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HOW CALIFORNIA GOT ITS FIRST GREAT WINE BOOK : EDWARD BOSQUI'S *GRAPES AND GRAPE VINES OF CALIFORNIA*, 1877

by *Marvin Collins*

The wind was stripping the last of the leaves from the boulevards of the nation's Capitol when California boomer and professional journalist Charles A. Wetmore invited a fellow reporter to examine some remarkable samples of printing freshly arrived from the West Coast. Wetmore hoped that his colleague would find the work at hand of sufficient interest to spin off a short story, but the writer from the *National Republican* noted that "the excellence of the enterprise merits more than ordinary notice" and wrote a piece paraphrasing everything that his friend had told him.

The next day the *Republican* ran the story a dozen column inches, and the day after Wetmore responded with a letter to the editor which was published. Soon after, Charles included both the article and the letter in a packet of dispatches to his employer, the San Francisco *Alta California*, who printed the story of the samples front and center on page one December 9, 1877, and the letter inside the following day. Below is a transcription of the article.

A Rare Work Of Art.
Grapes and Grape Vines of California, Illustrated.

from the National Republican, Washington D.C.

We have seen at the office of Charles A. Wetmore, correspondent of the *Alta California*, advance proof sheets and plates of a rare work of art now in the process of publication. It is entitled *Grapes and Grape Vines of California* and is being published under the auspices of the California State Vinicultural Association, by Edward Bosqui & Co. of San Francisco. Mr. Wetmore, who has, among other pursuits outside of journalism, been a devoted friend to the vinicultural interests of his State, has been requested by the publishers to superintend the work of obtaining subscriptions and to make the necessary arrangements to afford lovers of art an opportunity to subscribe. The excellence of the enterprise merits more than ordinary notice.

The publication has been in part suggested by works of a similar character which have appeared in Europe in the past quarter century, where they are valued both in an utilitarian and aesthetic sense, useful to those engaged in the culture of grapes and the production of wines, useful to the naturalist, and attractive to amateurs in art. Victor Rendu's Ampelografie Française and the Ampelografie Rhenane were devoted to the views of an entire country or region. Others were local, relating to single viticultural districts. Such works being limited in editions, are greatly prized by art collectors as well as viniculturalists, and by all who admire the luxurious beauty of the grape, when illustrated true to Nature in all its wealth of variety in form, cluster, foliage and

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color. Such a work, illustrating the beauty and peculiarities of grape vines propagated in California has been also suggested by reason of the fact that all the best-known varieties of the world flourish, producing clusters of grapes superior in beauty and size to the clusters in their native homes in Germany, Hungary, Sicily, Spain and Portugal. By change of climate and soil certain peculiarities are developed which characterize the vine in California, to illustrate which has a value in science as well as art.

There are growing in California more than 40 million bearing vines, distributed in districts scattered within an area of 700 miles north and south, 100 miles east and west, in valleys, plains, on foothills and mountains, in rich variegated loam, and in dry, gravelly soils. Each of these districts have marked characteristics. The varieties cultivated are very numerous, beginning with the Mission grape, a purple berry, formerly produced in abundance by the early Franciscan fathers, and afterward propagated extensively, and continuing through a long list of 300 foreign varieties, introduced by Agostin Haraszthy, under the auspices of the State Government, early in the history of California's industry. The grape has become a staple production, being certain to yield its crop in all years in dry and wet seasons.

The California State Vinicultural Association, some time ago employed an artist, Ms. Hannah Millard, to produce, in watercolors, illustrations of leading varieties of grapes. This she was instructed to do with a view to the attainment of the utmost accuracy and truth to nature, and to visit the vineyards and the various vine-growing sections of the state at the season of the vintage, with special instructions to make the paintings on the spot, each embracing an entire selected cluster, a portion of the wood, and two leaves – the one showing the upper and the other the under side. She was directed to choose for delineation an average cluster in each case, in order that the illustrations might convey no false or exaggerated impressions. She devoted herself patiently to this work for two years, carefully and conscientiously following her instructions.

The pictures produced are in every case exact copies from nature, exhibiting the fruit, stem and leaves in their natural size, colors, and with all their characteristic marks. Her illustrations do not represent exceptionally fine clusters, yet it is a matter of much surprise to those who are familiar with the same varieties as they are produced in Europe to notice that they produce, when propagated in the warm soils and sunlight of California, fruit surpassing both in cluster and berry what is usually seen in the regions from whence they were transplanted.

After this collection had been nearly completed, Edward Bosqui and Company, of San Francisco, printers and lithographers, undertook at their own risk to publish a serial work, giving text descriptions of the vine in California and oleograph plates, being exact reproductions of the watercolors prepared for the vinicultural association. The design of the work is very costly, the estimated expense of producing the limited edition of 500 copies, with 20 varieties of grapes illustrated, being $25,000; $12,000 have already been expended before the use of the first number, and only four of the plates are completed, and two more nearly completed. Mr. Bosqui was fortunate in being able to secure the services of the artist, Mr. William Harring, who formerly was leading artist in Prang's chromo establishment. An idea of the great labor and difficulty in producing the oleographic plates in the highest possible degree of art, which has been aimed at, may be conceived by mention of some of the details. The drawings are made upon stone, which is brought from Bavaria, and by a preparation of the surface, the etching is accomplished with acid. Each separate color, tint and shade requires a separate stone and drawing and a separate impression of the plate on the press. We are told that the plate illustrating the Johannisberg Riesling, a light green grape, is the product of 28 impressions from as many stones and drawings. To produce in this way 500 copies of this one plate requires 14,000 impressions, and to complete the 500 copies of 20 plates will require more than 250,000 impressions.

All this work must be done so carefully that it is a work of much time and labor and cannot be hastened by employing men to relieve those skilled and in charge. Mr. Harring devotes all his time to the drawings which he executes himself. He has already made 160 drawings in producing the first four complete plates and two now incomplete.

The completed illustrations, of which we have seen proofs in the portfolio brought to this city, are of the Muscat of Alexandria, Flame Tokay, Johannisberg Riesling and Chasselas Rose. An unfinished proof of the Mission grape was with the collection.

The work will appear in ten numbers being issued to private subscribers only, two plates with each number, the whole to be completed within the next twelve to fourteen months. In order to preserve the artistic merit of the publication, the edition is to be limited and as soon as completed, the stones and plates will be destroyed. No separate numbers will be sold. The style of the work in typography will be similar to the *Art Journal*. Each illustration suitable for binding with the work, or as will probably be more general, for framing as a picture is about 14 by 18 inches in size.

The first number will be issued sometime during

this month, and the two following in December and February. After that they will appear as rapidly as the work can be completed. The first number will contain illustrations of the Mission and Johannisberg varieties with text descriptions and prefatory remarks. Competent artists who examined the work so far as it is completed are quite enthusiastic in its praise, and say that nothing of the kind has ever been produced, either in this country or elsewhere, superior or even equal in merit. [Irving M. Scott and Virgil Williams wrote: We unhesitatingly pronounce the work to be accurate copies of the original water-color drawings, and consider them among the most successful efforts of oleographic art ever produced in Europe or America. The bloom, the delicate warmth, and transparent glow of the natural clusters are rendered with wonderful fidelity to nature ...]

It is a matter for California to be proud of, that so young a state has already resources for producing such oleographic plates and the success of the enterprise redounds to the credit of the Pacific Coast as well as to the daring energy of the publishers."

The article was a public relations man's dream. Wetmore, who for several years had been championing the emerging wine industry of his native state, used the occasion of the article to promote not the ampelography but the interest that had engendered it. He chose the moment as the pulpit from which to preach his doctrine of Native Wines.

"To Editor Washington *National Republican*: In your notice of the work on "Grapes and Grape Vines" of California, you paid me the compliment in saying that I have been a devoted friend of the vinicultural interests of my State. It is true that I have done something in the effort to overcome the senseless prejudice which Americans have generally against native wines; but nothing practical will be accomplished till American wine-drinkers fairly test the merits of California wines by purchasing and consuming the best productions under their honest labels. The average production of California wines is about nine million gallons annually, and constantly increasing, excepting this year, on account of exceptional causes. This great quantity is nearly all consumed on this side of the Rocky Mountains, only limited portion of the best samples being exported; some to Australia and some to Europe. ....It is true that only a portion of the California wines are suitable without mixing and blending for ordinary consumption; yet this is true of all countries. The ordinary California wine is better than the ordinary beverage of France or Spain; but to the public the excellent varieties will never be known until the prejudice against a native product is overcome."

The balance of his letter is in praise and promotion of I. Landsberger & Co. Eclipse Extra Dry Champagne, made by his friend Arpad Haraszthy, describing its lower price and its freedom from added spirits and resulting headaches.

"My advice to wine-drinkers is drink the best native wines, pure articles, save money, and save headache. Then they may also be sure that the quality of wine will rapidly improve, viniculturists being so encouraged."

Wetmore in Washington

By what confluence of events did a thirty-year-old reporter bring national attention to a seemingly esoteric work illustrating and describing winegrapes? Wetmore had gone to Washington the year before as the national political correspondent for the *Alta*, but had also tucked into his portfolio his deep interest in California viticulture.

In April 1877, he had hosted a luncheon and tasting of the still and sparkling wines of San Francisco's Isidor Landsberger & Co. at D.C.'s toney Wormley's Hotel. His guests were prominent journalists and wine connoisseurs who listened while Charles spoke at length about the burgeoning wine business on the Pacific Slope. The afternoon event had been covered by both the *Evening Star* and the *Sunday Herald* and had established his reputation as a wineman of considerable knowledge. He took pains in the promotion of Landsberger's Eclipse Champagne in the press and to dealers and restaurants, which he held up as an article of great achievement.

Bohemian Club Connection

Wetmore was a founding member of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco, chartered by and for journalists who despaired of the rough and ready post-gold-rush sensibility that passed for West Coast culture in 1872. Within a year the rolls expanded to included painters, composers and literary men, and Arpad Haraszthy and Edward Bosqui were among those brought into the fold.

Arpad, the son of Agostin Haraszthy, had apprenticed in sparkling wine at Epernay, and while in France had sent an excellent series of letters on European winemaking to the *Overland Monthly*.

After great and costly difficulties in producing a reliable sparkling product for his father's Buena Vista Vinicultural Association, he finally tamed the high sugar non-Burgundian grapes he had to work with and released the acclaimed Eclipse Champagne through the house of his partner and financial backer, commission merchant and wine dealer Isidor Landsberger. Haraszthy soon became a prominent member of the California State Vinicultural Association set up to fight unfair taxes on alcohol and to push for legislation friendly to the industry. In 1880 Arpad became a commissioner and president of the State Board of Viticultural Commissioners.

While Charles Wetmore had an early experience with wine growing through family friend Elias Lyman Beard in Mission San Jose, Haraszthy and Landsberger would mentor his entrée into the profession. There can be no doubt that Arpad's European tour and correspondence would be the model for Wetmore's own Letters from France in 1878 and '79. And there can be no doubt that a rising journalist with a nationally recognized name would be a great asset to the Vinicultural Association in getting the word out about the wonders coming from California. Wetmore's activity in Washington was positioning this man of boundless energy for his next great step, being named in 1880 as the Chief Executive Officer of the State Board of Viticultural Commissioners.

Edward Bosqui

Fellow Bohemian Edward Bosqui had arrived in California in 1850, finding first employment in the banking house of Palmer, Cook & Co., and later becoming the agent and secretary of General John C. Fremont, who needed assistance in handling the large tracts of land he owned throughout the West. Returning from a trip East on the account of Palmer Cook, Bosqui survived the sinking of the paddle steamer *Winfield Scott* that had struck a submerged ledge off Santa Rosa Island of the Anacapa Group in December 1853. He recounted in his memoir how his cabin-mate groped around in the dark for his wig and false teeth, despite Bosqui's urging to flee to the main deck.

Born in Montreal in 1832, Bosqui had a life-long interest in the arts. He was a skilled water-colorist in his own right and an organizer of the San Francisco Art Association in 1871, the year before the Bohemian Club was established. He knew almost everybody in the San Francisco art scene and eventually assembled a large and first rate collection of California art.

Bosqui founded the highly reputed, eponymous printing house of Edward Bosqui & Co. in 1863 on Leidesdorff Street, the same short venue where Wetmore would take an office for his vineyard real estate business when he returned to San Francisco. Bosqui became the pre-eminent San Francisco firm for engraving and letterpress printing of the highest quality. Many were the posters, prints and tipped-in illustrations turned out by his firm, as well as pamphlets and finely bound books. Every society bride had her invitations done by Bosqui & Co.

Chromolithography: Harring and Prang

And what of Mr. Harring of Prang's Chromo establishment? William Harring worked for Prang & Meyer Co. in Boston, where he literally honed his abilities in the finest color printing house in the country. Harring was a master of the arcane process of turning artwork, through engraving, onto the printed page. When he migrated westward to San Francisco in 1876, Bosqui snapped him up. The company had just added lithography and engraved printing to its range of services. It was a terrific coupe for Bosqui to garner the services of a Prang-qualified engraver and he lost little time in exploiting Harring's oleographic skills. Harring remained with Bosqui & Co. into the 1890s.

Louis Prang was a German wunderkind of the printing arts, who, like vintner Charles Krug, had had to seek refuge in the United States from the Prussian authorities who found his democratic activism and socialist beliefs a great threat to the Fatherland of 1848. He was born in Breslau in 1824, and had learned to dye calico in his father's workshop. This expanded into a formal apprenticeship in the engraving arts and work in major printing houses in Berlin. It was in 1850 that Louis crossed the ocean to settle in Boston where he continued in his trade illustrating magazines for Frank Leslie. Prang branched out on his own with partner Mr. Meyer in 1856, establishing their firm to produce color lithographs using the most advanced European techniques and machinery.

Prang's business house went from strength to strength. Soon after the War of the Rebellion, they began issuing chromographic reproductions of famous paintings. As the U.S. filled-in its territory with new

states, schools needed new maps, and Prang supplied beautiful four-color examples from some of the largest presses in the East. About the time that Harring had his first stirrings of Westward Ho!, Louis Prang cemented his legacy as the Father of the American Christmas card. While the tradition of exchanging cards instead of long, year-end letters had its start in England, Prang gave his cards a very American expression in pre-printing interior messages and greetings.

Prang was a prolific writer and educator who penned numerous books and manuals for printers and artists. His book on color theory went to several editions. He also manufactured a line of Prang's water colors that became a classroom staple for many years. He was a founder of the Dixon Ticonderoga pencil and artist's supply company, and no one educated in the United States has escaped the great Dixon No.2. The factory was also a school, and employees like Harring spread the word of fine printing across the land. Prang's technical manager, Sylvester Koehler from Leipzig, was a founder of *American Art Review* and a curator of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. By the time Bosqui sent his proofs to Wetmore, Prang's Chromo was a brand so well known that no reader would require further explanation.

Oleography was also known as chromolithography or simply chromo. As the article from the *Republican* so well described, an oleograph was a high quality color lithograph produced by preparing a separate stone for each color or shade desired and printing one color in registration over another. A single print could require as many as 30 stones. To replicate the appearance of an oil painting, the chromo was either printed on cloth or the heavy paper was varnished and impressed with canvas grain.

Chromolithography was the most popular method of color reproduction until the end of the nineteenth century when the development of photomechanical processes removed the skilled engraving artist from color printing. Each of the older processes could be joined to photography to produce fast and faithful reproduction when used in conjunction with the other great advance of the end of the century: the high speed power-driven rotary press. The day of the half-tone had arrived.

Hannah Millard

Not to be forgotten is the heroine of our story, Miss Hannah Millard, born in New York in 1827. She migrated to the Bay Area before William Harring and taught drawing in San Jose at both the Normal School and the San Jose Institute during the years 1870 through at least 1875. As an exhibitor in the rooms of the San Francisco Art Association, she was most likely a Bosqui acquaintance whom he brought to the attention of Haraszthy and the vinicultural brotherhood. We know that she received the commission to paint the grapes in 1875 and that it took her two harvest seasons. Here is where the mystery thickens. Edan Hughes, in his dictionary of early California artists, states that she painted 10, not 20, highly detailed oils and water-colors to illustrate the varieties of grapes grown in California.

Hannah met the sculptor William Compton Coffin in San Jose and married him in 1880, by which time they both resided in San Francisco. He was 64, she was 53. In the 1880 San Francisco census, Hannah is listed as a landscape painter. By 1892 the couple had moved to a farm in Lake County, north of Sonoma and Napa counties, to remain there until her passing November 24, 1900. The trail of sculptor Coffin cools after the death of his wife; he may have returned to New York at the age of 84.

There is no doubt of Hannah Millard's talent or that the State Vinicultural Society had well-chosen their artist. While I have seen her grape clusters only as modern reprints of Harring's engravings, there is a liveliness and tonal transparency that come through the pictures; they look and feel like grapes and leaves as much as Audubon's birds or Catherwood's Mayan temples mimic the things they represent. More work remains to be done in pulling back this talented woman from the shades of history.

It is not clear if the full set of twenty grape varieties was ever finished by either Millard or by Bosqui. The ten grape varieties illustrated, in order of appearance, are the Mission, Johannisberg Riessling, Rose Chasselas, White Muscat of Alexandria, Black Hamburgh, Flame Tokay, Zinfandel, Sultana, Catawba and Emperor. All the above spellings are as used in the book, which was set to Franklin Old Style type. The writer of the descriptive text for each variety remains anonymous, but shows an obvious, even professional, familiarity with the subject.

That the plates were appreciated in their own day is reflected in the report of Australian wineman Thomas Hardy regarding his grand tour of American and French vineyards in 1883. Hardy and his family arrived in San Francisco in June. Charles Wetmore arranged for him to meet with some principal colleagues around the State, including the major wine brokers centered in the City. Hardy was quite impressed with the "beautifully executed" framed Bosqui grape prints he saw hanging in the Montgomery Street office of Kohler & Frohling, and noted ruefully, "now out of print and none to be had!"

20th Century Facsimile Edition

San Francisco antiquarian bookseller John Windle produced an exquisite folio facsimile in 1980 with 64 pages and ten color plates. The plates took twelve to twenty passes per page through the San Francisco presses of the Phelps-Schaefer Litho-Graphic Company. The binding was executed by the Schubert Company in burgundy cloth over heavy boards, the spine is embossed morocco. The initial proposal was to make 100 copies in binding and 200 in portfolio, selling for $1,250 bound and $875 in sheets, but the edition was never completed and only 65 sets were released (25 bound, the balance in portfolio). These rare sets have found appreciative homes in institutions and private collections; the facsimiles today change hands for two to three thousand dollars.

Windle's facsimile edition (working from the copy owned by the Lilly Library at Indiana University) has an Introduction by Kevin Starr, the State Librarian, who gives an overview of the firmament of Victorian printing and typography in San Francisco and Edward Bosqui's orbit within it. Windle states that the Bosqui originals are the rarest of American color plate books, with just 12 complete examples known to exist. The California State Library at Sacramento holds two of the individual plates, which have been scanned and can be viewed on line. Mr. Windle told me that a colleague had sold an 1877 original some years back for $75,000.

At the Chicago Booksellers Convention in 1980, John Windle told Peter Jovanovich about his project, and Jovanovich quickly seized on the idea of issuing a mass market edition. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich publishers brought out their nicely done photo-lithography coffee table book in 1981. The page size was slightly reduced but Kevin Starr's Introduction was retained, complemented by an essay by wine historian Leon Adams on the viticultural histories of the illustrated *vinifera*. Copies of this edition are floating around the internet priced from $50 to $200.

I have had the recent opportunity to examine an original Bosqui plate, one from the Windle facsimile and one from the Harcourt Brace edition, side by side—all three of the Golden Chasselas cluster. Tendrils editor Gail Unzelman thinks the original and the Windle facsimile are definitely a cut above the Jovanovich edition as to depth and clarity of the paintings. "The grapes almost jump off the page!" I concluded that the facsimile had a small color variation in the leaves from the original, but that the former has the greater "pop," due to being laid on sparkling ivory paper.

Sidelights

One of the most interesting side-stories surrounding the making of *Grapes and Grape Vines* pertains to the unsold Bosqui color plates that came into the hands of Italian Swiss Colony. The company had their logo imprinted on the bottom of the sheets and gave them out as keepsakes to valued customers. Many of the individual plates surviving today are marked Asti, California. How and when this transaction took place is unknown; the Colony was only a twinkle in Andrea Sbarboro's eye before November 1881.

A sadder tale by far is told about the fate that befell the Windle set hung in the Windows of the World Restaurant in New York. They were lost when the twin towers went down on September 11, 2001.

Why Such a Book?

A great question remains: Why was this book produced at all? Kevin Starr, in his Introduction to the facsimile reproduction, noted that "Bosqui approached printing first and foremost as a business...that business was the first source of energy underlying Bosqui's art." Bosqui, in his 1904 memoir, wrote of the many business enterprises and speculations he had engaged in besides the printing business. The man clearly wanted to make money, so why spend at least $12,000 of a projected $25,000 of your own capital on a fanciful art book.? The math is simple; one could never recover the cost of the project even if every last one of the full 500 copies was sold for the highest price the market could bear.

The city of San Francisco had come commercially and industrially of age. *Grapes and Grape Vines* was meant to serve as an announcement of arrival: San Francisco had become a power in Pacific commerce and her printing and other productions could compete with the same goods made elsewhere. When the magnificent volume was exhibited at Paris in 1878, the Exposition judges had trouble accepting that work of such quality could have come from far-flung California.

The State labored under a sense of inferiority to the great industrial leaders of the East. Even the legislators in Washington considered California as a wild and woolly place where young men went to make or break their fortunes, and if they were smart would eventually return to the bosom of the true America. No sitting President had visited the Golden Shore until Benjamin Harrison came in 1891. Even then the committee of important men appointed to fete him intended to serve French wines until Charles Wetmore raised an unholy ruckus. By 1877, San Francisco was building fast sailing yachts and too-

effective mining machinery. A short dozen years later she was selling world class battle cruisers to the American and Japanese navies.

I think Edward Bosqui saw his *Grapes & Grape Vines* as a *piéce*, an irrefutable example of the extreme quality his shop could produce, a hedge against the future that would attract legions of potential customers. Urged on by the viniculturists, several among them his friends and who most likely promised to buy copies for themselves, Bosqui found a project truly equal to his talents and saw its possibilities laid out before him. At the very least, it was the birth announcement of his litho department, and a very loud whelp from the California wine industry.

EDWARD BOSQUI

Some Final Thoughts

Charles A. Wetmore was just beginning a career that would make him the most famous wine man in America. He would live another 50 years (1927) and found, and lose, the great Cresta Blanca Winery in Livermore. Arpad Haraszthy collapsed on a stormy San Francisco street, umbrella in hand, while waiting for the trolley, just days after his return from a promising expedition to the Alaska gold fields with his brother Bela. He expired on November 15, 1900; Eclipse Champagne had preceded him in death earlier in the year. Louis Prang died suddenly while on vacation in Los Angeles in 1909, distinguished in his field as no other. Bosqui, too, enjoyed a successful career until a trio of late life tragedies. His printing plant was destroyed by fire in 1893 and rebuilt. In 1897, fire destroyed his Marin County summer retreat and his great art and book collection housed within. The biggest blow was shared by all of San Francisco equally—his printing house was destroyed on April 18, 1906. Edward Bosqui died at his Lyon Street home on December 8, 1917, the last surviving founding member of the Bohemian Club.

Did either Charles or his brother Clarence Wetmore ever own a set of Bosqui's *Grapes and Grape Vines*? Did Charles pledge himself a subscription to the original offering that he had charge of promoting? The intriguing possibility of such a set is related by John Windle, whose wife was a Stanford classmate with Eric and Arel Wente, of the Wente wine family. During a recent visit to their home in Livermore, John immediately spied a framed Bosqui print on the wall and asked Eric if he had any more like it. Eric answered that he thought his family had once had ten in all and his mother might have some at her house.

Carl H. Wente had arrived from Germany in 1882, and after a three-year employment in Charles Krug's St. Helena cellar, he entered the Livermore Valley wine trade in 1885. He was too late to have been a charter subscriber to the 1878 Bosqui offering. Wetmore had bought his first Livermore acreage in 1882 and had lived in the valley even after he lost control of Cresta Blanca. Brother Clarence lived at least part time in the area until Alameda County purchased his home-place in 1928. Clarence kept his hand in Cresta Blanca business, if only as a figurehead, until his passing in May 1936. Schenley Distilleries bought the company in 1940 and squeezed all the good out of it, finally selling the Cresta Blanca name in 1971. The Wente family purchased the remains of the Cresta Blanca winery site in 1981 and began the restoration of the cellars and the caves. It is fascinating to think that the Wente Bosqui prints may have surfaced from the great wreckage of the house of Cresta Blanca, which would bring my story full circle. Or as Jake wistfully answered Brett so long ago under the rising Spanish sun, "Isn't it pretty to think so."

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San Francisco Alta California. Dec 9 & 10, 1877.

NEWS & NOTES

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

2008 WINE LITERARY AWARD

was presented to **Charles L. Sullivan** at a gala affair in San Francisco, 25 April 2008. To celebrate his lifetime contribution to wine writing, we quote the award program: "Since his 1978 article on the origins of Zinfandel in California appeared in the California Historical Journal, Charles Sullivan's work has established him as "the single most important wine historian alive today" (Charles Olken). In 1982 Sullivan published the first scholarly history of a California wine region, *Like Modern Edens*, which focused on the Santa Clara Valley and the Santa Cruz Mountains. The next year he coauthored *Late Harvest*, a history of wine growing in the Santa Cruz Mountains. In 1988 he penned another first, the highly acclaimed *Napa Wine: A History from Mission Days to the Present*. His 1998 book *Companion to California Wine*, a historical encyclopedia of the wine industry in California, won the Julia Child Award for best wine book of the year. In 2003, *Zinfandel: A History of the Grape and Its Wine* won Sullivan the Veuve Cliquot Award for best wine book of the year and was a James Beard Award finalist. A second edition of *Napa Wine* is due to be released in May 2008, and Sullivan is currently working on a three-volume, comprehensive history of the California wine industry. Wearing his journalistic hat, Sullivan has published more than 100 articles on an exhaustive range of topics in the field of wine history in such publications as Wines and Vines, Wine Spectator, Practical Winery and Vineyard, Connoisseur's Guide to California Wine, and The Journal of the American Wine Society. [We can proudly add to this list The Wayward Tendrils Quarterly!] Charles Sullivan joins WLA laureates Hugh Johnson, Robert M. Parker Jr, Harry Waugh, Leon D. Adams, Jancis Robinson, Gerald Asher, Tom Stevenson, Robert Lawrence Balzer, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Zraly, Dan Berger, and Karen MacNeil." A round of cheers for Charles, a vintage Tendril, and the first wine historian to wine this prestigious award!

Wines of the World Pocket Library: Rum

Fellow Tendril and André Simonophile, **John Danza**, sends this informative note: "I just read the April Quarterly, which was excellent as always. I have a thought I would like to offer-up regarding the *Wines of the World Pocket Library*, specifically the *Rum* book. Your article caused me to actually open and look at mine, as I really hadn't spent any time with any of these little books after I acquired them. What I noticed with the *Rum* book is that there is an advertisement for the United Rum Merchants in London. None of the other books of the First Series have any commercial information in them. I suspect that the *Rum* book was a completely commercial affair set up by André Simon to bring some money into the coffers of the Wine & Food Society, receiving underwriting fees from the United Rum Merchants. This is probably why the *Rum* book is missing from the contents list of the Series by 1951, as it was a one-time offering that was subsequently dropped. I have no proof of this, but it is consistent with other commercial ventures that André got involved with throughout his life." John's speculation is most likely a sound one. One copy of the *Rum* book that your Editor examined had a printed advertisement for Lemon Hart & Son, an old-time London rum house; another copy had no ads at all. I would imagine that these books were distributed to different rum houses for their own ads to be affixed, and for a price, as John proposes.

THE RAZI WINE LIBRARY & MUSEUM

is proposed as a cultural and educational center to be located near Dallas, Texas. In the plans are a wine library, a wine history museum, a wine education center for wine seminars, a cooking and food demonstration center, and a wine garden displaying the different varieties of wine grapes. Director **John Hopkins, MD**, writes with excitement about the project, and asks all Tendril members with duplicate or extra wine books to remember the new library's need for wine books, in any language. For full information, please contact John at hopkinsjh @sbcglobal.net.

SONG OF THE VINE: A HISTORY OF WINE

is the title of a superb grape and wine history exhibit sponsored by the **Cornell University Library**, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, being held June through December 2008 in Ithaca. The exhibit commemorates the first ten years of Cornell's Eastern Wine & Grape Archive, which seeks to preserve wine and grape history by saving documents and records of historic value. The event opened June 6, 2008, with a presentation by **Thomas Pinney**, "A Very Short History of Wine in America," that included a summary of New York State's contribution to U.S. wine history. As we know, Tom Pinney is the author of the landmark two-volume work, *A History of Wine in America*, and several other outstanding wine-related publications. Our congratulations to

Cornell—and kindly consider their Eastern Wine & Grape Archive when you have materials on wine "east of the Rockies" that need a good home!

Vineyards in the Sky, 2006

This now "classic" biography/memoir, *Vineyards in the Sky: The Life of Legendary Vintner Martin Ray* by Eleanor Ray with Barbara Marinacci (new edition published by Mountain Vines Publishing, 2006; first published in 1993 by Heritage West), is being offered at a big discount! The publisher recently discontinued operations. Retail price is $24.95. It is available to members and friends of Wayward Tendrils at the specially reduced price of $12 per copy plus $3 for S&H (or $2 each for more than one copy). California residents: Please add $1 per copy for sales tax. Additional discounts available for purchase of over 10 copies, for use as gifts or for resale purposes. To order single or multiple copies, please contact Ken Dawes (Mountain Vines) at kendawes@comcast.net or 831-684-0522 (phone/fax).

CORKSCREW REFERENCE BOOKS

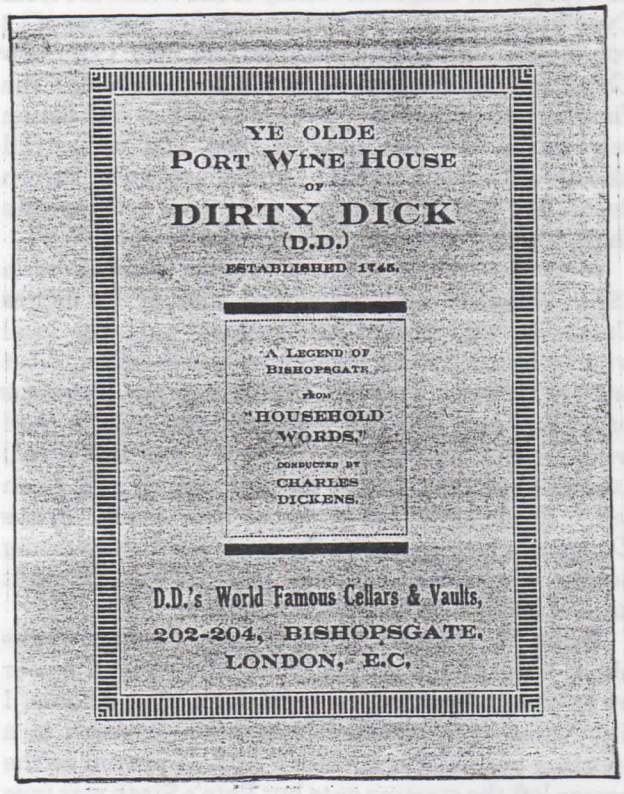
Long time corkscrew collector **Ken Hark** (harkx@bellsouth.net) is tidying-up his bookshelf and has more than a dozen important Corkscrew reference books to offer interested Tendrils. These include *I Cavatappi* by Fantoni & de Sanctis (signed), *Tire Bouchons* by F. C. Billet, *Scandinavian Corkscrews* by Bernstn & Ekman, *French Corkscrew Patents* by Joe Paradi, *18th Century Corkscrews* by Giulian, *Corkscrews for Collectors* by Watney & Babbidge (signed), and several titles each by Don Bull and Ferd Peters. Contact him for the full list and particulars. He also has a quantity of The Wine Circle Journal, going back about 25 years.

KESSINGER PUBLISHING, AGAIN!

Warren Johnson writes: "I recall the mention of Kessinger Publishing in a previous W-TQ [See "A Tale of Two Pirates" Vol.18 No.1 January 2008]. That, and because Kessinger does so many wine reprints, I thought Tendrils might find the following of interest — 'A Copyright Swiped'." Check this out! http://www.targetmarketingmag.com/bcs/enews/fullStory.bsp?sid=32029&var=story

A GEM OF A BOOKLET

Unearthed from a messy pile of papers on his desk, **Joe Lynch** shares his latest "find": *Ye Olde Port Wine House of Dirty Dick. Established 1745. A Legend of Bishopsgate from "Household Words" Conducted by Charles Dickens.* This original 16-page promotional pamphlet was published in the early 1900s by the owners of Dirty Dick's, the "World Famous Cellar & Vaults, 202-204, Bishopsgate, London." The story of Dirty Dick's life was "told fully some years ago in that popular journal Household Words, under the direction of the late Charles Dickens." His poem The Dirty Old Man (Dirty Dick) begins: "In a dirty old house lived a Dirty Old Man / Soap, towels or brushes were not in his plan / For forty long years as the neighbours declared / His house never once had been cleaned or repaired..." and goes on for fifteen verses. The pamphlet reproduces the poem in full, and gives a history of Dirty Dick's, established in 1745 by Nathaniel Bentley, one of the great characters of the City of London. After inheriting a fortune and the family business, Bentley took an aversion to cleanliness, arguing that "If I wash my hands to-day, they will be dirty again tomorrow." His ambition was to limit his daily living expenses to eighteen pence....an eccentricity that began when the woman he loved suddenly died on the day that he was due to honour her and all their friends at a splendid dinner. He was so distressed that he closed the dining room, and ordered it to remain closed for the rest of his lifetime, leaving all the food to rats, mice and spiders. This is a charming piece of promotional ephemera (5½ x 4½), illustrated with an old print of Dirty Dick "selling spirits fine and old" at Bishopsgate, and several other illustrations of the cellars and vaults.



cont. on p.14 —

WINE TALES

by

Warren R. Johnson

[*In this episode of "Wine Tales," our super sleuth of wine fiction has uncovered another cache of treasures for our pleasure. You are invited to investigate his Second Harvest website and its fine database of Novels, Mysteries, Romances, Poems, Toasts, Anthologies, and other such entertaining works.* — Ed.]

Vintage Tales. Edited by Cyril Ray. London: Century Publishing, 1984. 368 pp.

Subtitled *An Anthology of Wine and Other Intoxications*, this book brings together 78 short prose and poetry works devoted to wine and other beverages. The mostly British authors include some of the best names in fiction: Evelyn Waugh, Michael Gilbert, Somerset Maugham, Margery Allingham, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Known to wine and gastronomy readers are, in addition to Cyril Ray himself, Julian Jeffs, M.F.K. Fisher and Raymond Postgate.

Each work is identified as to its origin—book, newspaper, or magazine. Many of the works are from Cyril Ray's own *The Compleat Imbiber,* a series of 12 volumes published between 1956 and 1971. (*The New Compleat Imbiber* from 1986-1992 is a revival.) The *Imbibers* present numerous works of fact and fiction celebrating the pleasures of food and wine. Old photographs and drawings—and almost every known decorative printing device—were used to illustrate these highly recommended volumes.

Here is a tasting of these *Vintage Tales.* From a 1961 *Compleat Imbiber* comes a story by James Cameron, who prescribes drinking only the local wines when traveling, whether in South Africa, Tibet or New York. A memorable line in his story, *Buzzings of a Far-Flung Bar Fly*, is "I may not know a good wine from a marvelous wine, but I can tell a real stinker—not that it stops me drinking it; still, I can tell." Rosemary Bazley wrote the poem *Bottle Doggerel* which ends with the quatrain "Try counting bottles / Instead of counting sheep, / For the right kind of bottles / Will send you to sleep."

Brian St. Pierre in *Bottling the Bookies* writes about playing the ponies: "There are many better ways of letting money slip through your fingers, I discovered, one of which was wine—enough of a sporting proposition in itself." And, "I prayed as the horses left the starting gate but Pete's Sirah was true to type—he uncorked well, opened up immediately (even aggressively), dithered a little in the middle, but came through with a very lasting, hearty finish. (The price was right, too)."

Vintage Tales includes a story by Viennese Joseph Wechsberg, *Afternoon at Château d'Yquem.* Wechsberg, a writer on gastronomy, politics, and travel, wrote frequently for *The New Yorker* magazine. In a pre-dinner conversation, the writer and Monsieur K discuss the wines of Yquem. "No matter what some people may say about Bordeaux wines, they can't say anything about Yquem.... Yquem is perfection." For Yquem lovers, this story is followed by Godfrey Smith *The Case of Yquem.* The Robert Louis Stevenson entry is from his *The Silverado Squatters* of 1883.

Cyril Ray's choices of works make *Vintage Tales* a very delightful book, one that can be picked up and randomly delved into—it will be particularly appealing to any wine lover. The only fault I find with the book is its lack of biographical sketches for the contributing authors. Some of the authors are less well known than others and information about them would have added immeasurably to their writings.

Dionysus. A Case of Vintage Tales About Wine. Collected and Edited with an Introduction by Clifton Fadiman. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962. 309 pp.

Clifton Fadiman, who died in 1999 at age 95, was a gifted anthologist, compiling and editing many collections on different subjects; he also wrote or edited a number of other books. He co-authored the *Lifetime Reading Plan* published in 1960, later revised. *Dionysus* is a "case" of varied, even rare, stories put together for pure enjoyment: some are sweet, some are dry, others are sparkling. They include humor, science fiction, fantasy, mystery, horror, a novella and an excerpt from a novel.

Three stories of mystery are excellent wine tales. The first of these is a case of identity confusion. Lord Peter Wimsey is the famed British Inspector of mystery writer Dorothy Sayers. In *The Bibulous Business of a Matter of Taste,* two men claim to be Peter Wimsey; or, are there three? Only a blind wine tasting can identify the true Wimsey. Another mystery story is that of E.C. Bentley, *The Unknown Peer.* Philip Trent must backtrack a missing man by drinking wines in the hotels where he has stayed. The popularity of this story attests to it having also been included in Barry Woelfel's *Through a Glass, Darkly* (reviewed April 2007). The third intriguing tale is *The Income Tax Mystery* by Michael Gilbert. As a solicitor, the protagonist of this story is invited to join a very select outfit investigating income tax frauds. How can a wine merchant live a high-style life yet seemingly not make any money? His wine cellar holds the secret.

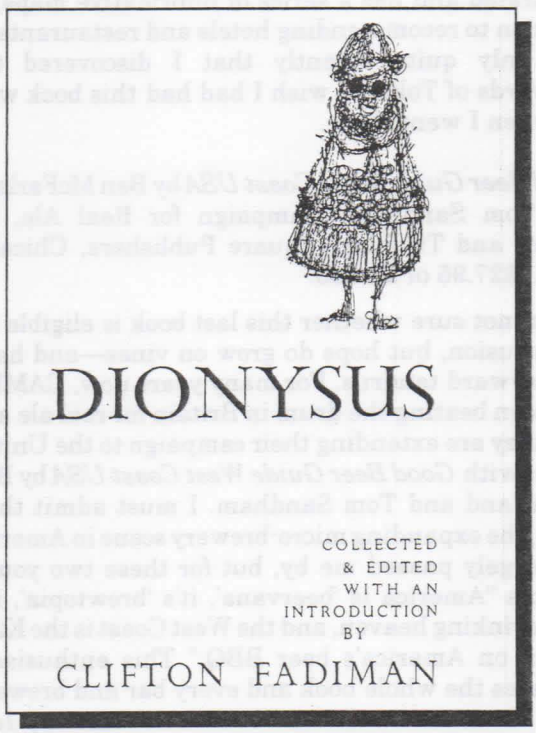
The Wine Beyond the World by Alfred Noyes is an

incredibly delicious taste of fantasy. The ancient German village of Rosenheim is home to the world's most expensive bottle of wine. The Emperor comes once a year to drink a thimbleful of this wine; the peasants can do no more than sniff the cork. A newly married couple from America are honeymooning in Europe and visit this village in order to taste this wine. They order it with their dinner. There is an uprising in the village, for no one but the Emperor tastes this wine; nor can anyone afford to purchase such a bottle. Does this couple get their glass of wine with dinner?

One of the earliest of horror stories, *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe, is included here, as it was in the Woelfel anthology. In that volume, a good discussion was given on the distinction between Amontillado and Sherry. In the Fadiman book, a similar discussion is offered by wine writer H. Warner Allen.

A wine from 1865? Twelve bottles are owned by a wealthy man who has married a young woman and they have been saved for his 65th birthday. In G. B. Stern's *The 1865*, when the birthday arrives, the husband believes his wife has taken a lover and he knows who it is. He invites both to his birthday dinner to taste this wine and to announce that he will divorce and allow them to marry. Only one shows up. What happens to the last of this wine?

Editor Fadiman introduces each story with a brief sketch of the author, or a quick synopsis of the tale at hand. This is a delightful book to sip and savor.



FROM FRAUD TO TOKAJ TO HOPS: WINE BOOK REVIEWS

by

Christopher Fielden

The Billionaire's Vinegar by Benjamin Wallace. New York: Crown Publishers, 2008. Cloth. $24.95.

Wine fraud has long been one of my interests, so I have been awaiting the arrival of *The Billionaire's Vinegar* with impatience. If you are one of those who enjoy seeing the wealthy making fools of themselves, this is certainly the book for you. At the heart of the story is a bricked-up cellar of wine reputedly discovered in Paris during development of the Marais district in the early 1980s. Amongst the bottles exposed were first-growth Bordeaux wines going back to the 1780s, bearing inscriptions which suggested that they might, at one time, have come from the personal cellar of Thomas Jefferson. The first of these bottles to be exposed to the public eye came up for sale at Christie's in London on December 5th 1985. It was a bottle of Ch. Lafite 1887 and it was bought for £50,000 by Kip Forbes, of the American publishing family. The figure was, at the time, the record price ever paid for a single bottle of wine.

The man who claimed to have discovered this cache of wine was a wealthy German musical entrepreneur and wine fanatic who went under the name of Hardy Rodenstock. Over the years, he was one of a circle of wine collectors, mainly in Europe and the United States, hosting ever more prestigious tastings, generally of the greatest wines of Bordeaux. These tastings were attended by the cream of wine critics, and their presence gave validity to the events. Whatever anyone else could do, Herr Rodenstock could do better. This competition led to spiraling prices in the fine wine world.

In the meantime Rodenstock became a full-time dealer in collectible bottles, claiming to source them in a variety of places as far apart as Caracas and Moscow.

From the very beginning there had been some concerns expressed about the authenticity of the Jefferson wines, particularly by the foundation that had been established at Monticello in Virginia to preserve the memory of Jefferson and the considerable amount of Jeffersoniana it collected. At some of the tastings, the experts had found certain bottles to be unreal, but while there were general mutterings, no actual steps were taken to pursue the matter until 2004 when a disgruntled oil heir, Bill Koch, employed detectives to unravel the Rodenstock mystery. What they discovered is the *dénouement* of the book.

I was never fortunate enough to be invited to any of these mega-tastings, but I do know many of the cast who appear in the book and, on one occasion, at a wine fair in Beijing, I was offered a cellar of historic wines lying in St. Petersburg! This makes *The Billionaire's Vinegar* of great interest to me. I am sorry to say that most of the characters do not come out in the best of lights; be they the auctioneers and wine merchants who placed publicity and profit before due diligence or the ostentatious rich flaunting their bottles, in some cases bought not even for drinking, but just for show.

This book is a rattling good read with comic interludes, such as the New York wine merchant who, whilst bragging about a bottle of 1787 Château Margaux (which he had on sale for an "entirely arbitrary $519,750") to the then-owner of the château, cracked it and had to settle for an insurance payout of $197,625; or of the original bought by the Forbes family, which was exposed in a showcase under a spotlight, causing the cork to shrink and drop into the wine.

Sadly, I find that the book does not complete the story. We learn who Hardy Rodenstock really is, but not what happens to him. As I write this, I learn that Bill Koch is turning his attention elsewhere, suing a New York auction house for supplying him with fraudulent wine. There must be a sequel and I am sure that it will be just as hard to put down.

A final thought: is there a lesson to be learnt by antiquarian wine-book collectors from this whole affair?

Get Some Yourself by Alastair Riley. 2008. Available from the author for $10 or £6 including postage and packaging at: Sauterelle, Trinity Lane, Platte Saline, Alderney, Channel Isles GY9 3XZ.

Alderney is a small island in the English Channel, whose inhabitants fondly describe themselves as "two thousand drunkards clinging to a rock." Whilst passing through its minuscule airport recently, I was fascinated to find for sale *Get Some Yourself – A Meandering Route into France in Search of the Wines Which We Rarely Find!* This is a slim, idiosyncratic book written by an artist with a passion for wine, which he wishes to share. He describes car journeys from the Channel Coast ports to some of the lesser-known vineyards of the Loire Valley and Burgundy, giving details of the roads to follow, the growers to visit and the restaurants and hotels where you should seek sustenance and a bed. With ever increasing taxes on wine here in Britain, I can see that this will appeal to those seeking a quick trip to France to fill up their trunk with wine. Just how individual this book is may be judged from its final paragraph: "Eh bien!! If you have stayed with me then I thank you and entrust my secrets with you in the hope that you will venture forth on your own next time as you once more aim to 'get some yourself'."

Tokaj – A Companion for the Bibulous Traveller by David Copp. Budapest: PrintXBudavar, 2007. $22 or £10.95, obtainable from The Wine Appreciation Guild, San Francisco.

Of all the countries of Eastern Europe, Hungary is the one which seems to have adapted itself most quickly to selling its wines in the western world, and one author, David Copp, has seen the opening for writing about them. Having first gone to Budapest to sell advertising in sports stadiums, he became fascinated by the wines that were available. His first book was on the wines of the country as a whole, but now he has produced *Tokaj–A Companion....* As Hugh Johnson says in the Foreword, "I arrived in Tokaj in 1989. It was cold, hungry and depressed. Eighteen years later it has a spring in its step, and everything to offer the visitor. David Copp knows the region and its wines well, and his *Companion* will make your visit doubly rewarding."

Whilst the book might be aimed primarily at the visitor to the area (it even gives the times of the best trains from Budapest), it is also a useful work of reference and makes enjoyable armchair reading. It provides profiles of all the producers in the region and of the major vineyards. It is beautifully illustrated and has a series of informative maps, in addition to recommending hotels and restaurants. It was only quite recently that I discovered the vineyards of Tokay; I wish I had had this book with me when I went there.

Good Beer Guide West Coast USA by Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham. Campaign for Real Ale, St. Albans and Trafalgar Square Publishers, Chicago, 2008. $27.95 or £14.99.

I am not sure whether this last book is eligible for inclusion, but hops do grow on vines—and have wayward tendrils. For many years now, CAMRA has been beating the drum in Britain for real ale and now they are extending their campaign to the United States with *Good Beer Guide West Coast USA* by Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham. I must admit that, sadly, the expanding micro-brewery scene in America has largely passed me by, but for these two young authors "America is 'beervana', it's 'brewtopia', it's beer-drinking heaven, and the West Coast is the King Prawn on America's beer BBQ." This enthusiasm pervades the whole book and every bar and brewery

cont. on p.14 —

IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by *Bob Foster*

Red, White and Drunk All Over: A Wine-Soaked Journey from Grape to Glass by Natalie MacLean. New York: Bloomsbury, 2007. 304 pp. P.b. $15.

"... some of the best wine writing I have seen in some time ... "

Some wine books are dreary, filled with information but so stodgy that reading them is a chore. On the other hand, books like this one entice and charm the reader. They impart lots of knowledge in a warm and friendly manner, as if the author was telling a story over dinner. This is some of the best wine writing I have seen in some time.

The author, a winner of four James Beard Journalism awards, repeatedly captures a scene or a personality in just a few words. For example, in the chapter talking about biodynamic winemaking in France, she aptly describes a vineyard of a winemaker who does not use these controversial techniques and still uses chemical fertilizers: "Over one wall, we see the fields of a neighbor who uses chemicals. We pull over to take a close look. The earth between the vines is covered with tractor marks under a dusting of snow, compressed as though one of those evil *Star Wars* machines has rolled through. The blackened vine stumps look like victims in a burn unit, sitting up on the hard, white hospital beds, reaching with outstretched spindly arms for morphine."

There are chapters on biodynamic winemaking, wine families of Sonoma, the intricacies of Champagne making, the modern battles over wine writing, Riedel wine glasses, and even food and wine matching. It's a wine range of topics. There is no intent to cover all bases; it appears that the author has selected topics that peaked her curiosity. The result is an ever-changing focus that never fails to charm and inform.

There is a lengthy chapter covering the acrimonious debate between Robert Parker and Jancis Robinson over the 2003 Ch. Pavie. He loved it. She hated it. The debate rapidly became heated and ongoing. In explaining the debate, MacLean does a top notch job of analyzing the American approach to wine writing as opposed to the traditional British approach. (Having long debated personally with Parker in the old days on the Prodigy computer network, the only point I think she missed is that, in my opinion, Parker is incapable of simply disagreeing with someone over a wine. When he disagrees, he seems compelled to attack the caliber or the qualifications of the person who dares to disagree with him.)

In her somewhat skeptical chapter on Riedel glasses, she carefully listens to the glass maker's presentation with its emphasis of putting the wine onto the region of the tongue that best perceives a particular flavor. But then, as an aside, she notes that the most recent research on our sense of taste has rejected the idea that certain parts of the tongue only perceive certain flavors. This is done with wit and charm.

But after all of this praise, I must confess that the book left me troubled. There is a wealth of great stuff in here, but just try to find it. For example, brettanomyces is in the book but just try to figure out where. There is absolutely no index. Such a flaw renders the book useless as a reference tool. Why go to all the trouble to write such great material if you are going to make it so inaccessible? I just don't get it. The waste angers me. Shame, shame, shame on the person(s) who made the decision to not bother with an index. Highly recommended, with the stated reservation.

Angels, Thieves, and Winemakers by Joseph Mills. Winston-Salem, NC: Press 53, 2008. 85 pp. Softback.

"... book of wine poetry..."

This is a first. In all the years I have been reading and reviewing wine books, this is the first book of wine poetry. The author covers a wide range of topics from the use of a wine thief, to filtering, to choosing wine in a store. I particularly like the short work on botrytis, ending with this stanza:

my shriveled berries
may result in an unusual sweetness
to someone discerning enough
to see beyond
the mold and wrinkles
and who chooses
to press this,
my late harvest.

The Battle for Wine and Love or How I Saved the World from Parkerization by Alice Feiring. New York: Harcourt, 2008. 271 pp. Cloth. $23.

" the meaning of the title eludes me ... "

I'm lost. While Alice Feiring has written an interesting book, the meaning of the title eludes me. While she mentions love interest along the way, it hardly seems important enough to be in the title. Similarly, while she presents a strong demonstration of the fact that substantial numbers of winemakers

have changed their styles in a direct attempt to get higher scores from wine critic Robert Parker, she never takes any concrete steps to change this pattern. She decries what is happening to so many wines, but the title makes it sound like there has been some affirmative change brought about by her actions. Sadly, not so.

There can be little question that Robert Parker's penchant for big, highly extracted, super ripe wines with lower acidity has caused a massive change in the style of wines made by many producers. Feiring carefully chronicles this change and points out with glee those producers who have not fallen victim to this movement. She also does a top notch job of showing the impact of major corporate ownership on many vineyards and wineries. She eschews the modern use of chemicals and techniques that impair quality and terroir. These parts of the book are interesting.

But within these themes she makes it clear that she has written off California wines because of their Parkerization. It's too sweeping a conclusion. While many California wines have given in to the chasing a high score routine, there are scores of producers who still make wines in traditional methods that don't strip the wine of style, elegance, or varietal character.

In another section the author makes the startling statement that a messy winery is "always a good sign to me; nothing worse than a winery as clean as a laboratory." Huh? Some of the messy wineries continually make wines ripe with brettanomyces (a term never mentioned in this book), or volatile acidity. She assumes that a clean winery must mean over manipulation and other evils. One of the cleanest wineries I have ever visited was Penfolds in the Barossa. I would hardly call Grange, or any of the other Penfolds wines, as deficient or among the worst of Australia. This tendency for sweeping and often questionable assertions detracts from the book's main thesis. Additionally, she has a tendency to write in a manner that dismisses anyone who does hold her beliefs about the modern style of wines.

Feiring's interview with Robert Parker is classic. He quickly becomes very defensive and continues to deny his scoring has had any impact on the style of modern wines. His denials seem to ring hollow. Parker goes on to vent his irritation about the conclusion in the book *The Emperor of Wine* (Elin McCoy, 2005) when it noted he was thin skinned, does not accept criticism, and goes after wine writers. Everything he denies is, in my opinion and based on my personal experiences [debating wine with Parker in the past], absolutely true. McCoy's book was spot on. Parker lacks the ability to say, "We will agree to disagree." [See *Red, White and Drunk All Over* above.]

Put aside the sweeping over-generalizations by Feiring; concentrate on her central themes and you will find an interesting, well written, entertaining wine book. Even if you adore Parker and his approach to wine, you need to read this book to contemplate what impact, if any, he has had on the wine world. Highly recommended.

[Bob Foster is a founding member of the Wayward Tendrils and long-time contributor of book reviews to the California Grapevine, published six times a year, in San Diego, CA. We appreciate their generous permission to reprint. The above appeared in the April/May and the June/July 2008 issues. — Ed.]

NEWS & NOTES, cont from p.9 —

A NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR COLLINS: **Marvin Collins** is a welcome new voice to the historical literature of wine. He has contributed two important studies to our Quarterly, "The Man Who Ate & Drank California: Maj. Ben Truman" (Vol.16 No.2, 3), a grand picture of the magnanimous California booster and his 50-year career in the State's wine industry; and "Portrait of ... a Young Bulldog ... the Rise of Charles A. Wetmore" (Vol.16 No.4), an on-going study of "the most diversely brilliant man to bring his talents to the California wine industry in the 1880s." Marvin is a passionate, indefatigable researcher—and loves to tell a good story. We look forward to his next adventure, with our special thanks for his rich insight this issue on "California's First Great Wine Book." Cheers!

FIELDEN cont from p.12 —

(or at least everyone selling good beer) from Skagway to San Diego, by way of 'Sin City' Las Vegas, is lovingly described. There are even suggestions as to where you might stay whilst you are on this mammoth pub-crawl. This is a million miles away from Bud and Miller, but this book opens up an alternative and much more attractive world. ▪

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

BOOKS & BOTTLES
by
Fred McMillin

[*We are enjoying Fred McMillin's 18th year of meeting a WT deadline. He has been truly generous in sharing his abundance of knowledge about wine and its literature.* — Ed.]

WHO WAS FLUFLUNS?

The Book: *Wine. The 8,000-Year-Old Story of the Wine Trade* by Thomas Pellechia. New York: Avalon/ Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006. 248 pp. Illustrations by Anne Kiley. $28.

This is not just a history of the wine *trade*, but a very readable history of *wine*, particularly for the newcomer. I have recommended it to my San Francisco City College wine students. The following tempting tidbits explain why.

▪ "Semele, mother of the Greek god of wine Dionysus, was also the mythological mother of the Etruscan wine god with the incredible name of Flufluns."

▪ "In the Code of Hammurabi, a Babylonian legal document established around 1800 BC, rules that governed the wine trade included a simple punishment for a fraudulent wine seller: he was to be dumped into the river."

▪ "During the 15th century, the French also suffered from fluctuations in wine prices and availability. Matters got so bad that high prices jeopardized the daily wine rations the French knights in the field demanded or at least expected."

▪ "About a decade before the famous Boston Tea Party, British Customs Agents at Boston Harbor had slapped a duty on a shipment of Madeira that arrived on a ship named *Liberty*. The townsfolk rioted in response. Within a few days the agents were forced to back down. The *Liberty* was owned by none other than John Hancock."

▪ "H. Warner Allen claims that between the 6th and 2nd centuries BC, well before the advent of the printing press, colonies and protectorates doing business with Greece were reminded daily of the extensive Greek wine export trade by vine and wine symbols, logos, and descriptions imprinted on coins. The images and designs used on the coins were duplicated for use on wine amphorae and stoppers."

Tom Pellechia has penned 248 pages of what you should find to be pure pleasure, whether your interest is the romance or the business of wine. Each chapter heading carries an appropriate quote from a notable wine writer, from the ancient and classical to the modern-day Pinney and Parker. His text abounds with references to the literature of wine, while his four-page Bibliography lists these valuable sources. In fact, our author states in his Introduction: "The story of the wine trade is to me as exciting as any thriller. I hope that by reading this book you will be spurred to dig deeper into other books, the ones that, taken together, provide the complete and glorious history of wine. If you take the bait I promise you will be richly rewarded, especially if you start your search with my bibliography." Pellechia's side-bars throughout the book are equally captivating and rewarding with unusual bits of wine-y information. A favorite, last taste:

▪ "At one point during the search for a cure for *phylloxera*, the French Government offered nearly half a million francs to anyone who could eradicate the disease. Numerous ideas poured in—toad venom, exorcism, flooding or burning the vineyards. One scheme to import a population of an insect from the U.S. that was known to eat *phylloxera* aphids failed when, after arriving from America, the insects refused to eat."

The Bottles: Since this book deals with the wine world, we offer an alphabetical list of such bottles that my students felt were Outstanding Values.

ARGENTINA. Malbec. Bodegas Escorihuela.
AUSTRALIA. Shiraz. Angove's Vineyard.
BULGARIA. Merlot. Bulgarian Master Vintners.
FRANCE. Mouton Cadet. Baron Phil. de Rothschild.
GERMANY. Riesling. Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler.
ITALY. Prosecco di Valdobbiadene. Mionetto.
PORTUGAL. Porto Fino White. Adri. Ramos Pinto.
SPAIN. Rioja. Cune-Vina Real.
USA. I'M Rosé. I'M Wines. Napa Valley.

GORDON JONES— Literary Wine Man
IN MEMORIAM [1921–2008]
by *Gail Unzelman*

It was a special pleasure knowing Gordon Jones, a truly fine gentleman with far-ranging interests and a delirious sense of humor. When the Wayward Tendrils was founded in late 1990, Gordon became one of our first members. He indicated at the time that he (and his wife Dorothy) had been collecting books on wine for some 35 years and had even compiled a checklist of English language wine books.

He was not quickly swayed by my "gentle prodding" to employ one of his many talents and write an article or two for the Wayward Tendrils Newsletter / Quarterly. One day, in conversation, I suggested that I might tour the Jones Library and contribute a piece on it as part of the W–T ongoing series, "Wine Libraries of the World." During our engaging visit, he promised, in turn, to "send in something for publication." For nearly ten years he fulfilled that promise to the delight and education of all Tendril readers. Always entertaining, well written, researched and thought-out, Gordon's articles were never one-dimensional...far from it. Enjoy these vintage tastes . . .

It's In Our Library Under 'R'
In his "It's in Our Library Under 'R'" (Jan 1998, Vol.8 No.1), the "R" stands for E. H. Rixford and his landmark book, *The Wine Press and the Cellar* (1883), the first California book on wine-making. Gordon gives us an in-depth study of Rixford, his La Questa Vineyard & Winery, and his book. But, since the book's original owner was Tomoki Ijichi at Fountaingrove Vineyard Co, Sonoma County, we are also treated to "the history of Fountaingrove [that] is possibly the strangest of any California winery."

A Rose is A Rose is A Rose
Gordon's subtitle for this July 1998 contribution is "Once You Find a Good Title, Stick With It." He covers three different books written by Stephen Gwynn each entitled *Burgundy*. While explaining the "redundant titles," he brings into his narration the 1930s' Constable Wine Library series, "eight modest volumes that changed the direction of vinous literature." Brilliant, it is.

Everything Old is New Again
The feature of this October 1999 column is "a most unlikely looking wine book" with the title, *The White Doe: The Fate of Virginia Dare. An Indian Legend* by Sallie Southall Cotten (Philadelphia, 1901). Paul Garrett, Virginia Dare wine, the Scuppernong grape, and more than a dozen valuable reference sources are all fascinating participants.

Wine Books à la Carte
Under discussion in the July 2001 issue is cook books *vs* wine books. Gordon asks, "Is it realistic to assume that if you like wine books, you like wine? And if you like wine, you like food. You have lots of wine books and you have some cook books. Some of the cook books have recipes that call for wine. Does this make the cook book a wine book?" Accepting that there is no "easy answer," he delves into numerous winey subjects such as early herbal and medical receipt books, and the books of Ward McAllister, André Simon, Isabel Beeton, Samuel Chamberlain, The Browns, Frank Schoonmaker, and a dash of others. Gordon ends the very informative article with that delicious quote from Omar Khayyám, "Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough...," and then offers, "I wonder if the *Rubáiyát* is a wine book."

Don't Bring a Brown Bag to Our House
With this July 2003 contribution, Gordon's facile pen again brought heart-felt amusement to all Tendrils with his grand tale of the "Wine Expert." Read, follow his lead, and Resign!

Ancient Wines: Cleopatra, Columella, & the Farmer
The introduction to Alexander Henderson's *The History of Ancient and Modern Wines* (1824) begins: "The invention of wine, like the origin of many other important arts, is enveloped in the obscurity of the earliest ages of the world. It has generally been ascribed to those heroes who contributed most to civilize their respective countries." Thus, Gordon sets the stage for a lesson on symposia and the ancient wits of wine. (Vol.14 No.2, April 2004)

Songs of Strangeness
For his last Wayward Tendrils article (April 2005), Gordon pulled from their library shelf another special book to share, *Ballads of the Wine Mad Town* by Florence Wobber (San Francisco, 1916). "This book is quite possibly unique among wine books, as it was written by a young woman who did not drink wine, sell wine, make wine, or have anything whatsoever to do with wine. She was merely filled with a deep desire to write." He concludes, "*Ballads* is certainly very different from most wine books, and it belongs in my wine library."

We end this tribute and remembrance where it all began, "A Visit with the Joneses and Their Wine Books," first published in Vol.6 No.4, October 1996. While we tour this treasured world of books, enjoy a glass and lift a toast to Gordon Jones. His memory will always be cherished.

A VISIT WITH THE JONESES AND THEIR WINE BOOKS

by

Gail Unzelman

Immediately upon entering the vestibule of the vintage California-bungalow-style home of Gordon and Dorothy Jones, books greet you. On your right is "Archaeology" and straight ahead is "Reference." You are guided through two sets of massive, columned and carved, redwood room dividers to the wine library—a warm, inviting retreat near the dining room. Here, one wall—floor to ceiling—is books: all are neatly shelved by author, with the tall books, very sensibly, relegated to the bottom shelf. Along the opposite wall are two glass-fronted bookcases which proudly hold the older, more special books. A large, beautifully crafted oak table occupies a commanding presence in the center of the room and serves as an all-purpose work station: each corner is piled high with books—some waiting to be catalogued, others awaiting shelf space. Along the wall that faces the wine library entry, an old upright piano—with books piled on and around—dutifully obliges as a book depository in addition to a maker of music. Over 40 years of collecting has filled this room with treasures.

Gordon Jones is a third-generation San Franciscan who "it seems, has always been around books and print." For many years he was employed at Schwabacher-Frey, the large San Francisco printing house; in the mid-1960s he left the firm to start an envelope printing company that emphasized graphic arts. This enterprise took the Jones family to the Glendale area of Southern California for a number of years before Gordon decided to leave the corporate world in 1970. He and Dorothy moved to the city of Napa, in California's famed Napa Valley wine country; here they continue to run their distinctive envelope printing company, Gordon Jones & Co.–Envelope Specialists.

From Printing to Wine

Asked if wine, or wine books, came first, Gordon replied, "the wine." While at Schwabacher-Frey, he was introduced to the wonders of wine through several clients, one of which was the Wine Institute in San Francisco. These were the days when the Wine Institute and its promotional arm, the Wine Advisory Board, were producing masses of wine literature to promote California wine: posters, recipe booklets, a wine course (with diploma), brochures on how to drink, serve, store wine—and Schwabacher-Frey printed them all. Frank Schoonmaker (*Complete Wine Book*, etc) also used the services of the San Francisco printing firm to produce his advertising material, both as an importer of fine wines and as advertising agent for the growing northern California winery, Almaden Vineyards & Winery. Schoonmaker introduced Jones to wine tasting, and he eagerly participated—from in-office tastings to elaborate affairs at the Palace Hotel.

In 1973 Gordon and a partner ventured into the wine business, establishing the San Francisco firm of Curtis & Gordon–Wine Merchants. Their aim was to carry "only those wines that we liked and that were reasonably priced." Together, Gordon and Dorothy combed the State, tasting wines from "Eureka to Cucamonga," to find suitable wines for their select shop. Operated primarily as a wine-by-mail business, Gordon wrote a monthly newsletter—chatty, informal, and informative—to accompany the list of wine offerings mailed to their nearly 10,000 customers. At first, Curtis & Gordon carried only California wines, but later expanded into some premier offerings of fine Burgundy, Bordeaux, port and sherry. Sadly, the business, along with Gordon's "golden prose" newsletter, had only a two-year run.

In the fall of 1974, as an extension of the wine shop, they started the London Wine Bar—"America's first wine bar"—in San Francisco's upscale financial district. It was an immediate success. (Gordon recalls that the idea, distinctly innovative in America at the time, came to him after reading a Gourmet magazine article about the wine bars of London.)

The Books

Gordon and Dorothy Jones have been avidly gathering wine books for over 40 years. Their peak collecting years were the 1950s through the 1980s; then prices for wanted titles became unrealistic, and the pace slackened. Early on they set boundaries for their collection and limited their major collecting interest to "pre-1940 English language" wine books.

In response to "your first wine book?" they agreed, after a brief discussion, that Alexis Lichine's 1951 book, *The Wines of France*, was the first wine book they had bought. And, it wasn't too long after this acquisition, the first hint that he and Dorothy had stepped over that delicate line between acquiring information and collecting books, came one day while they were living in Southern California. Needing more space for books, they cleared the shelves of all books, and neatly stacked them on the nearby dining room table: the perfect vantage point to readily weed

out the un-wanted ones. Of course, there were none they could part with. "We built more bookshelves."

Through the years most of their purchases were made from British booksellers, more often from general-antiquarian dealers than specialists. "We had some strange sources," as they recalled a bookseller by the name of John Smith in Glasgow, Scotland. They wrote letters to South Africa, Australia, Italy, France, and Germany inquiring about wine books. David McGee, legendary antiquarian bookseller in San Francisco, was a valued source, and so was Yale & Brown in Glendale—both no longer around. From Smith in Scotland Dorothy bought a copy of André Simon's *Bibliotheca Vinaria* (the original 1913 edition of only 180 copies): she remembers that $13 seemed a reasonable amount to spend for Gordon's birthday.

True to book-lover format, the Joneses relish the countless hours they have spent, and still spend, in bookshops: travel is equated to fresh book-hunting territory. An over-stocked, cluttered bookshop, with its sign indicating used & rare books, extends a special invitation to seek out some buried book treasure. The venerable wine book collector, Roy Brady, mournfully recalled in his 1975 article, "The Pleasures of Collecting Wine Books" (reprinted in our Newsletter, Vol.1 No.2), his "prudent" but not so "wise" collecting experience in a Santa Barbara bookshop: he left a box of 19th century California viticultural reports so that he could check which titles he already owned. Upon returning, list in hand, he found that a "less prudent and wiser" collector had grabbed them up. We now know who that was: "One of my best finds," says Dorothy.

A visitor to the Jones library immediately notices the tidy appearance and the splendid condition of the books: modern ones have proper dust jackets, the older ones belie their age. Leather bindings, often exquisitely tooled, are bright, and upon closer examination, the pages show little sign of wear. As antiquarian booksellers like to say, these books are "tight and clean."

Gordon and Dorothy, although they run a very successful, nation-wide business from their home, have neither computer, fax machine–nor micro-wave. A card catalogue satisfactorily keeps track of their books—whether wine (1000+), archaeology, the printing arts and fine press, or their present collecting love, Western Americana (2500+). In the 1950s and '60s they compiled a bibliography—some 3,000 to 4,000 titles—of pre-1940 English language wine books: it was the only bibliographic reference then available to them, except for Simon's unwieldy *Bibliotheca Vinaria*. They presented their bibliography to the University of California for publication, but the University could see no use for such a book: ahead of their time, once again.

Favorite Books

In their English-only library of wine books, they admit to having one book in German, and another in French: *Le Commerce des Vins, Réformé, Rectifié et Épuré*, written anonymously by C–S– in 1769. It is a lovely little book, handsomely bound in mottled calf with an ornate, gilt-decorated spine. Gordon found it in a "junk shop" in Southern California for $1. Although French, it is cherished.

An inconspicuous book (very small, perhaps 4" x 4") in royal-blue cloth, was one of the first books pulled off the shelf as a favorite: *The Wine Guide; being Practical Hints on the Purchase and Management of Foreign Wines; Their History, and a Complete Catalogue of All Those in Present Use.* Written by Frederick C. Mills, and published in London in 1861, this little 64-page gem must be quite scarce, and as it was given to Gordon by an appreciative client, it is also very special.

The Delights of the Bottle:

OR, THE

Compleat Vintner.

With the HUMOURS of

Bubble Upstarts.
Stingy Wranglers.
Dinner Spungers.
Jill Tiplers.
Beef Beggars.
Cook Teasers.
Pan Soppers.
Plate Twirlers.
Table Whitlers.
Drawer Bitters.
Spoon Pinchers.
And other Tavern Tormenters.

A Merry POEM.

To which is added,

A *South-Sea* Song upon the late Bubbles.

By the Author of the CAVALCADE.

The Fair, its true, yield wonderful Delights,
But when we're old torment us with their Slights:
The Bottle therefore is a fairer Friend,
Because that kindly leaves us to our End.

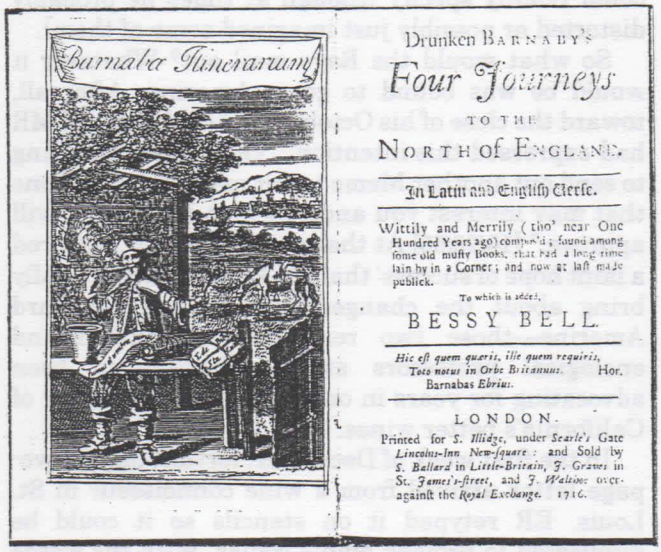
Singled out as "a spirited little book" is *The Delights of the Bottle: or, the Compleat Vintner...A Merry Poem* (London, 1720). André Simon, in his *Bibliotheca Gastronomica*, credits this work and several others of similar nature to the poet Ned Ward. A thin little booklet of 56 pages, Simon included it his 1961 exhibition of rare books on food and wine.

The oldest book in their collection is vintage 1650. Walter Charleton "translated, illustrated and amplified" Jean Baptiste van Helmont's *Ternary of Paradoxes: The Magnetick Cure of Wounds. Nativity of Tartar in Wine. Image of God in Man* (London). Dr. Walter Charleton was also responsible for two later titles, *Two Discourses: 1. Concerning the Different Wits of Men, 2. Of the Mysteries of Vintners* (1669), and *The Vintner's Mystery Display'd: or the Art of the Wine Trade Laid Open...* (c1690). All three titles, examples of very early English language wine books, are quite rare, and should hold a special place in any wine book lover's collection.

"Another book we like"—also from the 17th century—is *Vinetum Britannicum: or a Treatise of*

Cider and other Wines... by John Worlidge, Gentleman (London, 1678). In addition to three superb copper plate illustrations, this smallish book has a splendid engraved frontispiece showing both the crushing and pressing operations used in making ciders and wines. Most would agree the engravings are worth the price of the book.

Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys to the North of England, is a treasured book in the Jones library. It is a small volume, published in 1716, the 2nd edition of *Drunken Barnaby*. Jim Gabler provides a lengthy note on this work in his bibliography, *Wine into Words*: he appreciates Barnaby and his travels, and rather fancies his style and his amusing tales. Originally written in Latin verse in 1636 (with an English translation *ca*1638), this is one of the earliest references for the saying "a good wine needs no bush." Published under the pseudonym Corymbaeus —with several editions printed in the 18th century —it was not until 1818 that the identity of the author, Richard Brathwaite, was known. The book is illustrated with an engraved frontis of Barnaby and his trusty horse; later editions are embellished with engraved scenes from Barnaby's travels.



As with most wine book lovers, Gordon finds particular pleasure in the earlier books: the next jewel he pulled from the shelf as "a special book" was the 1727, first edition, of *The Vineyard: a Treatise ... Being Observations made by a Gentleman in his Travels.* (The frontispiece of a vineyard scene, engraved by Fletcher, is exquisite.) Although the Dedication to the Earl of Chandos is signed "S.J.", no author has ever been named for this very scarce, early work written to further wine culture in England. Gleaned from his extensive observations of European practices, the author provides "Easy and Familiar" methods for vine-growing and wine-making in England "to the greatest perfection."

Frederick Cosens, a 19th century sherry shipper, produced what is now one of the most charming—and at the same time, most scarce—books on sherry. *Sherryana* (by F.W.C.) was published in London circa 1887, and generously decorated with the lively drawings of Linley Sambourne. It is a quaint, oblong (7" x 5") cloth covered book, with the front cover enriched by a gilded title and drawing of a Jerez maiden carrying a jug of Oloroso on her shoulder. [NOTE: The WTQ subsequently printed an article on Cosens and his books, "'F.W.C.' The First Wine Book Collector?" Vol.17 No.4.]

Between the years 1911 and 1912 André Simon delivered a series of six lectures to the Wine Trade Club, at Vintners' Hall, London, and each were subsequently published in limited numbers. The titles included *The Wine Trade of England*; *Alcohol and the Human Body*; *The Art of Distillation*; *The Art of Wine-Making*; *The Vine and its Fruit*; and *The Vineyards of the World.* The Jones library has what is most likely a unique set of these lectures, bound in gilt-lettered suede cloth, inscribed by Simon "With very kind regards" to fellow wine lover, Saintsburyian, and author Ian Campbell. A joy to behold!

The collection has a copy of Rixford's *The Wine Press and the Cellar* (San Francisco, 1883), the earliest California book on wine making—their copy bears the marks of Fountain Grove Winery, an historic Sonoma County winery built in the 1890s. There is the highly desirable three-volume set of Simon's *History of the Wine Trade in England* (London, 1906–09), splendid in rich, gilt-decorated green cloth. A pristine copy of the signed, limited edition de luxe (1921) of Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellar-Book* sits beside several less rare editions. In the glass-fronted case is a fabulous copy—in full, elegantly tooled calf—of Sir Edward Barry's 1775 classic, *Observations Historical, Critical and Medical on the Wines of the Ancients.* Robert Shannon's 1805 *A Practical Treatise on Brewing, Distilling...Making of Wines...*, the book Gabler credits with being the first detailed account in English of modern wines, rests next to its rival for this distinction, Alexander Henderson's 1824 *A History of Ancient and Modern Wines.* Works by Vizetelly are present, and Cyrus Redding and ...

In one room, so many treasures.

Vinaceous Correspondents: Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles

The Third Article in a Series / Sixteenth Section

by Barbara Marinacci

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

– 16 –

This segment continues the complex story (begun in WTQ's July 2004 issue) of the longtime relationship, carried on both in person and in telephone and letter communications, between these two intensely wine-focused men: the Saratoga-based vintner, who took pride in vintaging and marketing only pure varietal wines in very limited amounts, and the hardworking, eminent UC Davis enologist, who by the mid-1950s was known and respected internationally as a researcher, educator, and wine connoisseur. At this time, because of MR's renewed and national publicity-seeking battle with the California wine industry over his insistence upon the need for quality control measures, Amerine was acutely aware that his known close connection with MR imperiled his crucial, necessarily amicable dealings with the proprietors and winemakers of much larger and far better known wineries—so that he had backed away from their friendship.

With the 1955 holiday season under way and most wine orders shipped out or delivered to wine shops and private customers, Martin and Eleanor Ray decided to bring the old, tumultuous year to an end with their own kind of bang. What cheer could they now disclose about the status of their Wine Quality Control Fight to all those loyal retailers and distributors, ardent connoisseurs, and wine writers on their mailing list? For the past half-year about two hundred of them had been receiving reports aimed at enlisting them in a war against the higher end of the California wine industry. And to the Rays' immense satisfaction, many recipients had been cheering MR on in his reactivated war with the dozen or so bonded wineries whose proprietors claimed to be producing fine wines and labeled them accordingly. The real wine aficionados in America, though, knew that the industry's best offerings were scarcely good enough, and that only Martin Ray's pure varietals could stand proudly next to the French models of perfection.

The Rays had tried by various means, even a veiled blackmail threat, to induce that new group calling themselves the Premium Wine Producers of California (intended to appear prestigious, but to them it was pretentious) to self-impose quality standards on their winegrowing and winemaking, and to pursue honesty in their wine marketing. But it appeared now that all these strenuous efforts of theirs had come to naught. However, it was not in Martin Ray's nature ever to admit downright defeat in his perpetual demand for quality control measures. Imbued with missionary zeal to convert people to his high standards in winemaking, he was continuously motivated by righteous anger against all those vintners guilty of abundant malpractices that he could readily specify (though at times he probably distorted or possibly just imagined some of them).

So what would the Rays mail out? Whatever it would be was bound to go to Amerine. After all, toward the close of his October letter to Maynard MR had expressed this intention: "Very soon I am going to send out another Memo to our mailing list and one that may interest you and of which I trust you will approve." [10/23/55] At that point, MR still harbored a faint hope of success: that Dr. Winkler might finally bring about the changes that he and Maynard Amerine—those two renowned viticultural and enological professors at UC Davis—had been advocating for years in order to raise the quality of California's better wines.

In the first week of December, fortuitously, a two-page letter arrived from a wine connoisseur in St. Louis. ER retyped it on stencils so it could be duplicated to provide ample copies. With the words on the letterhead stationery replicated, its author was identified as W. MacLean Johnson, president of Webster Publishing Company. A one-pager from Martin Ray introduced the missive. Above his three paragraphs was a cautionary message, as if the contents were flammable: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL. Yet by MR's standards the tone was relatively subdued.

> The attached is a copy of a letter recently received from a man who is genuinely interested in and drinks fine wines and who, with his wife and a Stanford scientist, visited our vineyards last summer. He is one of a large and growing list of important people from all parts of

the country who are placing themselves on record as opposed to the mislabeling and legalized blending-out of our fine California-grown varietal wines. This letter is typical of expressions received constantly by us and it indicates clearly enough the soundness of varietal growers adopting now self-imposed Quality Control. By making only 100% straight varietals and honestly labeling them, our firm has established that this important and discriminating market will buy and pay premium prices for wines comparable to the finest imports. But these people have turned away from other California wines for the simple reason they are not good enough (as stated in another recent letter from a famous New York gourmet [Alfred Knopf].

We have in our California Northcoastal districts some magnificent varietal plantings which are now sufficient to satisfy the probable immediate demand, should the Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and white Riesling be made and kept unblended in small oak cooperage and brought to market properly and free of sulphuring, heat and cold treatment, filtering and other short-cut-easy-method-but-injurious cellar treatment now openly permitted and practiced.

Every day the buying public is becoming more educated and more discriminating as evidenced by the growth in the sale of fine imports and by the growth in the sale of Martin Ray true varietals. As indicated in the attached letter, those who want fine wines are the logical purchasers of California varietals. The small group of top growers must be encouraged to turn away from volume toward quality. And retailers and consumers will bring this about by making known to them these facts. [12/14/55]

"Mac" Johnson's letter itself reported in detail to Mr. and Mrs. Ray about a recent blind wine tasting in which a Martin Ray 1952 Pinot Noir had easily bested a French burgundy from the renowned Clos des Ducs vineyard in Volnay. His letter ended:

You have proven that California wine can equal, or excel, Europe's best, provided that it is fermented with care and bottled in its pure form, unblended with the juice of inferior grape varieties. Now, if people like myself and my friends who were here last Wednesday are to drink California wines, and to serve them to their guests, they will have to be as good as yours. Although we are the logical purchasers of California varietals, we seldom do so. We know when a wine is top-notch and when it isn't. Most California varietals are not because they have lost character through blending with inferior wines. The people who make and sell wine, I am convinced, simply do not understand their consumers. They apparently believe we all buy wines by names or labels alone and that we cannot evaluate what is inside the bottle. This is a fatal error. This may lead us to buy one bottle, but we don't repeat. With a true varietal we would become steady customers. [12/1/55]

Among recipients targeted for MR's year-end report was *Life* magazine editor Pollard, who earlier in the year had expressed interest in what Martin Ray had been stirring up in the wine industry but needed more newsworthy drama. MR's note told him of the latest news from the battlefront.

Am sending along the enclosed to keep you advised that I'm still keeping up my fight for Quality of our top wine-varietals—and hope you'll be able to pick up a controversial news angle one of these days to break a big story, which it certainly deserves.

Incidentally, the growers recently got the Federal Government to crack down on me. They came up here and set up a miniature chemical lab, tested anything and everything they could find, to harass me. Try as they might they couldn't find anything serious to pin on us. We laughed and told them we understood why they were here and that they weren't personally to blame. Privately they admitted to me the source of the inquiry. [See the April 2008 *WTQ*.] So it goes. But every day we get more letters such as the enclosed ["Mac" Johnson's], showing the public is not so ignorant or unable to judge a wine as growers and dealers seem to think. Who wants to buy butter blended 50% with margarine? —milk only 50% milk and the rest God knows what? Wine alone remains the crook's dream, where anything goes! [12/17/55]

Amerine, of course, would have received the "Mac" letter too. But as an inadvertent casualty of MR's QC warfare, and doubtless weary of it all anyway, he may have resisted reading any more verbiage coming from his erstwhile friend, even if mostly written by someone else. Another even longer report would soon follow it into his mailbox.

The Year-End Battle Summary

By the third week of December, paying little heed to Christmas-celebrating preparations, the Rays had composed and sent off a more ambitious and extensive QC statement—this one taking up five pages. Like the "Mac" letter, it was duplicated and sent off for wide distribution to those on the Martin Ray Winery's extensive mailing list. Rather like Amerine's May 13 TAC talk printed up by the Wine Institute, this one was declared "Private, Confidential, and NOT FOR PUBLICATION"—though doubtless MR would have been delighted if someone, somewhere, actually published it.

It is necessary from time to time for all of us to review our efforts and accomplishments if we are to see ourselves realistically and judge our achievements in relation to others or to what they might have been.

This is intended as a review of the efforts and accomplishments of the varietal table-wine growers of California since Repeal—with full memory of their pre-Prohibition years and the evil effects of the Prohibition

period which still plague us. By table-wine growers I refer herein only to those growing all or substantially all their own grapes and those bottling under their own labels and selling in the upper-quality field—the names we all know, less than dozen of them.

The document recapped much of the same historical perspective that ER had presented in the summaries she had provided in May to magazine editors and writers whom the Rays had hoped would rise up to join their battle for quality control, as well as the arguments that MR had thrust forth in many letters. In writing about his winemaking peers he declared:

> Publicly they have taken the attitude that the problem does not exist. Yet privately, they all know the extent and depth of the controversy which if ever fully aired must alter entirely the methods and merchandising of California varietals. They have taken the attitude that we are trying to injure them or their business—some [*e.g.*, John Daniel of Inglenook] have personalized it and others [Robert Mondavi of Krug] have likened our efforts to actual libel. But the simple truth is, we are trying to help California's top growers exactly where they need help and, as one authority in a high place [Mrs. Julian Street] has said, "Yours is the only defensible position." We have it straight from Mlle. Christiane Latour of the great Burgundian house of Louis Latour that the growers in Burgundy fought just as furiously against reform and in the formation of their Appellation Controlée, whereas now they find it their meal ticket. And so it will be here. Some day the top growers will realize how their interest can be best served and protected.

(How prescient were these last two sentences of his, once the "boutique" wineries began changing the winemaking scene!)

Then came mentions of an unnamed organization formed earlier in the year to represent exclusively the needs of the better table-wine growers—obviously the Premium Wine Producers of California (PWP); MR's subsequent challenges to them; and finally the seeming conflict resolution when this group asked Dr. Winkler of UC Davis to meet with them so as to help set up a QC plan. In his last three paragraphs MR provided the dismal update.

> But no meeting between the growers and the University has ever taken place, as of this date, and no study of the subject is under way. Three of the growers concerned have said they will be willing to discuss the subject "in the late spring" (of 1956). But we learned that last April a group of growers indicated they are now aiming at blends of 75% instead of 51%—in 10 or 15 years! At this rate, it might seem, the industry has no intention of ever considering 100%. [It took much longer, for this 75% ruling finally arrived in 1983, after *28* years. And even then MR would have denied its value, particularly if frequent and stringent inspections weren't conducted in both vineyards and wineries.] Raising the legal unit to 75% would in fact have no effect at all on quality. For all purposes the barn door still would be left quite as open to malpractice, whether it be held open at a legal "loophole degree" of 51% or 75%! It followed, at the quarterly meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Wine Institute on August 5, 1955, it was actually proposed by one grower that the minimum percentage of varietals be increased from 51% to *75%*. The subcommittee promptly reported that the wine industry was not ready at this time to request an increase in percentages of varietals to 75%. This same subcommittee did, however, decide to meet and discuss further the proposal that a vintage wine no longer need be 100% wine of a given year! Thus, it would seem that the industry is never ready to consider moving forward, but is always ready to consider reducing standards!
>
> In any event, nothing has been done about "Quality Control," just as nothing was done almost twenty years ago by the Wine Institute in the same regard. This brings us to the conclusion of the report on the effort and progress which has been made to establish Quality Controls beyond our own vineyard. Despite the fact that for some twenty years [beginning during MR's ownership of Paul Masson] we have made unblended, 100% varietals, and been able to sell them at prices two and three times higher than those of any other growers in California, it still remains impossible to get others to renounce the legalized blending privileges and set up a system of labeling which would authenticate and publicize such wines, and thus establish California as able to grow truly great wines in many vineyards and several districts.

Once again MR, both disillusioned and angry, was explicitly handing over to retailers and consumers themselves, and to activist writers who loved wine, the duty to agitate for upgrading the quality of California's premium wines. After all, he could make his own wines, but he couldn't alter how other wineries made, labeled, and sold their so-called varietal wines.

> We turn now to you who are engaged in the trade and especially to you individuals who buy and drink fine wines and respect them for what they are. You, and only you, can bring about some form of self-imposed Quality Control, by demanding authentic 100% varietals, properly grown, labeled and merchandised. [12/20/55]

It seems, actually, that Martin Ray hadn't yet entirely abandoned hope that a few of the better vintners might eventually be persuaded to join with him in establishing quality control in California. Even *one* might help his cause! Thus shortly before Christmas, in tune with the holiday spirit, MR sent a conciliatory note to Herman Wente, whom he knew

and liked best in that bunch of growers. He first thanked him for having graciously hosted the summertime visit from Christiane Latour and her escort, MR's adopted son Barclay. Then he explicitly invited Herman to join him in introducing wine quality control in California, even if they couldn't get a group to back their initial effort. "You are definitely a leader," MR wrote, "and others seeing your example will follow, especially when they see our gain in prestige as well as higher prices." They'd put a QC stamp across their wine bottles—"and begin educating the buying public that the stamp can be relied upon to assure getting 100% varietals." And for this favor MR touchingly offered Wente his aid in any and every way. "If we could do this, Herman, we would be leaving our children a far, far better heritage than mere vineyards. And believe me, we would be thanked for having brought about a new era of better wines out of California." [12/21/55]

There's no indication that Martin Ray ever received a response to this plea.

Starting Out in the New Year

The lack of any letters covering the first months of 1956 within file folders of correspondence between Martin and Eleanor Ray and Maynard Amerine, whether carbon copies of theirs to him or originals from him to them, indicates that the vociferous winegrowing pair living at the top of Saratoga's Mt. Eden deliberately restrained themselves. They were holding off on any new attempt to revive the much-missed camaraderie with their friend in Davis, who had turned down several invitations to join them for dinner parties they gave during the holiday period.

There would be occasional references to Amerine, though, in the Rays' letters to other people, as in one that ER wrote to her son Peter, when she mentioned actor Burgess Meredith's ardent wish to buy a piece of their mountain, since he'd decided that he too wanted to be a winegrower. So Rusty—as Eleanor, Peter, and many other people usually called MR (but not Amerine)—would create for him a new vineyard, within which their new pal "Buzzy" would build a vacation home. They had even already settled on the site, and MR was eager to move ahead with the hard work of clearing away the trees and chaparral, then scarifying the ground deeply prior to planting, which he wanted to do by the following year.

> So far the deal is not made, as there's no money or agreement or anything definite. But you can be sure that Rusty has no intention of involving this quarter-section up here in any possible arrangement, it must be separate, and our wines separate. It's true that time changes the best of plans, and it's surely best to avoid complications if it is possible to keep things simple. Remember Amerine and his desperate efforts of recent years. "I've got to simplify my life!" he'd end most of his scribbled messages by saying. [2/5/56]

(In the coming years, the Rays would have it confirmed repeatedly that since "time changes the best of plans," they would have been wise to keep steering clear of dire complications that could ensue when setting up joint business ventures with others. But of course sooner or later such relationships were apt to get snarled by MR's perpetual tendency to skew, misinterpret, and overreact; and when suspicious, upset, or outraged, he could become outlandishly offensive.)

ER's last statement was decidedly an exaggeration, as a viewing of Maynard's actual "scribbled messages" proves. But having that remembrance of Maynard's occasional remark— whether made in person, over the phone, and in notes—aided the Rays to explain why he had withdrawn almost totally from them. When they had reached out to pull him back into their sphere, naturally he had recoiled. Getting involved with Martin Ray, and then remaining involved, was no way to simplify one's life.

Well, that poor fellow, MR and ER reasoned (and told others): Maynard had a bothersome, lingering infection that sapped his energy and spirits; was spending all too much time nowadays in the fellowship of outlandish male friends, eschewing the company of women; had been overworking on all sorts of research, teaching, writing, and consulting projects; was hypersensitive over being criticized (as MR liked relaying to him) by people he thought were his friends—even though he might in private expose the tasting errors of these snobs—for being interested only in California wines and knowing *nothing* at all about the fine European ones; and on top of all else felt ostracized, even persecuted, by people in the wine industry because of his insistence upon adherence to quality standards and truth in labeling. That last rejection seemed especially due to the assumption that he was in league with that cantankerous troublemaker Martin Ray, who had again been stirring up a big fuss about setting up quality control—though Maynard, totally disapproving, had nothing whatsoever to do with it!

When John Melville revealed how upset he was over Amerine's dismissive review of *Guide to California Wines* in the Autumn issue of *Wine & Food*, MR tried to console him. "You see, John," he wrote, "while I am not a writer there is some bitterness in me, too, about the way fate deals with some of the things I am devoted to." Then to make Melville feel better about the situation, he told of rumors he had heard as well as cited his own experience. "Never mind what Amerine has said or done. He is currently a very bitter man too! He has

broken with most of his friends, is under a doctor's care, and recently told me on the telephone that practically nobody in the industry will any longer speak to him and that he didn't want to hear any longer from me either!"

MR told how Amerine was greatly upset and envious that his own book, *Table Wines*, written with Maynard Joslyn, had only sold a measly few copies, whereas Melville's had leaped into bestseller lists in California. And as a final solace, MR assured Melville that "The number of people who read Amerine's review is very small." [3/17/56]

Correspondence Reactivated

As spring came around, Eleanor began vividly recalling the happy time just a year ago when Maynard had driven away from a luncheon visit, heading down the mountain road in his new convertible, carrying away sprays of wild clematis in bloom and a nest holding two turquoise bird eggs—the basic ingredients for a dramatic centerpiece for his dining table at an upcoming dinner party.

So she was the first to break the somber epistolary silence—or was it a standoff?—between the Rays and Amerine. On the 3rd of April she composed another of those lighthearted-seeming letters to "Dear Maynard" that consisted of a series of questions. Instead of the 10 she had asked him in December, she'd more than doubled the number, to 22. The questions, which filled two typewritten pages, started out thusly, to set the tone:

1. Do you know when you send someone a letter on passionate pink it means spring is in your heart as well as in the air, nests of eggs are readying themselves for decor on your table, vines are bursting forth, we think of you even more than usual, send darting messages by ultra-sonic, love you, miss you, and all that sort of thing?

(Probably ER had found some pretty pink paper for the original; the filed-away carbon copies were usually made on standard canary-yellow, second-sheet stock.) There followed 21 more numbered paragraphs all ending in question marks, ranging from a simple ? to triples, even quadruples. Here are some samples:

2. Do you know Jim Beard who's coming up to lunch Friday? ...

4. Did you ever get a report on the GRAND CRU tizzy I put on at a dinner party here some few months ago when a couple of so-called gourmets announced to eachother [*sic*—ER often seemed to deliberately combine these two words, perhaps of the opinion that they should really be joined] across the table that you knew nothing about foreign wines, only California wines???? (Rusty was down in cellar getting bottles so he never heard me, but I not only roared like an MGM she-lion, but told these fellows off. I recall saying that they were mere youngsters in their knowledge of wine, alongside of you, and now I don't suppose we'll ever entertain them again up here but does it matter & do I care, ha?

[This actually had been the notorious Thanksgiving dinner that MR would later describe in detail when writing to Maynard.]

5. Would you say you had an EXPANSIVE PALATE?

7. What do you think of Henry Charpentier, and would you be flattered or insulted to be invited (as we have been) to dinner at his place in January 1959???

[During this time period, the famed French chef offered specially catered meals in his Redondo Beach home in Southern California. Reservations, widely sought by gourmets, had to be made several years in advance, and the cost was exorbitant. To be invited, therefore, was scarcely insulting!]

11. Could a family have a more wonderful time than we've just had when Barclay and Peter both flew home for two weeks of glorious pruning together on the mountaintop and celebrating every night with great tastings, great drinking, great fun, amidst which we frequently toasted you?

[ER was hoping that Maynard would regret that he hadn't been there as well—to be treated like a member of this close-knit, wine-focused family, as he had often been in the past.]

12. Did you catch up with Bloeker's column in which he referred to you as "a charming genius with increasingly irascible moods"?

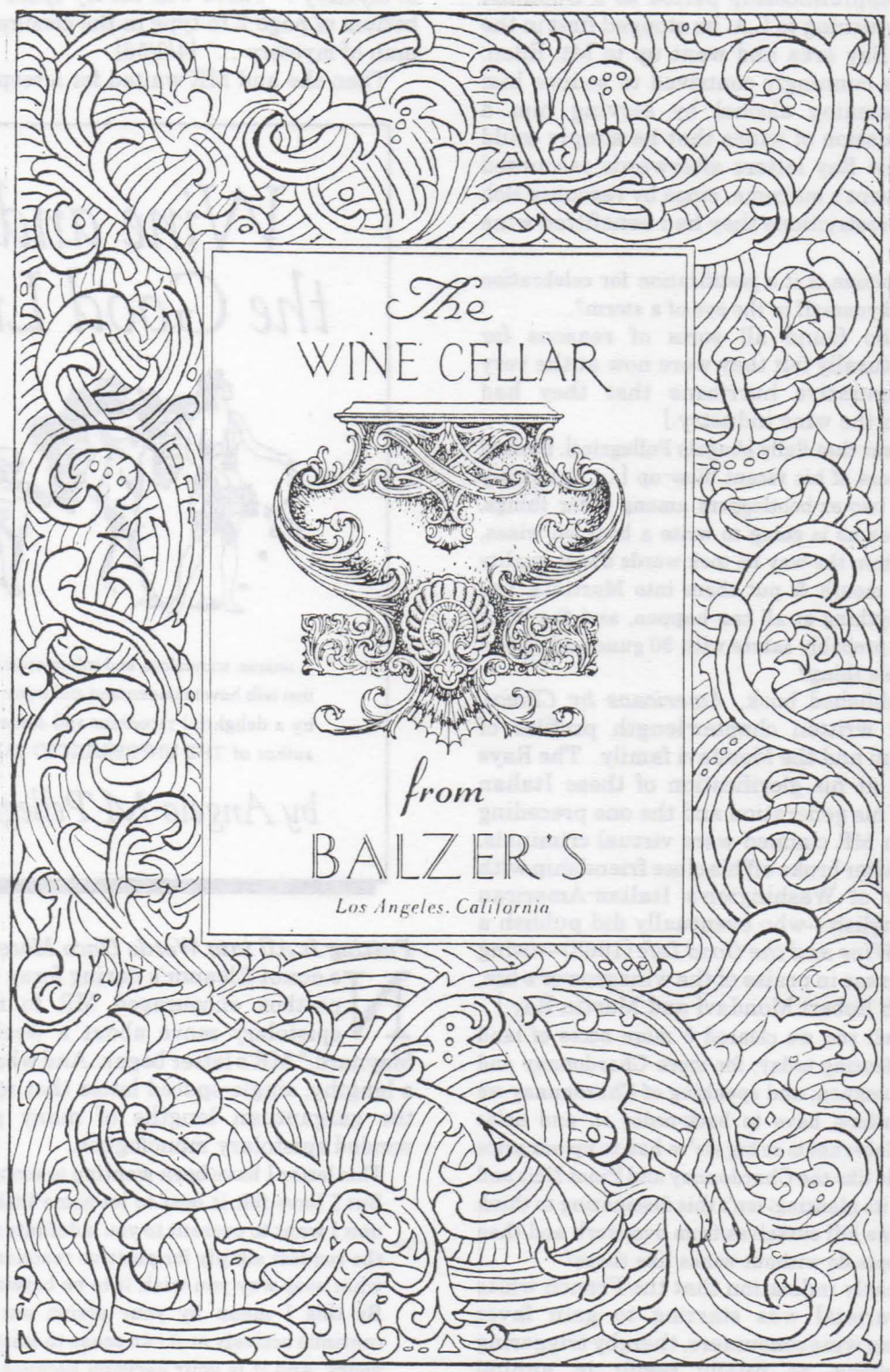
13. Is it true you are carrying on like mad with the titillating er wife or a certain er friend?

14. How do you account for the fact that Rusty's 5-gal. jug of Champagne Cold yeast exhibits a half-inch collar of foam in the narrow neck every morning but by evening it is gone; do you think this is related to Bob Balzer's becoming a Cambodian monk, or the fact that most people die in the night?

[Balzer, as most older wine buffs know, was a wine columnist as well as gourmet-store retailer in the Los Angeles area. They first became acquainted when MR owned Paul Masson, from 1936 to 1943, and MR later claimed he'd been Bob's mentor, steering him toward a wine-connected career.]

15. Speaking of Bob, did you know he has had his head shaved and had to beg in the streets of Cambodia for whatever scraps of food he got to eat for two weeks in order to feel properly humbled, and the Los Angeles papers simply went crazy over all this, and Bob's grocery manager is about to commit hari kari because customers get the idea that he must be going out of business because the papers say a Cambodian monk takes the vow never to touch gold or any form of alcohol? ...

[It might be commented here that when wine writer



CATALOGUE OF A "SELECTION OF WINES" IN THE BALZER CO. CELLARS
circa 1940 "All Wines Selected by Robert L. Balzer"

Robert Balzer came back to the States a few months later from his apprenticeship period as a Buddhist monk, before returning to L.A. he stopped first in the San Francisco Bay area and went up to Mt. Eden. There the Rays cunningly contrived to seduce him back into consuming alcohol by serving him a delectable succession of wines that he simply could not resist. A few Ray letters afterwards recounted with glee the event's outcome, since by rescuing Bob from Buddhist restrictions they had benefitted wine journalism.]

17. In your opinion is it a justification for celebration when you find yourself in the eye of a storm?...

[The Rays, who found all sorts of reasons for celebrating, naturally felt they were now at the very center of a figurative hurricane that they had initiated within the wine industry.]

19. Did you hear that Pelly [Angelo Pellegrini], flushed with the success of his recent blow-up [*i.e.*, laudatory portrayal] of two ex-bootleggers among other things, now announces he is going to write a book on wines, and judging from the way he took words about quality from Rusty's mouth & put them into Martini's, you might say anything at all can happen, and the Wine Institute will probably salute with 30 guns and underwrite the whole thing?

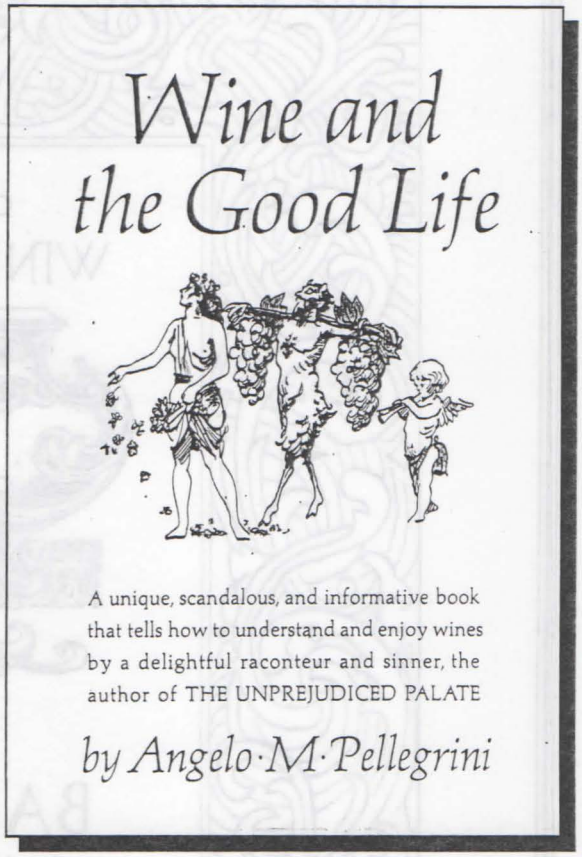
[In his just-published book, *Americans by Choice*, Pellegrini had written chapter-length profiles of Louis M. Martini and the Mondavi family. The Rays were outraged at his glorification of these Italian winemakers of his generation and the one preceding it—all of whom MR claimed were virtual criminals. MR soon thereafter broke off his close friendship with the University of Washington's Italian-American professor of English—who eventually did publish a book on wine, *Wine and the Good Life* (1965)—using in the title a phrase in praise of the winegrower's life, favored by both Robert Mondavi and Martin Ray.]

20. Did we tell you we cleared 5 more acres of land which we're fencing today, for more Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, and speaking of Chardonnay we can't meet orders; have to back-order it, and sales pressure on Cabernet is so big we've had to up our price to $4 the bottle like the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir and also increase its planting; isn't this fascinating to think upon even if we kill ourselves from overwork and then what will people do without wines like these?

[Here was an early indication that the French white Burgundian varietal was starting to gain favor among American wine consumers, thereby triggering increased planting, to finally result in annual statistical tracking of its acreage as well as yield in tonnage figures by the state's Dept. of Agriculture, which previously had just lumped it among miscellaneous white grapes.]

Eleanor's final question to Maynard was this: "Who do you think recently referred to you as 'a man of mystery'?" There was barely space enough at the bottom of page 2 to type in the closure: "We luv you, man of mystery ..." [4/3/56]

Then she and MR waited for a response.



Putting It All into Words Once More ...

No doubt Eleanor's daring foray into Amerine's postbox encouraged MR to make his own epistolary move about a week later. "Dear Maynard," MR's letter began. And what followed was a lengthy, single-spaced letter that reverted back to the gargantuan lengths of many previous long-winded epistolary monologues.

This letter I have been wanting to write for a long time. But I have felt it best to let some little time pass and now I want to present to you a definite proposition with the request simply for positive reaction on your part in what ever way you wish it to be between us hereafter. By this I mean by your action our friendship can continue actively or it can cease to exist. The decision is yours. And it is your decision because I have all along stated what I want is an active friendship between us. I still want it that way. But I do not know how you feel about it now and if you wish to not answer this letter I will take it as meaning that you do not want our friendship. In the latter case I will continue to respect

both our position and your achievements but I will treat you as one hostile should be treated.

Please understand, I do not attempt to threaten you. [?!] For, friendship is not so established. And it is your friendship we want. But we have so very many interests, common friends and movements and undertakings related, it must be known how we feel toward each other. It is not unlike some element forever present in vintage. It must be learned if it is good for the winemaking or not, and if not it can not be ignored but rather dealt with.

So far as I know, the only serious thing that has come between us is related to my interest in Quality Control, a thing you did originally assist me with. I did not try to force you against your expressed wishes to become involved in my efforts once you had made clear to me how you felt, you will recall. Those closest to you have explained to me their version of just what it was about all this [that] angered you. On the telephone you made untrue charges which you must by now know were unfounded. Whatever you may think, I am going to tell you here my side of the story as it really is and, as I have said, I aim to make to you a proposition. Rather than to let the latter hang suspended in our consideration, I will give you first my proposition. It will be my intention to state simply here the things that may have come to look very complicated.

I propose that we get together very soon, either at your place or at ours, as you wish it, and that we have a dinner and some fine wines and conversation with, however, no reference whatsoever to Quality Control and all that may have come to involve. I further propose that the next time we meet or at some further meeting not distant we both be prepared to talk the entire matter over with determination not to get hurt, angered or exercised but rather to understand each other fully. I pledge myself to answer any questions you may ask and request the same of you. The conversation should be conducted toward the end that we would reach an agreement on certain basic principals [*sic*] so that we might thereafter engage freely in conversation that might at any time arise out of your work and mine. All you need do in answering me is to accept an invitation to come down at a time stated by you or ask us up. It might be best here at the vineyards. But, you may feel otherwise and that will be accepted without question.

Then MR, with his "proposition" now stated, wanted to dip back into history and "outline" how his commitment to Quality Control had led to disagreeable struggles—above all with the organization that he always considered his most powerful and determined adversary.

The idea of Quality Control first came to me when I first became a grower. It was not then either clear to me what I might do, if anything, or how I might go about it. It was simply an idea. The Wine Institute was actively soliciting my membership. I have not bothered to look up how far back this may have been but it is close on to 20 years ago now. This fellow Gomberg worked for the institute and he & one or two others finally offered me a Vice Presidency and membership on all the important committees if I would join. I agreed to this with the provision they would do certain things within the Institute and this they never were willing to agree to. I do not recall now just what things were foremost in my mind. But I know that I had fought them on what manner of legal description a California Sparkling wine should require. I had employed a firm of attorneys to appear in opposition to them and I had lost.

Since MR's assertion that these celebratory, bubbly wines should not be called Champagne had been rejected, most American sparkling-wine producers continued to call their product Champagne; eventually even MR was obliged to do so when at Paul Masson he produced several different kinds of sparkling wines from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, using *la méthode champenoise.* At the time, though, he had labeled them "Extra Dry." (In recent years, though—almost seven decades later—that pugilistic stance taken by Martin Ray got vindicated when the American wine industry, pressured by the European Union, was forced to assent to the ruling that such wines made in the U.S. should no longer be labeled as Champagnes, since that term could rightly apply *only* to sparkling wines made in the Champagne district in France.) Meanwhile, on another battlefront, he had become the outspoken foe of vintners who either combined different grape varieties during vintaging or else blended different varietal wines later—yet labeled the bottles as if they contained a single fine varietal, thus eligible to fetch a higher price. So MR reminded Amerine:

I also remember I had gone on record as believing that it should be illegal to blend a varietal wine. My position was that a Pinot Noir should be 100% Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon the same and so on, including all varietals. From being friendly opposition to the Institute I gradually was forced into a position of considering them a group of greedy and ignorant men running hog wild. They forced me [into this belief] by a series of acts which have continued to this day. In the estimation of the public with which <u>we</u> are here concerned the Institute has destroyed itself because I have seen to it that what they have done has become known.

This last statement displays MR's inflated sense of his own potency, which ultimately, and somehow, would enable him to triumph over his foes, even destroy them. He then went on to tell how the Wine Institute for many years had been trying to sabotage him by virtually forbidding, through financial pressure, any press attention to him and his

wines—though surely Amerine had heard from him many times of this for-instance.

I will give you a single example. The magazine Wines and Vines came to me with an apology and explanation. They could no longer publish anything I wrote or carry an advertisement I might wish to buy. The penalty would be loss of the subsidy received from or through the Institute. I believe this was said to be $1,000 per month. And to bring it up to date, now years later I am told directly by the Bureau Chief in San Francisco for Time Life that the Institute through the placement or withdrawal of advertising determines what may be carried in the editorial columns or news columns of every publication other than Time Life. I have personally confirmed this in several instances. Now then, as I have said, this has done great damage to the Institute in certain quarters. But, I have made capital of it. When I speak here of the Institute I speak of the [California Wine] Advisory Board as well because, as you know, they have in the past been convenient twins of a sort. This situation I describe refers also to our friendship and its present state of break down.

Then MR went on to remind Maynard of opinions they had held in common. He acknowledged that much of what he'd learned over the years about current doings in the wine industry had come directly from Maynard. Now MR indicated that he had recently replaced him with some unnamed insider-informants.

You have worked with the Institute in much the same manner I did at first. That is, you have not agreed with all they do nor have you failed to openly take issue with them. There is no need for me to try to recall here all the conversations we have had. Many times you have told me with great pleasure of your disagreements, our intentions and theirs. Always we used to see alike on these matters. And for many years I knew very little of them other than what you told me of their behind the scenes workings. Now I have several other active sources that keep me fully advised especially with specific happenings and the long term intentions they have. For, there is coming a day when the Institute will not even claim to represent the best interest of the better table wine growers. And it is important that I keep advised.

Once again MR underscored Amerine's own vulnerability, caused by his longtime advocacy of significantly boosting the quality and of honestly labeling the better California wines—along with the consequent pairing of the two of them in other people's minds. These had led to the unfortunate ostracism that Maynard now suffered, outside of his more insulated academia, when mixing with industry people—whether winery proprietors, vintners, or Wine Institute officials.

In this correct position you have taken, you have made enemies. You have told me of it many times, over many years. One of the members of the Institute has told me personally that he intended to get rid of you as a factor in the industry. He named no others but he made it clear that he was not alone.

Because we were known to be friends, it came about that we were looked upon by the Industry as working hand and hand together and this was especially true within the Institute itself. Lou Gomberg told me this with special reference to Quality Control. Last June you made a speech before the Technical Advisory committee in which you denounced certain practices of members and this was at a time when I was bringing pressure on the newly formed or forming Quality Producers. .... It was taken by a group that we were working together and when, in one of my letters I stated I was not alone in my activities, it was taken by them to mean I referred to you. I explained to them that I did <u>not</u> refer to you and that I referred to all our retail and consumer customers. But the milk was spilt. They had waited for years to put their finger on something and some of them evidentally [*sic*] did or said or failed to do whatever it is that has so hurt you and for which you blamed me, saying that hardly anyone in the industry would any longer speak to you. Well, circumstances have been influencial [*sic*] in our relations, it is true enough. *But it is because of the things we have both done and said for some 20 years and especially it is because we have always had good friends and strong enemies as all men must have if they do things.* [Emphasis added.]

At this point, MR, feeling that the time had come to wind up this intense part of his letter to Amerine, summarized his current feelings.

It is out of this that has come many other things in one way or another related. I have heard things almost continually about you that I know to be untrue. I do not know what has been related to you of me but a letter such as this can hardly be ignored. After all, I do not have to have your friendship. I am making a substantial effort because I want it for the sake of the things we are commonly devoted to and the pleasure of the friendship that comes out of such common interests. It would be rather difficult to find another two so completely in agreement on the thing we have both devoted all our mature life to.

And then MR launched into one of those usual long, gossipy paragraphs to Maynard telling of people badmouthing or occasionally praising him (MA) or other wine-connected personages.

James Beard and Helen [Evans] Brown were here at a luncheon last Friday. You no doubt know him as the writer and her of cook books and now also of Sunset and I believe in some manner connected with Lucius Beebe and his Nevada paper. Anyway, at the table Helen Brown asked me if I thought you knew anything about wines. I expressed some surprise but told her in no

uncertain terms that I knew damned well that you are the foremost authority on wines in the state and told her I had never met anyone that knows from personal experience and knowledge acquired from drinking, study and research as much about wines. She was shaking her head before I finished my statement and negatively. She could hardly wait until she could tell me that she did not believe it and that she considered you a fraud and that you knew nothing about any wines other than California wines. Beard was very interested and finally made a statement which I considered intelligent. But we almost had a brawl at the time before I talked her down. Beard said that in New York Alexis Lichine has hardly a friend other than himself. Yet, he explained, Lichine knows his French wines. He told me that Schoonmaker has hardly a friend here or abroad. But, he asked me, has Frank not done a good publicity and merchandising job and does he not have certain abilities regardless of his failure with money. I agreed. He told me that in Los Angeles he had heard several people speak of me with extreme hostility.

One of the Amerine detractors named by Beard was Dr. Marcus Crahan, with whom MR had corresponded (see the previous issue), but later had had one of his bitter feuds, which he'd recounted to his guests. "Beard told me," he reported with satisfaction, "that I was not alone for he had had with Crahan one of the greatest fights of all times a few days ago." MR then told Maynard that he should expect to be both hated and admired—as he himself was. And from there he poked anew at the integrity of his perennial bête noire, the Wine Institute.

[Beard] told me of hearing from those who dislike you mightily and run down your abilities and hearing also great praises for you. He offered the idea that no one worth knowing could help but have enemies and did well indeed to have any friends. We laughed at that but not Helen Brown. Why she has this feeling toward you I do not know. But the Wine Institute tried to prevent her coming here with Beard and if he had not expressed his wish to me personally a few days earlier in Los Angeles to come here he would have passed through the state without ever seeing our place or us. Additionally, I literally snatched the party out of the hands of the Institute after which this Jew baby in San Francisco who works for them sent her regrets. [*Note*: MR could become notoriously, and sometimes crudely, as here, anti-Semitic, verbally and in letters, when he thought (at times wrongly) that he was conversing with goys with similar prejudices; he would similarly vent, with differing sets of complaints, about Italian-, Japanese-, and Mexican-Americans, as well as diverse national groups, such as the English, depending on his disposition at the time.] I had invited her. She had been given the assignment of taking the party about. Helen Brown may or may not be paid by the Institute, I do not know. But he made it very clear that she believes their policies good and correct and I told her the facts of the case which she did not accept.

One can readily spot here Martin Ray's penchant for getting into squabbles with tough-minded, articulate women, who would argue with him (either unaware of or ignoring ER's frantic signals to desist, for heaven's sake), showing that he hadn't utterly charmed them. As a macho autocrat, MR expected all women around him to be physically attractive and winsomely pliant—never to assert themselves, let alone argue with him, as Helen Evans Brown, a much-published epicure, was now doing. Any females that he (and ER too) approved of tended to be described as unthreateningly "little" or "small"—though in reality they might not be diminutive. Almost invariably, innate feminists took umbrage at MR's blatant chauvinism. Eleanor, who had quickly learned of his labile mental and emotional condition when marrying him, rarely if ever challenged this necessary show of alpha-male dominance—even though before marrying Rusty she'd been a feminist herself, first as the daughter of a prominent suffragist (one of the first female legislators in Washington state), then as an accomplished career woman, single mother, and book author. (Readers might be reminded, too, that this scene took place in the mid-1950s, seven years prior to the publication of Betty Friedan's call-to-arms, *The Feminine Mystique*, and the subsequent launching of the assertive Women's Movement, which would peak in the 1970s, when MR's overbearing potency had faded away.)

Now in his letter to Maynard MR delivered one more blast at the Wine Institute. Because it was targeting them *both* for destruction (how much of this view was paranoid, how much actual?), they really should mend their break and help each other.

In this day when publicity men and women are hired, when those who take you about are paid to do the will of the great institutions, it would be naive to think the Wine Institute is not actively working all the time to destroy me and you too. Now, lets not let them and what they say overshadow the fact most important: Our interests are common. That is the only sound basis for any lasting human relationship.

Maynard might also need now to know that MR's modus operandi, including his outspoken attacks on the wine industry during the past year, had actually helped boost his small winery into an extraordinary success.

My methods of conducting myself and my business have been successful financially and otherwise and never so much as in the last year. Today we are a full thirty days behind on shipments and have achieved again the enviable position of making the largest part of our shipments to individual consumer customers while at

the same time keeping our wines available at all the most important package stores.

Then MR proudly told Amerine about one of his latest wine-promoting triumphs.

The most elegant and successful tasting of wines ever put on in this country [!!] was that staged by Burgess [Meredith] in Chicago a few days ago. It was done voluntarily by Burgess and the man who controls all the fine wine outlets there. It was made a social achievement and was attended by some 200 who have expressed unpresidented [*sic*] enthusiasm. No day passes we do not get orders and inquiries from all over the country. I have not spent a day in sales work since last fall. Our mailing list has grown to several hundred and all these people are working for Quality Control, each in his own small way but most effectively.

MR went on to indicate that "two of us"—which meant when he'd combine with Burgess Meredith as a new winegrower on Mt. Eden—would establish their own Quality Control plan, since the Premium Wine Producers hadn't, and wouldn't, do it. Maybe Amerine would be willing to come up with the actual controls they'd implement.

We will announce our beginning before the year is out. At first there will be but two of us. If we can get things together between us I would like you to oversee the writing of the Controls. If you can not bring yourself to do it I will then ask Dr. Winkler. So far as that other bunch, the Premium [Wine] Producers, goes I realize they never had any intentions to cooperating. In fact, I have never heard from them in all these months [phone calls and letters to him from Gomberg obviously had ceased] and I am beginning to wonder if they really ever did get organized and if so what they can possibly find to justify their existence. Perhaps they have become a subsidiary of the Wine Advisory Board.

As with his letters of the past, Martin seemed reluctant to stop chatting and get to the signing-off point.

We will look forward, then, Maynard to hearing from you again. We stopped in Sacramento over night the other night while enroute to Reno. That group of which I spoke of that gets together up there gave us a great dinner which was the biggest event of its sort I ever attended. It must have cost a fortune. We left the James Beard luncheon table and drove to the Rancho Friday afternoon late and then on up to Reno Saturday. The weather was beautiful and we got back at ten last night. The first toast of the evening at that Reno dinner, after the very personal ones, was to the Success of Quality Control, made by a member of the [state] Supreme Court. There were two MD's, a Corporation and Railroad attorney, a Bank President and a group totaling 15 that drink all the fine wines that ever go into Nevada. I was told this by the principal wholesaler of Reno. In passing by Davis we would like to have stopped in but I wanted to write you first.

There was still more to impart. "[Dr. Salvatore] Lucia sent us recently an enlargement of a picture he took of us when we were last at your house. It came out very well." [Note: Unfortunately, the gift photograph taken by their mutual friend was unaccountably lost. This physician-oenophile, in charge of preventive medicine at the UCSF medical center, had recently authored a book about the healthful efficacy of wine drinking, *Wine as Food and Medicine* (1954), and later wrote *A History of Wine as Therapy* (1963).]

And MR couldn't resist bragging about his adopted son's latest triumph on the wine front. "Peter just gave a talk on wines at Harvard which lasted two hours and he showed a great number of slides, about two thirds from French and German vineyards and one third from our place. He told the story of our fight for Quality Control and had a very receptive audience who are ordering our wines as a result. He is now going to continue this same talk at other groups. Eleanor joins me in sending our best." [4/9/56]

The letter tells a lot about MR's recent activities and thinking. But after typing this five-page letter to Maynard, the Rays appear to have become uncertain about the strategic wisdom of sending it. Before sending it off, they should at least wait until they received Maynard's reply to Eleanor's letter—if they would ever even get one. The original pages were put into the folder that held correspondence with Amerine, and on the front page MR had attached a small note that simply stated, "NOT SENT."

Amerine Responds

Maynard didn't feel obligated to answer that long letter from Martin Ray, since he'd never received it. On the other hand, whatever he might have said in reply might have been interesting and edifying to future readers—though his inevitable rejection of the proposed peacemaking tête-à-tête would surely have upset MR anew. Amerine doubtless was determined never to put himself in a position wherein he'd either fight bitterly with Martin further or else be seduced into falling again under MR's undeniably charismatic spell.

Maynard did, however, respond diligently if briefly to most of Eleanor's questions—even some impertinent ones, which he'd accepted with humor. Moreover, he had written his letter on the same day that MR had composed the one to him that hadn't been sent after all.

Here is much of the entire letter Amerine sent off to the Rays. He managed to get the entire succession of responses into two paragraphs. (The two slashes given here [//] additionally had hyphens through them in the original letter, which he'd done by backspacing twice on his typewriter—obviously his

way of separating his answers to ER's questions without taking up a lot of space.) In his letters, Amerine tended toward verbal terseness.

April 9, 1956

Dear Eleanor and Martin: Jim Beard I do not know, didn't he write a couple of cook books? // Glad that Barclay has decided on the academic life. // No, never heard of Grand Cru tizzy. I am rarely in gossip-ridden San Francisco. But thanks for your defense – I have an expensive palate. – Present 51% law is pre WWII but I do not know its genesis. // Who is Henri Charpentier? I'd not feel flattered. // I am sorry that Melville didn't like my review. It was mild. You and he flatter me to suggest that I have any influence. I do not now have, never did have, and don't aspire to any "influence." Anyway, surely 500 W & F members in the USA wouldn't buy 4000 copies of his book? // I have only the greatest respect for those who are making good wines, and ever shall. // Who is Bloeker? Irascible – seldom; genius – never; charming – too nice to deny. [//] No carryings-on-for years. // Balzer's story I was told. It's an escape. He doesn't have to stay poor as I understand it.... // "Eye of the storm – celebration?" Too subtle. ... // I haven't seen Pellegrini's book and am too broke from local and state income taxes to buy. Will read the library copy. // Man of mystery? No, I just work morning, noon and night and I'm seldom seen in the fashionable places. // ...

Then came the final and most telling part of Amerine's letter, which would have been directed explicitly at his old friend Martin. Probably feeling rather like Candide, MA wished to tend his own garden, both real and figurative, retreating from that dangerous territory beyond academia—the wine industry with its ugly conflicts, which Martin Ray, in his quest for quality control, had been exacerbating for many years now.

Your invitation is kind but I must respectfully decline. The great commercial world of pressure and profit is for other people not me. Having been once bitten fore and aft I prefer growing lettuce; ever so much more fun. I admire those who survive but "the ends never justify the means." Stalin should now appreciate this. Yours, Maynard AA [4/9/56]

[*Note:* The ruthless methods of the Soviet dictator, who had died three years earlier, were currently being denounced, to considerable worldwide fascination, by his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, who began the slow but relentless "destalinization" process in communism's previous idolatry of the rabid ruler.]

An expectable refrain in Amerine's more sociable communications with the Rays was this reference to ends never justifying the means, for it was this disagreement that had split them apart. Be that as it may, the very composition and bantering tone of Amerine's letter indicates that from time to time he may have actually regretted that firm decision to terminate his special relationship with the Rays. In his personal and professional lives few people, if any, could ever replace the special bonhomie and sometimes quirky intimacy that they had provided; and before Eleanor there had been the incomparable Elsie, whom Maynard had known in his youth. True, he would know other men, and women too, who had a fervent desire to make great wine out of California-grown grapes. But none of them would ever have quite the same fiercely passionate zealotry as Martin Ray, or be as colorfully outrageous.

Amerine and others might disapprove strongly of MR's methods, but for four decades not one of them was ever "out there" on the battlements as he was, in ways that nobody else dared to be: in fighting that perennial bent of the industry toward quantity not quality, as well as in making and marketing a very small volume of high-priced true varietals. Their own inching along toward wine quality was thereby made easier as gradually far more acreage of fine varieties would be planted ... and far better, more honestly labeled varietal wines would be made, often proving to be gratifyingly profitable, just as MR had predicted. And with these efforts California finally proved itself capable of making world-class wines, as he had been insisting it could, all along.

This was the last rather personal letter—at least among those found in the Rays' file folder—from Amerine that displays the full idiosyncratic style that often characterized his earlier writing to his friends on Mt. Eden, especially on postcards. From then on, from time to time there would be either brief personal notes or else businesslike letters dictated to a secretary and typed on UC Davis letterhead stationery, mostly commenting on wines that MR had asked to be tested.

[*To be continued*]

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