



NAPA VALLEY WINE LIBRARY **REPORT**

SUMMER 2009

# Calendar of Events

Saturday, August 15, 2009—19<sup>th</sup> Varietal Seminar  
“On the Other Hand: Discovering Other Reds”  
Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, St. Helena

Sunday, August 16, 2009—47<sup>th</sup> Annual Tasting  
“The Romance of PetiteZinNoir”  
in the Grove, Silverado Resort, Napa

Also of note:

Wednesday, August 5 through Sunday August 23, 2009  
15<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival Season  
“Music in the Vineyards”

More information via:  
[www.musicinthevineyards.org](http://www.musicinthevineyards.org) or 707.258.5559  
Or e-mail [mitv@sonic.net](mailto:mitv@sonic.net)

Saturday, August 29, 2009  
Napa Valley Grapegrowers “Harvest Stomp 2009”  
Vineyard luncheons by day; buffet and barn dancing by night

More information on this popular and worthy fundraiser via:  
[www.napagrowers.org/harveststomp/harveststompDETAILS.html](http://www.napagrowers.org/harveststomp/harveststompDETAILS.html)  
or (707) 944-8311  
Or e-mail [info@napagrowers.org](mailto:info@napagrowers.org)

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## Napa Valley Wine Library Report

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# President's Letter

Dear Members,

This is my first year as president of the Napa Valley Wine Library Association, and I am looking forward to our two events, the Annual Tasting and our Varietal Seminar, in August. Response from the wineries invited to our 47th Annual Tasting, "The Romance of PetiteZinNoir," has been excellent and the 19th Varietal Seminar, "On the Other Hand: Discovering Other Reds," chaired by Carolyn Martini and assisted by Allen Balik, is almost sold out. Please refer to page 20 of this issue of the REPORT for more information about both these events.

Our semi-annual REPORT, compiled and edited by Diana Stockton, is a major part of Napa Valley Wine Library's mission to chronicle the stories and histories of those who grow the grapes and make the wines of Napa Valley. Diana's excellent work assures that this history is preserved. Special thanks go to Priscilla Upton whose photographs beautifully illustrate the interviewees in each REPORT.

Kevin Alfaro, our president for the past three years, deserves thanks and credit for a job well done. Fortunately, he continues to serve on the board of directors and give much

needed guidance. In addition, we welcome new board member Barbara Insel, and thank outgoing board member Morgan Morgan for her work on our website. A very special mention goes to Julie Dickson, guiding light of the Wine Library's memory. Julie developed and manages our relationship with St. Helena Public Library, the repository of the collections of the Wine Library. In addition, she has supervised the Barney's Backyard Petite Sirah vineyard on the grounds of the public library that produces the wine that honors the memory of Belle and Barney Rhodes—truly the patron saints of the Napa Valley wine culture. Please do not hesitate to visit the library in St. Helena and meet its dynamic director, Jennifer Baker.

On Wednesday, May 20, 2009 four authors took part in the 2nd Annual Books on Wine Festival we co-sponsored with St. Helena Public Library. Paranormal investigator Jeff Dwyer, *Ghost Hunter's Guide to California's Wine Country*; UC Davis professor Charlie Banforth, *Grape vs. Grain*; historian Charles Sullivan, 2nd edition of *Napa Wine*; and photographer Bill Tucker, *Napa Behind the Bottle* held the rapt attention of a large audience with their presentations. Accompanying wines for the event were provided by Appellation St. Helena members as well as NVWLA.

Today, many of us are concerned that with the hundreds of new wineries and vineyards in the Valley, the histories of the men and women and their contributions to our wine community may be lost. We have now begun the process to create a comprehensive listing of all of Napa Valley's wineries, wines and vineyards online. Such an undertaking will require the participation of a vast number of individuals and institutions. Our recent board members were invited to serve with this project in mind. I am hopeful that we can present a plan for this project by the end of the year and, most importantly, on how you can participate!

Thank you for your enthusiastic support. I look forward to seeing you in the Grove of Silverado at the Annual Tasting in August.

Bob Long  
President



PHOTOGRAPH BY JANE BURGER

# Interviews

Photographs by Priscilla Upton

## John M. Gantner Proprietor

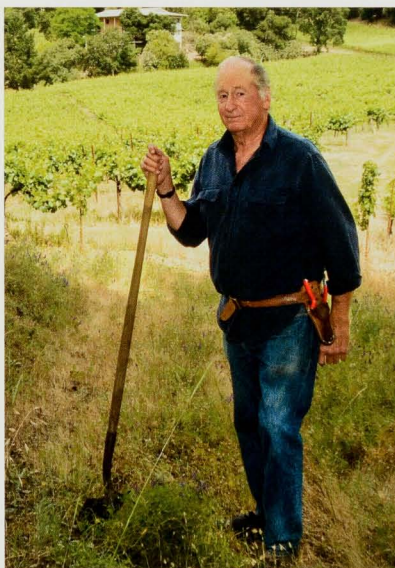
School House Vineyard  
3549 Langtry Road, St. Helena  
500 cases

John Gantner says there is a terroir taste in common with neighboring York Creek Vineyards that occurs in a band between 1200 and 1500 feet on Spring Mountain. It is earthy and mineral, with a hint of chanterelles. John says the taste “just thrills me, is something special and it is easy to know when to pick because the ripeness is *tasted* for rather than measured.” John has been part of School House Vineyard since the moment he was born.

In 1938, John Gantner’s father John Oscar Gantner found 160 acres to buy on Spring Mountain in St. Helena. The land had a house, a barn, and an old one-room school-house as well as a tractor and truck and a pair of plough horses to work a terraced and dry-farmed vineyard. The property had been planted to vineyard in the 1880’s by the Sheehan family, who sold their 160 acres to John Oscar with 40 acres planted to Golden Chasselas, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and

Carignane. Since 1992, John and his wife Nancy Walker have farmed School House Vineyard.

In college, John Oscar had had a vision of great Burgundy grapes, and he was definitely something of a visionary. He had been part of Gantner & Mattern in San Francisco when it pioneered the first topless men’s swimsuit in the 1930’s, and then the form-fitting “Wickie.” John Oscar took over the company from his father and introduced the fluorescent dye, Gantron, used in WW II signal flags as well as Gantner swimsuits



before John Oscar sold the business in 1954 and went to work for Arthur D. Little, managing its West Coast offices.

In the 1860’s John’s grandfather and great grandfather had traveled to Napa Valley by spring wagon to taste wines and bring back barrels of wine to stock the basement of the Swiss Hotel the great grandfather owned on Sacramento Street (opposite Jack’s Restaurant) in San Francisco. The hotel could then offer a *table d’hôte* wine by the bottle in its dining room upstairs. John and his two brothers grew up with wine on the table and tastes of wine with water in their glasses, besides John’s having to model an occasional swimsuit for Gantner and Company.

While at Stanford, John’s father had become a good friend and fraternity brother of John Daniel. Soon after graduation, John Daniel (of Inglenook, now Rubicon Estate) told John’s father that property in Napa Valley was going for a song and that it was a good time to buy—for that vision he had of “great Burgundy,” and that John Oscar should look for land that was predominantly hillside. Other friends, Frank Schoonmacker among them, also advised a mountain vineyard site.

When John Oscar acquired the land on Spring Mountain, he fenced twenty-five of

its forty planted acres against the deer and he, his wife and three sons spent weekends and every summer on the ranch. It didn't get electricity until 1951. John's mother cooked on a woodstove all summer long, water was piped to the house from a spring 500 feet up a hill, and an ice box on the front porch held steadily melting twenty-five pounders of ice, attracting hundreds of thirsty wasps. The Beringers had the only pool on Spring Mountain where John's mother would let her children swim only a few times each summer, so as not to wear out their welcome. The Gantners drove to town in a 1932 Chevy truck and John clearly remembers the sounds and excitement of going downhill with mechanical brakes on an unpaved road.

The two plough horses died in the 1940s, one in a hayfield where John says bones turned up for years. Initially, John Oscar sold the Golden Chasselas to his neighbor, Karl Beringer, for what John called "a really dry, nutty sherry" and then the mixed black fruit to the new cooperative, Allied Grape Growers, when mixed black grapes were getting \$25 a ton and white grapes \$15 to \$20. In 1952 John Daniel told John Oscar, 'I'm pulling out one acre of Pinot at Inglenook. The soil is too rich and it's the Romanée Conti clone I promised you, so you can have budwood for your someday to-be-fabled Pinot Noir.'

John says his father took the budwood to Emmolo Nursery where enough bench grafts were made onto St. George rootstock for three or four acres. Nick Montelli did the tractor work for the replant and from 1957 to 1959 John Oscar took his Pinot Noir to Stony Hill for vinification. John says they destemmed by hand, rubbing the fruit through a sieve. From 1960 to 1968 School House Pinot Noir was made at Buena Vista in Sonoma, where Al Brett was winemaker and André Tchelistcheff consulted. André considered the School House planting "a great clone." Over the years a number of wineries and winemakers were involved, including Ric Forman at Sterling and Jerry Luper and Bo Barrett at Chateau Montelena. In 1967 School House planted 4 ½ more acres of Pinot Noir on St. George, using cuttings from its original planting. Now



there are two more young acres, one planted six years ago and another three years ago, both on I10-R. John says St. George is a mismatch of vigor; it can create a vegetative imbalance in the Pinot Noir. Nancy says interplanting is constant at School House.

John's grandmother, Dorothy Erskine, began coming to Napa Valley from San Francisco on weekends to see her daughter and her family and got involved with land use. Dorothy had been effective in getting the City to set height limits for its buildings in order to protect everyone's view of the Bay and in 1958 had founded People for Open Space (now Greenbelt Alliance). She bought a house north of Calistoga and began working with Jack Davies and Volker Eisele on a Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve. In 1968 they were successful in founding the first such preserve in the United States. Dorothy died in 1982.

In 1965, John Oscar got budwood from his friend Fred McCrea at Stony Hill Vineyard and planted three and a half acres of Chardonnay on St. George rootstock (now being replanted on I10-R). All the Golden Chasselas was pulled in 1986 and the land lay fallow for over seven years so School House wouldn't have to treat the earth with methyl bromide for oak root fungus before re-planting. Unfortunately, that replant just

got under way after a very long permitting process because the land was fallow for over six years and Napa County treated it as new vineyard rather than a replant.

In the 1970's, 1980's and into the 1990's the single acre of School House mixed black fruit went to Paul Draper of Ridge for its Ridge Claret Langtry Road that John calls a "Zinfandel Claret" because the original planting from the 1880's was 20 percent Carignane, 25 percent Petite Sirah, and 55 percent Zinfandel. That single acre was the genesis of the School House field blend, "Mescolanza," John says "is itself, original with this place." The first vintage was 1992. After having it made in various places by various winemakers, since 1998 "Mescolanza" has been made at Pride Mountain. It is aged in the French oak first used for the School House Pinot Noir. Sometimes a little new American oak is added (the Chardonnay is aged in used French oak and stainless steel). Today the Mescolanza field mix propagated from the original planting is 76 percent Zinfandel, 17 percent Petite Sirah and 7 percent Carignane.

At the time John Oscar bought the property, all the vineyard avenues were planted with prunes (plum trees); French, President and Rubaix which John and his brother would pick and then take the fruit to a dehydrator

on Crystal Springs Road, more for something to do, John says, than to make any money. The prunes were pulled for vines in 1970. John says that although he came to the ranch every weekend since the time he was born, the running of the vineyard was his father's project.

After John finished Stanford and law school he lived and practiced law in San Francisco. In 1992 he and Nancy took over the farming of School House Vineyard, which had been largely unattended to for several years. John Oscar was then in his eighties, he died in 2002, and the star thistle had gotten really *thick*. In 1993 School House stopped disking and planted cover crops of annual lupine, clover and peas. Since 1998 its Chardonnay as well as Pinot Noir have been made at Pride Mountain Vineyards. Lately, Nancy does all the tractoring and John all the pruning and, since 1996, Nancy also has done all the marketing for School House. About 12 acres are in production, six in Pinot Noir, three and a half in Chardonnay, and the balance in the field mix. John's two brothers have houses adjacent to the vineyards, but neither has any interest in School House Vineyard.

To keep up with the vineyard John reads "*Wines and Vines*," but he says most of what he learns comes first-hand, "You live up here,

see what the neighbors are doing, bounce stuff off. We talk all the time. It's a pretty good coterie of knowledge." And Nancy says with considerable pride, "The 2007 Pinot Noir, to be released in 2010, will be the 50<sup>th</sup> vintage of School House Vineyard." ■

## Jay Heminway Vineyard Manager and Winemaker

Green and Red Vineyards and Winery  
3208 Chiles Pope Valley Road, St. Helena  
6,000 cases

Jay Heminway grew up in New York City with wine on the table at dinner. He thinks he may even have been given tastes of wine mixed with water every now and then. When Jay went to college in Colorado he majored



in French and spent his junior year in France. That summer, before he attended the Sorbonne, he worked at Chateau Lascombes. Among the cellar and vineyard experiences Jay remembers were tasting numerous wines with sons of various wine distributors and helping to bottle a rosé. After college, Jay worked at Sherry-Lehman, Inc. in New York for a few months and then took off for California and graduate school at UC Berkeley as a sculptor. A Fulbright scholarship sent him to Italy, north of Milan, where art rather than wine commanded his attention. After he got back to Berkeley, Jay continued to sculpt. His first trip to Napa Valley was in the 1960's with Bill Hamilton, a friend of his sister's who had grown up in the Valley. Jay remembers their visiting Souverain, now Burgess, and Beaulieu, and that the wines from those wineries were quite good—BV's from a mixed blend field planting.

When Jay was ready to leave the East Bay he fondly recalled his life in the country in Italy. So, he looked at property in Sonoma and Napa Counties and found a house in Chiles Valley with no hot water and a bad roof on 160 acres: "a perfect fixer-upper for the right price." There were a few almond trees and a Concord grapevine. The barn had burned down in the 1960's but an old truck and a 1950's Cadillac, well scratched by brush along the narrow drive, were included in the deal.

In 1970 Jay thought the first order of business would be converting the cesspool to a septic tank, but when the contractor from Montelli Construction came out to start the job he said, "Gosh, what great soil. You should throw in a few acres of grapes." Jay put the house project on the back burner and in 1972 began to plant vineyard. The soil at Green & Red is decomposed chert (the red in the name) with a few veins of serpentine (the green). The soil is deep in some places but it is all very rocky and fast draining. Farm Advisor Jim Lider said the hills were where Zinfandel got its start and recommended Jay plant it at a time when older Zinfandel vines were being pulled in the Valley and vineyards planted to Cabernet. Jay went out and tasted the 1968 Zinfandel from Mayacamas grown in the Stags Leap area as well as Deaver Vineyards in Amador County from Sutter Home and was just fine with planting Zinfandel. In 1976 he applied for a winery permit.

The original Zinfandel at Green & Red grew on its own roots. No rootstock was available when Jay planted his original four acres of Chiles Mill Vineyard (now a total of seven acres), so he put the green growing potted plants from a Bakersfield nursery in the ground, spacing the plants 8' x 10' and watered the vines by hand for two or three years. Jay says it seems like that's all he did

back then. He lugged water from a spring-fed redwood storage tank originally from Chappellet. In the drought of 1976 Jay put in drip lines for irrigation, the kind that had to be moved by hand every six rows all summer. These lines were upgraded in 1978 when Jay planted another three acres of Zinfandel on its own roots. He also planted three acres of white grapes each year in what became the Catacula Vineyard in 1981, 1982 and 1983 on a site that had been in vineyard a hundred years before. In 1989 Jay planted some Syrah and Petite Sirah down by the house. Both were used to heighten color and deepen structure in the Zinfandel. Jay says they also added a blue fruit note to the wine when used judiciously (so as not to lose the Zinfandel). Ten years later in 1993 *phylloxera* necessitated a replant of both Chiles Mill and Catacula vineyards. This finished in 1999 with all the vines' rootstocks either I10-R or Paulsen I103, which Jay quite likes, or I40 Ruggeri (although he says he loves St. George). The Zinfandel budwood came from 100 year-old vines from Ridge in Geyserville and Hambrechts in Healdsburg. Green & Red's Tip Top Vineyard, above Chiles Mill and Catacula, was also planted in the 1990's, to Zinfandel, Syrah and Petite Sirah and an automatic lazy man's gate of Jay's design was put in across the driveway.

Ridge's Zinfandels had inspired Jay to plant Petite Sirah for blending with Zinfandel. Traditional field blends planted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries included Petite Sirah, Carignane and Mataro (Mourvèdre,) as well as other varieties. Jay has tried blending his Zinfandel with Barbera, Grenache, Mataro, and Sangiovese but has ended up budding over to Petite Sirah and Syrah. The Syrah budwood he got from Phelps seems especially suited to the topography of Green & Red. The first Syrah it made was 400 cases of 2002, but now Green & Red is phasing out the Syrah. 100 cases of Petite Sirah were made in 2005 and 2006—which Jay thinks was probably a single effort that won't be repeated: it has been difficult to market.

When there were just four acres of vineyard, Jay did all the pruning and tractoring; after the mid-1980's with seven acres in production, he added some help. Today there are 31 acres in production. Although Green & Red used to disc for weed control, it now uses cover crops, a mower and, in the vine rows, a Clemens weeder. Green & Red will cease to irrigate after veraison unless there's a heat spike, giving the vines a quick drink of about two gallons each. It also practices careful canopy management. The vines are pruned by hand. After crown suckering, canes are sandwiched vertically to bilateral cordons.



Jay calls Zinfandel a very finicky grape. You must be very attentive at harvest, more so, he thinks, than with any other variety. If there is a heat spike, Zinfandel shrivels. It is thin-skinned, thinner even than Pinot Noir (Jay thinks Primitivo, as Zinfandel is known in Southern Italy, may be thicker-skinned and smaller-berried) and prone to mildew. With up to an inch of rain at harvest, berries burst on the inside as small clusters plump up. *Botrytis* can then easily set in.

Jay first sold his fruit to Cuvaision and then Philip Togni, but by 1977 had a bond for his own winery. He had been making home-

made wine right along as well as taking a few classes and reading about winemaking. He usually made Zinfandel, but once he made an Alicante with fruit from what is now Domaine Chandon, and once a mixed field blend from Trefethen, from a vineyard south of its winery. Jay says everyone in the Valley was very friendly. When he would go by Sutter Home for a half gallon of its red, Bob Trincherio was full of little tips. In 1980, Green & Red released its first vintage of 300 cases of 1977 Zinfandel. The wine hadn't gone through malolactic fermentation and was tart, but Jay says it has aged well.

The wines of Green & Red are made in a winery of Jay's design that has evolved from a capacity of five tons to fifteen. The Zinfandel fruit goes into an Italian de-stemmer and then an open-top temperature-controlled stainless fermenter where it cold soaks for four days. Green & Red used to do whole cluster fermentation; now with the de-stemmer it gets 40 percent whole berry—the same effect without stems (stems lower both the pH and the level of potassium). Yeast is added to a specific area in the tank, which has been warmed. Green & Red used native yeasts for a while but now prefers slow-acting yeasts such as Assmanshausen, a Pinot Noir yeast. After ten to fourteen days with punch-downs, the wine is pressed off at 0°Brix to +5°Brix and pumped to closed-top 800 gallon oak



upright and stainless fermenters. Green & Red was keeping free run and press wine separate but now combines the two. The new wine is inoculated for malolactic fermentation and moved to barrels. The wine then spends a year and a half in barrel, about 40 percent French and 60 percent American oak, 15 to 20 percent new, and is racked a couple of times a year. It is bottled in the spring of its second year. In 2000, to accommodate barrel storage, Green & Red had a 3,250 sq.ft. cave dug into the hillside behind the winery. The handsome entrance, door, and fittings were all designed by Jay, who has designed all the winery-related structures.

Currently, Green & Red offers seven wines for sale at the winery: three estate vineyard Zinfandels, a Syrah, Petite Sirah, and Sauvignon Blanc, and its proprietary blend, "Sobrante," which is 70 percent Zinfandel and 30 percent Syrah. Several months after bottling, Green & Red Zinfandel is ready to pour, with its flavors evolving over the course of the meal. Jay says he has been making wine for so long he can't imagine not doing it. And he really likes doing it because it requires a variety of skills, as making sculpture does. And, like sculpture, Jay says, "When people enjoy what you make it brings a lot of satisfaction." ■

## Vincent Arroyo Founder and Winemaker

Vincent Arroyo Winery  
2361 Greenwood Avenue, Calistoga  
8,000 cases

Vincent Arroyo's father emigrated from Spain to the United States, married and settled in California. Vince spent his boyhood in Hollister where his parents grew row crops until they went broke in the 1920's. Vince's father had to give up tomatoes and become a carpenter. After finishing high school in the 1950's, Vince studied to become a mechanical engineer in the aerospace industry. On call as an independent contractor with a specialty in packaging, Vince would figure out how to suspend circuitry, fuel tank boxes, you name it, in everything from cash registers to satellites.

After Vince married, he and his wife lived in Los Gatos where she taught school and he worked pretty much seven days a week, ten hours a day. Vince says in the mechanical engineering business when an independent contractor is called in it always means trouble. In time, Vince became very unhappy always working indoors and he didn't like the politics of contracts. He says marketing drives design. You work hard on a proposal and then you don't get the contract—all that work for nothing. Worse, when a company

bids on projects, it needs ready manpower, so workers are all set to go but with nothing to do, waiting.

One day, a fellow Vince was working (or not working) with saw an ad in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for potential vineyard in Calistoga and called out, "Vince, you like wine. You should go see what this is about." Vince had grown up with wine, so he did go and look at the property and he is still there today, at that very same place that was advertised in 1974. At the time it was all in prunes except for two patches of grapes and a big pile of brush out back where some prune trees had been pulled a few years before. A see-through barn, a house with a flat-top roof and another house half the size it is today, a derelict tractor, junk car, rabbit hutches, a hencoop, plus a fair amount of other junk



completed the holdings on 22 acres. After seeing the property, Vince drove back down to work for two hours, resigned his job, drove back up, made a deal, and then drove back down to wait until his wife got home.

She was fine with the venture. Vince's wife said she would manage their place in Los Gatos and teach while Vince took possession of the property and sorted things out. He moved to Calistoga, but when escrow closed after harvest Vince realized he'd need to look for another job until at least the first of the year. As a kid he had picked prunes, walnuts, apricots and tomatoes, but Vince had no clue what to do with grapes, so he introduced himself to his next-door neighbors and volunteered to give them a hand. Starting in January on the weekends Vince helped Frank Barberis of Palisades Vineyards and every other near neighbor he could for free. He would work in Sunnyvale and Mountain View during the week for pay and then drive to Calistoga. For five years Vince would get in Friday night to find a neighbor's tractor waiting for him with instructions on its seat for the weekend. Vince says learned how to do everything in a vineyard and did it, like prune and plant, working for free. Before he pulled out the rest of his prune trees, Vince harvested and took their fruit to the dehydrator for two years, even though he lost \$3,000 a load

because he couldn't just let them rot. Then he bought an old crawler, which wasn't very good, and planted two acres of Petite Sirah where that big brush pile had been. Vince got the budwood from his neighbor, Roy Enderlin, and did the budding himself.

Although Vince sold his grapes to Napa Valley Cooperative Winery, he found that as a grower he just couldn't get ahead because the Coop's prices and tonnage limits were so low and worse, a lot of fruit was turned away after its quotas for varieties were met. Vince was growing single varietals, no blends, and his blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Gamay and Petite Sirah made tons of fruit. Vince figured he'd get a permit for a winery just to handle his excess fruit that the Coop wouldn't take. With a permit in hand in 1984, Vince built a winery in the old see-through barn. Next, he got on the board of the Coop, serving along with Andy Hoxsey, and actually worked to dissolve the cooperative in 1986, which Vince says is one of the best things that ever happened: "It got people going in different directions."

Petite Sirah, according to Vince, is a hard wine to make and a tough grape to grow. It doesn't like everywhere and it gets everything. Red leaf virus? It's going to get it; it's prone to eutypa, and it sunburns no matter what. Vince didn't know all this when he

planted it, but he says he likes the challenge. His first experience with Petite Sirah had come when he was off camping somewhere with the guys and outside grilling steaks, and one of his friends opened a bottle of Petite Sirah. Vince has no idea whose Petite Sirah it was or anything about it, just that it went perfectly with the steaks.

In addition to its 22 original acres, Arroyo owns two parcels across the street, one in Petite Sirah and the other in Sangiovese (with budwood from Shafer) and a third parcel of 37 acres down the street bought from Cuvaison when it was planted to Pinot Noir, Gamay Beaujolais, Napa Gamay, and Cabernet. Now it is in Cabernet, Petite Sirah, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot. Arroyo also leases "Rattlesnake Acres," a neighboring vineyard Vince planted to Petite Sirah for the Enderlins when he first moved to Calistoga. The soils are deep at Arroyo, largely gravel in the back and half the front. The rest is black, sticky, gooey sedimentary soil. Arroyo doesn't plant cover crops but chops vine prunings and tills them back in. It uses very little spray, a mildicide but no insecticide and strip sprays between vine rows. In alternate years a hoe plow goes through. Arroyo is still all dry-farmed. There was an irrigation pond in place on one of the new parcels, but it is only used for frost protec-



tion along with a few wind machines. The layout of the vineyards and the winery are all Vince's. A bad fire in 1989 was caused by a short in the old barn's post and tube wiring. Vince said they lost inventory and had to build a whole new building.

Today, Arroyo makes four estate Petite Sirahs, two from single vineyards, as well as twelve other wines. At harvest, how fruit is managed differs with each lot: the eight patches of Petite Sirah in the block across the street are kept separate from the time they are harvested (the same is true for the Cabernet). Petite Sirah is picked into half-ton bins, goes into a destemmer-crusher, across the belt of a sorting table, and into open-top stainless steel fermenters where it could spend a couple of days cold soak.

Then yeast is added and the cap of skins and seeds punched down. Arroyo likes a slow, cool fermentation for Rattlesnake fruit, which crops five tons at most, but a warmer fermentation for the estate Petite Sirah. Vince says he has let one tank go to 10° Brix and pressed off early, then let fermentation finish back in stainless while the other tank fermented to dry. He might extend its maceration by ten to fifteen days and then blend both back into a closed stainless tank for a couple of weeks. The new wine is racked off into new barrels of American oak. Vince thinks American oak is a better match for Petite Sirah as it is more aggressive and he doesn't think the vanilla in French oak goes well with Petite Sirah. He says he has been using American oak since way back when and was probably World

Cooperage's first customer. Vince learned that if you try and make Petite Sirah like Cabernet it will be much too tannic and will take ten if not fifteen years to be ready. To soften it, you need to change your wine-making style. Vince's first Petite Sirah is just coming around now and he says the 1985 is great.

Arroyo makes 300 to 400 cases apiece of its two single vineyard Petite Sirahs, and still grows some Gamay; its proprietary blend "Melange" has a Gamay base. It also makes 600 to 800 cases of Chardonnay for those customers who insist on having an Arroyo Chardonnay. In January, barrel samples are pulled and a tasting set up for Vince and the staff with glasses and a graduated cylinder for each sample. The challenge is to blend the very best wine you can. Vince says the process helps in educating tasting room staff so they know what to say about the wine to customers (Arroyo wines are sold only at the winery), and Vince says, "I'd be a fool if I didn't listen to other people." Take blends: Arroyo keeps adding more and more. The wines find a market and then Arroyo can't cut them out. Vince says it stopped making Zinfandel for a while, but had to start again. The first years it did a thousand cases, now 8,000 cases. Vince says the small batches are 1,200 gallons (4 tons is ideal) and spend a minimum time in barrel of 22 months for

reds, ten for Chardonnay. In the winery, barrels are in tiers of four and earthquake clamps, unique to Arroyo, stabilize the racks (with at least two clamps per rack).

In 1992, inspired by Elias Fernandez at Shafer, Arroyo made 15 barrels of Petite Sirah port. Elias showed Vince how, and the port sold out. Now every 375ml bottle from 20 barrels is pre-sold. [The tin label was inspired by a French olive oil Vince had served to him on a visit to France (all at the expense of the French government, and he's still not sure why).] For Vince the port is a fun-thing—in the evening, a piece of chocolate, a little glass of port. No, he doesn't cook at all. "I'm afraid to cook. If I did, I'd weigh five thousand pounds!"

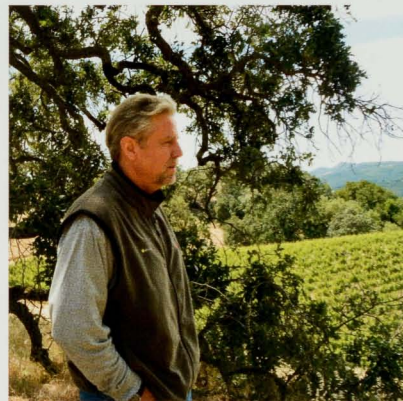
Vince used to take classes with Dr. Lisa Vander Water in things like microbiology at The Wine Lab in St. Helena. Now he keeps up by reading and the occasional seminar. His family is also involved. Although his daughter and son-in-law are both attorneys (they met in law school) his son-in-law has taken charge of compliance and his daughter handles all the writing. And everyone takes turns looking after Vince's new grandson. ■

## Terry Wilson Owner and Vineyard Manager Rancho Chimiles 1360 Wooden Valley Road, Napa

One of the oldest ranches in Napa County with one of the most highly regarded vineyards, Rancho Chimiles, is in Wooden Valley, in the hills of southeastern Napa County about five miles from Napa City. There, Terry Wilson grows ten different wine varietal grapes, half of them "other reds," and one of these, Tempranillo, is one of the rarer varieties in Napa County. The original Rancho Chimiles was granted to Ygnacio Berryessa in 1846 by Mexico and by Berryessa to William Gordon and Nathan Coombs in 1859. Little by little sections of the rancho came to be owned by various parties related and not related to the Gordon and Coombs families in Wooden and Gordon Valleys. ("Chimiles" in Wappo is thought to mean, "Where the honey clover grows.") Today, 70 acres of vineyard are planted at Chimiles, about a third at 600 feet elevation and two-thirds at 900 to 1,000 feet, on the portion of the rancho that still carries its name and is owned by Terry and his wife Lyn, who have been farming it since 1972.

Terry grows Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petite Sirah, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Syrah, Tempranillo,

Valdigué, and Zinfandel under contract to Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Pahlmeyer, Orin Swift, Parador and Favia. Mourning doves are the only birds that leave the grapes alone. Turkeys, crows and every other bird but a dove all try to get through swathes of netting unrolled over the tops of the hillside vines after veraison in order to eat the crop. Terry says it's a scramble. Not until after



harvest is the netting rolled up and stored in the shade until next season. Voles are a problem for established vines—they girdle the trunks, and gophers just pull young vines under. Although Terry says Chimiles has practiced non-tillage on everything for a long time and maintains barn owl boxes as a hedge against voles, it may disc or use a spader against the gophers. In the fall,

compost and gypsum are added to vine rows, in rotation among the vineyards. Chimiles relies on sustainable farming aids such as micron sprayer heads, rubber track crawlers in the vine rows, and bio-diesel fuel for its gators and tractors, and has been certified for Fish Friendly Farming.

Terry is committed to building soil structure and used to do most of the tractoring in the vineyard himself. Now he has a great young manager, José Ramos, and their tailored canopy management with the use of cover crops helps conserve horsepower and time on the tractor as well as fuel. Most vines are too vigorous anyway, Terry says. “Why worry about competition for water in the first four to six inches of soil? Vines are deep-rooted. Rodents are really the only negative.” Besides José, there is a full-time crew of five. Hill Family Vineyard Management from Yountville comes in when it is high maintenance time in the vine rows and Terry’s own crew has done the prep work. Mostly Terry worries that growers only have the one payday at harvest; they really have a lot of risk.

In the 1960’s Terry came to the ranch a few times with Lyn and other college friends. Although he had grown up in Woodside and gone surfing in most of his spare time, Terry’s family is from Montana and ranch-

ing was familiar to him. After graduating from San Jose State and making pilgrimages to a few famous beaches, Terry worked as a tour guide to Mayan ruins in Central America before coming to Rancho Chimiles. Initially he helped with its fences and cattle and discussed vineyards and wine with ranch foreman Steve Beresini and with Larry Hyde (of Hyde Vineyards and HdV), a childhood chum living at the ranch and working for Calplans Vineyards in Wooden Valley. Calplans sold its fruit to Robert Mondavi Winery at a time when Bob Mondavi was predicting Napa Gamay would be one of the next big wines of California. Wine was a new world for Terry. His family had only served cocktails.

In 1972, ten acres of Napa Gamay were planted on St. George rootstock in a former pear orchard with soil of Pleasanton loam. When the Wilsons moved onto the property they intended to help pay for subsequent vineyard plantings with cattle, but in the droughts of 1975-1976 and 1977-1978 there was no feed and no water and Terry had to sell the herd. When normal rains returned he bought stocker calves to feed and sell and in 1978 Chimiles was able to plant 35 acres of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Zinfandel. Terry says he had a few more good years with calves but, “The writing was on the wall for cows.”

Overall, seasonal temperatures in Wooden Valley are comparable to Napa Valley between Stags Leap and Oakville. Because of its altitude and the buffering effect of fog off San Pablo Bay, the afternoons stay cool. Although Terry has taken a short course here and there and reads a great deal, his vineyard management education has mostly been seat of the pants. As a result, Terry firmly believes you need to get your hands on the vines to be a good manager. He has set up three weather stations on the property to monitor wind and temperature, but doesn’t use soil monitors. Terry prefers to read his vines. He says canes are the best indicator of vine status. You just need to watch their tips and tendrils. And there is also the “Buckeye Index.” These trees flourish where it is neither too hot nor too dry. In May and June on still days at Chimiles Terry says their blossoms produce a near tropical fragrance in the hollows, and in August the trees’ leaves wither and die. In the process the trees let Terry know when the hills are drying and that he must attend to vine water requirements.

Stag’s Leap has bought Chimiles Sauvignon Blanc for its vineyard designated varietal wine for thirty years and calls Terry “a meticulous grower.” The musqué clone originally planted in 1983, at Warren Winiarski’s urging, was the first Sauvignon

musqué in Napa Valley and budwood from this planting has been shared with any number of vineyards, including those of Mondavi and Cakebread. It is vigorous on AXR rootstock, throwing many shoots in the spring, and drove canopy management changes in the vineyard blocks in the 1980's. In the early 1990's phylloxera necessitated a replant of the Sauvignon musqué onto I01-I4 and 3309C. Semillon and Cabernet for Stag's Leap's Artemis program were also planted. In 2003, in collaboration with Charlie Hossom (now at Snows Lake Vineyard) and Nicki Pruss at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, all but two acres of Valdiguié were pulled and more Cabernet Sauvignon planted. The Valdiguié goes to Dave Phinney at Orin Swift.

Terry and several other vintners have found that Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot grow very well in the high Wooden Valley. Five blocks of ridge vineyard at 1,000 feet were developed in 1987: ten acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and two acres each of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Canopies are adjusted to expose the crop to morning light yet shelter it from the westering sun. A breeze that comes up over the top of the ridge late in the day also helps keep things cool. The mountain Bordeaux varieties from the ridge vineyard throw big mountain fruit that Pahlmeyer has relied on

since 1993, and an acre of the Cabernet Franc now goes into a proprietary blend of Favia for its "Cerro Sur."

In 1998, several hundred feet above Wooden Valley on a terrace facing southwest, an eight and a half acre Zinfandel vineyard was planted to a Primitivo clone on I10-R rootstock. Terry enjoys watching the morning fog off San Pablo Bay, break in big chunks and stream through this vineyard in perfectly formed big pipes that break left; a leg runs south, and a long finger may stretch up into the ridge vineyards above. Terry says it is quite a beautiful thing to see. In the afternoon, wind comes off San Pablo Bay and up

the rows; sun and wind help thicken the fragile skins of the Zinfandel.

Below the ridge vineyard Terry also farms three and a half acres of Syrah and four acres of Petite Sirah where the soil is similar to the Zinfandel vineyard, Haire series of decomposed sandstone with some gravel, light in color, and a relatively lean soil. The Syrah budwood is a Hermitage selection from John Alban in Edna Valley. Its growth habit is naturally open—the canes like to run laterally. Terry says he has given up worrying about it. He just shortens the diagonals and has learned that as they ripen, the bunches will have some drier, wrinkled



berries. The Petite Sirah is a Durif, Clone 3 on 1103 rootstock.

In 1999 Chimiles planted a block of Tempranillo, a whisker less than an acre, in the ridge vineyard. Terry had left the block empty, it was so rocky, but when Steve Ventrello of Parador and his advisor, Alejandro Fernandez of Pesquera in the Ribero del Duero, came to assess the site for Tempranillo, they said it looked just like Spain and promptly secured Pesquera budwood. The rootstock is 110-R, with some 1103. At the time of this interview tall canes manifested vigor from a late rain and last year's fairly light crop, with leaves almost five times the size of Cabernet. Tempranillo starts to ripen ahead of Cabernet, but then slows. Its clusters are complex, with double shoulders at times. Terry says the color is beautiful, a deep purple black with blue. He likes how the fruit in the ridge vineyard blocks glows in the early morning sun during veraison.

Rancho Chimiles is also home to horses, hens, cattle and Australian cattle dogs. Several hundred cattle graze its oak savannahs from late May until early November. The controlled grazing reduces fire hazard by eliminating brush and encouraging native grasses rather than thistle. This in turn improves soil structure, which reduces erosion. Water is stored in three reservoirs on the

property. The upper one can provide frost protection for the vineyards below and the largest allows Terry and his family to take an occasional spin on a surfboard under tow (Terry had just killed a rattler he found under his board the day before this interview). All the Wilson family take an interest in the work of Rancho Chimiles, and Terry says they now meet regularly about the running of the ranch, which he enjoys. ■

## Sandy Belcher Owner and Winemaker

Arns

601 Mund Road, St. Helena  
*1,000 cases*

Sandi Belcher is from Virginia, where she grew up in the loving midst of her Greek family. After graduating from William and Mary in Williamsburg, however, Sandi went off to UC Davis for graduate work, convinced her future was in caring for large animals or at least large agricultural crops. And once at Davis, wine totally won her over. Sandi says it was just like gardening and infinitely better than dissection or having to pull calves at five in the morning when it was freezing out. She took a degree in chemistry and agriculture and, in the course of her studies, researched Chardonnay with classmate Larry Hyde (now of Hyde Vineyards and HdV). She also worked at Chateau



Montelena and Heitz Cellars and the UC Davis vineyard experimental station in Oakville. In Oakville, Sandi made wine with fruit from vines she had helped trellis using a number of different methods. At Heitz she helped with its now-legendary Martha's Vineyard 1974 Cabernet Sauvignon. After graduation, Sandi traveled around the world working in wineries before returning to Napa Valley.

In 1979 she was hired as winemaker by Long Vineyards on Pritchard Hill in St. Helena, where she worked alongside Bob Long, with Zelma Long consulting. Bob oversaw development of the vineyards and Zelma its wines. Sandi says she always seemed to be on the forklift in early photographs as Long Vineyards began to grow from 800 to 2,000

cases and from a production of only Chardonnay to Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc. Sandi was winemaker at Long until the property was put up for sale in 2005, and in that time she did extensive clonal research, especially on Chardonnay.

Meanwhile, Sandi and her partner John Arns took on the ownership and management of an Arns family property on Howell Mountain at about 800 feet, “Tilting Rock Ranch.” In 1869, its 160 acres had been homesteaded by a German who planted apricots and Zinfandel. In the 1880’s during his tenure, stone used to build Greystone Winery (now CIA-Greystone), was quarried from two pits dug into the hillside. The German died in 1912. The ranch’s next owner was a stonemason and plasterer who added a planting of Cabernet Sauvignon. In the late 1950’s John’s father acquired the property from the mason as a place for weekends in the country when the family lived in Kensington and Mr. Arns was on the board of a division of Chevron in Berkeley. At the time, Martin Ray of Santa Cruz Mountains was scouring Napa Valley for Cabernet. He found and bought from Arns; locally, Burgess and Ballentine also bought its Cabernet and Sandi supposes had a hand in managing its vineyards as well. The Arns family took over farming the property in

1966, planting additional Cabernet. Meanwhile, John graduated from UC Davis with degrees in both enology and viticulture. In 1979 he established his own vineyard management company. Besides Arns, Long Vineyards became a client as did Melanson Vineyards. John’s father died in the 1970’s, and in 1979 John and Sandi embarked on a steady process of the development of Arns to six all-Cabernet vineyards.

Soil at Arns is red Aiken—loam and tufa—and is either very deep or a rock pile. Today, six different Cabernet clones, FPS 06 and 07, ENTAV-INRA 15 and 337, and ones from Fay Vineyards and Shafer Vineyards have been planted, with about ten acres in production in ten vineyard blocks. The old apricot orchard was planted to Cabernet as was a former hayfield, now called Eloise’s Vineyard. The 1.1-acre Meadow Vineyard yields just three barrels of Cabernet. The vineyard block by the winery had 50 to 60 year-old gnarly vines of Cabernet with a color problem. Sandy says its juice was white! It has been replanted. The newest vineyard is nearest the entrance to the property. Two large water storage tanks and the ponds that fill the two former quarries provide drip irrigation as needed.

Between 1979 and 1990, Arns sold its Howell Mountain Cabernet fruit to Randy



Dunn. It also had sold to Mike Robbins at Spring Mountain and Merryvale for its “Profile,” and then in the mid 1980’s Arns built a winery. John had kept saying, “Yes,” and Sandi, “No,” because she had spent twenty years at other wineries and didn’t think Arns needed its own, since its grapes were so good. Now she is really, really glad they built the winery. With your own winery, Sandi counsels, you have complete control from the vineyard to the dinner table, which she says is so important. 1992 was the first commercial release of Arns Estate Cabernet



Sauvignon. This was 600 cases of 100 percent estate grown wine, which was all Arns made until it began to produce a Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon in 2002. The first release of its Napa Valley Syrah was 2004.

Fruit at Arns is all picked by hand. At picking time John is on the tractor and Sandi is at the crush pad and 10 to 15 pickers are in the vine rows. The Vega 10 de-stemmer can do about 10 tons an hour. It has three augurs and can also be adapted for whole cluster. Sandi had seen this equipment in action at Quintessa and Robert Mondavi and knew it was what she must have. Before de-stemming, Syrah berries go into stainless steel fermenters for a three-day cold soak. The must is inoculated with commercial yeast and fermented dry. The new wine is left on the skins for three weeks and then by hand is fed through a basket press that Sandi says she loves and has used for years. The wine goes through natural malolactic fermentation in barrel. It is not racked; the Syrah is neither fined nor filtered; the Cabernet is filtered. The Syrah is aged between 24 and 30 months in one year-old French oak, Cabernet in 100 percent new French oak. The barrels in the small, immaculate, climate-controlled winery are stored in tiers of three.

To blend the lots, Sandi takes samples across

to her lab on the back porch of the house next door. She says it is so important for samples to be at room temperature; the cold masks their flavors. At the time of this interview about 100 cases of 2006 Syrah were in a rented 200-gallon jacketed stainless steel tank ready to be bottled by hand Memorial Day weekend. Arns made 150 cases of Syrah in 2005. Sandi says the wine goes into stainless for about a month to get over its dramas after blending, before bottling. The 700 cases of its 2006 Cabernet are to be bottled over Labor Day weekend. After sanitization, a mobile bottler works from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and the cases of Cab are done. Sandi especially likes that Arns Estate Cabernet never leaves the premises until it is in the bottle. Because of hard frosts in 2008, its Cabernet vintage production is down 60 percent.

Fruit for Arns Syrah comes from Melanson Vineyard at 1400 feet on Pritchard Hill overlooking the vineyards of Colgin. The twelve year-old Syrah vines were planted by John and grow in very rocky soil in a block no larger than half an acre. Vines are the 174 Phelps clone, of Rhône Valley origins, on 110-R rootstock and planted in 6' x 4' rows; the berries are medium-sized. According to Sandi, Syrah is like Sangiovese: anything you add to it during vinification disappears, making a muddled wine, one not true to its form. Additions of Viognier or

Marsanne to darken color also the change taste. Sandi's benchmark Syrahs were the 1978 and the 1979 from Joseph Phelps. She characterizes them as "so approachable, so open." Sandi was just starting out as a wine-maker and could only buy wine for her own table on a modest budget. She wanted Syrah because it goes well with food, it ages well, she could afford it, and the Phelps Syrah wasn't over-oaked or high in alcohol. Sandi says, "Syrah screams out for food."

Arns Cabernet is sold at the winery and in various countries and states in the US; the Syrah is sold only at the winery, and also at what Sandi calls amazing tastings and charitable events. She cited the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Addy and Bruce Bassin Memorial California Barrel Tasting and Vintner's Dinner to benefit the Addy and Bruce Bassin Cancer Research Fund at George Washington University. Its very first tasting was the first-ever barrel tasting of California Cabernets. This spring 50 wineries participated in a tasting of 2007 Cabernet futures as well as the vintner's dinner the night before. Arns Syrah took first place at the dinner. There is much to be said for being able to keep a watchful and informed eye, hand, and heart on the wine you make. Sandi does say she misses making white wine, but that it is very difficult to find someone dedicated to making good Chardonnay. She says there is

so much absentee ownership in Napa Valley now and she wants to be able to see such a project through as a team.

Since 1981 Sandi and John have been consulting in Thailand on a 350-acre parcel with a restaurant on a platform up in the air where all the wines made from the vineyards below are sold. Sandi says she really likes getting away from the Valley for a fresh perspective. For a recent consult in China she was able to find a Cabernet that fully ripens in time to be harvested at 7,000 to 9,000 feet altitude.

Much of the reason Sandi has peace of mind while she is traveling is due to her daughter, Kathi, who routinely works with Sandi at harvest and at bottling but can be relied on at a distance to take care of things in the winery. Besides Arns, Kathi has worked at St. Francis Winery and Belvedere Winery, on the enology side of things, and is professionally trained in computer applications. Her mother says Kathi is organized, does all the IT for the winery, and has a good palate. She frees Sandi to travel and consult, which is a great, great asset. ■

## About Books

*Book reports by Bob Foster*

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*Passion for Pinot; A Journey Through America's Pinot Noir Country*  
Text by Jordan Mackay with Photographs by Andrea Johnson and Robert Holmes  
Ten Speed Press, Berkeley; 2009

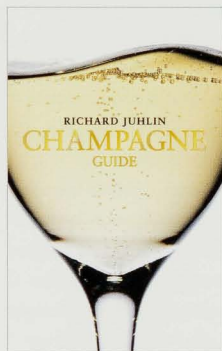
When I first opened this book it seemed to be just one more coffee table book about wine. Not so. It is an amazing overview of perhaps the most difficult grape grown on the West Coast. As André Tchelistcheff, legendary wine maker at Beaulieu Vineyard once proclaimed, “God made Cabernet Sauvignon, whereas the Devil made Pinot Noir.”

The book first covers the history of cultivation of the grape on the West Coast, with marvelous asides such as a winemaker swearing he's not trying to make Burgundy but moments later describing such wines as Burgundian. Next is a thorough exploration of *terroir* for every wine made from Pinot Noir, including each growing area and kind of wine produced. Then "A Year in the Vineyard" follows the months each grower spends nurturing this grape. An amusing section addresses how to start a Pinot Noir business with the pros and cons of every major decision that are truly mind-boggling. Equally interesting is the section on knowing when this grape is properly ripe for harvest and another on clonal selection. Here the author points out that rootstock may be *the* most important factor, but is often left out of any discussion. The final section covers the making of wine from Pinot Noir, with an overview of the thousands of decisions that go into each bottle, such as whole cluster fermentation or destemming, wood or stainless steel fermentation. Your head will spin, making good Pinot Noir is so complex.

So much for a topnotch text. The photographs on nearly every page are flat-out excellent. Each is in-synch with the text and well illustrates its topic with a focus not only on the land but also on the scores of people

growing or making Pinot Noir. The two photographers who contribute to this book are professionals, and it shows.

*Highly recommended*



### Champagne Guide

*Richard Juhlin*

*Imported by the Wine Appreciation Guild,  
South San Francisco; 2008*

Wow! What a great book. Juhlin, a Swede, who has written about Champagne for some time, has produced a superb book. If you are a fan of Champagne, this book is a must-buy. It begins with a fascinating explanation by the author of how and why he became involved with Champagne—his palate is so developed, Juhlin once named 43

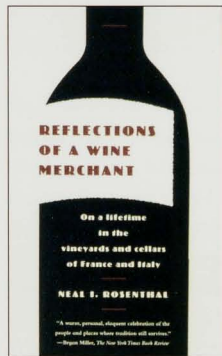
out of 50 wines served to him blind. The book then turns to a short chapter on the history of Champagne and an explanation of how Champagne is made. So many technically advanced methods have been introduced that now even the lowest level products are far better than before. (Of course, the focus of the book is on the best of the wines from this region, not the worst.) There is also a detailed chapter on touring Champagne, with suggested itineraries and detailed sections with photographs of places to stay and dine. Juhlin writes with authority as a man well traveled in the region.

The core of the book is almost 400 pages of tasting notes on thousands of Champagnes. Each producer is rated on a one-to-five star system. For each producer Juhlin indicates if it is N-M (a Champagne house with the right to buy grapes), R-M (a grower who makes Champagne), C-M (a co-operative) or N-D (a wine made from a grower's grapes and under his or her name, but distributed by the firm that made the wine.) The producer's address and phone number is also listed (but, sadly, no e-mail), followed by a paragraph or two of the producer's history. Then comes a rating of the wine with two scores. The first reflects how the wine tasted and the second how it will age. Juhlin is not an easy grader. Unlike some American wine

writers who are giving out 99 and 100 point scores more and more often, very few bubbly in this work achieve such a lofty level.

The best wines of each vintage are charted in the back of the book. Juhlin also lists his top 100 Champagnes of all time. Taken altogether, this book is a fascinating read.

### *Very Highly Recommended*



*Reflections of a Wine Merchant;*  
*On a Lifetime in the Vineyards and Cellars of*  
*France and Italy*  
Neal Rosenthal  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York; 2008

The author, one of this country's top importers for French and Italian wine, has

written an autobiography of his lifelong quest to find quality wines to import. This is a serious work. Rosenthal pulls no punches recounting experiences with individuals who have not dealt with him with integrity or honesty. I suspect there are those in the wine industry who may be troubled by his comments.

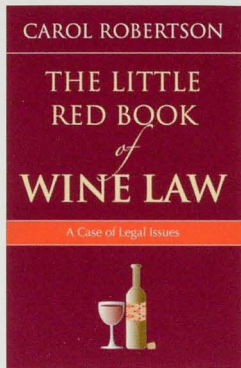
One glaring exception to his tell-all approach is the “elite American critic” who had lavished praise upon the Pouilly-Fuisses from Madame Ferret. As an American importer, Rosenthal set up a special dinner at the winery for the critic. It began with a tasting of several older vintages back to the legendary 1969, an exceptional vintage, forward to the current release of 1989, thought by the critic to be “rather chunky...with an almost sweet fruitiness and a round creamy texture.” Madame Ferret asked the critic, as guest of honor, to choose the wine for dinner. The critic chose the 1989 vintage, the blockbuster over the legendary and scarce 1969. Rosenthal was filled with surprise and dismay, although he never reveals the name of the critic. Now, let's see: a major American critic who prefers large, chunky wines? Hmm.

This book may not have the humor other autobiographies by wine importers have had (such as Kermit Lynch's *Travels on the Wine Route*), but there is a wealth of interesting

information. While the author chronicles his early days in a straight timeline, he later brings together many of his experiences into general topics such as loyalty, character, succession, and friendship. Under loyalty he provides a virtual encyclopedia of tricks played on visiting wine importers by unscrupulous producers—shipping older, lesser quality wines than the ones purchased, or trying to raise an agreed on price. There are fascinating lessons in how not to be deceived. I have to confess I was mystified by the author's description of *brettanomyces*, a wild yeast that imparts a wet horse-like smell and taste to wine, and is considered a flaw in California, but can be an attribute in Europe. Rosenthal thinks it can be part of the “essential” make-up of a wine. He writes of a need for wine to connect to nature, and seems to believe that *brett* is part of the essence of place. Rubbish. *Brett*-filled wines have a smell that transcends place or vintage and eventually obliterates varietal character. How yeast that strips away fruit and takes over flavors can be deemed essential totally eludes me. But, this is a small point in a much larger picture. The book sheds much light on the struggles a wine importer searching for great wines must endure.

### *Highly recommended*





The Little Red Book of Wine Law,  
A Case of Legal Issues  
Carol Robertson  
American Bar Association Publishing,  
Chicago, 2008

Robertson examines twelve published decisions from different courts illustrating legal issues permeating the wine industry. The author explains the facts that led to litigation and the human issues behind them. For example, in one case the question was whether an unsigned carbon copy of a will could control distribution of a deceased's estate where the signed original could not be found but there was testimony the deceased had signed the original and that the carbon was an accurate copy of what had been signed. Sounds dull, but Robertson explains

that the legal case was an attempt by distant members of a wine grower's family cut out of the will to gain a share of the estate by finding the wine grower died intestate. Had he died without a will, these relatives would have been entitled to a share of his vast empire.

In a sense, the author is giving readers the "rest of the story." The published decision explains the legal issues. The author reveals the wine-related human story behind each case, which include contracts, relationships with distributors, labor issues and trademark disputes (the infamous Gallo against Kendall Jackson over the Turning Leaf label is here). It is interesting material, well told. Interspersed between case studies is a series of "vignettes" in which the author discusses small, less detailed legal battles that have flared up over the years. I found the section over the struggle to control Chateau d'Yquem especially interesting.

However, there is one serious flaw—there is no index. In a work replete with detailed footnotes, a hallmark of seriousness of purpose, and a back cover which indicates the book should be viewed as a "law/reference" book, how can a publisher be so dim-witted as to think this work can be used for reference? Given the number of readily available computer programs for indexing,

there is simply no excuse for publishing *The Little Red Book* without an index. Shame on ABA for this misstep.

*Recommended, but not as a work of reference*

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*California Grapevine* is published six times a year.

To subscribe (\$36.00), please write  
Post Office Box 22152  
San Diego, CA 92122  
Or e-mail [niclett@san.rr.com](mailto:niclett@san.rr.com)

On Saturday, the Varietal Seminar from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm begins at the EcoLab Theater of CIA-Greystone. Coffee and registration are followed by what we think will be one of the most informative and interesting programs we have presented. Allen Balik leads a tasting of several red wine varieties, Pinot Noir from El Molino and Talisman; Zinfandel from Chase Cellars and T-Vine; Grenache from Outpost; Syrah from Truchard; Sangiovese from Cosentino; and Barbera from Robert Biale. Allen is a renowned wine presenter and organizer of wine auctions and specialized wine tours. Along with Allen, Dennis Kelly, the French Laundry's Sommelier, presents a selection of French Laundry's canapés to demonstrate how and why wines are selected by sommeliers to accompany food.

Lunch is in the teaching kitchens of CIA, where Carl Doumani of Quixote Winery presents Petite Sirah from the two wineries he founded, Stags' Leap Winery and Quixote Winery, and reminisces and expounds on his

**VARIETAL SEMINAR &  
ANNUAL TASTING**  
**ON THE OTHER HAND:  
DISCOVERING OTHER REDS**  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 15  
**THE ROMANCE OF PETITEZINNOIR**  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

many years in Napa Valley. Carl and Warren Winiarski made Stags Leap the well-known appellation it is today.

The Annual Tasting, "The Romance of PetiteZinNoir," from 5:00 pm to 7:00pm is in the shady Grove at Silverado Resort, Napa. This year's tasting of Napa Valley red wines other than Cabernet, including Petite Sirah, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Tempranillo, Zinfandel, and their blends, are to be poured by at least 75 Napa Valley wineries. As you know, this popular tasting draws several hundred members, so come early to enjoy such comprehensive selections.

An additional part of this year's wine tasting weekend is a wine reception with vintners on Saturday from 5:30 to 7:30 on the River Terrace at the Oxbow Public Market in Napa.

We are also making arrangements for those going to the tasting on Sunday to dine at one of several nearby restaurants, including Angele and Bottega. We will keep you posted.

Bob Long  
*President and Chair  
47th Annual Tasting*

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**Web Resources:**

*Please use our website for updates and information and please continue to send us your email addresses.*  
[www.napawinelibrary.com](http://www.napawinelibrary.com)

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[www.savorlifethroughwine.com](http://www.savorlifethroughwine.com)  
[www.frenchlaundry.com](http://www.frenchlaundry.com)  
[www.quixotewinery.com](http://www.quixotewinery.com)  
[www.silveradoresort.com](http://www.silveradoresort.com)



PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BURGER, DIANA STOCKTON

# Napa Valley Wine Library Association

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Bobbie Vierra

## Archivist

Chris Kreiden

## Seminar Faculty

The Faculty consists primarily of local wine-makers, winery principals, restaurateurs and caterers. Instructors in recent years are listed below; new individuals are added each year.

Kristof Anderson	Mike Martini
Jim Barrett	Peter McCrea
Bob Biale	Angelina Mondavi
L. Pierce Carson	Morgan Morgan
James Chery	Damian Parker
John Clews	Holly Peterson
Chris Corley	Chris Phelps
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Chris Howell	Sam Spencer
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Randle Johnson	Sloan Upton
James Laughlin	Nils Venge
Bob Levy	Greg Walter
Mia Klein	Mike Wolf

# Membership

We invite you to join the Napa Valley Wine Library Association. Your membership dues support the collections at the St. Helena Public Library. You will also receive the Wine Library Report, information about our courses and seminars, and admission to our ever-popular Annual Tasting, for members only. Individual membership is \$60.00 per year; lifetime membership is \$1,000.00.

To join, please complete this form and mail it with a check payable to:

Napa Valley Wine Library Association  
PO Box 328  
St. Helena, CA 94574

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