

**WINE: CLASSIFICATION,  
WINE TASTING,  
QUALITIES AND DEFECTS**

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Wine: Classification, Wine Tasting, Qualities and Defects by G. Grazzi -Soncini & F. T. Bioletti

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**G. GRAZZI -SONCINI & F. T. BIOLETTI**

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APPENDIX E TO THE BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF STATE  
VITICULTURAL COMMISSIONERS FOR 1891-92.

# WINE.

## CLASSIFICATION—WINE TASTING—QUALITIES AND DEFECTS.

By  
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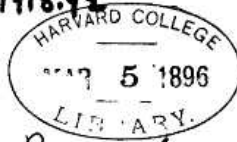
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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

ROYAL SCHOOL OF VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY, }  
ALBA, PIEDMONT, ITALY, January, 1892. }

A preface should give an immediate idea of what the author has proposed to do in writing his book. As Balbo rightly says in the preface to one of his books:

"It is the duty of every writer to give the reader a terse and clear idea of the work which he presents him. This sincerity benefits both: the reader, because it puts him in the position of knowing whether or not the book is likely to be of interest or utility to him; the writer, because, whilst it may reduce the number of his readers, it insures him more interested, attentive, and indulgent ones.

"The clearest and most sincere way of giving an explication of the object of a book is to tell how it was written."

Thus I will explain, as well as possible in a few words, why I have written this book, which treats especially of the classification, the qualities, and the defects of wine.

When I commenced to give particular attention to viticulture and oenology, I soon perceived that in oenology, and especially in that part which regards classification, qualities, and defects, all authors were not in accord in their use of terms to express the same characters. Thus, for example, some would mean by "sève," a slight sweetness in the wine; others by the same term would intend to express that character by which a wine of good quality affects the mouth and olfactory organs with a certain perfume, for a longer or shorter time after it has been swallowed.

I will say nothing of the classification of wines according to dishes, as wine to be drunk with oysters, fish, roast meat, etc., which shows a marked tendency to become a veritable chaos. In this classification, the work of Mr. Bertall, "*La Vigne-Voyage Autour des Vins de France*," is taken too literally.

How could one speak of the classification of wine, of its qualities, of its defects, without giving some explanation of the mode and proper conditions for tasting? It is for this reason that I have devoted a chapter to the tasting of wine, a chapter, moreover, of great importance, as it is by tasting, more than by chemical analysis, that we can best judge of the constitution and future of a wine. Who is a better judge than an experienced taster of the bad flavor produced in wine, for instance, by the tartaric fermentation, which even in its incipency he can detect by a certain burnt taste, which, with the progress of the malady, gradually develops into an insupportable bitterness? Among these gradations of bitterness we do not find that slight pleasing bitterness peculiar to certain wines, such as Barolo and Gattinara.

Chemical analysis gives us the principal components of wine, and from the presence or absence of certain of these and from their proportions, some judgment may be formed of the character of the wine. The

taster alone is able to detect diseases at their incipency, and, one might almost say, before they have commenced, whilst the chemist can only state the final consequence. In other words, one might say that whilst the chemist is limited to making a diagnosis, the taster can make a prognosis.

In the case of some defects of wine, I have not confined myself to a simple definition or description. I have also added notes, brief in some cases, more extended in others, on the determining causes and the means of prevention or cure. I have done this, believing it would be useful to the taster or the dealer, who is not always fully informed on all the details of technical œnology. With this information for a guide, he will be better able to judge of the relative gravity of this or that defect, and the dealer especially will be able to judge of the utility or inutility of attempting to cure a wine of a certain defect.

I have also tried—wishing to be useful to the greatest possible number of readers—not to neglect a secondary part, which has its importance in tending to make the consumer better appreciate the wine he drinks. Profiting by the *Consigli di un amatore di vini*, I have indicated the form of glass to be used with each kind of wine, how wines should be presented and distributed during the repast, and how they should be drunk. In this part, which I have called secondary, it is not to be denied that fashion is the determining factor.

And now the reader may judge if I have succeeded in my intentions. Even though his judgment should not be favorable, I shall consider myself fortunate in being the first—as far as I know—to call attention, in an extended manner, to this part of œnology, which in former treatises on the subject has been but lightly touched upon.

G. GRAZZI-SONCINI.



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, }  
BERKELEY, CAL., September 16, 1892. }

Professor Grazzi-Soncini's book, which has been already translated into French, fills a void in the literature of oenology. The part dealing with the defects of wine, the diseases to which it is subject, and the methods, when such exist, of remedying these diseases, will perhaps be of the most practical value to the wine grower. The part which regards tasting and classification, however, is worthy of careful reading, and many hints may be drawn from it that will be of use towards the attainment of that most desirable object: the production of constant types of wines—an object which is too little studied in California, but on which our hopes of building up a trade in high-class wines very largely depends.

Many of the numerous terms which the French and Italians have invented for the technical consideration of wine it is impossible or difficult to translate into English, and for this reason the translation necessarily lacks some of the scientific precision and clearness of the original. I have however attempted, wherever possible, to give the English equivalent of the term used by the author, and have also given the French term, in this way making a glossary in the three languages, which may possibly be of use in developing a uniform set of technical terms on this subject in our own language.

If this book should be of any use to the wine maker, and especially if it should call the attention of non-wine-drinking people to some of the uses and beauties of wine which they did not suspect, the translator will feel amply repaid for his trouble.

F. T. BIOLETTI.

## WINE AND THE ART OF WINE TASTING.

By G. GRAZZI-SONCINI.

## INTRODUCTION.

Wine is simply the juice or must of the grape after it has undergone the process of fermentation.\* This may be considered as the most natural and exact definition that can be given of it. It is the definition accepted by the law.

On account of the prevalence of sophistications and the considerable amount of wine that is now made from dried grapes and other saccharine fruits, a more particularized definition of wine is now given; it may be formulated as follows:

By wine is understood that liquid which is obtained by the alcoholic fermentation of the juice or must of fresh grapes. This must may be fermented in contact or not with the pomace or solid portion of the grapes, without, however, the addition of any extraneous substance or even of substances chemically the same as those that the grapes them-

\*Although as Gautier writes, "Wine is a very complex body, and so delicate that the work of chemists, so far, has been but an outline of what there is to do in the study of it," I think it will be useful, because it will give a more complete idea of the subject of our remarks, to give a list of the principal components of grapes, or must, and of wine:

## A. SOLID BODIES.

*Stems:* Lignose—Tannin—Albuminoids—Organic salts and acids—Mineral salts and acids—Chlorophyll—Gummy matters—Phosphates—Potash, lime, magnesia, silica.

*Stems:* Cellulose—Crocyanin—Enorubin—Tannin—Cream of Tartar—Catechin—Quercite (?)—Waxy matters, ferment germs—Etherous and aromatic principles—Nitrogenous substances—Phosphates—Potash, lime, magnesia, iron, silica.

*Pulp:* Cellular parenchyma—Nitrogenous substances—Cream of tartar—Gum, pectin, dextrin (?)—Gases, nitrogen, carbonic acid—Divers salts.

*Seeds:* Lignose—Fatty matters—Nitrogenous substances—Gum—Starch—Phosphates—Divers salts—Tannin.

## B. LIQUID BODIES.

Water—Glucose—Levulose—Divers nitrogenous substances—Saccharose, dulcitol—Cream of tartar—Tartrate of calcium—Tartaric, malic, and racemic acids—Halogen acids (traces)—Ammoniacal salts and organic derivatives—Phosphates, sulphates, nitrates—Potash, lime, magnesia.

## C. GASEOUS BODIES.

Carbonic anhydride—Nitrogen—Hydrogen sulphide.

## ELEMENTS OF WINE (RED WINE).

Water—Alcohols: ethylic, propylic, butylic (amyllic?), caproic, cinnamic, caprylic, pelargonic, capric.

Higher alcohols—Glycerine—Isobutyl—Mannite—Glucose—Levulose—Inosin—Gum—Pectic matters—Essential oils—Furfural—Aldehyde—Acetal.

Ethers: acetic, propionic, butyric, valerianic, caproic, lauric, myristic, palmitic, stearic.

Acids: carbonic, acetic, propionic, butyric, caproic, cinnamic, caprylic, capric, lauric, myristic, tartaric, racemic, succinic, malic, tannic, sulphuric, nitric, phosphoric, silicic, chlorhydric, fluorhydric. These acids are either free or combined with the bases: potash, soda, lime, magnesia, alumina, iron oxide, manganese, ammonia, volatile bases of the pyridic series.

Albuminoids—Coloring matters.

selves contain. The addition of the latter is considered by many as an adulteration, because it changes the quantitative composition of the must, and consequently of the wine.

Who first made wine is not known. The history of its manufacture, like that of many other fermented beverages, extends back into the mists of ages; nothing, therefore, is known about its first use. Tradition and mythology give several accounts of its first appearance, but they are of a very contradictory nature.

Of one thing we may be sure, and that is that from the first, man has asked himself the question: Is wine a real benefit? A question that has not yet, perhaps, been answered to the satisfaction of some.

Even at the present day it is not possible to give a satisfactory, definite reply to this demand, unless we look at it from an economical standpoint, in which case there can be no doubt of its utility, as it is one of the principal sources of national wealth in every country where the grape can be grown.

We must therefore consider it from this point of view, otherwise its real utility to man might be contested.

It is said that wine incites man to anger, licentiousness, murder, and in general subjects him to a thousand depraving temptations.

*"Il vino e il veleno piu terribile per la societ . N  i fulmine di Giove, n  la spada di Marte, n  i baci di Venere hanno fatto tante vittime quanto Bacco coi calici spumante."*—Bizzozero.

Alcohol, the moment it enters the cells and nervous filaments, revives their functions and excites and stimulates their action; this state of exaltation passed, however, if more alcohol is imbibed by the cells and nerves a period of exhaustion supervenes. The presence of this foreign body in the organism, tainting the blood and diffusing its vapors through the substance of the brain, interferes with the chemical processes of the body, augments the resistance to the nervous movements, and engenders that particular kind of poisoning known under the name of intoxication.

It was owing to wine that Ham was cursed and became the servant of his brothers' servants. It was owing to wine that the ancient Persians, Lacedemonians, Romans—active, vigorous, and glorious by a thousand splendid victories, as long as they possessed the virtue of sobriety—declined and fell when—

*Della stizza incede  
Spessa nel vin tempravasi  
La rigida virtude.*

But that was the abuse not the use of wine.

Every one should know that wine, drunk in moderation or with *temperance*, favors and augments the secretion of the gastric juices and so aids digestion; it excites the imagination, awakens the memory, dispels care, restores the physical force, and renders the movements of the body active and vigorous.

A proof of this, if one is needed, is furnished by the fact cited by all writers on hygiene, that if in the war of 1870–71 the German army was able to sustain the fatigues of the campaign and sieges, always remaining in good health, it was because they were invading and conquering a wine-producing country.

Bacchus is the "Dio salvatore." Plutarch, in the life of C sar, mentions that the whole army of the General was once afflicted with a