

Sommelier News



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Sommelier
GUILD

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JANUARY
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Volume 6, Issue 1

Champagne: Widows and other Survivors

A look at Champagne's colorful history: Part 2

By J. Herbert Silverman

The House of Pommery

The untimely passing of Alexander Louis Pommery in 1858, a wool trader turned wine maker, left his widow, Jeanne-Alexandrine, in charge of the business. Within 30 years she created one of most respected enterprises in Champagne, the House of Pommery.

The enterprising woman became known as one of the "Champagne Widows," a group of strong women who ran the businesses of their late husband. Among them were the Houses of Clicquot-Ponsardin, Bollinger, Roederer and

Laurent-Perrier.

Combining an interest in wine and art, Madame Pommery commissioned the solid oak barrel that held up to 100,000 bottles of wine created by the master cabinet maker Emile Gallé.

Upon Madame Pommery's death in 1890, her children took over management of the house and expanded the vineyards. Then tragedy struck in WWI when Reims was almost totally destroyed and the entire community had to be rebuilt.

The blood lineage was to

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First Press

By David Wilkening

Odds are good Champagne-drinking Americans are tasting French product

For Americans who toasted the New Year with Champagne, the odds are about three in five that the bubbly was bottled by industry behemoth LVMH Louis Vuitton-Moët-Hennessy, reports *The Wall Street Journal*. "The conglomerate, controlled by French billionaire Bernard Arnault, has managed in recent years to lay claim to the largest share by far of the Champagne region's limited grape output," says the newspaper, adding that "LVMH has done that by assiduously cultivating the independent growers

who raise most of the grapes - including by offering them free farming help."

Michigan direct wine shipments falls short of "booming"

Michigan's first full year of a new law regulating shipments of wine directly to customers was "smooth" but business was not "booming," reports the AP. The state Liquor Control Commission reported 451 wineries and wine distribution companies have received permits and sold wine through the mail to Michigan customers. Most are from California,

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Louis Roederer identified Russia as his special priority, and sales there quickly grew to as much as 60 per cent of his total production. Roederer Champagnes became renowned at the Imperial Court and among the Russian aristocracy, who had been passionate about French culture and the art of living since the 18th century.

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last until 1979 when the vineyards were acquired by a buyer outside the family. Today, the Domaine is noted for such world-class champagnes as Cuvée Louis, Grand Cru Millesime and Brut Apanage.

The current owner is Vranken Pommery Monopole, the second largest producer in Champagne.

Roederer

In 1776, the year the United States declared its independence from Britain, the house bearing Louis Roederer's name was born. It is one of the largest independent Champagne Houses and still remains family owned.

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Tsar Alexander II was a Champagne connoisseur who made it his personal mission to acquire the very best wines for himself. A royal concern was finding that the Champagne served at his table was indistinguishable from the Champagne served at the homes of his courtiers.

Part fact, part folklore: on hearing of Tsar Alexander II's displeasure, Louis Roederer II commissioned a master Flemish glassmaker in 1876, to design a new and unique crystal glass bottle, so solidly constructed that it could be made with a flat bottom. Thus was born Cristal, the first Cham-

pagne prestige vintage. The wines reserved for the Tsar were delivered in bottles bearing the imperial coat of arms.

The Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, followed two years later by Prohibition in the United States, together cost the House its two most important markets.

On the death of Léon Orly-Roederer, in 1932, his widow, Camille Orly-Roederer took up the reins at one of the most critical periods in the House's history. Under her leadership, Louis Roederer survived the aftermath of the Depression to regain its former glory and achieve new eminence.

Today, sixth generation Frédéric Rouzaud, the great grandson of Camille Orly-Roederer, is at the helm. Passionate about great wines, he succeeds his father Jean-Claude, who was one of the very rare Champagne House leaders to be a trained oenologist, and to have had a personal hand in the production of his wines.

In 1993, Roederer acquired a majority interest in another grande marque, Champagne Deutz. That vineyard was founded in 1838 by two Prussian émigrés, William Deutz and Pierre Hubert Gelderman. By 1882 Champagne Deutz became a founding member of the *Syndicate des Grand Marques*.

Bollinger

Jacques Joseph Bollinger established Champagne Bollinger in 1829 with vineyards that have produced Champagne since the 17th century. Jacques Joseph was one of the first to build a

(Continued on page 3)

Generations of the same families have worked at the same tasks for Pol Roger over the past two centuries. Sons have succeeded fathers as winemakers and remueurs. The Pol Roger family tradition dictates that the directors of the business know how to perform every single task involved in winemaking and selling.

(Continued from page 2)

lucrative export business with dry Champagne that gained a world-wide reputation for its signature style.

Sons Georges and Joseph took the reins after their father died in 1888. They acquired vineyards in the villages of Louvois, Bouzy, and Verzenay all the while expanding exports. When Georges died in 1918, his son Jacques, a distinguished French Air Force pilot in WWI, took the helm. Jacques purchased vineyards and cellars, substantially expanding Champagne Bollinger's capacity.

Jacques died in 1941, in the midst of the German occupation. His widow Lily saw the winery through the difficulties of war, which included nearly catastrophic bombing and severe shortages of fertilizer and fuel. After the war, Champagne Bollinger thrived under her leadership.

Lily became an ambassador for Champagne Bollinger and Champagne in general. Her words on the subject are still widely quoted: "I drink my Champagne when I'm happy and when I'm sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise, I never touch it - unless I'm thirsty."

Today, Ghislain Montgolfier, the great grandson of founder Jacques Joseph, and the nephew of Jacques and Lily Bollinger, is president of Champagne Bollinger. Etienne Bizot, a great-nephew of Lily's, serves as Managing Director.

Pol Roger

Another family-owned

Grand Marque, Pol Roger, under the aegis of Christian Pol-Roger established itself house in Epernay in 1849. After Christian's death in 1899, his sons added their father's first name to their last name legally changing the family name to Pol-Roger. That's why the wine and brand names are not hyphenated, but the family name is. *Entendu?*

Generations of the same families have worked at the same tasks for Pol Roger over the past two centuries. Sons have succeeded fathers as winemakers and *remueurs*. The Pol Roger family tradition dictates that the directors of the business know how to perform every single task involved in winemaking and selling.

Laurent Perrier

Still another historic label, Laurent Perrier, was founded in the 19th century by Alphonse Pierlot who bequeathed his holdings to cellar master Eugene Laurent who, with his wife Mathilde-Emilie Perrier, managed the estate. On Eugene's early death in 1887, Veuve Mathilde linked her name with her late husband to create the brand Veuve Laurent Perrier & Cie.

Mathilde's daughter Eugenie inherited the house when her mother passed away and sold the business to Madame Marie Louise Lanson de Nonancourt. Madame de Nonancourt poured her life savings into an almost bankrupt Laurent Perrier and somehow managed the company through WWII.

One son, Maurice, who would have been in charge after the war, died in the concentration

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There have been new names added to the firmament recently. Most notable is Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte founded only 30 years ago by a successful trader in cocoa and coffee who had his eyes set on owning vineyards. Feuillatte, who traveled in the jet set for some years, bought a vineyard in Reims and established his own brand.

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camp at Oranienbourg. The other son, army sergeant Bernard, and his tanker mates of General Leclerc's famous 2nd armored division, crashed into Hitler's wine cave in 1945 near the "Eagle's Nest," the dictator's retreat in the Bavarian Alps. There he discovered a half million bottles of wine, including several hundred cases of Salon Champagne which he had watched being stolen five years earlier.

Bernard de Nonancourt, who currently heads the largest family-owned Champagne house, initiated a departure in bottling the wine by blending wine from three years to produce a prestige cuvée and a brut nature (no added dosage).

His daughters, Alexandrin and Stephanie, are already in place to lead Laurent-Perrier into the future.

Gosset

Not too many producers are proud of being the smallest maker in the Champagne region but Gosset makes that claim. Founded by Pierre Gosset it is said to be the oldest wine house in the area.

Today, the Gosset legacy is in the hands of the Cointreau family who also own and manage the house of Cognac Frapin. At a time when many houses are owned by corporate conglomerates, Gosset remains a holdout, a family owned wine company in which its members are personally

involved.

Since securing Gosset, the Cointreau family has established long-term contracts with major growers who supply grapes to Gosset. Riddling and disgorging of all vintages and large format bottles are still performed by hand

Feuillatte

There have been new names added to the firmament recently. Most notable is Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte founded only 30 years ago by a successful trader in cocoa and coffee who had his eyes set on owning vineyards. Feuillatte, who traveled in the jet set for some years, bought a vineyard in Reims and established his own brand. In 1978, he developed a Resérve Particulière which he made available to his own royal friends such as Lauren Bacall, Sophia Loren and Yves Saint-Laurent.

The success was so great that his vineyards were insufficient to meet demand. Feuillatte partnered with the Centre Vinicole de la Champagne in 1986 to insure sufficient levels of production and quality.

A brilliant promoter and ambassador, Feuillatte funded the Nicolas Feuillatte Prize for Contemporary Art creating events at the Pompidou Centre, Tate Modern and MoMA. Dramatizing exotic themes centered in Paris, New York, and Beijing is a trademark of the brand.

J. Herbert Silverman is writing a book about colorful characters in the wine and spirits business and a history of Irish whiskey.

Quiet Collio

A visit to Marco Felluga illustrates the wine wealth of this once-troubled region

By Roger Morris



**Marco Felluga at the
Russiz Superiore
estate**

[Photo by Roger Morris]

As evening approaches, we sit on the rear deck of Roberto Felluga's home at Russiz Superiore in the Collio hills of eastern Italy, enjoying the view of another formation of low-lying hills perhaps a half mile away across a small plain of cultivated fields. We are, in fact, looking into Slovenia. The hills and the wine district over there are both called Brda. There is no dramatic separation between the two ranges of hills, the two countries, the two wine districts. Crossing the international borders, I'm assured, is a snap. Tour buses between the two wine-growing areas go back and forth every day. Slovenia is, after all, a member of the European Union, a country these days looking optimistically to the West.

Collio (the word is derived from *colli* or hills) is quiet and peaceful these days – almost docile, in fact – but that wasn't always the case. Wars have shifted borders in this area the way earthquakes rearrange buildings.

In the not too distant bad old days, Brda and Slovenia were a part of Yugoslavia and a member of the Communist Bloc. The dictator Tito kept the Balkans unified back then, before the breakup after the fall of the Soviet empire and the subsequent "ethnic cleansing," just as Saddam Hussein once kept Iraq's warring tribes under control. Neither one, though, was very pretty about how he kept order.

Today, Collio or, more properly, Colli Goriziano, is the third largest wine region within Friuli, after Grave del Friuli and Colli Orientali del Friuli. It is now

known internationally for its high-quality white wines, a reputation largely gained after the adoption of modern cold-fermentation techniques. The success of the white wine industry here, it is said, was what convinced Italians that their whites could match their reds in quality.

Collio's primary grapes are Tocai – henceforth to be known as Friulano – Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Bianco, and Chardonnay. The reds – chiefly Bordeaux varietals made in a Loire style – are respectable if less prized. The Felluga properties are among the best in the region and are well-known in Italy and worldwide.

Roberto Felluga's father, Marco – the driving force behind Marco Felluga and Russiz Superiore brands from Collio and an active presence in the region's modernization – has just arrived and tells us he has spent the last few days enjoying his passion of fishing out in the nearby Adriatic Sea. Over a bottle of Russiz Superiore Tocai and a delicious frittata with cheese and prosciutto, he explains how the family winery – his grandfather was the original Marco – was started in the late 1890s farther south along the eastern Adriatic Coast in the province of Istria, now a part of Croatia. He sits forward in his chair as he talks, an elderly but still handsome man with a florid face, thinning hair swept back across the top of his head, and rimless glasses.

Like many European men

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"California doesn't exist," he

says, "Sancerre doesn't exist.

Collio makes the most beautiful

wines."

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of the generation that survived the horrors of World War II to carve out comfortable business empires through hard work and considerable cunning, Marco Felluga has strong opinions on most things. He speaks no English, unlike the generation represented by his son Roberto, but, expressively talking through a translator, he lets us know he is not happy that the 2006 vintage will be the last year his wines can be

called "Tocai," as they have been for ages, having lost a European Union lawsuit with Hungary and its Tokay region. He loves America, he tells us. "If the Americans hadn't been here [at the end of the World War II], Tito would have taken Venice." As it was, he did take Istria, once a part of Italy. But his love of America doesn't extend to its wines. "California doesn't exist," he says, "Sancerre doesn't exist. Collio makes the most beautiful

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The view of the Brda hills in Slovenia from the Collio hills in Italy

[Photo by Roger Morris]



The barrel room at Russiz Superiore

[Photo by Roger Morris]

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wines." If they're not the most beautiful, they are certainly contenders, I think as we prepare to go to what turns out to be a lovely dinner at a nearby country restaurant.

The next morning, we meet once again at the house, Marco having returned to his fishing. Roberto arrived late last evening from his business trip, yet he is up early to greet us – a tall, lanky man with a shock of black hair falling over his forehead, looking like a young, if friendlier, Robert Mitchum in a Western movie.

The younger Felluga takes our group of mainly wine merchants on a short walk along a narrow gravel lane from the house to the Russiz Superiore winery. The "superiore" does not refer to a wine classification, merely the historic name that indicates the vineyard is elevated slightly from those of the plains. Felluga tells us about his prized Sauvignon Blanc, how it thrives in this area of sandstone and limestone marl in an area that experiences great fluctuations between daytime and nighttime temperatures. This is primarily a result of the presence of the Alps not far behind us and the Adriatic Sea, less than 20 miles ahead. The vineyards, 150 acres of a 250-acre estate, are planted to a density of about 6,000- 6,500 plants per hectare (about 2,425+ per acre).

At the modern winery, he pauses in his walk-around presentation and asks the merchants about how quickly Americans are turning to screwcaps. About 5 to 10% of the volume is corkless at present, he is told, but accep-

ance is very rapid. He nods and files the information away.

Presently, about 70 percent of Russiz' 20,000 cases of estate-grown wines are white, but Roberto tells us that the reds are progressively becoming better. "The region knows more about the science of maturing red grapes and red wines than we once did," he says, "including more-frequent racking and increased oxygenation." Like his father, Roberto is heavily committed to joint agricultural research projects with local universities.

On the walk back to the house for a tasting of Felluga wines, Roberto explains that the Felluga organization is planning on getting into wine tourism by building a small lodge here and perhaps other facilities to accelerate the growing popularization of the region as a traveler's destination.

And as the morning sun rises over the peaceful hills of nearby Slovenia, the Felluga wines we taste are a good primer of what Collio has been doing and what it can accomplish.

2006 Marco Felluga "Mongris" Collio Pinot Grigio – A lovely wine with nice, steady ripe-green flavors of Kiwi fruit, moderately full, and good acidity. Minerally. Touches of astringency in the finish.

2006 Marco Felluga "Molamatta" Collio Bianco. A very, very good proprietary regional wine, it has beautiful structure with ripe, but not tropical, fruits, lots of minerals, and a touch of cream in the finish.

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2005 Russiz Superiore "Còl Disore" Collio Bianco. Fermented in oak, it has a lovely fragrance of aged parmigiano reggiano, is tropical in taste but not at all sweet, and has light traces of dried apricot. Very well balanced – excellent.

2004 Marco Felluga Collio Merlot. The wine strives for ele-

gance but doesn't quite have the length and structure for it. Nevertheless, it does have a nice creaminess with medium-bodied cherry flavors.

2003 Russiz Superiore "Degli Orzoni" Colli Rosso. A blend of Cab Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cab Franc, it has good structure but a few awkward edges that need to round with age. Needs to ripen in the bottle, not to resolve tannins,

In addition to writing for The Sommelier News, free-range sommelier Roger Morris regularly contributes articles about wine, food, and travel to Saveur, The Robb Report, The Wine Enthusiast, Drinks, and Beverage Media, among other publications.



Roberto Felluga leads a tour of the Russiz Superiore vineyards

[Photo by Roger Morris]

Wine and Health

Our resident cardiologist decodes some of the mysteries of Resveratrol

By Dr. William Piccione

Currently, it is generally accepted in the medical community that a moderate consumption of alcohol reduces the risk of fatal CHD, a major killer, by 40 - 60%.

We've long been aware that people who consume moderate amounts of alcohol are generally healthier than abstainers. But how do we explain this observation? Early studies proposed stress reduction as a possible mechanism and this sounded plausible since we all know that excessive stress can adversely affect your health. However stress levels are very difficult to quantify, making them near impossible to study.

Interest has more recently shifted to the so called "French Paradox," which is the observation that while the French people traditionally consume a diet rich in fat, they seemingly enjoy a much reduced incidence of coronary heart disease (CHD), a major cause of death in the United States, Germany and the U.K. The most popular explanation was thought to be some protective effect from the relatively large amounts of alcohol, particularly wine, that the French consume.

While most Americans first became aware of this correlation following a *60 Minutes* segment in 1991, it was actually first described by an Irish physician in 1819. The first "scientific" paper supporting this observation was published in 1926. Currently, it is generally accepted in the medical community that a moderate consumption of alcohol reduces the risk of fatal CHD, a major killer, by 40 - 60%. Many other studies have since reconfirmed this observed benefit of wine consumption as well as other possible beneficial effects on stroke pre-

vention, stomach ulcers, osteoporosis and even some types of cancer.

So how does wine consumption, particularly red wine, accomplish so many wonderful things? Well, the short answer is that we're not really certain. However there is a growing body of research pointing to possible mechanisms involving effects on insulin, cholesterol, platelets (the small cells in your bloodstream that aid clotting), and antioxidants, compounds that sweep up harmful molecules in our body known as "free radicals."

Hopefully, I'll have the opportunity to address all of these topics in future months, but for now let's consider a compound found in wine that has received a lot of attention recently in the press called Resveratrol.

Resveratrol is a naturally occurring polyphenolic compound found in peanuts, walnuts, berries and especially grapes. Don't worry about the chemistry but know that other polyphenols include tannins, lignins and flavonoids, substances all found in wine. Although found in the vines, stems and seeds, Resveratrol is most abundant in the skins of *Vitis vinifera* and *labrusca* grapes. Interestingly, grapes grown in cooler climates seem to have higher concentrations. Also, since Resveratrol is found predominantly in the skins and therefore is extracted during fermentation, there are significantly higher levels in red wine as compared to white.

The beneficial effects of

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Resveratrol are still being studied but so far they seem to include an antioxidant effect that may be more potent than other more familiar antioxidants such as vitamins C and E. Experimental studies have also identified an anti-tumor effect of Resveratrol but there are no human studies to confirm this finding to date.

Much of the recent excitement regarding Resveratrol followed a recent report from researchers at the Harvard Medical School a year ago in the prestigious journal *Nature*, which caught the attention of the *New York Times*. In this study, the researchers found that very large daily doses of Resveratrol fed to mice could reduce the effects of an unhealthy high calorie diet and actually significantly prolong the mice's lifespan. The key to this finding is possibly a "longevity

gene" known as SIRT-1 which is found in mice and humans. Resveratrol seems to stimulate this gene to produce a protein - Sirtuin - which is thought to provide this benefit.

However, before we oenophiles get too excited I should note that the doses of Resveratrol fed to the mice were the equivalent of 750 - 1500 bottles of red wine per day! So while there are some exciting preliminary findings, clearly much more work needs to be done.

In the meantime, please remember that while many studies support the benefits of moderate alcohol consumption, excessive amounts seem to cancel any benefits by causing other health problems such as liver disease and certain cancers.

Drink well, drink in moderation, and don't forget the obvious: a balanced diet, exercise, and no smoking. Cheers!

Bill Piccione is a Chicago-based cardiologist and may well be the only practicing heart surgeon/sommelier in the world.

Drink well, drink in moderation, and don't forget the obvious: a balanced diet, exercise, and no smoking.

Volunteer Opportunity

Return to Terroir/Renaissance des Appellations

February 9th, 2008 Toronto's Distillery District - Fermenting Cellar

Sommeliers Needed to Pour

Trade tasting 12:00 - 4:00

Consumer tasting 4:00 - 8:30

Return to Terroir/Renaissance des Appellations is a group founded by Nicolas Joly in 2001. All the participating winegrowers recognize that the relationship between soil and climate has a different "face" everywhere on earth and strive to express the unique characteristics of their special terroirs.

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Tudor's Picks

Dean Tudor surveys recent books of interest to Sommeliers

By Dean Tudor

GUINNESS; the 250-year quest for the perfect pint (John Wiley, 2007, 250 pages, ISBN 978-0-470-12052-1)



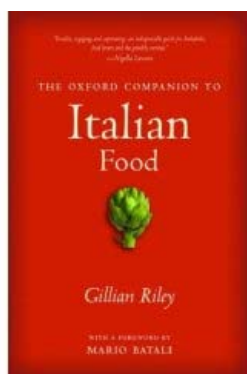
This is a business narrative written by Bill Yenne, a beer journalist living in San Francisco. He has written almost 40 books on a variety of historical topics. Plus six more on beer. This book was originally subtitled: "the story of the world's greatest beer," but better minds prevailed. But this book has been described as a perfectly poured history of the world's most famous beer. And that's 2 billion perfectly poured (one would hope) pints EACH YEAR. This is a mixture of Irish history and the biography of a family, compellingly told over a 250 year frame. Arthur Guinness became a brewer at age 30. His son and namesake came up with the winning formula. His son (grandson Benjamin) became the richest man in Ireland selling stout. It was Benjamin who built the family business into the beer juggernaut, the largest single brewery in the world. In addition to history and biography, this book is also the story of beer technology and craftsmanship. Yenne

has drawn from two basic source documents, Patrick Lynch's *Guinness Brewery in the Irish Economy, 1759-1876* and S.R. Dennison's *Guinness 1886-1939*. Particularly useful is the story of the 1986 innovation to help form the characteristic smooth and creamy head, for an authentic Guinness every time; it is now used in every bottle and can sold. There is a copious bibliography and a very useful index.

Audience: corporate history lovers, erudite beer drinkers, those who serve erudite beer drinkers.

Quality/Price Rating: 91.

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO ITALIAN FOOD (Oxford University Press, 2007, 637 pages, ISBN 978-0-19-860617-8)



This tome is by Gillian Riley, a food historian who makes major contributions to the *Oxford Symposium on Food*, and who is author of *Renaissance Recipes* and the *National Gallery Cookbook*. She's assisted by five contributors, including Anna del Conte and Carol Field, but she's done the bulk of the detail work, including the writing of all the unsigned articles. There are 900 articles here, in an A - Z setup for all of the entries (and no recipes). Major categories of topics include: history, society, culture, variety of cuisine, myths, dishes and prepared foods, ingredients (e.g., seafood, sweets, vegetables, herbs, meats, pasta), delicacies, cooking methods, culinary terms, implements, regional specialties (e.g. Emilia-Romagna), baked goods (amaretti, bruschetta, cornetto, panettone), cheeses. There are 75 biographies of important Italians, mainly chefs. She has some good clarifying notes on the differences between emmer wheat (farro) and spelt. Unfortunately, there is not much on wine or on other

beverages - probably outside her scope. The index has large type; it is extensive with copious cross-references. And there are internal cross-references as well, where appropriate. Headwords stand out clearly. She provides a long and up-to-date bibliography. Basic question: why start with Italian food? Why not French food? Just asking...

Audience and level of use: Italian food lovers, librarians, hospitality schools, food reference book collectors, sommeliers.

Quality/Price Rating: 95

Dean Tudor is Professor Emeritus at Ryerson University. He writes extensively about wine and food.

SOMMELIER OF THE MONTH: Dr. William Piccione

Doing what his heart tells him

By Liisa Sullivan

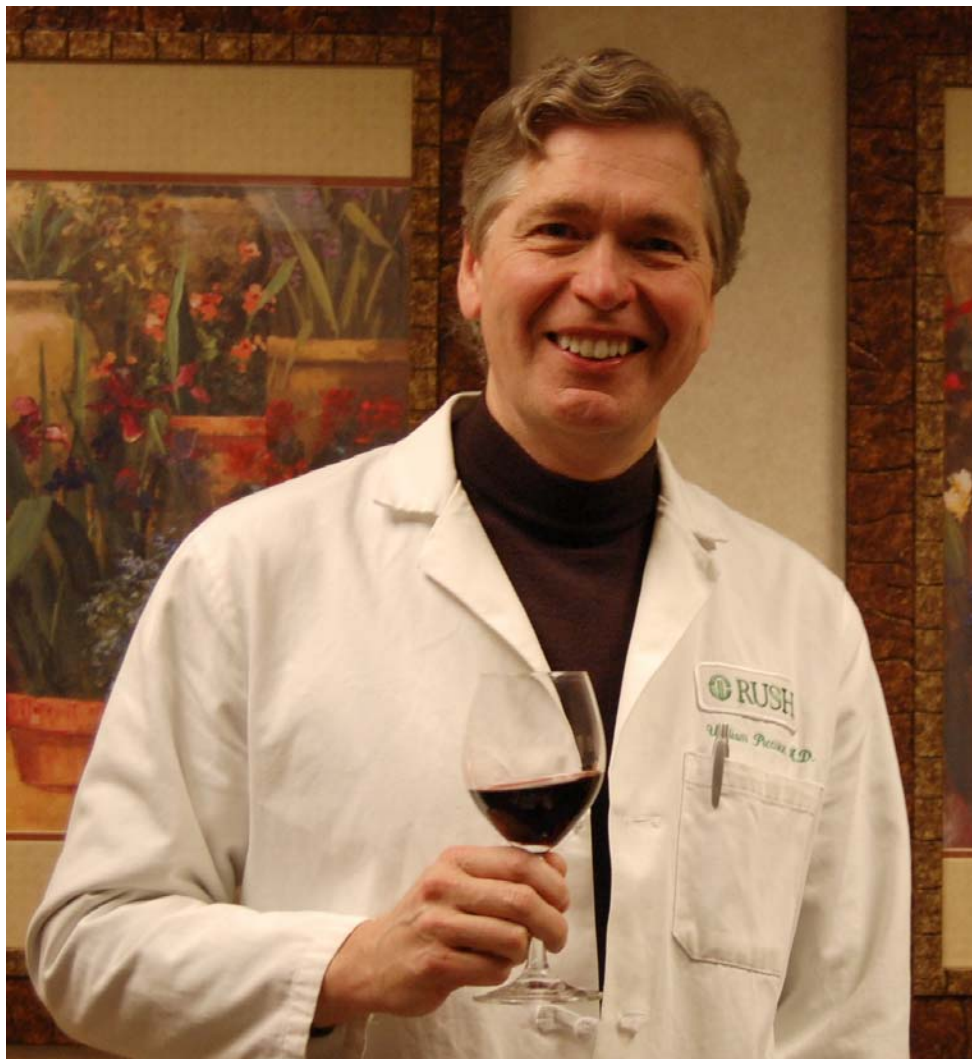
The ISG gave me the opportunity to learn an enormous amount of information in an organized fashion, which I'm sure will help me pursue my passion. I also had the pleasure to meet and study with some wonderful people that I otherwise would never been able to do.

Pursuing a personal passion and craving more knowledge about wine, are the reasons why William Piccione decided to study for his sommelier certification. As a practicing physician for 20 years, he realized the old cliché of "life is short" which prompted him to attend the International Sommelier Guild's classes.

"I have always had an interest in wine and tried to learn

what I could on the subject," Piccione says. "In addition, I've also always wanted to pursue something wine related, whether its importation or a vineyard. The ISG gave me the opportunity to learn an enormous amount of information in an organized fashion, which I'm sure will help me pursue my passion. I also had the pleasure to meet and study

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Dr. William Piccione, Sommelier and Cardiologist

A sommelier has a number of responsibilities, but most importantly, I believe that he or she has to be committed to a career of continued learning. Keeping up with new products, vintages, and producers is an enormous task. But, that's also part of the fun!

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with some wonderful people that I otherwise would never been able to do.

What is your favorite wine? Why?

I don't have a single favorite. There are so many wonderful wines out there and the landscape changes with every harvest. I would say that my favorite wine would depend on the season, the food and the company.

How did you develop an interest in wine?

My grandparents came to this country from Italy and my grandfather continued to make his own wine, as he always had. Wine is such an integral part of the Italian culture. As a young child, I remember going down to my grandfather's cellar which had barrels and a manual winepress. In addition, growing up, we always had a carafe of wine at the dinner table, invariably *rosso*. It wasn't until much later that I discovered the huge variety of wine in the world.

What is your current employment situation?

I have been a practicing physician for 20 years and continue to practice medicine full time. However, I always seem to find some time to pursue wine whether it's reading, tasting or just enjoying.

What is your personal philosophy when it comes to being a sommelier?

A sommelier has a number of responsibilities, but most impor-

tantly, I believe that he or she has to be committed to a career of continued learning. Keeping up with new products, vintages, and producers is an enormous task. But, that's also part of the fun!

What is your most memorable wine-related experience? Why?

Let's keep this PG! Several years ago, I was invited to give a lecture at the University of Siena. As usual, my Italian colleagues were incredible hosts and one day they took me to lunch at a restaurant in the old city called *Brunelli's*. We enjoyed a typically fabulous meal, complete with several local wines, and I thanked Mr. Brunelli profusely for his hospitality. One of my colleagues mentioned in passing my interest in wine and as we stepped out onto the stone street in the afternoon sun, Mr. Brunelli ran out and gave me a bottle of his own wine as a gift. It's true -- Brunelli's Brunello! I still have the bottle, unopened, in my cellar, and I still remember his face beaming with pride when he gave it to me. So, if ever you find yourself in Siena and hungry, *Brunelli's* is still there.

If you were stranded on a deserted island what three wines would you like to have with you and why?

Most deserted islands are temperate, if not hot, and I may be there for a while. That would give me plenty of time to ruminate over my unfortunate situation. For this I would prefer a pleasant Madeira, either a Bual or Malmsey. My diet would presumably consist

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Sommelier News Mission Statement

The International
Sommelier Newsletter
currently reaches more
than 17,000 readers

Our Aims are:

- To provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience of food and beverage industry professionals and enthusiasts world-wide.
- To spread enthusiasm for wine, beer and spirits with intelligent, educationally-oriented material.
- To encourage input and contributions from our readers in all aspects of wine, beer, and spirits.
- To encourage diverse perspectives on the beverage alcohol industry, and to study our topics from the earth to the table.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of their submissions and their opinions may not represent those of the International Sommelier Guild

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mostly of fish and coconuts which would pair well with a Sancerre. Finally, I would keep some Billecart-Salmon Blanc de Blancs Brut well chilled for my eventual rescue or in the event that the island is not really completely deserted...

What wine resources do you use on a regular basis?

Like most people, I try to keep up on things with several trade journals and there is always an abundance of information available on the Internet. The most enjoyable exercise is simply tasting and trying new things.

What is your favorite personal grape?

White: Sauvignon Blanc, although I've recently had some wonderful Pinot Gris from Oregon. Red: Syrah, with Pinot Noir as a very close second.

What are your plans for the future? What do you plan to

Liisa Sullivan is a freelance writer who specializes in writing about the food and wine business.

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The group adheres to a strict Quality Charter concerning vineyard and cellar practices. The members of Return to Terroir/Renaissance des Appellations have applied biodynamic or organic vineyard practices on their entire domaines for at least 3 years organic or biodynamic certification is required and the exceptional quality of their wines meets the standards set by the founder and the directors of the group (N. Joly, O. Humbrecht, D. L'Éclapart, A.-C. Leflaive, P. Morey, Ph. du Roy de Blicquy, Raimond de Villeneuve).

Contact: return.to.terroir@gmail.com for more information

do with your sommelier certification?

My future plans include a vineyard and I am in the midst of purchasing land in the Yadkin Valley in North Carolina. It's not Napa, but the climate is mild, the country is beautiful and it's up and coming. There's a lot of interest in fostering the wine industry in this area and some good people are working hard to develop an identity for the region. Check out Raffaldini Vineyard for a good example of what's going on.

If you could have dinner with anyone and discuss wine, who would it be?

I've read about a Frenchman, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, revered as the greatest gastronome of all time. He apparently wrote several books and took gastronomy and serious discussions of food and dining to new heights. I'm sure dinner would have been several hours long with much discussion and an array of wonderful wines (undoubtedly French). Unfortunately, he died in 1826.

Where Are they Now?

Or; Building the Sommelier Community

Sommelier News is interested in compiling an alumni directory for graduates of the Sommelier Diploma Program. Graduates of the SDP are encouraged to submit a listing stating the following:

- Name**
- Graduation Year**
- Title/Position**
- Business Contact Information**

In every issue, we will feature

Sommeliers on the Move, where graduates can announce new titles, positions and responsibilities.

Email to
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First Press

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followed by Michigan's 40 home-grown producers, according to news accounts. No winery has approached the 1,500-case annual limit on direct shipping that some feared would be too restrictive. "We're getting good response, but not a whole lot of volume," Angela Simpson, spokeswoman for the Liquor Control Commission, told newspapers.

Crying over spilled wine

A Melbourne brewery executive was on the verge of tears when he had to smash two bottles of Australia's best-known wine, worth about \$3000, at Melbourne Airport. Neil Grant, southern region general manager with Foster's Australia, ran foul of the tough air security rules as he was about to board an Emirates flight to Britain, reports the HeraldSun. "I was going to conferences in Scotland and Ireland, and grabbed a 1980 and an '82 Grange from my personal cellar," Grant said. The problem: Grant had forgotten about the limited liquids rule applying to carry-on luggage.

Worldwide winemakers feeling the heat

Climate change may mean a future of sparkling wine coming from Britain or even Tasmania. "With the prospect of climate change looming, and technology enabling grape growing in regions once thought beyond the vintner's pale, scientists predict

substantial shifts in global wine production. The changes could turn the wine market on its head and force seasoned oenophiles to consider—gasp—the finer points of a New Hampshire cabernet," says a daily analysis from the Council on Foreign Relations. The problem isn't that the world is getting hotter, but rather that temperatures are becoming more erratic. Michael A. White, a wine climate expert and professor at Utah State University, says "increases in the frequency of extremely hot days are going to be producing a progressively more challenging environment for wine production."

Hangover for wine growers

In Australia, years of boom will be followed by gloom as the nation's wine grape vintage plummets in 2008, a victim of the drought. "The big dry will force as many as 1,000 wine grape growers to quit the industry and follows a period of record exports and Australian winemakers being feted on the world stage," says the Sydney Herald. The drought-affected vintages could force 1,000 of the nation's 7,500 wine grape growers to leave the industry, many of them among the most renowned in the nation. Most are from the parched Murray-Darling Basin, which supplies 60-70 per cent of Australia's wine grape production.

Making wine with strawberries?

The Poteet winery is making its

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and Paul Martzoukos**

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product with strawberries but no one should make jokes about the Texas wine industry, which ranked fifth in the US according to 2007 Grape Growers Association report. Most vineyards are found in the Texas Hill Country. "The soil and terrain of the Hill Country are very similar to the hills of Italy and France," according to Wilson County News. Grapes grown include Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Merlot. Some Texas vineyards are also doing great work with grapes such as Sangiovese, Syrah, Riesling, and Viognier. And, of course, strawberries.

Fine wine: almost as good as oil

Fine wine was second only to oil as an investment this year as the value of top Bordeaux increased by more than 90%, reports Decanter.com. Some wines nearly doubled their value. Cases of Lafite-Rothschild 2000 saw a 91% increase. The 2003 and 1982 vintages rose by more than 76%. Other top performers included Montrose 2003, which went up 64%, selling for £1,540 a case this month. Margaux 2003 also did particularly well, nearly doubling in price.

The First Press features monthly wine related news selected by roving correspondent and long-time professional journalist, David Wilkening.

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It's a Matter of Taste