

5-25-1967

# Grapes and Wines in Eastern U.S.A.

Konstantin Frank

*Dr. Konstantin Frank and Sons*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/markko\\_documents](http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/markko_documents)



Part of the [Viticulture and Oenology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Frank, Konstantin(1967). Grapes and Wines in Eastern U.S.A.. *Markko Vineyard Documents*. Paper 38.  
[http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/markko\\_documents/38](http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/markko_documents/38)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Markko Vineyard Collection at Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. It has been accepted for inclusion in Markko Vineyard Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. For more information, please contact [earichal@kent.edu](mailto:earichal@kent.edu).

## GRAPES AND WINES IN EASTERN U. S. A.

A report concerning the questionable approach to the American public by the importers and exporters of foreign wines, the present status of grape growing, and the possibility of improving the grape industry by introduction of *Vitis vinifera* grapes.

Sometime ago friends sent me several clippings from the Sunday News of February 12, 1967. They call my attention to page 4C where one reads a remark made during a dinner given by our Governor, Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller, for the Congressional Delegation of the State of New York. At that dinner New York State Burgundy was served.

Here I would like to quote this remark: "Oh, lord" one of the Governor's aides moaned, "that's the same lousy stuff we complained about last year. No one will believe New York can really make wine."

Now, seven of my friends, some of whom have recently attended one of four special organized wine tastings held in Washington, D. C. and vicinity, sent me seven clippings from the Washington Post.

In this paper on March 19th one very indignant reporter quotes a wine list compiled by our Ambassador, Mr. David Bruce as "One of the world's Great Connoisseurs." And now I am practically bombarded by my friends with clippings published in many Newspapers as an answer to these articles published in the Foreign Service Journal and other Newspapers.

These polemics do damage to the domestic wine and grape industry and even help to mislead the American public.

Prohibition and religious belief (Baptists, Mormons, and many other sects) restrained the development and Government help for study, experimentation, and improvements in the grape and particularly in the wine industry. Because of these factors in the Eastern part of the United States, amateurs took the initiative in leading the grape and particularly the wine industries. The Publicists-

amateur grape-growers and home wine-makers - being in good faith, have published their experience convincing the American public that it is absolutely impossible to grow European Grapes East of the Rockies. This non-malevolent misleading has become so strong, and the failure so constant and so persuasive that it will take much time and work to change and to disprove these assertions.

There are a few books written about the grape growing and wine making in the East, but they cannot be taken seriously because the writers of these books were personally not experienced with the farming, the grape-growing, or wine-making at all; they were only professional writers.

But there are several hundred books about the French and German wines entitled: "Wine of France," "A Book of French Wines," "Directory of Wine," "The Vintage Wine Book," "Die Grosse Weine Deutschlands," "German Wines," "Die Spitzen Weine Europas," "Die Grosse Weine Frankreichs," "The Great Wines of Germany," "The Noble Grapes and the Great Wines of France," and many, many more. All these books are respected like the bible and these books can be found by wine lovers as educational material.

Most of these books were written by the professionals - wine importers. In most of these American wine books you can read how inferior are the American wines.

I would like to quote some of these authors:

"It is to be doubted that a really distinguished Muscatel exists, and at least 98 percent of those produced in America are unworthy of the attention of a person interested in fine wines."

In these books, not only are American wines badly treated but also the entire wine industry of California is accused of dishonesty. Here you can read:

". . . . and fully twenty times as much 'California Riesling' is annually sold as the few acres planted to the true Riesling could conceivably produce."

The same author accuses the American Government of helping the wine industry to cheat the American public.

"American regulations covering grape varieties, however, are neither so strict as they should be nor are they rigidly enforced." On the other hand, the same author assures the American public that the foreign wine industry must be trusted completely; he assures Americans that:

"All estate-bottled Rhines and Moselles are NATURWEINE".

#### FACTS ABOUT ESTATE BOTTLING

"An estate-bottled wine is therefore certified unblended and an estate-bottling is an absolute guarantee of authenticity. To a considerable extent, it is a guarantee of quality, as well."

"A consumer knows that a wine which carries a CHATEAU label can be trusted." On July 16, 1965, the public of three states - New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut was presented with a two-hour radio show. "SIX VOICES ON WINE over New York Radio". Later this program was published in WINES & VINES.

As a reply to the suggestion of President Johnson for serving of American wines at U.S. consulates abroad one of these voices, a leading business man, assures the American public that of his total sale of wines only 3% were domestic American wines. These six voices have assured Americans that we will never crack the European market with our American wines. During this radio show Americans were informed that the President's edict only increased the sale of imported European wines.

Do we know about the wine? Only what the importers present to the public through their publications, wine advisors, sommeliers, and wine tastings. In all their wine books you will find thousands of names of "famous" villages, Chateaux and Schlosses, some of which have never existed. In these books you can read what has been said about the French wines by Louis the first through Louis the eighteenth. Hero Napoleon, going home from Moscow to Paris, is quoted: "The Pinot Noir - the Burgundy, must be drunk only bare-headed."

Yes, they have said it and it was true. But would they say this now? Particularly if they were to buy a bottle of the imported Burgundies or Bordeaux, or Chateaux Mysteries or, even more, a bottle of Rauenthaler Baiken Trockenbeerenauslese and, what's more, even incredible, a bottle of these wines from the best year of the century - vintage 1959 for only one dollar? No, they would not say that again. They would not even drink the stuff.

But Why? Because in the time of the Louis and Napoleons in France only Pinot Noir and Pinot Chardonnay were grown to produce the famous white and red Burgundies. At that time the French hybrids were not yet in existence. In Napoleon's time France did not import several hundred million gallons of wine from Morocco, Tunisia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Algeria. Now all former French famous grape regions are tainted with 50% or even more of French hybrids. French Hybrid wines are blended with cheap imported wines from Southern European Countries and former French colonies of North Africa. They are decorated with famous French labels as Chateaux Mysteries, Estate bottled-Appellation Controlee. These wines are now sold in our Liquor Stores and Restaurants.

It should not be doubted that some of the most famous and finest wines of the entire world were and are produced in France and in Germany. But here rises a question: how much of these excellent wines are really excellent? How much hybrid wine or Algerian wine is in the bottle of imported wine from France? This you will never read in these Wine Books, nor will you ever read it on the French labels. There you will read only how famous, excellent, magnificent, and. . . .are these "MIS EN BOUTEILLE AU CHATEAU" wines.

The importers, the wine advisors, and the sommeliers organize periodically wine tastings of these imported wines to educate the American public. These wine tastings are patronized by Commercial Counselors, Foreign Embassies, Societies, Importers, and American personalities. Here I would like to quote again:

"A sommelier, Mr. Gourdin, - there are possible 50 in the United States,

- could, if asked, name at least 2000 varieties of dry, white wine, throwing in the country, the town nearest the vineyard and, at least he gives this impression, the lay of the land, type of soil, the name of the stream that flows by and whether there was enough sunshine when the grapes were picked in 1957".

Many Americans believe and find very fascinating this type of patter. But what is the truth about the wines imported from France nowadays?

This truth you will find only in scientific literature. Here I will quote. First a table published in WEINBERG UND KELLER 1966 and 1967 by J. Nespoulous-Inspector Principal de l'Institut de Vins de Consommation Courants, Montpellier, France. At the same time as in all European Countries the propagation of French hybrids are strictly prohibited, in France in 1964, 29,000,000 ownrooted and 8,000,000 grafted French hybrid vines were produced, according to this inspector. In 1966 (I do not have the data for 1965) 21,000,000 ownrooted and 6,000,000 grafted French hybrid vines were produced. This quantity of hybrid vines is enough to plant annually 30,000 acres with hybrids in France. This is an acreage that is five times as large as is the total acreage of grapes grown in New York State for wine production. Here are his words: "To the grape growers are offered numerous new grape varieties without any checking of their quality, hence a progressive development of a decadence in quality of product".

But even much more we will learn from the scientific publication by two French authors, Louis Jacquelin and Rene Poulain.

In this book, "THE WINES AND THE VINEYARDS OF FRANCE" on 416 pages these authors described all French grape regions in detail. On 38 pages of this book the authors admit that, with the exception of Alsace, in all other French grape regions 50% and even more of the grape acreage is planted with French hybrids.

These authors admit also that the hybrid wines will be blended with the wines from Algeria in the commerce of wines.

According to the statistics of these authors, in Algeria there are 882,500 acres of vineyards. This is twice as much as in California. The Annual production is between 293 and 422 million gallons of wine. Most of the grapes

grown in Algeria are mass-producers and French hybrids producing, according to these authors, an enormous amount of wine to the acre. Here I would like to quote again these authors of the book, "THE WINES AND THE VINEYARDS OF FRANCE:"

"Because Islam abstains from wine drinking 90% of all Algerian wines is exported. This wine alone accounts for about half the total annual export."

In addition to the imports from Algeria, France imports several hundred million gallons of wine from Tunisia, Morocco, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. ~~All these imports will be bottled in Yugoslavia.~~ All these imports will be bottled in France, decorated with the most famous French labels as French EXCELLENCIES-Mis en Bouteille au Chateaux - Appellation Controlee and will be shipped out to the world, including United States.

This cheating by importation of falsely declared wines from France was recently discussed in the English Parliament. German scientific magazines have published several articles proving that recently imported wines from France were not derived from European grapes. In Germany, France, and even the Geneva N.Y.S. Experiment Station, the scientists have proven that the hybrid wines show the presence of some substances that are absent in wines made from European grape varieties.

This gives us the possibility to check these imported falsely-labeled wines. If the American law prohibits false labeling of all American products why should not this prohibition be enforced also for wines imported from European Countries?

It is also very important to note that several leading European scientists have proven and have published data that the French hybrids contain some toxic substances. Here I would like to call the attention of our Food and Drug Administration to these imported wines: are they real French Excellencies or are they French hybrids which can do harm to our public? I feel it is my obligation as a scientist to call the attention of these authorities to these facts.

— Antonin  
Moulin

## THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE VINIFERA GRAPE INDUSTRY

For three hundred years the American public has been led to believe that table wines cannot be produced in the eastern section of the United States from the true European wine grape, known as the *Vitis vinifera*. After sixteen years of painstaking research in our vineyards overlooking beautiful Keuka Lake, one of the picturesque Finger Lakes of New York State, we have finally shattered this Myth and proven that our wines, made exclusively from European varieties of the genuine wine grape now growing extremely successfully here at Hammondsport for sixteen years, can be the peers of the "Great Growths of Germany, France, and many other parts of Europe. This we have proven not only for New York State but for seven other States east of the Rockies.

We should like to call the attention of the Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller, Governor of New York State and report to him again that in Hammondsport are flourishing since 1953 more than 180 acres and since 1960 these excellent European type wines are on the market. This past year in Hammondsport 500 tons of these grapes were harvested to produce at least half a million bottles of excellent wines.

We would like to call attention of the Honorable Governor of the State of Arkansas, Winthrop Rockefeller, and suggest that he request a report from Mr. Alcuin C. Wiek<sup>i</sup>kerkehr, Wiek<sup>i</sup>kerkehr Wine Cellars at Altus. There our cooperator Mr. Wiederkehr has grown these grapes for ten years.

We would like to call attention of the Honorable Governor Richard J. Hughes of the State of New Jersey to request a report from our cooperator Mr. Harold Applegate, who has grown the viniferas very successfully for ten years at Cranbury, New Jersey.

Professors Charles S. Singleton of the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore and Dr. G. H. Mowbray also from this University, both have established small wineries to produce European wines; they would be very glad to report to Honorable Governor Spiro T. Agnew about their success in growing the European grapes for five years in the State of Maryland. The wine produced in Maryland from these European

grapes is magnificent.

At North East, Pennsylvania, the President of the well-known Welch Juice Co., Mr. Douglas M. Moorhead, his son Mr. Douglas P. Moorhead, President of the Presque Wine Cellars, as well as Mr. Hans Frohlich, a scientist with Rohm & Haas Company will be glad to report to the Honorable Governor Raymond P. Shafer about their success in growing European grapes in the State of Pennsylvania.

In my forty-five years of experience in teaching grape growing and wine making in Universities and research at Experiment Stations in Europe, I have never been so successful in growing the European grapes in European Countries as I have been in growing them here in America.

If in Europe, where in the past the most used tools in the vineyards were shovels and hand hoes, and practically almost all grape vines now grown there are grafted onto American wild grapes (so called American rootstocks), then I cannot see why we cannot grow these European grapes here in mechanized America where American rootstocks have successfully survived millions of years.

In Europe we plant 1600 vines, or in some grape regions even 8000 vines per acre; here these vinifera vines grow so strong and powerfully (and produce higher quality grapes) that even 600 vines per acre have no room on the same area!

This we have and we can prove to every one with a hundred thirty thousand vines flourishing in Hammondsport as well as in the above mentioned states east of the Rockies.

The quality of the wines produced in Hammondsport from the European grape varieties has been compared with their counterparts produced in France and Germany at 33 blind wine tastings. These tastings have been held from coast to coast as well as abroad.

Here we would like to mention only a few of the most recent blind wine tastings.

Four wine tastings we held for the leading scientists of Cornell University at Ithaca, New York.

On March 3, 1967, we held our 30th blind wine tasting for 167 members of the Greenville Country Club at Wilmington, Delaware.

Our 32nd wine tasting was held on March 7, 1967, at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., this was our second visit, the first wine tasting for this club was held on September 11, 1965.

On March 11th one hundred ninety members of Commonwealth Club at Richmond, Virginia, compared our wines with their counterparts of imported wines.

On March 28th our wines were compared with imported wines at the Harvard Club in New York City.

It has been proven that from as far north as Hammondsport, N. Y. to as far south as Texas we can grow European grapes even more successfully than these grapes were, are, or can be grown in their native lands. We must learn from world-wide experience how to avoid the mistakes made over the world.

By taking only the finest and highest quality from more than 10,000 varieties of European grapes and considering the factors of soil and climate conditions, we can unconditionally guarantee full success. For example, our Concord grape will not color or ripen in the hot conditions of California. The same difficulty plagues the growth of Joahannisberg Riesling, Pinot Chardonnay and some other varieties which are characteristically cool climate wines. The American Concord and German Riesling belong in this moderate climate.

In 1953 I arranged the importation from West Germany to America of 1,004 European grape varieties native to different climatic zones of Russia which I imported in 1943 to Germany from Russia. There were very freeze-resistant grape varieties which in Russia withstood 30 to 40° below zero as well as varieties that were native to Russian colonies of South Asia, and South Caucasus. Many of these imported grape varieties were very valuable seedless table and raisin grapes. There were also high quality wine grapes and four of them were positively immune to the phylloxera. Most of this very valuable material was lost in Beltsville, Maryland - Federal Quarantine Experiment Station because of the opposition of our native scientists. They continue to mislead Government

Authorities, the grape and wine industries, and have published several articles against the growing European Grapes east of the Rockies. Instead of high quality European grapes these scientists promote the propagation of French hybrids.

Here I would like to quote recent publications by two of Russia's leading scientists, A. G. Mishurenko - All-Ukraine Institute for Grape and Wine Experimentation. "The planting of French hybrids is prohibited by law." "Der Deutsche Weinbau"

March 2, 1967.

Here is the second Russian scientist, W. W. Zotow. January 1967. Weinberg & Keller. "Notwithstanding 80 years of breeding we have not yet produced a single rootlausresistant variety of good quality which we could recommend to the industry." Mr. Zotow is a grape breeder who has produced at least 500,000 new hybrids in south Ukraine.

The French hybrids are prohibited all over the world except France and the eastern section of the United States. It is unbelievable that the French hybrids which are not good enough for poor Italian or, even more, for poor Russian peasants can be good for the most prosperous people of the world - the Americans.

I wish and I do hope my appeal to the authorities will be heard, the misleading will stop and this leading nation will disapprove the present status in the grape and wine industries.

I do hope to be able to present additional material and published proofs before it will be too late.

- Dr. Konstantin Frank  
Hammondsport, New York  
May 25, 1967