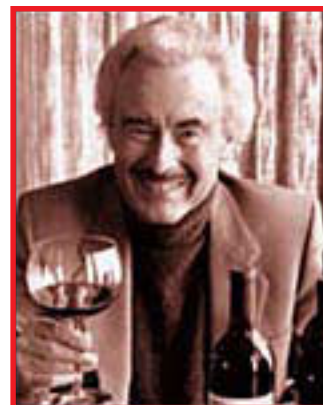


Books and Bottles, by Fred McMillin

Wayward Tendrils, September 2003

THE BOOKS

We all know botanist Dr. Durif developed the Durif varietal (alias Petite Sirah) in the 1880s in southwestern France. What we DON'T know is Dr. Durif's first name. . .at least, the Petite Sirah fan club didn't. They checked about 50 references and conferred with a U.C. Davis authority. No luck. So they phoned me for help. Thanks to guidance by editor, Gail Unzelman, I have an extensive collection of wine books. . .and when I cracked open Roy Andries De Groot's 1982 THE WINES OF CALIFORNIA there it was on pg. 155, FRANCOIS Durif!



Fred McMillin

And a Second Question . . .

"Also, could you tell us which California winery produced the first varietal of Petite Sirah. More than one claim the honor, from the 1960 vintage." Back to the books. Edited by the illustrious team of Doris Muscatine, Maynard Amerine and Bob Thompson (I've had the pleasure of talking with each of them), their BOOK OF CALIFORNIA WINE, 1984, says that while the varietal Petite first appeared in the mid-1960s, the first bottles were produced by Larkmead and by Louis M. Martini in the 1940s. . .but they labeled it DURIF! All of this brings to mind what the fine wine historian Ruth Teiser once told me about her discipline: "Being first is VERY, VERY important. . .to VERY, VERY few people."

THE BOTTLES

Here are the Best Petite Sirahs my picky panel has swirled and sipped recently. The best wine is listed last, so the further you read, the better the bottle.

Bogle, Appellation - California, 2000, \$10
Foppiano Vineyards, Bacigalupi Vineyard, 2000, \$17
Guenoc, Serpentine Meadow, 1999, \$39
Guenoc, North Coast, 2000, \$20
Silkwood, Howell Mountain, 1999, \$39

Francois would like 'em all.

www.psiloveyou.org

Fred McMillin, a veteran wine writer, has taught wine history for 30 years on three continents.

He currently teaches wine courses at San Francisco State University and San Francisco City College and is Northern California Editor for American Wine on the Web. Fred writes a monthly column in the *Marina Times* of San Francisco. He has written over 1,000 *On Wine* nationally syndicated articles as the "Global Gourmet", which are also shown on ABC's Channel 7 in the San Francisco Bay Area. Fred's words can also be found in *Vine Times*, *Wayward Tendrils*, and at special event programs which he hosts.

In 1995, the Academy of Wine Communications honored Fred with one of only 22 Certificates of Commendation awarded to American wine writers.