

# NAPA VALLEY WINE LIBRARY **REPORT**



SUMMER 2010

## Calendar of Events

Saturday, August 14, 2010 - 20th Varietal Seminar

“From DNA to Dinner, Everything You Wanted to Know about Cabernet”  
Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, St. Helena

Sunday, August 15, 2010 - 48th Annual Tasting

“Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Varieties and Blends”  
Silverado Resort, Napa

Also of interest:

August 4 – 22, 2010

Music in the Vineyards

16<sup>th</sup> Annual Season

[www.musicinthevineyards.org](http://www.musicinthevineyards.org)

Wonderful chamber music concerts embraced by  
equally wonderful venues

Saturday, August 29, 2010

“Harvest Stomp!”

Hudson Vineyards, Los Carneros

[www.napagrowers.org/harveststomp/harveststompDINNER.html](http://www.napagrowers.org/harveststomp/harveststompDINNER.html)

Rousing harvest party fundraiser for Napa Valley Grapegrowers’  
education programs

August 13 – October 31

“Art and Wine: the Expressions of an Industry”

Napa Valley Museum, Yountville

[www.napavalleymuseum.org](http://www.napavalleymuseum.org)

An exhibit guest-curated by Jim Cross of labels, books, banners, and  
related materials created by artists and selected from collections in the  
Napa Valley Wine Library and other area sources

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### Napa Valley Wine Library REPORT

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## Interviews



### Frank Lawrence “Laurie” Wood

Frank Wood and Sons, Inc.  
8897 Conn Creek Road  
Rutherford

Laurie Wood has always been progressive. He says he’ll “try anything once,” and he has had plenty of practice: he turned 90 this June. Laurie has lived all his life in Napa Valley, except for his hitch in the US Army during World War II, and been part of many innovations in farming. For instance, prior to the 1950’s and the development of the return stack smudge pot, farmers burned tires, hay, anything for heat in their vineyards and orchards on freezing nights. Smudge pots burned diesel oil, however, and people soon began to complain of the black air. It got so bad on frosty mornings, Laurie says, you couldn’t see Mount St. Helena. So, in the early 1960’s when Rain Bird Irrigation came up from Los Angeles to talk to him about their solid-set sprinklers providing a brand new kind of frost protection, Laurie thought he’d give them a try. On freezing nights, water is pumped under pressure from a reservoir to sprinklers that mist each grapevine, continuously jacketing them in layers of ice until the air temperature rises above 33°. Ice melt then seeps back to recharge the reservoir. Laurie got his good friends and fellow farmers Chuck Carpy and Roy Raymond to go in with him in a company to sell sprinklers throughout the valley.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SALLY WOOD

They soon had the custom of 30 or 40 ranches. Laurie says plastic (PVC) pipe was just coming into use and gave a good break on price.

Coincidentally, Elliott “Windy” Nelson of Bear River Wind Machine Company came to talk to Laurie about his wind machines that brought warmer air 12 to 15 feet above the ground down to displace cold air on freezing nights. In combination with smudge pots their protection was just about as effective as water. Laurie became an agent for the company and still recalls the roar of the machines during an April in 1970 when there was freezing weather 24 nights in a row. Today, both mist and wind are the common foils of frost in the vineyard.

In the mid-1960’s, North Coast Helicopter, originally a spraying and dusting company out of Stockton, hired Laurie to oversee sulfuring vineyards in Napa and Sonoma Counties. Its helicopter crew would start at 4:30 a.m. and spray anywhere from 200 to 2,000, even 4,000 acres. Laurie developed color-coded aerial maps of all the vineyards, which made the process much more efficient and meant he wouldn’t have to fly so much.

In 1917, Laurie’s father, Frank, had left his father’s farm in Tulare County to come to Napa as Assistant Farm Advisor, a position he was offered after graduating from the University of California in agriculture. (Frank’s younger

## President's Letter

Dear Members,

Founded in 1963 to provide information and guidance to those wishing to learn about the vineyards, wineries and wines of Napa Valley, our Napa Valley Wine Library Association maintains a collection of wine-related books, periodicals and other materials at the St Helena Public Library. In addition, members are provided with illustrated Wine Library reports that describe the grape growing and winemaking activities of viticulturalists and enologists who have established Napa Valley's international reputation for quality. We are fortunate to have Diana Stockton working as our able editor and writer.

The Third Books on Wine Festival in May at St. Helena Public Library, co-sponsored by them with this organization and Napa Valley Vintners, included a raffle for a magnum of our Petite Syrah Library Vineyard (won by Julie Dickson for her granddaughter, Sarah), a wine reception, and presentations by three authors: Richard Baxter and the second edition of *Age Gets Better with Wine: New Science for a Healthier, Better and Longer Life*; local authority Richard Mendelson with *From Demon to Darling: A Legal History of Wine in America*; and Vivienne Sosnowski and *When Rivers Ran Red: An Amazing Story of Courage and Triumph in America's Wine Country*, reviewed in this issue.

Napa Valley Vintners contributed the wines for the evening.

At our yearly Varietal Seminar and Annual Tasting in August we will have a chance to review, reflect on and celebrate fifty years of Cabernet in Napa Valley. For the Varietal Seminar, our 20<sup>th</sup>, Carole Meredith, Mark Oberschulte, Rosemary Cakebread, Dawnine Dyer, and Celia Welch have generously volunteered to examine and present the origins, wines, winemaking and growing techniques and current trends associated with this varietal family. The seminar is again at CIA-Greystone, with sommelier Traci Dutton pairing wines at lunch. As we go to press we still have room for you or a guest. Our 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Tasting at Silverado Resort is the 26<sup>th</sup> in the Grove. We have returned to a tasting layout according to appellation of the wine poured in order for you to best compare and contrast the wines from ninety Napa Valley wineries. Visit [www.napawinelibrary.com](http://www.napawinelibrary.com) for details.

Work continues on our online wine encyclopedia, which should be up and running by year's end. Currently, we are working to integrate Napa Valley Grape Growers Association's mapping project. We envision having much of the history of Napa Valley's wines, vineyards and personalities available online. Several individuals have asked about or made donations to the

collections of the Wine Library this year. Materials are as diverse as winemaking books from a grandfather who made a red jug wine in his basement, to transcriptions of the reflections of André Tchelistcheff at the fiftieth anniversary of Beaulieu. We urge you to remember the Wine Library when disposing of wine-related books, photographs, catalogues, and other sources, particularly those with technical data, and especially relating to Napa Valley.

Thank you for your continued support. We always enjoy hearing from you, so do not neglect to send us your comments via e-mail, [info@napawinelibrary.com](mailto:info@napawinelibrary.com) about our events and [editor@napawinelibrary.com](mailto:editor@napawinelibrary.com) about the REPORT or additions to the library. We look forward to seeing you in the Grove of Silverado at the Annual Tasting in August.

Bob Long  
*President*



PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BURGER

brother, the late Dr. George J. Wood, followed him to St. Helena in the 1920's, to retire from his practice in 1987 at the age of 91.) Frank settled into his new job assisting Herman Baade, the farm advisor for Napa County, and went to work advising farmers five or six days a week on what they should plant and how, selling life insurance at night, and farming a prune orchard weekends. When a ranch appointment took him to William E. Cole's ranch on the Rutherford Crossroad, he fell in love with the rancher's niece, Betty. As their wedding present, Betty's father bought 30 acres of his brother William's ranch, and Frank gave up the Farm Bureau to be foreman of this new ranch and the neighboring ranches belonging to Betty's uncles. Her Uncle William's ranch is now part of Frog's Leap Winery and Uncle Nathaniel's has become Usibelli Ranch. The wedding present is part of Laurie's expanded Wood Ranch. (Another Cole ranch, belonging to Uncle Charlie in Heath Creek Canyon, St. Helena was planted to walnuts and olives. It is now Van Asperen Vineyards and Corbett Vineyards.)

Frank and Betty Wood raised three boys. Laurie and his brothers worked and played alongside one another on the Wood Ranch from the time they were born until they finished St. Helena High School. Besides helping with a variety fruit crops, as a 4-H project Laurie had a breeding flock of 3,000 Rhode Island Reds, 500 of them happy roosters (his pals Mel Eisan and Clifton Mee also kept chickens). Twice a week Laurie delivered fertile eggs in boxes of twelve dozen to a hatchery in Napa. He and his



brother Bob also killed and plucked turkeys with Albert Taplin for the farmers' market in San Francisco.

Just six days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Laurie joined the U.S. Army on December 1, 1941. After training, he was shipped to Canada to work on the ALCAN (Alaskan) Highway. He says it sure helped that he already knew how to handle a D8 Caterpillar tractor. From Alaska, Laurie went on to England, France (he was part of the Allied invasion, hitting Utah Beach June 9, 1944), Luxemburg, and Germany as a combat engineer, assisting with roads, bridges and demolition. Laurie says access to roads in France was especially needed and the French he learned in high school came in handy.

He came home in 1945 to join Frank Wood & Sons, the farm management company his father had started earlier that year. By the early 1950's,

800 to 900 acres were under management, in addition to the adjoining Cole and Wood Ranches. These were planted to walnuts, cherries, prunes, apples, peaches, plums, and pears, even tomatoes and cucumbers for six or eight years, and ten acres of vines all watered by furrow irrigation. Laurie recalls Dean Turner, of Turner Produce in St. Helena, coming to the ranch five nights a week in season to load his Los Angeles lugs (open wooden boxes that held fifty pounds) full of fruit onto his truck for the farmers' market in San Francisco, to return with meat and other provisions for local restaurants.

Eventually Wood Ranch, which had grown by 54 acres, planted thirty acres of vines to such varieties as Early Burgundy, Burger, Carignane, Chardonnay, French Columbard, Petite Sirah, Johannesburg Riesling, and Zinfandel. In 1960, Bob Mondavi, a close friend of Laurie's, suggested he plant Sauvignon Blanc. He did, and sold the fruit to Bob's new Robert Mondavi Winery. Laurie was also a director of the Napa Valley Cooperative Winery when his friend Charlie Forni was winemaker. Laurie remembers a line of 20 or 30 trucks at the end of the day, when he'd bring in the Wood Ranch grapes to sell. Trucks having to wait overnight to unload were jacked up in front on two by fours; five-gallon buckets caught free-run juice out the back. In the morning the trucks would pull around to the scale and the fruit and juice were weighed. As the driver dumped out the lugs, an assistant would reload the empties: 240 boxes took 15 to 20 minutes to unload.



Frank Wood & Sons' first two hundred acres under management were for four clients: Ahern (next to Freemark Abbey), Moorhead (opposite the Jaegers on Inglewood Avenue, St. Helena), Wheeler Farms (on Zinfandel Lane, St. Helena), and Belle and Barney Rhodes, whose vineyards it managed for 45 years. The Rhodes' original vineyard became Martha's Vineyard when the Mays bought it. Laurie says it was planted with budwood from the Federal Government Station in Oakville after two years of flagging selected vines in the station's Cabernet block for growth, yield, and color. The Rhodes also invested with a few friends in Spring Lane Vineyard on Llewelling Lane, St. Helena (managed by Frank Wood & Sons), and acquired land for vineyard on Bella Oaks Lane, Rutherford. Barney also introduced Laurie to Narsai David, and Laurie farmed three successive vineyards for Narsai. Bosché Vineyard next to Inglebrook was another key client. Laurie believes its light gravelly volcanic soil is the very best kind for Cabernet. Frank Wood & Sons also cared for York Creek Vineyards for 20 to 25 years and Chabot Vineyard for ten; it developed and managed vineyards for Cain, El Molino, Gargiulo, Grace Family, J.J. Cohn, Long Meadow Ranch, Pride Mountain, and Snowden, among others, and for forty years looked after the Olsons' walnut orchard in St. Helena—twenty-nine different ranches, in all. Laurie's father retired in 1960 as farming practices began to change dramatically in the valley. The prunes had all left for Yuba City, Laurie says, where it was warmer and there was more water. Furrow irrigation gave way to buried perforated clay

pipes (*tilts*) which in turn were replaced by the now ubiquitous plastic (PVC) pipe.

When the place next door to Wood Ranch came up for sale in 1961, Laurie succeeded in talking his great friend Chuck Carpy into buying it. In 1965 Laurie and Chuck with John Bryant, Jim French, Dick Heggie, Bill Jaeger, and Jim Warren bought and revitalized Freemark Abbey Winery. Its first crush was in 1967 with fruit from the Carpy-Connelly, Wood, and Bosché vineyards plus its own estate Red Barn Ranch with Brad Webb, winemaker (as well as fellow shareholder). By 1973, York Creek Petite Sirah and Zinfandel were made at Freemark. That was also the year a torrential rain dumped three or four inches in September. On Wood Ranch, eight acres of Johannesburg Riesling turned purple in just four days. Joe Heitz had to tell everyone what had happened: a bloom of the mold *Botrytis cinerea*. The fruit was picked at 31° Brix and Freemark's first dessert wine, Edelwein Gold, was bottled in



375ml bottles, to sell out in only three or four months. Laurie is justly proud of the Freemark Abbey venture. It was the only California winery to have both its Chardonnay *and* Cabernet chosen for the Paris Tasting of 1976, thus playing a major role in establishing California wines in general and Napa Valley wines in particular as worthy of international regard. Laurie had managed its vineyards for over forty years when the winery was sold to Kendall Jackson in 2006.

A number of skilled Napa Valley vineyardists have started out with Laurie. Rafael Rios was foreman at Frank Wood & Sons for forty-five years; Rafael's nephew, Salvador Gutierrez has assisted for forty, and Laurie's own son Jim for thirty-five years. Elias Fernandez, winemaker for Shafer Vineyards, grew up on Wood Ranch. Ron Wicker, Jim Barbour and Mike Shuey all started out with Laurie learning vineyard management from top to bottom. Ron, who was just voted 2010 Grower of the Year by Napa Valley Grapegrowers, was with Laurie for most of the 1970's before starting his own vineyard management company, Wicker Vineyards. The late Mike Shuey spent several years with Laurie before joining Sterling in 1980 and then Louis M. Martini Winery in 1982, where he was its beloved vineyard manager until his death in 1998. Jim Barbour was with Laurie for fifteen years before leaving to start his own vineyard management company in 1990. He began releasing a small production Barbour Vineyards Cabernet in 1995. (An interview with Jim is also in this REPORT.)

Laurie prefers red wine to white, which these days he mostly has with spaghetti and meatballs. Viticulturally, he also prefers red to white. “Cabs, Zins and Pets” are his favorites and he has noticed a trend back to the Petite Sirahs and Zinfandels; people seem to be enjoying them more. The budwood, much of it from nameless original sources and gathered from vineyards every few years, used to be grafted onto clients’ vines by a select number of grafters at Frank Wood & Sons. Now, grapevine nurseries do much of this work. Budwood for Wood Ranch Petite Verdot was researched by Lucy Morton of Virginia, an expert in rootstocks and varietal clones, and makes up three or four percent of the vineyard. It has been sold to Elyse, Freemark Abbey, Rutherford Hill, Silver Oak, Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, and Vine Cliff. Clients for its other varietals have included Beaulieu, Caymus, Corison, Orin Swift, Quintessa, and ZD. The gravelly soil of Wood Ranch is common to Marin, Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, and Napa Counties; water comes from wells on the property. Laurie is relieved there has always been enough water for frost protection. Bud break may take until the end of May and he has seen a frost as late as June.

Overall, Laurie finds vineyard management practices pretty sophisticated today. Rootstock is just as important as varietal budwood, so the first big challenge is soil analysis: how much gravel, clay or rock, since soil dictates rootstock choice. St. George, 420A, 101-14, or 3309? The list goes on and on. And, which is the best varietal clone? What row orientation? Today,



new vine rows go up and down the valley, rather than across, exposing the morningside of vines to sun for just three to four hours. With trellising, more sunlight evenly reaches more leaves the whole length of a row, and plants grow at a faster pace. To control vigor, vines are de-leaved above the grape clusters on the sunny side, but not the shady side. With no logjam of leaves, normal breezes from the north and west blow unhampered down the vine rows. Laurie is happy to say, “Mildew has been reduced 200 to 300 percent.” And he judges sprinkler irrigation systems environmentally sound. Although sprinklers may irrigate at a rate of as much as 18 feet an acre, water does return to recharge the reservoirs and on a frosty night, the 4,000 gallons a minute of water, up to 50 gallons per acre, pumped continuously until the air temperature is back up to 33°, returns to the reservoir. Moisture in the ground can be measured by instruments that pinpoint its water and mineral content. Water in the plant is measured by a pressure chamber test of its leaf stems. Laurie is

particularly impressed with the petiole test. Petioles (stems of leaves) opposite the lowest flower cluster or from the newest mature leaf are gathered and sent off to a lab to be analyzed for nutrients: nitrates, potassium, zinc—as many as ten trace minerals—to assess vine fertility and monitor nutrition.

Laurie started farming when there were small vineyards throughout Valley. Despite the advent of large-scale enterprises, what really opened Laurie up to civilization, as he puts it, were his irrigation, frost protection and aerial mapping enterprises. These enabled him to really enjoy the **whole** valley, find new parts he didn’t even know existed. In recent years he has explored many of these territories as a water dowser. Long before solid set sprinklers and dispatching helicopters, as a teenager in the 1930’s, Laurie watched Bill Wheeler and Harold Smith dowsing for water when Harold Smith was the dean of dowers in Napa County. Laurie was fascinated, so Harold gave him the willow sticks to try. Laurie has been dowsing ever since. He has located sites for wells all over Lake, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties, and for over forty years has donated the dowsing fees to support his alma mater, St. Helena High School, through the Wood Family Scholarship Fund, begun in honor of his mother, Betty. It is she who gave him his watchwords: “Never *take* more than you give.” As Laurie said at the Napa County Farm Bureau in 2003 when he was honored as its Agriculturalist of the Year, “For all that I’ve received, I hope that I have given back in equal measure.” ■



## Jim Barbour

Barbour Vineyards

104 Camino Dorado, Napa

*500 case production*

In 1989, by Jim Barbour's count, there were twelve vineyard management companies in Napa Valley, and now there are over fifty. Jim says the work may be perceived as easy, but it's anything but. The morning of this interview, Jim had been up since 1:30 am because the temperature had gotten down to 31° and 30° in Chiles Valley and out at La Herradura, and Barbour had got "everything going" in the way of frost protection. Water gives the best frost production, then wind machines. Only problem with water, Jim says, is that those little hoses for micro-emitters and misters can freeze.

When Jim was 10 years old in 1962, his dad, stepmother, and, as Jim puts it, seven under-foot: three sisters (two up and one down from him in age) and five steps (two already out of the house, at college) moved to Rutherford from San Francisco. His dad had married a woman originally from Napa, and they bought Rancho de Los Ojos Azules, where Sequoia Grove is today, for their combined families when Napa Valley had more acres in walnuts and prunes than vines. Mr. Barbour continued to commute to work for ten years as the kids went to the local schools and worked on the ranch with its five acres in prunes, five in apples and twenty in vineyard.

Every weekend his dad worked with Jim and his stepbrothers in the vineyard and orchards, and after five years everyone had learned something about ranching. At harvest, all the orchard and vineyard fruit was picked into lug boxes; prunes went to the dehydrator in St. Helena, now offices for Icon Estates, and apples to a dehydrator where Angèle Restaurant in Napa is today, to be cleaned and shipped down the Napa River to market. Jim says all the grapes from the ranch's head-pruned vines of Gamay, Mondeuse and Petit Bouschet and went into Gallo's jug program at the Napa Valley Cooperative Winery.

Jim started college at Chico State intending to be a cop, but the program was not at all what he wanted, nor were there any jobs. He had been taking ag classes as well, and driving tractor for Laurie Wood at Frank Wood & Sons in the summer, so after two years Jim switched to UC Davis and what was familiar: plants, wine, viticulture. John Arns and Marc Mondavi were also at Davis, but on the wine-making side. Jim didn't see them (although he and Marc are now the best of friends). Jim continued to work for Laurie in the summer and after college, full-time. Ron Wicker was already with the company and Mike Shuey, a friend of Ron's from Capay Valley in Yolo County, was hired a little later. Mike had been managing 700 acres of family almonds. Together, the three helped Laurie farm 1,200 acres. Frank Wood & Sons specialized in hillside vineyard, developing and managing vineyards such as Barnett, Cain, Pride (formerly





Gamble Ranch), and York Creek. “A bunch of ‘em up on Spring Mountain, and all pretty much red,” is how Jim characterizes them, and viticulturally, like Laurie, Jim prefers “red.”

When Laurie thought he might retire, Mike went to work at Sterling before joining Louis M. Martini and Ron started his own vineyard management business. About this same time, Jim’s dad sold the Rutherford property to Jim Allen, who founded Sequoia Grove there in 1978. Despite the rumors of Laurie’s imminent retirement, Jim stuck around for another few years, figuring out what to do next. He says he didn’t want to start his own business. Finally he called Bob Steinhauer, then vineyard manager for Beringer Brothers and a mentor, and Bob said, ‘You know we’re just thinking of someone for San Joaquin [County],’ where Beringer had 4,000 acres in the Santa Maria-Paso Robles area. Jim and Bob flew down to Meridian Vineyards in Paso

Robles and to look things over. Jim says he is a perfectionist, that that’s his model, and Bob, observing him as they drove around, said, ‘Maybe I don’t want you down here getting everyone upset.’ Next thing he knew, Jim had started his own vineyard management company in 1990. Jim thinks the vineyard management companies of Abreu, Barbour, Piña, and Wood have planted about sixty percent of Napa Valley’s vineyards.

Jim started his company in a trailer on land he owned on Tokay Lane behind what is now Dean and DeLuca in St. Helena and Laurie gave him his first clients, Peter and Linda Snowden in Spring Valley. Jim had helped plant their cousins’ Snowden Vineyards. Additional clients came slowly; some were people Jim had met hauling grapes for Laurie. He took clients from Napa down to Woodside-Atherton and over to Sonoma. Eventually, he began to farm quite a bit in Napa Valley. Alec Vyborny asked him to take over twenty acres at Mont LaSalle and Jim worked out a lease arrangement with the Perrys next door to Grace Family Vineyard, which he had helped plant in 1976 and redevelop in 1989. Jim says it takes ten years to know whom to choose as clients. Today, Barbour Vineyards Management has 500 acres under contract and oversees an additional 465 acres for another winery. Jim says ninety-nine percent of his clients grow Cabernet. Barbour personnel have fluctuated from a high of 125 at harvest to sixty in the winter. Nate George has been with Barbour Vineyards twelve years and Jesus

Rios, one of Jim’s first hires, nineteen. They are partners in the business. A year ago, after having an office on Vintage Lane in St. Helena (with storage in Flynnville) for twenty years, Barbour Vineyards moved in to its own building at its present location.

Although crop production, or tons per acre, has remained about the same since the 1960’s, there are now four or five times as many vines per acre. The five or six tons an acre then is now a maximum of four tons, from vines that were spaced 8’ x 12’ or 5’ x 10’ then, to ones 3’ x 5’ or 4’ x 6’ now, an increase from 454 vines per acre on 8’ x 12’ spacing to as many as 1,800 to 2,300 vines per acre. Today, water is the first priority in contemplating a vineyard site because a well must provide, at a minimum, water pumped at 33 gallons a minute for an acre of ground with new vines spaced 4’ by 6’. Laurie still witches all Jim’s wells. Barbour Vineyards plants cover crops like bell beans and vetch on the valley floor to reduce vigor. On the hillside to amend and hold the soil it plants fescue, bromes and clovers, but not as much dwarf rye as it used to. Cover crops keep costs down as less disking or rock picking is needed, and the plants put nitrogen back in the soil. The number of passes in the vineyard has increased, Jim says, meaning the number of times a crew goes through a vineyard block. Barbour does green fruit thinning on short shoots and another thinning at veraison. Jim says he just tells his clients to leave town when it’s time to drop fruit. Barbour has stopped pulling off leaves

because of the risk of sunburn, especially with a longer hang-time or a week of 105°, even 110° weather, such as last year (but leaves were pulled just before a predicted rain fell). A weather station in each of its vineyards monitors highs and lows and current temperatures, humidity, precipitation, and wind on-line. In the high growing season, however, Barbour Vineyards relies more on pressure bombs and neutron probes than its weather stations. Jim says farming practices have gotten much more refined, but then wine wasn't \$100 a bottle back then, in 1980 or 1981, except, he reflects, Caymus Vineyards and Grace Family Vineyards, when Randy Dunn was winemaker at Caymus, where Grace was made.

Preparation begins in the fall with clearing the soil. Vine rows and irrigation/frost protection lines are marked out in the spring. When Jim worked with Laurie, Frank Wood & Sons



used to have July and August off. Now with green-growing bench-grafted vines ready to plant in growing tubes well after frost, planting time for hillside vineyard is from the middle of June through August. Even in established vineyard there is always planting to be done—a block is pulled, a new piece planted. Since becoming a client, Hundred Acre, for instance, has gone from nine to fifty acres. Jim says Barbour Vineyards' management practices are dictated by its clients' winemakers and it pretty much works with the "Red Wine League" of Heidi Barrett, Thomas Brown, Philippe Melka, Celia Welch, and newer, upcoming winemakers like Jeff Ames, Russell Bevan, Andy Erickson, and Mike Hirby. The winemaker gets involved in vineyard management *after* planning, however, about three years out. So, based on soil tests, Jim and his team choose rootstock, row orientation and budwood for new vineyard, and trellis accordingly.

Heidi Barrett was the one who talked Jim into planting his own vineyard. He hadn't wanted to, since he spent all day with vines, and had since his childhood. But Heidi persisted, so Jim planted one acre, when he started his company, then one more, and then three more. Because of its uniform soil, his vineyard is picked as one unit just once. Jim thinks the Cabernet budwood is ENTAV 337 that Caldwell first brought in, but it may be something else because it is virus free, so it might be 15. Heidi says Jim's Cabernet was one of her easiest blends that took only two or three

tries to get unlike the 25 or 30 tries other wines may demand. The first release was the 1995 of just 50 cases; now it is 500 cases, but Jim doesn't plan on making more because he doesn't want to be on the road selling wine! Celia Welch is his new winemaker; 2010 is her first vintage for Barbour. When they lived in Rutherford, Jim's dad made ten or twelve barrels of red wine every year with the Bartoluccis and other Italian growers. They'd get together to make wine with fruit from all their vineyards. Jim says there was 'red on table every night,' but he didn't care for wine much until college. Then, in the 1970's and 1980's, he got to liking Grgich Hills Chardonnay. Now Jim drinks pretty much only red: Zinfandel for spice, Cabernet from his clients, which he likes with steak or lamb or birds or really anything.

Jim says the best duck hunting in California is up by Chico where he likes to hunt with his friends and business partners at Llano Seco Duck Club. Except for a bear from British Columbia that looms in his new office, Jim hasn't shot anything he hasn't eaten. He isn't planning to spend more time hunting or making wine, however, because he still loves getting a new piece of ground to work on. These are five or ten acres now, and the soils change so much in Napa Valley that laying out even neighboring vineyards can be a fresh challenge. And new areas are opening up—Atlas Peak, Soda Canyon. Jim thinks he will always be doing something in the field of vineyard management. ■

## Christopher Vandendriessche

*Winemaker*

White Rock Vineyards

1115 Loma Vista Drive, Napa

2500 cases

In the 1860's a dentist from Massachusetts, Dr. John Pettengill, came to Soda Canyon to buy land and start a new career. He bought 107 acres and planted twenty of them to White Riesling. In 1870 he built his winery, White Rock Cellars. A hundred years later, in 1977, an economist from France, Henri Vandendriessche, came to Soda Canyon to buy land and start a new career. Henri and his American wife (they had met at UC Berkeley) moved to Napa from Paris so she could be near her family. Henri was happy to make a change from managing an accounting office to running a vineyard, with the intention of making wine.

When Henri bought the White Rock estate, it needed a great deal of work. Its winery had long since become a house and the few remaining vines were no longer productive, nor could their variety be determined. The grapes were black, but without good flavor, so the vines were pulled. To pay for the replant of 1979, Henri sold the ridge land as he planted 36 of his remaining 60 acres. Henri's two sons, Christopher and Michael, also took part in developing the vineyard blocks. Chris says he and his brother picked a lot of rock and while they were in high



school they planted the .8 acre "Cave Hill Vineyard" in Cabernet all by hand. Chris thinks the clone came from John Caldwell. It is on 5B rootstock and now produces their best Cabernet. Its flavor lingers. The brothers also helped with harvest. Chris recalls getting 35 cents either an hour or a bin for hauling grapes. The first release of White Rock Napa Valley Claret was the 1986 made at Conn Creek Winery and released three and a half years later. The vineyards of White Rock are in the Napa Valley appellation because, at the time of the hearings for establishing a Stags Leap appellation in the 1980's, Henri had said, White Rock *is* the appellation and didn't try to include his estate within the boundaries being drawn for the Stags Leap District. In 1988 a new winery was dug into a face of the hills of white rock that cradle the property and Douglas Danielak was hired as winemaker; Henri continued to manage the vineyards. When Henri built the winery, it was fashioned inside the rock so all fermentation and aging could be accommodated within, so it was sized for maximum capacity from the vineyards, figured at four tons an acre. White Rock actually uses only half the space for its wines, so it leases out the other half to a few clients. Presently, these include Hudson Vineyards, Parador Cellars and Kesner Wines.

White Rock has always farmed in an organic manner. Chris says they have never used any sprays. Some of the rows, which are planted



alternately to leguminous cover crops or oats, barley and rye, get tilled by hand; otherwise sheep graze down the grass in the spring. Hillside rows follow the contours of the land in a mostly North-South orientation. Sixteen acres of gently sloping hillside are planted to Cabernet Sauvignon and five to Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. Chris identified the two acres of Cabernet Franc as from an old heritage clone from Newton Vineyards; three acres of Merlot are a Davis clone from Caldwell; one and a half acres of Petit Verdot are from a heritage selection in the 1970s and a newer clone; and a half acre of Malbec, just seven years old, is from who knows where. Fifteen acres of Chardonnay were planted on the flat where it is cooler, and Soda Canyon is altogether cooler than the main floor of Napa Valley. White Rock crops two tons an acre for its red and three tons an acre for its white grapes. All the

vines were initially pruned to California sprawl. In 1993 they were changed to vertical shoot position on a bilateral cordon. In addition to nutrients from cover crops, an annually composted pile of stems, seed and waste from the winery with the addition of organic steer manure is put wherever vines need vigor. Chris says irrigation is seldom needed. In winter, a combination of fans and sprinklers is used for the average ten or twelve days of frost protection. His brother Michael took over managing the vineyards from his father in 1996 and continues to adjust vine rows, rootstocks and clones.

After high school in Napa, Chris majored in physics at UC Santa Cruz. He says the professors were most inspiring, yet at the same time it felt perfectly natural for him to get to know and hang out with vineyardists from David Bruce, Bonny Doon, Ridge, McHenry, and Santa Cruz Mountain. Chris doesn't know which of them are still there, but at the start of his senior year he says he knew, "I wanted to do wine, not physics." After graduation, he spent the next three years in France: one and a half years in Burgundy and one and a half in Bordeaux, where he took a post-graduate degree.

Next he worked at Chateau Pape-Clément learning how it made its Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet and Merlot. Then Chris returned to Napa Valley and worked at Luna Vineyards for two years with David Ramey and John Kongsgaard and Luna's custom crush

clients Phil Zorn, Bill Knuttel, Doug Shafer, and Dan Baron. After Luna, Chris went off to Rioja, Spain and the Remelluri Winery to oversee two of its smaller, recently acquired facilities in the hill country. He made a study of Tempranillo and Grenache fermentations in steel and cement tanks and barrels of French oak. Then, in 1998, Chris came back to be assistant winemaker at White Rock. 1999 was his first full vintage because he took over from Douglas as winemaker after malolactic fermentation of the red wines in barrel was underway. (After stints at Jade Mountain and Paras Vineyards, Douglas is winemaker at Clark-Caudon Vineyards.)

Chris says winemaking at White Rock is now entirely based on flavor and collective years of experience, "Acid, pH and °Brix are important, too, but it is really all about flavor, one's palate." The number one quality element for Chris, however, is viticulture, the care of the vines. Each vineyard block is picked three times: a main lot plus two smaller pickings. Chris says picking all the fruit in a block all at once pushes the level of alcohol, and as alcohol levels climb, balance in the wine is thrown off. He now works with about twenty lots of red from twenty acres. Vineyard at the tops of the hills, for instance, can ripen as much as three weeks ahead of that lower down. Because Soda Canyon is cool, the vines naturally have a higher acid level, which Chris says is good for aging reds and for getting crisper Chardonnays.



At harvest, a cellar crew culls the fruit the day before the main crew comes in. Then, as the main crew picks, Chris is just ahead tasting and roping off what needs more time to ripen. Most Cabernet is picked at 23.5 to 25°Brix. Before the fruit enters the winery, it is sorted in the vineyard. Then it is de-stemmed and fermented in the winery, mostly whole berry. After a cold soak of five to ten days, fermentation takes three to six weeks. Main lots are fermented in tank, smaller lots in barrel and bin. Fermentation is mostly a natural process, relying on indigenous yeasts. A risky lot may call for commercial yeast. Several short pump-overs a day are typical. After the primary

fermentation of Cabernet at 75° to 80°F, but before malolactic fermentation, the new wine goes through a nice old, gentle Bucher bladder press and then into 50 per cent new French oak barrels where it ages for at least two years before being bottled and aged for at least two more. White Rock uses three types of French oak barrels. It adds no yeasts and malolactic fermentation is usually complete by Christmas. After a year, Chris begins his blending. He finds a Bulldog Pup indispensable for moving wine. Because this device pushes wine out of a vessel using inert gas (one tankful can pump two dozen barrels) it is quiet, so there are no distractions and it needs no electricity, which often goes out at critical moments in Soda Canyon. At bottling time in August, Ryan-McGee Bottling of Napa comes for one full day.

2003 was the last year White Rock made a single Cabernet, its Claret. With the 2004 vintage came the innovation of Laureate, a 50 case reserve program. Laureate spends an additional year in barrel and in bottle. The winery caves were built with niches that can accommodate seven pallets of finished wine, or four thousand bottles as White Rock is adamant about bottle aging its reds to bring the flavor out of the grapes. Chris also urges decanting their “younger” reds. The 2004 Laureate and 2005 Claret are the latest Cabernet releases from White Rock.

Chris says he learned about the influences of native and commercial yeasts working

alongside John Kongsgaard at Luna. Chris thinks native yeasts give a heavier, weightier flavor and for his style of Chardonnay he prefers one that is crisp, and crisp dictates commercial yeast. The fruit is picked at 22.8 to 23.5 °Brix, ferments whole cluster and then goes into 50 percent new French oak for a year, where about ten percent will go through malolactic fermentation. The wine spends one year in bottle before its release.

Not just bottles fill niches in the caves at White Rock. There is also cheese and sometimes ham. Chris and Michael's sister, Ann Marie, manages the Fatted Calf at Oxbow Market in Napa. She is also a cheesemaker, who spent six years in Aix en Provence. Once she perfects the cows' milk cheese that is ripening in one niche, she plans to make cheese from the milk of the White Rock sheep. Fresh hams from Chris's own pigs may ripen in the fall, curing to Prosciutto alongside barrels of aging Cabernet. Nowhere is anything wasted or unsavored at White Rock. ■



## Jon-Mark Chappellet

*Managing Director, Plant Operations*

Chappellet

1581 Pritchard Hill, St. Helena

*30,000 to 36,000 cases*

When Jon-Mark Chappellet was nine, he and his four brothers and sisters moved into a big house tucked way up in the hills of St. Helena. It was so pink you could see it from downtown. This Pritchard Hill property was the very first Jon-Mark's father, Donn, had been shown when he decided to move to Napa Valley from Los Angeles. Donn thought he should take time to be sure, but a year later, in 1967, he and his wife were still certain, so he bought a house with 100 acres from Ed Harten. Ed had planted a new vineyard in 1963, although the land had been in vines off and on for eighty years, so the vineyard footprint of what would become Chappellet was already in place, in Riesling and Gamay, as well as Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Today, there is still Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Chenin Blanc; Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec have been added, and an Estate Chardonnay is grown in Jamieson Canyon. The Chappellet sibling footprint was also pretty much in place; a last baby came in 1968.

Donn chose Napa Valley to make wine after selling out his interest in a food service company. His initial success had been in marketing fresh coffee via a vending machine with an array of drip pots in continuous production—a totally new concept in Los Angeles that really

took off. Factory canteens loved it. From coffee, Donn expanded to a full coffee bar and then a more complete array of products. When the company went public Jon-Mark says his father found sitting on a board of directors was not as exhilarating as running a company. Donn was no stranger to a tractor—he had grown up spending summers on a ranch in the Tehachapi Mountains, so Napa Valley was not the leap one might think. Donn hired Philip Togni as both winemaker and vineyard manager. Philip had trained at the University of Bordeaux. The two began planning a winery and other improvements as the Chappellets settled into life in Napa Valley.

The school bus stopped at the foot of the hill for Jon-Mark and his siblings. Jon-Mark says they were *always* brought down to the bus, just not always picked up. After a year of high school Jon-Mark went off to St. Louis, Missouri and then to Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa at the recommendation of Jack Daniels (marketing director of Chappellet before starting Wilson Daniels, Ltd.). Jon-Mark transferred to UC Berkeley, where he majored in conservation and ecological sources and took part in the anti-nuclear movement. He was teaching high school science in 1991 with a brand-new teaching credential when his brother Cyril called: Cyril was selling wine and said he really needed help.

Chappellet's very first vintage, under the guidance of Philip Togni, had been nine barrels of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in 1968, crushed at Robert Mondavi Winery and fermented at Heitz Wine Cellars. Its second



vintage was at its newly built winery. Jon-Mark notes this second vintage of 17 barrels is quite historic. It is included among Robert Parker's most favorite Cabernets, ever. Philip made a few more vintages and then left to tend his own vineyard on Spring Mountain. A succession of winemakers earned their stripes at Chappellet, including Joe Cafaro, Tony Soter (who extols the 1976 Cabernet) and Cathy Corison, assisted by Mía Klein, Helen Turley and Phillip Titus. Phillip went on to work at Stratford but when Cathy left in 1990, Donn rehired Phillip, who has been winemaker for twenty years. New vineyard managers were hired until 1984, when Dave Pirio became vineyard manager. Dave has been with Chappellet for twenty-six years, Jon-Mark for nineteen.

Before Jon-Mark joined the winery, he says there was not a whole team approach to production (nor was there much interplay back then among vineyard manager, winemaker and

marketing at any winery in Napa Valley). Chappellet Cabernets had developed quite a reputation for tannins, they were wines that needed to "wait ten years" as Jon-Mark puts it, and Chappellet needed to turn that around. Fortunately, Phillip was sensitive to both making wines and the market place. He appreciated the wines of wine drinking cultures and didn't need to buck any trend. An era of experimentation was ushered in, conversations got going. Vineyard management, winemaking, and sales and marketing met together each month, tasted wines together. Dave says it helps that he manages other vineyards, has his own company, David Pirio Vineyard Management, and that Phillip is part of the family vineyard and wine enterprise, Titus Vineyards. The Chappellet team has been able to see how its grapes develop from the ground up for quite a few cycles. Many revisions can happen in ten years, and if mistakes are not too massive, Jon-Mark dryly observes, time and scale dilute change. Changing a wine, however, takes less time than changing the perception of a brand. Jon-Mark says Donn is more involved now than in 1990's. In the 1960's and 1970's he was on the tractor in the vine rows, or the vineyard roads, a lot of different things. The 1980's were devoted to long-term financial planning. Now the whole Chappellet family, three generations, is directing operations, representing it at tastings and other events, and working on the plan for its continued governance.

Jon-Mark says their collective expertise is limited to Chappellet. They practice what works well for them on that particular piece of ground. Vineyard blocks keep getting smaller

and more diversified as changes are made to clonal selection, rootstock, row orientation, watering, or the choice of cover crop, each change an integral part of the whole: Cabernet has been planted where Chenin Blanc was, Chenin Blanc has replaced Sangiovese, Petit Verdot has nudged over Cabernet. The current plan now calls for replanting five acres a year.

Replants allow the management of tannins, to work with fermentation, for Jon-Mark says, "There is an abundance of tannins up here." Cultural yeasts give the winemaker a lot of control. There are not a lot of pumpovers; extractions are early. Jon-Mark says they don't need to pull more tannins out of the skins with an extended maceration for most blocks, only with some. Cabernet fruit is picked into half-ton bins, de-stemmed, and then goes into fermentation tanks for 14 days, after which it all goes through a bladder press. As the new wine comes through, press cuts are made and may get blended back. Then the wine is put into barrels of Hungarian, American and French oak to age.

Chappellet makes three different Cabernets, some in new and old oak. The wine is left in barrel as long as possible, at least eighteen months in tiers four high in the winery where floors gleam with a new epoxy coating (thanks to a recent replacement with PVC of all the metal pipes in or below the cement). Once bottled, most of the wine goes out to market. The best-known and largest production wine, anywhere from 5,000 to 8,000 cases, is Chappellet Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, made from selected vintages since 1979. In

1997 the first Chappellet Pritchard Hill Cabernet Sauvignon was made. Although there was none in 1998, it has been made every year since. Pritchard Hill gets the very best of the lots, for 1,500 to 2,000 cases. It spends twenty months in barrels of new French oak and eight months in bottle. A third Cabernet, Mountain Cuvée, is ready for drinking and is often the wine on the family table. Chappellet also makes Merlot and a Pritchard Hill Estate Vineyard Cabernet Franc from vines planted in 1989, as well as Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc, but its true focus is Bordeaux varietals. That is its discipline, so, chuckles Jon-Mark, it won't be planting any Tempranillo. An original eight acres of Riesling was planted over to Sangiovese. To improve the Cabernet, all those vines were then budded over to Cabernet and Merlot as well as a little Chenin Blanc. (In retrospect, Jon-Mark thinks they might have just pulled four acres of the Sangiovese.) Of 100 vineyard acres, no more than 70 or 75 are in production. Another 15 remain fallow.

One of the first improvements Chappellet made was to the water system. Now the amount of water delivered to the vineyards is carefully controlled by meters monitoring gallons per week per vine delivered by emitters. It also relies on pressure bombs throughout the vineyard blocks and some use of probes, "to get on the watering," as Jon-Mark puts it, "before vines get too stressed." Frost is not a huge problem, so a few wind machines suffice, although the Cabernet was hit badly in 2008 and the Chenin Blanc is often affected, for its buds break early in the year.

Since 1980 Chappellet has had permanent cover crops on its terraced hillside vineyards. Some piles of huge boulders pulled out of the vineyards have been removed but Jon-Mark's mother, Molly, quite likes these rock islands, so a few remain, oases among the vineyard blocks, testament to the erosion of a 14,000 foot mountain that once stood tall in what became Yountville, and eroded over millions of years, releasing great boulders of volcanic ash. Dave says half the planted acreage is now certified organic, with the remaining half expected to be certified in just a few more years. Jon-Mark says they do a lot of cultivating in the vine rows, mowing, allowing nitrogen-fixing plants to blow off vine vigor as needed, incorporating cover crops into the ground, and adding compost from winery pomace enriched with green waste from Jepson Prairie Organics. Row spacing has changed a great deal. Planting is now much tighter with a doubling, at least, in the number of vines, but with probably the same crop tonnage: two and a half to three tons an acre in a mature vineyard. Chappellet didn't used to thin its crop; now, Jon-Mark says, it drops fruit as many times as it takes. Pre-pruning adds one more pass through the vineyard, in addition to leafing (removing leaves), hedging, and hedging again. In the fine-tuning, it might leaf again, in addition to pulling any lateral shoots. Instituting these many passes didn't all happen at once. The number of "touches," the amount of labor per vine, Jon-Mark says has increased dramatically. First thing at veraison, they're out fine-tuning according to the weather and how the grapes are sizing up. With iffy weather and big years, a reasonable crop load in July can look

like way too much fruit in August, and Malbec can crop anywhere from a half to three and a half tons, it is such an uneven producer.

When Jon-Mark came to work at Chappellet he was market and sales-oriented. Now he no longer travels as he did or manages distributors but is production-oriented, interested in style and blending as well as the diverse challenges of maintaining operations. He has become a blending participant, and has enjoyed learning the nuances of sourcing fruit and quality. In 1998, weather conditions inspired Chappellet to make *five* different Chenin Blancs including Dry, Demi Sec, Old Vine Cuvée, and Moelleux. Jon-Mark loves Loire Valley Chenins, especially those fully botrytised. He thinks they are best that way: "the Moelleux with its residual sugar and the fully botrytised Liqueureux made at 50°Brix with screaming acids that deliver only a hint of sweetness."

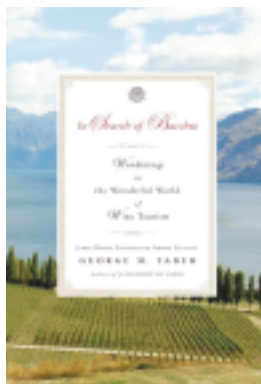
Jon Mark usually makes dinner--he says he has always been into cooking. Although the absolute best with Cabernet is a standing rib roast, Jon-Mark certainly can't eat that too often, so he usually has a glass of Cabernet while he's cooking pasta, to keep a hand in. Besides the winery and looking after his family, Jon-Mark makes time for local land use issues. He has been a board member of Napa County Farm Bureau for twelve years, is a past president and currently chairs its Tax, Land Use and Labor Committee. Right now Napa County's Winery Definition Ordinance is of paramount concern. Jon-Mark feels strongly that commercial activity at a winery is bad for agriculture. ■



## About Books

*Book reports by Bob Foster*

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### *In Search of Bacchus: Wanderings in the Wonderful World of Wine Tourism*

*George M. Taber*  
*Scribner, New York; 2009*

When this book arrived for review, I was expectant. Its author, George Taber, had written two topnotch books, one on the tasting in Paris where California wines beat the best of French wines, and another on the battle over the use of corks. Both were well written and to the point and read like good novels. Sadly, this book does not live up to Taber's earlier works.

He visited twelve of the world's best wine making regions and then wrote about each, giving the stories of some of the men and women who helped develop them. He describes each region, its land and its grapes and its major tourist attractions. Sections are often included on places to stay or dine. But the chapters seem unconnected—there is no central theme, no commonality of experiences. Each chapter devoted to a region is long and detailed, followed by a very short chapter documenting the author's own personal travels and experiences there. These companion chapters are frustratingly short and cursory. For example, in Napa Valley Taber visited both Whitehall Lane and Pine Ridge. His comments focus almost entirely on the cost of a tasting and whether or not one receives a wine glass to take home as part of the tasting fee. When Taber does talk about wines he tasted, he mentions three and just calls them "great."

If you were about to visit one of the twelve wine regions in the book, the overview chapter might help you set the stage for your trip, but this book lacks the depth and insight of Taber's earlier works.

*Recommended if you plan to visit these regions soon*



*When the Rivers Ran Red: An Amazing Story of Courage and Triumph in America's Wine Country*  
*Vivienne Sosnowski*  
*Palgrave MacMillan (St. Martin's Press), New York; 2009*

Most of us American wine lovers have a general notion about Prohibition's impact on the wine industry: wineries closed; good wine grapes were replaced by lesser, thick-skinned varieties; the industry had to start all over after Repeal. But the story is more complex. In this top-flight work the author goes into detail about Prohibition and its impact on Napa and Sonoma Counties, interweaving her history of the industry as a whole with wonderful stories of individual wineries and their owners.

Sosnowski carefully documents how our local wineries coped with Prohibition—by hiding from it, adapting to it, or partially ignoring it. Her story of wineries working with bootleggers is enthralling. The book's title is

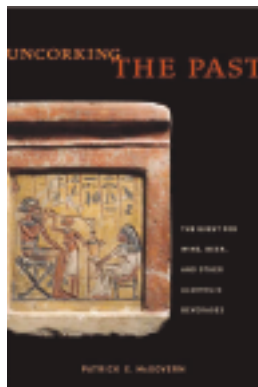
derived from the sudden arrival of federal agents at the Foppiano winery and forced it to empty all its wine, some 140,000 gallons of dark red, into the Russian River. As the wine moved downstream turning the river red, scores of Sonoma County citizens began filling themselves and various containers with the wine, an impromptu festival that went on for hours.

Prohibition became the law of the land thanks to political chicanery. Because the 18th Amendment was not self-executing and required enabling legislation, Congress passed the enabling Volstead Act, vetoed by President Wilson in October 1919. Efforts to override his veto led to a vote in the House of Representatives on a Thursday. Earlier that week, supporters of Prohibition realized that most of the opposition “wets” were out of town and planned to return later for the key vote. Without notice, the “drys” called up the override and passed it.

Although the author carefully chronicles the San Francisco earthquake, I wish there had been more discussion of the devastation in Sonoma County and *its* wine industry, as this area was much harder hit by the quake than San Francisco. It is interesting to note that so much wine was destroyed by the quake, prices immediately jumped.

An absorbing tale well told, with great footnotes, index and historic photographs.

*Highly Recommended.* ■



**Uncorking the Past-The Quest for Wine, Beer, and Other Alcoholic Beverages**

*Patrick E. McGovern*

*University of California Press, Berkeley; 2009*

The author works as the Scientific Director, Bimolecular Archeology Laboratory for Cuisine and Fermented Beverages and Health, University of Pennsylvania Museum. He is certainly qualified to discuss the role wine and other alcoholic beverages have played in various cultures of the world.

McGovern offers the intriguing hypothesis that since virtually every civilization has used wine or some other alcoholic beverage in its medicinal, religious, or funereal aspects, there may be something about these beverages that has played a key role in the development of these cultures. The pattern is so strong, McGovern theorizes, that the consumption of such beverages may be part of human nature.

To support his thesis the author carefully presents the latest archeological research from Asia, Europe, and Africa. He begins by noting that each of these regions found ways to make alcohol beginning with discoveries of fermented honey, fruits, and grains that lead to the perfection of various elaborate means to produce, store, transport, and consume its treasured alcoholic beverages. McGovern details the latest findings and then explains their impact on our knowledge of that area's history and its cultures. He challenges many existing theories, including the idea that life in the Americas came via the Bering Straights and Alaska.

The material is highly informative and challenging, however, the book is densely written and requires detailed concentration. This is not a light read because the book is filled with a wealth of interesting but often quite technical information.

*Very Highly Recommended* ■

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