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Judgement of Paris – California vs. France – Book Review

I just finished reading “Judgement of Paris – California vs. France” 327 pages by George M. Taber, copyright 2005. This is a book that has been laying around my office for a couple of years. I had a preconceived notion that it would be a dry historic rendition of the famous 1976 Paris wine blind tasting that I should read up on sometime. I was very wrong!

This book became the basis of the movie “Bottle Shock” that debuted in 2008. Bottle Shock is a good movie, but not as good as the book it is based on. Bottle Shock covers only a small portion of the book and does it with a great amount of artistic enhancement. In 2014, Rotella Productions was soliciting investors to do an accurate historical movie about the Judgement of Paris. A full documentary may be coming.
George Tabor was the only journalist that showed up to the May 24th, 1976 blind tasting that pitted 12 California wines up against 8 great French wines at the Intercontinental Hotel in Paris, France. He was writing for Times Magazine at that time. All the other journalists who were invited did not think it was an event worth attending. It was at this blind tasting that 9 of France’s top wine experts swirled, tasted, sniffed and spit their way to what was going to be a HUGE ground breaking event in the world wine industry. These TOP 9 wine experts picked a 1973 Chardonnay from Chateau Montelena in California as the best white wine and a 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon from Stages Leap Wine Cellars in California as the best red wine. This tasting and the after effects not only changed how California wines were perceived, it also showed other regions of the world that they too could have a chance to make great wines just like the French. This one blind tasting changed the entire wine world.

The book leads up the Paris tasting by first reviewing the history of both the French and California wine industry and the history of the vineyards, wineries and people involved. It gives a detailed account of how all the wines were made and how the grapes were grown. It covers how new world wine regions grew afterwards. The final chapter reveals what happened to the winning wineries, owners and winemakers. The book provides a great story of the Paris event, but the historic details leading up to and after the event is what kept me from laying down the book. Once again, another book worth reading and having in your library. mlw


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The Rothschild’s, who made their fortunes in other fields, got into wine as a way of raising their social stature. As the French have said for centuries, le vin anoblit – wine makes one an aristocrat.

From: page 19, Judgement of Paris – California vs. France

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**UMN Enology Specialist Position Announcement**

The Grape Breeding and Enology program at the University is seeking qualified candidates to apply for the new position of Enology Specialist. Please share the information below with your network of interested professionals.

The Enology Specialist (Researcher 4) will work under direction of the University of Minnesota Grape Breeding and Enology project leader and collaborate with other members of the Department of Horticultural Science, the Department of Food Science and Nutrition, the Minnesota Grape Growers Association (MGGA), Minnesota Farm Winery Association (MNFWA), and Minnesota’s commercial wine industry. This position will involve research and outreach responsibilities related to winemaking and grape cultivar evaluation. For full posting, visit employment.umn.edu and use the Advanced Search tool to search for job opening 305060. The full posting is also viewable via the following this link: https://goo.gl/XUV1xJ
Crimson Pearl & Verona – New Cold Climate Varieties from Tom Plocher

An October 6th article in Wines & Vines Magazine announced that Tom Plocher, a grape breeder from Hugo, MN named two “NEW” red cold climate winegrape varieties, Crimson Pearl and Verona. Tom is the breeder who introduced the Petite Pearl winegrape variety. According to Tom:

**Crimson Red** (T.P. 2-1-17) is a sister of Petite Pearl and has proven to be the most adaptable north of the Twin Cities and in difficult parts of otherwise good sites. Hardiness, relatively late budbreak, and mid-season ripening all contribute to its adaptability. The vine starts to harden off its shoots in mid-August and, by the time the fruit is ripe, is fully hardened off to the tips. Its wine will appeal to wine drinkers who prefer a soft and fruity dry redwine. It also produces fruity and highly aromatic rose wines. The grape has an excellent natural balance between sugar, acidity, tannin, and fruitiness, allowing the winemaker to concentrate on varietal expression, rather than acid or alcohol manipulation.

**Verona**, (T.P. 1-1-34) is a 1997 cross between Troubador (a cross by David Macgregor of Riparia 89 x St Croix) and E.S. 5-4-16, one of Elmer Swenson’s unnamed varieties. Over many years, it has produced the best quality wine of any of Tom’s selections, surpassing even Petite Pearl in blind tastings. Red wines from T.P. 1-1-34 are deeply colored with abundant soft tannins in the middle mouth and finish. They have a good balance between acid, tannin, and alcohol. Aroma is complex, raspberry with hints of chocolate. Rose wines from T.P. 1-1-34 are garnet in color, with cherry aroma, full-bodied, lush vinifera-like fruit, good balance and finish. Vines of Verona have not been as hardy in Hugo, MN and other Zone 4a test sites as Petite Pearl or Crimson Pearl. It also ripens rather late. It is recommended for planting south of the Twin Cities on good sites in Zones 4b or anywhere in Zone 5. In these milder areas, it has the potential to be very productive, having a large cluster, good vigor, and late budbreak in the spring.

The following nurseries will be carrying Tom Plocher’s grape varieties:

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The French invited California vintners to send samples of their wine to the 1889 World’s Fair in Paris. To everyone’s surprise the American wines, in particular those from Napa Valley, did very well in competition with the French wines. California wineries won 34 awards for their wines, brandy and sparkling wine, the Napa Valley wineries picking up 20 prizes, including 4 golds.

From: page 35, Judgement of Paris – California vs. France
In 1962, Beaulieu Winery (Rutherford, CA) became the first large scale winery to introduce malolactic fermentation for all its red wines. At an UC Davis seminar that year Mike Grgich (Beaulieu’s assistant winemaker) gave a presentation demonstrating how winemakers, with the help of a specially treated paper – chromatography paper – could see the progress of the procedure as it was taking place.

From: page 71, Judgement of Paris – California vs. France

The Post Harvest Vineyard – A-Z To-Do List

The harvest season has come to an end. Now is the time to start preparing your vineyard for winter and your next crop. Here is a suggested general post-harvest “To-Do” list for this fall:

a. Survey your vineyard and mark the weak or dead vines now so that plans can be made now for remediation or replacement.

b. Remove grow tubes to help plants acclimate to colder temperatures. Some may just pull the tubes up high on the plant. They may lower them down to the ground in the winter if rabbits become a problem or they can reuse them next spring in those cases where the plants need to be cut back low to the ground due to winter cold damage. (Ideally grow tubes should be removed in August.)

c. Remove debris, old prunings, mummies, and dropped fruit from the vineyard and either burn or compost outside of the vineyard.

d. Soil sample those special problem areas identified during the season.

e. Apply non-nitrogen fertilizers and lime as required by a soil sample analysis.

f. Move mulches away from the trunk so that rodents will not set up house and girdle the trunk during the winter.

g. Remove bird netting and store in rodent proof areas or containers.

h. Inspect and repair trellis.

i. Reduce trellis wire tension prior to winter. An 80°F to 20°F drop in temperature on a 12.5 gauge high tensile wire 500' long can increase the wire tension by 130 pounds.

j. Shut off electric deer and/or raccoon fencing.

k. Apply 2,4-D to the vineyard turf between the rows if broadleaf weeds are present and aesthetics are a concern. Wait unit after the first killing frost in mid-October. Keep the
2,4-D on the turf and away from the trunks.
l. Apply glyphosate (Roundup) to perennial weeds under the vineyard wire. October is a
good time to do this before the soil gets too cold in November.
m. Consider dormant applications of pre-emergent herbicides like Princep, Prowl H20,
Surflan, Chateau, or others in late October to early November. Do not apply to frozen or
snow covered soils. Use the higher rates listed on the label. This will free up valuable
time in the spring. An early summer touch up with post-emergent herbicides will be
necessary in most cases for season-long weed control.
n. Identify prolonged wet areas of the vineyard and consider subsurface tile installation or
surface drainage options..
o. Soil sample future vineyard expansion sites, apply fertilizer and lime as needed and
incorporate into the soil.
p. Order grape plants for next year.
q. Change the oil and service all the motorized equipment used in the vineyard.
r. Sharpen and spray a protective oil coating on all pruning equipment.
s. Clean out the sprayer and winterize by pumping an antifreeze solution through the
sprayer and then draining the hoses and pump.
t. Drain and/or blow out drip irrigation tubes.
u. Clean, repair and store away all harvest equipment.
v. Repair/repaint any trellis row signs lost or damaged during the season.
w. Organize and file away vineyard operation records for easy access in the future.
x. Begin to prepare a Plan of Work for next season.
y. Watch for upcoming vine/wine training events in Wine Grower News.
z. Relax and enjoy the holidays!

Congratulations to the Iowa Wine Trail for being awarded a $24,000 Iowa
Specialty Crop Grant to increase awareness of specialty grape crops in Iowa through
a marketing campaign.


10-(21-23), Iowa Tourism Conference – Ottumwa, IA

When: Wed. – Fri. Oct. 21-23rd. 2015
Where: Bridge View Center – Ottumwa, IA
Details: http://www.traveliowa.com/conference

Robert Parker told me, “the Paris Tasting opened the door for anyone, whether he is in
California or Australia or New Zealand”

From: page 231, Judgement of Paris – California vs. France
Upcoming Winemaker Round Tables – Wisconsin

What: UW-Madison Regional winemaker roundtables this fall. Wines will be tasted blind, in flights according to wine type or style. Each participant will evaluate the flight of wines. Once everyone has had a chance to taste and evaluate the wines from each flight, there will be open discussion on the wines. Winemakers have the option to seek additional comments on their wines if they so choose. The number of wines a winery can bring for tasting will depend on the number of wineries that will be present.

When & Where:
- 10/27/15: Elmaro Vineyards, Trempealeau, 1:00 pm
- 10/29/15: Parallel 44 Vineyard and Winery, Kewaunee, 1:00 pm
- 11/4/15: Wollersheim Winery, Prairie du Sac, 11:00 am

Who: Nick Smith, UW-Madison Enology Extension

Registration: Contact Nick Smith at NSmith35@wisc.edu or 608-890-3397 to sign up for one of the roundtables or for further information,
11-7, Wine Tourism Day

The third annual Wine Tourism Day will take place November 7, 2015. Wineries, hotels, restaurants, and other wine tourism businesses across North America and beyond are offering special events to the public on this day to celebrate the importance (and fun) of wine tourism. Events are being planned in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Events differ and can range from wine pairing dinners to music events to structured tastings. Organizations that participate in Wine Tourism Day will be donating a portion of their earnings for that day towards a local charity or non-profit of their choice.

If you are a winery or other wine-related business that would like to host an event for Wine Tourism Day on November 7, 2015, register your event to have it listed on the Wine Tourism Day events page. More information at www.winetourismday.org.

In order to make a successful wine today, you must start with a good wine, but then also have a good marketing plan and a good distribution network. Thousands and thousands of small French producers, however, lack both marketing plans and distribution networks.

From: page 288, Judgement of Paris – California vs. France

11-(13-14), Mead Making Workshop – UC Davis

When: Friday & Saturday, November 13 &14, 2015

Where: Robert Mondavi Institute

Cost: $575.00 each.

Registration Deadline: Friday, November 06, 2015

Details: https://registration.ucdavis.edu/Item/Details/170
Register for the Iowa 2015 Iowa Organic Conference here:
http://sustainability.uiowa.edu/2015-iowa-organic-conference/

11-(18-20), 2015 Wine Tourism Conference – Leesburg, VA


Conference Organizer: Zephyr Adventures
http://www.zephyradventures.com/

Details here: http://winetourismconference.org/

Reader Comments

10-8-15, Mike, I like your book review section and sometimes purchase them. Being a former resident of and amateur winemaker in the Hudson Valley I almost put thirty dollars on the barrelhead for your latest. Almost.

I have one comment to you and your readers: "Angels, Thieves and Winemakers" by Joseph Mills. It's a book of poetry with the grape grower's and winemaker's world as both tangible and metaphor. A lot of them are hilarious ("Standing Next to a Stranger at a Wine Tasting"), others poignantly capture the essence of life as seen through a grower or vintner. One small selection:

The Photograph Album in the Living Room
Everyone smiles in these pictures, the albums record the good vintages,
the times it all went well, 
the marriages and graduations, 
the vacations when we didn’t 
end up in the emergency room 
with a sick or broken child.

Looking at these, we often forget 
how the ripe fruits we harvested 
came during seasons of drought, 
years of living in rocky soil, 
times when we were pruned 
so close to the ground 
we didn’t think we would survive.

There’s a taste. Twelve bucks at Amazon.  
Mel Schlachter - Iowa City, IA

Show n Tell

(Left) Periderm: A secondary brown covering called the periderm begins to form on the grape shoots at veraison and proceeds through fall. Periderm formation starts at the base of the shoot and moves outward towards the green tips. The periderm replaces the outer layer of epidermis, and acts as a protective water repellent covering. The mature cells have suberin in their walls to protect the stem from desiccation and pathogen attack. 10-19-15 mlw

Videos of Interest

Sonoma Grape Growers Assn & USDA Risk Mgt. Agency. 9:04 min.(Excellent!):  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmRk_MYL1BA

2. Dirty Work Parody | Jordan Winery Harvest Music Video, 10-14-15 2:18 min.:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ab65-7OKVQ

Marketing Tidbits

1 “Sales are stagnating as a growing number of Americans say they are actively trying to avoid the drinks that have been a mainstay of American culture. Sales of bottled water
have shot up, and bottled water is now on track to overtake soda as the largest beverage category in two years, according to at least one industry projection.”

From: The Decline of Big Soda, 10-2-15 NY Times:


5. The back wine label: What information and features appeal to consumers? 10-9-15 Penn State Univ

6. The 6 Musts of a Successful Holiday Marketing Campaign, 10-12-15 Entrepreneur: http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/251532


Neeto Keeno


2. FREE Irrigation Courses: http://www.irrigation.education/

3. 80+ mobile Apps for Ag from K-State: http://webapp.agron.ksu.edu/agr_social/eu_article.throck?article_id=176

Notable Quotables

“The results of the study indicate that the chemical composition of wines and their perception as ‘mineral’ are not directly linked to the minerals in a vineyard’s soil. Rather, a variety of volatile chemical compounds derived from the metabolism of the vine, the fermentation of yeast and bacteria, as well as from techniques applied in the winemaking and ageing processes, were found to be responsible for the perception of minerality.”

From: New study strengthens case against soil-based minerality, 10-13-15 the Drinks Business

“We could in the United States make as great a variety of wines as are made in Europe, not exactly the same kind, but doubtless as good.”

--- Thomas Jefferson 1808
“The best fertilizer for a vineyard is the owner’s footsteps.”

--- Unknown

**Articles of Interest**


2. EPA Registers New Biochemical Miticide to Combat Varroa Mites In Beehives, 10-1-15 Growing Produce: http://goo.gl/zmE2PA


4. *MI wine industry may suffer after 2 years of bad crops*, 10-8-15 WOOD TV8 http://woodtv.com/2015/10/08/mi-wine-industry-may-suffer-after-2-years-of-bad-crops/


**Calendar of Events**

10-(24-25), VESTA Wine Sensory Analysis Workshop – Green Bay Botanical Garden 2600 Larsen Rd. Green Bay, WI. RSVP Lynn White, VESTA Coordinator, lynn.white@nwtc.edu

11-7, 3rd Annual National Wine Tourism Day: http://www.winetourismday.org/


11-(13 & 14), Beginner Introduction to Mead Making – UC Davis. Details & Registration https://registration.ucdavis.edu/Item/Details/170

11-(11-14), 2015 VitiNord International Conference will be held at the Lied Lodge & Conference Center in historic Nebraska City, NE: http://www.vitinord2015.org/

11-(13-14), Mead Making Workshop – UC Davis Robert Mondavi Institute: Details: https://registration.ucdavis.edu/Item/Details/170

11-(18-20), 2015 Wine Tourism Conference at Landsdowne Resort - Leesburg, VA Details here: http://winetourismconference.org/


2016

1-(7-9) Great Plains Growers Conference - Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph, MO: http://www.greatplainsgrowersconference.org/

1-(24-26), Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Conference, January 24 - 26, 2016 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI.

1-(26-28), Unified Wine & Grape Symposium – Sacramento Convention Center, CA http://www.unifiedsymposium.org/

2-(26-29), Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference – FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Campus at Ankeny, IA: http://www.ifvga.org


2-(9-11), World Ag Expo at the International Agri-Center - Tulare, CA. https://www.worldagexpo.com/

2-(11-13), Texas Wine Grape Growers Conference – San Marco, TX. http://www.txwines.org/
2-(11-13), Cold Climate Conference - Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis, MN
http://www.mngrapes.org/

2-(22-23), Northern Grapes Project Symposium & Advisory Committee meeting –
Kalamazoo, MI, Details later: http://northerngrapesproject.org/

2-(24-26), 2016 Michigan Grape & Wine Conference, Radisson Plaza Hotel – Kalamazoo,
MI. Details later: http://www.michiganwines.com/conference

2-(26-27), Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Assn. Annual Conference – Crowne Plaza,
Springfield IL: http://www.illinoiswine.org/wordpress/

2-(28-29), Iowa Wine Growers Association Annual Conference – Prairie Meadows Hotel –
Racetrack & Casino, Altoona, IA. Details later here: http://iowawinegrowers.org/

3-(3-5), Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Forum & Trade Show – Omaha Marriott
http://agronomy.unl.edu/viticulture/

3-(9-11), Eastern Winery Exposition – Lancaster County Convention Center – Lancaster,
PA: http://easternwineryexposition.com/

3-(16-18), Show Me Grape & Wine Conference – Columbia, MO. Details later.

**e-Viticulture:** http://eviticulture.org/

**Iowa Wine Growers Association:** http://iowawinegrowers.org/

**Iowa Wine Explorers Facebook page:** https://www.facebook.com/IAWineExplorers?ref=hl

**Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board:** http://www.traveliowa.com/GetInspired/WineAndBeer

**ISU Viticulture Extension:** http://viticulture.hort.iastate.edu/

**ISU Midwest Grape & Wine Industry Institute:** http://www.extension.iastate.edu/wine/

**Northern Grapes Project:** http://northerngrapesproject.org/

**Missouri Grape & Wine Institute Weekly Vineyard IPM Reports can be found here:**
http://gwi.missouri.edu/

**VESTA (Viticulture Enology & Science Technology Alliance):**
http://www.vesta-usa.org/
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