

need authenticity, which is one good reason why the Rudy Kurniawans of this world will not replace the real McCoy.

Has Bosker been able to train herself (that is, her brain) to recognize and identify wines? There is really only one way to tell—medical technology. Functional MRI (fMRI) is used in a variety of circumstances to examine changes in the brain under various stimuli. Dogs have been subjected to fMRI to identify the changes that occur in their brains when they are exposed to their beloved masters (Gregory Berns, *How Dogs Love Us: A Neuroscientist and His Adopted Dog Decode the Canine Brain*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013, 272 pp. [hardcover], ISBN 978-0-544-11451-7, \$25.00). That study was difficult to carry out, because dogs in the experiment had to be trained to lie absolutely still in the MRI machine, despite its substantial noise output. Bosker, in turn, sips some wines through a tube in the MRI machine and concentrates on identifying them. Sure enough, the fMRI shows her brain responding in the predicted manner, proving conclusively that her yearlong sniffing practice has altered her brain and that trained sommeliers are not just blowing hot air but really have knowledge that the rest of us lack.

As Bosker's year of learning and apprenticing comes to an end, she has her examination, which elicits moments of tension, nerves, and fear. In the blind-tasting part of the exam, she has to identify two wines; a white, which she calls a Chablis (1–3 years old), and a red, which she identifies as a California Cabernet (1–3 years old). She nails it. The other parts of the examination go equally well, leading to her designation as a Certified Sommelier. The final chapter deals with her getting a job from Paul Grieco as sommelier in his wine bar, Terroir, which had been named the World's Best Wine Bar. It is a worthy, richly deserved culmination of her anxiety- and work-filled year.

It is amazing just how much “stuff” this book contains about wines, tastes, smells, production, service, tastings, sommeliers, customs and wine lore, successes and screw-ups, and much, much more. Most importantly, Bosker communicates to the reader on every page the abiding love she has for wine and for the activities that wine professionals undertake. It is a “must-read” for everybody who loves wine or would like to reach that point.

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KELLI A. WHITE: *Napa Valley Then and Now*. Rudd Press, Oakville, California, 2015, 1254 pp., ISBN 978-0-692-47780-9 (hardcover), \$95.00.

Much has been made of the massive scale of this book, which reviews the origins and wines of nearly one hundred of Napa Valley's several hundred wineries. Printed in

China on super-heavy paper stock, it is difficult to actually lift. Apart from being unwieldy, the connection of the author to the wine and beverage industry has led some to call the book a vanity project. It is published by Leslie Rudd, for whom Kelli White is the sommelier (along with her fiancé) at PRESS, the St. Helena steak house (there is no other word for its menu) that Rudd operates. Indeed, a brief section of the book is devoted to a discussion of the wine list at PRESS. To top matters off, the HoseMaster of Wine has provided a hysterically funny blind book review (yes, he reviews the book without reading it—think blind wine tasting) at <http://hosemasterofwine.blogspot.com/2015/11/blind-book-review-kelli-whites-napa.html>.

Like the HoseMaster of Wine, I did not read the entire book, and I doubt the author would expect anyone to do so. After offering a brief history of early wine production in the area, *Napa Valley Then and Now* becomes a series of well-researched vignettes, with a few photos of bottles and vineyards thrown in for good measure. Each vignette provides a brief history of a winery, its vineyards, and some tasting notes on wines from the property to which the author has access. These tasting notes focus mainly on the aging of the wine; a symbol indicating whether a wine has started to show its age is assigned to each, which some wine collectors may find especially useful.

I found the winery vignettes I did browse through to be accurate and sometimes very interesting. I learned that the Scholium Project, whose oddball name I always wondered about, was started by a former professor from St. John's College in Annapolis who just extended his sabbatical indefinitely. And the School House Vineyard, which has a rather long and tortuous history, is a kind of microcosm of the Napa Valley story itself.

The book has brief prefaces written by Leslie Rudd and Robert Parker, each of which reads like a book jacket's advertising blurb.

However, the book has one enormous problem: its size and weight make it so ungainly that it is nearly impossible to read the entirety of many entries. Merely folding the pages over becomes a serious task, and searching the book for an entry (the entries are alphabetical, which helps) is ridiculously time-consuming in the Internet age. This book truly needs to be uploaded to the Internet, where it could be easily searched, where the font size could be adjusted, and where it would weigh no more than a simple tablet.

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