



OCTOBER 2020

Dear Members,

One of our overall objectives for the RWAFF is to increase our knowledge about wine, wine and food pairings and other related topics so that our own appreciation of good wine will be enhanced. Whether you are a wine novice or a wine expert, we all can and should learn more about our avocation.

For example, we all would like to be able to select the right wine for each situation and know why it is the right wine. By that, I don't necessarily mean the most expensive nor the best overall wine that you have in your storage but the wine that tastes the best *to you* in that particular setting. We learn from our successes and our failures but we can increase the chances of success by learning more about the basics of wine, wine tasting and wine and food pairing.

We want to provide our membership with sources of references and resources that are readily accessible to most everyone. Our membership spans the world (70 countries at present) so we certainly need every member's help and suggestions. We will begin a list of books, magazines, websites, instruction courses, etc., that I am familiar with, at the end of this note. This is by no means complete, just a start. We will post these lists on the website and add to them during the year as you submit them to us. You might add your comments about the resources as well, such as your recommendation regarding the value of the resource, the level of knowledge it addresses or how best to use it.

Our membership includes wine advocates with all levels of expertise. We encourage members to share their knowledge and experiences. Submit articles, letters, stories, etc. that would be of interest to our membership and we will post them on our website. Send us reports of wine events that you enjoyed, stories of your own personal wine experiences that were memorable and that might be reproduced by other members, wine courses you took that added to you knowledge and can possibly be accessed by other members, description of RWAFF occurrences that provided special fellowship and memories, etc. Send us articles on how to properly taste wine, descriptions of what a Cabernet Sauvignon should taste like, how terroir influences different varietals in different parts of the world, anything that will enhance our collective wine knowledge and be of interest to a majority of our members.

Magazines:

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|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Wine Spectator | www.winespectator.com |
| PO Box 37367 | \$49.95 per year in the US |
| Boone, IA 50037-0367 USA | 14 or 15 issues per year |

Perhaps the best overall wine magazine on the market in the US. Has many interesting and informative articles. Several members have recently asked for tips on touring Napa Valley, California. The September 30, 2017 issue is all about Napa Valley and I urge you to read it (I have included one excerpt below). It also has a great article about the great back-to-back vintages of White Burgundy and an article on California Pinot Noirs. They rate hundreds of wines in each issue and they have a great website with extensive wine ratings available, weekly newsletters with the latest ratings, online wine courses, etc.

2. **The Wine Advocate** www.robertparker.com
PO Box 311 \$60 per year
Monkton, MD 21111

This is Robert Parker's publication. This is the hard copy, which lists all the wines he has recently tasted. The email version (Robert Parker, www.robertparker.com, \$99 per year) is a resource publication where you find almost any wine or wine topic they have ever written with links to all sorts of resources.

3. **Wine Enthusiast** www.winemag.com
PO Box 420777 \$26.95 per year in the US
Palm Coast, FL 32142-8494 14 issues per year

Similar to the "Wine Spectator" in format. Has interesting and informative articles in most issues, some are very good. Has a Buying Guide that rates hundreds of wines in each issue.

4. **Decanter** www.decanter.com
Prices vary based on the type of subscription (print or online) and the source (discounts available)

Decanter is Britain's leading wine magazine, a magazine on wine and spirits, published in about 90 countries on a monthly basis. The magazine includes industry news, vintage guides and wine recommendations. Decanter also organizes the annual Decanter World Wine Awards

Apps:

All of the above can be accessed online so you can use their research abilities from your smart phone and there are some good apps that can help, as well. For example, many of us use ***Vivino that will take a picture of your wine label in the store or restaurant and give you a rating of the wine and a retail price for most wines.***

Books:

1. "*Windows on the World Complete Wine Course*", Kevin Zraly (Founder and teacher of the Windows on the World Wine School, formerly at the Windows on the World Restaurant in the World Trade Center twin towers in New York). A "must read" book; a simple, practical, easy to use wine course. Mr. Zraly describes the trends in wine over the past ten years and takes you on a country-by-country, region-by-region, "best buy" ratings tour of the latest vintages. Updated annually.
2. "*Great Wine Made Simple*" - Andrea Immer (Master Sommelier). This book makes selecting and enjoying wine truly simple. It describes easy and fun tasting lessons to help you identify what you like and to learn how to spot in on a menu or shelf.
3. "*Making Sense of Wine*" – Alan Young (President of the International Wine Academy). This book describes how our senses of sight, smell, touch and taste respond to food and beverage (wine in particular) stimulation.
4. "*Australian Wine Annual*" by Jeremy Oliver (one of the most widely read and influential wine critic in Australia). Provides a comprehensive guide to buying and cellaring Australian wine.
5. "*Australian Wine Companion*" by James Halliday (has contributed to more than 56 books on wine since he began writing in 1979. His books have been translated into Japanese, French, German, Danish and Icelandic, and have been published in the UK, the US and Australia. He is also the author of James Halliday's Wine Atlas of Australia and The Australian Wine Encyclopedia.
6. "*For the Love of Port*" by Roy Hersch (www.fortheloveofport.com). The recently revised book is a tremendous source of information on all aspect of Port. Also sign up for Roy Hersh's free monthly newsletter: "*For The Love Of Port*" Have a look at Roy's exciting trips to Madeira and the Port region of Portugal. Find hundreds of Port and Madeira tasting notes.

Online Wine Buying Sources:

There are many online buying sources available in the United States and I am sure in many parts of the world that can provide us access to difficult to find wines and/or lower prices. These vary not only by country but also by state according to the local laws, so it would be impossible to give a comprehensive list but I have used No Limit Fine Wines, WTSO (Wine 'Til Sold Out), Zacky's, Last Bottle, First Bottle, The Wine House, some of the magazines listed above can find & ship wine, wine storage facilities, the larger wine shops, etc. It seems that all you have too

do is to subscribe to one or two of them and the rest find you!

We also want to suggest wines for our members to try, in our newsletters. Our focus will be on good wine at reasonable prices that are readily available. We arbitrarily will define “reasonable price” as wines that cost \$20 USD or less. This is going to be tough because all wines may not/will not be available to every member in every part of the world and prices vary, but we will include wines from as many places as we can. We will begin with a list of good wines that represent great value and that should be easily found. Every month we will post a list of ten or more wines in this category. We also want to mention some great wines that we have enjoyed and that we highly recommend. These will be higher priced and perhaps more difficult to find but they represent good value for the money invested. Again, we need and encourage all members to submit wines that they know about that we can add to the list, in either category. Find these selections at the end of each newsletter.

Wine Myths

One of our RWAF Lifetime members, Brian Moore, PDG, aka “Chief Grape”, has offered to send us some articles that he has written on wine Appreciation over the years and we will be featuring them in the next newsletters. Here is the first one:



MYTH #2

“Wine critics know which wine is best for you”

There are some extremely talented people in the wine industry. The title of wine critic is often viewed as the all-knowable guru whose palate is worshiped. Their method of assessment is not to be questioned. Robert Parker Jr, a notable wine critic argues that he scores wines on how much pleasure they give him. Another well-known wine critic and cigar aficionado is James Suckling. His approach to wine tasting is learning what is behind the actual making of the wine. By knowing the story of the wine, the tasting experience for him is enhanced. Both Parker and Suckling taste more wines in a year that most of us will ever achieve in a lifetime. They continue to hone their skills in assessing wines and we have benefited in their sharing their opinions and knowledge with us. They possess the ability to identify wines that exemplify the wine varietal as well as the winemaker’s style. This is a goal for all of us who indulge in the appreciation of wine.

Each one of us has a perception of the perfect wine. It’s a natural notion. Our senses; vision, smell and taste, all play key roles in our personal assessment of a wine. I have sat on wine judging panels where judge evaluations were all over the map for a single wine; from awarding a gold medal to discarding the wine because the color wasn’t just right. Being human, we all have our ‘hot’ buttons. What may be acceptable to some is intolerable to others especially when it comes to wine tasting. Everyone has their opinion especially when that person happens to be a wine judge!!!

A wine judge, such as me, is perceived by some to be a wine critic. When we judges bestow an award on a wine, we are acting on our expectation of what the wine should be based on our knowledge and experiences. You, the consumer, may take exception to the wine receiving an award in that it doesn’t suit your palate. In some cases people feel pressured in saying they like a gold medal winning wine when in truth, they didn’t. And that is where I must take a moment to explain the reasoning behind issuing wine awards. What we wine

critics/judges are simply stating as we believe **the wine represents a good example of that style of wine making while reflecting the genuine characteristics of the grape varietal.** We are not saying that you, the consumer should or will like it. Indeed, you may not like that style of wine making or varietal characteristics. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that scenario. The number 1 rule in enjoying wine is drink what you like and not what another individual may say "you should like"! So remember "Wine Critics know which wine is best for you" is just a myth!!! Life is too short to drink wine you can't enjoy!!

Humor

Two guys are out walking their dogs on a hot day, when they pass by a pub. The first guy says "Let's go in there for a pint." Second guy, says, "They won't let us in with our dogs." First guy: "Sure they will, just follow my lead." He goes up to the pub, and sure enough the doorman says, "I can't let you in here with that dog." He replies, "Oh, I'm blind and this is my seeing-eye dog." The doorman says, "Ok then, come on in." The second guy sees this and does the same thing. He goes up to the pub, and the doorman says, "You can't come in here with a dog." He replies, "I'm blind and this is my seeing-eye dog." The doorman responds, "You have a chihuahua for a seeing-eye dog?" The second guy stops for a second, and exclaims, "They gave me a chihuahua?"

Wine Quote of the Month:

Some may disagree but -

"As a cure for worrying, work is better than whiskey." *Thomas Edison, Inventor*

Calendar of Events:

In this section, we want to publicize any upcoming events that either the RWA or local chapters are planning.

November 19, 2020:

My name is Maria Caselli and I am a Rotarian with the Rotary Club of Naperville, Naperville, Illinois. I wanted to let you know about a very special event you and other members of the Rotarian Wine Appreciation Fellowship might be interested in attending as well as share with others.

On Thursday, November 19, 7:00 pm CT, the Rotary Club of Naperville Charities will host a virtual Jazz and Wine event to raise funds to support mental health and awareness and domestic abuse shelters. Elevage Wines & Spirits has connected us with the well-known Napa area winery Meyer Family Cellars who graciously offered their wine to support our event. Bonnie Meyer, co-founder of Silver Oaks Vineyard, will also be a guest speaker.

For more detailed information about this event, including how you can **receive 10% off the purchase of wine**, please visit the website at www.jazzquilt.org

If you have any questions, please contact me at mariaacaselli@gmail.com or call 630-569-2566. Thank you. I do hope you will join us for an evening featuring wine from Meyer Family Cellars and world renowned Jazz artists.

Cheers!

Maria

Wildfires have ravaged Napa Valley. Will California's wine industry survive?

On October 1, 2020, the Glass Fire continued to rage through the wine country of California's Napa and Sonoma counties. By October 7, more than 67,000 acres and more than 630 residences had been lost. Viticulture, a major driver of the local economy, has been decimated by wildfires in recent years.

PUBLISHED October 9, 2020

By **Esther Mobley**

In late summer, Napa Valley was forced to confront a harsh reality: Harvest season in this world-famous wine region is now also fire season.

The unprecedented [fire events of 2020](#) have left little doubt that [California's](#) wine country has entered a new, dangerous era. First, in August, came a lightning siege that sparked fires throughout the state. One of the lightning strikes touched down in Napa. The resulting fire would ultimately grow to over 360,000 acres, resulting in five deaths.

Then, in late September, a separate blaze known as the [Glass Fire](#) erupted in Napa Valley. It would soon become the most destructive wildfire in the history of this [valley](#)—worse, even, than the record-setting fires of 2017. This time, 1,235 buildings have been destroyed, including nearly 300 homes.

The Chateau Boswell was established in 1979 by the late Richard Boswell and is currently run by Susan Boswell. It's one of the handful of family-run private wineries in the region and contributes to the Napa region's quality wine reputation.

As well as the destruction of Chateau Boswell in the town of St. Helena, a castle-style tourist attraction farmhouse winery Castello di Amorosa, plus Merus Wines and Davis Estates were under imminent threat from the fast-moving flames. The Black Rock Inn bed and breakfast was also up in flames.

Boswell

From there, the fire moved relentlessly through the valley's northern stretches, damaging structures on at least [26 wine and vineyard estates](#). [Castello di Amorosa](#), a popular tourist hub modeled on a medieval Tuscan castle that took 15 years and \$40 million to construct, saw one of its main buildings destroyed. [Newton Vineyard](#), an ambitious property owned by luxury conglomerate Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessey that had just completed

renovations a few weeks earlier, was in ruins.



But most of the Glass Fire’s devastation occurred at small-scale, family-run wine estates—names like [Behrens](#), [Sherwin](#), [Hourglass](#), and [Hunnicut](#). Historic buildings dating to the mid-19th century at [Burgess](#), [Cain](#), and others went up in flames. Along with them went inventories of bottled wine, in some cases the entire production of multiple years.

Northern Napa Valley, reliably verdant and lush at this time of year, became an eerie landscape of charred earth and white ash. Grapevines were blackened, wineries reduced to rubble.

Napa is America’s most celebrated and important wine region, the figurehead of California’s \$40 billion statewide industry. But the disasters of 2020, compounded by the serial devastation of recent years, have thrown it into existential crisis. Climate change, which was already [threatening to alter the taste](#) of Napa’s prized Cabernet Sauvignons, is now fueling fires that seem to turn more destructive each time.

The implications ripple through every facet of life here. The perennial presence of wildfire threatens the farmworkers who must choose whether to work in oppressively smoky air or not work at all. It imperils the local economies of wine country’s towns, which have grown heavily dependent on tourism—to the tune of \$2.23 billion in visitor spending in a typical Napa Valley year. And it endangers the viability of the wine itself: By one estimate, complications from fire and smoke may prevent as much as 80 percent of Napa Valley’s 2020 [Cabernet Sauvignon grapes](#) being made into wine.

Less than 24 hours after the Glass Fire exploded, one of Napa Valley’s grandest wineries could be seen engulfed in flames. The hand-quarried stone winery of [Château Boswell](#), located on the storied Silverado Trail, was decimated.

“All my personal possessions were lost,” says owner Susan Boswell, “but most importantly my family history,” including the first bottles of wine that her late husband had made in 1979. (Also gone, she added, were letters that her ancestor [Aaron Burr had written to his wife Theodosia](#).)

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Despite the extent of the losses, most of the 215 wineries located within Napa Valley’s evacuation zones were still standing by the time the Glass Fire was reaching a [stable containment level](#), one week later—thanks to some unknowable equation of firefighting, vineyards, wind patterns and luck. But the hard questions were only starting to surface.

Many Napa and Sonoma wineries proceeded with the harvest despite the fires. In fact, the need to pick the grapes felt even more urgent for wine quality, to minimize the grapes’ exposure to outdoor smoke. That meant that some managers were sending farmworkers near active blazes.

June 12 – 16, 2021: Rotary International Convention in Taipei, Taiwan. Register early so there will be less chance of a conflict between our dinners and the opening and closing ceremonies. Our Vice President, Stan Galanski, will be planning to have another good convention experience for RWAf members (assuming it happens!).

Recommended Value Wines:

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
2016	Chateau Fontis	Cru Borgeois, Medoc, FR	Red Blend	\$16	92	JS
2016	Chateau Pitray	Cotes Costillon, FR	Red Blend	\$10	91	WE
2015	Angry Bunch	Mendocino, CA	Zinfandel	\$15	90	WE
2017	The Federalist	Lodi, CA	Zinfandel	\$12	90	JS
2014	Dept. 66 Rhon	Cotes Catalanes, FR	Red Blend	\$20	93	WA
2016	Catena	Mendoza, AR	Chardonnay	\$15	92	JS
2017	Disruption	Columbia Valley, WA	Chardonnay	\$12	90	WE
2018	Jean Leon	Penendes, SP	Chardonnay	\$17	91	JS
2017	Chalk Hill	Sonoma Coast, CA	Chardonnay	\$17	91	WA
2018	Wairau River	Marlborough, NZ	Sauvignon Blanc	\$12	90	WS

A Few Special Wines:

Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
2018	Solomon Undhoff	Wachtberg, Austria	Gruener Weltliner	\$21	94	JS
2018	Flonan Mollet	Pouilly Fume	White	\$27	94	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 RWAF 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, RWAF

