



## A History of Wine in America, Volume 2: From Prohibition to the Present

By Thomas Pinney

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*A History of Wine in America* is the definitive account of winemaking in the United States, first as it was carried out under Prohibition, and then as it developed and spread to all fifty states after the repeal of Prohibition. Engagingly written, exhaustively researched, and rich in detail, this book describes how Prohibition devastated the wine industry, the conditions of renewal after Repeal, the various New Deal measures that affected wine, and the early markets and methods. Thomas Pinney goes on to examine the effects of World War II and how the troubled postwar years led to the great wine boom of the late 1960s, the spread of winegrowing to almost every state, and its continued expansion to the present day.

The history of wine in America is, in many ways, the history of America and of American enterprise in microcosm. Pinney's sweeping narrative comprises a lively cast of characters that includes politicians, bootleggers, entrepreneurs, growers, scientists, and visionaries. Pinney relates the development of winemaking in states such as New York and Ohio; its extension to Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, and other states; and its notable successes in California, Washington, and Oregon. He is the first to tell the complete and connected story of the rebirth of the wine industry in California, now one of the most successful winemaking regions in the world.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this comprehensive sequel to his *History of Wine in America: From the Beginning to Prohibition* (1989), Pinney delves into the legislation that has produced, and hampered, the creation of great American wine. It is a story of setbacks, confusing laws, bankruptcies and buyouts. Figures and statistics about all parts of the industry—from growers to wine makers to middlemen to connoisseurs—expand the focus beyond Napa. The tragic story of New York's Finger Lakes wineries sits alongside statistics on Washington's humble berry-wine beginnings, for example. After a careful analysis of the Volstead Act, Pinney traces the shift in grape plantings (from fine wine grapes to shipping-friendly seedless grapes) that resulted in a dominance of sweet fortified wine for decades after Prohibition. The Supreme Court decision in May that wine could be shipped across state lines makes this book particularly timely since confusing state laws and how they've created or destroyed local winemakers is a reoccurring theme. While Pinney's focus on law rather than on luminous personalities or colorful terroir can result in some dry chapters, his sentences often sparkle with wry humor: "the fact that he prospered at brokering stocks during the Depression says a great deal about him" he writes about Martin Ray, an obsessive gentleman winemaker in California's early history. And the final chapters still have the feeling of magic about them: so much of America's wine future is yet unwritten.

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From [Booklist](#)

More than a decade after his history of the beginnings of American winemaking appeared, Pinney brings his comprehensive treatise up to date with a second volume covering the period from Prohibition to the present day. The explosive growth of winemaking, particularly in California, since the middle of the twentieth century has been recorded anecdotally in many an introduction to wine appreciation and in any number of vintners' memoirs, but Pinney's work scrupulously documents how vineyards multiplied and adds careful research and statistical measures to the record. Most of this history addresses wine professionals and economists, but some of Pinney's prose will intrigue the more casual reader. His account of Prohibition's impact on wineries, as growers went gradually from initial despair to active involvement and unprecedented success in actually repealing a constitutional amendment, provides an object lesson for other change movements. Although the volume's narrative focuses on California, Pinney in no way neglects the Great Lakes and other lesser-known grape-growing regions. Extensive footnotes and bibliography. *Mark Knoblauch*

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Review

"A worthy successor to Pinney's landmark *History of Wine in America: From the Beginnings to Prohibition*, and like that volume evidencing a wealth of knowledge, presented with grace and style. In addition to telling fascinating stories, both of these books are invaluable references. Anyone interested in the history of American wine should read them." - Paul Lukacs, author of *American Vintage: The Rise of American Wine*  
"An essential reference book for anyone wishing to sound authoritative at the dinner table." - Bruce Cass, editor of *The Oxford Companion to the Wines of North America*"

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**Helen Woodson:**

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