



**Wines of Ukraine & the Consequences of War**



**KRAMER SAYS . . .**  
AN INTERPRETATION OF  
THE BEST OF  
MATT KRAMER



**10 Year Anniversary of the Passing of Serge Renaud**



**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SEASON**

# THE RENAUD SOCIETY SEASONAL WINE JOURNAL



Dear Colleagues,

As we come to the close of 2022, and with an apparent easing of restrictions to social gatherings and the decreased risk of COVID-19 to our health and survival, the challenges for our society





to hang together in-person, continues.

Political unrest in Europe, which may seem far off to some, and continued fears of new viral outbreaks, raise persistent doubt as to the safety of travel, and affects the accessibility and availability of air flights. Airlines continue to operate at reduced schedules and itineraries, flights are cancelled, and delays are the rule rather than the exception.

Rampant inflation, and a looming recession, have challenged many of our colleagues' vacation plans and spending habits, and have delayed retirement plans for those otherwise looking at enjoying a well-deserved retreat from decades of work. The prices of our most cherished wines, as other commodities, have certainly increased.

Wine societies throughout the world are facing the same challenges that we are. The expense of promoting events has skyrocketed, and the guarantees required to

secure venues are punitive. I have been in touch with leadership from several national and international wine fraternities, and the lack of participation and stymied membership participation is real.

I applaud our International Brotherhood, the Federation Internationale Confrérie Bachique, for its commitment to the brotherhood/sisterhood of wine enthusiasts worldwide. As one of only four societies representing the United States, and the only society among its world membership with a specific focus on wine and human health, we are proud to have been reappointed to their membership role, and sit among the many historic societies that enjoy a similar position. Still our society is being tested.

For the time being, I refer you to the FICB website, <http://www.winebrotherhoods.org/en/wine-brotherhoods/usa/>, for activities that are accessible exclusively to our members, offered by our international community. I also refer you to our academic partnership, <https://www.alcoholresearchforum.org> for an academic resource on the many topics of wine and health.

I hope that you enjoy this season's journal. Please consider getting involved. Help us organize events, write an article for the next journal, or send me an email through the society website and let's discuss what we can do together, now and in the future.

I wish you all blessings for the season, good food and wines, and good health.

Tedd Goldfinger, DO FACC FESC FCCP  
Grand Maitre, The Renaud Society

## Ukraine: Wine During Wartime

**Ukraine recently has begun to rediscover its winemaking, receiving international recognition, and obtaining ever higher marks at international competitions. However, all these challenges were nothing compared to the problems, which Ukrainian winemakers face due to the Russian invasion and war, which started in February 2022.**

*Jenia Nikolaichuk, Ukrainian wine expert  
and Andrii Tarasov (Hochschule Geisenheim University).  
Reproduced with permission from Meninger's International Wine  
Journal*

During the Soviet period, Ukraine was one of the largest wine-producing republics of the USSR, with a vineyard area of more than 150,000 ha and a big focus on industrial production. Currently about 40,000 ha of vineyards are cultivated in Ukraine (excluding Crimea), with the focus shifting from an industrial approach to smaller scale and higher quality winemaking. This is accompanied by the emergence of many craft winemakers in recent years. Winemaking is not a strategic segment of the Ukrainian economy, but it is an important part of the national culture and self-image of the country.

The winemaking is mainly focused on international grape varieties, such as Aligote, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot and Riesling. These grapes together with the Georgian variety Rkatsiteli are the most cultivated vines in Ukraine.

In recent years, Ukrainian winemakers have been putting a lot of effort into promoting signature local grape varieties such as Telti-Kuruk (white) and Odessa Black (red). For example, Telti-Kuruk is the first wine from a Controlled Designation of Origin in Ukraine, which is an analogue of the French Appellation system.

### Changes After 2014

The Russian invasion and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 led to a difficult economic situation. Ukraine lost access to about 20.000 ha of their vineyards on the peninsula. Since Crimean wineries were buying a lot of grapes and bulk wine, Ukrainian inland winemakers and vine growers also lost a large sales market. "Before 2014 we sold from 30% to 50% of our volume to wineries

## Wines of Ukraine



situated in Crimea”, says Konstantin Tintulov, the commercial director of Vinholli winery in Odesa region. Therefore, some inland bulk wine producers were forced to intensify their export to other countries or change their sales strategies inside Ukraine, establishing their own brands for retail. “After we lost opportunities to sell to Crimea and the war started in 2014, we concentrated on the internal Ukrainian market and launched our new label Villa Tinta wines,” explained Konstantin Tintulov. Since 2014, the old wine related laws also began to change to reduce bureaucracy. Expensive wholesale licenses were canceled for wineries who do not buy wine in bulk from third parties. And later, the term “small winery” was established in the law, which helped to make the legalization process for small producers easier, faster and cheaper. As a result, about 40-50 new small wineries have appeared in recent years.



### Impact of the 2022 War on the Ukrainian Wine Industry

The 2022 war has a dramatic impact on wine production in all corners of Ukraine. Some wineries were completely or partially destroyed, some are in the occupied territories, others live every day under the threat of shelling. For example, the Leleka winery in Odesa region lost a large amount of its wines when the company's warehouse was bombed. In Kyiv region, a rocket destroyed some of the premises of

the Wine Idea winery located nearby. The house of the small family winery Cassia near Kyiv was partly destroyed when the Russian army was trying to capture the capital of Ukraine in February-March 2022. Not only wine producers but also Ukrainian wine importers have suffered from the Russian invasion. In the very first days of the war, the Russian army bombed the warehouse of Bureau Wine, one of the largest wine and spirit importers located in Kyiv (estimated losses €15m).



**Svetlana Tsybak of the Beykush winery**

### Problems in Southern Ukraine

The Russian occupation of wineries and vineyards in southern Ukraine affects not only local winemakers, but also their colleagues in central and northern parts of Ukraine. The latter, as craft winemakers, used to buy grapes from Kherson and other southern regions to produce their own wines. Many people are also leaving Mykolayiv region. “We are lacking workers now because some of them left their houses as they were afraid to stay. At the same time, the logistics became unpredictable. It is problematic to deliver to our region even basic things like bottles, corks, etc.,” says Svetlana Tsybak, commercial director of the Beykush winery in Mykolayiv region, which is now on the hostilities line.

### Logistics and Materials

The war affects not only winemakers, but also infrastructure and related industries. Thus, the modern large Gostomel glass factory near Kyiv was totally destroyed, which led to a lack of glass bottles on the market. Since the import of bottles from other countries is difficult and the currency exchange rate has risen by 25-30%, production costs of wine have increased significantly. Products to treat the vineyards became much more expensive. The destroyed infrastructure further complicates logistics and blocks the usual trade chains.

"Starting from 24th of February, our company focused on humanitarian needs. We helped local hospitals, territorial defense groups, families of our workers, and so on. At the same time, we did not stop working in the vineyards and our team did everything possible to get a good healthy harvest. We are more fortunate than our colleagues from other places, who could not even get into their vineyards because of the bombing or occupation," says Giorgi Lukuridze, co-owner of Shabo winery in Odessa region.

All these examples are only the tip of the iceberg in the list of losses for the Ukraine wine industry, but much more dramatic is the loss of human lives. At least two Ukrainian winemakers were killed because of Russian attacks. The president of the National Association of Sommeliers, Ivan Bachurin, wrote on his Facebook page, that he spent almost a month under occupation without proper food, water and electricity. And many sommeliers and wine producers are now serving in the military.

### Clear Export Opportunities

With domestic production of 55-60m liters, the total Ukrainian still wine market amounted to about 100m liters (with an import share of about 40%). The share of exports from Ukraine usually did not exceed 5%. The majority of exported wines went to Belarus, Kazakhstan, Germany and Romania.

Due to the war and unprecedented global support of Ukraine, the export destinations are changing. Local wine producers have noticed an increasing interest from foreign markets. Recently, Ukrainian wines were exported to Japan, Great Britain, Estonia, Poland and the USA, for example.

"The biggest change we saw was in the export potential. We were impressed by the willingness to support us from countries that until recently were interested mostly in wines from the traditional production countries. Even large chains of retailers, which were unreachable for us before, now show interest in buying our wines. Just imagine, we were even contacted by retailers from Spain and Italy," said Giorgi lukuridze of Shabo. Whereas the retail sales share of domestically produced wine declined constantly in recent years, local winemakers have noted greater consumer loyalty to their product in 2022. Due to the huge interest in local products inside the country and changes in the currency exchange rates, the "buy local" wine trend in Ukraine became stronger.

"Yes, we have noticed an increased interest in local wines in the domestic Ukrainian wine market and we believe that it still has good potential for growth," said Svetlana Tsybak from Beykush winery.

The main wine question at the moment in Ukraine is an existential one: “How much wine can be produced in Ukraine in the near future?” It is still not clear if wineries will be able to harvest in 2022, especially in the southern regions. “I hope winemakers will have an opportunity to harvest at least partially in our region. This year is dry and without vine diseases. So, the harvest could be of good quality,” said Georgiy Molchanov, owner of Slivino Village winery in Mykolayiv region.

The Ukrainian wine industry is hoping for the best, but of course a lot will depend on Russia’s plans to continue this war. At the same time no matter what, Ukrainian wines may be one of your next major discoveries in the wine world.



### GEOLOGY AND REGIONS

Ukraine is located between 45 and 52 latitude, has mostly flat but also hilly terrain with the Carpathian Mountains in the west and the Crimean Mountains on the Crimean Peninsula.

This geographic diversity provides numerous microclimates and the possibility of producing wines of different styles.

Commercial viticulture in Ukraine is mainly located in the south near the Black Sea: mostly in Odessa region, as well as in Mykolayiv and Kherson regions, where active war battles are now taking place.

Due to climate changes, more and more winemakers are thinking about planting new vineyards further north.

“Over the past decades, it has become noticeably hotter in the Odesa region.

Therefore, our company made a strategic decision to move north and planted about 2 ha of new vineyards near Kyiv,” says Igor Petrenko, co-owner of Biologist winery.

At the same time, vineyards in cooler regions still need frost protection in the winter time, and the labor costs for such maintenance can be quite high.





## News from the Federation Internationale Des Confreries Bachiques (F.I.C.B.)

### F.I.C.B. Wine Challenge Postponement of the 2022 F.I.C.B. Wine Challenge in Hungary to 23-28 May 2024

<http://www.winebrotherhoods.org/en/congress/2022-f-i-c-b-challenge/>

**F.I.C.B. and the Ladies of Pannonia have postponed this event due to the evolution of the situation in Eastern Europe and the impact of the tragic developments in Ukraine.**

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### 2023 F.I.C.B. International Congress in Portugal The 52nd International Congress of Wine Brotherhoods 2023

will take place from 27 to 31 May 2023 in Porto, the Douro region and the Vinho Verde region. It will be followed by an optional extension to Lisbon, Oeiras, Evora and the Carcavelos and Alentejo regions from 1 to 3 June 2023. It is organized by the Federation of Portuguese Wine Brotherhoods, member of F.I.C.B, and open to our society membership

<http://www.winebrotherhoods.org/news/272/33/2023-F-I-C-B-International-Congress-in-Portugal-registration-open/>

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#### *An Invitation from Madeira:*

The *Confraria Enogastronómica da Madeira* has the great honour to invite our brothers and sisters of the Renaud Society to its *2023 Great Chapter* that will take place from 21 to 24 April 2023 in Madeira Island.

It will be a great pleasure to welcome you to the *Pearl of the Atlantic*, reveal our flavours, our traditions, our indescribable landscape and enjoy your fraternity. Book as soon as possible to guarantee nice prices for accommodation and flight. We look forward to your participation, your family and friends are also welcome!

**2023 Great Chapter  
Madeira Enogastronomic Brotherhood  
PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**

FRIDAY, 21st of April

6:30 pm – Gathering at Palácio da Justiça do Funchal 7:00 pm – Reception and Welcome Dinner



SATURDAY, 22nd of April

10:00 am – Visit to Funchal Market.

11:00 am – Island Tour (to designate).

02:00 pm – Lunch (to designate).

#### **SUNDAY, 23rd of April**

09:30 am – Gathering at Palácio da Justiça do Funchal

10:00 am – Mass

11:00 am – Parade

12:00 pm – 2023 Great Chapter Ceremony

02:00 pm – Brotherhood Lunch

#### **MONDAY, 24th of April**

10:30 am – Gathering at Palácio da Justiça do Funchal (transfer).

10:30 am – Island tour to Porto Moniz.

01:00 pm – *Panelo* (typical Madeiran lunch), at Chão da Ribeira.

05:00 pm – Regresso ao Funchal.

**LIMITED REGISTRATIONS** until 10th of April of 2023.

#### **FURTHER INFO:**

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## **Commemorating the Legacy of Professor Serge Renaud, patriarch of the Renaud Society.**

Dominique Lanzmann, MD  
Paris, France

Ten years ago, the spiritual father of our society passed away, a great scientist who revolutionized the world's conceptions of nutrition, both by showing the importance of essential fatty acids and the role of polyphenols, in particular on thrombosis and the risk of myocardial infarction: Professor Serge Renaud, who would have been 95 this month.

His story is intimately linked to his discoveries. Born into a poor wine-growing family in southwestern France in 1927, he left for Quebec after the war to pay for his studies by working successively as a lumberjack and train switchman. His first scientific observation was the frequency of myocardial infarctions in thirty-year-old Quebecers, something unthinkable in southwest France. He understood that he was not dealing with a genetic factor but with an environmental one, since the Quebecers shared the same genes as French. He then observed the differences in lifestyle between the Quebecers and the French of the southwest. First of all, he could not imagine a meal without wine, whereas in Quebec, there was no wine or fruit. He understood that food had to be the major factor. He wanted to study nutrition and was directed towards veterinary studies which he brilliantly passed at Sainte-Hyacinthe in Montreal, as major of his class. Then he became the principal assistant of Hans Sélyé, who first described the relationship between stress and disease, and would have liked to keep him but Serge Renaud wanted to unravel the mystery of the influence of nutrition on myocardial infarction. He worked at the Montreal Institute of Cardiology, in anatomopathology and made his second decisive observation while dissecting hearts: the arteries of young



hockey players were healthy! But clogged with thrombosis. Decades ahead of his time, he understood that thrombosis was the determining factor in myocardial infarction. For 40 years, he analyzed the effects of nutrition on thrombosis, on the cell, on the animal and finally in humans.

The key player in thrombosis is the blood platelet, which is responsible for sealing any breach in the bloodstream to stop bleeding. To study its activity, it must be done immediately, because as soon as blood is drawn, it acts in the blood tube. You can't take the sample to the capital and study it the following week. Serge Renaud wanted to study the effects of diet on the activity of blood platelets in different rural populations. So he built himself a laboratory caravan and went with his laboratory technicians to different parts of Europe, and studied the activity of platelets in relation to diet, changing the diet. He identified the main factors in platelet aggregation: long saturated fatty acids, omega-6, age, feminine hormones. Conversely, the factors that decrease platelet activity are: calcium, omega-3, polyphenols and alcohol.

He then set up the famous Lyon study on secondary prevention of myocardial infarction and was able to reduce recurrences of infarction by 76% in the intervention group receiving a diet that prevented thrombosis, inspired by the traditional Cretan diet.

In 1991, he was interviewed by Morley Safer for Sixty Minutes on CBS News, about the protection of the French against myocardial infarction despite having higher risk factors than Americans (cholesterol, smoking, blood pressure, consumption of saturated fats). In fact, the cardiovascular mortality of the French in 1991 was 3.5 times lower than that of the Americans. He proposed that moderate and regular consumption of wine with meal should be a determining factor in the cardiovascular health of the French. This led to an explosion of French wine exports to America in the 1990s.

30 years later, this "French Paradox" is proving to be very robust, as the French still have highest classical risk factors, but the lowest cardiovascular mortality in the world, passing the Japanese, being at the same time, the world's leading wine drinkers.

Professor Serge Renaud, a renaissance man, was always decades ahead of his contemporaries.



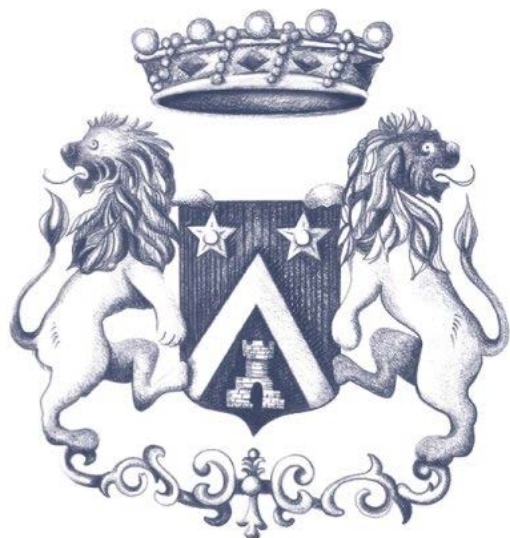
## Recommendation of the Season ... from your colleagues:

### **Côte Nicault 2017 GSM**

**37% Mourvèdre ~ 33% Grenache ~ 30% Syrah**

"A true GSM blend that's made from equal parts Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, Côte Nicault offers up beautiful blackberry and cassis-style fruit, ground pepper, wild herbs and hints of licorice to go with a





medium to full-bodied, seamless, elegant and beautifully pure profile on the palate. Showing the more forward, supple nature of the vintage, it has solid mid-palate depth, fabulous overall freshness and terrific finish. Already approachable, it will evolve nicely over the coming 5 - 8 years.”

The Côte Nicault Rhône blend of equal parts Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre reflects winemaker Gilles Nicault's Rhône Valley heritage, bringing together his viticulture and winemaking training in the Old World with years of winemaking in the Columbia Valley.

Despite a cooler than average spring and summer, these Washington vineyards produced intense wines with wonderful texture. Moderate spring and summer conditions finally warmed in late August, with temperatures climbing into the upper 80s to low 90s, allowing the grapes to gain color and sugar.

September and October days were warm and cloudless to bring the grapes to full physiological

maturity. Cool fall evenings offset the warm days to preserve the grapes' acidity and ripe tannins, resulting in wine with great structure and backbone.

Hand-picked grapes were brought to the winery in small bins where they underwent a distinct cellar protocol designed to complement the variety. Mourvèdre was aged in a French concrete egg to enhance the wine's spiciness and preserve its backbone.

Grenache underwent 30% whole-cluster native yeast fermentation to develop its delicate, perfume scented aromas and add another dimension to the finished wine before aging in once used Burgundian French oak barrels. Syrah was placed in small fermenters to achieve a high skin-to-juice ratio for added concentration, then aged in a 500L French oak barrel to capture the grapes' dark, savory character without undo oak influence. After 18 months of aging, the final blend was assembled and the wine was bottled.

From the time Gilles arrived in the Columbia Valley from France, he's dreamed of crafting a wine that reflects his Rhône heritage and upbringing. Thanks to the gravelly soils and steep slopes of StoneTree Vineyard on the Wahluke Slope, he discovered a site that is perfectly suited to produce such a wine. The 2011 Côte Nicault is an intense, dark wine offering ripe plum, fresh fig and crushed white pepper aromas and flavors. These flavors are interwoven with a vibrant mouthfeel held together by a racy texture that takes on added dimension and appeal across a bright, brambly finish.

**Listed at \$85.00**

## **2020 Aubert CIX ESTATE VINEYARD SONOMA COAST CHARDONNAY**

*The CIX Vineyard Chardonnay embodies everything you desire in a Chardonnay – distinctive aromatics, coupled with Goldridge soil that lends a varied richness and*



*breadth. The aromatics reflect the soil influenced minerals with White Burgundian nuances.*

*The 2020 CIX is breathtaking in its singular expression of terroir. The beguiling bouquet captivates with aromas of spring flowers, peach pie, lemon tea, and fresh brioche accented with notions of the vineyard's signature mineral perfume. An umami sensation on the palate complements endless layers of orchard fruit oils with a hint of coriander seed. Broad and concentrated, this vin de garde will flourish with extended cellaring time. The wine is slightly hazy showing our commitment to minimal intervention winemaking.*

*"If one could taste a fresh start. . . this is it"*

**Listed at \$115**



**Burrowing Owl Estate Chardonnay 2019 Okenagan Valley**

*An aromatic Chardonnay with intense orchard aromas of white peach, nectarine, red apple and pear along with honeydew melon, honeysuckle and vanilla, popcorn and a hint of butter. The silky textured palate is full-bodied with crisp, refreshing acidity and some hazelnut, toasty oak and butter that meld nicely with the melon, stone fruit and tropical notes of banana and papaya. The long finish shows lemon zest and a touch of minerality. Pair this with roast halibut with a peach salsa or root*

*vegetable mash with chanterelles sautéed in butter.*

**The Estate Chardonnay:** Ripe fruit and nicely integrated oak meld together in this modern, restrained Chardonnay. Vanilla, nut and popcorn barrel notes mix with white peach, banana, cantaloupe melon,

pear and a lemon on the nose. The palate starts with a creamy texture before the crisp, fresh juicy citrus acidity and minerality kick in. Flavors of peach, tropical fruits and lemon verbena last through a long finish.

Owl Estate Winery is one of BC's leading wineries, embracing an environmentally responsible program from the top to the bottom of its operations.

"Burrowing Owl" completed its initial land purchase in 1993, after learning that a little burrowing owl may have lived in the area at one time, but had since become an endangered species. The owl is rarely found in the region today. Burrowing Owl operates the Conservation Society of British Columbia for their captive release program for Burrowing Owls and to SORCO (South Okanagan Rehabilitation Centre for Owls). The wine shop alone raises close to \$50,000 each year for these two organizations.

The commitment to the burrowing owl is only one of the many environmental practices that are inherent in the day-to-day operation at Burrowing Owl Estate Winery.

**Listed at \$26**

## Alban Vineyards Pandora

At the very highest point, there is a unique and steep hillside. Over the course of 7 years, the land



was slowly folded by scratching terraces into this slope: a mix of pure white chalk laced with veins of fractured flint and sandstone. In the early years visiting winemakers went nuts when they viewed this site. Most were outraged when the plantings on the slope were Syrah and Grenache- at that time it sounded to them like putting a doormat on top of a silk rug. Times are changing. These 10 acres, on the hillside, of Syrah and Grenache, make up Seymour's Vineyard. While the Syrah goes into a wine called Seymour's, the Grenache is the fruit for our Pandora.

In the myth, Pandora is the first woman- the Greek 'Eve'. She is fashioned out of clay and as you know, handed a vessel that she is instructed not to open. Of course, curiosity forces her to take a look. In that moment, all the

challenges of the world are released- much like the effect of the apple in Eden. What is all too often overlooked is that Pandora shuts the vessel in time to retain one attribute: Hope. Naturally as the first woman, she is the source of all hope for mankind.

Pandora is a very feminine wine that has advanced the end of the idea that some grapes are nobler than others; that Grenache is too paltry to be planted on premier vineyard sites. Over the 30 years working with Grenache, a generation has emerged that really doesn't even know there were once, so called, noble varieties. There are only noble wines.

Aromatic and exotic with smoked herbs, juvenile fresh red fruits, fennel, and wet crushed stones; dense and long. Aged 34 months in larger French containers of various ages after being fermented open to by its native yeasts. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

***Listed price and vintages variable/expensive (rare)***



## **Redigaffi Merlot 2020**

### **Toscana IGT Italia**

A breathtaking, iconic 100% Merlot, Redigaffi is a benchmark Merlot from Italy. The vineyards are planted at extreme high density –up to 3,300 vines per acre - to ensure low yields and the greatest quality of the grapes. Extra long – up to 27 days - maceration with the skins and manual,

frequent punchdowns allow for Redigaffi's outstanding concentration and complexity. Matured 12-16 months in Allier and Tronçais oak barrels for exceptional smoothness. Redigaffi is unfiltered to preserve its plush aromas, and refined in the bottle to ensure the greatest elegance upon release.

Rita Tua and her husband, Virgilio Bisti, bought approximately 37.5 acres of land in 1984 and planted it with Cabernet and Merlot. They later purchased an additional 17.5 acres of land, bringing the total estate to 55 acres, of which about 45 are planted with vines. The winery released its first vintage in 1992, and soon began receiving praise and accolades from wine enthusiasts worldwide for its rich, full-bodied wines. In just five short years, its 100% Merlot had achieved cult-like status, receiving outstanding ratings from the world's most prestigious wine critics and publications. Critic Robert M. Parker Jr. said the 1999 Redigaffi was "as close to perfection as a wine

can get.” The following year, he gave the 2000 Redigaffi a perfect 100 score.

The winery’s Bordeaux blend, Giusti di Notri, also garners near-universal praise. Little wonder that Tua Rita’s wines are considered among the most difficult to find in Italy. has an intense color that arouses enthusiasm and satisfy the sight, it highlights great complexity characterized by the fruity attack in the mouth leaving then “room” to tobacco and liquorice notes. Good concentration given by the pre-harvesting activity, three passages and perfect maturation reached by our grapes.

Outstanding complexity. Floral notes typical of our “Macchia Mediterranea” are intense and persistent. The elegance of tannins is enhanced by the great structure and balance.

Considerable extraction and good acidity.

Deep purple in color, Redigaffi offers luscious layers of blueberry jam, ripe plum and blackberry, followed by voluptuous notes of dark chocolate, licorice, black pepper, vanilla and incense. Full-bodied and lush on the palate with polished tannins and an extra-long finish, Redigaffi is one of Italy’s greatest Merlots. A true masterpiece.

This wine pairs beautifully with dark-fruit chutney sauces, kalamata olive tapenade, Châteaubriand, and grilled pepper-crust sirloins.



**Listed at \$149.00**

## Keplinger *Fuego y Mar* Sonoma Coast Syrah 2018



**“This is so succulent and juicy with blackberry, violet and black-tea aromas and flavors. Full-bodied, yet tight and fresh with energy and beauty. Creamy tannins. Very complex. Savory aftertaste.” . . . James Suckling**

*“In 2004, I moved to the Priorat region in Spain to start the winery for a group of partners who had purchased a vineyard there. Over the next three years of living there*



*full-time and then traveling back and forth from Napa Valley, I became steeped in the culture, lifestyle, food and wines.*

*My husband, DJ, visited me often and we traveled throughout southern France, the Languedoc, and the Rhone. We became even bigger fans of the regional wines, as well as the complete Mediterranean way of life – the kitchen gardens, local fresh food, anything slathered in olive oil and sprinkled with sea salt – all of which are enhanced by the delicious, food-friendly wines. These wines and ideals are a big part of our lives in Napa, so it was only natural to begin our wine project with California Grenache and Syrah, and vineyards that would allow them to touch their full potential. Great wine is only possible from great vineyards – we select vineyards, farm grapes, and make wine by this mantra.*

*At our core, we are wine lovers, and we thoroughly enjoy the process of seeking out exceptional vineyards ideal for a specific varietal, and farming for the highest quality. We sweat the details with pleasure – focusing on small quantities made from small wine lots, respecting and responding to the uniqueness of each site and year. Working hard but with finesse, we believe in gentle winemaking to create wines of balance and complexity that are true to their varietal and speak of their terroir and provenance.” (Helen Keplinger)*

Fuego y Mar is a stunning wine, with seductive dark notes of ink, dark chocolate, black fig, lavender. The mouthfeel is incredibly silky start to finish, with a supple, beautifully textured palate of ultrafine tannins and an incredibly nuanced finish that lasts for minutes. Flavors of dark chocolate, resin, cedar, pipe tobacco, dried black fig, black cherry, and cinnamon stick are seamlessly interwoven.

**Listed at \$85.00**



***Clif Family 2019 Petite Syrah***  
***Napa Valley, California,***  
***USA***

***The wine shows inky color that will stain your clothes, this wine has aromas of ripe blueberry, blackberry, vanilla, and black pepper. The mid-palate is intensely concentrated, with tannin and richness dominating the mid-palate and fruit carrying through to the finish.***

***This is your classic over the top, fruit bomb, characteristic of a high-end Napa Valley Petite Syrah. Clif Family is an ambitious food and wine venture, but they keep their wine program true to the environment, with sustainable production and a culture of a boutique family wine program.***

***This Petite Syrah is chewy, fruity and well concentrated, but has a unique balance of fruit, tannin, and acid, and a most pleasing flavour, that makes it a special wine, for a special occasion, with a special person . . . or maybe alone, for an evening of reflection and contemplation.***

***Crafted by winemaker Laura Barrett; Laura brings her passion for wine, a life-long love of science and attention to detail to winemaking at Cliff Family. Inspired by her first harvest in New Zealand, Laura received a Masters in Viticulture and Enology from the University of California, Davis and trained under some of Napa Valley's most celebrated winemakers. With a vineyard-driven approach and a focus on organic farming, Laura is enthusiastic about creating balanced and elegant wines such as this Petite Syrah.***

***Well priced at \$45.00***

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## **Kramer Says . . . . .**

***An Interpretation of the best of Matt Kramer (retired):***

***as told by . . . Tedd Goldfinger, DO FACC, FESC, FCCP***

***Grand Maitre de la Société Renaud***

Deep in the archives of Wine Spectator, dating back to 1998, where this article sports a flattering photo of our young iconic wine journalist, Matt Kramer addresses gimmicks wine producers have used to sell and up-tick prices of their wines. The article caught my attention, as he references Ernest



Ernest Hemmingwav

Hemingway, not once, but four times. Having just returned

earlier this year from a trip to Cuba, where my wife and I, and close friends visited the master-writer's home and haunts, and I reread *Old Man and the Sea* for the *umpteenth* time, I was taken by the reference, and my perceived similarities between the raw honest writings of both Hemingway and Kramer.





*Gimme, Gimme Good Gimmick*, the article begins “*the most essential gift for a good writer, observed Ernest Hemingway, is a built-in shock-proof shit detector. Identifying a powerful lot of marketing manure, the same gift can be true as well for wine lovers, as gimmick is often heaped upon the wine consuming public*”.

The examples he gives, as he creates the appearance of being at the right place at the right time, is seeing a wine producer tasting his latest wine blindly at a wine shop, with both an educated wine-shop proprietor, and some of the customers, Kramer included. “*The shop owner slurps. I slurp. The winery owner smugly asks . . . so what do you think? The wine was OK, extracted, mildly tannic, intensely dull . . .so naturally I thought it was a Merlot.*” So actually it was a Pinot Noir, previously felt to be under extracted, and lacking excitement. “*We give it **22 months in new oak**, we’re putting it in a special bottle, and selling it for \$60 (a high price at the time!)*”. A distortion of the wine, and a gimmick to distort the perception of the consumer. “*Will it sell?*” “*Sure, why not*”.

As second example, Kramer presents 5 Italian producers from the Asti region, assembling their Barbera d’Asti finished wines together into one wine and bottling it only in magnums and selling it for “*guess what—\$60 a bottle*”, a good deal pricier than the wines individually at the time. Nearby, in the Alba region, winemakers did a similar thing creating, *L’Insieme*, a Langhe Rosso sourced from multiple producers, and sold as a special bottling.

So what has happened to the gimmick of wine sales in the 21st century? At minimum we can say they have become more creative, but also has created more distortion.

Consider celebrity labels such as Snoop Dog Red, or Martha Stewart Chardonnay, from Australian producer, 19 Crimes Wines. Well at least Martha is in the food (and wine) world. We are told that Snoop has traded his Gin and Juice cocktails for wine these days. I do admit that some celebrity sponsorships are interesting, where the celebrity truly has a vested interest in the wine, and has skin in the game. Drew Bledsoe has Doubleback and Bledsoe Family Wines, a portfolio that has gained a pedigree if not for his celebrity or his partnership with the Figgins family of Leonetti Cellar (Drew and Chris Figgins were high school pals), but for the quality of the product. And, of course, Palmaz Winery in Napa, an enormous investment by Julio Palmaz MD, creator of the intravascular stent (a celebrity in the medical field). “*Palmaz has the winery that every winemaker would want to have*”, said Michael Mondavi in private conversation. And my childhood hero, the late NY Mets ace, Tom (Terrific) Seaver, founder of Seaver Vineyards, where the capsule sports a baseball ribbing.



Food and Wine pairings have gone a bit overboard, such as seen with Barefoot Wines creating a special blend to pair with Oreo cookies. Or House Rose box wine sold with Cheez-It crackers.

And consider infused wine such as white wine laced with Dijon mustard seeds, perfectly paired with the white wine that’s used in



the mustard mix. I'm certain the Burgundians around the city of Dijon are embracing this very well. :-0



I do have to say that the gimmick of aging red wine in used bourbon barrels is interesting and I have tried it on more than one occasion. I happen to like bourbon, and the bourbon soaked staves of the used barrels clearly imparts a strong character to the wine. Bourbon, by definition, must be stored in new toasted American Oak barrels. So, the process gives a lot of oak and vanilla character and richness to what would otherwise be sold as a lower end red wine. I've only had Cabernet Sauvignon, but I can certainly see where a Zinfandel or Syrah would benefit from the gimmick of using the used bourbon barrel. For me, this one works. Maybe add a cinnamon stick. :-)



So as far as *gimmicks* go, wine producers, at least those who operate on a large scale, need to sell their wines, keep margins intact, and generate profit. Profit allows innovation, and we are all in favor of innovation. Smaller boutique wineries also have the same need, but operate at a level where quality, and customer loyalty allows them to exist.

So long as the culture of wine doesn't become too distorted, I don't really have a problem with it. Yeah, over extracting the Pinot Noir by bathing it in oak for 22 months, or Cabernet aged in Bourbon barrels, will distort the natural desire of the grape to become what it should be. And pop star sponsors may distort the culture of a fine wine served at a peaceful table with complementary food.

The consumer has the responsibility to hold the industry to the standard it expects. I'll invite a bourbon barrel Cabernet to my barbecue from time to time (also saw a Merlot stored in rum barrels!), but I'll pass on the gimmicky label that boast a celebrity with whom I do not relate. And, I think mustard belongs on hot dogs, and Oreo's pair best with organic whole milk.

Thoughts?

The Renaud Society Wine Journal is seasonally published twice a year and invites letters to the editor or other submissions, from its readers, for inclusion in future newsletters

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