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A Toast to Eclipse: Arpad Haraszthy and the Sparkling Wine of Old San Francisco

by Brian McGinty, 2012

Reviewed by *Bruce L. Johnson*

[*Bruce L. Johnson has had a life-long love of wine, printing, and history. He was formerly Curator of the Edward C. Kemble Collections on Western Printing & Publishing, then Director of Libraries for the California Historical Society in San Francisco, and, as an active member of the Book Club of California, he served on the Board of Directors and the Editorial Committee. He is the author of* James Weld Towne: Pioneer San Francisco Printer, Publisher, and Paper Purveyor *(2008). Tendril readers will remember his earlier contribution to our Quarterly, "Printing California's Wine Labels."* — Ed.]

IN *A TOAST TO ECLIPSE: Arpad Haraszthy and the Sparkling Wine of Old San Francisco*, Brian McGinty, the great-great-grandson of Agoston Haraszthy, has written a natural segue from his earlier book, *Strong Wine: The Life and Legend of Agoston Haraszthy* (Stanford University Press, 1998). Just as Arpad strove to secure his father's reputation, so, too, McGinty strives here to secure the Haraszthy family's place in California's wine history. Not that the family needs much help, but now the story is well-documented and encompassed in two well-written and engaging volumes.

MCGINTY IS AN ATTORNEY, historian, and writer, who began his in-depth look at the Haraszthy family with *Haraszthy at the Mint* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1975). He spent the subsequent decades conducting extensive research in Hungary, Wisconsin, California, and finally Nicaragua, where the elder Haraszthy met a strange death in 1869; McGinty's research efforts have paid off. Based upon a wide array of material—government documents, original manuscripts, newspapers, and secondary sources, *A Toast to Eclipse* is an affectionate yet fair-minded appraisal, one that's willing to portray its subjects with warts and all.

After summarizing Agoston Haraszthy's (1812–1869) trailblazing efforts to establish a world-class wine industry in California, a narrative fully explored in *Strong Wine*, McGinty closely follows Arpad's career, his character, his faults, and his accomplishments. Even though in many minds Agoston's reputation today often rests upon his association with Zinfandel—at least among people who have not read *Strong Wine*—his primary goal was to produce an excellent sparkling wine in California, one of the reasons he sent his third son (one of six children) to be schooled at the city of Épernay in the Champagne region of France. Arpad spent two years at the House of de Venoge, studying every nuance of Champagne production, filling three volumes with his notes and illustrations.

Although "The Manner in Which Champagne is Made," published in the Daily Alta California (20 May 1861) was merely Arpad's translation from one of his French textbooks, it marked a beginning. As with his father before him, and perhaps as important as Arpad's efforts at viticulture on the ground were his writings in the press, which promoted grape growing and winemaking in California and the United States;

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today these writings serve as neat summaries of the state of viticulture during the second half of the 19th century. To emphasize that point, no fewer than forty citations appear in the book's Bibliography under Arpad's name, including a 12-part series for the California Wine, Wool and Stock Journal. In 1864 he also wrote an extensive piece on "Wine-Making in California," for Harper's New Monthly Magazine, and in 1871–72 four long articles with the same title appeared in San Francisco's Overland Monthly.

Arpad began his efforts to make sparkling wine at his father's Buena Vista Winery in the fall and winter of 1862–1863. Although Benjamin Wilson was probably first in this arena in the 1850s, followed by Pierre and Jean Louis Sainsevain, Arpad's experiments with sparkling wine eventually paid off in greater measure than anyone else's earlier efforts.

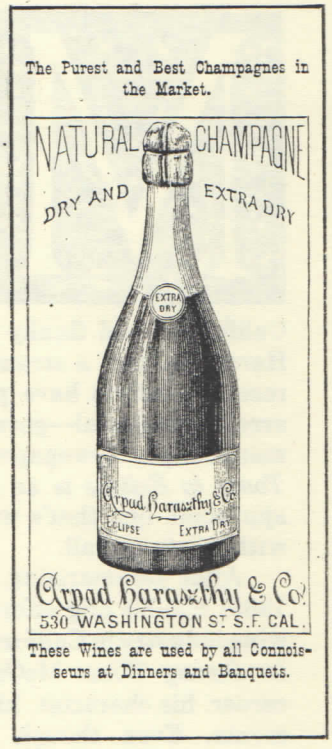
Many hands have undoubtedly contributed to the discovery of feature articles about grapes and wine in San Francisco's and other local newspapers, but the first-hand accounts of visits made by newspaper reporters to the vineyards and winemaking facilities of Agoston and Arpad Haraszthy published in several of the fourteen newspapers cited in McGinty's Bibliography bring a genuine sense of immediacy to the narrative in *A Toast to Eclipse*. The first of these correspondents represented the Alta California; he summarized his two visits in page-one stories in July and September 1863, and the reports provide a detailed glimpse into the inner workings of the Haraszthy operation. Later, a reporter from the California Wine, Wool and Stock Journal paid a similar visit, and his story describes a tasting of "champagne from the rack . . . which was of excellent quality," which resulted in some 5,000 bottles that year of Sparkling Buena Vista Champagne.

If the wine industry in California was in its infancy in the 1850s, its impressive increase during the ensuing decade was due at least in part to Arpad's efforts, not only through publicity, but also by attracting viticulturists to the state. By 1864, the list included more than fifty names, tending almost 3,000 acres, which represented an increase of almost sixty times that of the mid-1850s. Arpad formed partnerships with several of these entrepreneurs, including Pietro Giovanari and, more importantly, Isidor Landsberger. Although Arpad's efforts to make sparkling wine in the style of French Champagne (according to the méthod champenoise) with Landsberger & Co. were most likely not an immediate success, by September 1867 their wine had won top premiums at county fairs and the California State Fair and were being shipped worldwide. The company became the first successful sparkling wine house in the state. Interestingly, lightly pressed Zinfandel grapes became an important element in Arpad's typical sparkling wine cuvée.

After Agoston's death in 1869, Arpad seemed determined to secure his father's place as the pioneer winemaker in California—"the Father of Viniculture in California"—and very few have disagreed with the assertion that Agoston Haraszthy was, at least, a pioneer winemaker in the state. To be sure, detractors have made their cases through the years, which, of course, is their prerogative, but if Arpad was concerned about his father's place in wine history, he need not have been. It is secure, as is now his own, thanks largely to *A Toast to Eclipse*. Author McGinty does not mount a spirited defense of Arpad and Agoston against their detractors, but merely presents his documentation and states that Arpad would have stood up for the truth, were he alive. That low-key approach works quite well here.

Arpad's Eclipse Extra Dry, perhaps named after a celebrated 18th century racehorse, was first marketed in 1875. Bottles were entered into wine competitions almost immediately, and the awards followed. As McGinty notes, "At the American Institute Wine Fair held in New York in 1877, Eclipse won a 'medal of superiority,' the highest medal the Institute had ever given for a beverage to that date." Benjamin Cummings Truman, a booster of the Golden State if there ever was one, gave extraordinary praise for Eclipse, writing that it "far exceeds the French [product], which is artificial to a very high degree." Finally, the artist Samuel Marsden Brookes used bottles of Eclipse in several of his paintings, one of which graces the cover of *A Toast to Eclipse*.

In 1880, Arpad joined Henry Epstein to form Arpad Haraszthy & Co. The company's San Francisco facilities expanded to such an extent that, on average, 600,000 bottles of sparkling wine at various stages of aging could be stored in the company's underground wine vaults. Besides providing his financial backing for the new company, Epstein had recently purchased the Orleans Vineyard northwest of Sacramento for $28,000. In 1885, the partners erected a winery. Arpad built a bungalow overlooking the winery and he stayed in "Arpad's Cottage" during his frequent visits to act as sparkling



winemaster. Arpad changed his cuvées annually to achieve the characteristics he wanted for the three sparkling wines produced by the company—Grand Prix, Sillery Mousseau, and, the mainstay, Extra Dry Eclipse.

Like his father before him, Arpad sought leadership roles in California's wine industry, first by accepting the presidency of the California State Vinicultural Society from 1878 to 1886; from this position he continued to advocate for state-funded programs that would promote grapes and the production of California wine. The work of Arpad, Charles Wetmore, and others bore fruit in 1880 with the formation of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners; Arpad was the first commissioner for the San Francisco district. The Board took important steps to help secure the future of grape and wine production in California, such as the formation of a Committee on Phylloxera, Vine Pests and Diseases of the Vine, and the founding of a library to house books about wine and vineyard culture.

In 1883, Arpad tried to expand his activities into the El Cajon Valley of Southern California, hoping it might become a grape-growing Eden, and the next year he was elected president of the El Cajon Land Company. The Valley never became the vision that the Land Company's investors had dreamt, however, and development in that arena had to wait until the 20th century.

In two consecutive chapters, "The Zinfandel Connection" and "His Cup of Content," McGinty tackles perhaps the most controversial subject involving Agoston and Arpad Haraszthy, the son's claim that his father brought the first Zinfandel vines to California in the early 1850s, possibly as early as 1852. Arpad's statement was widely accepted until more than a century passed and wine historian Charles L. Sullivan began to challenge it. Sullivan claims that others cultivated Zinfandel on the East Coast in the early 19th century and indeed brought that grape variety to California in the 1850s. He also argues that there is no credible evidence that Haraszthy brought the Zinfandel to California and that Arpad's claim about his father's primacy was false, "almost pure hokum," and made for pecuniary gain. Other wine historians, most notably Thomas Pinney, author of *A History of Wine in America: From the Beginnings to Prohibition*, endorsed Sullivan's arguments.

In *Strong Wine*, however, and again in summary fashion in *A Toast to Eclipse*, McGinty presents convincing evidence with meticulous documentation that tends clearly to corroborate Arpad's recollections about his father, that the elder Haraszthy may very well have obtained Zinfandel vines as early as 1852 with the help of Lázár Mészáros, a horticulturalist with a nursery in New Jersey. The question, however, will never be answered conclusively.

In any case, and setting aside the controversies about who fathered California's wine industry or brought Zinfandel to the state, Arpad's contemporaries thought highly of the man. At a party in 1888 to honor him, and as cheers filled San Francisco's Pioneer Hall, Charles Wetmore introduced the man "whose genius, understanding, industry and patriotic zeal have won for him a place in the hearts of the people."

In the later years of his life, Arpad Haraszthy continued doing what he knew best—writing about California wine and making Eclipse. One of his more popular essays, "How to Drink Wine," was published several times in his own lifetime and reprinted even more extensively following his death. Arpad remained sensitive to critics who said French Champagne was better than California's sparkling wine, including his Eclipse. That the criticism was often leveled by people who may not have been totally unbiased, including Baron von Mumm, the German head of the French Champagne house of G.H. Mumm, brought renewed support of the American product from many quarters. Even so, California wine in general was still held in low esteem by too many Americans, who stubbornly clung to the notion that good wine could be produced in Europe, but not in California.

Economic depressions adversely affected the fortunes of many businesses, including the wine business, which also suffered from increased vineyard production and falling consumption into the 1890s. Arpad was not immune. The formation of a joint stock company, the California Wine Associ-

ation, which would try to stabilize the state's wine market, resulted mainly in controversy and recrimination, and did little to solve the problems besetting the industry at the end of the century.

Unexpectedly, Arpad Haraszthy died of heart failure in November 1900; he was 60 years old. In the Afterword, McGinty offers a summary of contemporary assessments of the man as reported in the public press. Some of what they wrote was family legend, but not all, for Arpad had indeed worked "valiantly to make the dream of a high quality California sparkling wine a reality." He "never compromised his viticultural ideals," and he made significant contributions to the field as a writer and speaker. If Arpad's insistence that his father was the first one to bring Zinfandel into the state was his Achilles Heel, as McGinty suggests, there seems to exist ample evidence in support of Arpad's other accomplishments to render any negative judgment in "The Zinfandel Connection" fairly moot.

A Toast to Eclipse: Arpad Haraszthy and the Sparkling Wine of Old San Francisco will find favor among both wine enthusiasts and students of California history. McGinty has done his research extremely well, and his narrative is insightful and refreshing; through *A Toast to Eclipse* one easily gains an appreciation for Agoston and Arpad Haraszthy, Eclipse, and the process in 19th-century California of making a wine sparkle.

A Toast to Eclipse: Arpad Haraszthy and the Sparkling Wine of Old San Francisco by Brian McGinty. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012. xii, 244 pages. Illustrated with historical images, many from the author's private collection.

NOTE: *Bruce Johnson is the editor of Enophilatelica, the quarterly journal of the Wine on Stamps Study Unit, and Philateli-Graphics, the publication of the Graphics Philately Assn. If you have wine or printing philatelic interests, email Bruce at indybruce1@yahoo.com and become a member.*

Celebrate!

NEWS & NOTES

Welcome! Derek Turnbull (drt@drturnbull.co.uk). Derek's special interest in wine and wine books is Port, and his website www.booksaboutport.com contains a good selection of Port books and many general books on wine, with brief descriptions of contents, &c. **Alder Yarrow** (alder@vinography.com) is the founder and editor of the award-winning wine and food blog, Vinography.com. See his review of *The Drops of God* this issue. With the gracious compliments of Tendril **Elliott Mackey**, we welcome to WT membership **Jean-Charles Boisset** (St. Helena, CA) and **Patrick J. West** (Bancroft, Ontario, Canada), while Tendril **Randy Heinzen** sent in a gift subscription/membership to **Rich Schaefers** (Talmage, CA). **Graeme MacDonald** of Oakville, CA (graeme.macdonald@hotmail.com) has a fast growing collection of some 150 books with an emphasis on the technical and the historical aspects of wine. Welcome to all!

JUST IN CASE

anyone else has become hooked on Peter Pauper Press books with wine interest (see our Checklist, v.15 #3 July 2005), here is another one for your bookshelf: ***Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Selected Poems***, 1967; edited and introduction by C. Merton Babcock, with several full-page illustrations by Wendy Watson, who also did the cover art. "Catawba Wine" is included, with a fitting illustration.

A "CORKED" FAMILY

Tendril **Joe Lynch** has turned up another winner: ***Amorim. A Family History 1870–1997*** by Carlos Oliveira Santos (Portugal, 1997). This is a fine addition to the few existing titles on the cork industry in our wine literature. It is a splendid two-volume history, 11¼ x 9, luxuriously illustrated, and bound in a rich forest-green cloth, with dust jackets. The two volumes (Vol.1:1870–1953, 119 pp; Vol.2: 1953–1997, 210 pp) are housed in a matching slipcase. In our October 2009 WTQ (v.19 #4, p.7), we briefly covered "Corked Literature" in the English language and listed seven titles on the subject (plus another five with "cork" in the title, although not at all helpful if you wish to know about corks). Perhaps Tendril members know of other titles to add to our list?

Fine Drinking

is the title of a recently found booklet that is quite lovely and would be a fine addition to any wine library. Issued *c*1949–1950 by Ayala Champagne : Croizet Brandy : Rocher Liqueurs in London, the 26-

page booklet was printed by the celebrated Curwen Press in its classic, handsome fashion. (Tendrils might remember that The Curwen Press printed a number of André Simon's books and pamphlets, and all of the issues of Wine & Food for a 32-year run, 1934–1966.) ***Fine Drinking*** is printed in two colors and embellished with attractive woodcuts and drawings, while its pleasing card covers are a typically decorative Curwen Press wallpaper-like pattern.

JAPANESE WINE NOVELS

An amazing series originally written and published in Japan are now becoming available in English. ***The Drops of God*** by Tadashi Agi and Shu Okimoto, Vol. 1–3 should be readily available on Amazon; volumes 4 and 5 are promised for June 2012. See full review this issue.

NEW ANDRÉ SIMON REFERENCE BOOK!!

Your Editor and Nomis Press are excitedly pleased to announce the publication of ***Printer's Ink: A Bibliographic Remembrance of André L. Simon and His Written Works*** by Gail G. Unzelman. A work in the making for some ten years, it is a handsome book in a format worthy of the appreciation of the "grand old man" of wine and food literature: each book is bibliographically described, with additional comments on the "why, who, and how," and a color photograph to illustrate almost all of the titles. Please see enclosed Prospectus for full details.

THE MAKERS OF AMERICAN WINE:

A Record of Two Hundred Years, the latest work by eminent wine historian **Thomas Pinney**, is scheduled for release in early May. This engaging history is told through the lives of thirteen individuals—twelve men and one woman—who played significant roles in building the U.S. wine industry to what it is today. Watch for it! We promise a full review next issue.

A Cordial Invitation

is extended to all fellow Tendrils by **Leo Lambiel**—the dynamic collector of all things beautiful, including wine and wine books—to have a personal tour of the Lambiel Museum, an Art Site on Orcas Island, San Juan Islands, Washington. From Fine Art to Architectural Follies this is the most extensive private collection of the finest original artwork by the San Juan Islands' best artists, from 1915 to the present: paintings, drawings, etchings, sculptures, murals, glasswork, photography, ceramics. In a very early issue of our journal (April 1997) we introduced Leo and the breath-taking setting for his wine library and cellar. Visit his website for a grand preview tour of his ever-growing museum. www.lambielmuseum.org.

GEORGIA'S WINERIES & VINEYARDS
A Wine Lover's Guide

has been written by fellow Tendril **Warren R. Johnson** (GA: A Little Local Color, 2011). His 73-page book—the first and only guide to the state's wine country—is a lovely presentation with color photos of the wineries and vineyards, with detailed maps of each of the six winegrowing regions. The first print-run has sold out, but Warren is busily working on a second edition for this "ever-growing and ever-changing" wine industry. Salud!

COPIES AVAILABLE FOR TENDRILS

The WT Wine Book Collectors Society has a supply of Ernest Peninou's ***History of the Orleans Hill Vineyard & Winery of Arpad Haraszthy & Co.*** (1983). It is a nicely produced 33-page booklet in card covers (8 x 5½), well illustrated. If you would like a copy for your library, email waywardtendrils@att.net, and we will be happy to send, with our compliments.

"Emotionally triumphant novel"

in "the sunlit elegance of California's Napa Valley ... amid the lush green vineyards ... passion and intrigue unfolds" in ***Bed of Roses*** by best-selling author Katherine Stone (Warner Books, 1998). Sounds like a bedtime story.

ENTERTAINING FIRST NOVEL

Michael J. Caldwell, an Oregon winemaker and restauranteur, brings a fine story together in *Varietal Tendencies. Book I of the Crush Chronicles* (Hood River, OR: Tannin Ink Press, 1997. 254 pp. Softcover). Intertwining three generations of a winemaking family, it is a war story, a love story, a winegrowing saga, and an antic meditation on the metaphysical characteristics of winegrape varietal characteristics. A recent email to the author relates that "Book II is progressing after 15 years, 3 restaurants, 2 kids..."

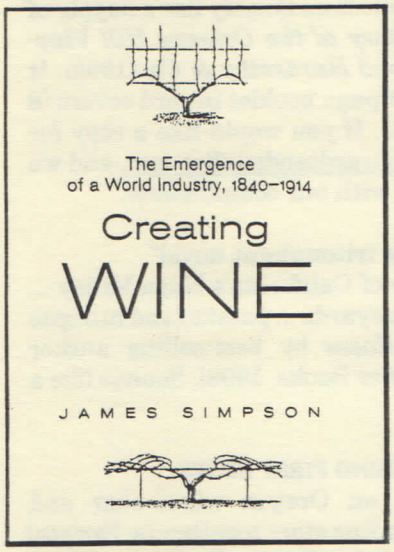
Dear Tendrils,

We are keenly grateful for our longtime bountiful energy that relies solely on our members' "vintage harvest and multi-volume" participation. Our WT Quarterly sincerely welcomes member contributions on favorite wine books, wine authors, or any other vinous-related printed material—South African wine literature, wine museums around the world, wine book collectors and their collections, wine fiction, ancient authors, new authors, old finds, new finds, does anyone collect Rubaiyats?—there is so much more to discover, and share. Tendril-ly, Your Editor.

Creating Wine: The Emergence of a World Industry 1840–1914, by James Simpson
Reviewed by *John Maher*

"ambitious, stimulating and cogent"

IT CAN BE A RELIEF in the opinionated and faddish world of wine to embrace the dispassionate and data-led discipline of the economist. James Simpson is a British-born long-standing resident of Spain who is professor of history and economic institutions at Madrid's Carlos III University, where he specializes in the economic history of agriculture, particularly wine.



Creating Wine is a discreetly elegant publication from Princeton University Press (2011) in its series "The Princeton Economic History of the Western World," that comes in a pale two-tone dustjacket embellished with just a couple of small drawings of vines taken from a U.S. 19th century technical book on viticulture. There are thirteen diagrammatic maps of winegrowing regions at the start of the work, which seemed initially either superfluous or insufficiently detailed, but which proved to be helpful in the course of reading, and have been useful subsequently as a quick reference resource. The introduction sets out the major structural distinction, still the case today, between a European wine industry–in which France, Italy and Spain accounted for 75 per cent of the wine produced worldwide–based on small, family-owned vineyards, and the situation in the New World where "viticulture and viniculture are highly concentrated and vertically integrated," giving rise to market domination by a small number of companies. The author also explains how cultivating vines, despite the intense labour requirement and uncertainties of output, was economically attractive to agricultural producers in Europe since work could be carried out during slack periods when there was little alternative employment on land that was often not suitable for other crops. In the New World growing conditions were often better, but access to markets tended to be difficult.

The book's subtitle raises the question of why those particular dates were chosen, and James Simpson explains that the period saw a transformation in the production and consumption of wine through improved production and broader industrial developments such as transport and urbanization. The reader is reminded that before key nineteenth-century contributions to the scientific understanding and production of wine most wine that was consumed was of very low quality to start with and frequently adulterated further after production. A distinction is drawn from the outset between "fine" and "commodity" wine production, with the emphasis for the first on quality and high price and for the second on producing consistently "sound" wine in volume. It is worth repeating, as regards the latter, that hitherto winemaking practices had rendered this haphazard. One finds oneself wondering how wine came to be enjoyed at all before Pasteur's *Etudes sur le Vin* (1866).

The book is by no means a dry economic tome. It is full of illuminating detail and insight into the world of wine and the lives of winegrowers, from the art of pruning to the drinking habits of migrant labor–dubbed "golondrinas" (swallows)–in Argentina. There is the occasional questionable assertion. For example, the reader is correctly informed that "white wine can be made from either white or red grapes," but is it really accurate to add "with the latter producing a better-quality wine" (p. 20)? Nevertheless, eyecatching nuggets of information throughout the text give pause for thought. We may balk at the taxation levied on alcohol today, but it is instructive to read that in Britain "taxation on alcohol contributed 36 percent of national revenue in 1898–99" (p. 29).

The period covered also saw the appearance of new vine diseases, such as both powdery and downy mildew, black rot and, most destructive of all, the phylloxera aphid which arrived in 1863 and proceeded gradually to devastate nearly all of Europe's vineyards. However, the fight against diseases and the increased price of wine resulting from reduced production saw the introduction of improved techniques and technology in vineyards and wine-making, alongside increased restrictions on the adulterated and artificial wines that had proliferated, contributed to the emergence of "genuine" wine as a commodity. These matters are the core of Part I of the work.

Part II of the book, "The Causes of Export Failure" consists of a single chapter that focuses on the vagaries of the British market, undermined among other things by the chicanery of wine sellers. Part III concentrates on the fine wines: bordeaux, champagne, port and sherry. Champagne is revealed as perhaps the greatest success story of the period, benefitting from technological improvements in production and storage, such as the development of *dégorgement à la glace*, greater control of sugar dosage, the develop-

ment—in Britain—of stronger glass bottles, and also from controlling bottling and creating brand identity and guarantees of authenticity through initiatives such as branded corks. The contrasting fortunes of port and sherry are telling, as the first successfully diversified in style according to changes in British taste while succeeding in consolidating quality, in direct contrast to the experience of sherry, for which this period shows a significant falling away from the late 1860s after a dramatic surge in growth immediately prior to this date. Ingenious initiatives to diversify—sparkling sherry or nonalcoholic sherry, anyone?—failed to flourish.

One of the strengths of *Creating Wine* is its engagement with different wine regions, and this is especially true of the New World. This provides both comparative perspective and cool analysis as opposed to the specific enthusiasms of many books about wine. California is presented as a wine region struggling to make headway, other than during a brief boom between 1873 and 1876, with hard fought progress being summarily interrupted by Prohibition. The California chapter lacks the detailed counterpoint—and entertaining anecdotes about the wiles of shippers, blenders and retailers—that the presence and analysis of the British market provides for the European wines, as well as for Australia, and comes across as more of a potted history, as does the chapter on Argentina. Perhaps this less vivid picture reflects the reality of these wine industries at the time. The chapter on Australian wine, in contrast, presents an industry that went from strength to strength, in terms of quality and export volume, with the 0.27 million liters exported to Britain in 1885 rising to 4.5 million in 1902, a fifth of the amount imported from France.

The transformation of the Argentine economy in the half-century before 1914 was remarkable. The massive southern European immigration of the period made Argentina distinctive among the New World wine producers analyzed in this study in being a wine-drinking society. However, it is almost a mirror-image of Australia, producing cheap wine in large quantities for domestic consumption, mainly in Buenos Aires, which by 1910 had a population nearly three times the size of that of Rome or Madrid with a more highly paid labour force. But whereas Australia succeeded in exporting to Britain, the wines of Mendoza struggled —not just in terms of transport, but also with politicians and recalcitrant consumers—to get to Buenos Aires in good condition, and to establish a dynamic market there.

There are the usual reviewer's grumbles. This wide-ranging study might have benefitted from some engagement with existing debates within the subject. It is hard to assess the extent to which the data and arguments deployed confirm established orthodoxies or provide a new perspective. Though there is a substantial bibliography, there is a far more substantial presence in the text of commentators from the period under study than there is of subsequent analysts. Despite the scope of the bibliography, there are some odd omissions. Just for California, of the titles described by Gail Unzelman in WTQ of July 2011 as "the unquestionable cornerstones of California wine literature," Agoston Haraszthy's *Grape Culture, Wines, and Wine-Making*, George Husmann's *Grape Culture and Wine-Making in California*, T. Hart Hyatt's *Handbook of Grape Culture*, Emmet Rixford's *The Winepress and the Cellar* and Frona Eunice Wait's *Wines and Vines of California*, only Hyatt's work appears. The fascinating Berry Bros. Price List from 1909 that is included at the end of the book does make one wonder whether Germany might not have been included. This is followed by an idiosyncratically brief glossary of English wine-related terms with their Spanish and French equivalents, and a bafflingly cryptic list and brief description of "Selected Grape Varieties" consisting of just three: Alicante bouschet, Aramon and Carignac, with no further explanation. Finally, the index is barely adequate. For my own area of interest, on encountering Alicante and Valencia in the text, they were nowhere to be found on consulting the index. On page 46, Catalonia and Valencia appear in the same sentence, apparently the only mention of Catalonia in the text, but only Catalonia is included in the index. Valencia comes up again on page 64, while Alicante appears on at least three occasions, but neither makes the index. These may seem petty quibbles, but Princeton University Press has not done their best by the reader and the author in these respects. After all, the book is priced at $39.50, with the ebook edition also costing around $30 (since the digital edition is searchable an index may be thought to be less of a requirement, though this is a question on which there are strong views).

Nevertheless, this book is ambitious, stimulating and cogent, and will be enjoyed by readers well beyond the confines of the academic environment, and by most people with an interest in the subject and history of wine. It has the virtue of leading the reader to engage with and question the author's arguments while doing likewise with some fondly cherished beliefs about the past and the present of wines that continue to dominate the wine world today.

Jon Hurley's *A Matter of Taste: A History of Wine Drinking in Britain*

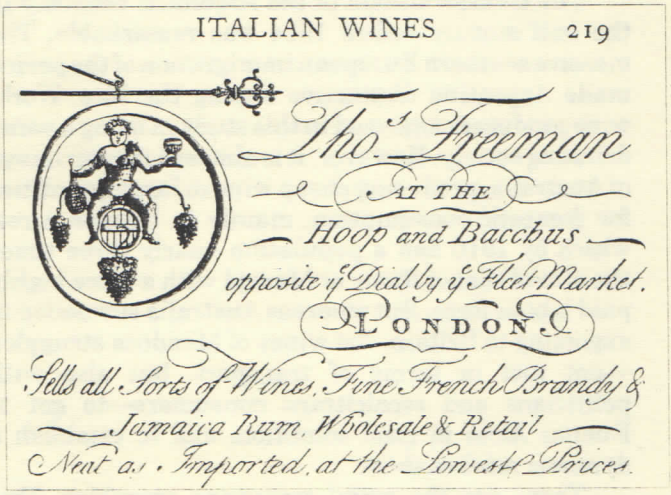
Reviewed by *John Maher*

"informed and eclectic anecdotage."

THE READER'S RESPONSE to the phrase "crammed with wit and anecdote" on the dustjacket of *A Matter of Taste* (Tempus, 2005, 256 pp, £20) is likely to indicate her enjoyment of the book as a whole. Jon Hurley is both highly erudite and a compulsive wag and wordsmith. It is instructive to contrast its tone with the other work I reviewed this issue, *Creating Wine* by the economist James Simpson. Both books deal with the British market and its fashions, but the academic economist and the wide-ranging conviviality of Jon Hurley could not be further apart. I ought perhaps to state from the outset that the fact that the author has also written about bareknuckle prizefighters has in no way influenced me when I declare that I enjoyed his informed and eclectic anecdotage. A look at the fifty-nine short chapters listed on the contents page, running from chapter one "The Pharaohs, Inventors of Fine Wine" to chapter fifty-nine "The Future," conveys the all-encompassing scope of the work. Chapter sixteen still only has us as far as Chaucer, and then from chapter seventeen the author deals with the wines associated with the English market, from Sack to Chile and Argentina. After that Jon Hurley engages with a range of subjects close to his heart, including chapters on wine merchants, oak, "wine and sex" and "wine writers: necessary parasites."

Within this welter of material, the author is broadly conventional in his enthusiasms regarding wine and wine writers. He approves of Bordeaux, Burgundy, André Simon, Hugh Johnson and Michael Broadbent (as opposed to "the spottier breeds of wine scribblers, brought up on a diet of late night porn"), as well as corks. Originally from Ireland (he is the author of two autobiographical novels *It's Late Very Early: Growing up in 1950s Dublin* and *The Weighing Room*), Hurley is alert to the influence exerted by Irishmen on the development of the wine trade, especially in Bordeaux, and also in Australia in the person of James Busby (1801–71), "the Father and the Prophet" of the Australian wine industry. In true Irish fashion, he reserves his sternest opprobrium for a fellow countryman, the urbane Maurice Healy, described here as "pompous and antisemitic" (p.163). Similarly, when writing of the efforts of the British "Lord's Day Observance Society" to prevent supermarkets trading on Sunday, it seems unfair to an author with an at best complicated relationship with organized religion to describe its members as "James Joyce clones in wet macs" (p.189). It is fair to say that Jon Hurley can on occasion be reluctant to allow niceties of judgment to interfere with an eye-catching turn of phrase.

In this respect it is worth commenting on the excellence of the book's illustrations. Even for collectors of books about wine, enough range and imagination has been put into the digging out of these for them to repay close study, which is in any case further imposed by a sometimes peculiar relationship to the associated text. This can also be quirky or cryptic—alongside a label of a 1988 Napa Valley Chardonnay from the Robert Mondavi Winery (Illustration No.66) the accompanying text reads "Robert Mondavi, Napa's passionate innovator. A charming pensioner, he's still a man." I spent some time pondering whether this was a Dublinism or a misprint, and relishing the ambiguity. This is true of the book as a whole. It is a bit like being on the receiving end of an unstoppable flow of forcefully flamboyant information and opinions offered from somewhere between a Dublin bar stool and an English country house. This reviewer, for one, felt rather at home in Jon Hurley's company. If any reader should care to seek it out beyond the pages of this book, the author and his wife have been running excellent-sounding wine weekends in the Wye Valley, Herefordshire, for over thirty years, more information is available via www.wineweekends.com.



Illus.44 – "A 19th century London wine merchant's ad"

Dying On the Vine: How Phylloxera Transformed Wine

A Review by *Will Brown*

[*Tendril readers will welcome once again a look at a new book for our wine library, reviewed by physician, winemaker, and Oregon wine historian Will Brown.* — Ed.]

"... should be required reading..."

T SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY that a new book on phylloxera was published, but it has been seven years since Christy Campbell's *The Botanist and the Vintner* was released. The author of this book, George Gale, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Missouri–Kansas City, and author of *Theory of Science: An Introduction to the History, Logic and Philosophy of Science* (1979), offers this study based on new information from France and California.

The story line of the phylloxera epidemic in the nineteenth century is probably at least somewhat known to most wine people but bears repeating as new information is acquired.

Gale recognizes that this outbreak marked the beginning of "Big Science" where government, industry and research universities work together to solve problems which are beyond the capabilities of each acting independently.

In the beginning, about 1868, a few hectares of grapes in the southern Rhône were found to be dying of an unknown vine malady. Faculty of the University of Montpellier and the École Agronomique headed by the eminent botanist J.-E. Planchon were recruited for the investigation. Only when live vine roots were exposed were the phylloxera organisms seen for the first time. Planchon recognized straight away that these insects had to be the cause of the vine disease. This assumption soon created serious opposition in high places which maintained that the true causes were environmental factors and vine management and that the insects were opportunistic. This cause or effect dispute was to persist for the next seven years. At length, with the help of Missouri entomologist Charles V. Riley, the insect was identified and found to be of American origin and the complex life cycle of the insect was elaborated.

The industry clamored for a defense against the organism and the government offered a prize for the solution. Three approaches showed some promise. When it was determined that the organism did not attack vines growing in sand, vineyards were planted in that milieu, but the extent of planting was limited by the available hectares of sand. It was also determined that flooding the vineyard sent the bug into remission, but because this approach was limited by the availability of nearly flat land, and required large amounts of water, it was expensive and inefficient. The third was the chemical approach when it was found that carbon bisulfide (CS_2) or its potassium salt was an effective antidote. However, the material was volatile, difficult to apply underground and costly. Major estates were able to afford to employ this modality for a few decades but it was not practical for the small farmer.

When it became apparent that the source of the problem also embodied the solution, resistant American vines began to be employed. At first, against significant opposition, direct-producing vines were planted but proved unsatisfactory for organoleptic reasons, and fear of importing more phylloxera from America.

In the end it finally became apparent that the solution to the problem would be to graft the *Vitis vinifera* scions onto resistant American rootstocks. This approach was not without major problems. Different stocks had differing environmental requirements of soil and climate, and their physiological properties were different. In the end, hybrid rootstocks of varying resistance were created and found their niches. The environmental problem of calcareous soils in the Charente (Cognac) and parts of Burgundy and Champagne which caused degrees of chlorosis in the plants was solved with the help of American plant breeder Thomas V. Munson by the use of the rootstock *Vitis berlandieri* found growing wild in Texas. Meanwhile, French plant breeders developed resistant hybrid plants by crossing *Vitis vinifera* and American varieties which could be planted directly. Although these creations became popular, they were eventually highly restricted by the French government and later by the European Union. At present they are mostly in the domaine of the peasant farmer in polyculture.

By the early twentieth century phylloxera was under control in France, but over time had spread throughout Europe and beyond to Australia, South Africa, and North and South America. The responses of governments in afflicted countries generally followed the French model with local variations and with varying degrees of success.

When phylloxera was first identified in California in 1873, "Big Science" intervened and, after decades of field tests, recommended in the end several rootstocks, one of which was a cross between Aramon, a *Vitis vinifera* and *Vitis rupestris* known as AxR1. The Europeans knew this stock was not completely resistant because it had failed there in several locations, but under California conditions it performed well, particularly in vigor, crop load and ease

of propagation. With the interlude of Prohibition, planting of this stock did not become prevalent until the wine boom of the nineteen sixties. Several decades later the bug reemerged creating a major problem for the industry, particularly in Napa and Sonoma Counties. Since the original endorsement of the rootstock was by the University of California at Davis, this institution soon came under fire. The University found that the phylloxera itself had changed and labeled the new variety Biotype B. Different stocks were subsequently employed and much of the northern California *vignoble* reconstituted. Fortunately this enabled the planting of varieties more suited to the locales and thus had a silver lining notwithstanding the huge expense.

This book is a good read because the author is knowledgeable, organized and a good writer–except for a few lapses into the vernacular. There are appendices on the Life Cycle of Phylloxera, the American Wild Grape Species and on Old American Varieties. There are also extensive endnotes which are not to be ignored because of their valuable content, and there is a fine bibliography. My unique quarrel with the author is that I felt in reading the section on California that he had an axe to grind against U.C. Davis which reached almost vendetta proportions. My suspicion was not lowered when I noted in the acknowledgments section that at U.C. Davis, while contributions from the Library, Entomology, and History and Philosophy of Science were recognized, the Department of Viticulture and Enology escaped any mention whatsoever–which suggests to me that he might be *persona non grata* there.

This book has several English-language competitors which should be considered by the reader who only wants to consult one book on the subject. *The Botanist and the Vintner* (noted earlier) by Christy Campbell, a British investigative historian, is an entertaining read and seems authoritative, but in a WTQ review shortly after its publication, wine historian Thomas Pinney found a plethora of errors in the material he was familiar with, placing suspicion on the reliability of the remaining text. I also found the book title to be misleading; I know that the Botanist mentioned is J.-E. Planchon but who is the Vintner? No winemakers are mentioned in the text. The subtitle *How Wine Was Saved for the World* is closer to the mark. The original and still very authoritative treatment of the subject is George Ordish's *The Great Wine Blight.* Those requiring elegant prose in historical writing will be in their element here, but unfortunately the book was published in 1972, with a revised edition in 1987, and is sadly out of date. The section on California for example is composed of three paragraphs, compared to George Gale's thirty-five pages in *Dying on the Vine.* Finally, there is *Science, Vine, and Wine in Modern France* (1996) by Harry Paul, a professor of History of Science at the University of Florida. His book has a very academic discussion of rootstock development in France (120 pp) and has the additional bonus of treating topics in winemaking in France as well.

In summary, *Dying on the Vine* hits the mark for well-researched history, good writing and up to date material. It also covers the economic impact of this disease in France and elsewhere in Europe and the dislocations of the small winegrowers many of whom were displaced to Algeria, Tunisia and the new world. This book will find niches in more than the world of wine where it should be required reading, but is a case study in history, sociology and economics as well as the science of the vine, from the point of view of a disaster with its impact on the lives of people, supply and demand and the further influence of new technologies on society. Highly recommended.

Dying on the Vine. How Phylloxera Transformed Wine by George Gale, Berkeley: U.C. Press, 2011. 323 pp. Illustrated. Cloth. $39.95.

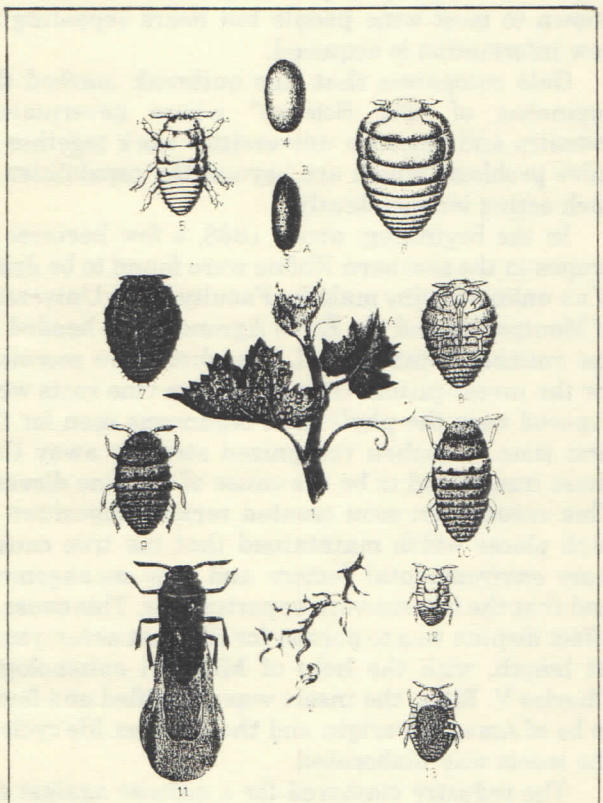


FIGURE 6. By 1890 many of the phases of phylloxera's very complex life cycle had been observed and described. This illustration (from Mayet 1890) depicts thirteen distinct phases. See Appendix A for a fuller discussion.

Gale, p.36

Valencians Contra la Fil·loxera
(Catalan Edition) by Joan C. Martín
Reviewed by *Jan Reinhart*

[*We have been favoured with a review by Jan Reinhart of this book, written in Catalan, about Spanish Valencia's early 20th century battle with phylloxera. Jan, a writer and translator who specializes in Catalan and Portuguese literature, has been in correspondence with Valencian Tendril John Maher, who recommended him to review this landmark book. Currently Jan manages the film and music libraries at Rutgers University in New Jersey; previously he worked as a reporter for newspapers in the Midwest and East Coast. We are deeply grateful for his generosity.* Ed.]

HEN THE PHYLLOXERA plague began to wipe out entire vineyards in France and Germany in the late nineteenth century, winemakers in the Valencian region of Eastern Spain at first prospered. Where there were 425,000 acres under vine in the Valencia-Alicante region in 1870, by the last year of the century it had surpassed 600,000 acres. Great estates expanded their plantings and humble peasants cleared rocky hillsides to accommodate the gaping void in European wine production.

And then it all ended in the space of about three years. The plague entered the previously phylloxera-free Valencian lands in 1904 from Catalonia in the north and Murcia in the south, a pincer attack on an industry that had been conducted in the Iberian Levant (with one long-Muslim dominated interruption) for at least three thousand years. Restoration took decades and transformed traditional Valencian society, but with less than 170,000 acres even now under vine it can only be classified as a partial recovery.

"Phylloxera was the biggest catastrophe in twenty centuries of European agriculture," writes Joan Martín in his new book, *Valencians contra la Fil·loxera* (Valencians vs. phylloxera). Martín says it is only comparable in devastation to the nearly coeval Irish Potato Famine, "with the difference that almost the totality of that tragedy was concentrated in Ireland, while the wine plague included all of Europe."

Martín, 59, was born to a small winemaking family in the dusty county of Foia de Bunyol, located directly west and upland of Valencia on the frontier of Catalan-speaking Eastern Spain. (His name, Joan, pronounced 'zhu-AN', is the Catalan equivalent of the Castilian Juan.) From those humble origins he rose to become an innovative winemaker, director of several of the region's top wineries and the foremost writer on wine for Valencia's biggest newspapers. As a boy, Martín spent summers with his father in the old family seat in Xest, where he heard older relatives talk in hushed tones about the "bicha," or insect that nearly wiped them out two generations before and continued to haunt the arid landscape. In particular he recalls his father's detailed relation of the plague on a train trip back to Valencia 50 years ago. "Between the darkness of the fields that unfolded on the other side of the coach window, the sooty smoke of the steam engine of the regional train, hurling, buffeting with shocking force against the glass, I imagined the "bicha," the damned phylloxera ... as a giant monster that strode through the night, emerging from the graves, pits and entrances to the earth in order to kill everything in its path: grape vines, trees, mules, dogs, men, children. It was like that imaginary yet nonetheless lethal demon in the Fred Wilcox movie "Forbidden Planet" (1956), a mythic monster of the subconscious, a monster of the Id. My father told me that phylloxera was a parasite, that it was a worm and also a chrysalis, but I couldn't make sense of this—I had silkworms in a shoebox and they fed off mulberry leaves."

Winemaking arrived in Valencia in the eighth century BCE, introduced to the Celtiberian peoples of littoral Iberia by the Tartessians, Phoenicians and Greeks, and later organized and improved by the Romans in their *villae rusticae*. In fact, the Roman practice of growing grapes "en parral" with rows of freestanding vines, was revived by Valencian vineyardists in the 1980s. That technique and many others were lost during Valencia's half millennium of Muslim domination, when most of the country's vineyards were ripped up in conformity with the strictures of Islamic law (even grapes for raisins got the ax).

With the Reconquest of Valencia under Jaume I of Aragon in 1238, wine cellars were rebuilt and vines replanted largely by those two famous military orders of the Catholic Church: the Knights Templar and the Hospitalers. A later "crusade" of Catalan adventurers to aid/overthrow the emperor of the Byzantium brought back what are now Valencia's two most important wine grapes: the Malvasia and the Monastrell.

The replanting was nonetheless a slow process, gradually gaining momentum in the years following the wrenching expulsion of Valencia's lingering *morisco* (Moorish) in 1609. The region was resettled by colonists from the nearby Balearic Isles, who brought with them their Catalan language and viticulture. With these settlers came a new emphasis on smaller vineyards, many only a few acres. In his book, Martín describes the establishment of one such vineyard in the boulder strewn hills above Xest.

Extended family had to help with the grinding effort of breaking and clearing away rock to expose the dry but fertile soil. Children as young as 10 helped by chiseling down larger rocks. "Blow by blow, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, with titanic patience, with the faith of the humble, they hammered away until the stone fell into pieces that could be hauled away by mules guided by their parents" to build roadside walls.

The pace and extent of the establishment of these *vinyes* exploded after the accidental introduction of *Daktulosphaira vitifoliae* or grape phylloxera in England in the 1850s. This species of root lice is common to Northeastern America, where grapevines have long evolved resistance to their attacks, but when clueless British horticulturists brought American grapes to Europe it was soon discovered that *Vitis vinifera* had no defense against them. Within a decade the lice, which ends its life cycle as a winged nymph, had spread to continental Europe, obliterating vineyards in all but the sandiest and sunniest locations where the insect pest could not thrive. (To this day, *Vitis vinifera* can be grown on their own rootstock in the dunes of extreme southwestern France—the "vins de sable").

That Valencia's wine boom was short lived came as no surprise to the brilliant young agronomist Rafael Janini, who tried for a decade around the turn of the century to warn vineyardists and his superiors in the regional and national governments of the gathering disaster. It fell on willfully deaf ears. Even as the plague began to take shape after 1904, Janini found the *caciques*, or corrupt local politicians, ignoring panicked cries for help from small growers and falsifying municipal reports to hide the truth. "It was an epoch of uncontrolled economic growth, an era of *laissez faire*, where the greed and ambition of savvy political operators was the whip driving European viticulture and the wine trade to catastrophe," Martín ruefully writes.

Of course, as the *bicha* wiped out vast numbers of vineyards in the space of three years (by 1916 only 50,000 acres were left fully functioning), Janini got the desperate attention of his countrymen and the legislative support to make a difference. In September 1909 he organized a groundbreaking conference to promote recent innovations against the lice: namely, the use of American rootstock—ironically the source of the original outbreak—with grafting of European wine grapes above. From his headquarters in the Plain of Utiel in Western Valencia, he supervised the cultivation of nearly a million rootstock vines. Many of his nursery workers were women from local vineyards, eager to help their impoverished families with a steady source of income. Even in this he was opposed by conservative local authorities, who Martín notes "sought to exploit the envy of jobless men, filled with anxiety about the plague."

What followed was no quick road to recovery, but decades of hard work and many reversals. The infected vines had to be ripped out and burned, their ashes buried in stone vaults. "Nobody wanted that wood," Martín says. "They were terrified of it—it had 'la bicha'." Imagine extirpating a vine of 20-foot length from rocky soil with only the help of a mule. Imagine doing that 2,000 times for a small landholding, and then deeply tilling and fumigating the stony soil until, after a fallow period you could replant the whole lot, sometimes repeatedly. Martín calls the project "homeric" in scope. It is no wonder that so many abandoned *bancals* can found throughout the region.

Out of much suffering came important innovations, however. Martín notes that important wine cooperatives and associations active to this day sprang up to help the survivors of the plague. These institutionalized technical resources helped small growers avoid the abusive practices of the wine trade middlemen and corrupt local officials. Not surprisingly, out of these organizations grew democratic political movements that flourished before and persisted during the *dictadura* of Francisco Franco. Martín drew considerable comment in the Valencian press and blogosphere when he reintroduced the honored old Valencian term "*conjugar*" in his book to describe the genuine common engagement and community spirit that twice resurrected his homeland's dying wine industry. The implication is that Valencia, foundering politically in a new era of corrupt *caciques* and economic disaster, needs to return to that ancient value.

Not the least of Janini and his successors' accomplishments was the intentional salvaging of Valencia's wonderful autochthonous grapes as the new vines were planted. Monastrell, Bobal, Forcallat (reds) and Malvasia, Mersseguera, Macabeu and Pere Ximenes (whites) are but a few of these historic varieties now growing on American rootstock. Think of that next time you uncork a Jumilla.

Valencians Contra la Fil·loxera by Joan C. Martín. Valencia: Anaconda Editions, 2011. 184 pp. Illus. Softcover. $25. NOTE: Joan Martín earlier authored *Els Vins de l'Arc Mediterrani. D'Alacant a Montpeller* (2009) and *Valencia, Land of Wine: A Winemaker's Selection* (2007). The English-language edition of *Valencia* was translated by John Maher (see WTQ, v.21 #2).

Wine in California: The Early Years
The Great Valley and Its Foothills
PART II: The Sacramento Valley – Continued
by *Charles L. Sullivan*

[*Our 9th installment of historian Charles Sullivan's never-before-published, in-depth historical study of the early pioneers and framers of California's wine industry returns us to the state's great Central Valley, where some of the "best stories are tales of colossal failures." We begin with his introduction from Part I of this chapter. As with his previous chapters, extensive, informative footnotes, with a substantial library of references, are provided.* — Ed.]

CALIFORNIA'S GREAT VALLEY, more popularly known as the Central Valley, is one the world's outstanding agricultural regions. With but one percent of the nation's farmland it produces about eight percent of the country's agricultural output. One of its most important products is the grape, for eating, for raisins, for wine and for brandy. In terms of value, grapes are today the regions most important crop. Fresno County is the most productive agricultural county in the nation and contains almost twenty-six percent of California's grape vines. But these facts are really not suggestive of the winegrowing history of the region during California's first half century of statehood, as I shall try to explain in this chapter. There is one theme here that does run through the state's 160 years. For the producers of wine and brandy in the Central Valley their efforts might be thought of as a long ride on a roller coaster.

Natoma

FOR ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE years in the last half of the nineteenth century the name "Natoma" was well known to all Californians interested in the state's wine. Today it survives as a place name for a small lake and for a little town northeast of Sacramento. Most of the land once covered by thousands of acres of grape vines now lies submerged under Folsom Lake, created when the Folsom Dam and Reservoir was created in the 1950s, damming the American River. The Sacramento and El Dorado County line runs through the lake, as it divided this wine country over a hundred years ago. The lake's elevation is 466 feet; four miles downstream little Natoma sits at 165 feet; five miles north of the lake the town of Pilot Hill looks down from 1150 feet. The great river used to pour down very swiftly from the lower foothills into the valley. Was this former wine country in the Sierra Foothills or the Great Valley? I'll follow historian Eric Costa's lead in his *Gold and Wine* (2010) and place the Natoma area in the foothills.

For millions of years the three forks of the American River have been rushing out of the Sierra, coming together south of Coloma, where gold was discovered February 12, 1848. During the summer of that year crowds of Forty Eighters poured in, many of them Mormons, who gave the name to this area on the river, Mormon Bar. The chief towns there were Folsom and Mormon Island. In 1849 the entire area for miles was a sea of miners' tents. But by the late fifties, as was the case throughout the foothills, placer mining activity was gradually supplemented by agriculture, particularly horticulture, and around Mormon Island by the sixties, viticulture.

B. N. Bugbey

In 1861 the California Farmer began boosting this area of the lower American River basin as a future center for viticultural development.[45] In that year a Connecticut man, Benjamin N. Bugbey (1827–1914), bought land north of Mormon Island and planted eight acres of Mission vines. He called his place Natoma Vineyard. From neighbors' grapes he actually made red wine that year for which he won a premium at the 1863 State Fair.

Bugbey had sailed for California in 1848 and spent the next years in various commercial ventures before he bought his land. In an 1870 biographical essay written for the State Agricultural Society he gave no hint as to how he acquired his passion for viticulture and winegrowing, but he obviously had full possession of the fever when he planted his first vine. The Society Transactions categorized Bugbey's place as "a mountain vineyard, low down among the foothills."[46]

Before the sixties were over Natoma Vineyard was well established as the most important winegrowing operation in the El Dorado foothills. Production was consistently more than 50,000 gallons, from vineyards that had grown to 150 acres. In 1863 he began producing brandy and in 1868 was the first to install a Johnston still, soon to be the standard of the industry in the seventies.[47]

Bugbey even began producing sparkling wine in 1868, aided by a German expert in Sekt production. For a while he was selling 4000 cases per year, before

disaster struck later in the seventies. In 1863 he acquired Hungarian Feher Szagos vines and made good dessert wine from them. More important, he later demonstrated the raisin potential for the region with his experiments with that variety.[48]

Bugbey began shipping his wines east by sea in 1867, first to his family and business connections in Hartford, Connecticut. When rails finally linked California to the East Coast in 1869, Natoma wines were among the first to make the trip, including a case for President Grant. By 1871 Bugbey had sales outlets all over the east and midwest; Chicago, St. Louis, Buffalo, Boston, New York City and Washington DC were the most important.

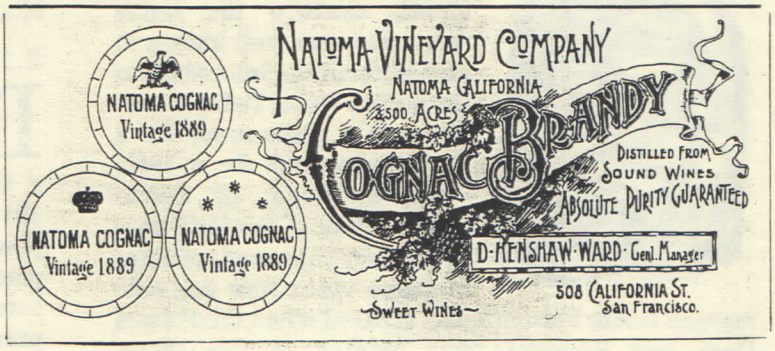
Natoma expanded and flourished through the sixties. A glance at his awards for wine, brandy and grape collections immediately explains B. N. Bugbey's fame. Between 1863 and 1871 he won 35 awards at the State Fair, mostly first places. In those years each department for awards at the fair presented a special gold medal to the outstanding overall entrant in that division. There was one for livestock, machinery, food products, etc. For some reason wines, brandies and grape collections were not always in the same department from year to year. But in 1867, 1868 and 1870 Bugbey won one of those special gold medals.[49]

In 1871 he again stood for a grand gold. He had entered twenty-seven wines and brandies in the individual premium sections and won three firsts, more than any other producer. His grape collection included twenty-two varieties and also won a first. But the judges gave the grand gold this year to a silk producer in Placerville.

Historically Bugbey stands out as the first in California systematically to test and evaluate a large number of grape varieties for their wine potential. His approach was almost the same as Professor Hilgard's fifteen years later at Berkeley. Dozens of unblended varietal wines were fermented in five-gallon lots and then evaluated. In the early sixties almost all the varieties available to him were those he could get from Sacramento area nurseries, mostly East Coast vinifera varieties usually used as table grapes. For Bugbey the Muscat varieties were particularly successful. His most successful white table wine was made from the Spanish Verdelho, which Hilgard later praised as an exceptional example of a wine made from grapes of fine quality.[50] Bugbey also liked the Red Traminer, but his favorite red was the Zinfandel, whose cuttings he distributed to other foothill growers. In fact, he and Sacramento nurseryman Anthony Smith were primarily responsible for the success and early spread of Zinfandel vineyards in the Sierra Foothills.[51]

The disasters Bugbey encountered later in the seventies were fire and economic depression. First, in 1871, and twice later, his winery and warehouses were destroyed or damaged by fire. In the process he lost thousands of gallons of wine, not fully covered by insurance. Yet in 1874 at the State Fair he managed to win first awards for both his red and white table wines, his sherry (from Feher Szagos), and his brandy. But his debt was heavy and rising. Already the devastating effect of the national depression on the state's wine industry was making for sobering news in the Agricultural Society's usually upbeat Transactions.[52]

Finally in 1879 Bugbey had to give up Natoma to his creditors. But we shall see that the wine community he pioneered survived. His personal successes were not forgotten, nor was his experimental approach to selecting useful grape varieties. He lived on for 35 years in Sacramento, first profiting in the real estate boom of the eighties and then settling into the good life of public service. In the nineties he served as under sheriff and later was elected county tax collector.[53]



Natoma Vineyard Company

The term Natoma can be traced to the name of an Indian village upstream from Mormon Island. In 1851 a group organized by Horatio G. Livermore and bankrolled by millionaire landowner Charles Webb Howard formed the Natoma Water and Mining Company. Its first goal was to supply water to the vast placer operations in the area. Livermore was a wealthy Maine man, who became much wealthier over the years with the help of his sons Horatio P. and Charles E. Livermore. The great and dramatic story here for the next forty-five years was the building of the first Folsom Dam and its world famous power plant. But that is not our story. Ours centers first on the younger Horatio and his interest in viticulture and winegrowing. From 1877 until 1885 he was the guiding light at what came to be called the Natoma Vineyard Company. The light went out in the latter year.[54]

For viticultural matters the elder Livermore gave

Horatio almost free rein. But the Natoma Vineyard Company was just a division of the water company until 1890. At first the vineyard operation went into play to put some of the water company's vast land holdings to work. In 1877 seventy acres were planted, Flame Tokays for shipping, Muscats for raisins. Two years later seventy acres of Zinfandel went in, to sell to neighboring Sacramento County wineries. By 1881 there were 300 acres of vineyard, about half planted to Folle blanche and Colombard to sell to brandy producers. By 1882 there were 500 acres of the former.[55]

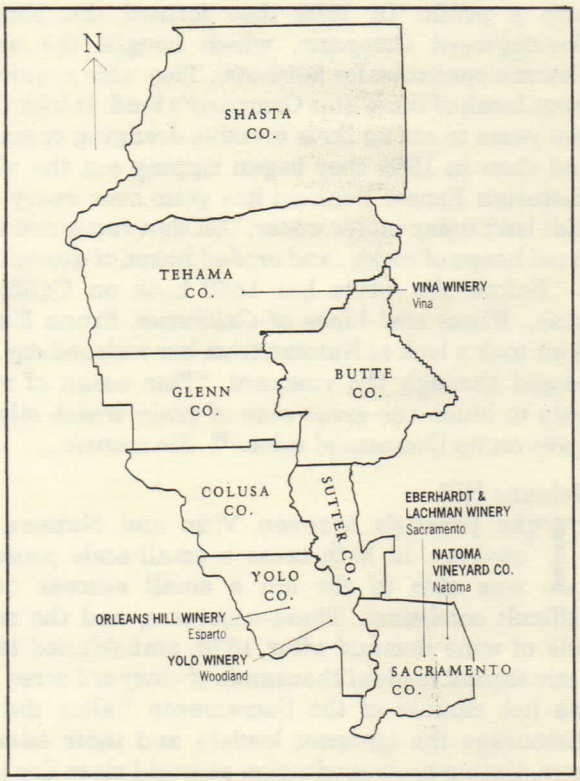
The late seventies had brought an end to the national economic depression and the beginnings of an agricultural boom, especially in California. With it came the first signs of the Golden State's great wine boom of the eighties. Livermore had been studying the distinguished wines of the Old World and by 1881 had decided to assemble the fine wine grape varieties to see which best suited the soils and climate of Natoma. The emphasis was on the noble varieties of France, Germany, Spain and Portugal. Charles A. Wetmore, the head of the state viticultural commission, advised him on the selection. When they began arriving, a large number were grafted onto already mature vines so that a small crop for each variety would be available for the 1883 vintage.

In that year he sent Wetmore an elaborate album containing the leaves of eighty-seven noted wine varieties, with a flowery cover letter on Natoma's fine future in world class wines. He also contacted Professor Hilgard and arranged to send him grape samples by rail express in the fall. From these the Berkeley crew had sixty-six varietals and blends from small lots ready for the 1885 State Viticulture Convention. The wines at the convention, hundreds of them, were examined by a distinguished committee headed by Hilgard. There was hardly a mention of the Natoma entries in their final report. There were passing comments on such oddities as Affenthaler, Aramon and Petit Bouschet. But only one varietal table wine won a laudatory comment, the Spanish Verdelho, the very grape B. N. Bugbey had earlier named the best for white wines from the Natoma area. But Natoma's fortified sweet wines got excellent reviews, particularly the sherries made from Palomino and Pedro Jiménez varieties. It is obvious that Livermore's high hopes for the production of world class table wines, particularly the reds and whites of Bordeaux, would not be gratified under the hot sun of the lower foothills of the Sacramento Valley.[56]

Meanwhile Hilgard made what was apparently a surprise visit to Natoma to see things for himself. There had not been a word about actual winemaking there in the press, but everyone knew that preparations were afoot. The professor's report in May 1885 led to the younger Livermore's transfer to another Water Company activity in Kern County. Hilgard was shocked by what he saw. The winery-to- be had been used to produce wines, but it was a mere shell with gigantic fermenters exposed to the sun and no attempt made to control fermentation temperatures. Nothing at Natoma suggested that Livermore was doing anything to develop an effective wine production facility, except to produce grapes.

Hilgard tasted two unbottled wines from the 1883 vintage. The first was a "claret," which he found "extremely faulty...acetified and milksour." A fortified white was not quite as bad, but "both were only fit for the still."[57]

The next years saw the new Natoma bosses working mightily to correct matters. Table grape production was increased and all wine grapes were sold to other producers until the new winery was on line in 1888. It had a 300,000-gallon capacity and a new still that could make 800 gallons of brandy a day. Another still in 1890 raised output to 1500 gallons. In that year the Natoma Vineyard Company officially became a separate corporate entity, no longer part of the water company, which under Horatio G. Livermore was putting the finishing touches on the first Folsom Dam. Some vineyard land stayed with the old parent company simply for its special value as undeveloped real estate. Natoma's vineyard acreage was now about 1500.[58]



From Peninou & Unzelman, *California Wine Association*, 2000

In a final attempt to produce good table wine, Natoma hired Napa Valley's Henry Pellet, the man Charles Krug and I consider California's greatest nineteenth century winemaker. He made sound wine but was not able to soften the Sacramento Valley summer temperatures. As of 1892 all Natoma wine was distilled into brandy. Like Vina, financial stability here would rest on the production of brandy and fortified sweet wine. But even that was shaky after the great national depression brought the country down in 1893. Two years earlier Natoma had made its first large brandy shipment to Germany, but the ship went down in a gale. Nevertheless, by 1895 Natoma brandy to Europe, mostly to Germany and England, was the main source of the company's income. And apparently the brandy was quite good, marketed as Natoma Cognac. In 1894 it won first prize for brandy at San Francisco's Midwinter Fair.[59]

By 1895 the California wine industry was in a state of chaos. Cascading wine and brandy prices had producers and the giant wine houses of San Francisco at each others' throats, in what the press termed the "Wine War." Natoma stockholders threw in the towel and leased the entire operation to a group of Napa wine producers. In 1900 when good times had returned, the California Wine Association took over the lease, but even that wine conglomerate was not able to generate reasonable profits. Sierra mining interests figured a better way to make all this land turn a profit. In 1906 they formed the Natoma Development Company, which bought the entire Natoma operation for $600,000. They also acquired a large hunk of the Water Company's land. It took them two years to set up their massive dredging operation and then in 1909 they began ripping out the vines. Historian Ernest Peninou has gone over every acre that isn't today under water. "All that remained were great heaps of rocks...and eroded heaps of dredgings."

Before she wrote her 1889 book on California wine, *Wines and Vines of California*, Frona Eunice Wait took a look at Natoma from her railroad car as it passed through the vineyard. "This ocean of vines puts to blush the great seas of grain which silently wave on its [Natoma's] sides."[60] *Sic transit....*

Orleans Hill

The parallels between Vina and Natoma are obvious. In both cases a small-scale producer was able to eke out a small success under difficult conditions. These successes, and the rising tide of wine demand after 1878, emboldened large-scale capital to plant thousands of vineyard acres. But the hot climate of the Sacramento Valley did not discourage the ignorant leaders and their advisors from aiming their production at world class dry table wines, on land that Professor Hilgard contended was better suited for producing "corn and pumpkins."[61]

Our next case's origins are set in the same years, the boom times of the early eighties, and follow a similar disastrous pattern. Moderate winegrowing success again preceded an overblown failure, but in this case the leader was not an ignorant man following the advice of ignorant advisors. This man was considered by the public to be one of the wine industry's most knowledgeable experts and leaders.

Our story is again set in the Sacramento Valley, but this time in the low foothills west of Woodland in Yolo County. The Capay Valley is where most of the historic winegrowing in this area took place in the 19th century. The valley is watered by Cache Creek, which years ago usually became an intermittent stream in the summer months, at least until the Indian Creek and Cache Creek Dams were built. In the 19th century it was a very undependable water source for irrigation.

Cache Creek runs diagonally northwest to southeast out of the foothills north of Esparto and into the valley proper. But the historic wine operation we shall look at, Arpad Haraszthy's Orleans Hill Winery, is located southwest of Esparto in the Lamb Valley. It never could have benefitted from the occasional waters of Cache Creek. We shall see that the geography, climate and soil of this foothill area had a severe impact on the health of this winery operation.

John Gillig was the pioneer winegrower in the Capay Valley. A native of Germany, he arrived in Sacramento in 1851 and opened a hardware store. He soon bought land northwest of the town of Capay south of cache Creek and by 1858 had planted grain, a fruit orchard, and his Adobe Creek Vineyard. His little winery, Yolo County's first, went up in 1860 and in 1861 he won an award for his vineyard at the State Fair.[62]

Jacob Knauth

A far more important name in wine here is that of Jacob Knauth, perhaps the most important. The son of a winemaker in the Rheingau, he arrived in Sacramento at the height of the Gold Rush excitement and set up a sort of resort just up the

street from Sutter's Fort, which he named Sutter Floral Gardens. But he obviously arrived with a keen interest in and knowledge of viticulture. He acquired some Mission vines and planted them at his Gardens. He also sent east for vinifera table grape cuttings. But experience told him he could get better wine varieties from his homeland.[63]

His German vines arrived from Nassau in 1853, chief among them the Riesling and the Orleans. The latter was a wine variety earlier common in parts of Germany but today grown primarily as a table grape. But it was a good choice for the Sacramento Valley at that time. It is a good bearer in warm climates with firm bunches. Its wines have a pleasant aroma, occasionally "with a Riesling-like aroma and flavor, good balance, and good finish."[64] The Orleans was no world class variety, but it could add flavor to the white wines of the ubiquitous and almost tasteless Mission, and it did well when blended with Riesling.

Knauth was making small amounts of wine at his Gardens and in 1858 was able to show thirteen grape varieties and eleven wines at the State Fair. He won a second award for his white table wine from his Orleans grapes.[65]

The worst flood destruction in the state came to Sacramento from the massive downpours in December 1861. Most of the city was destroyed; Knauth's Floral Gardens were submerged, his little winery and twenty puncheons of wine destroyed. But most of his vines survived. He decided to move to higher ground in 1862 and bought a hundred acres from John Gillig, a mile south of Capay at an elevation of 250 feet.

Knauth called his new vineyard Orleans Hills, for obvious reasons. He now split his time between the new establishment and Sacramento, where he became Henry Gerke's winemaker. In 1863 Carl Strobel, a friend of Knauth and Gerke, acquired a tract next door to Orleans Hill and began planting vines. Over the next few years they worked and experimented together looking for successful varieties. Their grapes were teamed to Woodland and then freighted by rail to Sacramento, destined for Gerke's winery. When Gerke sold the place in 1873 Knauth stayed on as winemaker. In fact, the city directory listed him as a winery owner well into the 1890s, then as a wine merchant.

Knauth continued to expand his vineyard and by the late sixties his Riesling/Orleans white wine had become very well known, winning award after award at state and regional fairs.[66] He and Strobel applied for the division gold medal at the 1870 State Fair and won it. Knauth's cellar expertise was demonstrated when he was invited to present a paper on fining at that fair.[67]

By then Knauth's wines were being marketed under the OHVA label, that is, the Orleans Hill Viticultural Association, which Knauth, Strobel, Gillig and several others organized as a joint-stock company in 1869. Together they turned over 780 acres of land to the Association with about 160 acres of vines.[68]

Knauth did well making wine in Sacramento for the next few years, but his vines out near Cache Creek gradually declined from what was later discovered to be an infestation of phylloxera. In fact Knauth's vineyard was a star in Frederick Morse's 1880 report on phylloxera for the University of California.[69]

Arpad Haraszthy

We have already seen how the Sacramento Valley had attracted investors to large-scale winegrowing during the boom of the eighties. Before then, in 1870, Arpad Haraszthy had visited Orleans Hill and remarked on Knauth's success overall and particularly with the Orleans grape variety. He later told a correspondent for the San Francisco Bulletin that his father had imported it from Europe in 1861. Like so many of his claims concerning his father's introduction of European varieties to California, this one also was not true.[70]

Knauth's excellent reputation for his wine quality was convincing, and the increasingly bad condition of his vineyard made the land relatively cheap.[71] If Haraszthy could find someone with plenty of investment capital, he felt confident that he could fix and expand the Knauth operation. The experience of two Sonoma growers who had successfully grafted their vinifera vines onto native American rootstock had convinced him there was a way to defeat the deadly root louse.

Haraszthy found his investor in the person of Harry Epstein, an Austrian by birth, who had become rich in Nevada's mercantile trade. In 1867 he moved to San Francisco as H. Epstein & Co. There he expanded his fortune to such an extent that he was able to spend 1877 and 1878 touring Europe and its wine regions. Back in San Francisco he bankrolled a new venture, A. Haraszthy & Co. It looked like a sure thing.

Arpad Haraszthy had had a noteworthy history in wine before he teamed up with Epstein. For two years he had been his father's winemaker and champagne master at Sonoma's Buena Vista Winery. But in 1863 he lost his job there when 9,000 bottles of sparkling wine failed to sparkle. Isador Landsberger was a director at Buena Vista, as well as a very successful San Francisco wine merchant. He was convinced that Arpad would be able to unlock the mysteries that had stymied earlier California sparkling-wine producers. There was good reason behind this confidence, for the young man had served an apprenticeship earlier at a leading Champagne house in Epernay. He took in Arpad as a partner and they set out to produce an

acceptable sparkler, knowing full well that real Champagne was being imported into northern California in large amounts.

Haraszthy abandoned the old Mission variety for better European white wine grapes and in 1867 brought forth a good sparkling wine which the partners named "Eclipse," after a famous race horse. The firm of I. Landsberger was soon profiting from sales of both still wines and several grades of sparklers. Their Eclipse became fairly popular and received excellent press notices in the seventies. It was famous enough to be featured in Samuel Marsden Brookes' painting, "Still Life with Game, Champagne and Vegetables."[72]

In 1879 Landsberger sold his interest in their company to his partner's successor firm, A. Haraszthy & Co. Arpad's instincts cried "Go!"; the California wine industry was on fire. Everything agricultural seemed to be booming after the end of the national depression in 1878.[73] Haraszthy now had control of a fine cellar in San Francisco, with an eye on Orleans Hill. Knauth had sold the rundown property in 1876 to John Carroll, an insurance company executive, for $15,000. Epstein paid him $28,500 for it in 1881, and in 1882 A. Haraszthy & Co., of which Epstein was now a full partner, bought it from Epstein, who was really selling the place to himself.

Historian Ernest Peninou wondered how two smart businessmen could have made such a mistake.

> What prompted the shrewd, well-traveled, well informed Epstein and the foremost California authority on champagne making to choose these dry, hot and sun-swept foothills to be the site for the planting of choice grape varieties to be used for the production of fine still wines and champagne is unexplainable.[74]

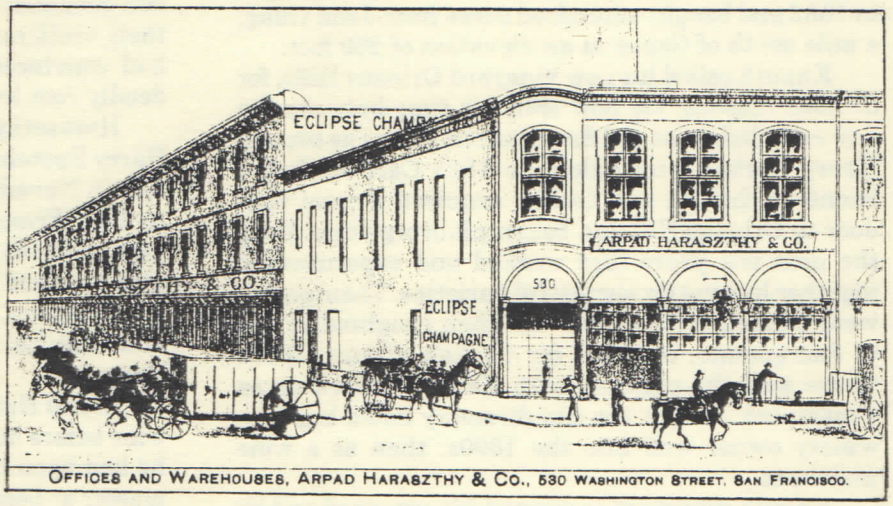
One explanation at least partially explains this endeavor. The two men were caught up in the overpoweringly optimistic enthusiasm we usually see at the opening phase of an economic bubble, economist J. M. Keynes's "animal spirit." Epstein's confident feeling makes some sense from the fact that Haraszthy was considered a wine expert and was recognized as one of the foremost leaders of California's young wine industry.

But Arpad's career had not been particularly successful, except when combined with Landsberger, who was a wine-wise, successful financier. He had been fired from his post at Buena Vista and he was a total flop at Orleans Hill when the agricultural business cycle turned sour after 1887. Most of his celebrity status in the wine industry came from his outpouring of intelligent and well-written articles in magazines and the press, starting in the late 1860s. That came down hard in 1888 when he was removed from his position on the State Viticultural Commission.[75] Nevertheless he remained a well-liked and influential industry leader until his death in 1900.

And it is clear that Arpad Haraszthy was an unstable individual. Historian Ruth Teiser, in her Introduction to *Wine Making in California* (Haraszthy's 1871–1872 Overland Monthly articles) has shown that his personal life made his wife an unhappy woman. For all Arpad's apparent financial success with Landsberger in the seventies, Teiser demonstrates that he did not make much money, or better, too easily let it get away.

His wife Jovita was General Vallejo's daughter. He was drawn into her domestic discontent when she demanded a divorce from her philandering husband. Vallejo wrote his wife that Jovita "is determined in everything." But finally he prevailed and was able to write that, "Jovita gives in...only for the sake of the children." She became pregnant soon after the reconciliation. The baby was dead at birth and a few weeks later she died. When Landsberger left the firm a few months later, Haraszthy was really on his own.[76]

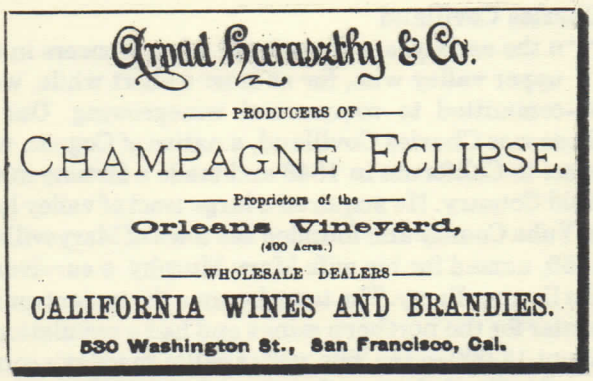
In San Francisco the firm's old wine cellars, now fully under Arpad's control, were impressive. The



OFFICES AND WAREHOUSES, ARPAD HARASZTHY & CO., 530 WASHINGTON STREET, SAN FRANCISCO.

principal cellars on Washington Street covered about 34,000 square feet, connected by tunnels to two others across the street. Together they were a little larger than an American football field. There were three stories above the main cellars, and a yard across the street where barrels and tanks were assembled and repaired. These details were supplied by Thomas Hardy, the Australian winegrower, in his 1885 book *Notes on the Vineyards of America* which chronicled

his travels in the American wine country in 1883. He was particularly impressed by Haraszthy's production facilities for his Eclipse champagne. This wine by then was apparently the toast of San Francisco from the mid-seventies until the late eighties, and for a while the basis for the company owners' confidence.[77]



Haraszthy, with Epstein's money, went to work to transform the neglected Orleans Hill into a bucolic paradise. The phylloxerated vines were torn out and replanted on *V. riparia* resistant rootstock, with a heavy emphasis on vinifera varieties that might make satisfactory sparkling wine. Examples were Gutedel, Burger, Folle blanche, Colombard and Feher Szagos. There was also Zinfandel whose "white" (pink) face Haraszthy depended on in his sparklers. By grafting he kept the Orleans and Riesling varieties from what had survived the Knauth years.

The land was prepared and forty acres planted in 1882. By the spring of 1884 there were 175 acres of vines on the hillsides; by 1886 there were 350. In the previous year Haraszthy spoke at a Fresno winegrowers' conference. He boasted that in 1883 the temperature at Orleans Hill reached 120° F. in the shade and "we have never had a drop of water on that vineyard except by our regular rainfall." It is no wonder that the vintage often began in the first week of August.

For now the grapes were hauled to Sacramento where Jacob Knauth converted them into wine. It was then transported to San Francisco by rail and barge. There the still wines were finished and the sparklers were produced. The final 1883 champagne cuvée was made mostly from White Zinfandel, followed by Orleans, Gutedel and Feher Szagos. The Orleans supplied a hint of Muscat flavor, which probably appealed to the California wine drinker who could not afford real Champagne. Eclipse could be had for $2.00 or less. The real thing cost at least half again more.[78]

There is something of a mystery in Haraszthy's wines. Where did he get the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, or the finished wine, for his Medoc style Chateau d'Orleans claret? This wine later sent an intelligent and very experienced English wine expert into ecstasy. If they came from Orleans Hill, I know nothing about wine or its history.

And how does one explain the erratic quality of the Eclipse, which noted wineman George Husmann noted in a letter to the Pacific Wine & Spirit Review? Why were the press reports from fancy occasions and formal wine tastings so positive, when the Eclipse on the shelf often seemed satisfactory but rather ordinary? I suspect that by the late eighties, when the Orleans Hill deficiencies were fully understood by Haraszthy, that he bought small lots of grapes from coastal valleys, like Napa and Sonoma, and kept their wines in separate lots for competitions and special events. My suspicion is only that, but the perceived evidence is very compelling.[80]

By 1886 Orleans Hill had a huge frame winery with a cellar dug into the hillside to fight the heat. Charles A. Silberstein was the winemaker and stayed on as long as wine was made there. The distillery next door first held a small kettle-type still. But, as was the case at Vina and Natoma, when reality finally settled in, a huge Saundors continuous still was installed. It's brandy would be used to fortify Haraszthy's growing volume of dessert wines.

250,000-gallon Orleans Hill Winery of Arpad Haraszthy & Co.

All wines were shipped to the San Francisco cellar, where the sparklers were produced and the still wines shipped out in bulk or bottled. As economic conditions deteriorated nationally after 1889, most of Haraszthy's still wine went out by rail in bulk, much of it to the New Orleans market.

In 1886 the year-round crew for the vineyard and cellar was sixty men, but the number declined quickly as the tonnage per acre dropped steadily to little more

than one ton per acre. Before long Silberstein was buying grapes from growers in the Capay Valley and around Woodland. By 1895 the company had ceased production of still wines and Epstein had taken over control of the floundering operation, which had technically become a part of the California Wine Association (CWA) in 1894. Arpad was so deeply in personal debt that he was unable to gain much of any financial relief from these transactions. He was able to keep some of the champagne-making equipment in a small section of his old cellar complex. He was barely in business in 1899, and in 1900 he headed off with his brother Bela to search for gold in Alaska. They failed in that and he was back in San Francisco in a few months. On November 16, 1900 he collapsed on the sidewalk waiting for a cable car and died on the way to the hospital.[81]

Before 1902 the Orleans Hill property changed hands several times, since it was not included in the sale to the CWA. There were still grape vines there and wine to be made, but none went to Haraszthy in San Francisco after 1890. Epstein sold the property to Eugene Myers in 1896; he sold it to Sigmund Greenbaum in 1899. Silberstein was leasing the property but could not make a go of it, even after an upturn in the economy and wine prices after 1897. John R. Jones bought the property in 1902, turned it over to his sheep and converted the winery into a fruit packing shed.

* * *

Before we turn to happier tales of winegrowing in the San Joaquin Valley and the Sierra Foothills, we must not leave the Sacramento Valley under a totally dark cloud of vinous failure. The small-scale successes of such as Gerke and Bugbey were rare, to be sure, and as the years went by commercial viticulture tended more and more to the growing of raisin and table grapes, and to the production of brandy as a beverage and for fortifying sweet wines.

As the land tenure situation cleared in the fifties and sixties the Sacramento Valley started filling up with medium sized farms, although there were vast areas where sheep and cattle raising dominated. We can see from the 1858 and 1860 reports of the State Agricultural Society's visiting committees that viticulture was on the minds of many valley settlers, usually in a small way, usually less than five acres. From Redding and Red Bluff in the north to Sacramento, the visitors noted dozens of small vineyards, which also dotted the land on the lower foothills running down to the eastern side of the valley.

As the years passed most farmers, who had first perhaps thought of wine, were converted by the climate, both physical and business, to raisin and table varieties. This was particularly true during the hard times of the seventies. By the late eighties the winegrape acreage statistics of some counties were very small: Colusa: 24, Butte: 111, Sutter: 38. In Tehama there wasn't a wine grape vine officially recorded except for the thousands at Vina. But in the south, in Yolo and Sacramento Counties, it was another story, which I shall touch on shortly.[83]

Charles Covillaud

In the early years there were a few pioneers in the upper valley who, for at least a short while, were committed to commercial winegrowing. One of these was Charles Covillaud, a native of Cognac, who came to California in 1848 and made a fortune in the Gold Country. He acquired a large tract of valley land in Yuba County and founded the town of Marysville in 1850, named for his wife Mary Murphy, a survivor of the Donner Party. The town became the major trading center for the northern mines and had a population of about 12,000 in the '60s, very similar to today's count.

Covillaud had a large and diversified ranch, planting 15 acres of wine grapes in 1855. His grapevine acreage rose to 140 in 1860, with quite a few table and raisin varieties. He also erected a small winery, with a press room and wine vaults. The Agricultural Society's visiting committee tasted his red wine, "much like a rich Burgundy," which the host thought got its rich color and "pungent flavor" from the wild *V. californica* grapes growing along the river. Perhaps the red grapes involved were Zinfandel, for which he won an award as a table grape at the 1859 State Fair. I find it very difficult to draw any firm conclusions from these "facts."[84] Charles and his wife both died in 1867 and we read little about wine from around Marysville thereafter. The 1870 Census counted four small producers; in 1880 only two, brothers Peter and Franc Grass. But in 1890 there were still almost 600 acres of wine grapes in the area, with no clear information on their destiny.[85]

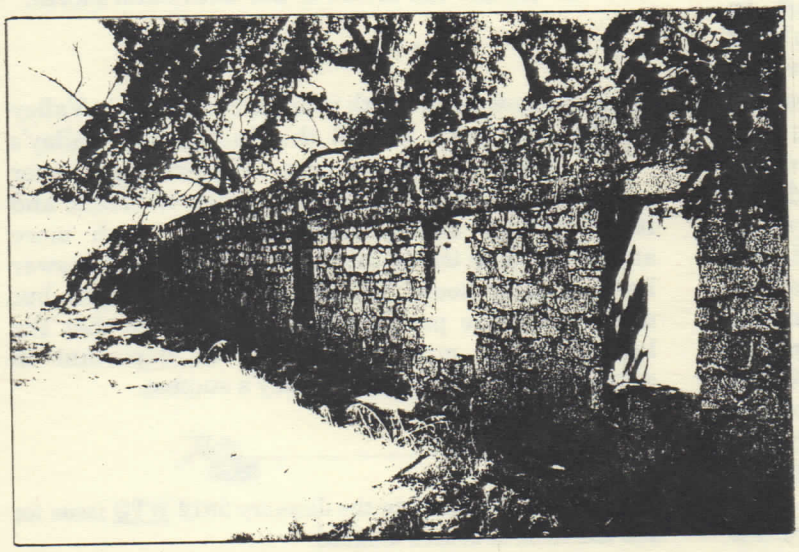
James Nickerson

An even more important example of an early and long-forgotten pioneer of valley winegrowing was James R. Nickerson. He came to California in 1850 and was soon rich from the gold taken from his Cedar Quartz Mine on the Bear River above Auburn. He settled in Placer County northwest of today's Lincoln (el. 164') and had five acres of wine grapes in 1857, ten in 1859, mostly foreign vinifera varieties imported from the East Coast. Among these was his "Black Zinfindal" which he soon discovered to be his best red wine grape.[86] The California Farmer soon discovered Nickerson and featured his vineyard and its wines as an example of the viticultural potential of the valley's lower foothills.[87]

In the sixties Nickerson and two other vineyardists in the area provided good vinifera vines to Placer County growers. One was George W. Applegate near

Auburn, another Zinfandel enthusiast. The other was L. E. Miller, whose American River Gardens were located near today's Rocklin.

This Placer County valley activity was actually sort of an offshoot of the Sacramento County area just down the road. Around the state capital growing wine grapes and making wine and brandy was big business from the 1850s to the end of the century and after.



Nickerson Winery ruins, *c*1950s [E. Peninou photo]

Anthony P. Smith, Horticulturist

One might wonder how it was possible for growers like Nickerson and Covillaud to have Zinfandel vines in the late fifties at about the same time that the variety was discovered to be a good red wine grape in the Sonoma and Santa Clara Valleys. There may have been several nurserymen in Sacramento and Placer Counties who brought in vinifera vines from the East Coast. But the pioneer and the most important was Anthony P. Smith, a New England man who sailed from Boston to San Francisco in 1849 and bought fifty acres of land from John Sutter just north of town. Smith was a dedicated horticulturist with connections to Boston's leading nurseryman, Charles M. Hovey, who was an accomplished expert on local viticulture, in which the raising and early forcing of vinifera grape vines was a Boston specialty. In New England table grapes were the only desired product of this activity. But some of them, particularly several Muscat varieties, made good wine. One, the Zinfindal, was a popular red variety, but no one as yet thought of it as a wine grape.[88]

Smith arrived in Sacramento with substantial capital, since he was one of the owners of the ship that brought him to San Francisco. He may have left an order with Hovey before he sailed, more probably after he bought his land near the American River. In 1853 he received a huge load of horticultural planting stock from Boston. In it were the very foreign vinifera varieties popular at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Newly arrived Californians were ready to try anything on the new land, experimenting to see what would work. In the 1850s when we read about vineyardists and their foreign vines, with very few exceptions we are reading about table grape varieties. Here and there in the late fifties we learn of the almost spectacular success of what came to be called Zinfandel, in the Sonoma and Santa Clara Valleys and in the lower foothills near Sacramento. The judges at the 1859 State Fair who named a red wine produced by a San Jose nurseryman the best red wine exhibited expressed surprise. It came from grapes which "had been selected more as table fruit than for winemaking." It was later discovered to be Zinfandel. Smith and his customers were making the same discovery.[89] Smith must have imported rooted vines for he was advertising them for sale in the California Farmer in 1854. That publication was his solid supporter, since he had known its publisher, James L. Warren, back in Boston where Warren had owned a commercial nursery before coming to California in 1849. His catalogues had listed the very grape vines Smith had imported from Boston, including the "Zinfendal" as early as 1844.

By the time that the Agricultural Society's visiting committee stopped by in 1858, A. P. Smith, as he was always known, had created a 90-acre horticultural paradise. His Pomological Gardens and Nursery was a huge operation employing thirty men full time. In 1859 the visitors counted 33 foreign varieties for sale. In 1860 they concentrated on his wines, which they praised for their "superior excellence." At the 1859 State Fair his white wine made from the Cannon Hall Muscat won first premium.[90]

This paradise was destroyed in the great flood of 1861–1862, although well-rooted plants tended to survive. James Warren was happy to announce in April the Smith was back in business, barely.[91]

In the years to come his nursery business in the upper Sierra foothills blossomed. When we read of the rise of the Zinfandel there in the 1860s, Smith was usually the source of the vines. We shall see that in these years wine grape acreage in El Dorado County made it one of the state leaders in that category. Eventually Smith's business was lively enough in the hill country to justify his establishing an agency for his sales in Placerville.[92]

Sacramento, strictly as a wine town, would have grown slowly and steadily from the sixties to the

eighties. But what accelerated wine production there was the fact that wine was necessary to produce brandy. And by the 1880s the city was not only the state's capital, it was the brandy capital of the state.

George Johnston

One name stands out in this development. George Johnston arrived on the scene in the mid-sixties, already a technical expert on distillation processes. He also had the capital to build a specially designed still to convert wine into brandy by a continuous process that controlled and lessened the fusel oil content in the final product. These high alcohols give brandy and fortified wines a hot, rough character. He patented his mammoth still and sold many of them to producers in the Great Valley. His own still had nine chambered columns and was seventeen feet high. In 1869 he produced 4500 gallons of brandy, 16,000 in 1871, 40,000 in 1872. He also invented and sold an excellent crusher-stemmer.[93] The entries of the Johnston Brandy and Wine Co. at the 1882 State Fair indicate the breadth of the company's product line: three vintages of brandy, dry Riesling, Zinfandel claret, Muscatel, Angelica and Port.[94]

By the 1880s new large wineries were being built in Sacramento. First was the Nevis Winery, which eventually became the well-known California Winery. Then those of S. Lachman & Co., and Kohler and Van Bergen. These were important arms to two powerful San Francisco wine merchants. In 1894 both joined the industry's great monopoly, the California Wine Association, making Johnston's brandy works part of the CWA after he sold the operation to his competitors.[95]

By 1890 the only really large winegrowing operations in the valley were Vina and Natoma, and their days were numbered. The Marysville area in Yuba County still had sixteen winegrape growers with 570 acres of vines. And there were three small wineries. There were also 430 acres just northwest of Sacramento in Placer County. In all the rest of the upper valley there were only 335 acres, owned by a few score families mostly for their own use.

But there were 1881 acres in Sacramento County that year, not counting the Natoma acreage. And quite a few growers in that Mormon Island area hung on after their giant neighbor expired, shipping most of their grapes down to Sacramento. In southern Yolo County, around Woodland, there were almost 1,000 acres, not counting those still alive at Orleans. That these vines were alive and their owners mildly prospering in the southern portion of the Sacramento Valley was obviously the result of their close proximity to the cooling marine effects of the San Francisco Bay area from which mild breezes drift east through the great water and wind gap of the Delta Area.

The greatest benefits of these cooler days and nights occur in San Joaquin County and its famed Lodi area, just below Sacramento. In fact, the official northern border of today's Lodi Viticultural Area is the capital's southern city limits. The great rise in Sacramento County's winegrape acreage in the next few years, many thousands of acres, would be near this line around the towns of Elk Grove and Florin.

* * *

We now head south into the San Joaquin Valley and leave behind the Sacramento Valley's tales of vinous woe. Writers have ever wondered why the sizzling hot region of Fresno and its neighbors should have been so much more successful than the counties to the north. The answer has generally been, "It's the Climate." Hot yes, but drier and more predictable. We shall see that the human factor may be at least as important in determining San Joaquin Valley's success.

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[Please refer to Part I in the January 2012 WTQ issue for full citations of source names.]

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75. PWSR, 5/11/1888.
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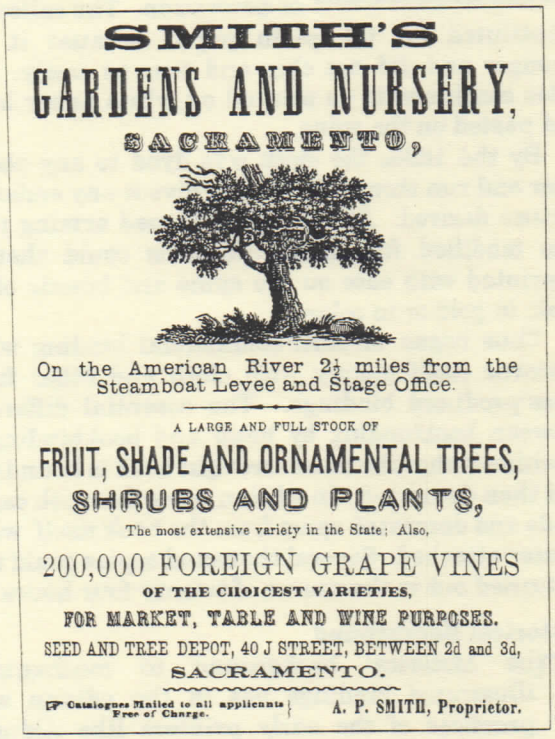


A. P. SMITH – See p.9

[Courtesy of Tendril Eric Costa, *Gold & Wine: A History of Winemaking in El Dorado County, California*, 2010]

A Brief Sketch of Victorian Illustrated Bindings

by *Ruth Walker*

[*Longtime Tendril member and ABAA bookseller, Ruth Walker is also a talented craftsman in the art of Bookbinding and Fine Book Restoration. Over the years, she has given us many valuable lessons on our books and their proper care. The following essay first appeared in the July 1994 WTQ. For your bookish needs, contact Ruth at reademoorebookrestoration.com.* — Ed.]

AN ARTICLE IN THE OCTOBER 1894 Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine titled "Commercial Bookbinding" describes the enthusiasm with which cloth-bound books were received in the 19th century. It was similar to our delight in the readability and economy of modern paperbacks. The transition from leather bindings to cloth and illustrated cloth bindings made by machine met the demands of large printing runs. And, as new cultural demands for less expensive books were met, these binding techniques became as sumptuous and aesthetically pleasing, in their own way, as the hand-wrought leather bindings of the previous centuries.

The Beginning

LTHOUGH ECONOMICAL paper and board bindings were introduced by German binders in the 18th century, English binderies began to use plain glazed calico (unbleached cotton cloth) in place of the paper around 1810. There was at first no thought of decoration. The calico was substituted for the plain paper because it was stronger and did not chip and tear as easily. The titles continued to be printed on white paper labels and pasted on the spine.

By the 1830s the cloth was dyed to any chosen color and run through rollers to give it any embossed texture desired. As the old-fashioned arming press was modified for steam, patterns could then be imprinted with ease on the spine and boards of the book, in gold or in colors.

Thus began modern commercial binding which concerns itself mainly with cloth and other fabric mass-produced bindings. The essential difference between bookbinding by hand and bookbinding by machine is that the hand-wrought book is bound first and then decorated. In edition work the cloth case is made and decorated apart from the book itself, which is later attached. Several thousand copies could then be turned out in the course of twenty-four hours.

Historical Background

The historical background to mechanically illustrated bindings lies in the edition work practices of the early printers like Aldus in Venice and Caxton in London. As the demands for books rose, methods were sought to simplify the work of the finisher who decorated the leather sides and spines of books. In the finest of early books every touch of gold on the book cover was made by a separate tool, which the skilled craftsman impressed onto the leather at least twice, once without gold and once to affix it. Finishing was a laborious and expensive process.

Labor Saving Devices

One of the first devices adopted as a short cut was the roulette, or roll, on which a complete pattern was engraved on the circumference of a brass wheel attached to a long wooden handle. When the heated wheel was rolled across the leather, this pattern was reproduced, creating borders and frameworks for further decoration if desired.

The next device was an engraved metal block that could be used in combination with others to make patterns on the covers and spine of a book. The finisher had in stock a variety of these blocks in different sizes and subjects, often related in pairs and sets of four. He could then arrange these to suit each book, availing himself also of the use of the roll and individual stamps or pallets used in handwork.

The one step needed to replace handwork embellishment was to engrave a design for the whole side of a book on one plate, so that it could be stamped onto the board in one stroke of the press. Engraved plates were used as early as the 15th century. However, the practice had ceased by the beginning of the 19th century except for mass produced dictionaries, prayer books and Bibles. And, the designs were always an imitation of hand-tooled designs which were pattern-oriented rather than pictorial.

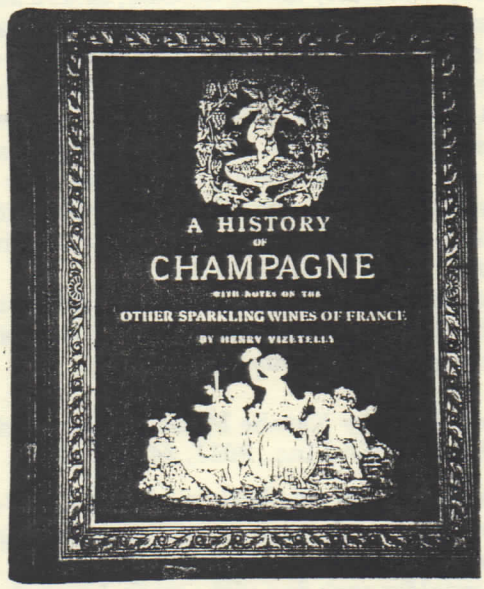
Pictorial Designs

In the 19th century, English and American book designers led the way in introducing a new pictorial interpretation of book cover illustration. German, Italian and French designers were inclined to imitate the artistic leather bindings done by hand. In general, their early cloth bindings were embellished to look like tooled leather patterns.

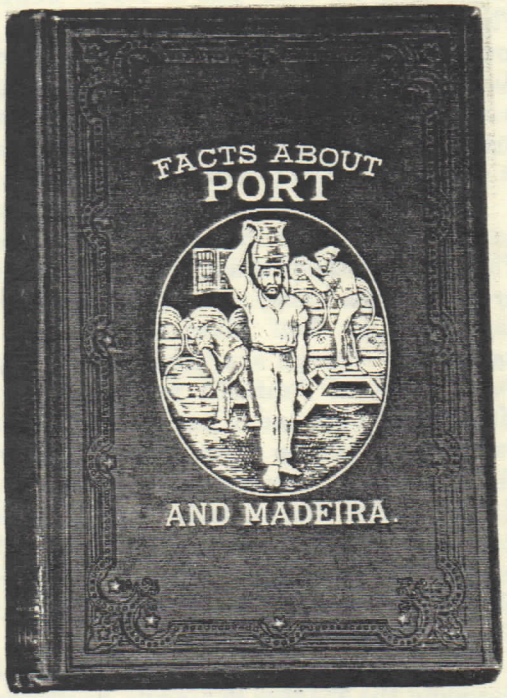
With the 19th century advances of steel and copper engraving techniques and the ease with which cloth book covers could be hot-stamped by steam-driven presses, English designers were truly free to explore

new concepts in book decoration. An important, and pleasing, introduction to the art of bindings was pictorial cover illustration related to the subject, theme or plot of the book.

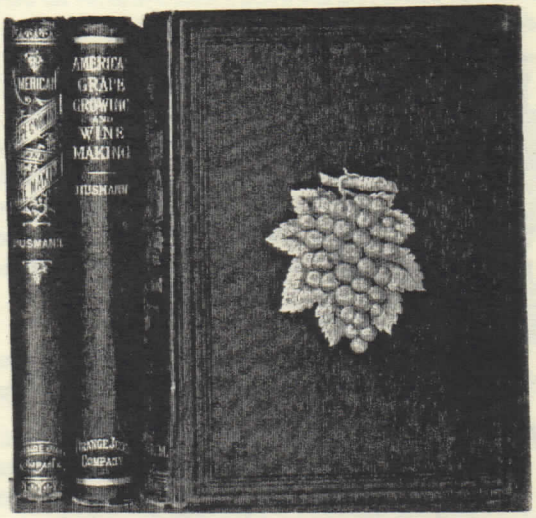
There are many fine examples of pictorial hot-stamped book cover illustration in the world of wine books. One of the most impressive of all is Henry Vizetelly's *A History of Champagne* (1882) in brilliant green cloth, lavishly gilt-stamped on the covers and spine:



Vizetelly's *Facts about Port and Madeira* (1880) also points out how as a publisher and author, Vizetelly was able to bring book illustration to new heights:



George Husmann's *American Grape Growing & Wine Making* (1881) and *Grape Culture & Wine-Making in California* (1888) display a simple front cover embellishment with a more ornate spine treatment:



Thomas George Shaw's *Wine, the Vine and the Cellar* (1863) is another exquisite example of a thematically illustrated binding:

These lovely bindings bring up an obvious bibliographical question: What was the first wine book to have a cloth cover? We have a couple of early candidates which we will discuss next issue.

Book Reviews: A Global Bunch
by *Christopher Fielden*

[*Christopher Fielden, a very knowledgeable and appreciated reviewer who covers the world's wine literature for our* Quarterly, *delights us once again.* — Ed.]

N THIS OCCASION, I have to report on a truly international range of authors from, in alphabetical order, Argentina, Australia, Canada, England and the United States. With no better reason to do otherwise, I will review them in that order!

Vino Argentino by Laura Catena. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2010. 238pp. $27.50.

There is probably nobody better qualified to write a book on the wines of her native country than Laura Catena, though how she has found the time to do it, I have no idea. Without being an author, she is the mother of three children and an emergency room doctor in a San Francisco hospital, in addition to roles as winemaker and export director of the family winery in Argentina. To fill in any spare moments she has, she is conducting research into the variables that affect the quality of wine.

This is a very personal book. Whilst there is much about the Catena family and their wines, they do not dominate it. The impression is of a fascinating scrapbook, full of brief portraits of the personalities in the Argentine wine industry. It is a book much more about people and places than wines, the whole lavishly illustrated with photographs by Sara Remington. What shines from every page is that the author is in love with her subject.

I can think of no book that is a better introduction for the novitiate to Argentina and its wine regions. It exudes the sunshine of the country. It will tell you where to eat and give you recipes for what you have eaten; it will tell you how to kiss someone when you first meet them and how to save money by getting an Argentine friend to reserve hotel rooms for you. If you are looking for a technical book on the wines of Argentina, don't buy this, but if you are looking for a truly pleasurable read, I can strongly recommend it!

Australian Wine Companion. 2012 Edition by James Halliday. Richmond (Vic): Hardie Grant Books, 2011. 776 pp. $A36.95.

Like Topsy, wine guides just grow and grow. My last copy of Halliday's annual companion dates back to 2000. It ran to 538 pages and it included New Zealand and the page size was smaller. Just how big the task of putting this together is given by the author; he says he features 102 wineries more than in the previous year's edition and that he only mentions wineries that have submitted samples that have rated 87 points or more—to check on lesser wineries and lesser wines you must consult the website www.winecompanion.com.au.

I have used this book in the past to seek new suppliers of wine for the British market and I have found it particularly useful because, as well as rating the vineyard and its wines, it says how many 12-bottle cases it produces in an average vintage and on what export markets it sells its wines. For the wine tourist, there is information about visiting possibilities and opening hours, and for the wine consumer there are detailed tasting notes and very useful background information about the vineyards and whether a cork or screwcap is used for each individual wine.

This is the essential book on Australian wines for me to have at my shoulder and I hope it is not another twelve years before I buy another copy.

Unquenchable by Natalie Maclean. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2011, 344 pp. $24.

The subtitle for this book is "*A tipsy quest for the world's best bargain wines*" and the suggested format seems is that it partners a wine region with a meal for each day of the week. I am not certain that either of these two concepts actually works. Notwithstanding this, I can recommend this book as a most enjoyable read. Why?—because it exudes such enthusiasm for wine and is totally down to earth. There are few wine writers who would extol the merits of Australia wine because of their cheapness. As she says, and I can echo her sentiments word for word, "As a Scot who comes from generations of hard-drinking penny-pinchers, this pleases me immensely. It means I can buy four bottles rather than one."

In the book there are seven wine regions featured and in each of them she visits two or three wineries. Thus Sunday, the first day of the week, is represented by the Barossa Valley, where she meets such diverse characters as Wolf Blass ("I call this wine the leg-opener," though she keeps hers firmly crossed), Peter Gago of Penfold's and Stephen and Prue Henschke. At the end of her visit, she gives her best value wines, her top value producers, a list of dishes she has tasted, recommended dishes to pair with Barossa Valley Shiraz, useful contact books and websites and, most surprisingly, what she calls "related reading"—*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke* and Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda*!

The following days take us to the Mosel Valley in Germany, the Niagara Peninsula, South Africa, Sicily,

Argentina, where we meet Laura Catena, the Douro Valley and Provence—largely because she is hooked on the works of Peter Mayle.

As I have suggested, I do have reservations about the book—so much of the format seems artificial. I also wish that the text had been checked more thoroughly before publication, as I kept coming up against small errors that brought me up short. Despite all this, I really enjoyed this book because I found it so refreshing. Natalie has a no nonsense approach to wine that it can make glad the heart of man—and woman.

The Finest Wines of Burgundy by Bill Nanson. London: Aurum Press, 2012. 320 pp. £20.

This is a further book to come out of the stable of The World of Fine Wine Magazine and I could repeat much of what I wrote last year about the companion volume on Champagne. The photographs, again by Jon Wyand, are magnificent, but there are great dangers in writing about the finest of anything. Any selection has to be subjective and strictly personal.

The distinctive feature about this book is the author. He is not a wine professional, he is a Burgundophile, with his own website devoted to the subject. He is a consumer who loves the wines of Burgundy so much that he has not just drunk his way up and down the Côte d'Or, but has repeatedly gone back to the region to work during the harvest. In this book he gives a true picture of the people of Burgundy, peasants who live close to the soil and who enjoy life. I mean nothing denigratory about the word peasant—it is the word that best sums up most of the growers. Whilst there may be a picture of the Muzard brothers of Santenay posing in their Deux Chevaux, most of the growers prefer to drive a Mercedes!

After useful introductory chapters on the history of wines of Burgundy and what happens in the vineyard and the winery, the villages and vineyards of the Côtes de Nuits and Beaune are described with loving profiles of some fifty or so Domaines and their owners. Details are given as to their production and as to what are their outstanding wines. At the end of the book, there is a selection of Top Ten lists—the last one being "Ten Best Domaines to Visit–English Spoken"!

I suppose my niggle is in the selection of the featured Domaines. My initial reaction is that it might have been the traditional prejudice of many writers on Burgundy—if you are a négociant, your vineyard holdings are immediately devalued. I think this may largely be the case, for such important holdings as those of Drouhin, Latour, Chanson, Faiveley and Picard are ignored. On the other hand Bichot, Bouchard Père et Fils and J-C. Boisset are included, indeed the last doubly, for the Domaine de la Vougeraie is treated separately.

Through this book I have been introduced, with affection, to many new growers, including David Clark, with his 2-hectare estate in Morey Saint Denis, which, amongst others, produces such humble wines as Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire and Bourgogne Passtousgrains. I think it must be patriotic pride on the part of the author that has included him with the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti.

In Search of Pinot Noir by Benjamin Lewin MW. Dover: Vendange Press, 2011. 424 pp. $45.

I think this is the first time that I have written of a book that it should not be approached lightly. Pinot Noir is perhaps the most serious grape of all and the author has approached his subject seriously. This is first and foremost an academic book. As he writes in the preface, "Winemakers in cool climates (and some not so cool) all over the world have set out in search of the Holy Grail: to emulate the best Pinot Noir of Burgundy." This book gives details of one man's pilgrimage through the best Pinot Noir vineyards of the world.

Perhaps not surprisingly there is no detail of the important quantities of Pinot Noir now produced in Eastern Europe . A recent visit to Romania suggested to me that though their wines so labelled might be good glasses of wine, they bore no relationship to Burgundy. This brings me to another point. I feel that many of the best Pinot Noirs from the New World can have their own distinct qualities, without in any way trying to emulate Burgundy.

One of his chapter headings describes the Pinot Noir as 'The Quintessential Terroir Grape," and whilst this is true, terroir is just one factor among many quality factors. As André Ostertag is quoted about what has contributed to the increase in quality of many Pinot Noirs from Alsace, "It's not a wine-making revolution, it's a viticultural revolution," but he laments, "To make great Pinot Noir you incur the same costs as Burgundy, but we don't get the same prices." This is one of the big problems: yields must be low and the resultant wine needs to be cuddled.

One of the detailed features of this book is the tasting notes from a number of the best wineries in each region. Notes for Burgundies are not generally given, except when for example, wines from adjoining vineyards might be compared. However there are, for example, notes of comparative tastings of the wines of different communes of the Côte d'Or and those of the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

For me much of the enjoyment of this book is the memories of my own particular pilgrimage through the Pinot Noir vineyards of the world.

The Drops of God: A Book Review
by *Alder Yarrow*

[*This review is gratefully reprinted from the January 12, 2012 posting at vinography.com, the award-winning wine & food site of new Tendril, Alder Yarrow. For more good things, visit his Vinography: A Wine Blog.* — Ed.]

The Drops of God. Vol.1. Story by Tadashi Agi. Art by Shu Okimoto. Vertical, Inc./Kodansha U.S.A., 2011. 424 pp. Card covers. $9.65.

"the most widely read wine book in history"

I'M TICKLED BY THE IDEA of wine featuring prominently in popular entertainment. I think a lot of wine lovers got a kick out of "Sideways." Regardless of what they thought of the movie overall, there were enough inside wine jokes and archetypal wine conversations that anyone who loved wine was able to at least smile knowingly. I found it delightful to watch people geeking out about wine and extolling the virtues of Pinot Noir on the big screen.

A similar small delight is to be found in the pages of the newly translated *Drops of God*, by Tadashi Agi and Shu Okimoto. *Drops of God*, or Kami no Shizuku, as it is known in its original Japanese, may well be the most widely read wine book in history, that is, if you are willing to grant this Japanese manga cartoon status as a wine book. I've written about the phenomenon of Kami no Shizuku several times here on Vinography, with amazement at just how popular the wine infused adventures of a young businessman could be. The readership in Japan is close to 500,000 people, and the series is purportedly just as popular in Korea.

And now the first volume of the comic has been released in the U.S. by Vertical, Inc. in conjunction with Kodansha U.S.A.

Curious wine lovers will find several surprises in the book, starting with the fact that it must be read right-to-left, top-to-bottom, just as it is in native Japanese. This format, which will take a little getting used to for most readers, stems from the fact that while the words can easily be translated to English, the drawn panels cannot as easily be rearranged to read in the traditional Western flow.

Perhaps more surprising is just how fun a story that completely revolves around serious wine geekery can be. From the finer points of Left Bank châteaux to the revered icons of Burgundy to the influence of terroir and time on the flavors of a wine, *The Drops of God* is suffused with a near mystical reverence for wine. Of course, this is manga, so the profundity level is much closer to that of a soap opera than a Rex Pickett novel, but that shouldn't stop you from giving it a try.

The story centers around a reluctant protagonist, Shizuku Kanazaki, a low-level employee at a beer company who just happens to be the estranged son of Japan's most famous, and as it turns out, recently deceased wine critic. While Kanazaki doesn't like or drink wine, it quickly becomes clear that his father has taught him more about wine than he was aware himself. And a good thing this turns out to be, as his father's last will and testament throws Kanazaki into a mysterious contest for his estate and wine collection, against his father's somewhat sinister wine-critic protégé Issei Tomine.

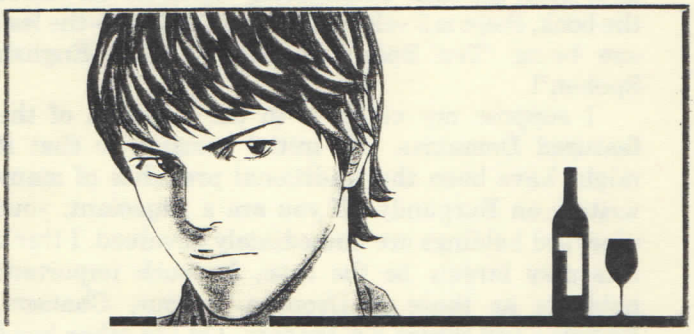
Kanazaki teams up with the studious, sweet, and adorably self-conscious sommelier, Miss Shinohara, to plumb the mysteries of his father's legacy and take a crash course on all the more practical wine knowledge that he needs to accompany his uncanny palate and decanting abilities.

As is typical for such comics, plenty of hijinks ensue, from the typical teenage-level obliviousness to developing romance, to shouting matches with aggressive bosses, to chases around the city to find a particular bottle of wine. The art is cinematic in quality, with a mix of great drama and subtle detail, much lavished on the fine reproduction of wine labels. The sub-plots multiply as the pages go by, just as some of the world's great wines surface everywhere from tragic messes on the floor of a cellar to buried in a city park. The storyline is quite compelling, and the mysterious plot can easily lead you to devour the entire book in a single sitting.

While many adults might not ordinarily consider spending their time with a comic book in hand, *The Drops of God* is worth a look. In any wine-loving household with a teenager, and parents who aren't afraid of glorifying the consumption of wine (with an occasional bout of over-consumption depicted) the book will likely be a big hit.

Frankly, the book's biggest disappointment lies in the fact that it is merely the first in a series, and as a result, leaves every thread of the plot hanging for resolution in the subsequent volumes.

Luckily, the second one came out a few weeks ago, the third is due in March, and the fourth in June.



The *Grapes of Wrath* and the Wrath of Grapes: The Friendship of John Steinbeck and Martin Ray

by *Barbara Marinacci*

CONCLUSION

[*In our January issue we savoured Part 1 of this hitherto unknown and unpublished story of the legendary wineman and his friendship with the world renowned author. During Martin Ray's long-lived fight for varietal quality in California's wines, he approached his old friend to join his cause.* — Ed.]

Martin Ray as Varietal Wine Zealot

TO SPEND TIME around Martin Ray at any period of his four-decade span as a vintner meant hearing him declaim, or even rant, about the wickedness rampant in the world's wine industry, especially in California. (Frequently Italy and sometimes even France would also draw his fire. And he had mostly contempt for American winegrowers outside of California, especially those using native grapes or their hybrid forms.) MR's own wines were intended to provide excellent models for other vintners to emulate.

From the start of his tenure at Masson in 1936 MR saw himself as California wine's redeemer, so certainly he would have talked at length to John Steinbeck about his frustrating efforts to convince at least some of the state's better vineyards and wineries to produce truly superior wine grapes and table wines. (He differentiated these "fine wines" from *vin ordinaire*, ordinary wines made for daily consumption, whose needed existence he readily accepted.) He attempted to induce these proprietors and winemakers to subscribe to his tenets of quality control. But to his everlasting frustration and ultimate ire, he perpetually failed to persuade other winery proprietors of the wisdom of his program for instituting excellent quality in fine wines that could represent the state's potentiality for winegrowing. (It should be said, too, that several viticulture and enology professors at University of California, Davis, who in the late 1930s also promoted grape and wine quality standards and were MR's friends, also made little headway in the industry.)

Eleanor Ray provides an amusing anecdote in *Vineyards in the Sky*.

> Martin shared with the Steinbecks his own intensifying campaign to promote pure varietal wines as *the* solution to California vintners' bad "press" nationally and internationally. One day at the Steinbecks' house, as he was holding forth on this favored topic, John told him for God's sake to hold off. "Want to kill yourself, keeping up this fight on top of all your cellar and vineyard work ... *and* your colossal entertaining?" he exclaimed. "Why should you care what wines are being ridiculously labeled? The worse they are, the finer yours will be in comparison. Just let it drop, Rusty!" Certainly John had a point: Martin's fixation was not simplifying his life any—as the doctor had ordered.
>
> Just at that moment, by odd coincidence, John got a phone call from Harry Hopkins at the White House. President Roosevelt's close advisor had discovered in Steinbeck inexhaustible material for his various social causes. Martin hung around while they talked, for over an hour, watching Steinbeck waving an arm excitedly to emphasize some point, and repeating "Now what we want is ..." and generally carrying on.
>
> "Who the hell is WE?" Martin asked when the conversation finally ended. "You kept saying, 'What *we* want.'"
>
> "Why, We the People!" John exploded, his fist in the air challengingly. Whereupon Martin laughed uproariously, and shook his own fist in the air. "We the Varietal Wines!" he came back at him. After that, John gave up trying to take the fire out of Martin's cause, and expected reciprocal consideration.

These were the key elements in MR's radical plan for those better California wineries who maintained they were already producing excellent products—and therefore appalled wine connoisseurs accustomed to superb European wines:

1) Grow, and vintage from, *only* fine winegrape varieties when making superior wines.

2) Use the painstaking, handcrafted, "classic" methods in making wine, which necessarily entailed strictly limiting production.

3) Stop the practice of "blending out"—in which abundant and low-cost inferior grapes are crushed along with those of the finer varieties, or large quantities of wines made from them are added to a small amount of a fine varietal, whose name alone will eventually be put on labels of the bottled product.

4) Strive to make wholly "natural" wines by refraining from adding something to them, such as metabisulphite, sugar, water, and (in champagnes) brandy; and also from removing beneficent microbes and flavors through processes like pasteurizing, fining, and filtering.

5) Be honest and give varietal names (e.g., Pinot noir, Cabernet sauvignon) *only* to 100% unblended wines. Also, identify on labels the regional origin, or geographic appellation, of the winegrapes used to make such wines.

A decade and a half later, as will be told shortly, Martin would try to enlist John Steinbeck in helping to get his revolutionary wine-improving message out to the wider public through his undoubted press connections.

The Beginning of an End

It's clear that Martin Ray at times wrote at length to Julian Street about Steinbeck in response to some questions that had been asked. For instance, there's this very long passage, containing insights accrued during MR's deep acquaintance with both Steinbecks—and then, as MR moved inexorably from the political and economic arenas into the highly personal realm, anticipating what could happen to their marriage.

> As for the question, "is John a Communist sympathizer?", I can tell you that he is not a Communist and not a Communist sympathizer in the accepted meaning of the words. Yet, John sympathizes with the under dog, and wishes to raise the benefits of the masses. He once told me that he could not devote his energies to the raising of a family because he felt it a limited devotion compared to what he felt toward all of humanity, or words to this effect. It is dangerous for me to undertake to describe with words what his feelings are as described to me in his words. You know how that sort of thing is. John's family were people of means although they lost it in later life. He and Carol lived on $25. and $50. per month during the first years of their married life which was the sacrifice then necessary for him to make in order to write full time, so they know what it is to have little. Her people were neither wealthy nor poor but somewhere in between. We went to school with her and remember her as not in any way limited by class restrictions. Her father was a Real Estate and Insurance Broker in San Jose, and still is; yet, she was hurt somewhere along the line and she is today still suffering from a feeling of inferiority, which accounts for her often being misunderstood. She speaks out very boldly and sometimes not delicately in the presence of people just met and in groups which she has just entered and sometimes the things she says are not very nice. She shocks people and they think she is brazen but underneath she is really frightened.
>
> John is bigger than she is and his success in a way has hurt her. She doesn't like the way people shower their attention on him and pay little attention to her. She has found this way which I described in which she gets attention of one kind or another. She has recently turned her hand to some sketching and has written a few things, so perhaps in time she will find herself and be content to be her own natural self. Understand, she is healthy, attractive and pleasant. Actually she is a very good sort. It was she who joined the Communist Party and if there is a left wing to the family, it is Carol rather than John. Elsie had to take her aside before she would employ help in her house. She was washing all the clothes and even the bedding when they had already undertaken much entertainment. Finally she got her to agree to get a house boy and now they have a cook and a house boy. It is naturally difficult to have all this attention pushed at one all of a sudden and to be making money hand over fist after all those lean years.
>
> I have said that John has not yet done his best work and I will add to it that it will probably be a good many years before his wife will be able to adjust herself to all these changes if indeed she is ever successful. [1/22/41]

In this letter to Street, MR ended these statements by observing, "I like his wife and understand something about her, but she is not a person I can reach for she is always somebody else rather than herself, furthermore, she doesn't drink well."

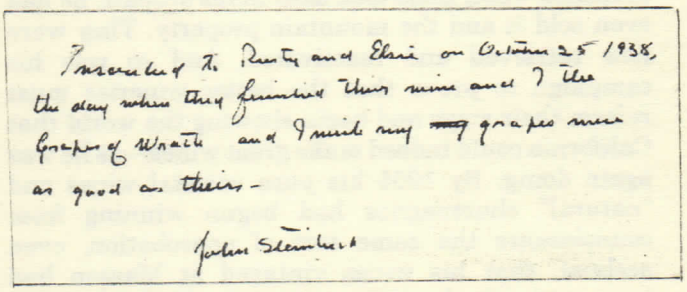
By the spring of 1941 it was becoming apparent to Rusty and Elsie Ray that the Steinbecks' marriage was totally unraveling. John probably confided in Rusty that he had begun an affair with Gwendolyn Conger, a young singer he had met in the previous year while spending some time in Hollywood, away from Carol.

In *Vineyards in the Sky* Eleanor Ray recounted what Rusty had said about this unhappy time:

> The Steinbecks' companionable marriage suddenly changed when *Grapes of Wrath* became a tremendous literary and commercial success. At parties John was the big celebrity, while Carol received little or no recognition. Feeling rudely dismissed, she acted out her anger, sometimes raising her voice to compel attention. Increasingly she was sharply criticized and socially ostracized. The once-amicable pair no longer visited the Rays' mountaintop together.
>
> Steinbeck's publisher, Viking, gave a big party for him in New York. He flew back there, leaving Carol behind. Immediately snatched aboard the East Coast celebrity circuit, he never really came back. It was a great loss. To Carol. To the Rays. To everyone who had loved him as a friend. But most of all, perhaps, to himself and his writing. Those romantic, anti-Establishment Steinbeck years in

California were over.

The same year, 1941, proved calamitous as well for the Rays. In early July, the big old winery had been consumed by fire. Only the thin rock-embedded concrete shell of the structure and the beautiful old sandstone Romanesque-style façade remained. All of the wines in casks and bottles had been destroyed, except for a repository of bottled wines that had been kept in a sub-cellar and had to be excavated from the rubble. Through great effort Martin managed to reconstruct the winery's interior in time for vintage that year: the grape crop, after all, had remained intact. But the Rays' financial liabilities forced them to lay off all regular employees and from then on do most of the considerable year-round work in the cellar and vineyards by themselves or with help from family members. They had almost no time or energy now for socializing with friends or entertaining celebrities. Meanwhile, the Steinbecks had begun going their very separate ways, so the compatible foursome's frequent get-togethers were ended forever.


Presented to Martin and Elaine on October 25 / 1938, the day when they finished their wine and I the Grapes of Wrath and I wish my grapes were as good as theirs -

John Steinbeck

Steinbeck presented a warmly inscribed copy of the limited edition printing of his *The Red Pony* to the Rays in celebration of finishing his *Grapes of Wrath* in 1938

Then on December 7, as 1941 was nearing its close, came Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II, which would soon call upon Steinbeck's gifts as a journalist.

Perhaps MR was reflecting fondly yet sadly upon that vanished close friendship with Steinbeck, when he wrote this to Street a year later:

> There was a time, already many years ago, I fear, when I could be charmed if not intoxicated by the meeting of almost any important personality, on the surface new and interesting. Then, it got to be that they had to have something other than position and surface attraction before I could really cherish the memory of them long after they had gone. Somewhere along the way I have developed a tendency to search for genuineness, simple truth in character, which means more to me than anything else. When I don't find it I just can't care very much for a person. But where it is, my heart warms to it in a way that seems to me very pleasant. [11/16/42]

The Visit from an FBI Agent

John Steinbeck was eager to do something to aid the United States and its allies in their struggle against the Axis, the ruthless totalitarian trio of nations that were imperiling the free democracies of the world. But when he applied for a commission in the Army, his reputation as a leftist and possible Communist made officials suspicious of his intentions; he might use a sensitive position as an opportunity for spying and turn classified information over to agents of the Soviet Union. When requested to supply character references, Steinbeck offered Martin Ray. He knew Rusty had close personal knowledge of his political beliefs and could assure doubters of his absolute fidelity to the land of his birth.

In June of 1943 an FBI agent reported on his recent interview with Martin Ray on Steinbeck's suitability for an Army commission.

> MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE
> Subject: John E. Steinbeck
> 30 June 1943
>
> On June 9, 1943, this Agent interviewed Mr. MARTIN RAY, intimate acquaintance of Subject. RAY associated with STEINBECK and his former wife, Carol Steinbeck, during the entire time Subject's residence was in Los Gatos, California. Informant is presently residing on Masson Road, Saratoga, California.
>
> RAY believes Subject to be absolutely loyal to the government although Subject associated with some elements of the Communist Party in his earliest days of writing. Subject repeatedly stated to RAY that he was not a Communist but was interested in the lower-class working people regardless of their particular political creed. RAY explains that Subject had written certain articles for publications which were considered Communistic but that these articles were written to explain Subject's point of view of the social problem involved and not to further the interest of the Communist party. Subject, according to RAY, gradually realized that he was being used by the Party and severed all connections with this element after his books began to have a wide sale. CAROL STEINBECK, former wife of Subject, told RAY that she registered with the Communist Party in Santa Clara County in 1938 simply to observe local reaction and that Subject was strongly opposed to this act.
>
> Following the sale of one of Subject's earlier books, Subject and his wife made a trip to Europe, visiting Sweden and Russia. RAY stated that Subject was deeply impressed by the economic and political policies of Sweden but was not impressed, nor did he discuss, the government of Russia.

Concerning Subject's character, RAY stated Subject's integrity was beyond question. Subject is very sensitive and sentimental; is deeply devoted to his friends and is easily influenced by these friends to grant large favors.

RAY believes Subject should be commissioned in the Army only if Subject's writing ability may be efficiently utilized. According to RAY, Subject would work very hard writing for the benefit of his country but is not qualified to hold a commission in any other situation.

Agent's Notes:

RAY is a close friend of Subject and has tremendous respect for Subject's writing ability. This Agent believes RAY is interested in Subject's welfare as a friend yet was absolutely fair and impartial in his recollections of Subject and Subject's suitability for a commission in the Army.

John K. Steinbeck was listed as living in Sherman Oaks, California, at this time.

Charles O. Shields, Agent, CHIC

The Rays would have followed Steinbeck's wartime writing with considerable interest, obtaining copies of his journalistic reports, stories, and books (such as *The Moon Is Down*) whenever they were available.

Resumed Contact

In the years after Steinbeck had left Los Gatos, occasional notes must have passed between the Rays and their old friend John, who after WWII had taken up permanent residence on the East Coast. Certainly Elsie Ray would have tried to maintain, at least, a customary annual communication at Christmastime.

Just as Steinbeck's life during the 1940s and early '50s underwent many changes, so did the Rays'. In 1943 they sold the Masson premises to Seagram, a large distillery corporation. (In subsequent years Paul Masson's historic property passed through several different corporate and private hands. It is now known as The Mountain Winery. The old winery building, rescued by Martin Ray after fire consumed its interior, provides a dramatic backdrop to summer concerts. It and the chateau, enlarged from the time when the Rays lived in it, serve as venues for meetings, special events, and catered affairs such as weddings.)

This profitable sale freed the Rays from debt and enabled them to buy a half-section of land, about 320 acres, just across the canyon from Masson, on the same Table Mountain. Rusty cleared the top area and began planting a vineyard there. He also built a two-room redwood house atop a small wine cellar, which would initially serve as his own eponymous winery. Before his own vines came into bearing, he bought grapes from other vineyards and he began making a very limited number of pure varietal wines and champagnes. The Martin Ray winery was an early embodiment of what would later become known as a "boutique" operation.

However, MR's prospects for finally achieving a less stressful, more satisfying life than what had been possible for him at Masson were shattered when Elsie was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Severely depressed and probably suicidal after her death, he was rescued from his dark fate by Eleanor Ray. Not only did she have an ebullient nature, but she brought into their marriage in the fall of 1951 an array of useful professional skills in writing, secretarial work, publicity, and advertising. Additionally, she had three almost-adult children from her marriage to Walter Kamb, and at once Rusty worked hard to recruit them into sharing his visions, hoping to establish an actual winegrowing dynasty.

The rejuvenated Rusty Ray had won a new lease on the "good life" traditionally sought by dedicated vintners. His winery business had barely been launched when Elsie took sick; in his despair, he had even sold it and the mountain property. They were now retrieved and reactivated. And so was his campaign to prove that the better wineries must reform their ways and begin showing the world that California could indeed make great wines—as he was again doing. By 1955 his pure varietal wines and "natural" champagnes had begun winning from connoisseurs the same sort of approbation, even acclaim, that his wines vintaged at Masson had received in the late '30s and early '40s. Since they were scarce and therefore difficult to obtain, following the rules of supply-and-demand they commanded the highest prices of any wines made in America. And MR could sell everything he made.

Celebrities started coming back into Martin Ray's life. So did persistent wine lovers thrilled when finally receiving invitations to visit Mt. Eden's mountaintop winery. Stage and screen actor Burgess Meredith took an interest in good wine, so while he was in San Francisco, starring in the road show of *Teahouse of the August Moon*, he sought out Martin Ray. He, his co-star, Scott McKay, and their wives were invited up for a dinner at the Rays' home and winery atop Mount Eden. Meredith and Ray, happy in their consumption of bountiful fine wine and together decrying the foul deceptions of most California vintners, decided to telephone "Buzzy" Meredith's good friend John Steinbeck, whom Meredith had known ever since playing the role of George in the movie version of *Of Mice and Men*. The call didn't get through, so instead Meredith sent a telegram with a rather inebriated greeting. It was apparently relayed by phone to Steinbeck at his residence on East 72nd Street in New York City on May 8:

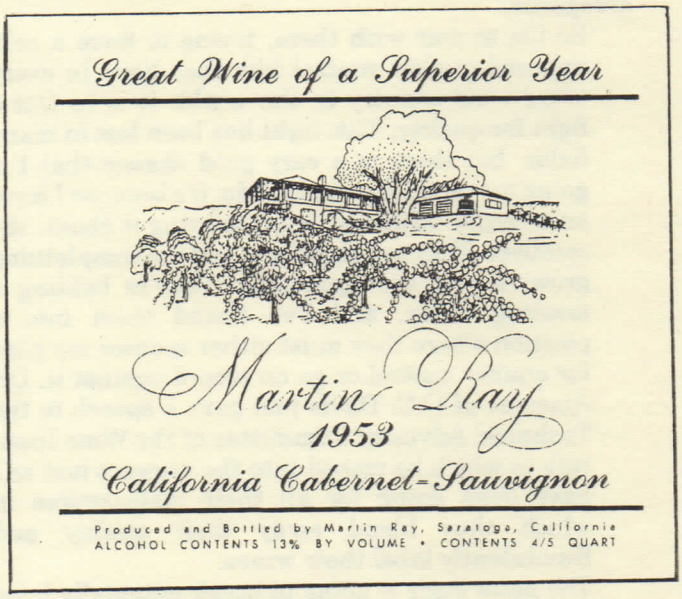
TRYING TO TELEPHONE YOU FULL OF WONDERFUL PINOT NOIR TRAFFIC IMPEEDING [*sic*] ANYHOW LOVE TO YOU AND ELAINE FROM KAJA, SCOTT AND JOAN MCKAY, THE MARTIN RAYS

It happened that just at this time MR was mounting another crusade against the California wine industry, even bolder and more strident than the one he'd launched in the late 1930s. It occurred to the Rays that Rusty should write to John Steinbeck and tell him about what he had begun calling his "Wine Quality Fight." He now had a particular target to focus on and a plan of action. So on June 3, 1955, MR followed the wire with a letter encompassing salient events in his life during gap of years between their seeing each other.

> We were having a great time the night we tried to phone you—Burgess, Scott and I & girls—and were so sorry to have missed you. Lots of things have happened since we last met, and even since we exchanged letters. I don't know whether you have caught up with any of it.
>
> Our magnificent new property adjoining the old place [Paul Masson] was just coming into bearing in 1948, and life was just as we wanted it—then, after a two-year struggle I lost Elsie to cancer. It just about killed me to lose her, but let me tell you, John, there was a girl who in utter defeat could still triumph. After the doctor told her she had only a few weeks to live we came home and she said "Papa, you know what I want? I want to drink a bottle of champagne with you." She figured it all out with infinite wisdom, how she'd enjoyed life so fully that actually she'd lived twice as long as most people so was willing to settle for what she'd had. She planned in detail for the difficult period ahead so the spirit of our life remained serene and unbowed, even in the face of catastrophe. There, I say, was true greatness.
>
> Incidentally, when she cleaned up her desk, throwing away letters and leaving notes to me about this and that, she left in an envelope the ribbon which had been presented to you at some sort of Academy Award; and, if you recall, on the day you received it we had a dinner at our old place, and there in your handwriting was an inscription wherein you bestowed the medal on Elsie. She had pinned a little piece of paper to it saying "Remember this, Rusty? I maintain that was one hell of a fine party."
>
> She was our first Madame Pinot [MR's fond nickname for both his wives]. Now, with great good fortune, we have another one—with all the interest in everything and fire for living. She is Eleanor, who was Elsie's best friend, and mine too, when we were all in school together.

Rusty then moved toward the principal motivation for his contacting Steinbeck after all these years. He had a big favor to ask of him. But before making his request, he sketched in the background for it. Some of the subsequent argument would have seemed familiar to John, since it all dated back to the period after Repeal, when the Steinbecks lived in Los Gatos and knew well Rusty Ray's fighting spirit on behalf of wine quality, and varietal wines in particular.

> Our new place, Mt. Eden, adjoins the old but is up 2000 feet at the summit where we live looking down directly on the vineyards—there's no place like it anywhere, I'm sure you'd be crazy for it. Have you seen this new book just out, "A Guide to California Wines" [1955]? Joe [Joseph Henry] Jackson wrote the foreword, John Melville authored it, and Doubleday is doing a terrific promotional job here in California. We get top billing in the book—Melville said without qualification that we made "the finest and costliest wines of California." We've moved into front place in a comparatively short time after bringing out our well-aged varietals from this new place under our Martin Ray label—and we're now in a position where we no longer have any competition. We get $100 and $120 a case for our two champagnes, $48 a case for our Pinot Noir, and $36 for our Cabernet Sauvignon. We have had about as much recognition as anyone could hope for, and things are going mighty well. [*Note*: Such prices on cases of wine (12 bottles) will, of course, appear absurdly low to today's sophisticated wine consumers. Even correcting for the inflation over the course of a half-century, they still seem low for just a *bottle* of a first-class California varietal wine in scarce supply from a notable winery.]



"Martin Ray's wines are all 100 per cent varietal vintage wines and of the best years only." Melville, *Guide to California Wines*, 1955.

But as to the industry—! California wineries (and I refer to those who sell wines under their own labels and at more than $1 a bottle) stepped up production during war years to as much as ten times what their own vineyards would provide, because they could sell whatever amount they made, no matter how bad. The result is, the quality of most California wines has severely suffered, and imports which were half a million gallons in 1948 have increased to three million gallons in 1954, thus filling the quality gap. Sales of California table wines are now jeopardized, and the growers are clamoring to tax competing imports out of the way (the same old cry they've been raising all through California's viticultural history!). These growers proclaim the excellence of their wines and insist on a quality reputation they no longer deserve. They have just formed a group called the "Premium Wine Growers [*sic*, Producers] of California" which is devoted to keeping out imports and stepping up radio, TV and newspaper advertising of their wines, when they should be devoting their efforts to improving their wines, thus meeting competition.

Several months earlier, this activist group of about a dozen well-known wineries had contacted Martin Ray through spokesman Louis Gomberg, who asked him to join up. Over the years MR had received numerous complaints from both retailers and consumers about the deceptions and poor quality in most premium California wines. After exploring the group's intentions and informed of their unwillingness to change their overall old ways of both making and marketing fine wines, MR became enraged at their arrogance.

So I'm at war with them, trying to force a self-imposed quality control like they have in every other wine country in the world. It is in fact a fight for quality. This fight has been lost in many fields, but there is a very good chance that I'm going to win it here, and if I do, it's because I have an effective economic lever to bring it about, the retailers. They're behind me, and the complaining growers now are squirming. They're holding a meeting today, and I've forced them into a position where they must either sponsor my plan for quality control or go on record against it. Dr. Amerine of U.C. Davis just gave a speech to the Technical Advisory Committee of the Wine Institute in which he ripped into the growers just as I have been doing for all their malpractices in which they blend away their quality and fraudulently label their wines.

The news story is going to break nationally later this month, whether or not these growers accept a self-imposed quality control. If they do, it will be the first time in history they've given in to quality objectives; if they don't, it's going to be a dramatic fight to report anyway. I'm going to send you a portfolio I'm getting together of all the letters which highlight this fight, and if you read them you'll have the entire picture, and will see at a glance the great significance of the struggle—symbolic of the quality struggle in all fields today.

Now came MR's request of John. Perhaps it was Eleanor Ray, aware of Steinbeck's position as a contributing "editor-at-large" to the *Saturday Review of Literature*, who had the brainstorm: Rusty should ask his influential, well-placed old friend to undertake an important mission to America's media publications center.

I am wondering if you could do something on it—perhaps a little story or editorial in the Saturday Review, as they are always keenly interested in the fight for quality. You will find in the portfolio names you can quote for added spice. I'd like to break the news story in New York papers, as soon as I have word from the growers as to whether they are going to accept or reject the quality control. If they reject, by breaking it in the press they'll be forced to reconsider. Don't you have some friend on one of the New York papers who could do a walloping job on this? I'd like your help on this, John, and in a way it's your sort of thing. Goddamn these big bastards who've gotten control of the industry—they no longer care what they put in the bottles, something must be done to stop them. You might be interested to know there's no opposition except from the growers themselves. Their organizer, Louis Gomberg (formerly of the Wine Institute, but fired because he was claiming to be favoring interest of table wine growers!) said to me a month ago that such a control as I proposed couldn't possibly come in our lifetime; a couple of weeks ago he said such a thing couldn't come for two or three years at least; and right at this moment the fight is on to see whether or not they will accept it now! That's what pressure can do, and I'm going to continue to pressure them by every means I can get hold of. That's how close we are to victory.

Finally Rusty brought his long missive to a brief and personable conclusion.

With best of good wishes to you, and hoping we can get together up here on the mountaintop one of these days—you'll be struck with the greatness we've achieved with our wines today, far greater than ever before!

On June 20 JS responded to MR's letter with a handwritten note.

Box 1017
Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York

Dear Rusty:

I have your letter and the brochure. Very interesting. They had to be forwarded. I have a little place out here and spend quite a bit of time here.

I was so sorry to learn about the death of Elsie. What a girl she was and from your account her manner of dying was not the least of her qualities. I wish I could do as well. I am glad to hear also that you have a good refuge. Wish I could meet her and I will. All the best to you both in luck and affection. And I am sure you will have it.

I am remarried and very happily so. My two boys are with me now but in the winter they live with their mother. They are good boys 9-11 and very interesting and very different, lord! how different.

I have a point of land here. Big trees, almost surrounded by water, a little cottage, a pier and a boat. And you know how I love the sea. We fish a good deal and cruise a lot and plant a few roses. It is a change from New York and a welcome one, although I do love the city. It is a wonderful place.

I haven't been in California for some time. Next year I am going to cover both conventions. I have never been to one. I will come out early for the Republican and will see you then. I hope you will invite us to the vineyard. I would love to see it....

All my affection to you and my compliments to your wife. Keep up the good fight—

Yours, John

The Rays must have been frustrated that it took so long—over two weeks—to get this response from Steinbeck. Noticeably, though, Steinbeck hadn't commented on Rusty's long discourse and brochure of some kind except to say they were "very interesting." Neither had he volunteered to join Rusty's fight to improve wine quality.

Very soon after he wrote his note, John may have returned to New York City and there read two more letters from Martin Ray. Or else the letters arrived in Long Island in time for him to take some belated action in honoring Rusty's request. (They didn't talk on the telephone, as they might have done, as will be shown later.)

The hope of enlisting Steinbeck's help in New York was only one factor in Martin Ray's resolute campaign against the Premium Wine Growers of California. MR had been alerted by Louis Gomberg to the group's collective intransigence over his insistence upon enacting quality control. Furthermore, he began to receive irate letters from the various winery proprietors to whom he had sent copies of several letters of his to Gomberg, in which he demanded changes in the way they made, labeled, and marketed their wines. MR responded to them by making further accusations targeted against specific "fraudulently labeled" wines of theirs—which he said had only small traces, if any at all, of the varietals named therein.

On June 12 MR sent a second letter to Steinbeck:

I know you haven't had time to answer as yet my letter to you of only a few days ago.

But things have been moving along rapidly in our fight for self-imposed quality control. You will remember I told you we're going to break a news story later this month when we get the decision pro or con from the newly-formed Premium Winegrowers of California. The release date for the news story is now set for TUESDAY, JUNE 21.

The Premium Winegrowers of California organization is making a tactical maneuver to smother the story value of this fight by delay. They say they can't consider such a big thing as quality control without having more time to think it over.

I know exactly what will happen if I let them control it, and put off releasing the story. They'll delay and hedge until the many people now vitally interested in this fight will lose hope of its accomplishing anything, and all interest will evaporate. These same growers did the same thing to my effort toward quality control twenty years ago in the new Wine Institute organization.

Now it's the same strategy all over again, with this newly formed "Premium" group. So I'm releasing the story of this fight on June 21—the news angle being that I've been pressured into telling all, giving the score on what's happened to date, giving the press the full story, including letters from big names and showing wide public interest in the outcome of this quality fight. Actually public interest if roused widely and sustained by the press may be the necessary force to make these growers finally give in to quality control, after all these years.

We have made arrangements to release a story June 21st in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston and Baltimore, but have no newspaper contact in New York, so are hoping either you will be able to do something on it, John, or hand it to some friend who will. The moment the news-story is broken a national magazine is going to follow it up, but it must be broken in the newspapers first. Whether or not you are able to help us with a New York newspaper story for Tuesday, June 21st, I'm hoping very much you may do something in the Saturday Review or in any other publication you may have in mind that would be interested in this quality fight.

I don't care how either story is handled. There's but one thing I would stress, I don't want individual growers of the opposition singled out, but refer to them as the growers' group; for, if they are hurt as individuals our chances of getting

them to back quality control will be lessened. But if the story is slanted as if taking for granted they're finally come around to a mature point of view, with idealism triumphing over materialism, maybe they will come round!

Thanks very much for anything you can do, John. Wire or telephone me collect if you want anything further. With all the best personal regards—

There was still another letter from MR to JS, a short one, composed and sent two days later. (Decisions and actions usually had to move fast with Martin Ray.)

You probably surmised that it's LIFE aiming at this story, if they can get the story broken first in the newspapers so they can pick it up and do a terrific exploratory job. I've just been talking with Dick Pollard, TIME-LIFE Bureau Chief in S.F.—and he stresses that he wants the story to break explosively with lots of controversy. He says the New York Times would be the best possible paper—is it possible that you could arrange this? Actually the more interest roused the better, he suggested Newsweek also be given the story.

I know how busy you are, but do hope you have someone you can turn this over to who'd be vitally interested in this quality war and do a bang-up job just for the hell of it. There'd be less chance of interference back there. Here in California the Wine Institute is an advertiser to be reckoned with, and maybe able to kill the story—Joe Jackson tells me he's certain they can get it killed. So you see much can depend on what a paper such as the New York Times does with it.

Again, many many thanks for anything you can do on this, John.

Hastily, Rusty

P.S. The portfolio of materials went off by air to you yesterday, and I trust is in your hands by now.

Since his note to MR had been written on the 20th, Steinbeck apparently hadn't had time to do anything, even if he'd wanted to, before receiving the packet of materials and those last two letters announced the June 21 deadline. But he seems then to have alerted the Saturday Review to the current wine-quality controversy, so that some materials— the binder and perhaps Ray's first letter, or all three—were delivered to the magazine's office. William Patterson, the associate publisher, took a look at it, and on June 24 (three days after Ray's news release deadline) wrote to John. They saw no way, he said, to publish Ray's material until they put out their "gourmet" issue some months in the future. But maybe, he suggested, the New York Times' Sunday magazine section or Colliers might want it; he'd soon talk to the editors in both places. If they'd be interested, he'd let John know. In the meantime, he was returning the material. But then something else occurred to him.

We do have one suggestion as far as Saturday Review is concerned. Since you know the area and the subject—California and wine—very well indeed, you might want to work this controversy in the structure of an editorial around the theme, "America must do things well, not just overwhelm the world with masses of sub-standard products, etc." That would be an interesting idea and wine is, after all, interesting to a lot of people ...

Don't let your typewriter haunt you. You have no fixed deadlines here. Enjoy the sun, and only stir when the spirit moves you.

Then in a P.S. "Pat" reported that Colliers' senior articles editor had just called and, hearing about the wine-quality crisis being brewed out in California, he wanted to see Ray's coverage of it. So it would be sent over to him.

The next day, Steinbeck sent this letter from Sag Harbor.

Dear Rusty:

Enclosed is a letter from Pat Patterson of S.R.L. which is self explanatory. I hope you approve of what I have done with the material. Any way, if anything happens to the material, I should imagine they will get in touch with you.

Colliers has more coverage but the Times more prestige

I want to get this off to you so close in haste.

Heartiest, John

Out of a sense of loyalty to a friend from his distant past, Steinbeck had gone out of his way to get the Saturday Review to look at Martin Ray's material. Perhaps he even contacted other editors he knew in New York publishing offices. As for composing a special wine-and-quality "theme" editorial for the SR: busy as he always was with his own writing projects, he probably had no time or inclination even to consider it.

After reviewing MR's writings, Colliers apparently declined to get involved; maybe the New York Times, too. But what happened with Life's supposedly keen interest that apparently depended upon a prior major news break? The operating budgets of many magazines and newspapers, whether national and local in circulation, depended upon receiving healthy advertising revenues. They often carried ads of prominent California wineries as well as of their overarching Wine Institute. Why ruin goodwill by biting hands that paid out big and dependable cash?

Meanwhile, as the days had gone by back in California, the situation was already getting defused. The winegrowers' group, probably concerned about getting the bad press that Martin Ray was threatening, told Gomberg, who acted as mediator

between them and MR, that they were willing now to explore the possibility of imminent quality control. They had agreed to accept MR's proposal that they work out all the specifics with Dr. Albert Winkler, the much-respected viticulturist at UC Davis who had long been promoting widespread planting of superior winegrape varieties. The Rays in a way seemed almost relieved; they felt that progress had been made; thanks to their efforts the high end of the wine industry would start to change. Rusty could now return full time to work in his beloved vineyards and wine cellar, Eleanor to her kitchen, flower garden, and "needlepoint" knitting.

It all ended up like a tempest in a wine decanter. Little mention was made in the press, anywhere, about this stir among California wineries. In fact, the reporter who wrote the single article in the Ray scrapbook got it all wrong, and actually had MR (a photo of whom was shown) as a member and leader of the winegrowers' group. Furthermore, the eventual outcome of the "Quality Wine Fight" turned out just as MR feared it might. The group's seeming assent had only been a ruse—or at least that was how he saw it. They never met at all with Winkler, probably because they never intended to. And why should they? In the mid-1950s the California wine industry was resistant to change. The wineries and grapegrowers simply weren't ready and willing yet to get serious about becoming self-regulating: about accepting forms of quality control, such as identifying grapevines accurately, planting far more acreage of fine wine-grapes, ceasing the blending out of varietal wines, labeling bottles honestly—to do or refrain from doing all those things that mattered so much to Martin Ray. It would take at least ten more years for significant progress to be made in the long march toward what became known as the "Wine Revolution." And that, as MR predicted, was partly caused by pressure from retailers and a growing number of consumers who expected to buy much better wines made in California.

As for MR's disappointment over big-name Steinbeck's lack of success in gaining publicity for his crusading wine battle, perhaps he could take comfort in a comment he'd made right at the start of his appeal to John. He was testing at this time the loyalty of another friend, whom he had met about the time he first met Steinbeck: the now-eminent U.C. Davis enologist Maynard Amerine. MR was vainly attempting to enlist him as a public ally in his great quality cause, despite Amerine's close association with wine industry bigwigs. So he bragged:

> You'd be surprised at how many names I could employ [for PR purposes], and yet they would for one reason or another not serve the purpose here, often because of association. Take John Steinbeck. What he would say would only associate our wines with those of Cannery Row! Yet, he would let me use any statement! [6/4/55]

An Abortive Reunion

The renewed contact between MR and Steinbeck was not yet over, though. About a year after the flurry of correspondence and activity about the Wine Quality Fight, John wrote to Rusty.

> Pardon me for being so long in answering. But I have had a kind of hectic time.
>
> We are going to both [political] conventions, first to Chicago and then to S.F. I don't know exactly but I think the S.F. one starts the 19th of August and no one knows how long it will run. They think it will be short but there is just a possibility that something might get out of hand to make it exciting. The hatreds within the Republican party are running very high and if one thing broke loose there might be a big fight. Anyway it can't run over a week. We will be staying at the Clift Hotel during that time. After it is over we plan to rent a car and drive down the state seeing friends and so forth. And if everything works out, we would love to see you. However, there is plenty of time to work such things out. I am covering the conventions for about twenty-five papers and I must think first of them, but once they are out of my hair I am going to take a little time to do nothing but visit friends and talk over old times. Also you have never met Elaine and she would be delighted with your set up.
>
> I'm in the usual rush now but did want to tell you that we would love to see you. [6/4/56]

Rusty was excited about the prospect of seeing John again, meeting his wife, and introducing Eleanor. He was expecting the Steinbecks to come and stay on the mountaintop, in their guesthouse—the original redwood cabin—for a couple of days. And prior to this he'd arranged for a pleasant welcoming surprise for John in the San Francisco hotel room when he arrived to cover the Republican Convention: some choice Martin Ray rosé champagne. As he wrote later in a letter to Burgess Meredith: "Did John Steinbeck tell you we had a bottle of Madame Pinot waiting for him in his room in an ice-bucket when he arrived?" Then MR added a rather dour statement, followed by a petulant question:

> I just read that [Humphrey] Bogart listed [Steinbeck] as one of the ten best drinking men in the country. The inference was that he worked on whisky, however. Has John forsaken wine for spirits?" [1/28/57]

Certainly Steinbeck had originally intended to visit MR at his mountaintop home in Saratoga. But as the time approached, he must have realized he was too physically and mentally exhausted to go there—overwhelmed at already having attended two noisy,

people-filled conventions in a short space of time and sending reports about them for syndication in 40 newspapers. Perhaps he no longer felt strong and durable enough to deal with the Rusty Ray he remembered from years ago: his inescapably exuberant persona, his fixations on the treachery and shenanigans in the wine industry, and tall tales being told at the dining table for hours, as bottle upon bottle of wine were opened and consumed.

Following John's defection, Rusty described his keen disappointment in a letter to Eleanor's son Barclay. But it seemed far more like disillusionment.

> You expressed some feeling of question about John Steinbeck's scheduled visit here following the Republican Convention, which surprised me at the time. But you must have been in tune with some waves which failed to reach me because John did not come! Instead, he telephoned late the other night when I was asleep and I was shocked to hear a voice at the other end of the line no more like it used to be than a pip-squeak is like a fog horn. I don't know what has happened to him over the years. But it is not good. He formerly spoke out forcefully in a full throated sort of voice without any hesitancy. Now his voice is shrill, almost feminine and he continually hesitates and reaches for more breath, so to speak. He sounded like a man frightened to the full point of endurance. He said that he was "just exhausted, completed exhausted" and had to get to his sister's house in Watsonville at once for a rest. He said that he should have phoned me sooner but that he could not because he had failed to bring with him my letter giving my phone number. And he repeated several times that that had been the whole trouble—if only he had brought my letter. Then he asked me how he could reach me later by phone in case he could get rested up and how he could get my phone number. He had called me. Well, at this point I decided we were sort of out of touch. He told me how very much he wanted to see our place and us but kept referring to the statement he had instead to go to Watsonville so he could not possibly get to Saratoga they were so far apart! John grew up in Watsonville and lived for years in Los Gatos, so this threw me further, knowing he knew they would pass through Saratoga enroute to Watsonville if they wished to take the shortest and fastest route. So this illustrates how much a person can change even in17 years. Oh, yes, he said that he had wanted to come up here and sleep under a grape vine one night! And big, strong John almost cried when he said it! [8/26/56]

There's no evidence that after this failed get-together either John Steinbeck or Martin Ray ever tried again to revive their lost friendship. Five years after John's failure to visit MR, he undertook his American odyssey-by-camper-truck with his dog Charley as a companion; although he came to the San Francisco Bay area, he neglected to drop in on Rusty at his Mt. Eden domain. When Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962, MR must have felt deeply honored to have known him well during those Los Gatos years, as John was reaching the peak of fame and fortune as a writer. Six years afterward, when John died of heart failure, Rusty's own heart must have ached as he recalled their rousing good times together, long ago now. Within eight years, he too would join his old friend John in the eternal darkness. By then he had become a tragic figure, for his grand ambitions had led him into unwisely overextending his reach. Feuds with shareholders in the new Mount Eden Vineyards Corporation that he and Eleanor had founded in 1960 ultimately stripped away his ownership of most of his mountain property. He felt disillusioned, too, in his once-fervent hope that Eleanor's children, and their children, would carry on his wine empire after him.

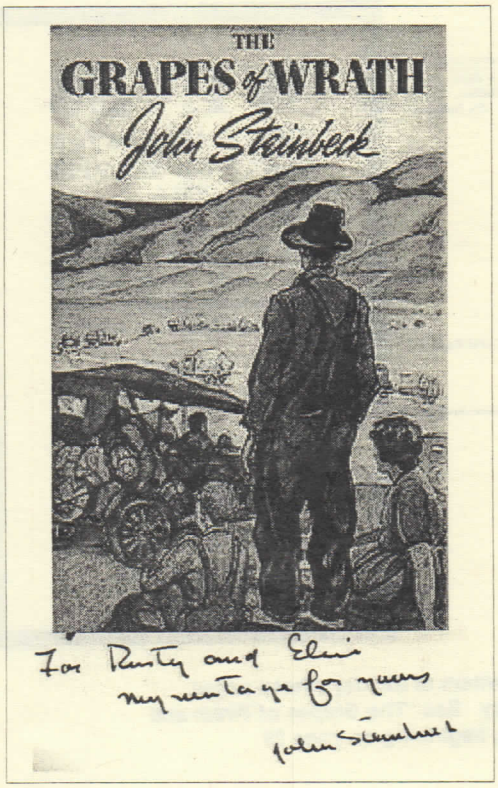
Steinbeck's talents and fame are undisputed and perpetual. As for Martin Ray, he got his own posthumous vindication, if not outright recognition. His long-sustained battle for wine quality, which he had fought almost single-handedly for three decades, began to be joined by other vintners and wineries, particularly after the mid-1960s. In Paris in July of 1976, six months after MR's death, two California-made varietal wines, red and white, both won first places among a group of French and American vintages judged in a blind tasting by acknowledged French wine experts. Wine drinkers of the world were astounded. But it demonstrated that Martin Ray's quality-demanding position, posited so long ago in his intense talks with John Steinbeck, had finally been endorsed by a new generation of winemakers and wine consumers. It was indelibly proven now that California could indeed produce not only good wine, but *great* wine—just as Martin Ray had always declared during his prime years as a vintner.

* * * * *

Acknowledgments: The author is grateful to two library sources for granting permission to use extracts from letters. Princeton University Library's Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections holds the Julian Street Papers, which contains Martin Ray's extraordinary correspondence with Street (accessible through microfilm), in which he frequently mentioned his friendship with John and Carol Steinbeck; it also has carbon copies of Steinbeck's poem about the Paul Masson vineyard and winery. Special Collections Department in the Shields Library of the University of California at Davis has the extensive Martin and Eleanor Ray Papers, gifted by the

Ray Family in 1999; in it is the Ray–Steinbeck correspondence of 1955–'56 and other documents used in the article. Additional quotations come from the Ray Family scrapbooks; from wine historian Charles L. Sullivan's interview with Martin Ray's former employee Daisy Haig; from Burgess Meredith's published memoir; from Eleanor Ray's *Vineyards in the Sky*; and from *Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath, 1938-1941*, edited by Robert DeMott.

Barbara Marinacci is the daughter of Eleanor Ray, Martin Ray's second wife. A developmental book editor and writer, she has authored or coauthored ten nonfiction books, including *O Wondrous Singer!: An Introduction to Walt Whitman*; *California's Spanish Place Names: What They Mean and the History They Reveal*; *Linus Pauling in His Own Words*; and—with her mother—the memoir, *Vineyards in the Sky: The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray*. For fifteen years she lived in the Rays' "chateau" on Mt. Eden in Saratoga, California, with its panoramic view of Santa Clara ("Silicon") Valley, and served for five years on the advisory board of the Center for Steinbeck Studies at San Jose State University. She now lives in Pacific Palisades in the Los Angeles area, where she is active in many community affairs, especially ones connected with the environment. She also serves as editor of Eden: The Journal of the California Garden and Landscape History Society.



Book Collecting

Iolo A. Williams [1890–1962], *The Elements of Book Collecting*, 1927 (London: Elkin Mathews & Marrot Ltd.).

"THE OBJECT OF ALL COLLECTING is the increase of the general sum of knowledge upon some particular subject... Of all things that are agreeable to collect, among the most agreeable are printed books. They are the records of the human soul and brain; of man's conquest over knowledge... What more engrossing occupation can one imagine than the collecting and arrangement of a group of such records, all bearing upon some one aspect of human knowledge or development?" (p.1-2)

"THE COLLECTOR MAY SEARCH hopefully in those delightful shops where all is chaos (save sometimes in the mind of the proprietor) and books lie in great heaps upon the floor, and he may rout out his treasures amid clouds of dust and the scuttlings of disturbed black-beetles. He may climb step-ladders, and search topmost shelves with a good heart." (p.3)

"THE BOOK COLLECTOR'S DUTY is to see that his recreation—if it is merely that—is a step further in the progress of that conquest of knowledge. He must make his collection of books a marshalling of the evidence which exists in some corner—however small and dark—of the hall of written knowledge. He will then find that his pursuit is a profitable and useful one. He will also find it extremely pleasant." (p.11)

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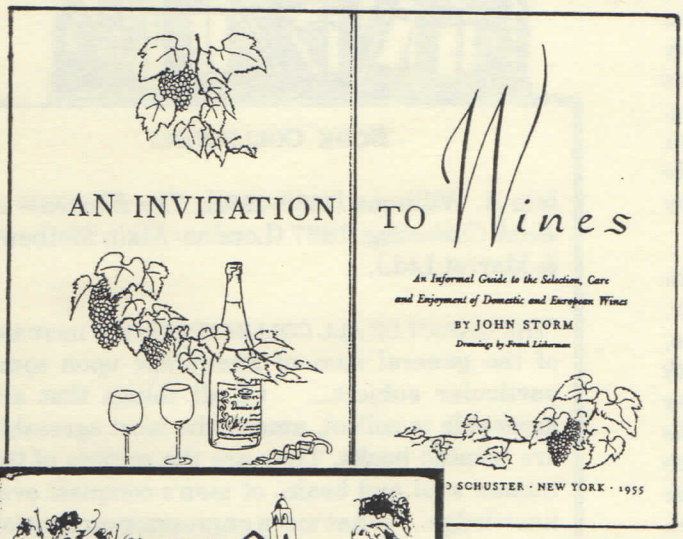

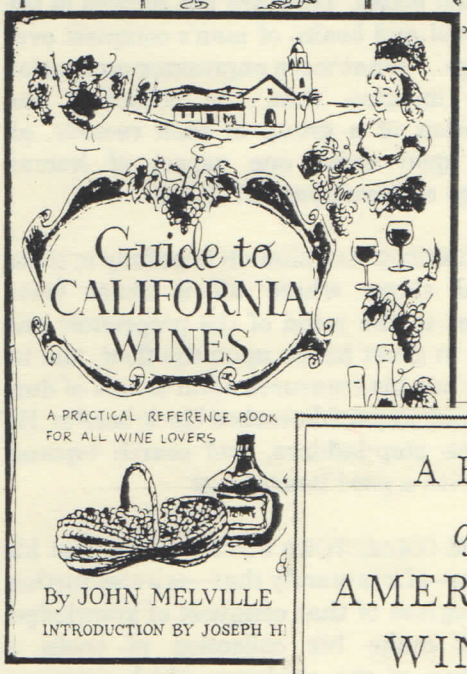

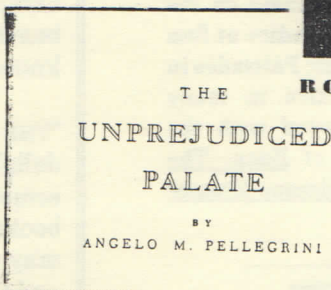

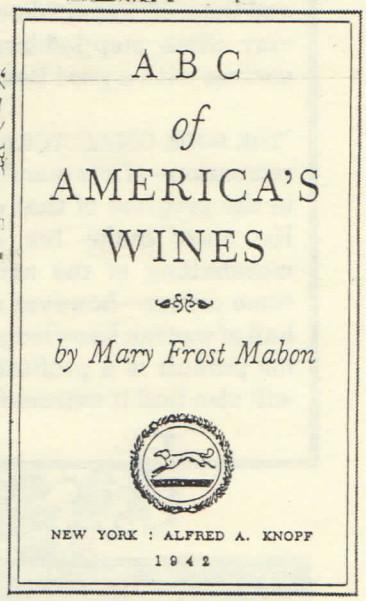

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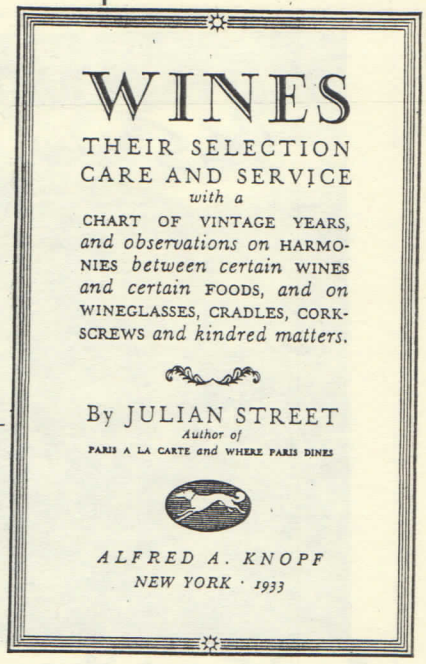
DR. JOHNSON

NEW YORK
CMILLAN COMPANY
1948



A fine sampling of the books of the popular wine writers of the day whose pages applauded the pure varietal wines of vintner Martin Ray. See "The *Grapes of Wrath* and the Wrath of Grapes" by Barbara Marinacci, beginning on page 29