

The book is beautifully illustrated and written in a lively and accessible style. For anybody interested in knowing more about wine in this, the world's third largest economy, and understanding its recent evolution and adaptation in a country with a deep and ancient culture, this is the volume to read.

Hal Hill  
*Australian National University*  
[hal.hill@anu.edu.au](mailto:hal.hill@anu.edu.au)  
 doi:10.1017/jwe.2018.46

## Reference

Anderson, K., and Harada, K. (2018). How much wine is *really* produced in China, Hong Kong, and Japan? *Journal of Wine Economics*, 13(2), 199–220.

DANIEL DECKERS: *The Sign of the Grape and Eagle: A History of German Wine*. Frankfurt Academic Press, Frankfurt, 2018, 100 pp., ISBN 978-3-86983-020-9 (soft cover), €20 (directly from the publisher).

In 1985, a survey of the West German population showed that almost half of those canvassed had thought wine fraud was broadly practiced and that less than 10% considered German wine to be of a generally good quality. Earlier that year, the Austrian diethylene glycol wine scandal disproportionately affected the German trade because many of the tampered wines were sold as blending agents to bulk German producers. As if this were not enough, in 1985, Christophe Tyrell, President of the German Growers' Union, had been sentenced to a year in prison for illegally “improving” predicate wines at his Ruwer estate. The reputation of the German wine trade, and its *prima facie* ambassador, the *Verband Deutscher Prädikats- und Qualitätsweingüter* (VDP or Association of German Predicate Wine Estates), had been sorely damaged. Although the timing of the public survey coincided with these illicit scandals, the sour reputation of domestic wine among Germans, and the lack of trust in the trade, proves to have much deeper roots.

The history of German wine is anything but linear. Ups and downs constitute the norm, not the exception. Both regional infighting and global turmoil—not least the two world wars—have destabilized the German wine trade to its breaking point, on several occasions. Yet, like a phoenix risen out of the ashes, the global trade in German wine has (once again) captivated on the world stage. Lettie Teague's (2018) three-part series on German wine in the *Wall Street Journal* (June 27, July 5, July 19) is evidence enough of its broadening appeal, even if the premise of her thoughtful articles is that most Americans misunderstand or are oblivious to German wine altogether. One could argue that we are living in the Golden Age of German wine, especially Riesling. Not since the 1890s have the finest fruits of the Mosel and Rhine been

so coveted by collectors and appreciated by rank and file drinkers curious enough to put aside preconceived biases against unfermented sugar and residual Teutonic enmity. Knowledgeable critics such as Teague and David Schildknecht have legitimized the seriousness of German wine to consumers while the swelling ranks of *terroir*-driven producers, including those committed to traditional methods and sites, continue to up the ante of quality.

On the surface, Daniel Deckers seems like an unlikely candidate to chronicle the German wine trade's turbulent 20th century. Deckers, an editor and journalist at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, is a Doctor of Theology and an influential Catholic voice in Germany. He has written numerous publications on the church and several of its leading figures, including a 2014 biography of Pope Francis. Deckers has also emerged as the most significant historian of German wine active today. In addition to his landmark *Im Zeichen des Traubenadlers: Eine Geschichte des deutschen Weins* (2010), Deckers has penned a more general introduction to wine, *Wein: Geschichte und Genuss* (2017), and lectures periodically on a number of themes, including the historical role of German Jews in the trade. Despite Deckers's attempt at a corrective, scholarship on German wine remains grossly inadequate, especially compared to its French counterpart, so the recent translation of *Im Zeichen des Traubenadlers* comes as a welcome gift to an English-language audience.

Titled *The Sign of the Grape and Eagle: A History of German Wine*, the 2018 translation of *Traubenadlers* is a joint initiative of the Frankfurt Academic Press and the VDP. The book is ably translated and abridged by Giles MacDonogh, a historian of Central Europe who has also published on food and wine. While the book certainly marks a major step forward for the English-language student or consumer of German wine, it is, as will be articulated below, lighter and somehow more perplexing than the German-language original.

The book's narrative interweaves two overlapping threads, sometimes to good effect and other times less successfully. In the first thread, Deckers provides a general overview of 20th-century viticulture and trade in wine. Much to Deckers's credit, he goes to great lengths to avoid a study that is overly focused on a single region. While a scholar could easily fall into the trap of assuming that the Mosel, or the Rheingau, speaks for all of Germany, Deckers goes out of his way to bounce back and forth between regions, revealing the layers of complexity and lack of uniformity that characterized the trade. In the second thread, *Eagle* follows the creation and evolution of the VDP. While the representativeness of the VDP to the whole of the trade is up for debate (VDP members owned about 5%–10% of total vineyard acreage throughout much of the 20th century), this focused perspective allows Deckers, and the reader, to restrain an otherwise unwieldy topic. In addition, we are able to ride out the *Sturm und Drang* of the period through careful attention to a handful of key participants.

The creation of the VDNV in 1910 (Union of German Natural Wine Auctioneers), the forerunner of today's VDP, came as a response to various crises

in the trade, including the spread of chaptalization and other “artificial” winemaking techniques, the spread of vine diseases such as Phylloxera, and the ongoing challenge of promoting and selling German wine domestically and abroad. German wine laws of 1892, 1901, and 1909, had proved inadequate in solving many vexing issues to the satisfaction of growers, merchants, and consumers, in Germany’s diverse regions. In addition to chaptalization, the question of de-acidification, or *Gallisierung* as it was unaffectionately dubbed in tribute to its founder and promoter, Ludwig Gall, may have been the most contentious issue, though it hardly merits a mention in *Eagle*. The initial VDNV consisted of members from four regions: Mosel, Rheingau, Rheinhessen, and Pfalz. Lord Mayor Albert von Bruchhausen of Trier was chosen as the Union’s first president, not least because of his sway in Prussia as a member of the House of Lords. Deckers’s treatment of these early years proves instructive in his highlighting of the regional players who struggled to congeal as a single, national Union. Changes in taste, such as the international fashion for Mosel wines in the 1890s and the effect this had on competing regions, as well as major political restructuring, most notably the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine (and its high-yielding vineyards) in the 1870s, were both catalysts for and thorns-in-the-side of Unionists. As Deckers points out, distress, more than success, drove change in the German wine trade.

World War I (1914–1918) challenged the bread-and-butter economic engine of the VDNV—the auction. As WWI dragged on, and suffering on the home front worsened, regional associations within the VDNV struggled to save face while profiting (rather lucratively in some cases) from the high price of wine. Not everything, however, was rosy. According to Otto Wolfgang Loeb, son of Sigmund Loeb, one of the Mosel’s foremost wine merchants in the period, the first months of the war were an economic disaster; foreign demand for German wine had dried up and domestic buyers, owing to the war economy, apparently felt little need to pay their bills. In addition, the wine regions of southwestern Germany were on the front lines of the war, and winegrowers were often forced to “donate” wine to soldiers passing through. By 1917, the War Profiteering Office was hot on the trail of wine auctions and those who most benefited from their success.

The Treaty of Versailles that concluded WWI altered the landscape of the German trade. Alsace-Lorraine and its oceans of wine were handed back to the French, although its wines were technically permitted free entry into the young Weimar Republic, thereby harming small German growers. German growers had lost major markets, including distant colonies, as a result of the war. Even Prohibition in the United States proved damaging to export growth. In fact, the period 1918–1925 marked some of the most chaotic years in the history of the trade. Although winegrowers faced new barriers as a result of the war, the stellar vintage of 1921 offered hope while new technologies, such as sterile bottling, promised cleaner wines for consumers (of course, the very issue of sterilization was disputed by growers and tradesmen as to whether or not it was an “artificial” measure). The idyllic town of Bernkastel on the Mosel became a flashpoint for tensions in the

trade as vintners gathered in a mass demonstration and burned the town's tax office in protest of the 20% duty that was instituted during the war, but had not been removed despite the increasingly deplorable conditions faced by winegrowers.

Not coincidentally, the onerous 20% tax was soon removed as politicians in Berlin finally prepared to come to the aid of Germany's winegrowers. The "Drink German Wine" (*Trinkt Deutschen Wein*) movement was launched at the Reich's Exhibition of German Wine in Koblenz in 1926. Artful posters and a spate of promotional publications (funded by the government) linked patriotism with the consumption of domestic wine. The ploy had been effective, although the financial crisis of 1929 soon put a damper on the trade's growth. The existing wine law, in place since 1909, had run its course by the end of the 1920s. A new law, released in 1930, bore the imprimatur of the VDVN, particularly when it came to chaptalized wine, which was not permitted to bear any declaration of purity or naturalness. Similarly, the concept of "domaine-bottled" received greater protections against potential misuse.

The English translation of *Eagle* is about half the length of Deckers's original *Traubenadlers*. Somewhat inexplicably, the most significant abridgement occurs where the greatest amount of interest is likely to reside—with the Nazis and WWII. This section is disappointingly short in *Eagle* and misses many of the complexities and curiosities available in *Traubenadlers*. Deckers has a broader knowledge of the contribution of German Jews in the wine trade than any other scholar, but things feel rushed here. We do encounter important figures like Fritz Hallgarten, Hermann Sichel, and Ludwig Levitta, the Rheingau auctioneer who was murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Despite, or maybe because of, the historic connection of Jews to the German wine trade, "less than a handful of hardcore National Socialist activists" existed in the trade, according to Deckers. Long-standing NVDP president von Bruchhausen refused to sign-off his letters with the near-ubiquitous "Heil Hitler!"

On the whole, Nazi viticultural policy had to consider many other issues besides de-Judaization of the trade. The Reich's Food Corporation (*Reichsnährstand*) oversaw general agricultural reforms, including the important rationalization of the vineyards (*Flurbereinigung*). The VDVN was incorporated into the Food Corporation in 1934, which oversaw the auction process by 1935. When war broke out in 1939, the wine regions once again formed the first line of defense (and offense) on the Western Front. The infamous Siegfried line (*Westwall*) cut through many privately owned vineyards, while other vineyards, including those planted on steep Mosel terraces, were outfitted with anti-aircraft artillery. Inconceivably, the VDVN continued to occupy itself with the trivialities of the trade during the war; as the bloodletting reached a fever pitch in 1942, the Union was legislating whether or not "Estate Bottled" could apply to a chaptalized wine. By 1944, the trade had become a shell of its former self. The periodical *Der Deutsche Weinbau*, which had backed Hitler, had ceased production. Insufficient copper sulphate meant that wine blights went untreated. By early 1945, the rail line between Trier and Koblenz, as well as the bridges and ferries serving the Mosel, had all been destroyed.

As with many other German industries, May 1945 marked a so-called zero hour (*Stunde Null*) for the German wine trade. A lack of labor, chemicals, equipment, and money meant that the future of German wine was in doubt. Of course, we know how things turned out. The “economic miracle” of West Germany and the concerted efforts of German and international advocates (including the American Frank Schoonmaker) salvaged the unsalvageable. New challenges certainly emerged, not least finding inroads into the American and British markets. Also, the drive towards a common European market created uncertainty among German growers as the continent drowned in surplus bottles and barrels of wine. By 1971, a new German wine law had been passed, forcing the shrinking VDNV to make major changes, including to its name. The “N” which had stood for “natural” was replaced by a “P” for predicate. The new law permitted chaptalization and focused instead on “quality” levels of grapes at harvest (the familiar Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, etc., spectrum). The newly christened VDP, although still emblemized by the grape eagle, took on a host of new issues, including the place of dry wines in the new Germany. Today, at about 200 members, the VDP is as strong and as relevant as ever. Although the internecine strife over terminological issues remain, the trade’s future appears bright.

English-language books on German wine are as rare a treat as a 1971 Trockenbeerenauslese, and in the case of Daniel Deckers’s *The Sign of the Grape*, it is as mercurial. One of the book’s strengths is the inclusion of dozens of colored images and illustrations. They are both beautiful and a useful accompaniment to the text. By and large, the entirety of the book’s content will be new to most readers. This book does not concern itself with nuanced maps, grower biographies, and the discussion of vintages. It is very much a work of history, but not without faults and detractions. There is no index and sources are not cited. In the text, Deckers leaves clues as to archival and published sources, but nothing is definitively clear. The production quality of the book is, unfortunately, a tier below the German original. While *Traubenadlers* is a 225-page hardback, *Eagle* is a 100-page soft cover. Notably, *Eagle*’s chief deficiencies are unrelated to Deckers’s original *magnum opus*. It is not an exaggeration to say that the reader can expect a typo or otherwise obvious error on each page of the book. Casual as well as persnickety readers will find this a distraction, and it leads one to wonder if abridgement decisions received a similar level of non-attention.

These inadequacies aside, *Eagle* is a much-needed translation for wine scholars and readers with a keen interest in the history of wine. It is an easy recommendation for the home or office bookshelf or wine cellar.

Kevin Goldberg  
The Weber School, Atlanta  
[kgoldberg@weberschool.org](mailto:kgoldberg@weberschool.org)  
doi:10.1017/jwe.2018.47

## References

- Deckers, D. (2010). *Im Zeichen des Traubenadlers: Eine Geschichte des deutschen Weins*. Darmstadt, Germany: Philipp von Zabern.
- Deckers, D. (2017). *Wein: Geschichte und Genuss*. Munich, Germany: C. H. Beck.
- Teague, L. (2018). The wine destination only the pros know. *Wall Street Journal*, June 27. Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-wine-destination-only-the-pros-know-1530113781>.
- Teague, L. (2018). The pro move? Order the German Riesling. *Wall Street Journal*, July 5. Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-pro-move-order-the-riesling-1530823662>.
- Teague, L. (2018). How German winemakers are quietly conquering the world. *Wall Street Journal*, July 19. Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-german-winemakers-are-quietly-conquering-the-world-1532019188>.

KNUT BERGMANN: *Mit Wein Staat Machen: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (State-building with Wine: A History of the Federal Republic of Germany)*. Language: German. Insel Verlag, Berlin, 2018, 366 pp., ISBN 978-3458177715 (hardcover), €25.

Alcohol, like sex and religion, is a taboo that Americans scarcely broach in polite conversation. In politics too, alcohol seems anathema to the puritanical messages of the mainstream of promulgated Judeo-Christian values. Only in the rarest of instances, for example, William Henry Harrison's 1840 "Hard Cider" campaign and President Obama's "beer summit" following the arrest of Henry Louis Gates, have national politicians weaponized alcohol to send a curated message, usually about class. While the recent senate judiciary flap involving judge Brett Kavanaugh placed beer front and center in American politics, alcohol—especially wine—remains seemingly absent from the American political imagination.

This is less so in the case of Germany, particularly postwar West Germany, where the politics of wine, or rather the wine of politics, was often high stakes. Knut Bergmann's meticulously researched German-language book, *Mit Wein Staat Machen: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (State-building with Wine: A History of the Federal Republic of Germany)*, offers a fascinating glimpse into the inclusion and exclusion of wine at state events, which was often loaded with symbolic meaning, political pitfalls, and journalistic criticisms. Whether international spectacles such as the official visits of American President John F. Kennedy or the Swedish royal family, or the mundaneness of dressed-up Bonn diplomacy, wine—German or otherwise—was almost always a key ingredient in the making of the modern German state.

Bergmann, a political scientist by training, opens his study by tipping his hat to hand-picked anthropological, historical, and sociological themes in wine scholarship. Short sections on ceremony, consumption patterns, and alcohol policy during the Imperial period, Weimar Republic, and Nazi era demonstrate