

# Sacramento Book Review



Below is a clipping of your book review that appeared in the January 09 issue of the *Sacramento Book Review*. Thank you for sending us the book.

## **WineWise**

By Steven Kolpan, Brian H. Smith; Michael A. Weiss

Wiley, \$29.95, 368 pages

The three authors of *WineWise* are all professors of wine studies at The Culinary Institute of America. Together, they have put together a highly useful and educational overview guide to wine. There are some limitations to the book, but, within the scope of the book, they did a good job. The first chapter is a practical (but short) introduction to wine, wine making, how the appellation system works, and why some wines cost so much. There are two chapters on the major white and red grapes, with some sub-categorization on specific growth areas in different countries. There are ten chapters on major growing area, with comprehensive discussion of the various appellations, major growers and styles. Some of their lists of wineries are just that—a paragraph or so of names, with no editorial commentary or reason for their inclusion. The maps of the regions are excellent, and the included wine labels throughout the book are a nice touch. There are numerous sidebar articles expanding on specific subjects relevant to the topic on hand in the chapter.

There are two reasonable chapters on wine pairings and doing wine tastings at home. Both are a good introduction, but either one could be the entire subject of their own book (and have been

often enough.) The chapter on picking wine at restaurants is a nice addition to a beginning guide like this, though some of the suggestions may fall into the category of common sense. The final chapter of bargain wine choices is an interesting addition, with each of the authors picking wines in different price ranges and styles. Here is where you see that the authors either didn't collaborate directly, or the editor didn't want to directly interfere in the writing. Each of the author's sections are organized and arranged differently, with no consistency to either price, region, or system. And, while this isn't a major flaw (and the section is fairly helpful to new wine buyers looking to maximize their dollar and tasting range), it does explain the sometimes-noticed inconsistency within the chapters in writing style.

For the price, *WineWise* is worth the purchase for a new wine drinker, or for someone wanting a book to loan out to friends.

