the WAYWARD TENDRILS Newsletter

Vol.3 No.2 A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S CLUB April 1993

[The Sonoma County Wine Library hosted **Bibliotheca Sonoma: An Intellectual and Sensory Adventure - Food, Wines and Books,** Monday evening February 22nd, 1993. The Newsletter is pleased to present the following talks given by Tendril members Gail Unzelman and Ruth Walker.]

~ ~ ~ ON THE JOYS OF COLLECTING WINE BOOKS ~ ~ ~

by Gail Unzelman

About two years ago the Wine Spectator magazine ran a lengthy article on collecting wine books. As this flashy magazine is wont to do, it emphasized financial reward as a primary reason to collect wine books. Granted, to be a knowledgeable and a wise collector, one should be aware of current prices and values and scarcity. And, of course, it is very gratifying to discover that a book purchased for $50 is presently worth $500. But, if we ask most collectors, this is not the reason they collect. There are many rewards more satisfying than "investment value".

Tonight I would like to share with you a few personal thoughts on the special joys of collecting wine books. This book collecting has often been called a disease, you know. Most known cases are severe, some are uncontrollable. A mild case is probably as rare as a 16th century imprint.

We can all recognize the symptoms. One of the first I noticed was that used-bookshops easily, and very comfortably, became my second home. I began to find it impossible to go into a bookstore and not come out with a book. When visiting a new town, the first thing I check is the yellow pages for used bookstores. Afflicted collectors watch their mailboxes daily for the arrival of booksellers' catalogues, [and the McKirdys of Cooks Books, with us here tonight from England, will attest that I have written them in a panic more than once wondering when the next catalogue was coming - I was having "withdrawals"].

I believe that book collectors are born with this disease, and it was early in my life that I realized that I was afflicted. I shall pass over the childhood book stories, but during the 60s, when my husband Ron was in medical school in San Francisco, for me a special night out on the town was a trip to North Beach to visit the used bookshops. We spent hours browsing the shelves. An entire evening might cost us a couple of dollars - and we came away with an armload of 10-cent paperbacks. Once in awhile we would splurge and buy some hardbacks. I remember we were seriously hooked on bullfights and Barnaby Conrad; Hemingway, Steinbeck and George Bernard Shaw.

On the rare weekends that Ron could get away from the hospital we escaped the City, and soon discovered California's wine country - and wine. I suppose, like most book collectors, we became interested in wine books when we began our adventure into wine. We bought books on wine to learn about the wines we were drinking and laying away in the cellar. As confirmed wine lovers, we quickly became wine book lovers.

It was apparent, almost from the start, that a division of duties would be a good idea: Ron would be in charge of the wine cellar, and I the wine library. We have wonderful memories of our early visits to the old Esquin's Wine Shop in San Francisco, with its giant basement of wines and, upstairs near the office, the shelves of wine books - here Ron bought our first case of Bordeaux and I bought our first Harry Waugh. Now, after 25 years of collecting wine and books, more than 2000 wine books finally outnumber the bottles. But, you understand, that is only because the wines are more drinkable than the books.

To me, one of book collecting's greatest pleasures is the thrill and adventure of "the hunt". The chase goes on everyday, everywhere. Rummaging through dusty, over-flowing used-book shops is a favorite, passionate activity - even for the least afflicted collector. Anticipation is keen as we eagerly check every nook and cranny of the shop.

Ron and I found one of our most treasured books in a dingy little bookshop in San Francisco,

tucked away on a shelf where it didn't belong. I can't help but wonder: is it some strange law of the book-world that these little gems are never found in their proper section? Luckily, the dark, old leather binding with the faded gilt-lettering caught my eye.

I can still feel the excitement when I pulled it from the shelf and opened the cover. Here was Louis St.Pierre's rare little treatise on grape culture, written in 1772 for the people of the colony of New Bordeaux in South Carolina. St.Pierre had the book published in England - perhaps naturally since this was pre-Revolutionary War - but if he had chosen to have it printed here in America, we could call this America's first book on wine and grape culture.

What makes this book very special to us is that it has a Sonoma County wine connection. Inside, on the front fly leaf, in a bold hand, it is lovingly recorded that the book was found in an old book shop on the Strand in London by John Drummond, who inscribed the book to his dear friend Basil Warfield, June 15th, 1888. Both of these gentlemen were pioneer grape growers and wine makers of Glen Ellen.

In 1990 several of us collectors formed a wine book collecting club called The Wayward Tendrils. Over 100 collectors from around the world have joined - and what a pleasure it is to see so many of you here tonight! It is interesting to see the many different wine-related areas the members' collections represent: the history of wine, wine & art, wine & food, specific wines or wine regions such as Bordeaux, California or Italian wines; wine and health, technical works on grape growing or wine making, even wine novels.

Ron and I collect everything, and in all languages. We also have our special interests, including wine and health; the history of wine in the U.S., and especially California; books on port wine; and anything we can get on the dreaded phylloxera (that louse that has dramatically reared its ugly head in California once again).

During phylloxera's wild rampage in the 1800s, the wine vineyards of the world were nearly destroyed, and the subsequent quest to find a remedy is one of the great scientific thrillers of all time. In California, the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners was formed to help fight the battle. In their efforts they published numerous reports that contain a wealth of information on the disease, and on grape culture and wine making in general. We have fervently collected these now very scarce publications, and of the 50 or so reports issued by the Board, we still lack a handful. The search continues...

Under our special wine and health category, we have about 100 books catalogued, from the recently published and highly publicized *French Paradox*, to the 1512 printing of a work by Arnaldus Villanova, a physician born in 1238 and called the most learned man of his generation. Villanova was a prolific writer on matters medical, and very concerned with the proper use of both wine and food. In this little treatise, he included instructions on choosing, and recipes for making, healthful wines. Another of our favorite medical-wine books, with the very distinctive-sounding title *A Vertuose Boke of Distyllacyon of the Waters of Herbes*, was written by Jherom Bruynswyke and printed in 1527. You would appreciate its lovely, antique leather binding and the beautifully rustic, old-style German wood-cuts used to illustrate the many distilling apparatus and the herbs, including the grapevine, used for making medical waters.

[*from Bruynswyke - 1527*]

Hidden away in a hard-to-get-at corner of our wine cellar are about a dozen cases of vintage port. Ron and I both have a special fondness for this wine and the books written about it. One section of the bookcase is reserved for these "port books." Here we can look up the history of the port wine trade, its factory houses and quintas; we can review vintage reports and tasting notes - or we can go back in time and read many of the 19th century writings of the colorful and legendary Baron Joseph James Forrester, the out-spoken promoter of the port wine trade. (He is the one, you remember, who drowned when his boat overturned on the River Douro - he sank with the weight of all the gold he was carrying, but the ladies with him floated to safety, saved by their crenoline skirts). Christie's of London recently published a biography of Baron Forrester - the first that I know of and a very welcome addition to the world's wine history.

I must say a few words about bibliography.

Some collectors might think bibliography boring, but it is the backbone of every serious collection. It is also a favorite past-time of mine. There are several wine book bibliographies that, taken as a whole, list most of the major works ever printed, from the earliest time and in all languages. Jim Gabler's *Wine into Words*, which he published in 1985, was the first to direct itself solely to the works written in the English language - and it is truly a godsend to the collector. Andre Simon, the dean of wine & food and author of over 100 books on the subject, compiled a thorough wine bibliography. But it is terribly organized and very frustrating to use. This is what called me to action to undertake my labor of love and publish a revision of it in 1990. [This is also a godsend!] I use these bibliographies and a shelf-full of others, along with booksellers' catalogues, auction catalogues, foreign language dictionaries, and biographical dictionaries regularly in my constant search for information on the books and their authors. It is exciting to know that there is always something new to discover in the world of wine books.

The eternal hope that one day one of my long-sought-after titles - "elusive little devils" I call them - will turn up is part of the fun. And, don't we all appreciate a little serendipity? I looked for years for a copy of Frona Wait's 1889 *Wines & Vines of California* - the wine country's first p.r. and consumer oriented guide, and an important book for any collection. Then, one Saturday afternoon at the local flea market, there it was. [I tried not to look too anxious as I asked how much they wanted for it.] But, I have no realistic hope of ever finding a copy of William Turner's little book on wines printed in 1568, the first book in English on the subject. There are only 8 copies known to exist. Nor, do I hope for the 1478 "first printed book on wine" - although, ironically, just this past weekend in Paris, the only copy I have ever seen offered was auctioned. I have yet to see the results, but the low estimate for this treasure was $15,000.

Ron and I are thrilled to have one of the few known copies of what I think is the most beautiful book on wine ever printed. It is the 1877 ampelography of California grape vines produced by the renowned San Francisco artisan Edward Bosqui. This masterpiece is a large folio, 14 x 20 inches, with 10 full-page magnificent chromolithographed plates of wine grape varieties.

In 1980 a very lovely reproduction of this book was produced in a limited edition of only 100 copies. It is now rumored that only 25 copies were actually completed. I mention this because the Wine Library recently acquired one of these exquisite books, and it is on display in the glass case, along with the classic French grape ampelography by Viala and Vermorel, and several other lovely illustrated books.

The earliest printed book in our collection is a 1488 edition of *De Propreitatibus Rerum*, a Latin encyclopedia for the farmer that contains several detailed chapters on growing grapes and making wine. It is the only incunabula, or pre-1500, book that we have. It is a lovely, large-sized book, with hand-illuminated pages and beautiful, dark, old-style print. The binding of tooled, heavy leather covers actual, thick wooden boards. The ornate brass clasps that once kept it tightly closed are still present. A few old worm holes also.

Some of you probably know of Roy Brady, the Southern California "grand-daddy of wine book collectors" who has had a severe case of "collecting fever" for over 50 years. His first massive collection of wine material finally went to California State University at Fresno - it was literally taking over his house. But, he hasn't stopped - he is still at it. Someone once asked Roy if he possibly was cured after that first fabulous collection. "Cured?" he replied, "There is no cure. Death is the only cure." Ron and I look forward to our uncured old age - with our port and our books. ❧

CORNERS BUMPED AND WORN

by Ruth Walker

Although the Age of the Craftsman has gone, we have a fascination for finely crafted objects. Because craftsmen -- such as fishing rod-makers, saddlers, gunsmiths and bookbinders -- traditionally learn their trade by apprenticeship, not much of the social history of these people is well known.

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and mass production in the nineteenth century, a certain nostalgia and romanticism developed for the "old ways." William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement, started in the 1880s, conveyed a new spirit and enthusiasm for these trades, insisting that the fine arts and applied arts, such as metalworking and printing, were not foreign to each other.

Bookbinding and similar handcrafts became socially acceptable endeavors for the middle and upper classes to explore as hobbies and professions. In fine bookbinding, the first notable figure to spread the message was T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (1840-1922), a barrister. He was dissatisfied with his career and when Mrs. Morris suggested that he should take up the craft of bookbinding, he followed her suggestion in

1883 and eventually practiced professionally, introducing many aesthetic and sound craft innovations.

I am grateful for the Arts and Crafts Movement and the subsequent crafts renaissance in the last 30 years, because I am one of those who is happier working with my hands and intellect. However, the nostalgia for the past has glossed over the working conditions and life of the pre-industrial bookbinder and printer. Our appreciation for the fine craftsmanship of the books of this previous era will deepen as we review the working environment of the people who created them.

Until the early nineteenth century, master binders conducted their businesses in two-story dwellings, with the first floor used for working purposes. Generally all work was done by the master binder, one or two journeymen and an upaid apprentice that boarded and lodged with the family upstairs. These men were employed in cramped quarters with poor ventilation exaggerated by charcoal burning stoves.

Until about the year 1772, these men worked from six in the morning to nine at night. According to Bernard C. Middleton, by 1805 the standard working day was six to six, six days a week; but it was not uncommon to work much longer hours. Since coal-gas interior lighting was not available for workshop lighting until well into the 1830s, the craftsmen frequently worked by candlelight.

Although books were in tremendous demand, binders did not command the wages that other tradesmen did. The cost of a seven year apprenticeship was less than half of the printing apprenticeship premium. It was accepted that binders would be able to make a success at their trade only if they worked hard and were frugal. [Binders expected to make a success of their trade only if they worked hard and were frugal]. Certainly not a glamorous livelihood and never a particularly popular choice.

Overall environmental conditions revolved around water being obtained from outdoor public wells and street pumps. Sewage frequently contaminated water sources, and cholera outbreaks were common. As the cities grew, water shortages and contamination led to severe epidemics by the 1850s.

Along with these foul living and working conditions, good food was not always available. Widespread food adulteration -- plaster of paris and pipeclay mixed with flour, lead with wine and cider, and copperas with beer -- all caused poisoning and reduced resistance to diseases (tuberculosis, for one). In 1843, life expectancy for the middle and trading classes was 29 years; 44 years for the upper and professional classes; and 22 years for laborers.

Handling and reading a completely hand-crafted book, including paper, printing, binding and gold-tooled finishing is always an enriching experience. I hope this brief overview of the lives of the binders enhances our enduring interests in our collections and their heritage. ❧

[Ruth recommends for further reading: *The Craft of English Bookbinding* by Bernard C. Middleton, 1963; and *Nothing but the Best: The Tradition of English Craftsmen* by Thomas Girtin, 1959.]

..... *NEWS & NOTES* ....

Accompanying his request for membership in the Tendrils, **Jeffrey Kellgren** wrote an informative letter telling us of his **Specialty Books Company** and **"Kellgren's Wine Book Catalog"** of currently in-print books available in the U.S. Since his letter arrived too late for a notice in the January issue of the Newsletter, the Editor encouraged him to send all members a copy of his latest catalog (Fall/Winter 1992-93). He noted that he does not regularly carry older or out-of-print books, but will search for them if a customer requests. If you did not receive his catalog, you can contact him at the address listed in the enclosed Membership Roster Update. Jeff also volunteered that he speaks fluent French and German, if this could be of help to the members.

John Thorne sent us a note to advise that *A Practical Guide to Book Repair and Conservation* by Arthur Johnson (recommended by Ruth Walker in the January '93 Newsletter) is available in the U.K. at L10.95. John did not send ordering details, but an inquiry to him should prove fruitful.

Tendril **Hudson Cattell**, in the Jan/Feb 1993 issue of his noteworthy Wine East magazine, writes an enthusiastic review of a new history of wine that has been 25 years in the making. *The History of Wine -- The Last 10,000 Years* is "an informative and highly

readable history of wine resulting from extensive travel around the world, visits to several hundred museums large and small, and extensive studies of writings and documents through the ages." Author Maurice Chenier is a news service veteran who has travelled and tasted wines in almost all of the world's wine producing countries, and has been an editor, columnist and commentator for wine and food publications, newspapers, radio and television. He has published the 377-page book in a limited, signed edition of only 100 copies. Approximately 40 copies remain for sale and can be ordered directly from the author: Maurice Chenier, 580 Place de la Fontaine, Apt.M, Nuns Island, PQ, H3E 1G7 CANADA. The price is $50 (U.S.) Note: Now that Mr. Chenier has completed his tome, he advises that he is willing to part with many of the wine books that he has gathered over the years for his research. Most are 20th century, some signed. If interested, drop him a line for the particulars.

Roy Brady is looking for a copy of Leo Loubere's *The Red and the White. A History of Wine in France and Italy in the 19th Century* (Albany, NY: New York State University Press, 1978).

Wine Books For Sale: Our sole member in Nova Scotia, **Vince McDonnell**, has approximately 50 books on wine that he would like to sell as a lot. He also has "many ships' menus and wine lists (1960s/'70s)." Write him for the interesting details.

The **Kilian Fritsch Collection** of wine books was auctioned in Paris in mid-February. For the sale, *Expert* Gerard Oberle put together another superb and lavish catalogue (similar to his *Les Fastes de Bacchus et de Comus*, 1990). With just-over 600 items listed in 313 pages [magnificent color illustrations and well-researched annotations], *Une Bibliotheque Bachique*, is a recommended addition to the reference shelf -- but rather pricey [780FF/France; 830FF/Europe; 900FF/Others - write Gerard Oberle, Librairie du Manoir de Pron, 58340 Montigny sur Canne]. Or, as announced in their latest *Jottings*, Cooks Books - Rottingdean, will fulfill orders for copies of the catalogue.

Our thanks to **John McGrew** who kindly took a minute from his busy schedule to tell us about a series of four articles written by **Thomas Pinney** for the American Wine Society Journal [Winter 1988 - Fall 1989] that should be of interest to all Tendrils. Pinney writes on twelve historic texts related to wine in the Americas, including Antill, St.Pierre, Dufour, Buchanan, Adlum and Husmann. The W-T Newsletter looks forward to reprinting this series in future issues.

In the Fall 1986 issue is another Journal gem: an annotated list of Wine Library Resources, compiled by John McGrew and Elizabeth Lincoln. For a subscription to this periodical write: 3006 Latta Road, Rochester, New York 14612. $32/year.

Stephen Skelton writes from England that he seeks the following titles:

Beech, F.W. & Catlow, E. & Gilbert, E.G. *Growing Vines in the Open in Great Britain*, 1974.

Johnson, Geo.Wm. & Errington, Robt. *The Grape Vine; its Culture, Uses and History*, 1847.

MacCollom, Wm. *Vines and How to Grow Them*, 1911.

Ministry of Ag, Fisheries & Food. *Grapes for Wine.*[Reference Book No.322], 1980.

Tod, H.M. *Vine-growing in England*, 1911.

Tritton, Suzanne M. *Amateur Wine Making; an Introduction and Complete Guide*, 1957 + further editions.

----------. *Grape Growing and Wine Making from Grapes and Other Fruits*, 1951.

----------. *Grape Growing and Wine Making incl the Vintners Calendar*, 1949.

----------. *Successful Wine and Beer Making*, 1960 rev.ed.

----------. *Tritton's Guide to Better Wine and Beer Making for Beginners*, 1965 and 1969, 2nd.ed.

----------. *Winemaking from Pulps, Fruits, Juices and Concentrates*, 1963 rev.ed.

Heidi Congalton gleefully asks to change her membership status from "Bookseller" to "Collector." Although she will continue to participate with her husband in their bookselling business (Between the Covers Rare Books), she is no longer willing to include her wine books in the shop's inventory!

The March Wines & Vines notes Fine Wine Folio, a monthly publication in its fifth year, seeks subscribers. Each issue deals with one wine region (e.g. Volnay), or even with single wineries. Subscriptions are $46.50 per year; new subscribers get a free binder[!]. Write: 155 Spring St, New York, NY 10012.

--THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly membership dues are $10 and include subscription to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS NEWSLETTER, published quarterly. Permission to reprint is requested. Please address all correspondence to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS, P.O. Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA 95405 USA. Editor: Gail Unzelman. Asst Editor: Bo Simons.--

Pinot Envy:

A Bibliography of Books, Parts of Books and Dissertations Dealing with That Greatest and Most Allusive Elusive Illusive Grape and Wine: Pinot Noir

compiled and annotated by Bo Simons

Note: Members of the Prodigy Online Service's Food and Wine Bulletin Board contacted me about putting on a tasting featuring Russian River Pinot Noir. These online wine fanciers sometimes call their more avid members "WBJ's" (Wine Board Junkies) and their face-to-face meetings "Offlines." I put together a larger bibliography for that event of which this is a part. The Pinot tasting, featuring a meal and talks by Dan Berger and Tom Rochioli, will be Saturday, June 5, at the Sonoma County Wine Library.

Archer, Eben.
Espacement studies with unirrigated, grafted Pinot Noir (Vitis Vinifera L.) / by Eben Archer. SERIES 1. Annale - Universiteit van Stellenbosch ; SERIES NO 1) 1991/2. Stellenbosch, South Africa: Universiteit van Stellenbosch,.1991?
A technical study of hillside viticulture using Pinot Noir.

Asher, Gerald. ***On Wine*** / Gerald Asher, With an Introduction by Elizabeth David. New York: Random House, 1982. xvii, [4], 222 pages.
This book is drawn mainly from columns Mr. Asher wrote for *Gourmet* between 1972 and 1982. There are over 25 index entries for Pinot Noir and its sub-headings. On pages 164-171 in a chapter titled "California Pinot Noir: The New Frontier," Asher turns his considerable charm and incisive intellect on the struggle to produce good Pinot Noir in California. He sums the case against them compellingly: "California Pinot Noirs have been criticized for lack of color, lack of varietal character, lack of body and lack of staying power. We are told that we have the wrong clone, the wrong climate, the wrong soil, the wrong yields, the wrong yeasts, the wrong ideas. We probably use the wrong gum on the labels, too." Asher interviews Josh Jensen of Calera and Michael Benedict of Sanford and assesses their Central Coast Pinots.

Barr, Andrew. ***Pinot Noir*** / Andrew Barr. London : Viking, 1992.
xiv, 278 p. : maps ; 21 cm. Notes: includes index. Maps on lining paper
Bibliography: p. 257. Series: Guides to grape varieties. Series editor : Harry Eyres. BINDING: Cloth PRICE: L13.99 ISBN: 067082514x
This book, not available yet in the United States, appears to be the only general monograph on Pinot Noir. Mr. Barr is the author of *Wine Snobbery,* published in differing editions in both Britain and America. *Pinot Noir* is reviewed in the March, 1993 *Decanter*.

Brander, C. Frederic. ***Volatile composition of Vitis Vinifera Var. Pinot Noir wine.***
Dissertation. Davis, California] 1976. 114 Pages . illus. Notes: Thesis (M.S.)--University of California, Davis). A dissertation from Davis on the chemistry of Pinot Noir, concentrating on the volatile composition.

De Groot, Roy Andries. ***The Wines of California, The Pacific Northwest and New York: Including the First Classification of the Great Vineyards and Wineries.*** / Roy Andries De Groot. New York: Summit Books, 1982. 463 pages.
On pages 134-154 DeGroot discusses the state of the art of Pinot as he tasted it in California, Oregon and Washington. He states as if it were an uncontested fact that Pinot plays prince to Cabernet's king. He goes over the problems of wine making.

Fried, Eunice. ***Burgundy: The Country, The Wines, The People.*** New York: Harper and Row, 1986. 205 pages. Although this bibliography does not really concern itself with the sea of ink sloshed over Burgundy, this book was too good to evade mention. Fried describes the winemaking year in Burgundy, the barrel making process, the food scene, the evolving role of négociants and producers. She focuses her narrative around the story of Rebecca Wasserman, an American woman, who became first a barrel broker and then a négociant, cracking several Gallic male preserves.

Jensen, Josh; and Swan, Joe. "On Pinot Noir." in ***The Vintner's Club: Fourteen Years of Wine Tastings, 1973-1987.*** San Francisco: Vintner's Club, 1988. Jensen [pages 257-267] and Swan [pages 268-274] discuss Pinot Noir as they produce it. Swan recommends clonal selection and low yields. Jensen stresses the limestone soil which he came to know working at Romanee Conti. Both are insightful, chatty ramblings on this Holy Grail of grapes.

Lee, T.H. (ed) ***Tasting seminars : Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.*** Title of a work downloaded from the Roseworthy Campus {University of Adelaide} Library's online catalog accessed via Internet. Apparently a locally produced set of tasting notes used in classes at this South Australian technical and agricultural school.

Ramey, Bern C. ***The Great Wine Grapes and the Wines They Make.*** [Burlingame, CA]: Great Wine Grapes, 1977. [250 pages] A beautiful photograph of a

Pinot Noir cluster, branch, leaf and tendril resembling a botanical illustration graces the text by Professor Lloyd A. Lider. Lider adopts the official UC line, first promulgated by Professor Eugene Hilgard in the Nineteenth Century that, in America, "Pinot has yet to demonstrate its greatness."

Robinson, Jancis. ***Vines Grapes and Wines***. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. 280 pages. Ms. Robinson's book remains a beautiful and informative look at wines, focused on and arranged by varieties of grapes and how different climates, soils, growing conditions and wine making processes achieve different wines. On pages 81 to 86 she discusses as one of the "Classic Varieties," Pinot Noir, "the minx of a vine. Indubitably feminine, alas, if not exactly female...[which] leads us a terrible dance tantalyzing with an occasional glimpse of the riches in store for those who persevere, yet obstinately refusing to be tamed." Ms. Robinson slams California Pinot Noir mercilessly: "very plumy, sometimes almost burnt, and often has an unnerving suggestion of overboiled cabbage about it."

Tancer, Forrest R. "Pinot Noir." in ***The University of California/Sotheby Book of California Wine***. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. Pages 213-223. Tancer of Iron Horse gives a good assessment and rundown of Pinot Noir in California. He discusses in some detail but without being ponderous the factors of soil, climate, clone, yeast, and wine making practices.

Thompson, Bob; and Johnson, Hugh. ***The California Wine Book***. New York: William Morrow, 1976. 320 pages. This collaboration between two of my favorite wine writers is a good snapshot of the California wine industry about 20 years ago. The authors offer some lasting insights and capture some revealing moments. On pages 200-210 they deal with Pinot Noir. There are some nice cracks about Sebastiani's version of Pinot Noir: "Not altogether conscientious about being Pinot Noirs, but they are too enjoyable to be ignored."

Thompson, Bob. ***Notes on a California Cellarbook: Reflections on Memorable Wines***. New York: Beech Tree Books [William Morrow], 1988. 355 pages. Bob Thompson offers a good assessment of Pinot Noir in California, region by region, producer by producer, noting it is all too often disappointing but occasionally exquisite.

Viala, Pierre, and Vermorel, Victor. ***Traite General de Viticulture: Ampelographie***. Paris: Masson et Cie, 1901-1910. 7 Volumes. Messrs. Viala and Vermorel supervised the production of this most magnificent of ampelographies. Volume II, on the page before page 19 has a chromolithograph of a painting of a bunch of Pinot Noir. The image is accurate and enchanting, showing opalescent dew on black fruit. The text which follows gives an accurate depiction of the growing practices and vinification methods for Pinot Noir in France which have changed little in the intervening ninety years.

MARTIN RAY REVIEWED

by Roy Brady

Vineyards in the Sky. The Life of a Legendary Vintner, Martin Ray. By Eleanor Ray. Stockton, CA: Heritage West Books. 423 pp. $28.95.

This is not an objective biography. Rather it is a love story and a celebration of a man's life. It is variously informing, charming, moving, saddening, humorous, wry, worshipful, fascinating and frustrating. It tells a great deal about Martin Ray [1904-1976] before he bought the property from Paul Masson himself in 1936, most of it new to me, an old Martin Ray watcher. The imagined long conversations between the magisterial Paul Masson in his prime and Martin as a young teenager with a preternatural drive to learn all about winemaking may be taken as pure fancy, but much else rings true.

I knew Martin rather well, as such things go, during the years leading up to the great Mt. Eden adventure. Naturally my view of Martin differs from that of an adoring wife, but her well told story captures his joy of everyday life, his ebullience, his constant rising above setbacks, and his extraordinary ability to flame enthusiasm in others. He was also a visionary, a showman, and a con man. He wanted to create in the Santa Cruz Mountains a domaine based on his view of Romanee Conti, but greater, and rule it as autocrat.

The book shows that circumstances, including two terrible fires, prevented him from making a long series of vintages from one vineyard. Was Martin Ray a great winemaker? I think he could have been, but other circumstances apart, his imp sometimes caused him to make a point rather than a great wine. His refusal to use sulphur was quixotic. My notes show 75 Ray wines, some of them many times. The best were unsurpassed, and some were best left unmentioned.

Here is the unique story of a wine man great in spirit and intent if not always in execution. Every reader will respond in his own way. Those who felt themselves misled will probably continue so, the youngest generation may give him short schrift, and those who enjoyed his acquaintance, warts and all, will treasure his memory.

In some ways Martin Ray resembles Agoston Haraszthy a century earlier. Both were promoters and enthusiasts. Martin was the better practitioner of his art and, I have no doubt, a great deal more fun. Haraszthy went to Nicaragua and was eaten by alligators; Martin stayed on his mountain and was eaten by his disciples. Both bitter ways to go.

~ ~ ~ AN OHIO ROMANCE ~ ~ ~

by
Linda Walker Stevens

Forget those slipshod wine industry romances marred by inadequate research and flimsy backdrops. For satisfying escapism enter the alluring environs of congenial husbandman Albert Nelson Prentiss. *My Vineyard at Lakeview*, published anonymously by Orange Judd & Company in 1866, provides a charming contrast to the overwrought, pedantic or preachy writings common to some nineteenth century grape culturists.

Prentiss' fervor sparkles from the pages of his unassuming little book. His descriptions of contented country life in ante-bellum Ohio evoke a healthy nostalgia for a simpler, kinder, gentler America. His unselfconscious glee regarding "a certain brown-haired boy of three years" and the advent of another child, "with darker eyes;" his amusing eulogy on hens; his lyric vignettes of home and landscape; his lament that "The physiognomy of a cow is not easily read" all allow glimpses of a sensitive spirit, in tune with nature, and given to viewing life's ordinary details with a rare appreciation and thoughtful wit. Perhaps because Prentiss courageously abandoned a newspaper job in a his New England hometown to pursue his rural idyll, his joyous chronicle of the move has the power to inspire wistful wonder, even in a twentieth-century reader.

The author received his first impetus toward grape growing, he reveals, during a chance visit to the German village of Hermann, Missouri in 1853. Though, regrettably, he fails to name his vineyard hosts, it is intriguing to speculate on his certain encounter with young George Husmann, already a leading light among Hermann horticulturists. Surely those two sanguine nature lovers enjoyed a fruitful meeting -- and a friendly glass of wine.

From his first trials with Clinton vines in the spring of 1854 -- "Clinton seemed perfectly incorrigible" Prentiss remarks facetiously of his healthy, prolific cultivars -- through his added successes with Isabella, Catawba and Concord, the enthusiast documents his methods clearly, and provides straightforward advice on everything from site selection and propagation to trellising, underdraining, and packaging for shipment. His concise prose makes the intricacies of viticulture accessible to any novice. His own early experience he describes as "an illustration of the success of book-farming." Obviously Prentiss is inclined to augment the agricultural genre with his own sage input, but he's never long deterred from his thoroughly entertaining style of writing.

Nowhere in the literature of grape culture does there exist a more appealing salute to the vine than Prentiss supplies. His fourteenth chapter, a scant seven pages titled "The Autobiography of a Vine," deserves attention as an admirably economical, informative and delightful rendering of the viticultural facts of life. Although Prentiss declares he received this communication from a friend, its consistent style suggests that it is the author's work and that this disclaimer represents a literary device of little practical consequence in an anonymous publication.

True to his nineteenth-century roots and education, Prentiss devotes a chapter to ancient methods of grape culture, replete with quotes from Pliny, Virgil and Milton, and allusions from Scripture. Following this poetic diversion, he remonstrates with a friend over the man's "lamentable bachelorhood," then indulges in a mocking criticism of politics. All in all, *My Vineyard at Lakeview* offers more than a horticultural treatise -- it provides the memoir of a happy, gracious life. Sadly, Prentiss' singular contribution to literature remained his single effort.

"In the farm life there are both prose and poetry," grower Prentiss informs us, "but both are good." The same observation aptly applies to author Prentiss' pleasing book. ❧

[*Tendril* Linda Walker Stevens is a freelance writer, who has most recently produced articles on Nicholas Longworth and the historic Ohio wine industry. Linda formerly resided in Napa Valley, where she edited a consumer wine magazine, grew Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer, and served as First Vice-President of the Napa County Farm Bureau. Since 1985 she has lived in Hermann, MO, where she's at work on a historical novel of the wine industry at Hermann.]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A VINE

being Chapter XIV
of
My Vineyard at Lakeview

On one occasion, not long ago, I visited a friend who has a small number of vines which are perfect models in form and vigor. One of them was particularly remarkable for its symmetry. "If that vine," I remarked, "were to tell its own story, it would be one of great care and untiring attention." "Not very great," my friend replied; "and as to telling its own story, I see no reason why it should not. I frequently talk to it while engaged in the work of bringing it up the way it should go." Not many days afterwards I received the following paper, bearing the title I have placed at the commencement of this chapter:

"When very young, I know not how old indeed, but nearly as far back as my memory goes, (you would have called me a *bud* in those days), I used to take great delight in the anticipation of future enjoyment. My father was a venerable vine, kindly in disposition, and well to do in the world. His roots penetrated the soil far and wide, where abundant nourishment for his whole family was easily gathered. What a splendid time, so I soliloquised, will I have the whole of next season; (it was now fall), nothing to do in the way of obtaining food for myself, no searching the dark soil here and there for delicate tit-bits -- nothing of the kind; my venerable papa will do all that. My only task will be to put forth a few leaves, and digest the nourishment which will be so abundantly furnished. The gentle summer showers will refresh me when I am thirsty, the genial sunshine will warm me when cold, and the cooling breezes will fan me when the heat becomes oppressive. What a continued scene of enjoyment will my life present! I can scarcely await the slow approach of spring, so that I can enter upon it. But the force of circumstances were quite overpowering; so I settled down for a long winter's repose.

But alas for any calculation which can be made regarding the affairs of this transitory world. I had scarcely fallen to sleep when awakened by the noise of voices in conversation. They came from the gardener and his assistant. "Here, Patrick," said the first, "cut all of these vines through here down to two buds, and save all the well-ripened wood for single bud cuttings." "Sure, and I'll do that same," was the willing response of the other. Not many minutes had passed before the sharp knife of Patrick had taken me and many of my brothers away from the protecting care of our respected ancestor. Where now, thought I, are all the fine calculations for next year's enjoyment? But I said nothing, consoling myself with the reflection that the society of my brothers was still left me. Some time after, a number of us were taken up and carried into a propagating house, a strange looking building with a glass roof. The air was warm, almost uncomfortably so; on one side was a long bench, covered with sand, made still warmer than the air of the house, by means of what they called bottom heat. I had scarcely made these observations, when the self same bloodthirsty Patrick came along with his knife and deprived me of my only remaining consolation, by separating me entirely from all my kindred. I recalled to mind an old saying that misfortunes never come singly, and thought what a fine illustration my fate afforded of its truth. Presently they took me to the bench, and putting me in the sand in a slanting kind of way, covered me completely up. Buried alive, thought I; and at the same time wondered why they failed to make this last misfortune complete by not putting me in head downwards. But they did not do it, and herein was a slight shadow of consolation, only it was so dark in there that I could hardly see the shadow. For several long days I kept very quiet, waiting for something to turn up. But nothing happened, or seemed likely to. So I put up a leaf or two above the sand to see what was going on. Among my first experiences was a drink of water which Patrick was kind enough to give. What a comment is this, thought I, upon those anticipated enjoyments! Instead of the gentle summer showers which were to refresh me all so nice, the incorrigible Patrick comes along and gives me a little sprinkle from a tin watering pot! And thus it is, frequently, in life. The fine castles that we build, grand and gorgeous to look upon, too often in the reality are only plain houses, and even these sometimes with broken windows and a leaky roof.

Before many days I began to get quite hungry. I was now dependent on my own resources, not having the kind papa to get me food as I had anticipated. So I put out a few roots in the sand to see what could be found, and poor picking it was you can rest assured. I believe I should have starved to death if it had not been for the food my venerable papa had surrounded me with before I was taken form his hospitable trellis. But I had hardly commenced wondering what would become of me, when who should come along but Patrick, and taking me from the sand, place me in a nice little pot, filled with the richest soil. What a feast was that -- a regular thanksgiving. There was such a nice lot of food close at hand, that being thrown on my own resources did not seem so bad a thing after all. I grew quite rapidly, and it was not long before I felt crowded in my new abode. My roots had nearly filled the pot, so that there was hardly a chance to stir. This inconvenience had not lasted long, when the inevitable Patrick, whom I had learned to look upon with some degree of favor, took me out and placed me in a larger pot. This was a sensible operation, as I had outgrown the old one much as a school boy outgrows a pair of shoes.

In my new abode I continued to grow strong and vigorous. It was not long, however, before spring arrived. I was now taken from the pot and placed with a great number of companions in a bed out of doors. This bed had been prepared with the greatest care. It was mellow, and dry and warm, and the supply of food was so abundant that it required no great exertion to get all we wanted.

On the whole we passed the summer very pleasantly. They gave us but little care, and I should say that we did not need more, because many of us were at least five feet tall at the close of the season. When we were planted, they gave us a good mulching of coarse barn-yard manure, and then let us shift for ourselves, except that they pulled out a few large

weeds which made a very obvious display of large capacities for stealing our food. At the approach of cold weather they cut us all down to about four buds, dug us out of the bed, and heeled us in, covering us afterwards entirely with earth.

Early next spring, some of us were taken out, packed in moss, and sent some distance by rail. Without any remarkable incidents on the journey, we arrived here, and I was shortly afterwards planted in the very spot where you see me now.

The first summer passed very pleasantly. The soil must have been nicely prepared. It was so exceedingly mellow that my roots could get around with the greatest ease. There was a little lime which I was glad to get hold of now and then, because I am as fond of it as most people are of salt. During the season I grew pretty much according to my own notion, except when they thought a lateral was getting a little too long, they stopped it. In the fall they came along with pruning shears, which they used in a careless sort of way, as is proven by the fact that they cut me back to only fifteen inches in height. A mighty pretty way this is to barber a fellow, thought I. But as it seemed to be quite the fashion among all my neighbors, I did not so much care.

The next spring they came along and rubbed off all but my two upper buds. From these I produced two very stout canes during the season, the laterals being kept pretty closely pinched in. Feeling somewhat ambitious, I produced this season a couple bunches of fruit, whereat I felt as much pride as a boy does with his first whiskers, or a hen over the first egg. The gardener who had charge of me in those days, felt very much gratified. And I suppose he was entitled to some reward for all the trouble he had been to in taking care of me. But if he had left me more alone, and not cut and pinched me so much, I am sure I should have been equally well gratified. Perhaps trials and tribulations are necessary to the proper development of character. It is at least a true philosophy of life to count all afflictions as blessings in disguise. And if these disguises, as sometimes happens, are so well put on that the blessings are not recognized, we must still exercise our faith that they are there, and that all things are working together for good. In the fall these two canes of mine were shortened to four feet.

The next spring, this was my third year in the vineyard, they built a trellis of five wires attached to posts, so that the lower wire was fourteen inches from the ground. On this lower wire they fastened the two canes, in opposite directions, and called them arms. And now what do you think was done next? All of the buds on the underside of the arms were rubbed off; but from each of the buds on the upper side a cane was allowed to grow, making six canes on an arm. These canes were tied to the trellis as they grew, and the laterals kept pretty well shortened in. Feeling somewhat in the fruiting way, I produced one or two bunches of fruit on each cane, about twenty in all; but I did not feel so proud of them as I had done of the two bunches the previous year. At the fall pruning, the gardener cut off all the canes down to two buds. This bit of cane which he left on he called a spur. And there I stood, the whole winter through, with arms outstretched to their fullest extent. It would have become quite fatiguing had not the trellis afforded me a good support.

The next, the fourth year of my vineyard life, a cane was produced from each of the two buds left on the spurs, making a dozen canes to an arm. These were treated precisely as those of last season, but the amount of fruit I produced was very much increased. I think there must have been some sixty or seventy bunches in all. In the fall, each alternate cane was cut entirely away, and the rest down to two buds.

From that day to this my life has been simply a repetition of my fourth year's experience. Many good crops of fruit have I borne, but I do not feel exhausted, or that old age is creeping upon me. Indeed, when I recall to mind the stories I used to hear father tell of some of our ancestors who had rejoiced in the summer sun of half a dozen centuries, the notion creeps over me that I shall live and bear my fruit for at least a hundred years to come."

MY VINEYARD AT LAKEVIEW;

OR,

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BY A WESTERN GRAPE GROWER.

ILLUSTRATED.

To any one who wishes to grow grapes, whether a single vine or a vineyard, this book is full of valuable teachings. The author gives not only his success, but, what is of quite as much importance, his failure. It tells just what the beginner in grape culture wishes to know, with the charm that always attends the relation of personal experience.

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ORANGE JUDD & CO., 245 Broadway, New-York.

GEORGE EDWARD BATEMAN SAINTSBURY

by Roy Brady

George Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellar-Book* (1920) is the most enduring and most quoted wine book in the language. Every wine lover has a copy, but how many read it? Everybody knows the quotes chosen by the inter-bellum school of British wine writers, and requoted by others ever since, but there are many more fine passages.

When Saintsbury lived on Guernsey he found drinks cheap, and "this same cheapness was a remarkable preservative of quality." Now we know that dearness is not such a preservative. In these days of nervous nudgings toward metered nipkins of red wine for thy heart's sake, it is bracing to read: "In days when it was still lawful to drink bottles of wine in the plural, I should have said that a bottle of hock at dinner, and a bottle of claret after it, was a decent and moderate allowance . . . " Coronary occlusion, anyone?

The following could have been written today: "There was a time, not so very long ago, when one could afford to treat the adversaries of honest drinking with a good-natured and rather lazy contempt . . . But that time has passed." Then in some of his most vigorous passages he excoriates the "pussyfoots."

For summing up Saintsbury I cannot approach *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (1941): "Saintsbury was wide and discursive rather than profound and precise. His foible of omniscience was so transparently ingenuous as to be attractive rather than offensive. He had what few scholars seem to possess, an immense vitality of enjoyment, and he invited the world to enjoy his hearty preferences. To the large vision of a critic he added the bright, short view of the journalist, and combined, in a degree almost unique, scholarship with popular appeal." Not everyone enjoys Saintsbury, but if you like that description I think you will.

Rudyard Kipling, an old friend of Saintsbury, called him "the most allusive of writers." That may be a problem for some people. Has anyone identified all the allusions. One would expect an article somewhere if they did. Saintsbury dedicated the *Notes* to R.K. and presented him with a copy which Kipling annotated and which is preserved in his house. These facts I owe to Thomas Pinney, our fellow member, whom we know as a wine historian but who is also a Kipling scholar and has edited his correspondence. Thomas has, I believe, examined Kipling's own copy of the *Notes*. What value would you booksellers put on that volume?

Britannica (1973) gives Saintsbury half a column. He was born in and is buried in Southampton (home port of the *QE2*). Observing that his literary output was enormous, *Britannica* summed up: "Though a stricter approach has replaced his copious, wide-ranging writing, he yet opened the way to a broad view of Western literature; and, by his enthusiasm, emphasized enjoyment as literature's primary aim." One might call him a paleoantideconstructionist.

[The "Author Spotlight Series" applauds Roy Brady for heeding the call (once again) and treating us to this bit of Saintsbury...]

BOOKS & BOTTLES

by Fred McMillin

"Thank you, Robert Balzer, for telling us about the important wines...of California."
Maynard A. Amerine

Exactly ten years ago Robert Balzer was revising his handsome *Los Angeles Times Book of California Wines*. He included a list of names that would "join the ranks of California's . . . premium wineries" during the 1980s. How good was his forecast? To find out, at a recent wine tasting we put current releases from the named wineries into paper bags. The panel of 18 ordinary wine consumers tasted and indicated their choices for the best wines. We unveiled the top ten vote getters -- here is what we found:

10th	William Hill Cabernet Sauvignon
9th	Shafer Chardonnay
8th	Culbertson Frontignan Sparkler
7th	Robert Pecota Gamay Beaujolais
6th	Clos du Bois Alexander Valley Merlot
5th	Vichon Coastal Selection Cabernet
4th	Quady "Electra" Orange Muscat
3rd	Sanford Chardonnay
2nd	Scharffenberger Blanc de Blancs
1st	Matanzas Creek Chardonnay

Professor Amerine complimented Robert Balzer's prose. We should also pay tribute to his very clear crystal ball.

A *PRESSING* AFFAIR

by R. Hume Andrews

[From his OPEN TRENCH, R. Hume caught the following action while eavesdropping at a local winery...]

he male winemaker, Willmes, had a crush on the female head enologist, Theresa Grafinsky Lee, alternately known as T-Graf and T-Lee. These feelings had been mutual at one time but now they were deeply-rooted only in Willmes. In fact, T-Graf recently told Willmes he was lower than a root louse.

But Willmes couldn't keep his feelings bottled up, and the sparkling effervescence of T-Graf's personality just made the sap rise in him. One day he tried to press his body against hers. She said, "Put a cork in it, Willy." But he persisted, so she filed sexual harassment charges. Willmes knew T-Graf had him over a barrel.

"She'll make pumice of my reputation," he wailed. "I think it's just sour grapes over my last review of her performance in bed. I was all pumped up -- in fact, I was sur-Lee's if you know what I mean -- but she was wracked with guilt over her berry small breasts. I feel destemmed by this whole thing."

T-Graf was furious. "If you had a beaker of sense," she yelled, "you would see how thick-skinned you expect me to be. This has been a harrowing experience. You said you liked me lean and well-structured, and now it turns out you want hedonistic weight instead. You keep sacks of sugar next to the bed. You cry "RP-71" or "WS-73" at the height of passion! Must you be so cruel?"

"Hey, call me crazy," said Willmes, "Call me two brix short of a load if you want. But I really do like your elegance, your stability, your balance, your lingering finish, your dry wit, your fine appreciation of egg whites. There is no need to get an acid tongue just because I have clusters of fantasies. Perhaps your figure will become riper with time. Besides, what is wrong with talking about a little T and A around the winery?"

"Listen, bret-breath," she answered. "You've got a saccharometer where your brain stem should be. You're never happy unless the barrels are stacked up to "D" level. You've spoiled everything that could have matured between us. There is nothing noble about your rotten, shrivelled personality. Don't you dare say "bung-hole" to me ever again! Your seduction plans are foiled permanently!"

"Look, T-Graf," pleaded Willmes, "Maybe you just need some time to let things settle out. Maybe things will be better the secondary time around. When you stave off my affections, it just makes me unstable. When we talk about cabernet, I just have to be franc with you. I can't keep my love in reserve."

"When I'm through with you, Willmes, you won't be disgorging around women for a long time," said T-Graf. "You will be on the shelf in sex offenders' library!"

"You mean I'm going to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court?"

"No, ascescence-head, you'll have pressing obligations in prison!"

"Well then, do you think I'll have a fall release date...?"

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That goeth down sweetly,
Causing the lips of those
That are asleep, to speak.
-- *Ecclesiastes.*