



The world of wine can appear vast, complex and intimidating. A simple act like facing a comprehensive wine list and choosing a bottle of wine for friends may cause fear and trepidation—“what if they really know wine and I what if I make a mistake.” The result of all this? Lots of people tend to stay in a small, safe comfort zone, always drinking their same, familiar wine and never stepping outside of it to explore further.

European wines take on more than two thousand years of the customs and traditions of each individual community that they’re made in. Wines that are made from grapes from a single small field on a hillside somewhere develop unique characteristics from that field—its soil, the way the field faces the sun and also the evolved techniques of the winemakers that farm it. European wines are defined by what’s called their ‘terroir.’ Terroir is a French word that has no direct translation into English—the best we can do is that it defines the ‘whereness’ of a wine.

In the Old World terroir is every-

thing. For example, wines from the village of Gevery-Chambertin in Burgundy carry only that description on their labels. They’re all made from one hundred per-cent Pinot Noir grapes but the way they are marketed is as Gevery-Chambertin—they’re wonderful, by the way.

#### CALIFORNIA COMPONENT

From musketeers to marketeers. Fast forward a couple of thousand years to the wine industry that emerged onto the scene in the 1960s. California winemakers, most especially the recently deceased Robert Mondavi, figured that Americans were ready to

# FROM THE BEGINNING

## The basics of enjoying wine

What a shame. What a waste. Wine is such a beautiful thing to enjoy and to dig into more deeply. Definitely, the more you know about wine the more pleasure you’ll get from it. And that really isn’t difficult to do—despite all appearances; wine is pretty easy to understand.

Let’s start with the big picture. The world of wine is divided into two parts. There are “Old World” wines and there are “New World” wines. Or maybe even a little simpler, there are wines from Europe and there are wines from everywhere else in the world. The two types of wine are different—they give you different taste experiences and, on the label, they are categorized and described differently.



Hanover Park’s premier wine, 1897

start drinking fine, quality wines. And they knew that the way to get Americans sipping was to make it simple for people to purchase wine in a store or to order it with a meal. What simpler way than to describe wines by the grape that they’re made from and not by the place they were made. Ordering a Cabernet Sauvignon is so much simpler than ordering a bottle of Chateaux Mârgaux. Ordering a Syrah is so much simpler than ordering a bottle of Côte Rôtie. Welcome to ‘varietal’ wines. Varietal descriptions are what you’ll see on all New World wine labels. Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, Shiraz from Australia and so on.

So, that's it? Terroir versus varietal and New World wines are just easier to order? Not really. New World wine makers went after a different style of wine. Just like they took complexity out of ordering, they took a lot of the complexity out of their wines. They made them with an emphasis on the fruit part of the taste experience masking out much of the earthy aspects that you find in Old World wines.

**COMPARE THE STYLES**

An obvious question poses itself? Is one style better than the other? Absolutely not. It all depends on your personal taste. Wine's real pleasure

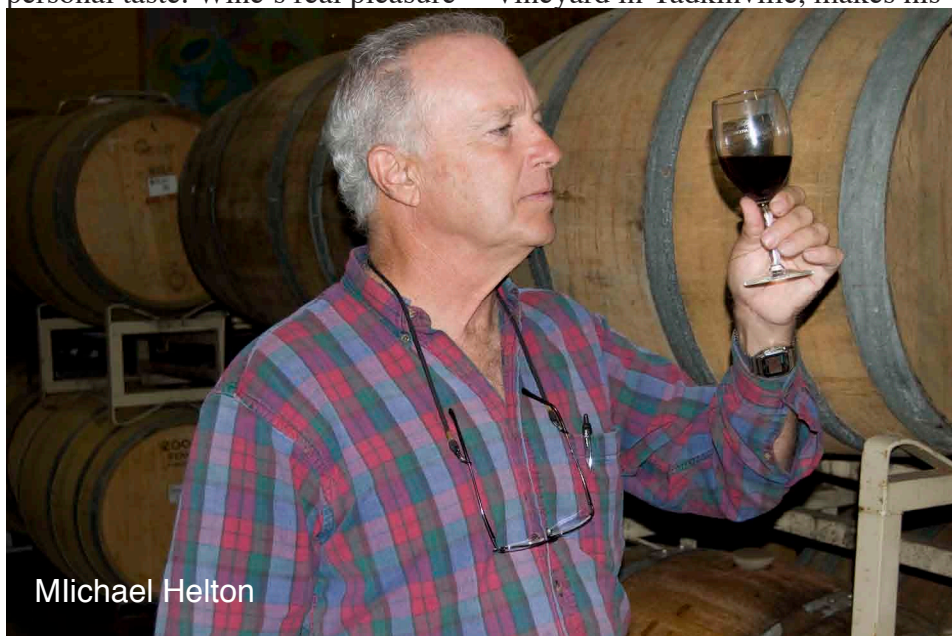
comes out of exploring and discovery. The one thing that I'm personally certain of is that Old World wines are better and more balanced with food. But, don't take my word for it; try it out for yourself. Grill a really juicy steak and try it first with a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Napa Valley, perhaps, and then with a Bordeaux wine from Haut Médoc. See what you think. What a tasty task.

Another fun way to dabble with Old World style wine is only a short drive away. Michael Helton, the winemaker at Hanover Park Vineyard in Yadkinville, makes his

wines with a deliberate Old World feel. Especially, try his blended red wine, 1897.

A couple of years ago I was fortunate enough to attend an event, in Paris, along with Michael and his wife and vineyard co-owner, Amy. One of the city's most renowned chefs prepared a meal pairing his creations with Michael's wines. The wines absolutely shone. In fact, after tasting Hanover Park's wines, one of the wine servers rushed towards the kitchen in search of an atlas while muttering to himself, "Where is this North Carolina?"

Taste these wines in Yadkinville or wait until the next time they're featured in Paris. Either way it's well worth the trip.



Michael Helton



Trevor Burton—a retired technology marketing consultant now occupying himself in the far more important field of wine and its enjoyment.

Certified by the International Sommelier Guild, Trevor is founder of SST Wine Experiences and, along with his wife Mary Ellen conducts wine education and tasting tours to wine regions throughout the world.

**WANT TO TASTE?**

Hanover Park is a short and easy drive from Lake Norman.

Head north on Interstate 77.

Take Interstate 40 (East) in Statesville,

From Interstate 40 take exit 170 (Route 601) and head north towards Yadkinville

In about 10 miles you will see a sign for the winery.

Make a right on Courtney Huntsville Road

Hanover Park is just a little way after your turn, on the left.

The winery is open from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday—Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, visit [www.hanoverparkwines.com](http://www.hanoverparkwines.com) or call 336-463-2875