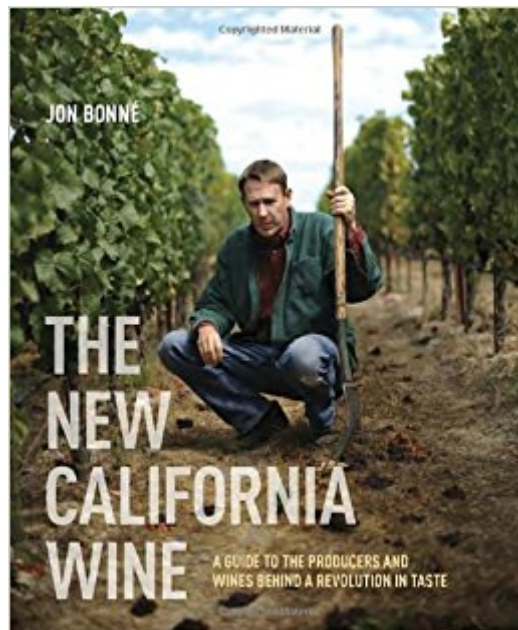


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# The New California Wine: A Guide To The Producers And Wines Behind A Revolution In Taste



## Synopsis

A comprehensive guide to the must-know wines and producers of California's "new generation," and the story of the iconoclastic young winemakers who have changed the face of California viniculture in recent years. The New California Wine is the untold story of the California wine industry: the young, innovative producers who are rewriting the rules of contemporary winemaking; their quest to express the uniqueness of California terroir; and the continuing battle to move the state away from the overly-technocratic, reactionary practices of its recent past. Jon Bonniwell writes from the front lines of the California wine revolution, where he has access to the stories, philosophies, and techniques of top producers. In this groundbreaking debut, Bonniwell paints an unflinching portrait of the current state of the industry: its strengths and shortcomings, its essential wines and those not worth pursuing. Lush full-color photographs, as well as a region-by-region tour of some of California's lesser-known growing areas, reveal the people and places behind the bottles. Finally, a comprehensive purchasing reference lists all the must-know producers and their best wines, making The New California Wine an essential resource for finding and buying the very best the state has to offer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Bonniwell's intelligence and knowledge are on full display in this book. There is no better guide to delicious wines from California." —Edward Behr, *The Art of Eating* "A wonderful, engaging read — a great gift for any wine lover" —S. Irene Virbila, Los

Angeles Times

“The New California Wine” delivers some of the most insightful wine writing you’ll read anywhere. This is the real skinny on cutting-edge California wine from somebody who’s on the ground, knows his stuff, and could care less about offending the Establishment.

•Matt Kramer, author and columnist for Wine Spectator

“Jon BonnÃ© brings a clear-eyed perspective to California; this book offers a fresh look at a mature wine culture heading in surprising directions. Its new leaders are all here; its old scams get some brusque treatment, too. Essential, pithy, easy reading.

•Hugh Johnson, author of The World Atlas of Wine

“An impeccably timed, beautifully written book chronicling a profound generational shift in California winemaking. Required reading for any sommelier, retailer, or consumer who’s left California behind for other pastures—it’s time to come home!

•David Lynch, owner/wine director of St. Vincent Tavern and Wine Merchant and author of *Vino Italiano*

“An incisive assessment of the California wine industry: its current state, fascinating history, and future in the hands of a new generation of winemakers.

•Paul Draper, winemaker at Ridge Vineyards

“There are few greater authorities on California wine than Jon BonnÃ©. Dispassionate but engaged, enthused but objective, BonnÃ© brings a forensic rigor to his work. But *The New California Wine* is no textbook, in spite of its comprehensive scope. Instead, BonnÃ©’s narrative moves at a rattling pace, delving into California’s colorful past and vividly describing its future. A must-read for anyone who is serious about the state’s wine.

•Guy Woodward, former editor at *Decanter*

“A gutsy, inspiring book driven by the same ideals as the movement it has so gracefully defined. Not only has BonnÃ© delivered one of the most important and relevant books on California wine ever written, he’s also redefined our notions of the wine book. *The New California Wine* is at once a manifesto, a guidebook, and a narrative peek inside the motives and methods of California’s new avant-garde.

•Talia Baiocchi, editor-in-chief, *Punch* “Big, jammy, oaky, buttery? Guess again. BonnÃ©, the San Francisco Chronicle’s wine editor, turns expectations of California wines on their head, profiling new producers, growing areas, and approaches to winemaking that are yielding all sorts of exciting bottles. Brisk, elegant, steely and most of all, nuanced—with this seminal account of a vinicultural revolution, these are the adjectives with which we will now be describing the Golden State’s wines.”

•Betsy Andrews, [www.saveur.com](http://www.saveur.com)

“As wine editor of The San Francisco Chronicle, Mr. BonnÃ© has been positioned perfectly to observe the profound pendulum swing in style and attitude that has occurred among California winemakers over the last decade. While

“revolution” may be too strong a term if simply tracking public tastes and sales figures, it nonetheless captures a sense of mental liberation among winemakers and consumers freed from a stultifying, dominant style that Mr. Bonne labels “Big Flavor.” •Eric Asimov, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)” Jon Bonne’s new book is a wonderful, engaging read with a cast of characters who think outside the box, care about sustainability and have a strong curiosity and work ethic.” •[www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com) “A Favorite Cookbook of 2013” •KCRW “Beyond its strong storytelling, Bonne’s book offers an history lesson and a practical guide to the new stars, from Paso Robles syrah to a “neo-Friulian” white blend from Napa’s Massican that “sums up all the changes from California.” Not surprisingly, it contains no chardonnay.” •The Philadelphia Inquirer

JON BONNE is the wine editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, responsible for the newspaper’s coverage of wine and spirits, as well as the annual “Top 100 Wines” list. His work has earned awards from the James Beard Foundation and the Association of Food Journalists. He lives in San Francisco.

Jon Bonne goes about explaining the current state of California wine by focusing on the move away from what he calls “Big Flavor” in this engaging and thought provoking read. Running through his engaging prose is a strong point of view, a point of view that Bonne pulls no punches in expressing. His favored producers (Ridge Vineyards, Calera, Littorai) are given great praise for their willingness to buck the Big Flavor band wagon, and Bonne pulls no punches in heaping scorn on wineries he feels lost their way in producing Big Flavor wines (resulting in some uncomfortable criticism of some of our cellar jewels like Sea Smoke, Aubert, Harlan, and Bond). I strongly recommend reading *The New California Wine*, even if you are a collector who has some of the Big Flavor California wines in their cellar - Bonne’s clear thesis keeps the writing focused, and whether you like his conclusions or not, you will be far more knowledgeable about California wine as a result of following Bonne’s train of thought.

Over the past several years, Jon Bonne has emerged as one of the most insightful and compelling voices in the world of wine. His writing for the San Francisco Chronicle has often focused on finding and trumpeting undiscovered (or forgotten) gems, frequently from his home state of California. In *The New California Wine* he goes even deeper, exploring and introducing us to a wide variety of regions, vineyards, and producers who are continuing to show what is possible in California wine. In

refreshingly unpretentious prose, he weaves together the old and the new, and sheds a much deserved spotlight on folks like Steve Edmunds, Ted Lemon, and Rick Longoria who have been pursuing their own visions for decades (often against the grain of popular taste), while at the same time highlighting young upstarts. We have been waiting a long time for a book like this. Much like Andrew Jeffords's classic *The New France*, *The New California Wine* is both a terrific resource on California wine and a highly enjoyable read.

*The New California Wine* is an exceptional and comprehensive narrative on the California wine industry's past, present, and future, and includes a reference guide to a generation of winemakers interested in exploring CA's abundant history of farming vineyards and CA's terroir. It also includes many producers who may have been criticized by the press- such as Ridge or Corison, but emerged as an alternative to what Bonne calls "Big Flavor." The first 70 pages fly by- Bonne's style of writing is easily digestible even though it contains some serious technical information on farming, biodynamics, and winemaking philosophies. Bonne relies on the narratives of several 'leaders' of this 'New CA wine' to weave together a comprehensive picture of history, winemaking and farming practices, and terroirs of CA - both forgotten and new. The final section, a reference guide to producers organized by grape variety, highlights those farmers/winemakers/producers who are seeking out ancient vineyards and grape varieties or pioneering new places, and those who eschewed high alcohol, highly-manipulated styles to make more balanced wines. Many names are likely familiar. I'd recommend this book for anyone who loves CA wine now or has abandoned CA wine for Old World styles of wine, as well as for anyone who wants to learn about CA and wine in general.

A truly great CURRENT California reference and guide chronicling the states most noteworthy artisanal producers. If you seek out wines of balance that express varietal and regional typicity Bonne outlines the very best producers for virtually every varietal grown in CA. And, although its thorough, it is approachable and not the length of *War & Peace* (like many wine books out there...). If you are serious about wine or want to get there, this is a must read. If you are trying to find smaller, hands on producers to check out and support but, don't know where to start - start here. It would take one years of scouring online wine forums and traveling to the regions themselves to get the inside story on these producers, learn how and why they came to do what they do and know what they hit out of the park among their various offerings. If you have left domestic wines behind due to richer styles being front and center in the eyes of many "critics" and publications, the

revolution has begun so bring your butts home.PS: Will be buying several copies for holiday gifts - killer gift under \$25 that anyone who drinks wine will love.

Jon Bonne's assessment of recent trends in the wine industry was refreshing to read. For almost ten years I have seen the steady increase in alcohol along with over-extraction from grapes in California wines. The reds moved from plum to prune in flavor, so that the varietal character was lost in the wines. It was impossible to know a Pinot Noir from a Cabernet. Expensive wines became burger wines at best. Food friendly wines they were not. Even whites fared badly. I remember tasting a Sauvignon Blanc at a winery where the alcohol bite prompted me to check the label. It was over 15%. I hope the positive change in California winemaking Bonne describes develops quickly.

An excellent book for anyone interested in the wine industry in California.The author takes you on an amazing journey through the past, present and future of California wine. His writing really helps you feel as though you are experiencing a trip through California. During your journey you meet the winemakers and get to know the nuance and subtleties of the land they work.I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in diving deeper into what is in their glass, who's hands made it and where it came from.

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