

Nectar of The Gods:  
A History of Wine  
Ed Korry MA CSS CWE

Society of Wine Educators Virtual  
Conference 10/16/2021

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### Main Themes

- The path from Sacred to Secular
- How it shaped and shapes Trade
- Fortification as an essential element to wine trade
- Technology and agricultural aspects -> Quality
- Wine diversity- Choices, choices everywhere
- New World vs Old World vs Real World

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### What is wine?

- The word Wine is of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) stem woī-no
- Fermented juice of grapes
- Made primarily from vitis vinifera

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## Grape genera and species

- 17 Genera?
- 60-70 species
  - Vitis Vinifera- hermaphrodite 5,000-10,000 varieties: i.e. Chardonnay
  - Vitis Riparia- America
  - Vitis Labrusca- America
  - Vitis Blandieri- America
  - Vitis Rupestris- America
  - Vitis Amunerensis -Asia
- Genus Muscadinia
  - Vitis rotundifolia- America
- Hybrids and Crosses - Seyval Blanc vs Pinotage or Chardonnay

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## Types of Wine

- Light (Still) Wines- White, Red, Rosé, Orange
- Sparkling Wines- ie Champagne, Cava, Crémants, Méthode Rurale, Pét Nat, Charmat method, Prosecco,
- Fortified Wines- ie Port, Madeira, Marsala, Sherry, VDN, Topaque
- Aromatized Wines- ie Vermouth, Lillet, Chinato, Byrrh

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## Schrödinger's Cat

- 500 million BCE Ampelopsis (peppervine or porcelain berry)



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## Pre-history

- 200 million BCE postulated appearance of *Vitis Vinifera Sylvestris*
- 50 million BCE Fossilized remains of *Vitis Vinifera Sylvestris*
- 200,000 BCE postulated appearance of white mutations

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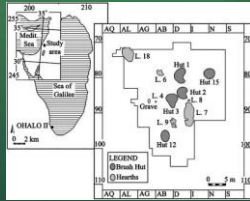
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## First Human Traces of *Vitis Vinifera* Use

- 21,000 BCE *Vitis Vinifera* at Ohalo II site in SE Galilee
- Other plants included
  - emmer wheat
  - wild almond
  - wild pistachio
  - wild olive
  - flowers



Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2004 Apr 27; 101(17): 6821-6826.  
Published online 2004 Apr 16. doi: [10.1073/pnas.0308557101](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0308557101)

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## Wine and its determinant role

- Ethanol and interaction with other animal species 17 species including bonobos, chimps, birds, native Malay tree shrews
- The gene ADH4 - 10 million years ago
- Its key psychotropic aspect- (psychedelic peptides from monkey frogs, anyone?)
- The discovery of wine vs beer vs chicha etc
- pre-Neolithic and Neolithic 10,000-13,000 years
- 13,000BCE Traces of Calcium oxalate in Raqefet Israel
- Wine as a sacred object. What do we mean by sacred? Taboo
- Its role in the evolution of religion

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## The Magic of Wine from Eurasia to China

- Grapes naturally ferment via *saccharomyces cerevisiae*
- Fermentation - role of yeast-not understood until 1860's by Louis Pasteur
- Wine would spoil -> vulnerable to *acetobacter* ->vinegar
- The blending of hawthorn, wine with honey and rice in Jiahu China in 7000BCE. Similar evidence in Near East/ Mesopotamia. Why?
- Drinking tubes depicted from Jiahu (China) to Godin Tepe (Zagros Mts in Iran), Egypt, Crete, Ancient Greece
- Associated with funerary and sacred acts- the first buzz?

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## Wine as a perishable product

- Figuring out how to slow down or prevent it from turning into VINEGAR
- Adding ingredients to retard the process, sealing it, temperature control
- Selecting higher acid varieties
- Leaving residual sugar - a preservative
- Later fortification

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## From the Sacred to Consumer Good

- 6000 BCE -5000 BCE Georgia, Iran and Sumeria
- 4000 BCE- 3100 BCE - Wine in Canaan (later Phoenicia)
- 3200 BCE -2700 BCE Ancient Egypt mostly imported
- 1700 BCE - 1500 BCE Earliest Sanskrit wine references
- 1600 BCE Wine in Ancient Greece via Crete
- Wine in Graecia Magna and Etrusca and Ancient Rome
- Wine in Judaism- the Kiddush at Shabbat
- Wine in Christianity - Communion
- Wine and Islam

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## The Juicy Part of the Wine Story begins

- 8500 BCE Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey grapes and distinct varieties develop. Why?
- 7000-6600 BCE First known 'wine' in Neolithic village of Jiahu, China- Patrick McGovern



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## Wine and Religion

Noah and the Flood- The Gilgamesh Flood Myth (5600BCE)



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## Noah

- Mt Ararat
- What was the first thing Noah did after his sacrificial offering to YHWH?
- He planted a VINEYARD! (And then got very DRUNK!)
- Curse upon the children of his son (C)ham- Canaanites (Phoenicians)



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# MAP



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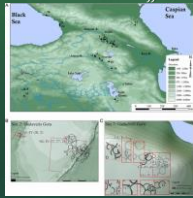
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## Georgia The Cradle of Wine

- 6000 BCE Prof. Patrick McGovern verifies Gora Shulveri 30 miles south of Tbilisi as oldest wine artifact
- 5400 BCE Hajji Firuz Tepe in Zagros Mts



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## Georgian traditions

- Qvevri wines
- 400-600 indigenous varieties: Rkatsiteli, Saperavi, Goruli, Mtsvane
- Orange wine- 'Natural wines'
- (Taste Qvevri or Orange wine now!)
- Read Lisa Granik's MW

Wines



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## Armenia

4000 BCE Oldest  
discovered winery at  
Areni



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## Land of Canaan

- Canaan was ideal for viticulture- Land of Eschol. Why?
- 1800 BCE Canaan referred to in Ancient Egypt's The Tale of Sinuhe - 'land of more wine than water'
- 'The (2 of 12) spies brought back a cluster of grapes which required the two to carry upon a lever'. Numbers 13:23
- The wine source for the earliest Pharoanic dynasties
- Area ruled by Pharaohs after battle of Meggido 1456 BCE till the Late Bronze Age collapse the seafaring people @ 1200 BCE -1177 BCE

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## Oldest Wine Cellar (to date) in the land of Canaan/ Israel

- 1700 BCE
- 40 jars with 50 liter capacity
- Recipe included:
  - pistachio tree resin
  - Mint
  - Cinnamon bark
  - Juniper berries



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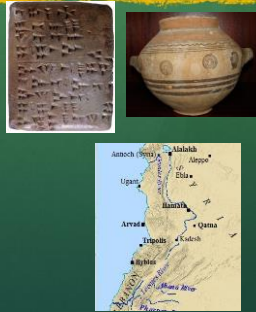
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## Land of Canaan

- 3000 BCE Wine and viticulture to Cyprus and Crete
- Canaanite jars - precursors to amphorae
- 1500 BCE Ugarit (Northern Syria) as a wine export center- origin of the 30 character alphabet
- Libations to deities and their influence on other cultures- Baal



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## Land of Canaan

- Wine referenced 280 times in the Bible more than any other food or beverage
- Wine as a gift from YHWH
- Israel as the vineyard and YHWH as the vintner
- Garden of Eden myth and the fruit of knowledge- Apple translation -but really fruit or grape (serpents venerated by Canaanites)
- Indigenous varieties include Jandali (w) and Hamdani (w) perhaps called Godali and Haldali in 4<sup>th</sup> Century

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## Ancient Phoenicia



By --DooFi (talk) 02:09, 18 May 2009 (UTC) - Routes\_commerciales\_des\_Phéniiciens-fr.svgPhoenicianTrade.png, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6807626>

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## Ancient Phoenicia

- Wine brought to the Mediterranean coasts and isles
  - 800 BCE viticulture brought to France, Portugal, Spain
  - 750 BCE Tunisia - Carthage
  - 600 BCE Wine introduced to the Gauls - Casks
  - 500 BCE Algeria

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## Ancient Egypt

- Irp - ancient Egyptian word for wine
- Religious significance - sacred aspect (Semez)
- Wine used as Medicine -> Aromatized wine tradition
- 3150 BCE 700 wine jars from Caanan buried at Scorpion I. Wine is laced with pine resin, figs, herbs, coriander, mint, sage

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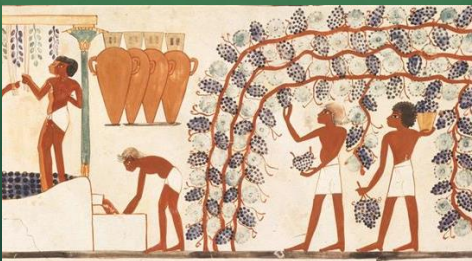
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## Ancient Egypt

Pergola trellis system



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## Ancient Egypt

- Vinification
- Wine 'labels' include variety, vintage, producer and vineyard
- Cork usage @ 2500 BCE?



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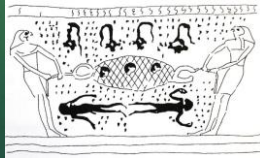
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## Ancient Egypt

- Shezmu - god of the wine press
- Offered wine to Osiris to facilitate resurrection



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## Ancient Egypt

Osiris receiving the grapevine



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## Ancient Mycenaean Greece

- Wine introduced to Cycladic civilization- libations to the gods
- Crete and Minoan Culture ends in 1646 BCE with Thira explosion
- Mycenae 1600 BCE - 1177 BCE?
- Sacred quality and offerings of libations to the gods



Krater



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## Mycenaean Greece

- Water's potability- origins in Phoenicia
- Limited Water resources in Land of Canaan
- Krater and krosis - mixing wine with water
- Pure wine used for medication and embalming fluid
- 'Water first then wine-' Xenophanes 6<sup>th</sup> C BCE
- Barbarians in part defined by drinking habits

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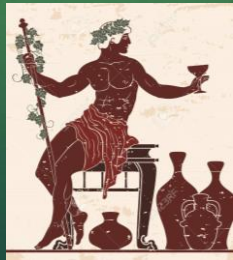
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## Archaic Greece 800 BCE - 480 BCE

- Mainland Greece's topography, soil and climate
- Olive oil and wine trade as a basis for wealth and power
- Evolution and Roles of Dionysos - resurrected god; the intermediary between the gods and men
- Symposia and bacchanalia



Dionysos with thyrsos

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## Archaic Greece 800 BCE - 480 BCE



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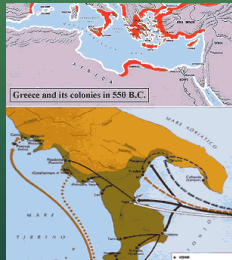
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## Archaic Greece

- Varieties
- Vine training and spacing
- Different pruning methods
- Sweet Wine
- The 'white flower' - Jéréz
- Magna Graecia and Sicily
- 650 BCE First Wine laws introduced
  - Zaleucus and pure wine
  - Draco's law- grape stealing
  - 1<sup>st</sup> wine laws for quality & harvest date



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## Sweet Wine

- Sweet Wines- Advantages
- Methods described by Hesiod in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century BCE
  - Liastra
  - Bythinian technique of drying grapes on the vine
  - Vin cuit/ vino cotto
- Sweet wines exist to this day in the Cyclades- ie: Samos, Rhodes, Chios, Limnos, Paros, Santorini
- Spread throughout the Mediterranean



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## Ancient Greek Wine artifacts

- Pithoi – large container to store wine –buried for temperature control
- Amphora – used to transport
- Krater – for krasis
- Arytaina- ladle with a cup like a venencia
- Phiale – a wine drinking bowl




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## Greek Wine Artifact

- Skyphos – two handled cup-like a mug
- Kylix – stemmed cup for symposia
- Oinochoe – pitcher to transfer wine from a krater
- Kanthoroi – two handled deep cup
- Psykter- wine cooler
- Cyceon – first cocktail (used in the Eleusinian Mysteries)




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## Ancient Rome and Oenotria

- Etruscan vs Magna Graecia
- Wine becomes a consumer good- Why?
- Rome's Population exceeds 1 million -> dependence on wines of Gaul & Iberia
- 121 BCE legendary vintage – Opimiam
  - Falernum
  - Aglianico, Greco di Tufo
  - Mastroberardino vineyard in Pompei
- Casks as primary mode of transportation and sulfur use (Pliny)




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## Pompeii-130 wine bars



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## Western Europe

- Romans had planted everywhere they had conquered
- 65 CE Columella's De Re Rustica - 12 volumes
- 81- 96 CE Emperor Domitian decreed prohibition on grape growing outside 'Italy'
- 325 -350 CE Speyer Römerwein in Pfalz



Found in 1867

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## Wine in Christendom

- Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan 313 CE
- Monks were the main driving force in expansion of vineyards till the French Revolution
- Benedictine and Cistercians established famous vineyards in Burgundy, Loire, Bordeaux, and Rhône
- Expanded land acquisitions by the Church



Clos de Vougeot

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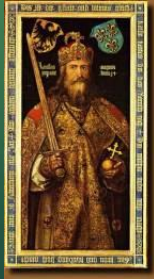
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## Western Europe

- 802 AD Charlemagne bans led wine; selection of Rudesheim Corton (red beard)
- 1001 AD Leif Ericson and Vinland
- 1086 AD Domesday Book -40 significant vineyards in England
- 1141 AD 1<sup>st</sup> known Chianti Ricasoli family



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## Malvasia in Byzantine Empire

- Malvasia derived from Monemvasia on the tip of the Peloponnese
- Dominant wine in trade from 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century
- Venetian Empire and corruption to Malvasia
- Malmsey in Madeira
- (Taste Mediterranean sweet unfortified wine)



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## Western Europe

- 1152 AD Marriage of Henry II to Eleanor of Aquitaine
- 1224 AD "Battle of Wines" in poem by Henri d'Andell Apostolus Commanderia
- 1299 Arnaldus de Villanova and wines made from mutage



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## Western World

- 1455 AD Madeira wine
- 1487 AD Use of Sulfur sticks decreed for wine production in Prussia
- 1524 AD first plantings in the Americas -Mexico
- 1548 AD first plantings in Chile by Pizarro
- 1554 Argentina at Santiago del Estero by Fr. Cidron
- Pais/ Criolla Chica/ Mission = Listan Prieto from the Canary Islands?



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## Western World

- 1590 1<sup>st</sup> written record of botrytized wine in Tokaj? Or 1606? King of Wines and Wine of Kings
- 1615 Ban on charcoal in England- development of coal industry. Heavy glass and Cork use
- 1638 1<sup>st</sup> Port house - trade with British since Treaty of Methuen (Treaty of Windsor 1386)



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## Wine enters the Modern Age

- 1655 Wine planted in South Africa- victualing station
- 1662 Christopher Merret and deliberate production of sparkling wine (**Champagne**)
- **Heavy glass use-** control of fermentation
- 1663 Samuel Pepys and "Ho-Bryon" - Branding



Stellenbosch South Africa

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## Fortification & the British Empire

Why the spread of Fortified Wine?

British consumer demand

- Jerez-Xerez-Sherry
- Madeira/ Azores
- Port
- South African wine (Jerepigo)
- Australian -Port now Topaque
- Marsala



Madeira

Taste your fortified wine now !!!

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## Wine enters the Modern Age

- 1699 King Carlos II bans wines in colonies except for church use
- 1788 1<sup>st</sup> vineyard planted in Australia
- 1790-1800 Constantia wine achieves legendary status
- 1800s Attempts to plant vinifera in the colonies fail
- Madeira or fortified Azorean wine dominates in the 13 colonies
- PHYLLOXERA



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## Wine enters the Modern Age

- 1789 French Revolution and two consequences:
  - Church loses its lands- the rise of négociants
  - Napoleonic Code of inheritance
- 1801 Chaptalization
- 1824 1<sup>st</sup> precise measurement of alcohol



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## Wine enters the Modern Age



Library at the Abbey of Cîteaux

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## Wine enters the Modern Age

- 1845-47 Oidium Tuckerei- Powdery mildew -disaster
  - Sulfur
- 1855 Exposition Universelle and the Bordeaux classification
- Dominance of French wines till the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- But continued dominance of French varieties



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## Wine in the US

- Native varieties - Concord/ Scuppernong/ Norton
- Beer and rum -> whiskey drinking culture
- 1769 First vines planted in California Junipero Serra
- Viewed as an elite beverage
- Inability to plant vinifera because of phylloxera
- Jefferson and Monticello



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## Wine in the US

- 1830 First mention of Zinfandel (Tribidrag/ Crljenak Kastelanski/ Primitivo)
- 1852 Agoston Haraszthy-Zinfandel introduction to California
- 1849- California Gold Rush
  - 1862 Vines number over 8 million in California
  - 1870-1880's Phylloxera strikes California
  - 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire



Agoston Haraszthy

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## Wine enters the Modern Age

- 1851 Echazarreta brings vine cuttings from France to Chile- pre-phylloxera
- 1862 Phylloxera strikes and wipes out all the vineyards of Europe and beyond (continues) exceptions- Chile, Washington State, Australia (not all) a select few vineyards in Europe
- 1878 Peronospera Downy mildew 1<sup>st</sup> appears in Europe- Bordeaux mixture



Taste your Pais wine

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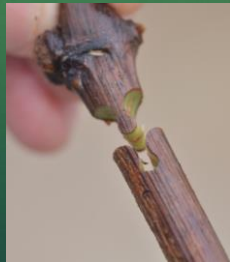
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## Modern era

- 1880- Grafting solutions and replanting
- 1887 Munson awarded Legion of Honor in Dennison
- 1892 1<sup>st</sup> vinifera taken to China- Marselan and Cabernet Gernischt
- 1903 167,000 acres to 1500 sq miles of vines in Algeria -> threat to French wine industry



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## Modern Era

- 9 gal spirits avg/person + cider /beer
- 1920-1933 Prohibition - grape production increases
- 1936 - AOC laws - why?
- 1948 - Supertuscans -Sassicaia
- 1954 1<sup>st</sup> mechanical harvester used (US)
- 1950's **Stainless Steel Fermentation** use
- 1956 Winter Freeze in Bordeaux



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## Modern Era

- 1957 Zellerbach (Hanzell) and Fr Oak & Dr. Konstantin Frank
- 1958- AxR1 rootstock approved leading to future calamity in CA
- 1959 - screw cap for wines- Stelvin closure invented for wine use - TCA
- 1966- Robert Mondavi- Christie's wine department and wine auctions- wine becomes an "investment"
- 1971 Varietal labeling in US- Why?
- 1976 **The Judgment of Paris**
- 1978-79 Wine Advocate and Robert Parker + Wine Spectator
- 1981- Napa Valley - 2<sup>nd</sup> AVA ( now 257)

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## Modern era

- Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Tasting in 1980's/ Oregon's Tualatin's Best of Show in London 1984
- 1985- "Anti-freeze" -diethylene glycol scandal in Austria
- 1991 - 60 Minutes and "The French Wine Paradox" - 40%⬆️ red wine consumption
- 1997- Phylloxera attacks 90% of Napa & Sonoma vineyards
- 2004 Sideways movie- Pinot Noir in US sees exponential growth
- 2006 Fraud becomes prevalent- Bill Koch sues Hardy Rodenstock (Meinhart Görke) later Kurniawan

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## Present and Future

- CLIMATE CHANGE-
  - Fires in Australia and California
  - Changes in varieties grown in traditional regions\*
  - Changes to viticulture & vinification techniques  
(Read Roger Bohmrich's brilliant analysis of impact of projected climate change)
- Homogenization and Industrialization of wine
  - No excuse today for a bad wine -added ingredients
  - Reaction to the last 60 years
  - Expression of Terroir - explosion of choices
  - Natural wine - vs Organic vs Biodynamic wine
  - Orange wine
  - Rosé craze
  - Disappearance of sweet wine traditions

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## Old Vines



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Coming Full Circle  
we started with and end  
with.....

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## China as a potential power house



Burying vines in Ningxia Province to prevent winter kill

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## A sampling of relevant books to read

- Kevin Begos: Tasting the Past
- Oz Clarke: The History of Wine in 100 bottles
- Arthur George: The Mythology of Wine
- Patrick McGovern: Ancient Wine & Uncorking the Past
- Hugh Johnson's: Story of Wine
- Stavoula Kourakou Malvasia: Vine and Wine in the Ancient Greek World & The renowned wine, Yesterday and Today
- Mark A. Matthews: Terroir and other Myths
- Rod Phillips: Short Story of Wine & French Wine: A History
- Ian Tattersall & Rob Desalle: A Natural History of Wine
- Tim Unwin: Wine and Vine: An historical Geography of Viticulture and the Wine Trade
- Jason Wilson: Godforsaken Grapes

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Thank you

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