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A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S CLUB

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THREE BOOKS ON WINE

by Thomas Pinney



It is not regarded as good form for authors or editors to review their own books. This has always seemed to me an unreasonable prejudice -- after all, who should know the books better? -- but I defer to it. What follows is not a review but a simple notice.

-- Thomas Hardy, *The Vineyards and Wine Cellars of California*, Edited by Thomas Pinney, with a Foreword by Robert Mondavi. San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1994. xxiii, 64 pp. Illustrated. \$155. Availability restricted: inquire of Book Club of California, 312 Sutter Street, Suite 510, San Francisco, CA 94108. --

The Vineyards and Wine Cellars of California, published last October, is a selection from a longer work entitled *Notes on Vineyards in America and Europe* written by the pioneer Australian winemaker, Thomas Hardy, and originally published in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1885. Hardy's book seems to be genuinely rare: only a handful of copies are known in Australia, and none has so far been recorded in the United States or England. The record of a long trip that Hardy made in 1883 to California, Ohio, and Europe, the narrative is written with a professional's eye upon the practical details of grape growing and wine making. Of the book's thirty-six chapters, eleven are devoted to the scene in California and Ohio, and these have been selected for the present reprint. Hardy began his tour of California in the Napa Valley, where he visited the wineries of Charles Krug, Beringer Brothers, John Thomann, and William Scheffler; in Sonoma the list is Attila Haraszthy, Henry Winkle, Julius Dresel, Jacob Gundlach, Martin Cady, Kate Warfield, and Joshua Chauvet. In San Francisco he called on the great wine houses of Arpad Haraszthy, Samuel Lachman, Lachman and Jacobi, Benjamin Dreyfus, J. Gundlach,

and Kohler & Frohling. From San Francisco, Hardy passed through the raisin-growing vineyards of Yolo County and then started south, calling at the cellars of General Naglee in San Jose on his way to Fresno, where he inspected the Eisen vineyard and the Fresno Vineyard Company. In Los Angeles he saw the Kohler and Frohling cellars, where the firm began its life, the Sunny Slope property of L.J. Rose in San Gabriel, and the San Gabriel Wine Company. Hardy's view of winemaking in California is shrewd, somewhat skeptical, but essentially sympathetic and approving. From California he went on to the east coast, stopping by the way to make a visit to Sandusky and Kelley's Island in Lake Erie, where the greater part of the Ohio wine industry was then concentrated.

Hardy's intelligent, informed, and attentive account of what he saw is enough, I think, to give his book a genuine claim to our attention; the fact that copies of the book are exceedingly scarce adds a certain dash of interest. Besides this, I argue, Hardy's may be the first connected account of the vineyards and wineries of California ever published -- not the first book to mention these things, of course, nor the first book to describe some one or other of them, but the first connected account: that is, the outcome of a deliberate effort to inspect and describe a particular

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industry through a representative selection of its elements. Such claims are not easy to make out, but I try to make out this one in my introduction to the

book with, I hope, a proper cautiousness.

I am particularly pleased to be associated with this reprint of Hardy's account because of the book's splendid design and production. The work of James Robertson at the Yolla Bolly Press in Covelo, California, the printing of text, headings, and titles is clean, clear, and handsome. Heavy Mohawk superfine paper provides an excellent base for the photographs that illustrate the text, and a final note of luxury is provided by the colored lithographic reproductions of 19th century labels and trade cards tipped in the book. Assembling this illustrative material from public and private collections was the work of Gary Kurutz, head of special collections at the State Library in Sacramento.

-- Thomas Pinney, *The Wine of Santa Cruz Island*, With a Foreword by Marla Daily. Los Angeles: The Zamorano Club/Santa Barbara: The Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994. 102 pp. Available from Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1010 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. --

The Wine of Santa Cruz Island is a history of the interesting winery that operated on Santa Cruz Island, off the California coast some twenty miles from Santa Barbara, between the 1880s and 1939. The materials for this history are mostly preserved in the Santa Cruz Island Foundation in Santa Barbara, established by the last private owner of the Island, Carey Stanton. They are not complete, but they are nonetheless very rich. The winery was begun by Justinian Caire, a French emigré merchant living in San Francisco, whose family maintained the operation down to Prohibition and for a few years afterwards. They also kept the records that now repose at the Santa Cruz Island Foundation. These include manuscript records of the people employed (almost all of them, for some reason, Italians freshly-immigrated to San Francisco), the materials sent to the Island (enumerated in great detail), the operation of the vineyards, the varieties of vines grown, the kinds of wine made and in what quantities, the design and layout of the winery, and the kinds and quantities of the wine sold and the people who bought it. Maps and diagrams of the Island properties as well as painting and photographs of the people and scenes of the Island are part of the material kept at the Foundation.

The scale of the winery operation was not large, but it was nevertheless substantial -- an average of around 40,000 gallons a year, mostly red, and of that red, mostly Zinfandel. The wine had a good reputation, and there is every reason to think that the winery would have had a long and healthy life had it not been for Prohibition. Like most of the other

winemakers of California, the Caire family sold grapes to home winemakers during the drought of Prohibition, and they tried to keep their unsaleable stored wine in good condition, waiting for the day when it could once again be put to its proper use. Since almost all of their wine was dry, and thus unfortified, it was difficult to keep it sound -- again a common experience in California wineries during those blighted years. By 1929, most of the wine had spoiled and was therefore destroyed (that is, simply dumped). When Repeal came in 1933, the winery renewed its licenses and began production again, but the heart had gone out of the enterprise. These were hard times; the Caire family sold the Island to the Stantons, of Los Angeles, in 1937; two years later, the remaining 25,000 gallons of wine in storage was dumped, and winemaking came to an end on the Island. The winery buildings themselves burned in 1955, but the walls survived and the reconstructed buildings, now without any contents recalling their origin, are still in use. Whether winegrowing will ever return to the Island, who can say? But the first episode is over.

[Editor: The Santa Cruz Island Foundation sent us the following publication release: Author Thomas Pinney is professor of English at Pomona College, where he has taught since 1962. In 1989 his book, *A History of Wine in America from the Beginnings to Prohibition* was published by the University of California Press. Marla Daily is the President of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation and recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the California Historical Society for her efforts to promote and preserve the history of California's Channel Islands. *The Wine of Santa Cruz Island* was published by the Santa Cruz Island Foundation in conjunction with the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles in a limited edition of 350 copies, \$55. Fifty numbered and signed copies of this gilt-stamped, burgundy cloth, fine press book are available with an original Santa Cruz Island Zinfandel label tipped-in, \$125.]

-- Jancis Robinson, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. xvi, 1088 pp. Illustrated. £30 UK, \$50 USA. --

By far the most splendid book of the trio (it doesn't really belong, but I am unable to resist the wish to bring it in) is the *Oxford Companion to Wine* edited by the distinguished English writer and wine expert, Jancis Robinson. I have only a tiny part in this imposing volume (mine are the articles on "American Grapes, Hybrid," "American Grapes, Native," "Amerine, Maynard," "California" (in part), "Cruess, William Vere," "Gallo Winery," "Haraszthy, Agoston," "Jefferson, Thomas," "Krug, Charles," "New

York State," "Prohibition in the USA," "United States, History," and "Wagner, Philip"). The contributors are a notable company -- besides the contributions of the editor herself, there are articles by such heavyweights and superstars of contemporary wine literature as Hugh Johnson (inevitably first), Michael Broadbent, Nicholas Faith, Rosemary George, James Halliday, Ian Jamieson, Harriet Lembeck, Simon Loftus, Zelma Long, Edmund Penning-Rowsell, Jan Read, Pascal Ribereau-Gayon, Tim Unwin, Pamela Vandyke Price, and A. Dinsmoor Webb (who acted as editor for the articles on enology). Not since the California-Sotheby *Book of California Wine* has such a synod of experts been convoked to overhaul the question of wine, at least in English. But of course, the scope of the *Oxford Companion*, unlike the *Book of California Wine*, is the whole world of wine. I am intimidated by the prestige of the company but, needless to say, highly flattered to have been invited to join it.

Something of the scope of the book may at least be suggested by citing a few titles of articles. Besides the necessary coverage of viticulture and enology, wine regions and wine kinds, there are articles on "Academe," "Ancient Vine Varieties," "Arab Poets," "Arnaldus de Villanova," "Artists' Labels," "Auctions," and "Avery, Ronald," to go no further than the letter "A." As the inclusion of Arnaldus de Villanova suggests, writers about wine as well as those who have made and sold wine receive special attention in this book, a fact that should make it particularly appealing to Tendrils. There are entries for Frank Schoonmaker, André Simon, Hugh Johnson, George Saintsbury, Henry Vizetelly, Cocks and Feret, and many others, ancient and modern, whose work may be found expertly outlined in the general article on the "Literature of Wine," itself the work of fellow-Tendrill, Christopher Fielden.

Only after the book has been put to the test of time can one be sure of its value; but I don't mind venturing the prophecy that from now on the *Oxford Companion to Wine* is the one that I will go to first.



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HIDDEN TREASURES IN GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS?

by Charles L. Sullivan



Last Fall I received a catalogue from a wine book seller. I read it and marveled at the prices. My two criteria for buying such a book are: 1) can I afford it? and 2) might I use it in my research? So I rarely buy them anymore. My brain fired up suddenly when I found a listing for the 1860 U.S. Patent Office report. For sale it was for \$200. The reason: it contained an article by Ludwig Gall on winemaking. There was a note from Thomas Pinney's *History of Wine in America* (Berkeley, 1989) that Husmann's writings had leaned heavily on Gall's work. Then another note indicated that this same volume had an article by D.R. Goodloe on the history of wine, and that neither Pinney nor Gabler had noted this item (Heaven forbid!). I raced to the bookcase which I have devoted to Patent Office and USDA yearbooks and pulled out 1860. It had cost me \$6.50 not too long ago at a certain New England book store, which kept heaps of such useless things. My stars! \$200.

After checking to make sure that I had all I needed, I decided to let my fellow Tendrils in on this potential bonanza. Listen up!

What became the USDA in 1862 was previously the Agricultural Division of the U.S. Patent Office, housed in six rooms of the basement of that agency. In 1849 Daniel Lee, former editor of the *Genessee Farmer* (New York), was hired to prepare separate annual reports on agriculture for the Office. But before this date there had been a few articles on winegrowing published by the Office. Lee's annual reports are the forerunners of the USDA yearbooks. Here follows what I think are for us important articles, some quite long, in these publications.

- 1847 -

p.462: N. Longworth on grape culture and wine manufacture.

- 1848 -

p.609: Charles Cist on grape culture.

- 1849 -

p.283: The vine of North Carolina.

- 1850 -

p.238: Winemaking in the Cincinnati area.

- 1851 -

p.48: Grape Culture in North Carolina.

- 1853 -

p.256: Wine production from the 1840 and 1850 censuses.

- 1853 cont'd -

- p.273: Oregon's potential for viticulture.
- p.296: Grapes and wine in colonial America.
- p.299: Correspondence to the Office on grapes and wine.
- p.306-9: Sidney Weller, "The Southern System of Vine Culture and Wine-Making."
- p.309: The wine grape crop of the West (Ohio Valley).
- p.311: Grape diseases in Europe.

- 1854 -

- p.80: The grape vine borer.
- p.230: Grape varieties recommended by the American Pomological Society, October 1854.
- p.237: Grape vines grown in Connecticut.
- p.244: Viticulture in Maryland.
- p.254: Grape culture in Missouri.
- p.260: The Isabella and Catawba in New Hampshire.
- p.261-5: The Catawba wine industry in the Cincinnati area.
- p.274: On vines from German seeds in Pennsylvania.
- p.292: Vermont viticulture.
- p.311: J.F. Allen, "Remarks on the Grape Disease in Europe."

- p.312: Correspondence.

- 1856 -

- p.329: On the Concord in Maine.
- p.332: Massachusetts viticulture.
- p.351: New Jersey viticulture.
- p.357: Pennsylvania viticulture.
- p.371: Delaware viticulture.
- p.386: Michigan viticulture.
- p.408-45: John A. Warder, "The Wine Culture of the United States."

- 1857 -

- p.32: Production of agri products, 1790-1850 (includes beer, vinegar, wine and spirits).
- p.227: John LeConte, "American Grape Vines of the Atlantic States."
- p.232: G.C. Swallow, "Grape-Culture in Missouri."

- 1858 -

- p.48: Questions used to collect Patent Office stats on grapes and wine.
- p.233: Imports of spirits and wine, 1851-1858.
- p.280: The preparation of the government propagating garden at Wash DC, partly because of "the extension of vine-culture in the U.S."
- p.338: Andrew W. M'Kee, "The Grape and Wine Culture of California."
- p.344: Matthew Keller, "The Grapes and Wines of Los Angeles."
- p.355: R.H. Phelps, "Cultivation of Grapes in New England."
- p.366: "Remarks on the Propagation of the Vine."
- p.383-419: New Jersey, Connecticut, Wash DC, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania viticulture.
- p.424: Varieties recommended by the American

Pomological Society, 1858 meeting.

- 1859 -

- p.17: Vines in the propagating garden.
- p.30: H.C. Williams, "Native Grapes of Arkansas and Texas."
- p.42-56: C.D. Jackson, "Report on the Saccharine Contents of Native American Grapes in Relationship to Winemaking."
- p.59: "The Presence of Tartaric Acid in the Cultivated Grapes of the U.S."
- p.61-71: J.F. Weber, "The Native Grapes of PA, N.J., N.Y. and New England."
- p.71-100: J.F. Weber, "Culture and Management of the Grape, and the Modes of Making Wine."
- p.108: The vine in Italy.
- p.470: Grape culture in Illinois.
- p.536: Viticulture in South Carolina.
- p.544: Wine-making in New York.
- p.547: Pennsylvania Yankee grapes in New York.
- p.571: Matthew Keller's grapes.
- p.571: E.W. Bull and the Concord.

- 1860 -

- p.28: Native grapes for distribution.
- p.30: Foreign grape vines under propagation.
- p.323-358: Ludwig Gall, "Wine-making."
- p.359-402: Daniel R. Goodloe, "Grape Culture and Wine-Making."
- p.402-16: S.J. Parker, "Culture of Grapes in Graperies."
- p.499: Native grapes of Texas.
- p.501-2: Viticulture items received at the Patent Office.

- 1861 -

- p.4: On Office winegrowing.
- p.163: Grapes from San Bernardino County, CA.
- p.334: Packing and shipping grapes.
- p.470: Grapes from Kelley's Island, Ohio.
- p.476: Experiments with grape cuttings.
- p.478-86: S.B. Buckley, "The Grapes of No. America."
- p.486: On grape culture.
- p.495: Mildew on grapes.
- p.506: Winegrowing in New York.
- p.526: The grapes of Afghanistan.
- p.621-33: Viticulture in Europe.
- p.635: Vines from Pennsylvania.

- 1862 -

- p.194: Climatology and viticulture.
- p.209: On grape hybrids and crosses.

- 1863 -

- p.147: Wilson Flint on grape culture in the U.S.
- p.156: On winemaking.

- 1864 -

- p.38: Grape culture in Virginia.
- p.122: Improving native grapes through hybridizing.
- p.501: The grapes of Malaga.
- p.514: On vinous fermentation.

- 1864 *cont'd* -

- p.533: Detecting artificial coloring matter in wine.
p.607: The Office's experimental garden, vines.

- 1865 -

- p.194: New grape varieties.

- 1866 -

- p.18: Vines in the experimental garden.
p.46: New York and Massachusetts wines.
p.97-118: Pruning and training grape vines.
p.115-18: Grape growing in the West.
p.118-25: Winemaking in the middle Atlantic states.
p.151: Viticulture in N.Y.
p.164-83: Viticulture along Lake Erie.
p.581-610: California resources, wine and brandy.

- 1867 -

- p.25: Native grapes under glass.
p.27: Grape climates in the east.
p.154-63: George Husmann on American winemaking.
p.163-74: A report on wine at the Paris Exposition.
p.341: Grape culture in Massachusetts.

- 1868 -

- p.6: Report on grapes and wine.
p.53: Wine exports.
p.118-9: New vines at the Department; Scuppernong.
p.207-19: American grape culture.
p.443: Scuppernong.
p.444: The wine crop in California.
p.482: Massachusetts grape production.
p.519: Grape growing in Iowa.
p.525: The wine districts of Missouri.
p.567-76: Reviews of several books on viticulture and wine making.

- 1871 -

- p.85-7: Leafhoppers and phylloxera.
p.116: Mildew on grape vines.
p.148-52: Grapes of No. Carolina.
p.159: Grapes of Texas.
p.231-2: Grapes of Iowa, Ohio, Michigan and Missouri.
p.372: Missouri grapes.
p.378: Grapes of Nebraska.
p.396: Ohio grapes.
p.402: Rhode Island grapes.

- 1878 -

- p.476-507: E.W. Hilgard on the agriculture & soils of California.

- 1895 -

- p.385: C.L. Marlatt, "The Principal Insect Enemies of the Grape."

- 1896 -

- p.297-303: Native grape varieties in early America.
p.499-542: E.G. Lodeman (Cornell) on pruning and training grapes.

- 1897 -

- p.120: The grape in California.
p.305-8: On colonial wine.
p.312: Raisin culture in California.

- 1897 *cont'd* -

- p.401, 420: On grape hybrids.
p.416: Phylloxera.

- 1898 -

- p.165-6: Pruning grapes.
p.551-62: George Husmann, "The Present Condition of Grape Culture in California."

- 1899 -

- p.20: USDA viticulture work in the southeast.
p.197: Plant diseases and viticulture.
p.472-7: Grape breeding in the U.S.
p.513-48; 672-5: The work of the USDA Experimental Stations.

- 1902 -

- p.407-20: George C. Husmann, "Grape, Raisin and Wine Production in the United States."

- 1904 -

- p.241-54: On birds and fruit growing in California, with letters from Paul Masson and E. Goodrich (El Quito Ranch, Saratoga) on robins.
p.363-80: George C. Husmann, "Some Uses of the Grapevine and Its Fruit."

- 1925 -

- p.272: E. Bull and the Concord grape.

- 1926 -

- p.349-50: The government inspection for "juice" grapes.

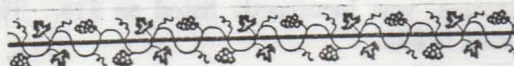
- 1933 -

- p.331-2: On the grape industry.

- 1937 -

- p.631-64: Elmer Snyder, "Grape Development and Improvement."

You can see that the great interest manifested in the period from 1850-1870 drops off some as the years go by. And, of course, the publication itself evolved into a very different thing than what it was in the early years. Actually, there are loads of statistics on production, imports, exports, and overland shipments in the Yearbooks up through the 1930s. For example, in 1926 you can get: grape production by state (1924-26), California grape production by district (1919-26), California grape production by classification (1899-1926), raisin production (1913-1916), carlot shipments by state, auction sales by variety per lug, and price per ton (1919-1926). Since the late thirties each Yearbook has had a specific theme and has a very strong consumer orientation. For example, 1949's topic was "Grass." the 1962 number was devoted to the history of the Department. Recent numbers can be had for a dollar or two in used book stores. But I think you might still be able to pick up a copy of the 1860 number for under \$10, but you may have to move fast.



NEWS & NOTES

Welcome to 1995! May it be a bountiful year for wine books - new, old, and rare. This year the **Newsletter** looks forward to its fifth year, and anticipates with delight the many interesting and entertaining contributions that will come from Tendril members during the year. Your Editor is ready for all materials: articles, suggestions, ideas, criticisms - all are welcome! This is **our** Newsletter...

You will notice on the enclosed **annual renewal notice** that our dues have been raised to \$15 for USA and Canada, and \$20 Overseas. The "treasurer" reports that we have but few expenses: printing and mailing the Newsletter, bank service charge, and annual post office box fee. But we need a pinch more income to cover them.

An up-to-date **Membership Roster** will be sent shortly to all members. Meanwhile, we welcome new member **Thomas Filip** (701 A South West St., Carlisle, PA 17013), introduced to us by **Loyd Hartley**. Dr. Filip collects Port wines and is looking for first edition books about Port.

The ever-complimentary wine educator and Tendril, **John Sarles**, enjoyed the October Newsletter: "From 'admirable', thru 'superior', to and including 'top-notch' - all apply to the October issue! It is indeed a masterpiece and well worth the annual subscription price for this issue alone!" Such exuberant praise is heartily appreciated...Thanks, John!

Our Food & Drink bookseller member in southern California, **Marian L. Gore**, writes: "Thank you for Vol.4, No.4. As a New Yorker subscriber for many, many years, I particularly enjoyed **Bo Simons'** piece on Liebling's *Between Meals*. I no longer have the original edition, but North Point Press did a reprint in 1986, and I have that copy."

Rick has moved! San Francisco bookseller member **Rick Wilkinson** (Albatross Book Company) has vacated his Eddy Street shop for improved quarters: Albatross Books (general used books) is now located at 143 Clement Street, S.F., 94118 (415-752-8611). Rick has also opened a second bookshop in partnership with Thomas Goldwasser: Goldwasser & Wilkinson Books, Inc. at 486 Geary Street, S.F. 94102 (415-292-4698). Their stock is general, fine antiquarian books with a special interest in the "art of living: those books that furnish our lives with pleasure, including food and wine."

Oops! In October's "Books & Bottles" column by **Fred McMillin**, the price of Jackson and Schuster's book, *The Production of Grapes and Wine in Cool Climates*, was incorrectly listed as \$15. The correct price is \$25.

John Thorne, graciously writes to tell us that the revised seventh edition of John Carter's classic *ABC for Book Collectors* (with corrections, additions and introduction by Nicolas Barker, editor of *The Book Collector*) has been published by Werner Shaw Ltd, London. In one of our first Newsletters, we listed this reference book as an indispensable guide; this new edition has 450 alphabetical entries of book collecting and bibliographic terms, comments on auctions, fakes, facsimiles, rarities, etc. Available at £12.95, John will be happy to supply (plus postage), or ask at your local bookstore.

In our July 1994 (Vol.4 No.3) Newsletter, Brillat-Savarin, M.F.K. Fisher and *The Physiology of Taste* were discussed by Tendrils **Paul Scholten** and **Fred McMillin**. Your Editor recently received a prospectus for a deluxe collector's edition of "this French gastronome's elegant and witty compendium on the art of dining...a literary classic on the grandest scale." Two hundred copies of Fisher's translation have been designed by the talented Andrew Hoyem and printed at his Arion Press (San Francisco); nine color lithographs and 200 drawings by the acclaimed artist Wayne Thiebaud have been specially created for the book - each copy is numbered and signed by the artist. 10 x 14 in size, hand-bound and in a slipcase, the price is \$2,500. (The prospectus is stunning; wish I could afford the book.)

Yes! You now should find on your favorite bookseller's shelf **Charles Sullivan's** not-to-be-missed, long-awaited book, *Napa Wine: A History from Mission Days to Present*. (See Bob Foster's review in this issue.) A special Collectors Edition (500 copies, in gilt-stamped leather, signed and numbered) is available from the Wine Appreciation Guild for \$85.

Warren Johnson, proprietor of Second Harvest Books, has compiled a Want List of fiction and non-fiction wine-related books that he is searching for. Write him at his Cobb Mountain, CA address.

Antiquarian bookseller and Tendril member **Jonathan Hill** (New York) recently issued Catalogue 86, "Books on Wine, other Alcoholic Beverages, and Gastronomy from a Well-Known Private Collection," his first catalogue devoted to wine and related books. (The "well-known" collector is not identified, as per his request. Jonathan would only tell me that he has collected for over 30 years, is from New York City, is now retired and moving to a smaller home.) The catalogue is a worthy production, with over 600 out-of-print, scarce and rare books described, many with lengthy notes. It is advertised as "the largest bookseller's catalogue ever printed on the subject." In the usual Hill fashion, the catalogue is finely designed and produced. It should remain a useful reference tool for the collector, particularly for American imprints.

OLD MADEIRA

by Roy Brady

[Reprinted, with kind permission, from the Spring 1963 issue of *Wine and Food*, which introduced the author as "an American man of letters in the Saintsbury tradition: his love and knowledge of wine* are catholic and articulate." * Please add wine literature. Ed.]



In recent times Madeira has been widely known and widely neglected. The wine has a peculiar fascination, derived probably from its reputation for unparalleled longevity, from its origins on an exotic island, and, for Americans at least, from its place in American history through the 18th and 19th centuries. Somehow it was one of the first wines I was aware of and one of the first I ever bought. As an undergraduate about the time the war started I remember buying a bottle, a Cossart/Gordon called, I think, Crown Bual. I can still remember the warmth of the wine in a Chicago winter and the orange label with a drawing of a cask of wine on one of those bullock-drawn sledges for which the island is famous.

After the war when my wine interest began to be more serious, I had the delightful and discouraging experience of reading Professor Saintsbury. He, born nearly three-quarters of a century earlier than I, had already given up Madeira because after the coming of the oïdium in 1852, really fine Madeiras were only a memory, and "Sir, I drink no memories." That stern pronouncement seemed firmly and finally to close the door on old Madeira to later arrivals. A little later I made the acquaintance of Sir Stephen Gaselee in the pages of *Wine and Food*, and learned that wonderful old Madeiras had not passed entirely from the earth. Fortunate cellars here and there still had a few bottles. The knowledge had no practical significance. The wines were inaccessible, but there was a certain bleak comfort in knowing that they existed.

Meanwhile bottles bearing seductive vintages were no rarity on the American market. The years 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890 and 1900 were indeed so favoured that one was inclined to believe that some quirk of Madeiran climate had persuaded the vine to adopt a decennial habit of bearing. Sampling various of those wines made it all too clear that they were *not* the sort whose disappearance Professor Saintsbury had regretted. One could imitate them rather well with a mixture of alcohol and molasses generously flavoured with vinegar and scorched popcorn. Towards the end of the 1940s one of Chicago's leading wine merchants decided to rise above all this tawdry

fraud and offer some pre-oïdium Madeiras. That he began with an 1857, a year in the midst of the oïdium, I thought was suspicious. Later I discovered that Mr. H. Warner Allen mentions an 1854, another oïdium year, so that such a thing is at least possible. Anyhow he went on to put before the public an 1848, an 1812 and a 1792. Very little sampling was required to show that these were not what Saintsbury had been thinking about either. Not that they were bad -- they rose to mediocrity.

By that time, after a couple of dozen experiences with self-styled vintage Madeiras, my disillusionment was nearly total. It seemed that Madeira was destined to be nothing but a literary wine in my life. The turning point, though long to remain unrecognized as such, came on the 3rd of May 1952 when I was browsing through Fred Burka's shop in Washington. I saw the first genuine old Madeira of my experience and did not believe in it and did not buy. The decision was not quite fatal because I did finally taste the wine, one of the greatest I have ever had. The labels were plain almost to the point of ugliness. Their very unpretentiousness should have been a guarantee of authenticity. The next opportunity to buy an old Madeira came during a visit to Boston in November 1953. I missed that one, too. S.S. Pierce had what purported to be an 1846 Terrantez for \$11.75 a bottle. While I did not buy it, neither could I forget it during the next few days. I remained most skeptical about any vintage Madeira. Still, S.S. Pierce is a highly reputable old house and the shipper was Cossart/Gordon, one of the most renowned on the island. On the way to the airport I decided to risk a bottle and detoured by S.S. Pierce. As things turned out it lay untasted and faintly mistrusted in the cellar until February 1959.

But this is running ahead of the story. November 1954 found me back at Burka's where there were actually two old Madeiras, one called Rainwater, the other Malmsey. They came from an estate in Baltimore where they had been put into five-gallon demijohns in 1832. That was the earliest remaining date in their history. Vintages were lost. The tags on the demijohns bore only the name "Blackburn" in addition to the wine names. Among the thirteen English firms which André Simon mentions in *Madeira: Wine, Cakes and Sauce* (London, 1933) as doing business at Funchal in 1840 was a Blackburn & Co. Apparently it was one of those which did not survive the oïdium. At any rate Mr. Burka, who had bottled the wines in 1949, very kindly permitted me to taste them in his office. They were very similar and quite unlike anything I had tasted before. That was just the trouble. They were so unlike anything I had ever tasted that I did not know quite what to make of them. The nose was

extraordinarily powerful. The notes which I made at the time say they were "imposing, austere and vigorous...intellectual rather than sensuous." This time I had at least the wit to carry off a bottle of each. One sampled in 1957 seemed less strange. When finally they were both tasted along with the 1846 Terrantez in February 1959, the tide began to turn with a vengeance. Whatever they were, they were marvelous.

Evidently one could get a few grand old bottles -- at a price. The next hint of the remarkable events to come was contained in Avery's modest advertisement on the back cover of Wine and Food, No.91, Autumn 1956. They had a "special list including some rare and interesting wines such as a Terrantez 1846." The same subject was unobtrusively alluded to again in Nos.93 and 104. In spite of having no way (later I found one) to get wines from Bristol to California, I asked for a copy of the list. It was a simple mimeographed thing, a bare listing of names and prices, clearly discriminating between vintage and dated solera wines, something merchants in this country are rather pointedly vague about at times. Other lists of the same kind followed. They grew longer though never more than a single page. Vintages ranged in astonishing profusion from 1900 back to 1789 and prices from 37s. 6d. to 75s. With no fanfare whatever one of the greatest wine events of recent times was taking place. A fabulous collection of old Madeiras such as one would expect only to read about was on the market.

Still some of the old doubts lingered. Could the wines possibly be genuine? Anyone who regularly buys substantial quantities of wines in the United States tends to develop a jaundiced view of the veracity of wine dealers. However, in the view of many wine lovers, Mr. Ronald Avery of Bristol is *the* wine merchant beneath whom all others are ranged at various distances. With his unexceptionable reputation behind it the whole subject of vintages had to be reconsidered. The detailed information he generously supplied could not fail to carry conviction. He attributes the survival of so many old wines to the fact that interest in Madeira was so long at low ebb. Now there seems to be a Madeira revival going on in some quarters, regrettably not much in the United States, but I think England is more fortunate.

The June 5th 1959 issue of Harpers Wine & Spirit Gazette carried an extremely interesting report on a tasting of old Madeiras given by Mr. Noël Cossart in the London cellars of Messrs. Evans, Marshall & Co. Ltd. There were twelve vintages, many of them from the list offered by Mr. Avery, and, to all appearances, several were the same as some offered in New York. This tasting was accorded the final accolade by Mr. H. Warner Allen who was there. In

his splendid *A History of Wine* (London, 1961) he says, "I was an old man when my senses were dumbfounded as if by a firework display by presentation to such a collection of glorious Madeiras as had never been seen before and will never again be seen. I had drunk the more than centenarian Madeira which the Saintsbury Club owed to the generosity of Sir Stephen Gaselee as the finale of a sequence of fine vintage wines, with the reverence due to the rarest of pleasurable experiences, but it was not until May 1959 that I had a unique opportunity of judging the supreme heights to which the greatest of great vintage Madeiras could rise."

So all doubts are laid to rest. I regret that my skepticism prevented me from beginning to buy old Madeiras sooner. Prices would have set severe limits, but I might have had a few more bottles. I am eternally grateful not to have missed the opportunity entirely. Most of the wines are gone from the market now, the best especially. By the time I got back to Burka's both the Rainwater and Malmsey had vanished. Of course many of the wines will survive in private cellars for a long time to come.

The only mystery that remains is the very fact of their sale. Why were they sold and who, exactly, owned them? Those sold in New York bore Blandy labels, those in Boston Cossart/Gordon labels, and those in Bristol Avery labels, though the latter came from Cossart/Gordon at Funchal also. One clue is found on the back label of a solera 1818 Sercial (Blandy's) sold by Sherry's of New York. It says, "Dr. Michael Grabham who married Miss Mary Anne Blandy inherited through his wife a very fine cellar. This he left to his son Walter Grabham. Walter, who died in 1955, left the cellar to his cousins Graham and John Blandy." Many wine lovers are already familiar with Dr. Grabham (1840-1935) through the story André Simon tells in *Vintagewise* (London, 1945) of his visit with the doctor in Funchal in 1933. In his *Madeira* (London, 1961) Rupert Croft-Cooke provides some further background telling how, during the 19th century, C.R. Blandy spent large sums of money buying up old Madeiras. Mr. Croft-Cooke, incidentally, makes Dr. Grabham as something of a leg-puller in his stories about old Madeiras. The good doctor was no stranger to controversy. His name had appeared in the literature of wine long before. Charles Tovey in his *Wine and Wine Countries* (new edition, London, 1877) tells how Dr. Grabham wrote a letter to the London Times in 1876 suggesting that people write directly to Madeira for the best wines. He goes on to quote at length the indignant reply of the Wine Trade Review to this proposal for by-passing the London merchants.

So it would appear that the Blandys built up an unsurpassed collection of old Madeiras, that Dr.

Grabham had a remarkable cellar, and that these are the foundation of our recent good fortune. Perhaps the best that can be said about the appearance of such grand wines on the market comes from Mr. Noël Cossart who recently wrote, "I suppose the real answer is that none of us are as rich as we were. Although these precious wines are very scarce on the market, partners and directors have taken care that they have enough to 'keep them comfortable in their old age'."

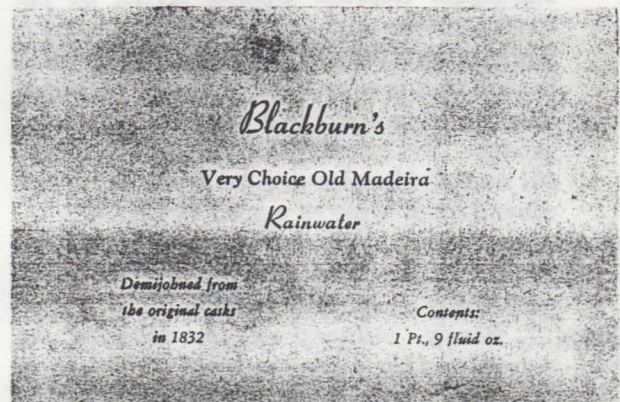
The signs of revival in Madeira are very encouraging. Great vintage Madeiras may rise again. At the end of the last war the vineyards displayed a large percentage of Jacques vines, a native American variety imported after the phylloxera as a rootstock and very poor as a direct producer. Since then the Portuguese Government has been subsidizing a return to the classical varieties, Sercial, Bual, Verdelho and Malmsey. Even the once almost extinct Terrantez is returning.

What is vintage Madeira? One would be inclined to assume that it is the product of a single year, like a vintage claret or port. When one considers how vintage Madeiras are handled it is difficult to believe that they can all be strictly vintage wines in the simplest sense. It has long been the custom to keep the finest Madeiras in wood for a very considerable period, then to put them in demijohns for many more years, and finally to bottle them. Until they are in glass they are subject to evaporation, which easily takes 3 per cent or 4 per cent a year. an 1805 Verdelho, for example, was in cask for 140 years, and there is an 1862 Terrantez which was in cask until 1905, in demijohn until 1936. The point is that a wine in cask has to be replenished from time to time. If a vintner starts with a large enough quantity of a single wine he can replenish with it alone for a long time. Nevertheless evaporation is in the long run ruinous. After 50 years a thousand gallons losing only 3 per cent a year would be reduced to 218 gallons and after 100 years to 48 gallons. In 1920 Williams & Humbert in Jerez actually began to lay down a butt of sherry each year as a curiosity to be kept unblended. Rather than handle each wine in the usual solera fashion they move it to successively smaller casks as it evaporates. Under these conditions they estimate that a butt would completely disappear in about 75 years or, allowing for a little tasting, in 45 years. Thus it seems inescapable that some replenishment has to be allowed for wines kept very long in wood. If the additions are of relatively old wines of high quality, the results will, of course, be admirable. However, if this argument is admitted, there is no absolutely sharp line between vintage and solera wines -- unless it is this, that a vintage is a solera with one withdrawal only. In other words, suppose that a cask

of vintage wine is laid down and replenished at infrequent intervals only to make up for evaporation. Nothing whatever is withdrawn until one day the entire cask is bottled off.

It would be interesting to know exactly what the composition of such a wine would be. Has anyone ever studied the question? What evaporates from a cask of wine? Alcohol and water, of course, but what else? Do flavouring substances go as fast? Probably not. The wine is not simply being lost, rather it is getting more concentrated. Some discussions in Julian Jeff's excellent book *Sherry* (London, 1961) suggest that this is exactly what does happen with sherry. If that is true then an old cask from which no wine has ever been removed really contains the essential parts of all the wine that has been put into it since it was filled. A calculation which shows, say, that 10 per cent of the original vintage is all that remains in the cask is misleading. It is true that only 10 per cent of the original alcohol and water remain, but what of that, if most of the original flavouring materials and their derivatives remain? This is an interesting if speculative way of viewing an old wine.

In this day when even the most ancient and famous vineyards everywhere age going in for lighter, quicker-maturing wines it is good to see some wines still being made in substantially the old ways. When it comes to wine a country may be better off for not being too up to date. For some reason, probably no more than coincidence, the great fortified wines, port, sherry and Madeira, are the least touched by progress. They too are changing naturally, but they may be the last strongholds of greatness. Despite all the furor over the 1959s in France and Germany, I suspect that they will be forgotten before the 1953s and 1949s in Germany and the 1945s in France. In this I am in good company. Mr. Allen, to cite him once more, thinks that 1945 may be the last great year for a long time. For wine lovers, if not for the producers, it may be fortunate that vintage port and vintage Madeira are not very popular. ♪



["Despite the ugly label...a truly fine wine." Roy Brady, 1994]

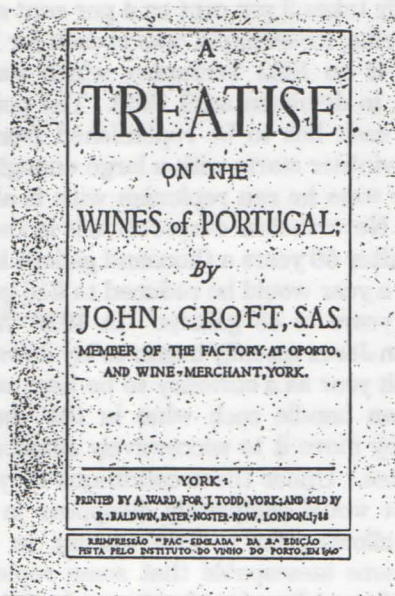
MADEIRA WINE - A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

by Gail Unzelman

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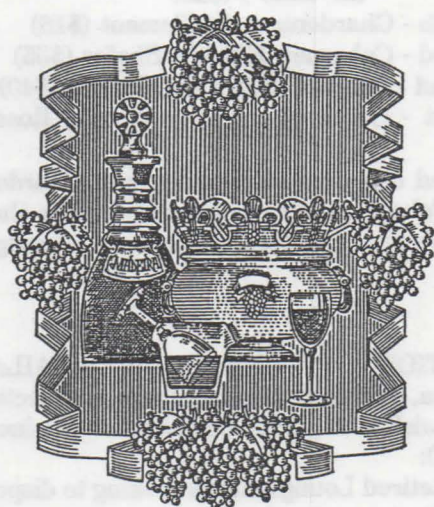
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[Decanter, Rinser, Monteith - Implements for the drinking of Madeira wine. -- From 1975 Corti Bros reprint of *Madeira Wine*]

Mitchell, S. Weir. *A Madeira Party*. New York: Century Co., 1895. 165 pp; 2nd.ed. 1910. "Written by a prominent Philadelphia physician, this is a fictional re-creation of a Madeira tasting in an upper-class home of Philadelphia in the mid-1800s." Also, a 1922 limited edition by the Marchbanks Press, New York, 36 pp; a 1958 privately printed edition of 100 copies for E.J. Rousuck, 29 pp. A 1975 reprint by Corti Bros, Sacramento, has an added Introduction by William Dickerson and Appendices on Madeira Wine by Roy Brady, 80 pp.

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"Contains a short chapter on Madeira wines (grapes, exporters); a useful glossary, index and bibliography are provided."

Robinson, Jancis. *Vines, Grapes and Wines*. New York: Knopf, 1986. 280 pp. "In this highly detailed, comprehensive work on grape varieties and the wines they make in wine regions all over the world, Madeira vines and wines are thoroughly covered..." With Glossary, Bibliography, and extensive Index. Informatively illustrated.

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Note: This Checklist contains only English-language works on Madeira and its wines. There are numerous books and pamphlets in the Portuguese language on the wines of Portugal, including Madeira: for additional material you might refer to André Simon's *Bibliotheca Vinaria* (London: Holland Press, 1979), pages 114-117, "Works on the Vineyards and Wines of Spain and Portugal," and to the extensive bibliography of Portuguese works on grape-growing and wine-making published by the Instituto do Vinho do Porto, *Esboço de Uma Bibliografia* (3 vols: 1945, 1947, 1952). Please send any additions, corrections, or comments to the Editor. ☺



**BOOKS &
BOTTLES**
by
Fred McMillin

NAPA: AS SEEN FROM FAR and NEAR

The **BOOKS**: We just blew the budget on four fine new wine books (total weight 19 pounds!), three from Europe and one from California: Hugh Johnson's fourth edition of his *World Atlas of Wine* (London: M. Beazley / New York: Simon & Schuster, 320 pp, \$50); Jancis Robinson's *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1087 pp, \$50); Charles Sullivan's history of *Napa Wine* (San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild, 438 pp., \$30); and the first *Larousse Encyclopedia of Wine* (London: Foulkes / Paris: Larousse, 608 pp. \$40). How does each view California's prestigious Napa Valley?

Hugh appreciates the wines, but not the appellation system. "The U.S.A. Approved Viticultural Area (AVA) is a toothless instrument, concerned only with geography, not quality ... The Napa Valley, anxious to retain the identity that gives its grapes a premium over almost all others in California, is one AVA. [The AVA] is political rather than physical, including not only the valley, but the bayside, mountainside, and high plateau. It is not reasonable to argue that there can be one 'Napa style'."

Jancis respects Napa Chardonnays but pays the highest tribute to Napa's Cabernets. "Cabernet surfaced as a leading success in Napa in the 1880s ... other parts of the state have been trying to catch Napa [ever] since ... Napa produces most of the memorably distinctive, age-worthy California Cabernets."

Charles agrees. "Cabernet led Napa's post-Repeal surge to world class status ... In 1990 Napa Cabernet Sauvignon grapes sold for 26% more than those of Sonoma, its only [California] competitor in terms of the number of high quality Cabernet producers."

The *Larousse Encyclopedia* respects Napa wines and likes some current trends. "The Napa Valley is the best-known wine region in America ... It is dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, which combine to make up more than half of Napa's plantings... Recently, there has been a trend...away

from high alcohol, over-oaked varietal wines and toward more complex, more subtle elixirs."

The **BOTTLES**: My Scott's tasting panel blind-tastes a lot of Napa wines. Do they agree with the above evaluations, or would they move Napa Merlots and/or Pinot Noirs into the top echelon? Here are their favorite current releases.

- 8th - Chardonnay, Robert Mondavi (\$13.50)
- 7th - Cabernet Sauvignon, Conn Creek (\$18)
- 6th - Riesling, Late Harvest, Grgich (\$50)
- 5th - Howell Mt Blend, Duckhorn (41% Cab - an "elixir") (\$25)
- 4th - Chardonnay, St.Clement (\$16)
- 3rd - Cabernet, Hillside, Shafer (\$35)
- 2nd - Insignia (80% Cab), Phelps (\$40)
- 1st - Cabernet, Hendry Vineyd, Rosenblum (\$30)

So, we had one dessert Riesling, two Chardonnays, and five Cabernets. Pretty hard to dispute the claim that Napa's best grape still is Cabernet Sauvignon.



COLLECTION OF WINE BOOKS AVAILABLE!!

Brian Rea, our "eccentric" member (he collects booze books...), wishes to rid his bookshelves of wine books (sacrilege!):

"Retired Loungasaurus seeking to dispose of a small collection of wine books, approx. 95/100. Included are items such as: *A History & Description of Modern Wines*, Henderson, 1851; *Bible Wines versus the Saloon Keepers Bible*, 1911; *The British Wine-Maker & Domestic Brewer*, Roberts, 1835; *Mon Docteur le Vin*, Derys, 1934; *The Whole Art of Making British Wines, Cordials, etc.*, Robinson, 1848.

Loungasaurus is desirous of trading collection for drink recipe books, or any books pertaining to bartending, cocktails, saloons, inns & taverns, etc. Could also be persuaded to trade for big, fat, knock-yourself-out Zinfandels. May consider Cabernet."

For a list of the collection, send a SASE to Brian Rea, 5333 Vista Grande, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

Thanks to **Marts Beekley** for this "aroma from another cask," Emerson's impression of the sympathetic behavior of the wine in the barrel and the vines in the field, and what is really secondary or malo-lactic fermentation which occurs as the wine temperature rises in the springtime:

...When trellised grapes their flowers unmask,
and the newborn tendrils twine,
the old wine darkling in the casks
feels the bloom on the living vine,
and bursts the hoops at hint of spring...

IN THE WINE LIBRARY by Bob Foster

Napa Wine: A History from Mission Days to Present, Charles L. Sullivan, The Wine Appreciation Guild, San Francisco, 1994, 438 pp., hardback, \$29.95. Fans of the Napa Valley have been deprived for years. While there have been a few works on the history of wine in America or the history of wine in California, there was never an authoritative volume tracing the entire chronology of California's most prestigious wine growing area. But that situation has been ended with an excellent work by wine historian Charles Sullivan.

The author begins with the initial planting of grapes north of San Francisco by both the Russians at Fort Bragg and the Franciscans in San Rafael in the dormant season of 1817-1818. He traces the history of the Valley from the initial settlement by George Yount through the modern day limitations on growth designed to protect the agricultural character of the Valley. It's a complex tale of nature, politics and economics bringing about both glorious golden ages of growth and prosperity as well as dark periods of depression and prohibition. What the author so carefully chronicles is the fact that winemaking in the Valley has long been caught in an eternal grip of factors far beyond self control. While showing how the wineries directly face the fortunes of Mother Nature on a daily basis from both weather and pests, Sullivan details how major outside forces have had indelible impacts on the Valley. The two major outside forces are politics and world economics. The author carefully notes each of the world wide depressions and their often savage impact in the Valley. Similarly, world political events such as the world wars or prohibition have also made major changes in the state of the wine industry. Thus, Sullivan carefully traces not only the vintage by vintage events in the Valley but ties them into the large external events that may ultimately cause even more changes. It's a fascinating and well told story.

The book abounds with interesting vignettes from the past. For example, I was amazed to learn that the recent developments on vineyard land on Howell Mountain are but a shallow repeat of the late 1800s. Indeed, during that golden era there were almost double the number of acres under cultivation that there are now. Other fascinating tidbits abound. Of equal interest is the fact the Zinfandel was the primary red grape in the very early days of the Valley. Moreover, if you ever find yourself in a wine trivia game, this book has what should be a game winning bit of information. The original name of Yountville was Sebastopol.

The book is filled with photographs and drawings, many of which have never been published

before. The photograph of two men working in the lab at BV in 1957 bears close examination. The men are Andre Tchelistcheff and Joe Heitz.

A brief note about the writing style of the book must be made. Sullivan writes well, but because he is telling a story that is made up of numerous threads, there are times when he has to take a thread and carry it forward for a number of years before he can break off, go back and pick up another thread that began at the same time but runs a shorter length. It takes a bit of time to get used to the less than perfect chronological order, but the reader is rewarded with a rich and powerful work.

The book is blessed with a detailed and comprehensive index. Given the wealth of information crammed into this work, the index is but one of the features that make it indispensable for the lover of Napa's fine wines. Highly recommended.

The Oxford Companion to Wine, Edited by Jancis Robinson, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1994, 1,088 pp., hardback, \$49.95. There seems to be a weird pattern that once a wine book goes over 1,000 pages (or five pounds in weight) it's chances of being a great book decrease while its chances of being a great doorstop increase. This fine work demolishes that pattern. It's over 1,000 pages, weighs in at a hefty seven pounds and it's terrific.

I have often criticized modern wine encyclopedias for just presenting well-travelled material in a new format. The fact that this new work covers so many innovative areas with so much fresh material is what makes it such a triumph. The editor has assembled nearly 100 experts in the wine world and had each write on his or her specialty. In addition to the scores of traditional subjects, this book breaks new ground with the depth and breadth of its coverage. It covers a wide range of technical topics from canopy management, bentonite, and devices to scare off birds, to cryoextraction. On a more refined note the book also covers topics from wine in classical art to a detailed history of the literature of wine. This is all material never before covered in any wine encyclopedia. Bravo!

There are a few things that make the book less than perfect. The coverage of individuals is quirky. Included are Robert Parker, Harry Waugh and Michael Broadbent, but excluded are Marvin Shanken (and the *Wine Spectator*), Clive Coates, and Oz Clarke. While there are numerous full color photographs, the maps are only presented in black and white, and only cover entire regions (i.e., there is a single map for all of California), and show only the most rudimentary locations of areas. They could have been so much better. Additionally, the lack of an index is troubling. Since some of the [cont'd. p.16]

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Foster.. more esoteric entries contain references to specific châteaux (i.e. the entry on Contaminants discusses Ch. Phelan Segur's loss of vintages from the chemical Orthene in 1984 and 1985), a reader seeking information on this particular château would only find the cross reference by happenstance. A work of this magnitude and importance demands an index to allow the reader to make full use of its amazing materials. Highly recommended.

The World Atlas of Wine - Fourth Edition, by Hugh Johnson, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1994, 320 pp, hardback, \$50. It's frustrating. There simply aren't enough superlatives in my thesaurus to properly praise this book. Hugh Johnson's earlier editions of *The World Atlas of Wine* were staggeringly excellent, setting new standards yet a notch higher. By far, this is the single best wine atlas ever written. It is magnificent!

The heart of any atlas must be the maps. While the last edition of this work had nearly 150 maps, this work tops 185. There are 36 new maps covering emerging wine regions (such as Asia) or re-emerging ones (such as Moldova). As the quality of the region increases, so does the detail in the maps. The maps are crystal clear, easy to read, and show elevations and other topography. They show just how good a wine map can be.

In this regard, a special treat is in store for German wine lovers, who are so often forgotten in modern wine writing. They will take delight in Johnson's designation of the finest *terroirs* in the various regions.

As is always true in Johnson's full size books, there is a wealth of photographs, readable charts and other illustrations. In toto there are over 1,600 full color graphics that add to the work's value. The layout is well done, providing visual interest without becoming cluttered. And, as should be true for any serious wine reference book, there is a detailed index - really two, with a general index as well as a gazetteer.

But, even with the superb maps, excellent typography and illustrations, the book would be of only passing interest were it not for the utterly superb text. Hugh Johnson has the ability to communicate even the most complex, technical subjects in an easy to read form. But, he does not reduce topics to pabulum. The writing remains on a sophisticated, stylish level, laced with understated British humor.

This book is an absolute must for any wine lover. No wine library can be complete without this stunning work. It is one of the best books on wine ever published. Very highly recommended.

[Bob's reviews appear regularly in the California Grapevine.]



♦ ♦ IN MEMORIAM ♦ ♦
GUNTHER DETERT: 1912-1994

The world of wine book collectors has lost one of its most enthusiastic and dedicated members. An energetic participant in many fields of wine appreciation - Napa Valley grape grower, home wine maker, long-standing member of the San Francisco branch of the I.W. & F.S., the Vintners Club, and the Lawyer Friends of Wine, co-founder of the California Vintage Wine Society, and ardent supporter of the Napa Valley Wine Library - Gunther Detert loved wine, and the people and books that surrounded him.

A San Francisco resident, and attorney for 53 years in the law firm of Sedgwick, Detert, Moran and Arnold, Gunther's serious interest in wine began in 1953 when his mother bought a home in the Oakville area of Napa Valley, with 40 acres of surrounding vineyard. This vineyard was one of the first to be planted exclusively to Cabernet Franc; the grapes are sold to Robert Mondavi Winery for use in their acclaimed Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon.

As he recalled in *Sketches from My Life* (written for his family just before his death), when his mother asked him to manage the vineyard, "my wife Marie-Louise and I plunged into educating ourselves in wine grape growing and wine making." Thus began the collecting of wine books. Frequent trips to Europe centered around furthering their knowledge of wine - with visits to vineyards and bookshops.

The Oakville ranch house is home to the Detert collection of wine books. The library numbers close to 500 volumes - many old, some rare, but all collected for an educational, working library. His "specialty" was books about the Napa Valley and the wines of California, and most of the known titles are here. He also particularly enjoyed the "wicked" series of books caricaturing wine that were done by the cartoonist Ronald Searle - these books were kept readily at hand on the side table. Able to read both German and French, a scattering of older German books and many of the classic texts in French were purchased in Europe for the library. Gunther prized the magnificent ampelographies of the past, and although not present in his own collection, he actively pursued them for the Napa Valley Wine Library.

Gunther Detert's ultimate collecting love was the Napa Valley Wine Library. (See his descriptive article in the "Wine Libraries of the World" series, Vol.1 No.2 of the *W-T Newsletter*). Formed in 1963, the library was the brainchild of James Beard, M.F.K. Fisher and Francis "Paco" Gould. When Louis Martini asked Gunther to take the Association Presidency in 1967, he willingly did so and served for seven more years. Since then he has been active as a Director, and headed up the committee on book buying and

collection development. In his later years, "despite failing hearing and eyesight," he continued to enjoy his involvement with both the book acquisition and the oral history programs. With his keen interest in the Valley's heritage, Gunther was instrumental in starting up the Wine Library's Oral History series, and devoted untold hours to working on this project.

True to form, Gunther contributed whatever he could to any Napa Valley wine history endeavor. From Irene Haynes' compact photographic tour of 19th century Napa wineries (*Ghost Wineries of Napa Valley*, 1980) to Charles Sullivan's comprehensive history (*Napa Wine*, 1994), Gunther is acknowledged for his encouragement and help.

Fittingly, Gunther Detert's own oral history, with his recollections of early Napa Valley wine activities and the Wine Library, has been taped and transcribed, and is part of the collection of the Napa Valley Wine Library.

He will be missed - in many ways.



[The Editor wishes to thank Gunther Detert's family for biographical information and sharing *Sketches from My Life*.]

