Charles Sullivan's *A Companion to California Wine: Encyclopedia of Wine and Winemaking* fills an oenological-reference niche that has up till now been lacking a suitably comprehensive and scholarly effort. An A-to-Z compendium of wine-related entries ranging from Acacia Winery to Zinfandel, the Companion to California Wine covers 750 wineries and more than 100 wine-grape varietals, delivering useful explanations for tourists and wine-tasters, plus well-researched historical context for wine scholars, history students, and the idly curious. A random flip to page 3 reveals a profile of Leon D. Adams (journalist, historian, cofounder of the Wine Institute, and author of Commonsense Book of Wine), thumbnail sketches of small wineries (Adelaida Cellars near San Luis Obispo, Aetana Springs Wine Ranch in Napa, and Ahlgren Vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains); an entry on aging wines that explains the process and details its history in California; a blurb on Aguardiente, the hard liquor commonly consumed during the Gold Rush; plus a introduction to Alameda County and its important wine-growing regions. A great boon to California oenophiles wishing to bone up on the small winery labels they run across (the entries for which include location, history, annual production, and the varietals they specialize in), Sullivan's encyclopedia is engaging enough for amateur wine buffs and comprehensive enough for serious students of California history, wine history, or both. --Stephanie Gold

My Personal Review:
The importance of Bo Simmond's praise for this book on Amazon can not be exaggerated; there is no better library of wine books in the United States. Sullivan himself has studied wine and its history in California for...
Sullivan has contributed his California wine history database to winefiles.org. It contains over 30,000 citations to primary sources in California's wine history, including books, newspapers, trade journals and other periodicals.

In addition to "A Companion to California Wine", Sullivan is the author of:

"Napa Wine: A History from Mission Days to Present";

"WINES AND WINEMAKERS OF THE SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS" (Los Gatos: D. R. Bennion Trust, 1992);

"Like Modern Edens: Winegrowing in Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains 1798-1981"; and

"Zinfandel: A History of a Grape and Its Wine" (California Studies in Food and Culture, 10).

Sullivan continues to write about California wine, and has written over a hundred articles on the subject, which have been published in leading wine periodicals. "A Companion" is a great place to explore his work and California wine history in general.

Robert C. Ross 2008

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