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To Bonné, the pendulum has swung and a new generation is about to rearrange California's wine landscape. Yet for now, he's identified more of a small grass-roots movement than an upheaval. How deep and wide that movement will go remains to be seen.

—James Laube

SONOMA WINE AND THE STORY OF BUENA VISTA

By Charles L. Sullivan (*Wine Appreciation Guild*, 360 pages, \$34.95)

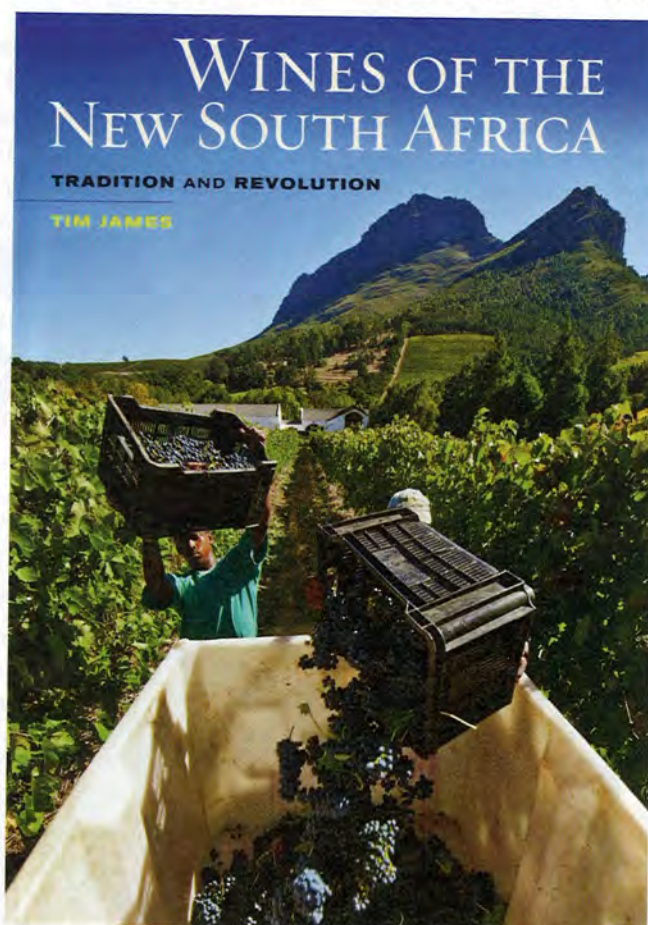
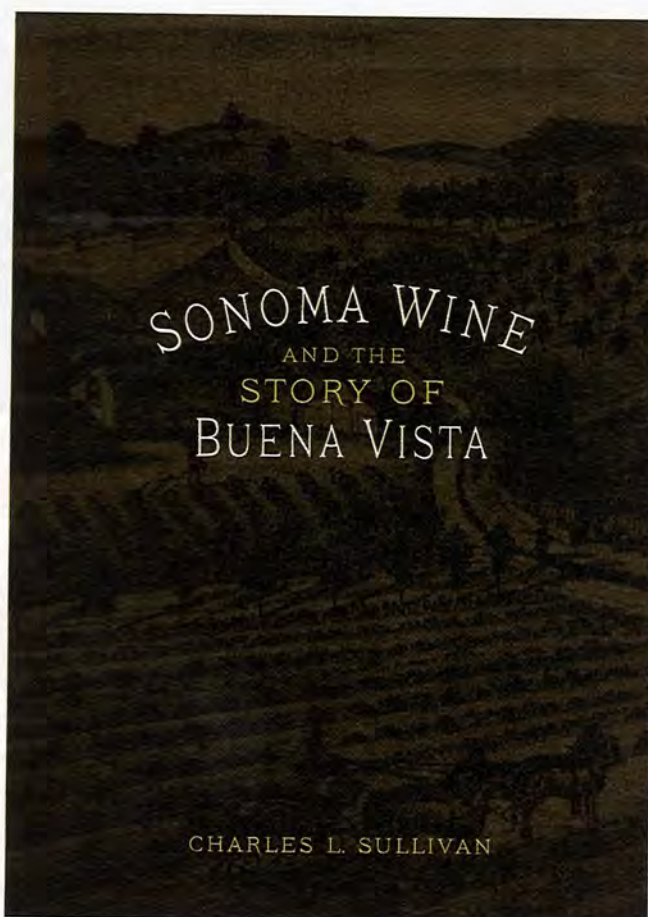
In his latest book, wine historian and author Charles L. Sullivan takes a look at Sonoma wine through the story of Buena Vista. In many ways, the idea is compelling. Buena Vista is the oldest commercial winery in all of California, and was founded by Agoston Haraszthy, a colorful and important figure in California wine. As in his previous books, Sullivan is a meticulous historian, piecing together many different documents and accounts.

Haraszthy founded Buena Vista in 1856. He was the first to import from Europe many of the grape varieties California is now known for. Financial pressures led to his ousting in 1867, and by 1878 Buena Vista had filed for bankruptcy and liquidated its assets.

While Buena Vista was on hiatus, the rest of the Sonoma wine industry was just getting started, and that is when it begins to feel like a stretch for Sullivan to use Buena Vista as the main subject. He gives an overview of the changes and challenges in Sonoma outside of Buena Vista, successfully framing how what was happening in the country—the establishment of the transcontinental railroad, the 1906 earthquake, Prohibition, its repeal, the Depression, war—affected the wine industry. He also gives a good overview of the ways in which complications of phylloxera provided a steep learning curve for vintners.

Buena Vista's story doesn't really pick up again until the 1940s, when Frank Bartholomew took over. The winery's modern history begins in 1979, when it was purchased by the West German wine and spirits company A. Racke, which started to turn the neglected vineyards around. After A. Racke, Buena Vista passed through six different owners before Jean-Charles Boisset purchased it in 2011.

In the book's introduction, Sullivan explains that Boisset asked him to write a book about the history of Buena Vista, which Sullivan agreed to do, as long as he could broaden the scope to Sonoma's



wine history. The good news is that Sullivan is a thorough historian who brings plenty of details to any topic he's writing about, even if the premise doesn't always work. —M.W.

WINES OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

Tradition and Revolution

By Tim James (*University of California Press*, 344 pages, \$39.95)

As South Africa steadily becomes an important wine category in the United States, the dearth of books on this country's wine industry has become equally noticeable. This tome, from one of South Africa's more prominent resident wine writers, is a welcome addition for those who like a shelf full of handy references.

The book starts with a historical background introduction, which does a good job of laying out the recent post-apartheid growth of South Africa's industry. Post-apartheid history comes first, followed by a recap of South Af-

rica's long colonial-era wine industry, thus preventing the book from opening too academically.

From there, formatted sections detail South Africa's wine regions, backed by informational listings of the key wineries in each. James does a good job of highlighting what South Africa does best, focusing on blended reds and whites in both the Bordeaux and Rhône models. The lack of a vintage chart is a little disappointing. The absence of photos, when South Africa is one of the most visually stunning wine regions of the world, constitutes a serious miscalculation.

The winery listings are good, with some solid data, though more often than not they skirt around concrete opinions about quality. When James does take a firm stand, I often disagree.

With Vergelegen, he allows reputation to win out over reality, stating that "Vergelegen is firmly reestablished among the finest producers of the 'new' South Africa," even though it has not kept pace with the country's cutting-edge wineries. Then he head-scratchingly pans Anthonij Rupert wines as not matching the quality of their vineyards, when their wines have been consistently outstanding.

In addition, James' writing style is a bit baroque and overly wordy, which might make it slightly tiresome for some readers to move through easily—this is not a book you sit down to read cover to cover, but rather a book to digest in smaller chunks. Overall, though, the