

Recollections

1973

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23/4/1900 - 2/4/1978

A few notes on *my* early, recollections; my old Grandfather, Richard Haselgrove, was a man who had lived a very full life and retired to Marlborough Street, Adelaide, to enjoy the fruits of the hotel business which he had established around Kadina and Crystal Brook in the Fifty's. I inherited a beautiful under-lever 22 Gauge which the old man had used with my Father driving the buggy to shoot plains turkeys.

He suffered from Gout and his language when the buggy hit one of the many ruts made talking difficult. The old man had done sufficiently well by 1872 to take the whole family back to Arundel, England, and my father went to school at Bognor Regis Grammar, and he described it as a typical "spare the rod and spoil the child" affair. Unfortunately, the Agent whom Grandfather had left in charge absconded, so the whole family returned hurriedly to Australia with the help of the proceeds of Grandfather's gold watch. What an undertaking in those days of sail, with six small children and what a disappointment. My Mother, Emily Martha Powell, was born at Aldinga when that was a flourishing farm area in the early days of the State, but her family left there as the land failed from lack of Super. They came from the country outside of Abergevenny and were Welsh. Her brother, Tom, was an accountant in Adelaide but I have lost sight of my cousins. The Haselgroves have been much more prolific and the name is well known around Adelaide but only five of us have chosen the Wine Industry as a career; my two boys Richard and Jim, and brother Colin and his son Bob.

In looking back over school days and growing up I think it is worthwhile to state a point of view because today the powers that be propound the fallacy that all are born equal. The value of education is essentially to help the child to help itself and a good teacher between the ages of 8 and 12 to teach a child how to learn is the secret of success and a full life. The immense resources of literature available to the modern, place the ball at the child's feet. At the age of 10 or 12 the old Magnet and Gem introduced a wider world, and so on, through the world of science, history, biographies, science and the novel. I suppose I have

averaged two books a week for sixty years. This is the true free education which has been available in this century. There is no fun in life without striving. The more that is presented free on a plate the less savour in life and less real achievement is likely.

I didn't like exams at school and in consequence at the age of 15 was much at a loose end, and a Roseworthy Prospectus came into my hands and with my resolve never to go into an office or bank as my brothers had (and later into my Father's hardware business) this, was a godsend and opened up a vista as I was much attached to the land from holidays on farm.

Possibly it was in my blood as both my Father and Mother's people were country folk from Southern England and Wales. I was able to arrange to work at Roseworthy Scholarship at Unley High School for six months. I had managed to avoid "College" mainly because my friends had too much homework to do. My diligence on the Roseworthy Scholarship resulted in my heading the list and I entered Roseworthy before my sixteenth birthday.

Roseworthy in those days was a great place for the development of character, with plenty of work and play. On getting a Diploma I decided to try the wool industry, and went out in the sheds to complete my Woolclassing Course, the theory of which was, taught at Roseworthy. Then came six months on the wool floor at Bagot, Shakes & Lewis, Port Adelaide, a privileged position at £1 per week. After six months I asked Spen Williams, my boss, and a leading wool man, what my chances were and he said none at all unless you go home to Bradford. So on a whole £1 a week with nothing saved I approached my father, who, knowing I had no-savings, still asked me how much I had saved, and on my reply said, "Well that's too bad, you can't go to Bradford". I decided that there was no future for me in wool and was fortunate to land a job back a Roseworthy for the football season as Temporary Acting Assistant State Analytical Chemist. Sounded

marvelous but it kept the wolf, from the door and gave me a breathing space.

Once more Lady Luck stepped in. Reg Nowat, the Oenologist and Viticulturist had decided to leave Roseworthy and join Seppelts as Manager of Great Western, and after testing my palate, he put the idea into my head of having a crack at the Wine Industry as Leo Buring was looking for a junior assistant in a few months time. As I had not done Oenology in the general course I copied out the notes which Reg kindly loaned me and put in my evenings on wine analytical work and in due course Buring accepted me, a very raw Oenologist, as Jim Ingoldly tells, as I thought the wines of the '21 vintage with a hot stopped fermentation tasted much better than the sound dry wines, and in any case I never liked the old style heavy ferruginous so-called burgundies made for export in those days. The much lighter, more delicately flavoured wines of today are infinitely preferable.

First vintage was at Renmark Growers Distillery 1921 and Buring spent a few days with me for a start and then said "make 50,000 of currant, 100,000 of Gordo" and disappeared for a month. Mainly I think because he was appalled by the conditions of filth, but before going he gave me detailed instructions on how to clean up with hot water and formalin mainly. The old cement tanks were a problem as they had never been scraped or paraffined. But somehow it was done and the wine made sound. Possibly modern winemakers are not aware how much care and cleanliness counts - for instance, one tank of Gordo grapes was filled to be drawn off next day at about 10 Be'. Fortunately a sample which, put under a microscope Buring had left me, showed a perfect lactic culture so was discarded.

Why this tank out of ten should have been infected was a mystery but care paid off. Once the wine was made and conditioned, only delivery to Buring's order remained, so I was fortunate to go to Watervale for a few months under Emil Sobels, at that time Australia's greatest maker of dry white wines, but curiously, he was never so successful with reds. Further

experience followed at Buring & Sobels Adelaide Cellars, where the labeling was meticulous under the eye of Rudi Buring.

By this time the old bogey of "You must go to Europe" had raised its head, so I once more approached my father using the same words "they say I must have European experience to get on in the Wine Industry". He replied as before "how much have you saved?" This time I was ready for him with £120. So he gave me my fare and £120 which was sufficient in those days for twelve months in Europe. I realised in years after how wise was his attitude and thanked him for it. Sailing from the Outer Harbour on the old Moreton Bay, March 1922, in a twelve berth cabin with six in it (every penny counted) once more good fortune smiled on me, as before the ship sailed I met Len Wigan, an engineering graduate going to England for post graduate experience, who was in the same cabin. Years afterwards he reminded me of how on the first night out I threw all the other four's boots and socks out of the cabin to get a little fresh air and they took such a dislike to me that within days Len and I had the cabin to ourselves all the way to England. Len, on board ship and later in England, was always talking of young Elsie, his sister, and I gained a picture of a little girl in pigtails. To digress: On my earlier return from overseas Len had asked me to call and see his mother and sister and reassure them of his life and health. Imagine my amazement when the door was opened by a beautiful young woman of 21 with no pigtails, but a pair of eyes it was impossible not to get lost in. By twelve o'clock that night even Mrs. Wigan, a charming kindly gentlewoman, was showing signs of impatience and she admitted to me long afterwards she thought I was never going, and to her consternation I turned up again next day and for months to come till we were married.

Thinking of the past, a series of characters crowd in upon me. Fellow students at Roseworthy of whom the one I single out is George Fairbrother who has proved himself over the years as a wine judge and one of the few capable of assessing the qualities of Australian Brandy. The only other figure from Roseworthy days from a wine point of view is Reg Mowat a great footballer who just

held up his finger at anyone who attempted foul play and that was enough as he was about 6'2" and 15 stone, and a tiger when roused. As a wine man he was tops; not widely known as he preferred to concentrate on Great Western for many years but raised Great Western to a peak of quality which Jo Preece took over on Mowat's retirement and so ably maintained and diversified by producing, about 1952, the first really top dry red in thousands of dozen that I, in the same year, put down in a few hundred dozen as the original Mildara Cabernet Shiraz Bin 23. Further I am reminded that Jo in '26 or '27 produced the Solera dry sherry by the Flor process; the first commercial high quality sherry to be produced in Australia from the yeast (I think) that F. Castello was given by the Marquis in 1908, in Spain, and in any case, used by me at St. Agnes in '26 or '27. These were the heigh days of dear old Oscar Seppelt who could have stopped straight out of Galworthy's Forsyte Saga.

What an experience to call at Seppeltsfield in '27 and find Wally waiting in trepidation to usher you in to Oscar's, presence and of course if it took an hour you could not but stand and wait until the August Presence opened the door and testily enquired of Wally why he was keeping him waiting. I can remember Oscar talking of "scud" these little B's that were troublesome in dry red that he studied in Vienna in the previous century without solution.

As I had recently returned from France, the first to be at Montpellier for some 20 years, he was seeking help, but of course, in those days and for two or three years to come little was known of the cause and effect of beneficial malo lactic fermentation. However he was amongst the first in the world to appreciate something of its significance. I, at that time, was not interested in making dry wines, just Sherry, Sweets and Brandy, and failed to appreciate the significance of Oscar's leads. My brother Colin, who was at Montpellier about 1927, found an investigation started in Switzerland, so he had a much better appreciation on his return than anyone else in Australia.

I was particularly fortunate at this early age to be pitchforked into the wider forum of the Federal Viticultural Council, as my boss T.C. Angove preferred me to act as his deputy.

The character that stands out from the twenties above all is Ronald Martin of Stonyfell, to whose sound judgment, the Council owed much, in its early years.

It is curious how largely certain subjects bulked in the twenties and still do today. A night meeting, off the record, in Rutherglen; Oscar, Ron, Bob Davis, Teddy Gurner of Reynella, on the vexed question of price cutting in Sydney. Both Seppelt and Martin were large shareholders of Caldwells, run by Davis, but neither could stop Davis because he blamed Gurner and things waxed fast and furious until the small hours with Oscar at one stage saying, "you are no better than a dunican rat". No harm done, as in my innocence I expected dire consequences next day, but of course all that happened, price cutting went on, and Bob just laughed at Oscar's loss of temper, but it was wonderful to me as a youngster to see men standing up for the principle of not letting the other fellow down, something rather more common in Australia today.

W.W. Senior was a name to conjure with in Melbourne in the Twenties. Principal of Matthew Lang & Co., he specialised in high quality imported wines. I remember he introduced me to Duke Port, which set my mind at rest as to what constituted a Tawny Port, after trying many different Australian styles, and 1921 Rhine Wine shipped by Dienhard, a vintage probably never equaled. To be invited into the Senior tasting room where he took endless trouble with a callow junior, was experience which could not be bought, and to taste with him at Wine Shows, with his true faultless palate was an education. He shipped 1927 Gould Campbell Vintage Port which gave me a true appreciation of this style. I remember nailing up a bin in my cellar at Renmark in the Thirties so as not to squander it and the last bottle went a year or two ago.

I am reminded of our arrival from Australia, standing up the Channel the teeth of a bitter easterly that must have come from the frozen Steppes of Russia. What a stretch of water, so placid, but on occasion so violent, much like the Backstairs Passage but so much bigger and with such a stupendous history, the natural defence of our homeland for so many centuries. Then the arrival and disembarking at Tilbury, surely then the shabbiest gateway in the World, and the approach to London by rail past thousands of awful tenements, but the arrival in London and the thought "fancy allowing distance to baulk you, you might not have arrived and it is just as simple as visiting a few hundred miles instead of thousands". I suppose today, with modern travel, this thought does not arise. London in April, drab but still overwhelming and the Spring, when over night the squares and parks were clothed in vivid green, seemingly more intense than any other green, probably by contrast. How fortunate I was to have some letters of introduction to City Wine Merchants, and I found for the first time that I belonged to the best and most sophisticated Club in the world, "The Wine Trade Club", international in scope. Everywhere a young callow Australian was received with open arms.

A luncheon in the office with all the attendant ritual of wines and service and when I say Wines I mean Sherry and up to six different white and red, with Port and Brandy to finish; a test of sobriety and incidentally of character, for if a man can't hold his liquor he should seek some other profession. I was indebted for an introduction from Rutherford of O.R. & P. for another lucky chance as I was given an introduction to the old established Cruse et fils freres of Bordeaux of whom more later.

A fortnight in London with Len Wigan was all too short. He left for the North and I for Bordeaux. My knowledge of the language was limited to six months Ecole Berlitz as I had carefully avoided languages at school, so I approached Cognac, my first destination for a few months, through Bordeaux and chose the Steam Navigation Line: Captain Wilson, an old sea dog of

uncertain temper but a heart of gold, who, hearing of my intentions, fathered me, summoned a taxi at the Quais des Chatrons and said "now you are on your own; tell him where to go". So I said "a la Guerre" to the amusement of all but eventually realised it was "a la gare du l'est". On arrival I asked confidently for a "billet a Cognac" only to be dumbfounded by the reply "aller ou retour" but a finger being advanced and withdrawn solved the problem for me. On the train I held, an animated conversation with a Russian and a Pole who spoke no, English: a good finish to my Alice in Wonderland day.

At Cognac I had a letter of introduction to a French family, M. & Mde. Pinaud, friends of Leo Buring from his days on the Rhine, and started my career as an "Agent Provocateur" in M. Pinaud's office with circulars all over England extolling his cognacs; at the same time I applied myself to gain a working knowledge of French without proper grammar and ended up in a few months like the "Veritable Vache Espanol". My experience in Cognac was very valuable because of my association with mainly young Scandinavians, in particular Reidar Larsen, then a correspondent in Prunier. All knew Cognac and taught all they knew by example. After a few months we fell back on Scotch as a general drink and contented ourselves with only 3 or 4 Cognacs after dinner.

It was fascinating to learn the difference between the Grand Champagne, Petit Champagne Borderies, etc., and the basic Cognacs of the various houses and the fact that this outstanding quality was so easy to achieve by growing the right grapes in the right place and double distilling in a simple pot still by rule of thumb. Of course simple in the Charantes but impossible elsewhere. But I made a vow that at the earliest possible chance I would apply this simple formula to Australian conditions and see what happened.

My friend Larsen duly married the most charming jeune fills of the district, the envy of us all, and established his own business famous for quality Cognac and continues to flourish: Having acquired a smattering of French and a deep appreciation of Cognac it was time to move on to my main

objective in Europe.

L'Ecole d'Agriculture de Montpellier as an auditeur libre, free to attend any lectures of interest. However, I quickly found that my notes in French, particularly those of M. Ravaz, the Principal, who started at the end and finished at the beginning, were unreadable. So I paraphrased in English but decided Ravaz was not for me and even Frenchmen agreed that he was "tres difficile". Once more Lady Luck smiled and the Professor of Oenology was M. Ventre, a natural logical lecturer and the foremost of his profession in France and he extended the freedom of his lab and time to me and John Guinand who spent a month in Cognac before we entered Montpellier. I had brought a few problems from Australia on yeasts and bacteria, etc., which Ventre quickly solved for me, as no one in Australia knew the answers.

I resolved at that time that my first endeavour on my return home would be an attempt to encourage the introduction of some organised form of scientific research in the Wine Industry. Digressing, this was raised with the Australian Wine Board when they were constituted, and after a lot of prodding from, in particular, Ronald Martin, an appointment was made of John Fornachon in conjunction with the Adelaide University. It is ancient history now how *by degrees* the Federal

Viticultural Council and Australian Wine Board were successful with the help of Tom Fisk in having the Trust Fund constituted from the Surplus Bounty Funds and establishing the Wine Research Institute with John Fornachon as first Director. Today, in consequence, Australia is playing an important part in the world of Wine Research.

I found that twelve months at Montpellier was ample, in fact six months was a holiday as the local wine scene was uninteresting mass production vin ordinaire, except for seashore vines in sand pre phyloxera and still flourishing. My intention, having finished at Montpellier, was to proceed to the Rhine and learn a smattering of German, spend a few months there

as long as the money lasted and proceed home. I had been in touch with the Federal Council in Australia who decided on a wine exhibition in 1924, at the Wembley Exhibition, in the charge of Colonel Fallon, and as he would need assistance I anticipated this by applying for the job and thanks to Ron Martin, Leslie Salter and Leo Buring I think, got it. Wonderful. Another six months in Europe in a paid job, and a posh one at that, in charge of the exhibit and hobnobbing with all sorts of distinguished visitors, from Public Servants with charming daughters to Beer Barons prepared to buy Australian Wine in sample case lots. Several said, "Oh, we'll try it on the Hunt, they are not fussy". I didn't care so-long as my figures pleased the Colonel and the wines were certainly going into homes where they had never been before. This, of course, was about the start of the "Bounty" when we commenced shipping styles of wine other than "ferruginous red", a trade which grew to 3,000,000 gallons and then collapsed because it was not built on a firm foundation.

My second stay in London renewed my acquaintance with Len Wigan at a boarding house in Maida Vale, an intriguing study of English class of the Twenties now no more. Miss O'Shea, sister of the "Royal House" Chairman, who flourished as the Queen of the House in his shadow and many other characters straight out of, I had previously thought, fiction. The Class structure of Britain in the Twenties, even after the world war, was fairly rigid. If you were born to it you were expected to accept your lot, something which to me as an Australian was intolerable, but I suppose with my cane, gloves and spats I aped the ones who would have considered themselves my betters but it was a pleasant life with money to see the theatre and general life of London, that fascinating city. Paris is fun and beauty, but London is London.

Another stroke of luck was meeting up with the Fells Family of 56 Tooley Street, one of the specialist shippers of Port Wine and incidentally, members of the Australian Trade for many years, with their own brand of quality Australian Wine.

Sydney Fells, around my own age, was congenial company and a friendship arose which has stood the test of time. John, Sydney's father, and Sydney had two of the best palates in London so the wonderful opportunity of tasting all the top wines of Europe and Scotch Whiskies in distinguished company and further developing palate for the inimitable "grand Vins" of Europe, was given me.

I mentioned earlier an introduction to Cruse et fils freres of Bordeaux from Rutherford. This was a stroke of luck (slightly marred at a later date by obliging Cruse in an exchange transaction with a descendant of my benefactor with the result that we have not spoken since). These visits which I made to Bordeaux both whilst in France and later, were the most important of my wine education, as I fixed in my mind the unalterable standard for the World of the Grand Vins de Bordeaux. Something every young wine man must do in his younger years. My brother Colin took as his standard the wines of Burgundy of which he had greater experience. But whether it be the white of the Rhine and Alsace or one of the two dry reds, every man who wishes to be accepted as having a proper appreciation of wine must take one or all three of these as his unalterable standard. Christian Cruse, the doyen of the Wine Industry of Bordeaux, was particularly kind to me when he realized my intense interest and was not above setting a few hazards in my path, such as opening an 1895 at the end of a tete a tete luncheon which had included two glorious vintages. The 1895 was specially made by his uncle, light in colour but judging by the results, high in alcohol. One could not leave any '95 (this was in '50) so even in English my tongue refused normal duty and I was forced into a more or less mumbling, but Christian, at that time around 70, did not turn a hair and showed me how a true wine bibber could appreciate every wine right to the end, and of course there were no heel taps. Edward Cruse, son of Christian, was the soul of hospitality and had an appreciation of fine wine the same as his father.

The luncheons at Chateau Ponet Canet were all memorable occasions over the years marked by the delicious food and the

presentation of from 5 to 10 of the best years of Ponet Canet. Not such a hazard as just finishing several bottles of wine, but I found it paid to be careful to limit slightly the consumption of the younger vintages so that the magnificent older wines going back to the turn of the century could be enjoyed to the full.

Before Wembley finished, my father paid a visit to London and Colonel Fallon's report must have been satisfactory for I sat him down in the great arm chair reserved for distinguished visitors and he asked me how I was going to get home. I replied that I was saving hard, but, he volunteered "here's your fare" and gave me £50, enough for a single berth cabin on the "Baradine", so I was left with funds for a glorious trip around France looking up all my friends with a student card: which entitled me in those days to half price at Hotels. I remember enjoying the Hotel de la Post for a week in Beaune to see something of Burgundy - magnificent wines but not to my mind so reliable a standard as the Bordeaux.

The trip home was rather an anti-climax and I arrived in time to join Angoves Limited of Renmark and Tea Tree Gully for the vintage. Buring and I had parted company before my departure from Australia as he was typically indefinite about the future.

Once more I was back in the hurly burly of primitive winemaking akin with unsound wines two a penny all over Australia. The sweet wine diseases were the winemakers' nightmare. However, care, cleanliness, proper use of SO₂ and reasonably low temperatures solved all problems and for fourteen years Angoves, progressed from strength to strength with John Guinand joining them about '26 or '27. One endeavour during '25 vintage was to make dry white for brandy and the Doradillo proved the best. This double distilled through a pot designed by Bergstrom in the simple Cognac method gave a clean attractive brandy which at four years old started taking prizes in the Shows and Angoves decided to market under the brand St. Agnes.

My association with Thomas Carlyon Angove for the early years was great experience. He was an all round gentleman but at the same time he had to be dominant in all he touched, but also if he was satisfied and you knew a job he never interfered. A happy relationship culminated in the big flood of '31 when he was overseas for six months. I must admit it was hard to step down from No.1, working in conjunction with Ronald Martin, half partner with Angove in Lyrup and St. Agnes and main partner in Stonyfell. However it was the "Skipper's" way to turn things upside down, give them a good shake and say "I am off for a fortnight, get on with so and so", and you did.

In the Twenties I was also supervising St. Agnes where Arthur Hall was Manager and Winemaker, and started flor sherry in a small way on Doradillo and Pedro, two Spanish grapes, with immediate success, but the hit and miss methods of those days, where the flor for no accountable reason would suddenly fail, made development slow and it was not until the Forties when John Fornachon had completed his epoch-making work on flor that all our problems were solved. Around 1932 Hurtle Pegler of Mildura Winery Pty. Ltd., consulted me on their problems. As they were still in the 1921 era it was very difficult to give worthwhile advice by -Proxy. Hurtle died and his son Gus took the chair and invited Ron Martin to join the Board and make a report. I remember Ron Martin, who had asked me to join him in Mildura for a day, was so overwhelmed that he left hurriedly for Melbourne and Gus had to chase him to find out what was wrong. Ron said everything is bloody well wrong and I can't help because of my commitments but if you can persuade Haselgrove to act as your official adviser I will join the Board, so I became, with Angoves' blessing, Technical Adviser at the extraordinary salary of £200 per year. I remember Bob Anderson, another Director, objecting to my appointment because he said I couldn't be any good at that money. I was more than content as once more I sensed Lady Luck and the challenge of rebuilding a company practically insolvent gave unlimited scope and my interest was

entirely wine and grapes. No other type of business attracted me. I started with the 1934 vintage, a nightmare but not much worse than Renmark in 1925 and with my added experience by 1936 things were more or less organised. With my intense interest in Brandy and six great Pot Stills available at Mildura, trial and error quickly showed four were useless, but one in particular produced an attractive Brandy. Similar wines and methods were used to my original efforts at Angoves but the Brandy was different in style and developed with aging into Mildara Supreme, although of similar quality quite distinct from St. Agnes. I blamed the Still mainly for the difference and as soon as possible had the Bergstrom pot at Horndale (a replica of the Remark pot) copied and although the Brandy was improved it still remained a different style. In my early winemaking life I noticed this cellar difference, Renmark Growers, Lyrup and Angoves Sweet Muscat, although made by similar methods in some instances with grapes from the same vineyards, were all recognisably different and I think this is a general phenomenon of cellar variation.

When Angoves decided to send me overseas in 1935 on Company business for six months I was to go. Something to look back on travelling in luxury with my Wife P.O. on the old "Cathay", a type of travel which unfortunately has disappeared and the moderns don't know what they are missing dashing around the world in a few weeks. London was even more fascinating as I was part of the business life of the city, for a while in Angoves London Agents Office and that was the heyday of the Sweet White trade, a flash in the pan which went to the lowest bidder and now I think it is mainly Cyprus. First we left the Cathay at Marseilles and visited friends in Montpellier and Bordeaux, Cognac, refreshing the palate with nothing but the best, marveling once more at the inimitable quality of Bordeaux and Cognac. It was about this time that it was borne on me of acquired variations of palate under the influence of the different characteristics of the Country of residence and the resulting wines and spirits. The amazing thing to me is that wines such as the Grand Vins of Bordeaux,

Cognac, Burgundy, Rhine Wines, taste the same irrespective of the country of residence, whereas Australian, North American, South African and many others do not. I was badly caught by this in 1950 as I had taken our Mildara Brandy to show my friend Larsen in Cognac on the way down to Spain where I spent a week; or so in Jerez practically living on Sherry in its various styles. At the end of my stay I was shown a well distilled brandy made in the district and was so impressed with its quality that on my return to Cognac I told Larsen I had found a Spanish Brandy as good as our Mildara. He said "impossible" and on tasting, I realised that the strong Sherry district influence of the Spanish gave it an unacceptable marked sherry character that had been missed by me in Jerez but was obvious in Cognac neutral territory.

Perhaps mention should be made of "lily pools" in the old days alongside distilleries literally stinking which after a few days no one noticed and when visitors remarked on the awful smell it was only then that it became apparent to habitues.

Also in 1950 I was fortunate to secure a strain of Palomino (Listan) grape not previously grown in Australia where the best, strain was the Palomino grown by Potts at Langhorne's Creek. I had studied this variety in South Australia with its various strains as then grown at the Fullarton Collection and in various vineyards and had already decided that Potts was true to type but I was anxious to see whether anything better was grown in Spain. I saw several strains in the vineyards around Jerez including a new vineyard planted by Mauricio Gonzalez Diez, and even in this vineyard were two strains which I distinguished as white and red wood.

Thanks to air freight and the co-operation of the Scientific liaison officer in London, both strains landed in Melbourne in good order and were quarantined at Burnley for five years. Both were released and grown at Mildura and in early winemaking trials the red was discarded and the white developed by vineyard planting and distribution of cuttings to New South Wales and Western Australia. Recently with the amendment of the antiquated regulations the white has been introduced to South Australia. Extensive trials have

proved that the new strain known now as Liston to distinguish it from the others, makes a better flor sherry than Potts.

To return to London, the most interesting part was that the wines, all the best in the world, used to be available at reasonable prices, and Sydney Fells, that wonderful host, extended the freedom of his tasting room to me and at all hours of the night and day would produce wines from all over Europe. A quick trip through Switzerland producing more wine than Australia, some dry whites in particular very good, skiing in the Jura with John Guinand's cousin Henri Pfister, with whom we both stayed for Christmas '23 and saw the tomb of John's Arriere Grandpere who invented a telescopic lens, I think in the 17th Century, and this mathematical genius has emerged again in John's brother Andrew. On to Cognac and train to Toulon to join the ship and so home. On the day of my arrival in 1936, walking down Currie Street the Skipper said to me "you know Mildura might want to make you a Director and, I could not agree to that". Without consulting me the Board, including Angove's partner Martin, had appointed me during my absence, so the fat was in the fire and I knew that day was the beginning of the end of my association with Angoves, which had been a great mutual benefit and in 1938 we parted company and henceforth all my energies were devoted to building up Mildara. I remember working hard before the break, with Ron Martin's support, to achieve an amalgamation of Stonyfell, Angoves and Mildura interests to no avail. What an organisation that would have been by now. All have gone their separate ways, not I think to the disadvantage of Mildara. The war was a very difficult period and stopped all development but once peace came, on went the pressure, and Syd Wells joined the Company as Irymple Manager and quickly rose to Manager and a Director. Our main operation since 1912, was Merbein when the Head Office was moved from Irymple, established by W.B. Chaffey for the first vintage in 1891.

Flor sherry was first developed in 1939 when Fornachon had already done some development work and stocks laid down to 1949 from picked Palomino, Doradillo and Pedro wines from Johnstons,

McLaren Vale, with whom we had a close association, and so Supreme Sherry was born. My brother had produced a similar quality wine at Morphett Vale and we took all the stocks available to swell our blend. The success was immediate and the demand quite beyond our capacity to supply until 1966 when at last it came off ration.

As mentioned, Brandy was first distilled at Merbein in 1934 and stocks laid down progressively and by 1942 a finished blend for sale under label was achieved in a small way. Two thousand dozen for the first year under the newly created Supreme label. When the question of distribution arose I decided to call on Collin Co. Ltd., Melbourne where Tom Crompton of the Adelaide family was a Director. Over lunch at Menzies, Tom said, "send me down five cases and I shall try it on my friends and if successful we will handle it". That was the original and only contract that we had for some 25 years with our Australian Distributors. The second notable label launched by Gollins was Supreme Sherry in '49. About 3,000 cases in the first year and as we built up our winemaking capacity so Collins built up their wine and spirits, departments in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. Gollins were not available in Western Australia and Lionel Samson & Sons accepted our distribution in that State.

My great love of dry red wine had always made me anxious to try my hand at making the best possible dry red in Australia and I was first attracted to the Hunter River but in 1952 decided that the district offering most scope was Coonawarra where Bill Redman had kept the flag of quality flying in the teeth of adversity, so Mildara acquired land on the red bank which is high in lime and overlies deep beds of friable limestone. So many of the famous wines of Europe are grown on limestone subsoils, that there is obviously an affinity between limestone and quality. Limestone coming from the sea, comparatively recently has not carried typical Australian forests for countless eons and the recent volcanic eruption in South East South Australia and Western Victoria had further purged the land and I believe that these factors are the main ones which make Coonawarra the most favourable

area in Australia for growing quality grapes and the climate of course particularly suits the making of dry wines with perfect maturity at 12/14 Baume with reds, and 9/11 Baume with whites according to the season and variety. As opportunity offered more vineyards and land was purchased, and up to 1963 we were indebted to the Redman Family for our winemaking and we supplemented stocks by purchase from them to establish the first dry red in Australia to be labelled Cabernet Shiraz, a blend of McLaren Vale, Coonawarra and Hunter River, established under a Bin Number, the first of which was 21 and later the vintage was included. By 1963 we had erected Cellars to process our own grapes and this vintage proved an exceptionally good one, so in 1965 Mildara Coonawarra 1963 was launched on the Australian market in a small way as Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Shiraz. We have now some 900 acres at Coonawarra, of which about half are in bearing and this year has seen the original small fermenting cellar engulfed by the latest in large stainless steel fermenters ready for the greatly increased tonnage for 1973 and succeeding vintages.

A further overseas trip was undertaken in 1960 with my wife who accompanied me in '36, '50, '60, and '70, and was a great help in the social side which is always so important in the Wine Trade. Richard and his wife, Sue were in Europe at this time for twelve months and he was gaining an appreciation of the fine wines of Europe, so essential to any successful winemaker. He had several years' experience at this time with Mildara so knew what to look for in Europe. Friendships were renewed in London and Bordeaux; in particular we had the good fortune to meet the Demptos Families of Bordeaux, experts in oak and casks and closely connected with the Wine Industry of Bordeaux. Louis in particular had a great appreciation of the Grand Vins and was a great host and guide introducing us to M. Sanders of Chateau du Mayne Baisac, his Father-in-Law, where once more we saw the characteristic effect of the Noble Rot on the young White Wines.

At an early age I realised the importance of the association of wine with white oak. In Bordeaux the best dry

reds when young go into new oak hogsheads for two to three years, which accentuates the strong tannin character in the wine. For all quality brandy, dry red wines and sherry, storage in oak casks is essential for full development of flavour and quality. The ideal oaks are Troncais for red, Limousin for brandy and American for sherry and these quality timbers are becoming ever more expensive and difficult to secure. Nevers has increased in popularity in recent years as a general purpose oak. The use of oak casks for maturing Cognac in London Bonds was said to be markedly beneficial because of the moist climate, and resulted in the brandy losing strength and becoming more mellow. Oak casks fix the flavour of fine flor sherries and long storage gives the valuable blending wines so necessary in standardising commercial sherry blends. There is no other timber in the world which marries with wine as does Quercus Alba from the uplands of Europe and North America. It was therefore great experience to meet up with the Demptos Family and learn more from their expert knowledge. I have recognised Troncais oak casks in more than one Bordeaux Chateau.

Reviewing my time spent in Bordeaux I am reminded of my good fortune that in '22, '24, '36 '50, '60 and '70 some of the best vintages of the century were available for tasting at the Chateaux either at a few months or up to two years old before bottling, a fascinating study.

It was quite fun to go back to London and air my opinion, often before the London buyers had seen the wines, that they should quickly have a look at '21, '24, '34, '49, '59 and '69, all wonderful vintages.

The changing fashions, the demand for quicker consumption wines, seems to have affected Bordeaux less than most, and it is to be hoped that the long maturation in bottle which gives unrivalled delights will still be possible.

As I was told by Edouard Cruse, my one worthwhile unfulfilled ambition is to apply modern methods in a Bordeaux Chateau and see

how much the wine could be improved. The Maitres des Chaffs are the most conservative boings on earth.

My early appreciation of the wines of Bordeaux led to importing selected vintages from 1924 on. The first was two hogsheads of Pontet Conet in 1927 one of which was bottled by Senior, and the other by Ronald Martin. There was some difference between the two as Martin bottled without fining and the wine was a little harsh with excessive tannin from the wood but after a few years there was little difference. Both wines were inferior to 1924 Pontet Conet imported in bottle, so all future shipments of outstanding years were imported in bottle immediately after bottling in Bordeaux and all matured well particularly '49 and '59.

It is not advisable to import these dry wines or vintage port after they have been bottled for some years, mainly because excessive heat may be experienced in transit. It is ideal to lay these wines down at an early age in the cool cellar from which they will be consumed to ensure perfect maturation.

The inroads that Americans have made recently by purchasing Chateaux in Bordeaux and wines has made many wines all but prohibitive except to millionaires, and the prices have little relation to the actual value of the wines.

The quicker consumption minor growths are by far the best value today. I remember in 1923 one of these bourgeois growths bottled by the Coq d'Or restaurant in Bordeaux and served without a label, price included in the lunch, which was a marvelous wine and I didn't waste a drop. It was the only lunch of this nature I could afford in those days as a student.

Probably our most enjoyable trip overseas was in 1970 because at an advanced age it was nice to know we could still do it, and because it took in the French Australian Challenge and The America Cup, a fascinating experience to see at first hand the efficiency of the Americans and undoubtedly their success was due to

their elimination series, where the Defender was brought to a peak of sailing perfection.

Newport water is an astonishing stretch for a championship yachting event, with winds variable in strength and direction from hour to hour fogs, tides and lobster pots. In many races the course could not be determined until shortly before a delayed start.

Local knowledge was very important, and it was essential for competitors to keep as close as possible together, apart from covering. The navigation of Gretel II by Bill Fesq against France on the day of the fog was perfect. After being invisible for half an hour she emerged right between the finishing marks. Fog led to a race against Intrepid being abandoned mainly because of the danger from spectator boats which were a considerable hazard. The American Coastguard did a great job keeping the course clear of spectators' craft in all shapes and sizes from 20' speed boats to Destroyers.

Gretel II in my opinion the better boat, was not tested until the challenge with France, and after winning that, then required at least two months of competitive sailing against a comparable boat to be ready to beat Intrepid. Jim Hardy and his crew did a great job under severe handicaps.

Newport, a small town, with its roots deep in America's past, comes to life for the Cup and millionaires' mansions of other days are used for entertainment on a lavish scale. Undoubtedly the Cup Challenge is a most important facet in Australian-American relations, and results in more newspaper coverage in a month than the rest of the year put together.

For the challenge against France my Wife and I went out on various craft from a schooner to a ferry and enjoyed a splendid view of the races from outside the box as the number of spectator craft was reasonable.

We went on to London as the gap before the Cup allowed time

for business and my Wife elected to stay in London and I flew back to Newport to find my brother Colin and Mock Sarah for company.

Commodore Dixon of R.S.V. had Kirribilli, with Mock as anchor hand and general rouse-about, and we were fortunate to be invited to join as. Supernumeraries and enjoyed a grandstand view from within the box. Marvelous - particularly the day Gretel won. Intrepid had her covered about half a mile from the finish, but was over confident, and too far to windward. Gretel started sailing like a witch and Intrepid quickly came about, but would have gone under Gretel's stern. That was really the end of the race because Gretel went on with the bit in her teeth, and won in the next quarter of a mile by about 200 yards. It just showed what Gretel was capable of and left Intrepid's skipper staggered.

Another bye-way was Reynella, when I was invited by Sir Arthur Barrett to join the Board and assisted to put that Company of varied fortunes on its feet again by inviting my brother to join the Board as Managing Director.

In reviewing progress in winemaking practice, the first outstanding simplification was the use of SO_2 in the 20's in the form of Potassium meta-bisulphite, which Leo Buring was responsible for popularising all over Australia, with the result that unsound wines became relatively few but the resulting dry wines were often bitter (K_2SO_4) through the over use as a preservative in the finished wine.

The old rule of thumb winemakers who continued to obtain SO_2 by burning sulphur retained their attractive dry whites. When liquid SO_2 became available bisulphite was superseded.

The second was the use of efficient cooling and refrigeration which have so simplified hot climate winemaking that young winemakers of today asked to use the methods of the 20's would be staggered. Cold fermentation and control has lifted the quality of Australian dry wines into World Class and made possible the making of quality wine in hot climates and from grapes that were

hitherto impossible. Another vast change is in storage, for whilst oak containers of various sizes will never be outmoded, concrete and brick have been superseded by stainless steel. The hazard of the old concrete and brick tanks of the 20's was very real because cracks which inevitably developed became infected and were a constant source of worry. The first expanding 4" wall 5,000 gallon cylindrical tanks were developed by Steve Gilbett built on monolithic foundations thirty years ago at others and Mildara. They are as sound today as the day they were built but the building of them and also of Jarrah vats was made redundant by the advent of stainless steel, which has revolutionised the modern fermenting cellar.

My period of association with the Federal Council of the Industry saw many important developments. First, the aftermath of the first War, when Government sponsored plantings by Returned Soldiers led to a glut of fortifying spirit and wine. This was overcome by a differential excise on Doradillos and an export bounty on fortified wine which pushed sales of cheap sweet white to 3,000,000 gallons to Britain and when cheaper wine was available from elsewhere this trade largely disappeared and left the British public with the impression that Australian wines were cheap and of indifferent quality.

Two other achievements of Great value were the income tax amendment regularising the method of accounting used in the Wine Industry a relic of pre Federation to bring method of assessment into line with livestock. The second was the differential excise on brandy which stabilised production and allowed satisfactory prices to be paid to growers for all grapes produced.

The Wine Industry has been fortunate in that successive Federal Governments have appreciated the value to Australia of intensive cultivation of the land as the basic strength of any nation. Sir Robert Menzies and Sir Philip McBride were a team who did more for Australia than any other in her history. Sir Robert's magnetic personality had to be experienced to be believed.

The main strength of the Federal Council was that the delegates were drawn from State Association's of Wine men in the four winemaking States and in the important years of development delegates' services were unpaid.

Looking back it is hard to recapture the outlook of the wine men when the Australian Wine Board was first established in the early twenties. It was mainly one of hostility to interference. The members elected to the Board by Proprietary Winemakers were pledged to no interference and opposition to change. In consequence in the early years the Board achieved little. By the time I became Victorian Member of the Board this early attitude had largely disappeared and with Harry Palmer as Secretary – later General Manager, the Board worked together in harmony to further the interests of the Wine Industry. Probably the most effective of the Board's efforts has been in the field of propaganda as the number of Australians who today believe that Australia produces the best wines in the world is legion. To inculcate a love of dry wine in countless numbers of the younger generation of Australians has been a great team effort on the part of the Board and the Wine & Brandy Associations. In the political field the Board has performed valuable services over the years.

Whilst I was the first of the family to embrace wine in all its facets, my heart felt wish was that having established something worthwhile my sons would be attracted to the same profession and I left them free to choose. Jim at an early age opted for the mechanical life of the motor car, joining General Motors Holdens no doubt inspired by the success of his uncle Arthur Wigan until lately a Director of G.M.H. Jim after some years decided to leave G.M.H. and fortunately told me of his intentions so I was able to persuade him to give the Wine Industry a try. He joined Mildara and proceeded to go through the mill for a few years and progressed so well that when we started on our expansion program at Coonawarra, of cellars and vineyards he became cellar manager and assistant in the vineyards and showing administrative ability moved up to Manager of the

Company's interests at Coonawarra.

Richard opted to become an Agricultural Scientist, but at the same time through the good offices of John Fornachon was able to devote some time to wine at the Research Institute and at the completion of his successful studies decided to join Mildara Wines Ltd. and served an apprenticeship in all phases of the Company's business. The most important part any wine company is still the winemaker and when he showed special aptitude it augured well for his and the Company's future. In my opinion the most important part of a man's training, after a thorough grounding in technique, is to absorb into the memory at an early age a world appreciation of wine which means a European appreciation as the great wines come from France, Germany, Spain and Portugal and set standards to be aimed for by all winemakers.

This appreciation cannot be gained in a month - at least a year is necessary coming and going between London, Bordeaux, Beaune, Rheims, Jerez Oporto and the Rhine. So when he was ready Richard, accompanied by his Wife, went off to Europe for a year and absorbed his essential background. On his return to Australia he rapidly progressed with the help of a loyal staff led by Syd Wells, a tower of strength to the Company. In 1968 he became assistant Managing Director and on my retirement as Managing Director in 1971, Managing Director of a Company which he has helped to make in no mean fashion one of the most progressive and successful in Australia.

I mentioned my Grandfather's 12 gauge, my first gun and twenty years in Renmark meant great fun on the Murray with duck shooting, probably in those days the creek shooting of driven birds was the best duck shooting in the World and we all enjoyed it to the full.

The Chowilla Robertsons and Humphrey Kemps of Millewa and later Lindsay Point were great hosts and keen shooters. A wonderful period that has now passed, with thousands of motor cars and speed boats, now making the river a metropolis. Being so far from the sea, which I have

always loved, meant only annual cruises until we moved to Adelaide to live in '45 and later acquired a beach house at Encounter Bay where Lionel Rumbelow was a great friend, and his knowledge of the fishing grounds made a holiday paradise. I am thankful that age has not yet ruled out shooting, fishing and tennis so we can still enjoy life to the full as my wife has always ably aided and abetted all our past times.

The one development in the Industry which I deplore is the selling out to Foreign interests and one with which as an Australian I cannot agree. Foreigners are still permitted to buy up enormous areas of Australian freehold. This seems to be poor Statesmanship. The Wine Industry is on the threshold of great development and will double in size in the next ten years and it is a defeatist attitude to shirk the responsibility and hand over to a Foreigner.

Looking back, it is wonderful to have been able to work and play at the same time, and to have had the remoulding of Companies for the, purpose of civilized man - WINE

H.R. Haselgrove

1973