



JUNE 2020

Dear Members,

Well, it has certainly been a different world these last few months, certainly different than anything we ever anticipated. It has been tragic for some, disrupting for all and our lives will be changed forever in many ways. Things will eventually get back to “normal”, but it will be a new normal, better in some ways but perhaps not so good in others.

For those of us who grew up in simpler times, we have learned that life is full of difficult periods and trying circumstances but it is not that we have problems, because all of us do, it is how we address and solve our problems that makes us stronger and better.

Betty and I are fortunate enough to no longer have to depend on a weekly paycheck but we are at a period in our lives that we looked forward to sharing our time with good friends, traveling and doing all the things we have wanted to do for many years, but just didn't have the time. So COVID has caused us to cancel and/or postpone trips planned and to stay at home like everyone else. Given this time of relative isolation though, has allowed us to get caught up on things that we never had or never made time for. As one example, we had always wanted to build a wine cellar in our new home and although it is still unfinished, it is far enough along that today we cranked up the cellar A/C and are bringing it down to proper temperature so that we can begin to move our wine from remote storage to home where we can access it and enjoy it with friends (safely).

I hope that all our members are not only surviving these times but have accomplished significant things and made lasting memories of some good experiences.

Perhaps the most incredible wine tour we have every been on was with Roy Hersh, who is a port and sherry wine critic and the editor of “For the Love of Port”, when we toured the Duoro Valley in Portugal as part of our RWAFF wine events at and after the Lisbon Convention. If you enjoy port, you ought to subscribe to his newsletter: <https://www.fortheloveofport.com/subscribe-to-ftlop-2/>. I mention this because Roy published an article that resonates with me in these days and I thought you would like to read it:

What is Port Wine?

Port is a sweet, red, fortified wine from Portugal. Port wine is most commonly enjoyed as a dessert wine because its richness.

The Common Styles of Port Wine

There are many different official categories of Port, but most fall under these 4 categories:

Ruby (Red) Port: a deeply-colored red Port which includes Vintage, Late-bottled Vintage (LBV), Crusted and Ruby Port

Tawny Port: a very sweet barrel-aged port with oxidative nut and caramel flavors

White Port: made with indigenous white grapes including Rabigato, Viosinho, Gouveio and Malvasia

Rosé Port: This is a new style of Port wine made like rosé wine with flavors of strawberry, violets and caramel



FOR THE LOVE OF PORT™

COLLECTIVE PORT WISDOM

Difficult days have descended upon our planet and we are all in this together. More weeks of staying at home are in most everyone's path, and no matter how we all wish for things to normalize, it will require considerable time and patience for us to see what eventually emerges as "the new normal." We at FTLOP hope that you and your loved ones remain safe and are not personally infected by Covid-19. While many of us do have family members that have taken ill and required medical treatment or worse, warnings to remain at home and practice social distancing are for the greater good of our communities. For those with businesses interrupted, great and small, the economic impact on family's can be very harsh right now ... and this is not said lightly. In time, this too shall pass, but it won't happen quickly. There will be a renaissance!

While many friends are experiencing cabin fever, (I am told that no Portuguese term describes this) it is our hope that you are finding ways to engage with your family and remain safe and healthy and maybe even productive. If you are on your own, the same applies. I have read as friends mention what they're doing and typically, hobbies are invoked. A few mentioned they had resorted to the music and art world; listening to vinyl that they've not had time for in ages or creating new play lists for their phones. Others have either begun or returned to painting. Or spoiling kids and pets with affection. Some are drinking more wine. I began organizing my cluttered wine cellar and considered getting my collection on to a great computerized program like CellarTracker; which needs to happen, while time is readily available. My main focus has been to ensure that issue #102 delivers plenty of captivating content for all subscribers. We've also had to face painful realities and make difficult decisions regarding our 2020 wine tours.

Additionally, I've been getting back into the kitchen to sharpen cooking skills that have worn dull in recent years — since formal culinary school days. As much as current isolation presents time for introspection, projects and opportunities, I found the latter involving my wine collection. I greatly prefer drinking mature still wine, as well as Port & Madeira. As an example, I still own bottles purchased in the late 1980's and through the mid-1990's, finally, they're ready to drink. For tasting notes, I am happy to examine new releases or taste the young ones, as that practice keeps my palate sharp. Living at a slower pace, with the edict to "shelter in place" it's important to realize, there comes a time when one must break out some of the well-aged best bottles with family; not just when wine geek friends come to dinner. While reorganizing my cellar, the old axiom, "You can't take them with you" hit hard! During this period of enlightenment, I urge everyone to consider digging deep into your collection and enjoy some of the refined pleasure of consuming some of those great old Ports, Madeira and wines from around the world. This is as good a time as any to pry open some of those very special bottles you've hung onto until they were "ready". I've seen way too many of them come up at auction ... and realized that someone held them a bit too long. Covid-19 presents a drinking op;

Thanks for your supPORT!

Roy

R.I. Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA (June 7-10 2020)

Obviously, the convention did not happen in Hawaii but a big “Thanks!” needs to go to Liz Kane and the whole team in Hawaii who spend countless hours planning the convention and our RWF wine events there. A lot of hard work and considerable expense has gone into a wasted effort thanks to COVID – but that is our life these days. Better days are ahead!

How an English Energy Crisis Helped Create Champagne

Desperate bottle-makers turning to a new fuel resulted in a sparkling innovation.

By: Jai Ubhi

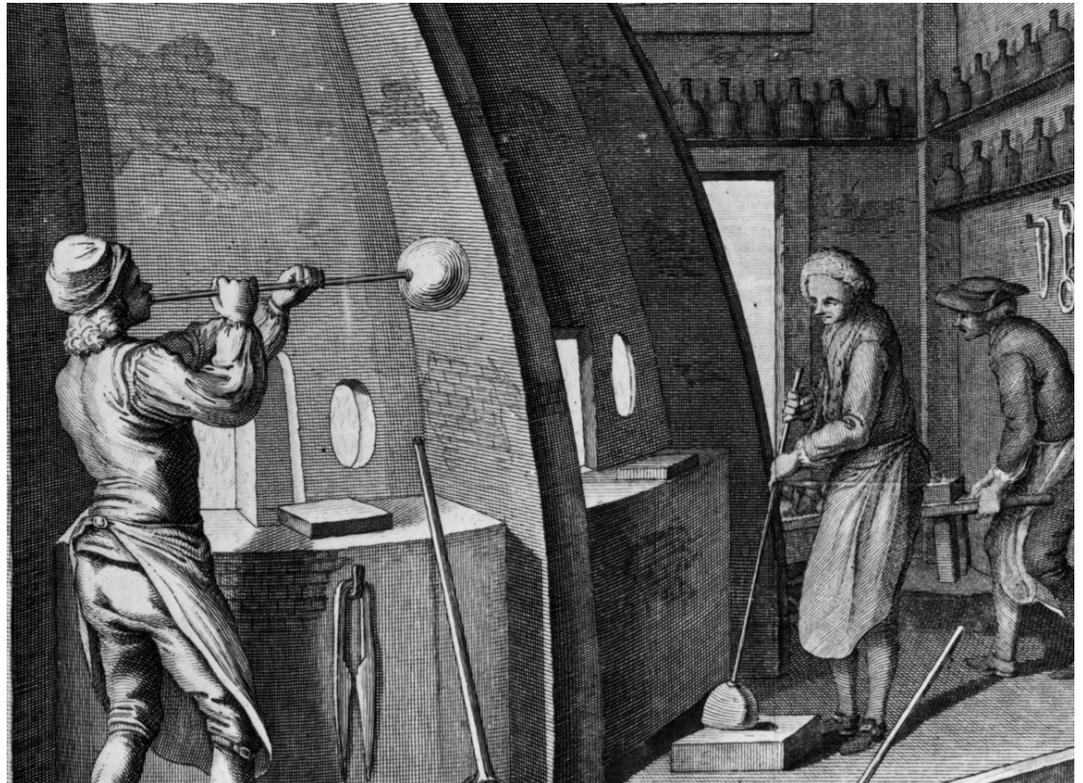
IN THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY, the kingdom of England was in the grip of the world’s first energy crisis. Decades of population growth, rapid urbanization, countless foreign wars, and myriad voyages of discovery to the New World under the capricious Tudors decimated the country’s forests and its timber supply. King James I was terrified. No trees for timber meant no ships for the navy, and no navy meant leaving the country wide open and undefended against England’s enemies—which, at this time, was pretty much all of the rest of Europe. This lack of timber was nothing short of an existential threat to England itself.

A panicked Royal proclamation was swiftly issued in 1615 to stem the tide. It bemoaned the increasing dearth of good old English wood, “great and large in height and bulk” with “toughness and heart,” which is “of excellent use for shipping,” and it set out a series of drastic restrictions for its use for anything but absolutely essential purposes. In particular, the proclamation explicitly forbade that anyone should be so wasteful as to “melt, make or causeth to be melted or made, any kind, form or fashion of Glass or Glasses whatsoever, with Timber, or wood, or any Fewell made of Timber of wood.”

No timber as fuel to make glass? The country’s glass-makers were outraged. They had been burning timber for centuries to make their product: an almost alchemical process of using fearsome heat to melt a mixture of potash and sand. What on earth were they to do now?

While craftsmen around the country were up in arms about this new prohibition, the attentions of the London upper class were engrossed with a decadent new product. English wine has long been maligned. The ancient historian

Tacitus wrote that Britain was “hostile and unsuitable for the growing of grapes,” but it was his fellow Romans who brought their vines to Britain two millennia ago to sustain them in their drafty villas. A thousand years later, the Domesday Book listed 45 working vineyards in the country. And, in the 1600s, a new type of wine was being produced on the shores of England: refined and unique in character, to cater to the tastes of the affluent and upwardly mobile individuals who had flocked to the capital. And, for that, we turn to Christopher Merrett.





Champagne's sweet taste and bubbles quickly made it a go-to for festive occasions, even for this group in the countryside.

Sir Christopher Merrett was possessed by an insatiable curiosity. A librarian, gentleman scholar, physician, and, in the terminology of the time, a “natural philosopher,” Merrett was one of the founding members of the Royal Society: the “invisible college” where the greatest minds of the age investigated the minutiae of the known world. His output was extraordinary. He even produced an exhaustively comprehensive book attempting to list all the fauna, flora, and minerals of England. But it's his 1662 paper, *Some Observations Concerning the Ordering of Wines*, that has had the longest legacy. “Our Wine-coopers of latter times use vast quantities of Sugar and Melosses to all sorts of Wines,” he wrote, “to make them drink brisk and sparkling and to give them Spirits.”

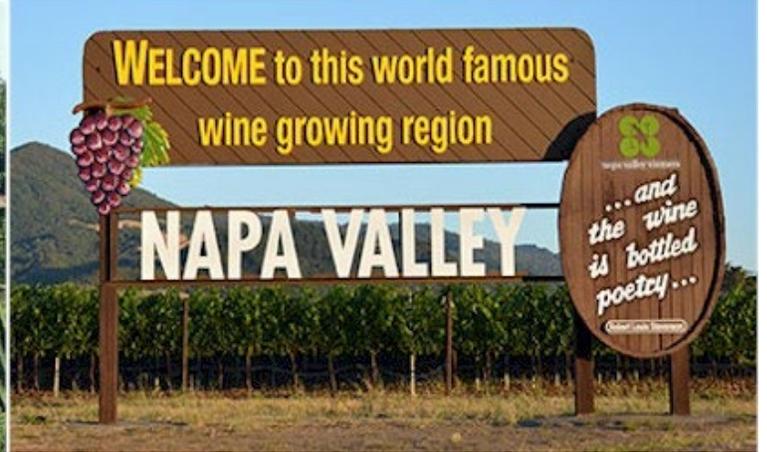
What Merrett was describing was the *méthode champenoise*, the act of secondary fermentation where still table wines are loaded up with sugar and molasses to get the yeast going again, then sealed in a bottle to produce an effervescent, bubbling concoction. It is a method made famous, as the name suggests, by the French in the Champagne region. But here is the first known description of making “sparkling” wine—and Merrett writing that British vintners had been doing this for years. The problem with this new liquid, “brisk with spirits,” was that it generated an incredible amount of pressure. In a standard bottle of sparkling wine today, the internal pressure is at around six times that of atmospheric pressure—three times that of a car tire. That's the equivalent to more than five kilograms of weight pushing hard against every square centimeter of glass. Only an especially strong bottle could withstand this sort of pressure. Thankfully, England's glass-makers were prepared.

After the royal proclamation a few years before, English glass-makers had reluctantly turned to coal. While wood was thought of as a noble fuel, across Europe coal was historically considered undesirable and dirty, and the act itself of mining it had been likened to vandalism or burglary from the earth ever since Roman times. Even though it was well known that rich seams of coal ran across England, these were left largely untouched for centuries. Nonetheless, once laborers started begrudgingly using this coal to heat their furnaces, they overcame their reservations. Sure, coal gave off fumes and toxins, but it also reached a much higher temperature than timber, creating stronger, more durable, and thicker glass. Over time, artisans honed new industrial methods to take advantage of this discovery. While European counterparts were still using wood, the Champagne bottle as we know it was born in the furnaces of England.

Not only did these new bottles help spawn an embryonic wine industry, but they became status objects themselves. Samuel Pepys, in his *Diaries*, writes excitedly about visiting his local vintner to see “some of my new bottles made, with my crest upon them, filled with wine, about five or six dozen.” The introduction of lead oxide later in the century made the bottles even stronger, and catapulted England's craftsman to the pinnacle of European glass-makers.

Napa Valley vs. Bordeaux... By the Numbers

Posted on March 3, 2020 by Robert Johnson



If you've ever toured the Napa Valley — driving from the Carneros region in the south to Calistoga in the north, then crisscrossing between Highway 29 and the Silverado Trail and perhaps climbing the winding Atlas Peak Road — it can seem like a big place. And it is.

Although the valley is relatively narrow, there's a lot for a wine lover to see and do... and taste. So how does Napa Valley stack up against the region to which it's most often compared — France's Bordeaux appellation?

Well, think of Bordeaux as a bucket, and think of Napa as a drop in the bucket. In other words, by comparison, Bordeaux is big. Really big.

Here are a few numbers to demonstrate the differences...

- * Napa Valley has 46,000 acres of vineyards. Bordeaux has 287,000.
- * Napa attracts around 3.85 million visitors per year. Bordeaux draws 6.8 million.
- * Napa has around 475 "physical" wineries, averaging two brands per estate. Bordeaux has 6,100 chateaux — typically much smaller than the average Napa estate, but eclipsing Napa in the number of labels. (Fun fact: The reason there are so many chateaux is that, through the years, many have been divided as they've been handed down from generation to generation.)
- * While Napa is responsible for a significant percentage of California's and America's wine production, it makes only 0.4% of the global wine supply. Bordeaux produces 2.6% of the world's wine.
- * Napa wineries produce an average of 115,680,000 bottles of wine each year. Bordeaux chateaux produce 960 million.

So the next time you're in the Napa Valley and feeling a bit overwhelmed by all the winery, restaurant and shopping choices, look at the bright side: You could be in Bordeaux instead.

Hmm... come to think of it, I don't see a downside to this scenario.

Humor

All the passengers are seated on a plane out on the tarmac and the stewardess announces "We're just waiting for the pilots." The passengers look out the window and see two men, dressed as pilots walking towards the plane. Both men are using guide dogs and appear to be blind. There are murmurs among the passengers, and some believe it is a joke. The men board the plane and go into the cockpit. More concerned murmurs and uneasy chuckles from the passengers. The plane taxis normally to the runway and begins its takeoff. As passengers look out the window they realize they are nearing the end of the runway. The entire passenger cabin begins screaming but the plane lifts off just before the end of the runway. The passengers calm down and chuckle to themselves. In the cockpit, the pilot turns to his copilot and says "You know, one day those people are gonna scream too late and we're all gonna die!"

Editor's Note: *Do you remember airplanes and flying?*

Wine Quote of the Month:

Anonymous "Let us celebrate with wine and sweet words."

Calendar of Events:

In this section, we want to publicize any upcoming events that either the RWA or local chapters are planning. An even quicker, better way is to list them on our Facebook page: Rotarian's Wine Appreciation Fellowship

As we continue to do, we will list about ten value wines with each newsletter. These are wines from around the world that are readily available in many markets, are rated by some "expert" as being at least 88 points (out of 100) and which cost \$20 USD or less. We would appreciate any additions suggested by any member. We feel that no matter what type of wine you enjoy, you ought to be able to find a good one at a reasonable price.

Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
NV	Rondel	Brut Cava, Spain	Sparkling Wine	\$8	90	W&S
2017	Atrevida	Argentina	Malbec	\$10	89	WA
2018	Conscious	Willamette, Oregon	Pinot Noir	\$11	90	WE
2017	Bellini	Chianti Classico	Sangiovese	\$12	90	JS
2015	Bulgariana	Bulgaria	Cabernet Sauvignon	\$12	90	WE
2017	Muirwood	Arroyo Seco, California	Sauvignon Blanc	\$13	90	WE
2018	Vina Santa Ema	Maipo Valley Reserva, Chile	Cabernet Sauvignon	\$17	91	WS
2018	Volver	Monastrell	Alicante Tarima	\$9	88	WS
2018	Vina Tarapaca	Maipo Valley Gran Reserva, Chile	Carmenere	\$18	91	WS
2017	Cousino-Macul	Maipo Valley Antiguas Reservas	Cabernet Sauvignon	\$17	90	WS

A Few Special Wines:

Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
2016	Silverado Estate	Napa Valley, CA	Cabernet Sauvignon	\$32	93	JS
2016	Chateau Malescot St. Exupery	Margaux	Bordeaux	\$55	98/99	JS

WS = "Wine Spectator" WA = "Wine Advocate" (Robert Parker) WE = "Wine Enthusiast"
V = "Vinous" (now including IWC, International Wine Cellar) CCH = Not yet rated, my score

We will always appreciate your comments and suggestions. You are receiving these newsletters because you are members of the RWA and publishing a newsletter is one of the duties of a Rotary Fellowship. If you would like to discontinue receiving these newsletters, please so indicate by return email and you will be removed from our address list.

Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve.

Conrad C. Heede, PDG, President, RWA

