James M. Gabler, *Wine into Words: A History and Bibliography of Wine Books in the English Language*
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How do you review a bibliography?

This was the first question James Gabler's revised, and enlarged, bibliography of wine books raised for this reviewer. It is certainly a prodigious effort, but the question remains, just how do you judge the contents, value, and quality of a bibliography?

My first thought was to check for completeness. Is there anything important left out of this bibliography? Admittedly, one must define precisely what it is intended to include, but Gabler is very careful to do this in detail at the beginning of the volume. My answer is that, except for a few very recent items, no doubt published too late for inclusion, not very darn much has been left out! In short, Gabler gets a high grade (oops, perhaps better to use the 100 point rating system, see entry G32925), say a 95, for conpleteness.

My second thought was to check for accuracy. Here the author has to be given extraordinary marks, perhaps 100! We received our first review copy of this book at *Liquid Assets* in early 2004, copyrighted 2003. It was promptly followed by a letter from the author explaining that there were errors in the copy that we had been sent, and that a new printing would be arriving shortly! The next version we received was copyrighted 2004, and this review is based on that copy—not the apparently flawed 2003 version. This is an astonishing effort and, after looking high and low, I can find no inaccuracies (though I am sure someone could if they looked hard enough—despite my score of 100, no one is perfect!)

My third thought was to check for consistency. Here I could find some fault. For example, one of my favorite books is Amerine and Roessler's *Wine:, their sensory evaluation* (entry G7766). Roessler, a distinguished statistician at the University of California, Davis, collaborated on this book with Amerine, a distinguished enologist at the same university. In general, co-authored books are listed under the name of the first author in Gabler's bibliography, which is the case here. However, for some entries there

is also an entry for the second author, which indicates the location of the complete entry. However, there is no such entry for Roessler. Thus, if you knew only that Roessler was one of the authors of the book you were after, you would be out of luck and unable to find a reference to the book in this bibliography. Okay, I admit this is a picky objection, so I still give Gabler 94 points for consistency.

One extremely nice touch to this book is the Introduction, written by Kevin Starr, California State Librarian for many years, now emeritus. The erudite Starr, though he admits to being no enophile, did know many of the famous characters whose works appear in this bibliography through his long connection with California scholarship about the wine industry. The Introduction serves to show us how a truly professional bibliographer "reads" such a document. It is hard to describe in brief terms Starr's preferred method, but the basic recommendation is to pick a subject that you find fascinating and then let it lead you to other entries. This certainly worked for me.

There is little doubt that this is a book for wine lovers, but it is most especially a book for those who collect wine books. After all, it provides a virtually complete list and annotation of what such specialized bibliophiles would want in their libraries. In Gabler's own notes to his bibliography he kindly gives a contact for a society of such specialized book collectors. The group is called the Wayward Tendrils, which publishes the *Wayward Tendrils Quarterly* ($20 in the US, $25 in Canada, PO Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, or make email contact with publisher Gail Unzelman at tendrils@jps.net). No doubt the next step for a wine book bibliophile, after they have purchased Gabler's bibliography, is to join the Tendrils.