Neither will find the emphasis to be especially American, however, and the book as a whole will leave both groups wanting more.

David A. Jaeger
City University of New York Graduate Center and University of Cologne
djaeger@gc.cuny.edu
doi:10.1017/jwe.2013.38


This classic reference book has sold more than four million copies since Hugh Johnson first put it out in 1971, and it is now published in 13 languages. It tells us where winegrapes are grown and is a natural companion to the seminal Robinson/Harding/Vouillamoz 2012 book on which winegrape varieties are grown around the world (Wine Grapes, reviewed in the previous issue of JWE, Vol. 8(2), 2013), as well as to Robinson’s Oxford Companion to Wine (the fourth edition of which will appear in 2014).

The Atlas has been revised every six or so years since it first appeared, with Jancis Robinson joining the project beginning in 2001. If you already have an earlier edition, should you indulge in this new one? For anyone who refers at least occasionally to it, the answer is almost certainly “yes.” It is worth its modest price for the new set of spectacular photos alone, but, of course, its unique maps are the book’s greatest strength.

So much has changed in the industry even since the sixth edition appeared in 2007. Key trends include the expansion of vineyards in new or reforming regions, the striving to raise the quality of wines by paying more attention in the vineyard and intervening less in the winery, and the beginning of a diversification away from well-known international winegrape varieties to less-familiar local ones.

Among the regions getting expanded treatment or new maps are Tasmania in Australia, the Okanagan Valley in Canada, Ningxia province in China, coastal Croatia, Ahr in Germany, Khaketi in Georgia, Peloponnese in Greece, Canterbury in New Zealand, Etna and northwest Spain, Swartland in South Africa and northern Virginia in the United States. To keep the volume to 400 pages, some other regions were dropped, including North Africa, where the wine industry has been in the doldrums for decades (in contrast to the first half of the twentieth century (see Meloni and Swinnen, 2014).

These changes in coverage invite speculation as to which regions might change before the next edition of the Atlas appears. Might the Arab Spring lead to a resurgence in winegrape production in countries bordering the southern and
eastern Mediterranean? Certainly, Turkey has been striving to do so, such that it deserves its own new page in the seventh edition—even though barely 3 percent of its vast vineyard (fourth largest in the world) is directed toward wine at present. One reason that growth is hampered there is Turkey’s poorly developed wine laws and heavy taxes (Ozdemir, 2013). Might the dramatic growth in the middle class in India see its embryonic wine industry boom? Heavy import taxes and promotion by the Maharashtra state government have encouraged domestic production, but currently India has only 0.1 percent of the world’s winegrape area, making its wine industry about 1/100th—yes, one one-hundredth—the size of China’s. Brazil or Uruguay? Both face viticultural challenges, having a far wetter climate than that of their Southern Cone neighbors, but both are striving to improve the quality of their winegrapes, as indeed are other tropical countries (Bolivia, Peru, Thailand, and even Myanmar). The Third International Symposium on Tropical Wine was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2011, and the fourth one is scheduled for August 2014 in Brisbane, Australia.

A better understanding of the geography and terroir of each region helps the consumer know where tonight’s bottle came from. Just as important, it helps producers assess their place in the ever-evolving wine world. For them, and for those just wishing to keep up to date with where the wine industry is globally, the latest edition of this book will appeal, as it continues to be an essential and unrivalled part of every wine lover’s library.

Kym Anderson

*University of Adelaide and Australian National University*

kym.anderson@adelaide.edu.au
doi:10.1017/jwe.2013.39

References


Ozdemir, D. (2013). Turkey’s arduous journey from vine to wine: Why can a country, with the fourth-largest vineyard in the world, not make wine from its grapes? AAWE Working Paper 143, October.