

chaptalization and de-acidification, now fairly routine practices around the world, were once seen as insidious forms of manipulation. Less controversial but no less important are the more recent cases of fraud committed by Rudy Kurniawan and Hardy Rodenstock, both of whom Phillips discussed in the context of contemporary wine crime.

Wine is an eminently worthwhile book. Just as Hugh Johnson's *The World Atlas of Wine* (2013) is the go-to reference for vineyard geography, I would make the case that Phillips's new book may be the best general introduction to the social and cultural history and historiography of wine. While I often found myself excitedly looking ahead to see where Phillips was leading, I was just as frequently drawn to the material on the current page, mentally wandering off into ruminations about wine and landscape, words, crime, etc. Thankfully, the book's thematic format invites jumping around with limited opportunity cost. This is truly a thought-provoking book.

Kevin Goldberg
The Weber School, Atlanta
kgoldberg@weberschool.org
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BERNHARD HERRMAN and ROBERT STREIBEL: *Der Wein des Vergessens* (German Edition). Residenz Verlag, Vienna, 2018, 253 pp., ISBN 978-3701716968 (hardcover), €24.

Der Wein des Vergessens (*The Wine of Oblivion*), written in German, may be the first book published that deals with the wine industry in Nazi Austria. In general, there is only scant literature about the German and Austrian wine industry during the Nazi regime, 1933–1945. Only in recent years have a few authors shed some light on various aspects of the Third Reich's wine policies, particularly on the role of the German-Jewish wine trade. Daniel Deckers, editor of the daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, was one of the first, who, in his outstanding German language book *Im Zeichen des Traubenadlers. Eine Geschichte des deutschen Weins* (Deckers, 2010), devotes more than 40 of 220 pages to the wine industry in Nazi Germany.¹ From the book, as well as from a few subsequent articles (Deckers, 2012, 2017), we learn that up to 60% of the German wine trade, particularly the wine export,

¹ Kevin Goldberg reviewed the abbreviated English language version of Deckers' book for the *Journal of Wine Economics* (Deckers, 2018; Goldberg, 2018).

during the 1930s was handled by German-Jewish businesses. However, starting in the early 1930s, Jewish wine traders and brokers were harassed, denounced as wine adulterators and currency scammers, and finally pushed out of their businesses.² Most did not survive the Holocaust; the “lucky” ones left Germany, moved to the United States or the United Kingdom, and often successfully rekindled new wine businesses. Emigrants such as Max Fromm, Alfred Langenbach, Otto Loeb, S.F. Hallgarten, or Peter Sichel, the man behind *Liebfraumilch Blue Nun*, are also known as authors of authoritative books about German wine. Peter Sichel’s autobiography provides an excellent account of the life of a Jewish wine merchant before, during, and after WWII (Sichel, 2016).

In the fall of 2018, after Bernhard Herrman and Robert Streibel published *The Wine of Oblivion*, Austria’s wine world was in turmoil. Even in Germany and Switzerland, *The Wine of Oblivion* made it to prime-time news. In essence, the book argues that one of Austria’s largest wine producer, *Winzer Kremes Sandgrube 13* in Kremes (Wachau), is an aryanized business, illegally taken from a Jewish wine merchant and his gay lover in 1938.

The fact that this had been forgotten for more than 80 years is amazing. Even a recent book, devoted to the history of wine in Kremes (Frühwirth, 2005), does not mention the aryanization and, instead, honors local farmers’ chief Franz Aigner as the “founder of the wine cooperative” (p. 135) *Winzer Kremes Sandgrube 13*—the winery he supposedly “bought” from Paul Robitschek.

The book, written as a historical novel, was conceived when one of the authors, Bernhard Herrman, found a trove of documents, letters, photos, and footage in an inherited house in Styria. The documents tell the story of the Jewish businessman Paul Robitschek and his lover August Rieger. It is the story of a wealthy Viennese wine merchant and the life of a gay couple in glamorous pre-Nazi Vienna. Robitschek and his mother Johanna owned several wine cellars, wineries, and vineyards in Austria—one of which was *Sandgrube 13* in Kremes. In 1938, in an increasingly hostile climate towards Jews (and homosexuals), Robitschek sold the winery to his partner Rieger. The sales agreement was written under Austrian law, when Nazi approval was not yet required for the sale of Jewish property. However, several local Nazi leaders, notably Franz Aigner, the local *Bauernführer* (farmers’ chief) quickly challenged the contract exploiting the (illegal) homosexuality of Rieger, the new legal owner. After a short but intense bureaucratic battle, Rieger and Robitschek lost the winery; the Nazi administration handed it to the local cooperative.

Supported by various friends including a Nazi police chief, Robitschek escaped to Italy, and, after being interned in France, fled to Venezuela where he launched another successful wine business. His mother Johanna died in a Nazi concentration

²The expulsion of Jews from business life and the subsequent transfer of Jewish property into “Aryan” hands is commonly known as Aryanzation (German: *Arisierung*).

camp. And despite some trials and tribulations among others with the *Gestapo* (secret state police), August Rieger survived the war in Vienna. In 1949, *Winzergenossenschaft Krems* and Robitschek settled the sale for a final payment of 600,000 Austrian schillings, and the story was forgotten thereafter.

Aside from the fact that *The Wine of Oblivion* is a captivating read from the first page to the last, it also provides an excellent and detailed account of an aryanization process in the wine industry; a topic that has received little or no attention. In addition, without this book, nobody would have remembered—and all would have been forgotten. Instead, *Winzer Krems Sandgrube 13* wants to find out more about its own roots and commissioned three historians, including Herrman and Streibel, to compile all relevant historical documents.

Karl Storchmann
New York University
karl.storchmann@nyu.edu
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JAMIE GOODE: *Flawless: Understanding Faults in Wine*. University of California Press, Oakland, 2018, 240 pp., ISBN: 978-0520276901 (hardback), \$24.95.

Sometime in the mid-1970s, I opened a bottle of inexpensive claret that had been stored in the living room closet of my apartment in graduate housing. It smelled of damp basement and wet newspaper. I thought that perhaps being stored with winter coats had somehow introduced these unfortunate aromas into the wine. Had a book like *Flawless* been available, I would have discovered that the bottle