

Book and Film Reviews

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RONALD J. CLARKE and JOKIE BAKKER: *Wine Flavour Chemistry*. 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 2011, 440 pp., ISBN 978-1-4443-3042-7 (cloth), US\$199.95.

Would it be useful to learn about wine flavor chemistry? From the standpoint of the professional involved in winemaking, student of enology, or those who wish to follow the winemaking literature, this is undoubtedly an important topic. Maynard Amerine, a University of California at Davis professor and pioneer in viticulture and enology stated late in his career that if he were a young man who wanted to become a winemaker, he would first study chemistry. The secrets of many a mystery of wine's flavors are being discovered at a rapid pace through advances in wine chemistry. Despite the fact that winemaking might always remain an art, science has contributed greatly to the improvement in winemaking, and today's wines are much less likely to have sensory faults. Thus wine chemistry science clearly has benefits for the consumer as well. This second edition of *Wine Flavour Chemistry*, by Jokie Bakker and Ronald J. Clarke, attempts to present the important concepts and research on this topic to give us a better understanding of the fundamental components of wine flavors. In fact, in the Preface to the first edition

of this book, the authors indicate that it is “aimed to be of interest to consumers with an inquisitive mind about wine, and all those involved with the production and trade in wines with an interest in the chemical and technical aspects of wine flavor.”

The authors have approached the topic of wine flavor chemistry from backgrounds with considerable experience in the field and the wide scope of the book reflects that. Dr. Jokie Bakker has worked as a researcher in food flavor and color and as a wine industry consultant. Dr. Ronald J. Clarke, a writer and food industry consultant, spent some 40 years studying the manufacture of coffee, on which he has written or co-edited several books. He offers useful insights on wine flavor with coffee and wine comparisons that are scattered throughout the book. This book is organized into seven broad-based chapters and includes two appendices. The introduction covers the vinification process and includes a short discussion of the physiological aspects of wine. Chapter 2 presents important grape varieties and their growing regions and also summarizes the wine appellation or other classification systems of six major wine-producing countries. Three chapters form the book's core. Chapter 3 presents basic taste and stimulant components, Chapter 4 discusses the volatile components, and Chapter 5 includes wine-tasting procedures and overall wine flavor concepts. A separate chapter is devoted to Sherry, Port, and Madeira. There is a concluding chapter on wine chemical formation pathways during fermentation, which would have been much better placed in an introductory chapter.

What are the highlights of this book? Each topic presented is relatively well referenced as each chapter concludes with an extensive bibliography that includes references to both general texts and specific research publications. The seven chapters and two appendices feature more than a hundred useful tables. The many detailed tables remind one of a reference book such as the *CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics*. These tables are so extensive and informative that they represent the highlight of the book. There are also several excellent discussions including those on the important role that compounds such as SO₂ play in winemaking, CO₂ in young wines and champagne, and O₂ throughout the vinification, aging, and bottling process. The importance of reduction/oxidation reactions throughout the wine process is also well presented.

What are this book's failings? Unfortunately, even the reader with considerable chemistry background will likely find this book frustrating, not because of its complexity but because its design is suboptimal. First, and most strikingly, the book lacks illustrations. Although the cover of the book beautifully and sensually illustrates newly poured red wine sloshing in a wine glass, with flavor almost jumping out at the reader, none of that sort of illustration is in the interior of the book. Images of processing sequences, graphs, and chemical structures are offered, but far too few to illustrate the important concepts that the text attempts to describe. Only a single spider-plot illustration graces the entire book! (A spider-plot illustration shows the intensity of multiple characteristics of a given component,

e.g., flavor, on a single plot and resembles a spider web.) Such plots would be much more effective in presenting the flavor profiles of different grape varieties than simply listing the characteristic components in a table.

Another frustration is the inconsistent presentation of topics both from an organizational viewpoint and from a conceptual one. The poor organization results in useless repetition and incomplete discussions of the topic. For example, Chapter 3 explains the location of polyphenols within grapes without an accompanying illustration. However, in the final chapter the topic is represented and includes a figure that shows the location of extractable chemical compounds, including polyphenols. One example of inconsistency in concept presentation is the discussion of the role of alcohol in the flavor of wine. An early chapter cites literature that suggests that ethanol concentration, at least over a limited range, does not affect the sweetness, acidity, aroma, or flavor perception of a Riesling wine. In a subsequent chapter, in which wine balance and suppleness are discussed, a well-known and conceptually useful empirical concept known as the Suppleness Index (SI) is presented. The relation is:

$$\text{Suppleness Index} = \text{Alcohol} - (\text{Acidity} + \text{Tannin})$$

This relation indicates that higher concentrations of alcohol (including sugars) are needed to balance higher acidity or tannins for a wine to have an SI within a desirable range. The authors neither mention the discordance in presentations nor offer an explanation for these discordant findings.

Technological innovations have improved our ability to determine the chemical compounds responsible for flavor, and some can help in determining the optimal maturity of grapes, but the authors fall short in describing the details of some of the recent technologies. Although gas chromatography remains the most important tool for evaluating volatile compounds, it involves relatively large, immobile, and expensive equipment. A new technology often referred to as the electronic nose is relatively inexpensive and portable and might revolutionize how one can determine optimal grape maturity. It is based on changes in the electrical resistance of its metal oxide sensors caused by the volatile chemicals produced by grapes. Although the authors mention the device, they give short shrift to details of the progress in its use and potential.

The writing style includes awkward phrasing and occasional spelling errors, which are also frustrating for the reader. From a publisher like Wiley-Blackwell, one would have expected the book to receive some attention from an editor to simplify complex run-on sentences and eliminate spelling errors. Here is an example of a sentence that includes both: "The receptor proteins for sweet, bitter and umami are available for tastant compounds to bind to, this resulting very specific binding leads in a number of steps to the stimulation of neuron activation, giving the information to our brain." We can only be thankful that, unlike as is stated in that clumsy sentence, neurons, not neutrons, are activated.

Wine Flavour Chemistry is not essential reading for all those involved in commercial winemaking, as stated in the blurb on the book's back cover. Neither is it a useful textbook for teaching the concepts of wine flavor chemistry except as a reference book, as it is far too dry, lacks illustrations, and is relatively poorly organized. A far better book for less than half the price is *Concepts in Wine Chemistry*, by Yair Margalit (2nd ed., paperback, 2010). It is eminently better organized and is more readable, understandable, and illustrated. It is surprising that the authors, Bakker and Clarke, did not reference this text by Margalit. Perhaps they would not have written *Wine Flavour Chemistry* had they been aware of it! Although Bakker and Clarke offer many useful references, they have perhaps overreferenced authors such as the French Pascal Ribereau-Gayon at the expense of some top-notch American researchers such as Bruce Zooklein of Virginia Tech, who has done much pioneering work in enology and wine flavor chemistry. Other books that discuss wine flavor chemistry that I would also recommend include *Wine Science*, a textbook by Ronald Jackson. For the beginner and for wine lovers who do not necessarily have a background in chemistry, I recommend *Winetaster's Secrets*, by Andrew Sharp. Finally, those who really want to have fun challenging their olfactory discriminatory ability and also wish to learn some of the fundamental compounds of wine flavor and specific wine varieties should buy a 54-bottle set of basic smells that can be found in wine titled *Le Nez du Vin*, by Jean Lenoir. Although hundreds of smells in wine are described in it, you will find the identification of even this simple set of 54 difficult but also entertaining and informative.

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KEN BURNS and LYNN NOVICK (Directors): *Prohibition*. PBS/Florentine Films, 2011, DVD \$39.99.

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for example, and countries other than the United States fought and sacrificed during World War II. Claiming to be authoritative, Burns invites attacks for his errors of omission.

Undoubtedly, such attacks will also be made on his six-hour film "Prohibition," which debuted on PBS in 2011 and is now available on three DVDs. Readers of this journal will wonder why there is so little wine in the film, which focuses on beer and distilled spirits. Historians will note the lopsided attention to Prohibition's origins, compared to the cursory analysis of its repeal and long-term effects. And movie buffs will wonder what happened to Eliot Ness. Despite these shortcomings "Prohibition" resurrects unjustly forgotten historical actors, presents fascinating film footage and photographs, and reanimates the sense of contingency that make historical turning points so fascinating. It is well worth the several evenings it will probably take you to watch it.

You will immediately recognize the hallmarks of a Ken Burns film: modern-day footage of preserved historical sites, slow camera pans across black-and-white photographs, well-chosen literary talking heads, a concise and witty narration written by Geoffrey C. Ward, and original music that pays homage to the period. For all that, this film is a departure from the usual ecumenism and determination to avoid linking past events to present-day controversies. Unlike 1990's "The Civil War," which deftly avoided blaming either the North or the South, "Prohibition" shows Burns arguing that Prohibition solved few of the problems it set out to solve and created several more that were solved only by its repeal in 1933. The film does not flinch from the horrors and persistence of alcoholism, and it helps the viewer to see the logic behind the ban on alcohol. But instead of dismissing the whole effort, the film takes seriously its causes and effects, its detractors and champions.

The three episode titles move the argument chronologically. Why did Prohibition pass in 1919? Because the United States had become "A Nation of Drunkards." What was it like to live during Prohibition? It was like living in "A Nation of Scofflaws." Why was Prohibition repealed in 1933? Because the United States had become "A Nation of Hypocrites." Burns views Prohibition as a policy destined to fail. He also maintains the United States should wear that failure as a badge of honor.

Fortunately, Burns does not overstate this thesis by demonizing Prohibition's supporters. In fact, the film lionizes many of them, portraying the herculean efforts of courageous men and women. Some of them are well-known: Lyman Beecher and his thundering sermons, Carrie Nation and her hatchet, Wayne Wheeler and his mastery of Congress. Lesser-known reformers also get screen time, which will raise their profile among the current and next generation of students. The Washington Temperance Society began in Baltimore in 1840 with a method to help individuals control their addiction that was remarkably similar to that of Alcoholics Anonymous, founded almost a century later, in 1935. In the 1870s, Eliza Jane Thompson began a series of mostly female sit-ins at taverns and drugstores,

launching a bold movement that led to the Women's Christian Temperance Union's founding in 1879. Mabel Walker Willebrandt transformed the U.S. Justice Department into a national law-enforcement agency, one that pioneered such techniques as wiretapping. The film spreads the news about these half-forgotten historical figures, even though they supported a policy that Burns clearly opposes. He also spotlights a driven reformer with whom he agrees, Long Island socialite Pauline Sabin, who was instrumental in overturning the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933.

In addition to crusaders, there are criminals, and not just Al Capone. Impressed by the quantities of smuggled liquor passing through Puget Sound, Seattle police officer Roy Olmstead quickly put himself in charge of it and earned the nickname "The Good Bootlegger." Pouncing on the Volstead Act's exception for prescription medications, Cincinnati attorney George Remus became the country's biggest moonshiner. Unlike Capone, Remus and Olmstead seldom resorted to violence. Like Capone, they wound up behind bars. The message is clear. The booze ban turned talented, law-abiding men into crooks, and who could blame them for trying?

The excavation of buried treasures will endear the film to historians, but scholars from other disciplines will find few original insights. Economists have studied the effects of Prohibition on alcohol consumption rates, on the California grape industry, and on the market for sacramental wine. The film does dramatize some of these effects. Products suddenly appeared on store shelves that allowed anyone to turn his home into a winery. The Volstead Act's exemption for religious services took a toll on Judeo-Christian institutions. When only one-fourth of the sacramental wine was actually used for sacraments, and when "rabbis" surnamed Kelley and O'Shanahan purchased wine in bulk, churches and temples lost some of their moral authority. The handling of the federal revenue question is sound, but not eye-opening. The Sixteenth Amendment's income tax helped pave the way for the Eighteenth Amendment's alcohol ban by making the federal government less dependent on liquor taxes. The desperate need for more federal revenue by 1933 was a major reason President Franklin Roosevelt supported the repeal. This level of analysis is pretty much all the film has to offer the economists in the audience. It is a familiar but unchallenging narrative, the equivalent of a bottle of Two-Buck Chuck.

So if the film breaks little academic ground, then why is it still worth watching? Because Burns's films are now an American institution that attracts wonderful talent and serious scholars. No economics paper will have narration by Peter Coyote. No history book will be voiced by Patricia Clarkson, John Lithgow, Tom Hanks, Oliver Platt, Samuel L. Jackson, and Paul "the guy from *Sideways*" Giamatti. Historians still cite their venerable peer William Leuchtenberg, but Ken Burns can put him on camera to tell the story of his father's ill-fated distillery. Daniel Okrent, author of *Last Call* (Scribner, 2010), appears on camera frequently as the film's organizing device. Other writers fill the screen and offer keen insights, including Pete Hamill, Noah Feldman, Catherine Gilbert Murdock, Jonathan Eig, and Michael Lerner.

Occasionally, they repeat points from the previous week's episode, but it is satisfying to see good scholarship rewarded with speaking parts.

The second reason to keep watching is to see the historical footage dug up by the production team. In documenting an illegal activity, where do you find moving images of people in the act of breaking the law? One obvious solution is archival footage featuring law-enforcement officers. Cops and sheriffs knew that stopping sales of all booze was impossible, but they still had incentive to make a good show of it. "Prohibition" features scene after scene of authorities chopping open beer kegs, whiskey barrels, and wine vats, letting the contents flow into storm drains. Another solution is to make your own close-up footage of cocktails and beers being poured into glasses on sparkling countertops. "Prohibition" rerolls both of these money shots so often that you find yourself looking for variations on the theme. Oh, look, *that* freshly poured martini has an olive in it. Look at how *this* time the neighborhood kids are scooping whiskey out of the gutter with tin cups to bring home or sell. I wonder how they cleaned up all that broken glass after they finished smashing bottles. After seeing a foaming mug and a leaking keg for the dozenth time, ones gets the sense that the filmmakers' script outran their supply of unearthed celluloid.

Although these segments can start to drag, "Prohibition" startles the viewer with some truly fascinating footage. Instead of flappers doing the jitterbug, the film offers a fresh segment on reporter Lois Bancroft Long, who covered the social scene at speakeasies and jazz clubs for the *New Yorker*, wrote under the pen name Lipstick, and completely erased the line in journalism between participant and observer. The Lois Long segment features readings of her acerbic prose and footage of her quintessentially New Woman lifestyle. The frame does not glamorize Long and her proto-feminist drinking buddies, and it lets the audience decide whether public drunkenness and serial monogamy were truly a liberating force for women. The underlying point is that the widespread acceptance of illegal hooch opened the door to the acceptance of other activities and lifestyles that had previously been off-limits.

Even when the film focuses on the army of reformers who spent at least eight decades pushing for temperance, it yields profound surprises. The 1870s photos of Ohio housewives stoically enduring abuse and threats as they kept vigil outside bars and liquor stores are a distant echo of the iconic photos of college students sitting defiantly at lunch counters, department stores, and bus depots during the postwar civil rights movement. These resonant images force the viewer to question his or her own first impressions. How can I find one group of nonviolent protestors heroic and the other group ridiculous just because I disagree with their objectives? Burns also shows us excerpts from a 1909 nickelodeon, *Ten Nights in a Barroom*, which compressed the ill effects of drinking into a melodramatic crescendo not seen on screen again until *Reefer Madness* in 1936.

By far, the film's most impressive trick is a reminder more than a surprise. Prohibition, Burns asserts, is not ancient history. The era's alumni still walk

among us. In addition to William Leuchtenberg, several octo- and nonagenarian interviewees appear on camera to offer first-hand accounts of the dizzying pace of social transformation in the 1920s. Prohibition changed the way they viewed their parents, their courtship rituals, and their relation to law and the state. Repeal advocates used a carbon copy of the original argument that Prohibition supporters had used years earlier. If drunken parents were bad role models, so, too, were scofflaw parents. How do we raise our children to be moral citizens when so many of us break the law at 5:00 every afternoon? The interviews with John Paul Stevens, however, reveal these arguments to be oversimplified. Born in Chicago in 1920, Stevens recalls growing up the son of a prosperous hotelier, who by practical professional obligation was involved in malfeasance. Nevertheless, the young Stevens grew up to be the longest-serving justice in Supreme Court history, showing that at least one child in a nation of hypocrites and scofflaws could still develop a respect for law and civic order.

The film's main strength is its willingness to be open-minded in ways like this. Whatever it lacks in original research or insights, it makes up for by modeling the proper temperament for learning about the past. Burns sticks to his argument to the end. Prohibition was an extreme solution to a problem that begged for a different, multifaceted approach. Thus, it failed and was repealed. In this claim, Burns is probably on the same wavelength as 95% of his PBS viewers. But he also shows his viewers that the counterarguments have merit, too. Maybe some good things *did* come out of Prohibition. Following Daniel Okrent's lead, the film emphasizes that in the nineteenth century, the rules and expectations for hard liquor were truly those of a different country. Social conventions about drinking on the job, during adolescence, and at the breakfast table have changed completely over the past 150 years. As the acceptance of hard alcohol in public declined, the acceptance of women in appearing in public—either to drink or to speak out—rose, in no small part because of the Prohibition battles. The film leaves us to think deeply about the paradox that a puritanical attempt to regulate immorality accelerated the modernization of American society.

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ALICE FEIRING: *Naked Wine: Letting Grapes Do What Comes Naturally*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011, 240 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0306819537, \$24.00.

Let me begin with the conclusion. Yes, if you're interested in wine, you should read this book. It proselytizes for natural wine, a significant movement in winemaking today. It is something important to know about whether you agree with its philosophy or not. Besides, the book is delightfully written.

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“Natural wine” has no precise definition. Essentially, it is wine from grapes grown organically with no additions in the winemaking process and no extraordinary manipulations. A sticking point is the use of sulfur, which most winemakers feel is required to prevent spoilage. Sulfur may be permitted in organic winemaking but is sharply frowned upon for natural wines.

The book *Naked Wine* is a largely first-person account of Alice Feiring’s encounters in this semi-cult-like world. Feiring travels from the wine country of California to France, Italy, and Spain investigating the origins of the natural wine movement and detailing its present manifestations. She uses the account of her personal adventures along with vivid portrayals of the colorful personalities she meets (some unquestionably oddballs) to convey her crusading passion for her subject. She writes engagingly and her explanations of sometimes technical aspects of winemaking are clear. She does seem to go overboard in her insistence that many (not all) natural wines are delicious and that most other wines, particularly those containing more than a modicum of sulfur, are undrinkable.

Nevertheless, I feel obliged to question the premise upon which the book is ostensibly based, that is, the assumption that natural is always inherently better than artificial. Where is it written that nature’s efforts have to be superior to man’s? Such a conviction seems to be based on a new-agey sort of mysticism: something that is natural is better simply because it is natural.

As a physician, I can testify that in many situations, nature messes up big time. In diseases such as heart failure or kidney failure, the initial damage is often minor compared to that caused by the body’s ongoing misguided efforts at amelioration. The major thrust in the modern management of heart failure is to counteract the body’s defense mechanisms that are the cause of progressive deterioration. These are mechanisms that, having evolved to cope with entirely different problems, are now deployed as an inappropriate approach to novel circumstances not foreseen by evolution. So don’t try to tell me that Mother Nature knows best.

The majority of our aroma and flavor preferences are acquired, that is, we learn them in the process of growing up. What we like depends on experience, sometimes very early experience. In Germany, for many years most baby formulas were flavored with vanilla. Investigators presented German adults with two samples of ketchup (Haller, 1999). They were the same except that one contained added vanilla. Those subjects who had been bottle-fed preferred the sample with vanilla by a factor of 2 to 1. In contrast, most of their breast-fed contemporaries liked the plain ketchup better.

My generation and some of those that followed were brought up mostly on natural ingredients, because that is what was available. That’s why we prefer natural flavors. Now that almost everything in the supermarket is processed and includes unnatural substances, our children and grandchildren may be in the process of acquiring a different taste profile. They could end up preferring artificial favors in many instances over the natural.

So I don't accept the idea that a "natural" wine must be intrinsically superior by its nature alone. That doesn't mean that such wines can't be very good. I can think of three reasons why natural wine might be better than conventional wine. The first is that natural winemaking avoids many of the pernicious practices employed by less fastidious producers. Secondly, it is a quasi-evangelical movement overseen by dedicated and conscientious winemakers who would undoubtedly make excellent wine regardless of the philosophy under which they worked. Finally, the wines produced are individual and distinct unlike the uniformity of many contemporary wines, which appear to be made to appeal to the aesthetic of a small group of wine critics.

The proof of the wine is in the drinking. At the end of her book, Ms. Feiring provides a list of winemakers who employ the practices that she extols. I collected about a dozen wines from those producers that were available in my area and not too expensive. I drank them along with my wife and a friend.

Overall, we were quite impressed. Most of the wines were very good. There was only one that we really didn't like. It may have been a spoiled bottle, something that is not altogether unexpected in wines with little or no sulfur. That one disappointment was balanced by a marvelous red Burgundy from an unheralded appellation (Savigny-les-Beaune "Les Lavières" 2009, Domaine Chandon de Briailles), which I am tempted to put in the category of a great wine. It is unfair to do so, however, until one sees how it ages at which point, again, the lack of sulfur becomes an issue.

Beyond a favorable price-to-quality ratio, these wines are also very individual. They have distinctive character. Some accentuate the characteristics of place or varietal, while others seem to go off on a tangent of their own. They are wines with personality in a world threatened by uniformity of style.

The book was fun and natural wine is fun, but it is not the only act in town. A great many wines give pleasure and most are not in the natural style. I am enthusiastic about many categories of wine, including Rieslings from Austria, Germany, and Alsace. If I come across one from a natural producer I will be eager to try it, but I will certainly not confine myself to those kinds of wines alone. Nor am I ready to give up aged Bordeaux or grand cru Burgundy. Still, I am very pleased to have been introduced to the category of natural wine.

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GEORGE M. TABER: *A Toast to Bargain Wines: How Innovators, Iconoclasts, and Winemaking Revolutionaries Are Changing the Way the World Drinks*, Scribner, New York, 2011, 320 pp., ISBN: 978-1-4391-9518-5 (paperback), \$15.00.

Economically it may be the worst of times, but oenologically, it is the best. Winemaking technology has not only matured, ensuring higher quality, but has also been shared globally. I no longer approach an inexpensive unknown label, regardless of origin, with quite the same trepidation as I did in the 1970s. In his fourth book on vinous subjects, journalist George Taber chronicles the evolution over the past couple of decades that has resulted in reducing the gap in quality between the best bottles with high price tags and those with the lowest. Taber asserts and then illustrates that “[t]he chasm . . . has dramatically narrowed in the last generation” (p. 1). This pleasant volume, as agreeable to read as many of the inexpensive wines recommended therein are to drink, is divided into three parts plus a Guide to Best Buys. Part I, “A Global Business in Turmoil,” sets the tone by relating “embarrassing” instances in which so-called experts misidentified wines in blind tastings or fell prey to frauds. “Clearly, wine consumers should not be buying a bottle simply because it is expensive or because some famous person says it’s good. People should decide for themselves which wines to drink. . . . They may be pleasantly surprised by what they discover” (p. 9).

In Part II, “The Iconoclasts,” Taber introduces several characters who offer alternative approaches to understanding and determining taste preferences to assessing the value of medals awarded to wines, to packaging them in creative ways, and to critiquing them. A commanding knowledge of his subjects based on interviews, research, and literature reviews informs his stories, which sustain an engaging personal tone. For example, we learn about Tim Hanni, who has divided tasters into four phenotypes, “the combination of physiological and behavioral traits someone exhibits when it comes to taste” (p. 37). These are sweet; hypersensitive, preferring “delicacy and finesse”; sensitive or more balanced; and tolerant, able to enjoy more intensive flavors. A test is included that allows the reader to find out what his or her Taste Sensitivity Quotient is. I took this test and followed up with a slightly more thorough evaluation on Hanni’s web site. As someone with extremely eclectic, even promiscuous, tastes in both food and wine, I found the result irrelevant and even naïve.

Part III tells several tales of some of the most prominent “Wine Revolutionaries” who are filling shelves with inexpensive, though in my opinion not always good-value, wine. We learn the histories of “Two-Buck Chuck,” the creation of Fred Franzia of California’s Central Coast, and John Casella’s [yellow tail] from Australia. “The Next Giant of Bargain Wines” tells the tale of the emerging wine industry in China, which some cognoscenti believe will produce rivals to the best of France.

Taber's "Guide to Best Buys" lists his preferences in 34 categories, mostly varietals, for wines costing \$10 or less, and a couple of splurge bottles between \$10 and \$20. He also lists bargain brands from a dozen regions around the world and concludes with his picks for boxed wines. I read the 128 pages nodding in agreement with many of the recommendations, especially for bottles from Washington State, Spain, and the Southern Hemisphere, and only occasionally shaking my head in disagreement. I've never been enamored of "Two-Buck Chuck," for example.

With the statement "Far too many winemakers stress the importance of their *terroir* to charge more" (p. 162), Taber stakes out a position with the "antiterroirists" in the ongoing dialectic and foreshadows the complaints in the Occupy Wine manifesto (<http://wineeconomist.com/2011/12/06/occupy-napa-and-sonoma-and-burgundy-and-bordeaux/>). With this volume, he has become an important advocate for reasonably priced wines, but he is no ideologue. He also drinks and appreciates the best wine that the world has to offer but, like the 99% of us, cannot drink them every day.

A big disappointment for me, a recent transplant to McMinnville and committed "locapour," is the lack of a worthy contender from Oregon for a bargain wine under \$10. Taber's recommendations include 10 Washington/Oregon bargain brands, yet none of the ones listed originate at an Oregon winery. Only Castle Rock, which offers a Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, is mentioned. A Maysara Roseena from the McMinnville AVA is a splurge off-dry rosé at \$14. "Both Washington and Oregon have many boutique wineries that charge premium prices, so it can be difficult to find wines under \$10" (p. 277). I confirmed this after tasting a 2008 Rascal Pinot Noir and a 2009 Rascal Pinot Gris, both on sale for \$5.99, regularly \$7.99. Although the nose of the pinot noir exhibited some of the characteristics typical of a Willamette Valley product, hints of earth, dark fruit, dried herbs, hay, and coffee, the overall impression was simple and fairly muted. The taste was lifeless ending in a short watery finish. Initially, the pinot gris made a bit better impression with lots of pear on the nose and an ordinary taste but decent finish. The next day was a different story, with everything out of whack. My desire to support the local economy yet drink well for less has not yet reached a happy equilibrium. The search goes on. In the meantime, I find some comfort in the advice of Edmund Burke in *A Letter to a Noble Lord*, "Expense, and great expense, may be an essential part in true economy. If parsimony were to be considered as one of the kinds of that virtue, there is however another and a higher economy. Economy is a distributive virtue, and consists not in saving, but in selection."

I enthusiastically recommend Taber's latest treatise on wines. It is blessedly devoid of purple prose. It represents solid journalism addressing the "who what why where" of the current and emerging bargain wine scene. Finally, it presents one worldly taster's advice on what to drink while not spending a fortune. But things are rapidly changing. With the economy likely to stay in the doldrums for a while,

established wineries are creating less expensive labels to stay afloat and Taber's recommendations may soon be dated. So, like the wines it extols, this book should be consumed young.

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