his (for it is a he) wings clipped by Lucifer himself. To add further spice to the tale, three girls are murdered in strange circumstances and Sobran develops an extra-marital relationship with a local member of the aristocracy, the Countess Aurora.

I cannot claim to have enjoyed this book, though I stuck with it to the end, as I could not imagine what the *dénouement* might be. Elizabeth Knox is a writer from New Zealand, who draws her characters well; none is unconvincing. However, whilst wine might provide the framework for this novel, it is no more than that. Do not, as I did, buy it just because of the title.

*Pinot Noir – the New Zealand Story* by John Saker. Auckland: Random House, 2010. 296pp. \$50.

I was fortunate enough to visit New Zealand first in 1969, when almost all the locally produced wines were “ports” and “sherries.” I have been back regularly since and seen the wine industry develop through the ubiquitous Muller-Thurgau wines to the glories that are the Sauvignon Blancs and Pinot Noirs of today. This book is about the development of this latter grape variety, a subject that really fascinates me.

The first part of the book plots its course, both in historical times and also in the recent past and it is only now that I have become aware of how kind my New Zealand hosts must have been to me over the years. Whilst I cannot recall ever tasting the Nobilo Pinot Noir 1976, described in the book as “New Zealand’s first serious expression of the variety,” I certainly tasted, at the winery the Babich Pinot Noir 1981, the winner of the first Gold Medal for this variety at a national show, and the St. Helena 1982, from Canterbury, which for me had the finesse of a Burgundy. I also tasted other classics from Martinborough Vineyard and can claim to be the first ever customer of Felton Road in Central Otago.

This book is not just about the history of the Pinot Noir in New Zealand: it talks in depth about the grape variety itself within its global perspective, the multiplicity of clones that are available, their advantages and disadvantages, the variety of fermentation techniques that are open to the wine-maker. For any wine student wanting to understand this most fickle of grape varieties, whether or not he wants to know anything about New Zealand, this is an invaluable source-book.

Each of the regions where the grape variety is currently grown is profiled as are the wineries that produce the most interesting wines. Sadly, perhaps, not every producer can be given a mention, as their number is growing so rapidly. Also, I would have

welcomed some detailed maps to accompany the text.

It must be stressed that, notwithstanding the fact that this is a serious book, it is also a fun book, enriched by the wonderful photographs of Aaron McLean and elegant typescript. The last words in the book are the un-attributed quotation, splashed across the page in grape-juice coloured print, “No mean-spirited bastard ever made a decent Pinot Noir.” This book is a real joy to read, and to look at.

*The Ultimate Wine Companion* by Kevin Zraly, ed. New York: Sterling, 2010. 374pp. US\$24.95.

Kevin Zraly is considered, with justification, to be one of the great educators in the world of wine, but he does not hesitate to recognise those from whom he has learnt. The opening dedication of this book is “To all writers, for taking readers to new heights—and a special thank-you to all the wine and food writers who have taken me on my path to wine wisdom. You are all my teachers.”

In this anthology he has assembled over forty articles from wine writers in most of the English speaking world, each of whom has something to impart. For me the attraction of this book is the breadth of the contents. Take, for example, “Shall the Old Order Change? The Case for Reclassification,” from Alexis Lichine’s *Guide to the Wines and Vineyards of France*. Its predecessor, *The Wines of France*, which he wrote with William Masee, was one of the first books I bought when I joined the wine trade over fifty years ago. Even then, I was impressed by the fact that one of the main benefactors from his suggested new classification was his own property Château Prieuré-Lichine! From an even earlier date comes Frank Schoonmaker’s plea for the wines of the United States to create their own names rather than rely on California Chablis and Hearty Burgundy.

All the great names are there: Hugh Johnson, Michael Broadbent, Jancis Robinson, Frank Prial, Gerald Asher, Robert Parker and James Halliday, to give but a random selection, but also place is found for new, young writers, such as Peter Richards and other personalities, including Baron Philippe de Rothschild and Francis Ford Coppola.

The articles are grouped under six headings—Thoughts on Wine, On Tasting Wine, Wine and Food, On Making Wine, Old World, and New World—so there is something to cater for every taste. Quite naturally an anthology cannot include everything and, in this case, New Zealand is the loser. However, this is a book I can thoroughly recommend and it will provide me with much bedtime reading!





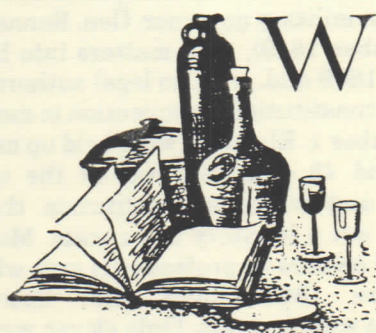
Wine in California—The Early Years:  
From Province to Statehood  
1846–1850

PART I

by Charles L. Sullivan

*[In the first four installments (April 2010–January 2011) of Charles Sullivan's never-before-published history of the early years of wine in California, we explored the Mission years, those humble "cradle years" of California winegrowing. This present chapter, presented in two installments, will document California statehood and the early pioneers of the new state's fledgling wine industry. As in the previous chapters, his extensive and informative footnotes, with a substantial library of sources, are provided at the end. — Ed.]*

THE READER WILL BETTER UNDERSTAND the genesis of a real wine industry in California in the 1850s by first undergoing a short course in the basic history of the new state during the course of the five years from the so-called "Conquest" to statehood, 1846–1850.



When Commodore John Sloat (1781–1897) sailed with his little fleet into Monterey Bay in July 1846 and asked the Mexican commander to take down his national flag so that the American sailors and marines who came ashore could replace it with the Stars & Stripes, there had already been a comic-opera revolution at Sonoma. There on June 14 a group of about thirty rough American frontiersmen rode into the totally garrison-less town and declared for a California Republic. They parleyed with Comandante Mariano Vallejo, who received them cordially, and then packed him off under arrest to Sutter's Fort at Sacramento. They proclaimed their revolution and fashioned a crude flag dominated by the likeness of a grizzly bear. This was the Bear Flag Revolt; the Americans involved were thereafter the Bears, or Osos. Their story is still an oft repeated and lightsome fragment of early California history. As was true of almost all of the confrontations of the Conquest, there were few casualties, the most obvious in this series of events being Vallejo's dignity and the sore heads of many of the Bears the following day, which I shall explain shortly.

Sloat's orders required him to take the California ports in case of war with Mexico, but he hesitated taking Monterey, recalling Commodore Jones's embarrassment in 1843. But news of the Bears' Sonoma escapade moved him to land troops and capture the port town. (War with Mexico had begun along the Rio Grande two months earlier.) He also sent Capt. John Montgomery on the sloop *Portsmouth* to Yerba Buena (soon to be called San Francisco) to hoist the flag there. Montgomery gave flags to Lt.

Joseph Revere, Paul's grandson, to raise at Sonoma and at John Sutter's fort on the American River. This is how the Conquest moved along, naval officers leading a few sailors and leathernecks ashore to raise the flag, without opposition.

On July 23 Sloat, in poor health, was relieved by Commodore Robert Stockton (1795–1866). Meanwhile the Bears and a few other American settlers had been organized into the California Battalion, giving Sloat and Stockton a 250-man land force. Stockton sent these men by ship to San Diego, and then moved to finish the Conquest by capturing Los Angeles, about 30 miles inland from its port at San Pedro. Stockton sailed down the coast and arrived at the little port August 6. Within a week the California Battalion had marched up from San Diego, and on August 13 the American forces quietly took quick possession of Los Angeles. Things were not quiet for long.

Three weeks later Stockton headed north, having dispatched his report to Washington lauding his own brilliant conquest of the Mexican province. On leaving he gave instructions to the officer in charge to follow a lenient policy toward the town's lively Californio population. But marine Lt. Archibald Gillespie was not suited for such a task. He laid a strict curfew on the local population. Fandangos and the usual animated night life were outlawed; the retail sale of wine and brandy was strictly prohibited.<sup>1</sup> When the locals resisted these measures, Gillespie added more oppressive and arbitrary restrictions. By September 22, Los Angeles was in open revolt. Before the end of the month Gillespie had surrendered to the rebels and marched off to San Pedro. The American garrison at Santa Barbara was driven out on October 2nd.

Meanwhile General Stephen Kearney (1794–1848), whose forces had recently captured key points in New Mexico, was ordered to march to California with 300 dragoons. On the way he met Kit Carson, who was carrying Stockton's triumphant news of his conquest of California. On this bright note Kearney sent more than half his troops back to New Mexico. By the time



his force arrived at the Colorado River on November 25 they were exhausted and half-starved. Kearney then knew nothing of the rebellion in southern California. A week later Kearney received some of the details of recent events and headed toward San Diego. On the way he learned that a Californio force of about eighty riders was ahead of him at the village of San Pascual, 40 miles northeast of San Diego. Gillespie, who had ridden out to join Kearney, and Kit Carson, who had stayed with the general, both promised the commander that the Californios were cowards and would not fight. The battle lasted about ten minutes; in historian H. H. Bancroft's words, "the most famous and deadly in California history." The Americans learned a bloody lesson in the face of the best horsemen in the world, armed with lances. A third of Kearney's force was killed or wounded. The general was lanced twice, Gillespie three times. The Californios had about a dozen wounded, none killed. But the Americans fought bravely and held the field.

Kearney was now military governor of California and Stockton returned to his ships. The rebel leaders knew they could not defeat the American forces which soon faced them. A month after San Pascual they signed a treaty with the commander of the California Battalion, which Kearney accepted. His report of March 15, 1847, stated, "The Californians are now quiet, and I shall endeavor to keep them so by mild and gentle treatment. Had they received such treatment...there would have been little or no resistance on their part. They have been most cruelly and shamefully abused by our own people.... Had they not resisted, they would have been unworthy the name of men." <sup>2</sup> Gillespie soon left the service for civilian life.

The year 1847 was the calm before the next storm in California. By September fighting had ended in Mexico with an American victory, but the treaty that ceded California to the United States was not signed until February 2, 1848. The year also saw the continuation of the overland migration from the eastern states by land and sea and the arrival by sea of the New York Volunteer Regiment, almost 700 strong, which arrived in March. They had been enlisted with the understanding that they would stay as California settlers after release from the service. Thirty-six years later Bancroft counted 130 still alive and living in the Golden State. <sup>3</sup>

What triggered the storm was the discovery of gold at Coloma on January 21, 1848, just nine days after California legally became a possession of the United States. It was May before Californians were generally convinced that there were great fortunes to be made in the Sierra foothills. The flood from the rest of the world did not begin until the early months of 1849. By the end of that year about 60,000 Argonauts had

poured into California, overland, and around the Horn, and across Panama and up the coast. Close to a third of them came from Western Europe.

The last three army officers who served as military governors of the former Mexican province did a creditable job maintaining some semblance of order. But what was needed and demanded by those who had a solid stake in the land before February 1848 was, at least, the establishment of a territorial government based on traditional republican principles; after that, statehood. To lay out this course was the customary role of Congress. But for the moment north-south sectional strife precluded any such action by that body. By December 1848 Americans in San Francisco and San Jose had started a movement to provide California with institutions of representative government. The last military governor, Gen. Bennett Riley (April-December 1849), took matters into his own hands in June 1849 and, with no legal authority to do so, called for a constitutional convention to meet in Monterey September 1. Elections were held up and down the state, and 48 delegates met at the old provincial capital and wrote a constitution that declared California not a territory but a state. Most delegates were land owners or professional men who had arrived before 1848. Eight were native Californios, fourteen were lawyers. Only eleven were from southern California.

It was not until September 7, 1850 that Congress, as part of the Compromise of 1850, finally recognized California statehood. The news reached San Francisco October 18, ten months after the new state's legislature already had met in San Jose and begun passing laws.

Standard histories of these five dramatic years have no time to follow the course of California agriculture, much less the story of wine and brandy. But underneath the colorful tales of conquest, rebellion, gold, and massive population changes, there were important developments that set the stage for the birth of California's modern wine industry. There were also some interesting stories relating to the grape and its products. And some observations of several participants in this colorful history provide us with bits and pieces that afford us a better focus on vinous matters.

#### The Bears and Vallejo's Brandy

Probably the best, and certainly the most lasting story coming from this period, that touches on California wine, was enacted almost a month before Sloat captured Monterey. The Bears had gathered in the Napa Valley on June 13, 1846, and headed for Sonoma the next morning, "about as rough a looking set of men as one could imagine," in the words of one of their leaders. Comandante Vallejo arose at daybreak to find his home surrounded by



thirty or so armed men. He put on his military uniform and went out to speak with their leaders, sending a servant off to fetch winegrower Jacob Leese (1809–1892), the town *alcalde*, to act as interpreter.



After it was made clear that a rebellion against Mexican rule was under way, but that no violence was meant, Vallejo invited three of the leaders in to parley and, always the proper host, ordered wine and brandy to be served. Outside, the rest of the party waited—and waited. Next they sent in John Grigsby, a Napa man, to move things along. He soon joined the merrymakers and Vallejo had a barrel of brandy brought up for those outside. Finally, William B. Ide was sent in, a good choice, since he had a combination of talents almost unique among the Bears. He was a teetotaler and was literate. Inside he found the Bear leaders, including Grigsby, in various stages of intoxication. The exception was Robert Semple, who, in conversation with Vallejo, Leese helping to translate, was writing out the articles of capitulation. In the courtyard the brandy had no calming effect on those outside; they had become a drunken mob. There was loud talk of looting the town. Grigsby came out and tried to speak but was so inarticulate that Semple had to lead him back into the house. The sober Ide saved the day with a rousing speech that concluded by asking the men whether they wanted history to remember them as conquerors or drunken horse thieves. The men were finally calmed but they insisted that Vallejo and several others be kept in custody and taken to Sacramento. Vallejo, who had quietly long supported American annexation of California, was astonished to find himself held in captivity for almost a month. He did not forget, and, as a delegate to the state Constitutional Convention in 1849, he objected to the design of the Great Seal of the state. If it were to have on it a likeness of a grizzly bear, he wanted to see it being lassoed by a Californio *vacquero*. His idea was voted down.<sup>4</sup>

#### A Bibulous Rebellion

The military excitement in 1846 did not come from the minor skirmishes that added up to Stockton's claim of "Conquest," but from the rebellion in southern California against Lt. Gillespie's

oppressive rule. Several American military participants in the events of that uprising penned and published their recollections, which occasionally mentioned California wine and brandy.

All observers of conditions in Los Angeles, after Stockton left Gillespie in charge on September 20, agree that the latter's restrictions on alcohol consumption and normal town night-life powerfully fueled the rebellion. The retail sale of wine and brandy was prohibited and all shops of any kind had to close before sundown. No groups of more than two persons were allowed to congregate on the streets. And when the young locals refused to obey these restrictions they were locked up. American Consul Thomas Larkin, in town at that time, wrote that Gillespie "fined and imprisoned who and when he pleased without a hearing." He accused the officer of behaving like a petty tyrant.<sup>5</sup> What additionally rankled the *pobledores* was the fact that Gillespie's troops had acquired and stashed away a large supply of brandy. Its liberal use triggered several confrontations in which the young and disarmed Angelinos found themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Later Gillespie admitted that many of his men were "perfect drunkards whilst in that Ciudad of wine & Aguadiente [sic]."<sup>6</sup>

On September 23 the rebels assaulted the American forces, who dug in and held out for three days. Meanwhile, Benjamin Wilson (1811–1878)—later the famed San Gabriel winegrower—acting as captain of U.S. volunteers, was captured and taken to Los Angeles where he advised Gillespie to surrender in the interest of the American settlers in the surrounding countryside, now at the mercy of the rebels, powerfully emboldened by brandy and looking for revenge.<sup>7</sup> Gillespie surrendered on September 29 and marched his command to San Pedro the next morning. For the next two months virtually all of California from Santa Barbara to the south was in rebel hands.

General Kearney arrived from New Mexico with his exhausted forces on December 1 and headed toward San Diego, still in American hands. The next day they reached John Warner's Rancho Agua Caliente, about twenty miles northeast of San Pascual. There the unit's medical officer, Dr John S. Griffin, noted that Warner had more than ten acres under cultivation, one and a half in vineyard.<sup>8</sup> After the bloody engagement at San Pascual, the battered force made it to Francisco Alvarado's *rancho*. The owner absent, the Americans went to work on the livestock and helped themselves to the plentiful supply of wine. Dr. Griffin later wrote that the "havoc on the comestibles was immense." They also took along a barrel of wine, "for our sick and wounded."<sup>9</sup>

By the end of December Kearney and Stockton had



mustered their forces at San Diego and prepared to march north to retake Los Angeles and snuff out the rebellion. The force of about 600 men marched out of town on December 29; the night before Stockton had thrown "a fine ball (with) quite a turnout of good looking women." The tone of Dr. Griffin's remarks suggests that the troops marched off without hangovers. The little army took more than a week to reach the Santa Ana River, which, Dr. Griffin wrote, was a dashing stream, watering several nearby vineyards. The rebel army of about 500 mounted men faced the Americans on January 9, but after a few skirmishes and a taste of the marines' artillery, the Californians could see they were no match for their enemy.

The American officers decided to move into town the next morning, rather than in the hours just previous to darkness. This decision was prompted by the knowledge that most of the town's young male population would most likely be sleeping off the effects of the evening's overindulgence. Early in the morning of the 10th, before the troops entered town, a flag of truce appeared, carried by William Workman (1800–1876), an English born *ranchero* and noted vineyardist. He and his two Californio colleagues proposed to surrender "their dear City of the Angels," if property and persons were respected.

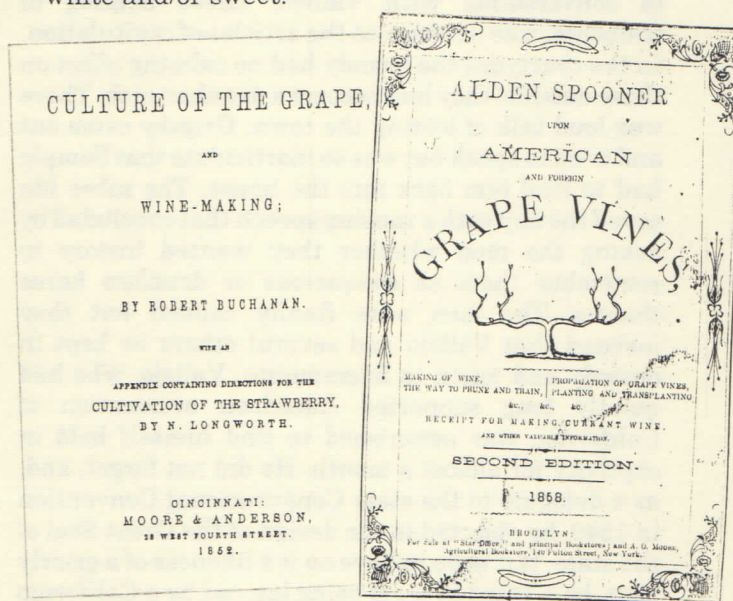
The offer was accepted by Stockton, but before the day was over American soldiers were all over town, and "woe betide the house that had no occupants," the words of a naval officer on the scene. Stockton fought a losing battle to keep the town's large stores of wine and brandy from falling into the hands of his own troops.

### Los Angeles Wines and Vines

Apparently Dr. Griffin got his first taste of Los Angeles wine the next day, "of fine flavour, as good I think as I ever tasted." He thought Los Angeles "decidedly one of the most desirable places" he had ever seen. Three days later Lt. William Emory, Kearney's talented topographical engineer, apparently found the source of this fine white wine. It was "wine of the country, manufactured by Don Luis Vignes, a Frenchman. It was truly delicious, resembling more the best description of Hock [German white] than any other wines."<sup>10</sup> Two other officers stationed near Los Angeles in the calmer coming months had good things to say about local wines and vines. Lt. Joseph Revere, he who took down the Bear flag and raised the Stars and Stripes at Sonoma, was at San Pedro on the sloop *Cyene*. While at Sonoma he had counted twenty-six barrels of wine and eight of brandy in Jacob Leese's little cellar. In Los Angeles he visited William Wolfskill, most of whose 1846 grapes had gone into brandy production. "The vineyards of the Pueblo de Los Angeles are as luxuriant and

productive as any in the world." He knew something of grapes and wine. He had met the Muscat of Hamburg at home in Massachusetts where it was grown under glass as a table grape. He thought the local Mission variety resembled that grape. Like Lt. Emory he thought Vignes' white wine tasted like a Riesling.<sup>11</sup> The local red he likened to "La Malque of Marseilles," whatever that might have been. He admired the best of Los Angeles brandy, colorless, pure, with "an agreeable taste." He particularly loved Angelica, "a delicious cordial...if the old Olympian gods could get a drop of it, they would soon vote nectar a bore...." In his memoirs, published in 1849, he was prescient about California's viticultural future. He noted the volcanic soils in the North Bay area, and the perfect climate. "The grape will, hereafter, be a vast source of wealth to the people of California."<sup>12</sup>

Revere's enthusiasm for the Los Angeles vineyards was seconded by Lt. Edward Buffum, who arrived in California three months after the end of the rebellion. "The vineyards are lovely spots; trimmed every year, and thus kept about six feet in height, and in the fall of the year are hanging thick with clusters of grapes." He thought southern California "should be covered with vineyards." He also visited the Wolfskill place where he saw lots of wine and brandy in storage. The sweet wine, probably Angelica, tasted like an old Madeira, but he thought Wolfskill's red table wine "execrable stuff." I find virtually all praise for southern California wine during these years aimed at white and/or sweet.<sup>13</sup>



During this beginning period of California wine, there were a number of American books already published on grape growing and winemaking, all in the Eastern states

There had never been a newspaper in California



before 1846. The first was the Californian, at Monterey on August 15, 1846. Next was the California Star at San Francisco on January 9, 1847, founded by Samuel Brannan, of whom I'll have more to say later. Those two newspapers were primarily interested in the war and the course of government. Far more important for this study was San Francisco's Alta California, founded by Edward C. Gilbert and Edward C. Kemble and first issued January 4, 1849. Gilbert had come to California with the New York Volunteers in 1847; Kemble had arrived by sea in 1846. Both men had been printers in New York. It is not possible to trace the editorial policy of the Alta California in its early years to any one of these individuals. But it is clear from its earliest editions that the editors believed that the economic health and future of the new state was as important as politics. There was rarely an issue of the paper that did not deal with some aspect of agricultural development; and viticulture and winegrowing were a primary focus in the paper's earliest years. The newspaper was hardly a year old when it began running articles touching on southern California winegrowing.<sup>14</sup> In 1851 it began its annual coverage of the vintage in the Los Angeles area.<sup>15</sup> That city, with an 1850 population of not much more than 1500, and mostly Spanish speaking, was not capable of supporting a daily newspaper until 1869. But the Los Angeles Star did go to press in 1851 as a weekly, primarily interested in politics. Its publishers were pro-slavery Democrats whose offices were padlocked by federal officials during the Civil War. Earlier, when they did take notice of Los Angeles vintages, as in 1851, the Alta usually copied.<sup>16</sup>

### Gold Fields

The Gold Rush in 1848 started slowly but by the summer the word was out in northern California; by September the region had lost 80% of its white male population to the mining area in the western Sierra foothills. Histories of the era emphasize the fact that most of the Argonauts who came to California as 49ers rarely made a real fortune placer mining. Such was not nearly the case with the 48ers. Many were already established on the land in one way or another, and coming home before winter set in with a thousand dollars or so in dust and nuggets gave them a capital base to acquire land or to develop what they already held.<sup>17</sup> Many of these men, particularly in northern California, invested their profits in agricultural lands and a few of them helped to pioneer the wine industry. An example was Jacob Leese, who was early into the foothills with several of his Sonoma neighbors. They opened the Yuba River valley and in three months earned \$75,000, almost \$1,500,000 in today's dollars. Charles M. Weber (1814-1881) brought a crew of Santa Clara Valley Indians to the tributaries of the San Joaquin River.

Their success set off a new rush for what came to be called the "southern diggings," and helped Weber by 1850 to establish himself as a San Jose winegrower.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the year there were about 1300 southern Californios in the diggings. Antonio Francisco Coronel was a *ranchero* with an early interest in viticulture and in August was one of the earliest from the southland at work in the mines. He too brought a crew of Californio and Indian workers from his *ranch*o, and in three days they had extracted 137 aureate ounces from their southern diggings. When he came home he bought sixty acres of Los Angeles land and eventually had forty acres of vines there. The 1860 census showed his grape production included fifty-two tons which he sold to local wineries plus what he used to make his own wine. In 1853 he was elected mayor of Los Angeles and in 1867 became the California State Treasurer. Obviously California voters did not hold it against him that he had led a rebel cavalry unit against the Americans in 1846.<sup>19</sup> Some of these pioneers in wine left their names on the land of the foothill gold country. For example today we can still visit (John) Bidwell Bar, (Pierre) Sainsevain (Don Pedro) Bar, and (Charles) Weber Creek.<sup>20</sup>

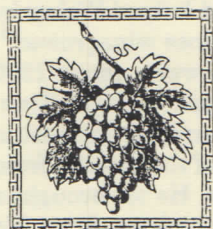
It was clear to all concerned that the rising flood of gold-seeking adventurers had to be fed. By the end of 1848 most of what they were eating came from imports. Since the demise of the missions, agriculture in the sense of soil cultivation had lost most of its importance. Of this situation Walton Bean wrote, "Cultivation can barely be said to have existed at all in California during the last years under Mexico...."<sup>21</sup> In fact, the only items to eat and drink produced in California in sufficient amounts were beef, grapes, wine and brandy. Imports filled the gap, at great cost, but it was obvious that good money could be made from crops grown from seed in a single year. The stories of the quick fortunes made from crops such as potatoes, onions, or melons are legion.<sup>22</sup> Luis Maria Peralta, whose great *ranch*o covered land from today's Oakland to Mission San Jose, gave good advice to his four sons. "God has given the gold to the Americans.... Therefore go not after it.... Plant your lands and reap; there be your best gold fields."<sup>23</sup> Few Californios were of this mind.



Mission vines planted during the Gold Rush



## Grapes and Wine



During these years it was easier to make money selling fresh grapes than converting them to wine. Such northern California vineyardists as Vallejo, Leese, John Wolfskill and E. L. Beard sold lots of fresh grapes that went mostly to miners in the Sierra foothills. But there was also a healthy demand in the San Francisco market, where retail prices ran as high as seventy-five cents per pound. There were even vines being planted here and there in the foothills.<sup>24</sup> But the biggest numbers came from the southland, which sent huge shipments north from Los Angeles by ship from San Pedro. The fat bunches were packed in barrels, protected by sawdust.<sup>25</sup> (I shall discuss this trade more closely in the next chapter.) And there was plenty of wine made in the south. The 1850 census credited Los Angeles County with 57,355 gallons.

The wine that Los Angeles producers were able to send north before 1855 was a drop in the bucket compared to demand in the northern part of the state. The evidence is overwhelming, but almost entirely anecdotal before 1853, that the Bay Area and the foothills were awash in imported dry table wine, "Champagne," brandy, whisky, and almost every kind of liquor and cordial imaginable. The Argonauts were mostly young men with a thirst and many had plenty of money to quench it. By 1852 San Francisco had become something of a wooden and tented metropolis with almost 35,000 residents. By comparison Los Angeles had fewer than 2000. In San Francisco, hotels and restaurants for the large transient population were numerous, as were saloons and gambling houses. All served alcoholic beverages. Beer, not easily or profitably shipped by sea, was scarce before 1850 when breweries began appearing in San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, San Jose and Marysville.

Most of the wine brought through the Port of San Francisco came from southern France, a small amount from Spain. Overwhelmingly it was red, and before 1855 about 45% came in cases of bottles. After that year, the case wine dropped to about 30% of the total imports. Almost as much brandy as wine came into the state before 1855, primarily from France and almost all of it labeled "Cognac." The importation of sparkling wine from France, all labeled "Champagne," was large, averaging about 25,000 baskets per year before 1855. It is not until 1853 that we have fairly good statistics on such imports.<sup>26</sup>

### Alcoholic Beverage Imports – 1853; 1856

Wine in barrels: 11,500; 17,300

Wine in cases: 157,000; 130,300

Brandy in barrels: 21,700; 31,430

Brandy in cases: 8,000; 56,000

Champagne in baskets: 34,000; 18,620

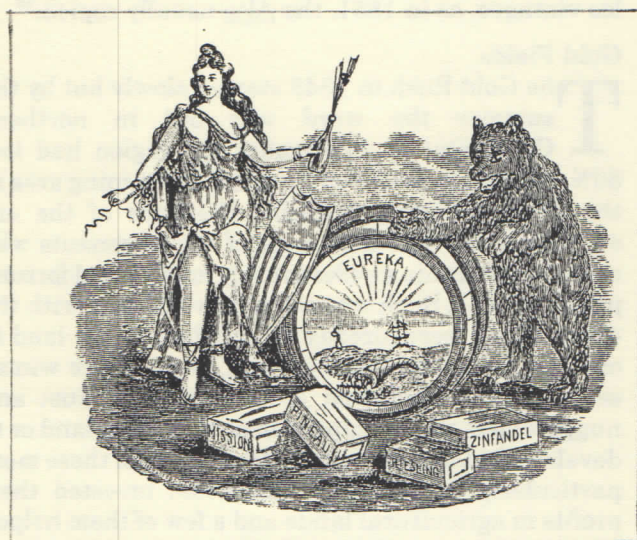
Liquor in barrels (absinthe, gin, rum): 13,500; 11,800

Liquor in cases (vermouth, &c) 16,500; 18,000

Of course, a large part of this alcoholic amplitude was consumed in San Francisco and the larger young towns in the Central Valley. But large quantities found their way to the diggings where a miner could convert his nuggets and dust into whisky and Champagne. New York journalist Bayard Taylor gives an interesting picture of overindulgence on the banks of the Mokelumne in the fall of 1849. There he saw men "drinking their champagne at \$10 a bottle" and "warming in the smoky camp-kettle their canisters of turtle soup." He saw an Englishman who found a lump "as big as yer fist" buy "champagne, ale, and brandy by the dozen bottles, and insisted on supplying everybody in the settlement."<sup>27</sup>

We shall see that such import statistics encouraged some in California to try to get a piece of this action. By 1853 there was, in Bancroft's words, a "revolution in trade" in which California products began to supplant some imports. So far as wine and brandy were concerned this revolution took a bit more time than with other products. Bancroft also noted that the "lessened consumption of champagne serves to indicate the wide retrenchment attending the change from flush mining days to an era of more sedate occupations." He might also have noted a rise in the female population as a cause for this change.<sup>28</sup>

*(continued next issue: "More Newcomers")*



California Grapes, Gold & Grizzlies

[from RIXFORD, *The Wine Press & the Cellar*, 1883]



## NOTES

1. Neal Harlow, *California Conquered*, Berkeley, 1982, 161.
2. Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California*, V, 439-440.
3. Bancroft, *History*, V, 517.
4. Bancroft, *History*, V, 111-121; Theodore Hittell, *History of California*, II, 429-432; Harlow, 98-101.
5. Larkin to Mrs. Larkin, December 14, 1846, cited by Harlow, 161.
6. Gillespie to Secretary of War George Bancroft, February 16, 1847, cited by Harlow, 162.
7. Benjamin D. Wilson, "Narrative. . .," dictated 1877, cited by Harlow, 164-165.
8. *A Doctor Comes to California...*, San Francisco, 1943, cited by Harlow, 179-181.
9. Harlow, op. cit., 190.
10. Harlow, 203-217, 236. Most of this story comes from the journals of Dr. Griffin, Lt. Emory and Lt. Joseph Downey, which Harlow cites in precise detail. For more on Emory and Griffin see Thomas Pinney, *A History of Wine in America*, Berkeley, 1989, 249-250.
11. We know that some White Muscat grapes were grown in Los Angeles. I suspect that Vignes added a bit of their juice to the poorly flavored Mission wine to perk it up. This is precisely what some northern California producers later did to give their whites a touch of "Johannisberg" flavor. Napa's famed Jacob Schram called such wine "verbessert."
12. Joseph W. Revere, *Naval Duty in California* [1846], Oakland, 1947, 223-227. While on duty at Sonoma, Revere acquired the Rancho San Geronimo, which he sold in 1850. He also had land in the Napa Valley for a short period. Bancroft, *History*, V, 692.
13. John and Laree Caughey, *Los Angeles: Biography of a City*, Berkeley 1976, 119; Bancroft, *History*, II, 735-736.
14. *Alta California*, Aug 7, 1850; Feb 20, 1851.
15. *Alta California*, Nov 13, 1851.
16. Edward C. Kemble, *A History of California Newspapers, 1846-1858*, Los Gatos, California, 1962, 88-97, 233-235. This valuable history was first published as a supplement to the *Sacramento Union*, Dec 25, 1858.
17. To convert dollars of the 1850s to current value, one needs to multiply by a number between fifteen and thirty. See J. S. Holliday, *Rush to Riches*, Berkeley, 1999, 137.
18. John Walton Caughey, *Gold Is the Cornerstone*, Berkeley, 1948, 27-30. For Weber's early achievements in winegrowing see: *Alta California*, Sept 11, 1858; Oct 6, 1858; *California Farmer*, Oct 9, 1858; Oct 16, 1860. He was also the founder of the town of Stockton and was the first to plant grapes in San Joaquin County.
19. Holliday, 72-73; Ernest Peninou and Sidney Greenleaf, *A Directory of California Wine Growers and Wine Makers in 1860*, Berkeley, 1983, 16; Bancroft, *History*, II, 768.
20. Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names*, Berkeley, 1998, 419; Bancroft, *History*, II, 721; V, 708-709.
21. Walton Bean, *California, an Interpretive History*, New York, 1969, 203-204.
22. Holliday, 66-67, 194-196.
23. Bancroft, *History*, VI, 65-66; W. W. Robinson, *Land in California*, Berkeley, 1979, 133.
24. Bancroft, *History*, VII, 46; Eric Costa, *Old Vines*, Jackson, California, 1994, 1-3.
25. There are no statistics from the early years available, but in 1852 approximately 1500 tons were shipped north. It was estimated that this was about 65% of the Los Angeles crop. *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1858*, Washington DC, Ex. Doc. No. 27, 296-306.
26. Bancroft, *History*, VII, 46-47, 113-114; Federico Biesta, "State of California in 1856." *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, XLII, 311-343. A report from the acting consul of the Kingdom of Sardinia to his Minister of Affairs.
27. Bayard Taylor, *El Dorado*, Berkeley, 2000, 205, originally published in 1850.
28. Bancroft, *History*, VII, 113.



White Muscat





ATLAS DE LA FRANCE VINICOLE L. LARMAT  
SET OF 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITIONS  
Courtesy: The Napa Valley Reserve