

AMERICAN WINES COMING OF AGE

American vintners have moved out from under the shadow of European generic names.


They are calling their wines after the grape from which it is made. Managers should be familiar with these varietals and change their wine lists accordingly by ROBERT SCHARFF

The familiarity of old classic generic names, such as Burgundy, claret, Chablis and Rhine, have for many years caused confusion among American wine drinkers. A French Burgundy tastes much different than a California Burgundy. And in turn, both of these taste different than a New York State Burgundy. The reason for this is that a French Burgundy

might have been made from Pinot Noir grapes, a California Burgundy from Zinfandel grapes and a New York State Burgundy from Baco Noir grapes. Hence, the obvious reason for taste difference. Other reasons exist, too, but chiefly, grape variety is the culprit causing the confusion. Grape variety became rightfully a concern among premium vintners, and it

followed that better identification would come from making *varietal* wines.

To some wine fanciers, the word *varietal* is a new term. But there is no hocus-pocus about it. Simply, a varietal wine is named after the grape from which it is made. For example, Gamay varietal wine is made from the Gamay grape. This wine has a taste all its own, because



it reflects the unique qualities of this particular grape.

From almost the beginning of the wine industry in the United States, generic names have been used to describe this wine. These generic titles specify a general kind of wine, with certain characteristics. Originally these names were taken from the geographic regions of Europe from which the wine came. Chablis, for instance, is a dry white wine of the general type as that originally grown in the Chablis district of France.

It is not difficult to see how the generic taste-type names we know today in America came into usage. We must remember that when the early vintners came to the United States, they used the same names for their wines that were used in their homelands. In addition, American wines were unknown to the public in the early days, and the winegrowers and merchants, who tried to sell them, tried to identify

the taste characteristics of their wines by comparing them to similar known European wines.

However, prior to Prohibition, the use of European geographic names got out of hand. Thus, when the American wine industry began again to produce wines in 1935, the Federal government limited the usage of generic taste-type names to the following: Burgundy, claret, Chablis, Champagne, Chianti, Malaga, Marsala, Madeira, Moselle, port, Rhine, Sauterne, Haut-Sauterne, sherry and Tokay. Some argument can be made with the concept of using European names in the first place, but usage had established the taste-types. They were considered an aid rather than a deception to the consumer and were written into law.

The amount of help, however, that these taste-type names have been can be questioned. Most American generic named wines on-

ly vaguely resemble the wines that actually come from Europe, and each producer of wine decides for himself the characteristics each of his generic wines will have. For example, Sauternes is a specific district near Bordeaux that produces sweet, luscious white wines, yet much California Sauterne (note the final *s* is dropped in the United States) is rather dry, which makes the generic use of this name especially illogical. It is not unheard of for an American winery to label the identical wine Chablis and Sauterne. Incidentally, in wine parlance, dry means that all of the grape sugar was fermented out, and the opposite is sweet rather than wet.

In recent years, however, to identify more exactly the taste of their wines and to get away from the shadow of European generic names, some progressive winegrowers in both California and New York—the major American wine producing

continued



WINES *continued*

states—are calling their wines after the grape variety from which they are made. To bear a varietal name of a grape, according to Federal law, a wine must derive at least 51 per cent of its volume from the grape whose name is used, and must have the flavor and aroma of that grape. Some varietal-named wines are made 100 per cent from the grapes named; others use other grapes in their blends.

Fortunately, most of the varietal names fit into the taste-types of generic titles. For instance, Cabernet Sauvignon (wine made from the grape of the same name) can be placed in claret group. Pinot Noir is a member of the Burgundy family of red dinner (table) wines. California Barbera corresponds to a Chianti. Among the wines, Riesling is of the Rhine type; Chardonnay is equivalent to a Chablis; Aurora, Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc are Sauternes; Pinot Blanc and Chenin Blanc are akin to the Vouvrays of the Old

World. To help you to plan your wine lists, as well as when ordering varietal wines, we have tabulated on this page the more popular varietal wines of both California and New York State and have placed them into their proper taste-type families. By the way, most, if not all, the American varietals are considered dinner wine class.

Some vintners, especially in New York State, use both a varietal and generic name to best describe their wines. For instance, a Baco Noir Burgundy tells you that the wine is a Burgundy taste-type produced from the Baco Noir grape. Likewise, a Dutchess Rhine wine has the basic characteristics of the German type of the same name, but it is made from the native American Dutchess grape.

A few varietal wines have a unique flavor that compares only to itself. The Zinfandel is one such varietal. This species is now the most heavily planted of California's wine grapes and appears as a varietal—under the grape name—and

in a large share of the California Burgundies and clarets. It is probably not fair to characterize Zinfandel only as a single wine type. It is several, depending on who makes it and where it is grown. A Zinfandel from the Central Valley of California will be different from that of the north coastal counties, and both will be distinct from a Zinfandel of the Cucamonga region. More than that, Zinfandels can be two widely different wines when young and when well aged. Many young Zinfandels, in their second or third years, resemble a good French Beaujolais—tart, exceptionally fruity, with a pronounced aroma of the grape. That is the way most of us know it.

After a few years of bottle age, however, the Zinfandel softens, mellows and develops a distinct bottle bouquet. Young, it is like wines best drunk young; aged, it can carry the distinction and authority of a classic aged wine.

Because the soil and climate can change the taste characteristics of a wine, most varietal bottle labels in the United States contain some geographical information, such as the name of the state or the viticultural area of a state in which the grapes were grown and fermented, and where the wine was produced. For instance, a varietal label may carry such geographical information as California Pinot Noir, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon or New York State Isabella. Incidentally, according to Federal regulations, a wine is entitled to use an appellation of origin if at least 75 per cent of its volume is derived from grapes both grown and fermented in the place or region indicated by such appellation, and it must be fully produced and finished within that place or region. Some states, such as California, go even further than Federal law and require that 100 per cent of the grapes come from that state.

Most vintners in the United States do not apply vintage dates to their varietal wines. They prefer to blend their wines to the highest possible—and unvarying—standard each year. Those who date their wines do so to aid the buyer in determining their age, and to accommodate those who care about mi-

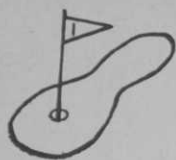
continued on page 94

TABLE OF AMERICAN VARIETAL WINES

Generic taste-type	California varietals	New York State varietals
Burgundy (red dinner wine)	Pinot Noir Charbono Gamay Red Pinot Zinfandel*	Baco Noir Isabella
Claret (red dinner wine)	Cabernet Cabernet Sauvignon Gamay Beaujolais Grignolino Zinfandel	Chelois
Chianti (red dinner wine)	Barbera	Barbera
Rosé (pink dinner wine)**	Grenache Grignolino Gamay	Catawba Isabella Seibel
Chablis (white dinner wine)	Pinot Chardonnay Folle Blanche Pinot Blanc Chenin Blanc White Pinot	Pinot Chardonnay Delaware Diamond
Sauterne (white dinner wine)	Sauvignon Blanc Semillon	Aurora
Rhine Wine (white dinner wine)	Riesling Sylvaner Traminer	Riesling Dutchess Vergennes

*—When aged

**—Most rosé, due to the way they are fermented, usually carry both the generic and varietal names.



SOD

FOR
GREENS AND TEES

**PENNCROSS BENT
AND
TORONTO C-15 BENT
SOD or STOLONS
ALSO
FYLKING & WINDSOR**

Quality Growers for 22 years



4301 WEST FLOSSMOOR ROAD
TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS 60477
312-798-2210

For more information circle number 198 on card

PREVENT DISEASE



Economical, effective
*DYRENE broad-spectrum
fungicide controls: leafspot,
leaf blight, copper spot, stem
rust, dollar spot, brown
patch, snow mold (*Typhula*).

Mixes easily with water;
non-corrosive; dyed green to
blend with nature.



**RESPONSEability
to you and nature**

Division of Baychem Corporation
Box 4913, Kansas City, Missouri 64120

73107-5

For more information circle number 153 on card

GOLF CARS *from page 78*

his facilities to ensure they are well-equipped and well-staffed. Also, be certain to ask about the manufacturer's warranty; what does it cover, for how long and how firmly does he stand behind it.

Once you've determined to your satisfaction which dealers you care to do business with, which financing methods best suit your needs and which products work well on your course, your decision team can move quickly toward the choices—product, financing and dealer.

Follow the steps, listen to the points of view of your team members, then decide.

Remember, though, the acquisition of a fleet is a major financial step for any club and must be considered as such.

Properly selected, financed and operated, that capital investment can generate cash for the club and convenience for the members. And that's what operating clubs is all about. ☐

NOER *from page 62*

- Madison, J.H. *Principals of Turfgrass Culture*, 1971.
Madison, J.H. *Practical Turfgrass Management*, 1971.
Melady, J.H. *Better Lawns for Your Home*, 1952.
Merrill, A.F. *The Golf Course Guide*, 1950.
Merritt, M.G. *Practical Lawn Care*, 1939.
Mills, C.B. *First in Lawns* O.M. Scott & Sons, 1961.
Musser, H.B. *Turf Management*, 1950 and 1962.
Noer, O.J. *The ABC of Turf Culture*, 1928 and 1937.
Parker, C.W. *The Lawn*, 1939.
Piper, C.B. and R.A. Oakley *Turf for Golf Courses*, 1917 and 1923.
Reed, R.J. *Lawns and Playing Fields*, 1950.
Rees, J.L. *Lawns, Greens, and Playing Fields*, 1962.
Rockwell, F.F. and E.C. Grayson *The Complete Book of Lawns*, 1956.
Rodale, J.I. *Lawn Beauty the Organic Way*, 1970.
Sampson, K. *Diseases of British Grasses and Herbage Legumes*, 1942.
Scherer, H. *Schoner Rasen/Aber Wie?*, 1966.
Schery, R.W. *The Lawn Book*, 1961.
Schery, R.W. *The Householder's Guide to Outdoor Beauty*, 1963.
The Seeding and Care of Golf Courses, 1923.
Shaw, T. *Grasses and How to Grow Them in North America*, 1903.
Simpson, J. *Golf Courses: Design, Construction and Upkeep*, 1933.
Smith, J.D. and N. Jackson *Fungal Diseases of Turf Grasses*, 1965.
Sprague, H.B. *Better Lawns for Homes and Parks*, 1940.
Sprague, H.B. *Turf Management Handbook*, 1970.
Stevenson, T. *Lawn Guide*, 1965.
Sutton, M.H.F. *The Book of the Links*, 1912.
Sutton, M.A.F. *Golf Courses: Design, Construction, and Upkeep*, 1950.
Thomas, G.C. *Golf Architecture in America: Its Strategy and Construction*, 1927.
Turf Culture, 1961.
Vengris, J. *Lawns*, 1969.
Viergever, R. *The Modern Golf Course Superintendent*, 1970.
Ward, H.M. *Grasses: A Handbook for Use in the Field and Laboratory*, 1908.
Wise, L.N. *The Lawn Book*, 1961.
You Can Have a Good Lawn, 1938.
Young, O.W. *Better Lawns and Turf*, 1967. ☐

WINES *from page 86*

nor variations in taste between years. For American varietal to bear a vintage year, under Federal labeling regulations, it must be 100 per cent of the wine of that year.

Varietals are the "in" thing with American wine drinkers. They have cleared up the confusion of wine tastes and most of them are as good—if not better—than their imported counterparts. Keep in mind that recent restaurant and hotel industry surveys show that approximately 91 per cent of the wine and 80 per cent of the Champagne consumed in this country is "Made in U.S.A." The idea that all imported wines are vastly superior to American wines is completely false. Premium quality wines of Europe and the United States both have their enthusiastic supporters, but most Americans prefer American wines. So get on the bandwagon and have them available for the guests and members of your club. ☐

**Sign of
the good
neighbor.**

The American Red Cross

advertising contributed for the public good



Golf Course Sales

The nation's leading commercial turf products company has several openings for technical representatives to promote a special line of commercial turf products. Representatives will call on golf course superintendents as well as industrial and educational institutions. Applicants should have a BS degree or its equivalent in one of the agronomic sciences, plus have sales or practical experience in the turf industry. In addition to an excellent starting salary, commission and automobile, we offer a comprehensive benefit program at no cost to the employee.

Send resume in confidence to:

Box #314, c/o GOLFDOM

An Equal Opportunity Employer