

Madsen) asks Miles (Paul Giamatti) why he is so enamored with Pinot Noir. He responds with a memorable statement that might have been uttered by any of the real-life characters in *Burgundy*:

“It’s a hard grape to grow. ... It’s thin-skinned, temperamental, ripens early. It’s not a survivor like Cabernet that can grow anywhere and thrive even when neglected. Pinot needs constant care and attention and in fact can only grow in specific little tucked-away corners of the world. And only the most patient and nurturing growers can do it really, can tap into Pinot’s most fragile, delicate qualities. Only when someone has taken the time to truly understand its potential can Pinot be coaxed into its fullest expression. And when that happens, its flavors are the most haunting and brilliant and subtle and thrilling and ancient on the planet.”

Near the end of *Burgundy*, New York sommelier Michael Madrigale (recently of the Boulud restaurant empire), is one of the guests at La Paulée de Meursault. Clearly in love with the wines, the cuisine, and the passion that permeates the luncheon, he turns to the camera and confesses that each year “there’s something magnetic about Burgundy that brings you here.” Enough said, except for some personal advice, based on my own experience with the film. Make sure you have a good bottle of Burgundy available in your cellar—perhaps a Premier Cru, if not a Grand Cru – that you can open and enjoy, as I did, with the film or shortly thereafter. You will not regret it.

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JENNIFER SEGAL (ed.): *Reds, Whites & Varsity Blues: 65 Years of the Oxford & Cambridge Blind Wine-Tasting Competition*. Pavilion Books/JSNewMedia, London, 2013, 256 pp., ISBN 978-1909108288 (hardcover), £35

Beginning in 1953, the University of Oxford and Cambridge University each fielded teams for annual blind wine-tasting events at which typically six undergraduates from each institution met to blind-taste a dozen or so wines, half white and half red. The wines had to be identified by the contestants, and points were awarded for correct identification: In the 1960s, for example, guessing the type of wine correctly was worth 5 points, the vintage 2, the district 1, the commune 1, and the

name of the wine 1. The winning team received a prize (e.g., a magnum of champagne) and, of course, untold amounts of glory. The winners are listed at the end of the book, with Oxford garnering slightly more than half the triumphs. Senior members of the wine trade such as Harry Waugh, Hugh Johnson, Michael Broadbent, and Jancis Robinson participated as judges or got otherwise involved in helping the wine societies, and large firms in the wine trade (e.g., John Harvey & Sons) provided financial support; in addition, dues were paid by members of the Oxford University Wine and Food Society (OUWFS) and the Cambridge University Wine and Food Society (CUWFS). The student organizations from among whose members the contestants were selected changed over time as in the case of the Oxford University Wine Society (OUWS) and the corresponding society in Cambridge which supplanted their predecessors.

The book is organized by decades, from the 1950s through the 2000s. It starts with several short essays: an “appreciation” of Harry Waugh, an important figure in the British wine trade and in the history of the Oxford–Cambridge wine-tastings, by Robert Parker, a brief biography of Harry Waugh, an interview with his widow, Prue Waugh, and a brief history of the firm John Harvey & Sons of Bristol. The wine-tasting history of the six decades is covered by letting the participants speak about their experiences: who participated, what they drank, what pranks they played, how well they competed, and how this all unfolded. What emerges quite convincingly is that the undergraduate participants took all this extremely seriously. They held training sessions in preparation for the annual tasting, and it seems at least superficially that many of the tasters were quite sophisticated, in spite of the occasional horrible blunders, like mistaking a Burgundy wine for a Bordeaux. New World wines and wines from Spain and Italy were practically unknown in the early decades, and even in the later ones their appearance at a tasting was only occasional. One of the wine societies seems to have held a private tasting of Russian (Georgian) wines and pronounced them undrinkable. The dinners were characteristic of the age and would today be considered hopelessly old-fashioned: At a meeting of the CUWFS in a restaurant in 1962 the food served was

Pâté du Patron au Cognac
 Mousse de Brochet Dieppoise
 Filet Mignon Chasseur au Cognac
 Petits Pois au Beurre
 Haricots verts sauté comme en France
 Pommes Parisienne
 Crêpe Simone flambé
 Petits Fours
 Café Moka (p. 66)

The food was accompanied, in turn, by Vin Blanc Cassis (what today we would call a kir), Puligny Montrachet 1955, Château Léoville Barton 1952, Château La Fleur Petrus 1952, Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey 1937, Reserve Malmsey Solera 1830, Rouyer Guillet 1910. A quite acceptable dinner, even if old-fashioned! Life

at Oxbridge seemed to have been pleasant (Jonathan Harris of Trinity notes “We shot, we beagled, we punted and played games for the colleges” (p. 68)) but the good times did not interfere with many of the students going on to distinguished careers, quite a few in the wine trade. Of course no women were members of these societies or of the Oxford and Cambridge student bodies until much later. Quite a bit of attention is paid to John Harvey & Sons and its rival, Avery’s of Bristol and to the fact that by the 1970s women had arrived at Oxbridge (for the story of that see Nancy Malkiel, *“Keep the Damned Women Out,”* Princeton University Press, 2016.) The first American competitor was Charles Moore of Pembroke College in 1970–1972. The CUWFS is remembered by Dennis Dugdale, also known as Lord Crathorne, as is “real tennis,” described as “a perfect game for those who find squash and tennis too energetic” (pp. 72–75). A useful essay on the Institute of Masters of Wine describes the grueling three-part examination that has to be passed to receive the coveted degree of Master of Wine (MW), first introduced in 1953. The examination consisted of (1) theory (four three-hour examination papers on viticulture), (2) three 12 wine blind-tasting events each lasting several hours, and (3) a 10,000 word dissertation, which had to be an original study on some relevant subject (p. 168).

By the 1990s, financial problems began to rear their heads as Harvey’s proved reluctant to continue its role of sponsoring the contests, which were ultimately taken over by Pol Roger. Some internecine struggles temporarily rocked the CUWS as two undergraduates attempted a take-over and behaved very badly at a legendary luncheon, which so incensed Jancis Robinson that she made a point of writing the incident up in the *Financial Times*. Hugh Trevor-Roper, a famous historian, is mentioned more than once; he was master of Peterhouse for a while, and is referred to several times as being responsible for the “(mis)-authentication” of the purported Hitler diaries—no love lost there!

As should be obvious by now, this is not a standard “wine book.” No systematic analysis is provided and the content is, on the whole, episodic, but nevertheless thoroughly enjoyable. It is worth mentioning that the book is profusely illustrated with photographs of Oxford and Cambridge colleges, students and faculty, menus, wine lists, which by itself makes this a sort-of “coffee table” book that you might just like to have around and dip into from time to time. The episodic nature of the exposition is illustrated by the fact that there is an interesting analysis of Clos St. Denis (pp. 218–219), but this is really one of the very few wines that is analyzed in this depth (Château Lafite is a notable exception, pp. 53–54). If you want to know how the elite get educated in England, this is clearly the book for you. But in addition to that, it contains an enormous amount of interesting tidbits about wine and food and the enjoyment thereof, as well as the quaint habits of the denizens of Oxbridge, with occasional additional comments about what was happening in the world outside of wine drinking and academia. The Editor did an enormous amount of work compiling all the details and must be congratulated on doing a huge job

well, and she also provided a solid Index, which makes the volume much more useful than it would have been otherwise.

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ANDREW W. M. SMITH: *Terror and Terroir: The Winegrowers of the Languedoc and Modern France*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK, 2016, 296 pp. ISBN 978-1784994358, \$115.00; Kindle Edition: ASIN B01NBNAG6E, \$77.48.

Andrew W.M. Smith's *Terror and Terroir* is a case study of the effects of national and global agro-economic policies on the winegrowers of the Languedoc region in France. Smith begins his chronology with the abortive 1907 *révolte du Midi*, France's largest social disturbance since the Revolution. A substantial portion of this first chapter deals with the pre-*révolte* industrial atrophy in the region and the subsequent expansion of small-scale vineyards producing low-quality wine. Smith carefully traces out the cast of characters—winemakers large and small, local and national-level politicians, and labor leaders—who will reappear as the study's main characters in the subsequent chapters. This first chapter is also a sketch of the rise of the various groups (both unions and other sorts of associations) among winegrowers, and, of course, of the 1907 revolt of Languedocian workers (principally but not solely winegrowers). The subsequent chapters are in the main chronological, tracing the economic challenges first of the worldwide depression, then of the Vichy-imposed regulations on the industry. Smith focuses the middle chapters of the book on the post-war history of the central union, the Comité Régional d'Action Viticole (hereafter, the CRAV), and their use of the memory of 1907 to galvanize support. These chapters also show the winegrowers' attempt to link Occitaine regional identity (evolving in the 1960s) to their struggle. Chapter 5 focuses on the lethal clash of winegrowers and security forces at the town of Montredon in 1976. The final two chapters chart the CRAV's decline and the dramatic changes in the Languedoc wine industry at the end of the 20th century as power over policy shifted from Paris towards Brussels.

Smith's prose is clear; he gives enough context to make the debates accessible even to a non-specialist in French history or the history of wine production. Labor and social historians, well-versed in the modification and recycling of the past by labor movements, will recognize much in Smith's book that is familiar. His punctilious use of sources from regional and national archives, local newspapers, and even oral histories reveals that the CRAV's struggle was not revolutionary or anti-statist. The author shows that despite continual references to the 1907 "révolte" and frequent extra-parliamentary (and often illegal) measures used by the winegrowers, their