

# The Amateur Winemaker

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## From the Editor's Chair



### WINEMAKING TOO 1

*"The hardest part of a do-if-yourself job is listening to the neighbour who tells you how he'd have done it easier and cheaper..."*

*"Reader's Digest"*

### RED WINE!

I was disappointed indeed this autumn, and I suspect that many others were too, at not being able to make any quantity worth mentioning of one of my favourite wine, elderberry. The same was true of sloe and almost all the fruits we usually rely upon to produce the bulk of our year's supply of red wines. It is upsetting, when one works on a cask system, to have a break one year in continuity of production. Consequently I was delighted when I heard that Semplex (as they advertise this month) have succeeded after many frustrations and delays in importing dried elderberries, from behind the Iron Curtain, of all places (RED wines 1). They are quite cheap (3/6d. lb.) and 1 lb. of the dried fruit is equal to 4 lb. of the fresh, so 1 lb. will make 1 gallon, and I sent off post-haste for 12 lbs., which will neatly repair the omissions of last autumn. They have arrived and just been put down to ferment. No doubt many other winemakers will have the same idea, so a recipe for this wine is given off [Page 9]

### CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS

Preparations are now well advanced for the 1962 Conference at Cheltenham Spa, and schedules have been sent to all wine circle secretaries, so if you haven't seen one, chase your secretary! We want to make the wine how the biggest ever, with entries from as many Circles as possible, and it looks as if we'll do it. Bookings are already pouring into Cheltenham, and the Committee member in charge of accommodation, Mr. E. Malin, of the Home Office, Stoke Rd., Bishop's Cleeve, Cheltenham, is being kept pretty busy. Incidentally, he asks us to point out that, whilst he is quite willing to do all this work to smooth the way for visitors to the Conference, neither he, the Committee, nor the "host" Circles can assume financial responsibility for hotel bookings *not* taken up. Any reservation made is in the name of the person concerned and it will be their responsibility to alter or cancel any booking so made, direct with the hotel concerned, and the individual must accept any financial responsibility.



### VARIED PROGRAMME.

As you will see when you consult the schedule, there is an attractive programme for the Conference. Quite apart from the 28-class wine show, something unique in his or any other country, there will be trade stands and displays. Sets of coloured slides (and, it is hoped, films)

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on winemaking will be shown, and the highlight of the day will be the session in which Mr. B. C. A. Turner interviews Mrs. S. M. Tritton, M.P.S., F.R.I.C., of Grey Owl Laboratories, and Mr. R. C. Lucas, the general secretary of the Conference, "Face to Face." We are hoping that their views will differ widely enough to make this both instructive and entertaining, for they are both skilled winemakers and both have definite views on most winemaking subjects.

If last year's is any criterion, the Conference lunch, at which the Mayor will be our guest, will be thoroughly enjoyable (tickets are 12/6d. and it is advisable to obtain yours early since demand is liable to exceed accommodation). Afterwards, replete and refreshed, we shall have an "Any Questions 1" session at which the "Panel" will be Mr. S. W. Andrews (chairman), Hertford, Mrs. L. K. Lucas, Bournemouth, Mr. C. R. Austin, Hertford (show champion last year), Mr. C. R. Shave, Birmingham, and Mr. F. Spark, Andover. An innovation, meeting requests voiced last year, will be a "Judge with the Judges" winetasting, supervised by Mrs. Cherry Leeds, to enable anyone to form an idea of what is regarded-by judges! - as a good wine.



### OUR COVER PICTURE

Talking of Cheltenham, you will there have a chance of seeing, as well as the trade stands, some interesting displays and demonstrations. One of them is of coopering, that ancient and, to a layman, mysterious craft to which our hobby owes so much. It is always a mystery to me how the cooper can cut curved staves with a two-way bevel and yet finish up with a cask which is not only wine-tight, but holds the precise quantity required. Our cover picture shows the "trussing up" ceremony of an apprentice cooper, and for it we are indebted to Mr. J. N. Oldham, of Waterlooville, himself a master cooper, formerly of Old Oak Craft, which he founded.



### CARTONS

Last month we mentioned that there was a need for a "one-bottle pack" for the convenient despatch of wine. Mr. S. A. S. Smith, of 5 Church Place, Swindon, kindly put us on to G.P. (Containers) Ltd., of Lillyburn Works, Milton of Campsie, by Glasgow, who market exactly such an article. They have sent us a specimen, and it would be excellent for our purpose. Their Safasound pulp packs are available in one-, two- and three-bottle sizes, and are both secure and convenient, a pulp inner container, inside a cardboard "outer."

Singles can be purchased for as little as 162/- a gross, depending on the quantity taken, and Circle secretaries might find it worthwhile to send for details.



### BOYSENBERRY WINE

Mr. C.S. Shave, of Birmingham, writes: "As a result of my letter published in your October 1961 issue, I received so many enquiries on the cultivation and then making of wine from the Garden, Huckleberry, that I am prompted to bring to the notice of Your readers another easily cultivated fruit from which an excellent wine can be made-The Boysenberry. This fruit is basically similar to the Loganberry except that the berries are a little larger and ripen, earlier than the Loganberry. Does well on light soils and resists drought. Grown

similar to the Blackberry, is planted 6 to 8ft. apart and can be trained to a fence or to wires. The old canes should be cut back to ground level after fruiting. Having small seeds the Boysenberry is excellent for jam-making, and a superb wine can be produced from it.

*Recipe:* As for, Garden Huckleberry, Blackberry and Loganberry wines.

Any reader's experiences on the cultivation of, and/or winemaking, from the Boysenberry, would be appreciated." - THE EDITOR

## AMATEUR WINEMAKERS' NATIONAL CONFERENCE

### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT-1961 CONFERENCE

<b>Receipts</b>	£ s. d.	<b>Payments</b>	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Donations .....	101 0 0	By Advertising	23 11 8	
Admission Tickets	101 3 9	Printing and Stationery.	57 16 6	
Trade Stands	53 10 0	Postage and Telephone	9 13 11	
Entry Fees	74 14 0	Prize Money	55 2 0	
Lunch Tickets	79 5 6	Raffle Prizes	1 5 0	
Raffle .....	29 18 0	Speakers' Fees	10 0 0	
Sundries ..	2 14 1	Judging Expenses	1 15 10	
		Hire of Accommodation	26 5 0	
		Wine Party Expenses	8 9 2	
		Judges' and Stewards' Teas	7 17 0	
		Official Lunch	79 5 6	
		Haulage	11 0 0	
		Sundries	4 1 6	296 3 1
		Balance at Bank -		
		Current Account	46 2 3	
		Deposit Account	100 0 0	146 2 3
	£442 5 4			£442 5 4

I have examined the books, bank account, receipts and vouchers of the Amateur Winemakers' National Conference for 1961 and certify that the above Receipts and Payments Account is in accordance therewith.

R. H. HIVES,  
Accountant and Auditor,  
215 Seabourne Road,  
West Southbourne,  
Bournemouth.

### Readers write ...

## JUDGES' COMMENTS WANTED

Mr Peter M. Duncan, of 29 Fitzjohn's Ave., Swiss Cottage, London N.W.3, makes a point about the judging of wine, and the necessity for informing the exhibitor more fully of the judges' opinion of the entry:

About 10-12 years ago, my father and I used to breed and exhibit budgies (a far cry from winemaking!), and if a bird showing some prominent fault found its way to the exhibition then we knew why it was rejected without a prize because the judge or steward would write an appropriate remark on the class label.

Since budgies, like wines, are very temperamental, such faults could arise simply because of the journey to the show, because the hall was hotter or colder than the bird was accustomed to, and so on. What is more, the bird could recover itself shortly after judging before the public was admitted or before it was returned to the exhibitor.

Although identical circumstances are unlikely to arise at wine shows, the first question a non prize-winning exhibitor asks is "Why am I an also-ran?" In most cases even very grave faults in a wine are not apparent to the actual vintner. Surely it would be a good idea for judges or their stewards to write on the label of, say, an earthy beetroot wine the word "earthy" or on a sweet wine found in a dry class "sweet wine in dry class."

Obviously, most wines would remain unmarked because their general quality simply is too low, but in some cases where serious defects are found the exhibitor will then know the trouble and take steps to remedy matters. Otherwise he is left completely in the dark, knowing only that his wines are not good enough to win a prize. The words aver-acid, under-acid, insipid, high in tannin, very harsh, and so on take a matter of seconds to write and convey a wealth of meaning in a very concise comment.

Perhaps you would care to sound the opinions of the judges. After all, the National is the place to start this trend.

*This is a point which, as Mr. Duncan says, has long worried both exhibitors and judges: it is obviously desirable that competitors should know the reasoning behind judges' decisions. Whether Mr. Duncan's suggestion is the best way of attaining this, however, is another matter. It would work excellently at a flower show, where one had a comparatively small number of exhibits of widely varying quality, so that it would be easy to comment in a phrase. At the National, however, classes tend to be large, and the general quality to be high, so that differences between wines tend to be much more subtle. Judges are invariably working at quite high pressure, and to have to write a comment on each individual wine would slow down judging*

*far too much. Comments, too, would be difficult to write, for whilst it is easy to say why a bad wine is marked down, to describe in a few words the subtle differences between, say, 40 wines, all of them good (in such a way as to show the reasons for placings) would, I think, sorely tax the ingenuity of most of us. But other judges may think differently, and we'd be interested to have their opinions. The National Committee has approached the same problem from a different angle this year, and at Cheltenham there will be a "Judge with the Judges" event, in which anyone can try judging a number of wines, and compare their placings with those of a panel of judges, thus demonstrating what is held to be a good or a bad wine.-Editor.*