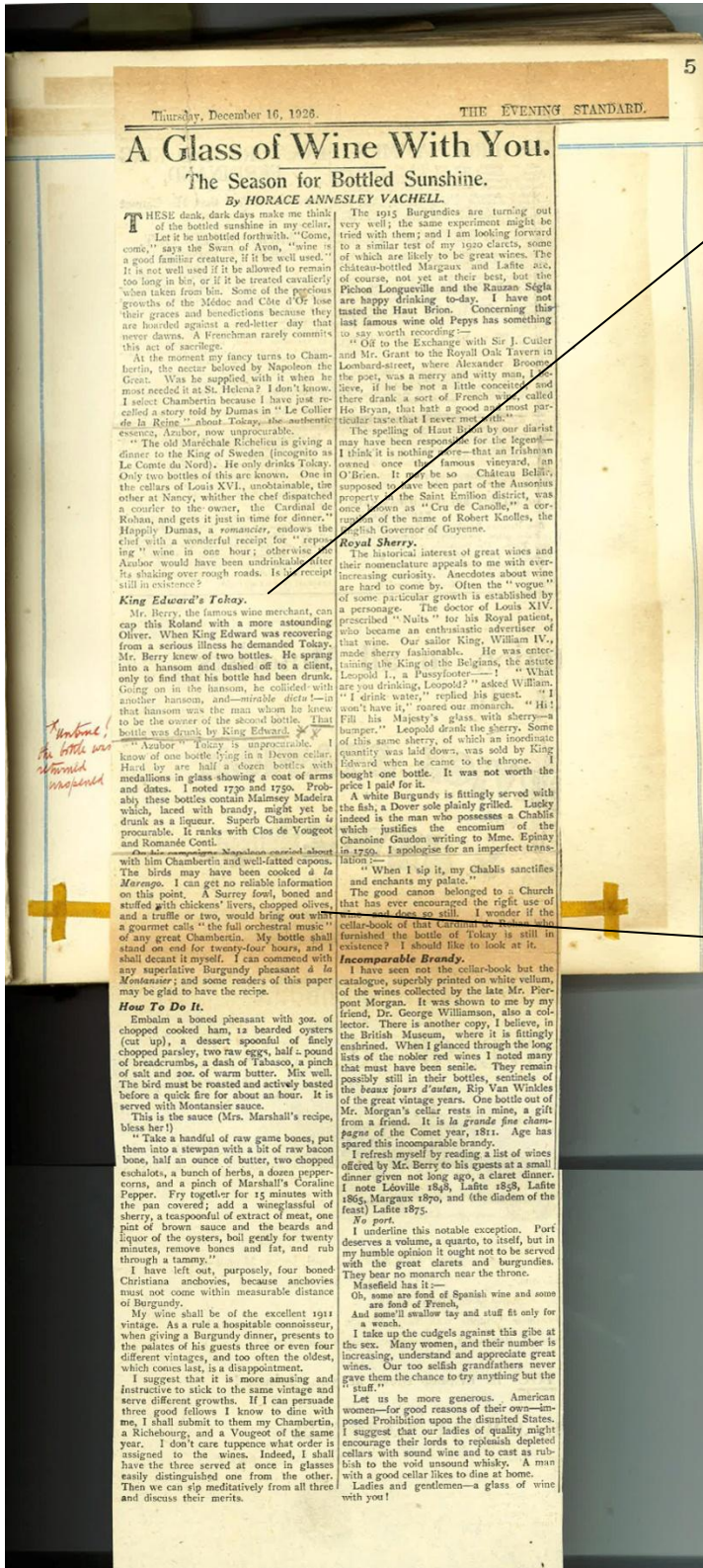


Historical News Cuttings Book: Evening Standard, 16 December 1926



King Edward's Tokay.

Mr. Berry, the famous wine merchant, can cap this Roland with a more astounding Oliver. When King Edward was recovering from a serious illness he demanded Tokay. Mr. Berry knew of two bottles. He sprang into a hansom and dashed off to a client, only to find that his bottle had been drunk. Going on in the hansom, he collided with another hansom, and—*mirable dictu!*—in that hansom was the man whom he knew to be the owner of the second bottle. That bottle was drunk by King Edward.

"Azabor" Tokay is unprocurable. I know of one bottle lying in a Devon cellar. Hard by are half a dozen bottles with medallions in glass showing a coat of arms and dates. I noted 1730 and 1750. Probably these bottles contain Malmsey Madeira which, laced with brandy, might yet be drunk as a liqueur. Superb Chambertin is procurable. It ranks with Clos de Vougeot and Romanée Conti.

On his campaign Napoleon carried about with him Chambertin and well-fatted capons. The birds may have been cooked à la Marengo. I can get no reliable information on this point. A Surrey fowl, boned and stuffed with chickens' livers, chopped olives, and a truffle or two, would bring out what a gourmet calls "the full orchestral music" of any great Chambertin. My bottle shall stand on end for twenty-four hours, and I shall decant it myself. I can commend with any superlative Burgundy pheasant à la Montansier; and some readers of this paper may be glad to have the recipe.

Monte!
the bottle was
returned
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Thursday, December 16, 1926. THE EVENING STANDARD.

A Glass of Wine With You. The Season for Bottled Sunshine.

By HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

THESE dark, dark days make me think of the bottled sunshine in my cellar. Let it be unbottled forthwith. "Come, come," says the Swan of Avon, "wine is a good familiar creature, to be well used." It is not well used if it be allowed to remain too long in bin, or if it be treated cavalierly when taken from bin. Some of the precious growths of the Médoc and Côte d'Or lose their graces and benedictions because they are bottled against a red-letter day that never dawns. A Frenchman rarely commits this act of sacrilege.

At the moment my fancy turns to Chambertin, the ocean beloved by Napoleon the Great. Was supplied with it when he most needed it at St. Helena? I don't know. I select Chambertin because I have just recalled a story told by Dumas in "Le Collier de la Reine," about Tokay, the authentic essence, Amber, now unprocurable.

The old Maréchale Richelieu is giving a dinner to the King of Sweden (incognito as Le Comte du Nord), who only drinks Tokay. Only two bottles of this are known. One in the cellars of Louis XVI., unobtainable, the other at Nancy, which the king despatched a courier to the owner, the Cardinal de Rohan, and gets it just in time for dinner. Happily Dumas, a sommelier, endows the chief with a wonderful receipt for "repeating" wine in one hour; otherwise the Amber would have been undrinkable after its shaking over rough roads. Is the receipt still in existence?

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How To Do It.

Embalm a boned pheasant with 3oz. of chopped cooked ham, 12 bearded oysters (cut up), a dessert spoonful of finely chopped parsley, two raw eggs, half a pound of breadcrumbs, a dash of Tabasco, a pinch of salt and 3oz. of warm butter. Mix well. The bird must be roasted and actively basted before a quick fire for about an hour. It is served with Montansier sauce.

This is the sauce (Mrs. Marshall's recipe, bless her!)

"Take a handful of raw game bones, put them into a stewpan with a bit of raw bacon bone, half an ounce of butter, two chopped eschalots, a bunch of herbs, a dozen peppercorns, and a pinch of Marshall's Coralline Pepper. Fry together for 15 minutes with the pan covered; add a wineglassful of sherry, a teaspoonful of extract of meat, one pint of brown sauce and the heads and liquor of the oysters, boil gently for twenty minutes, remove bones and fat, and rub through a tammy."

I have left out, purposely, four boned Christiana anchovies, because anchovies must not come within measurable distance of Burgundy.

My wine shall be of the excellent 1913 vintage. As a rule a hospitable connoisseur, when giving a Burgundy dinner, presents to the palates of his guests three or even four different vintages, and too often the oldest, which comes last, is a disappointment.

I suggest that it is more amusing and instructive to stick to the same vintage and serve different growths. If I can persuade three good fellows I know to dine with me, I shall submit to them my Chambertin, a Richbourg, and a Vougeot of the same year. I don't care tuppence what order is assigned to the wines. Indeed, I shall have the three served at once in glasses easily distinguished one from the other. Then we can sip meditatively from all three and discuss their merits.

The 1913 Burgundies are turning out very well; the same experiment might be tried with them; and I am looking forward to a similar test of my 1910 clarets, some of which are likely to be great wines. The chateau-bottled Margaux and Lafite 200, of course, not yet at their best, but the Pichon Longueville and the Rauzan Ségla are happy drinking to-day. I have not tasted the Haut Brion. Concerning this last famous wine old Peppy has something to say worth recording:—

"Of to the Exchange with Sir J. Colter and Mr. Grant to the Royal Oak Tavern in Lombard-street, where Alexander Broome the poet, was a merry and witty man, I see here, if he be not a little conceited, had there drunk a sort of French wine, called Ho Bryan, that hath a good and most particular taste that I never met with."

The spelling of Haut Brion by our diarist may have been responsible for the legend—I think it is nothing more—that an Irishman owned one of the famous vineyards, (an O'Brien. It may be so. Château Bellin, supposed to have been part of the Ansonian property of the Saint Emilion district, was once known as "Cru de Canolle," a corruption of the name of Robert Knolles, the English Governor of Guyenne.

Royal Sherry.

The historical interest of great wines and their nomenclature appeals to me with ever-increasing curiosity. Anecdotes about wine are hard to come by. Often the "vogue" of some particular growth is established by a personage. The doctor of Louis XIV. prescribed "Nuits" for his Royal patient, who became an enthusiastic advertiser of made sherry fashionable. He was entertaining the King of the Belgians, the astute Leopold I., a Pussyfoot— "What are you drinking, Leopold?" asked William. "I drink water," replied his guest. "I won't have it," roared our monarch. "His Majesty's glass with sherry—a bumper." Leopold drank the sherry. Some of this same sherry, of which an inordinate quantity was laid down, was sold by King Edward when he came to the throne. I bought one bottle. It was not worth the price I paid for it.

A white Burgundy is fittingly served with the fish, a Dover sole plainly grilled. Lucky indeed is the man who possesses a Chablis which justifies the ecnomenclon of the Chanoine Gaudon writing to Mme. Epinay in 1750. I apologise for an imperfect translation:—

"When I sip it, my Chablis sanctifies and enchants my palate."

The good canon belonged to a Church that has ever encouraged the right use of wine and does so still. I wonder if the cellar-book of that church—*which has also furnished the bottle of Tokay is still in existence?* I should like to look at it.

Incomparable Brandy.

I have seen not the cellar-book but the catalogue, superbly printed on white vellum, of the wines collected by the late Mr. Pierpont Morgan. It was shown to me by my friend, Dr. George Williamson, also a collector. There is another copy, I believe, in the British Museum, where it is fittingly enshrined. When I glanced through the long lists of the nobler red wines I noted many that must have been senile. They remain possibly still in their bottles, sentinels of the beaux jours d'autan. Rip Van Winkles of the great vintage years. One bottle out of Mr. Morgan's cellar rests in mine, a gift from a friend. It is *la grande fine champagne* of the Comte year, 1811. Age has spared this incomparable brandy.

I refresh myself by reading a list of wines offered by Mr. Berry to his guests at a small dinner given not long ago, a claret dinner. I note Léoville 1848, Lafite 1858, Lafite 1865, Margaux 1870, and the diadem of the feast! Lafite 1875.

No port.

I underline this notable exception. Port deserves a volume, a quarto, to itself, but in my humble opinion it ought not to be served with the great clarets and burgundies. They bear no monarch near the throne.

Massefield has it:—

Oh, some are fond of Spanish wine and some are fond of French,
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only for a wench.

I take up the cudgels against this gibe at the sex. Many women, and their number is increasing, understand and appreciate great wines. Our too scilicet grandfathers never gave them the chance to try anything but the "stuff."

Let us be more generous. American women—for good reasons of their own—imposed Prohibition upon the dispirited States. I suggest that our ladies of quality might encourage their lords to replenish depleted cellars with sound wine and to cast as rubbish to the void unsound whisky. A man with a good cellar likes to dine at home.

Ladies and gentlemen—a glass of wine with you!