

# MERCI, MISSOURI!

BY TODD KLIMAN



Stone Hill Winery

**I**T PROBABLY WON'T SURPRISE MOST OF YOU to learn that my friends on the East Coast are always astonished to discover that wine is made in Missouri.

"Really?" they respond whenever I bring up the subject. "Missouri?" A long, scrutinizing glance usually follows. Half of the time they think I am putting them on, and the other half they are certain I meant to say beer.

I can shake my head at this reaction now, but I have to confess: Before being drawn into the world of the Norton grape to research my book, *The Wild Vine*, and discovering a fascinating world of wine beyond California and Europe, I was just as ignorant.

After years of research and countless interviews, I now know that the astonishing thing is not that Missouri makes wine, or

even that it makes good wine—because Missouri wine is wine of character and distinction with a sense of place. This is no small feat in an age when homogeneity reigns and regional distinctions are disappearing.

No, the astonishing thing—the truly astonishing thing—is that more people don't know about it.

But for a quirk of history, the state today would be synonymous with wine in America. What if Prohibition hadn't come and there hadn't been such an irreparable rupture in this state's production of wine? It is, for me, the great tantalizing "what if" in the world of wine.

Today, Prohibition is widely regarded as a failure, but we are naive to think it lasted only 13 years. Winemakers had moved on

TODD KLIMAN is the Food and Wine Editor at the *Washingtonian* in Washington, D.C. He won the prestigious James Beard Award in 2005 for the country's best newspaper column. He authored *The Wild Vine* about the state grape of Missouri, Norton. *The Washington Post* called his book "a fascinating story, complex and with a haunting finish."



Missouri History Museum

One of Stone Hill Winery's prized growing locations (*left*) is 46 acres known as the Rauch Vineyard, named after the original owners. It includes half an acre of pre-Prohibition Norton vines. This 1904 photograph of Stone Hill's vineyards and cellar area (*at right*) was taken more than 50 years after its founding in 1847, around the time it was the second largest winery in the United States.

## TREAT YOURSELF AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS

By KIT BOND, FORMER U.S. SENATOR AND GOVERNOR

Like most Missourians, I am a long-time fan of Missouri wines, but my real education with our state's rich wine-producing history began during my first term as governor.

Missouri, once the second-largest wine-producing state in the country after New York, saw our industry devastated by Prohibition. Historic vineyards were ripped out in the 1920s. When Jim and Betty Held reopened Hermann's Stone Hill Winery (1965) and Lucian Dressel and his wife Eva reopened Mount Pleasant Winery in Augusta (1966), their vines were virtually non-existent. Meanwhile, other states lacking our wine-making heritage also emerged from Prohibition with their sights set on growing grapes and making great American wines.

To restore and strengthen the industry, grape-growers, winery owners, wine lovers, and retailers formed an informal coalition and presented an idea to the legislature. These advocates proposed the Missouri Wine and Grape Program, which I was proud to support and sign into law in 1984. With a small fee on each bottle of wine sold in Missouri, the program provides scientific and marketing support for the state's wine industry.

Today, more than \$1 million per year is divided evenly between marketing and research for our wine industry. Our Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture and Enology draws outstanding researchers from around the globe.

I like to think the research had an immediate impact. Any good sports fan should remember the St. Louis Cardinals' victory over the San Francisco Giants in the 1987 National League Championship Series. During that series, a Missouri sparkling wine went head-to-head with a San Francisco selection in a blind taste test. As I recall, the 10 California participants in the blind taste favored the Missouri sparkling wine 6 to 4, and in St. Louis, perhaps with a more cultured taste, Missourians gave our state's wines another win with a 7 to 3 vote. The Missouri wine industry hit that one out of the park!

Later, when I was serving as one of Missouri's U.S. senators in Washington, D.C., I was excited to see Missouri wines were making headway on the East Coast, as well. I found a delicatessen in Northwest D.C. carrying Missouri wines where, not surprisingly, pictures of Senators Thomas Eagleton and John Danforth hung on the wall. I have a feeling the senators had something to do with the store's refined selection!

Whether you are a sommelier or an amateur taster, my suggestion to those who have not tried Missouri wines is this: Treat yourself! Some of the finest wines I have tasted are Missouri-grown. I've never forgotten the delicious Chardonnay and the 1996 Norton produced in Hermann. When you find your favorite, please tell all your friends!



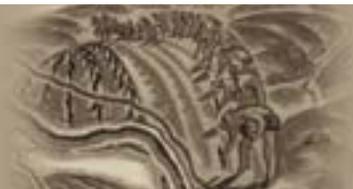
*Curt Dennison*

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These small clusters of Norton grapes in early May will be ready for harvest in mid-October. The "State Grape of Missouri," Norton has been grown here since the mid-1800s.

# THE BOUNTY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

BY GERARD FORD CRAFT



Greg Rannells

**W**HEN I FIRST drove through the Ozarks, I was blown away. I had recently moved to Missouri, a state I had never been to before, to open my first restaurant. People said I was crazy. In hindsight, I probably was. But as soon as I saw the lush, fluorescent green hills, I knew I was home.

I am a city kid from Washington, D.C., and most of my family is from New York City, so there isn't much country in my blood. I have a different perspective from those who were raised here because I am an outsider looking in, and I can see the gold that many take for granted. There are a million things to love about St. Louis, where I reside, but the second you head out to the country, you melt and forget all about the big-city problems.

GERARD CRAFT has been named one of the ten best new chefs in the country by *Food and Wine* magazine and nominated for numerous national awards. He owns and operates four restaurants in the St. Louis area: Niche and Pastaria in Clayton, and Brasserie and

I will never forget the first time I drove out Highway 94. The highway itself is a destination, a scenic byway that winds along the north side of the Missouri River. The countryside is filled with amazing people and places: countless dedicated farmers, wineries putting Midwest wines on the map, wild foragers, beautiful trails, and the most important rivers in America. There is a reason many Europeans settled here long ago; they, too, were outsiders looking in on great potential.

The most important thing for me, as a chef, is the food potential. This is the heartland, where American cooking originated, and we know how to use the best of what's around us. I say "American cooking" because we are a melting pot; Missouri was

*“When I stood on this hilltop overlooking the vineyard and the valley below, I said to my friends and fellow chefs, ‘With a view like this we could be in Tuscany or Provence or Spain, but we’re right here in Missouri. Let’s appreciate it.’” —GERARD CRAFT*



Bryan Haynes

Carrots Three Ways (*left*) at Niche restaurant in St. Louis showcases local carrots, cumin, orange juice, carrot juice, and creativity. Alfresco dinners are common in the vineyards in Missouri River Country, especially around harvest in September and October. Shown here is a 1950 Chevy pickup, a three-acre Norton vineyard, and a sunset feast in progress.



Jarred Gastreich

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Justin Leszcz and his wife run Yellow Tree Farm, selling their produce to local restaurants and through Community Supported Agriculture shares. Consumers can buy a subscription to a CSA and receive produce and other food throughout the growing season.

## WHY I BUY LOCAL

BY BILL CARDWELL, PROPRIETOR, CARDWELL'S AND BC'S KITCHEN

When I was a boy in Vermont, my parents owned an inn and served only what their garden produced: corn freshly picked and shucked, blanched green beans, a medley of preserved and canned food for the cold months.

We bought lettuce in the winter time, and I think that was it.

When I first started a restaurant, I got all my herbs shipped in. I'd go to the Greyhound bus terminal to pick up my herbs. Other farmers would come to the back door with baskets of asparagus. Over time, I sought out local Missouri pecans, grains from mills, and of course, the herbs.

It's important to me. I sometimes wonder if people really care. I would hope they do, but I'm not so sure.

Fresh food tastes better and takes less presentation because it already looks good. I ordered peas from a commercial buyer, but they were so old they'd already sprouted in their shells.

But buying local means more than high quality. It's about healthy food, and it's also about consciousness of supporting the independent business. I'm an independent businessman. I'm not saying there's no place in our world for conglomerates, but I'm very pro-independent business. I would rather support all these little farmers—it's their livelihood.

Regional farmers make sourcing local foods easier. I currently work with Bob Lober of St. Isidore Farm in Moscow Mills, Missouri, to get baby beets, carrots, spinach, arugula, turnips, other root vegetables, and lettuce.

My priority is to do seasonal cuisine, which I grew up with, and to feature locally sourced ingredients and sustainable agriculture as much as I possibly can.

# THE BUCKS, AND DUCKS, STOP HERE

BY ROBERT L. ZIEHMER



*Danny Brown*

**S**T. CHARLES is one of Missouri's fastest growing counties. You might not recognize it today from what it was in the late 1990s and hardly at all from what was here in the early 1970s. At that time, much of this area was still undeveloped, with rural plots, open fields, and small winding roads.

A modern-day Rip Van Winkle waking up today would be shocked to see little evidence of the green space that once dominated St. Charles County. Instead, he would be greeted by the asphalt gray of a major highway expansion, abundant shopping centers, restaurants, a hospital, and residential developments.

But that stops south of Interstate 64, which cuts through the county. There, the August A. Busch and Weldon Spring conservation areas, totaling more than 14,000 acres of undeveloped green space, provide a true escape for discovering nature.

These areas are managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Created by popular vote in 1936, the department is entrusted with the care of the state's forests, fish, and wildlife. The agency works with the people of Missouri to protect and manage these natural resources.

Although the August A. Busch and Weldon Spring conservation areas are close together, the habitats they conserve are worlds apart. Located on the west side of Highway 94, the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area's main entrance lies off of Route D, and it provides 7,000 acres of an outdoor lover's paradise. The terrain is mostly flat, with a maze of gravel roads that winds through the area, so be sure to pick up an area map at the entrance.

Where do all these roads take you? Lakes. Busch Conservation Area offers thirty lakes, and each one has a distinctive look and

BOB ZIEHMER serves as the eighth Director of the Missouri Department of Conservation since its formation in 1937. He assumed the role in January 2010. He began his Conservation Department career in 1987, and he believes that citizen input and involvement are critical to conservation.



*Eric Rosenbaum*

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The gadwall is a dabbling duck that dunks its head to feed on submerged plants. This is a juvenile drake. Gadwalls prefer wet grasslands, marshes, or open wetlands, which have been preserved at Busch Conservation Area.



*Danny Brown*

# REINTERPRETING THE RIVER

BY JONATHAN W. KODNER



Bilyo O'Donnell

JONATHAN KODNER, an internationally recognized consultant and art dealer, is also the President and Director of Kodner Gallery, which he operates with his brother David. Kodner Gallery is a source of fine and rare art for museums, institutions, corporations, and private collectors around the world. Jon and David are members of several art and antique appraisal associations and museum and gallery associations.

**T**HANKS TO THE INCOMPARABLE AND PROLIFIC TALENTS of historic artists such as George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Hart Benton, the history and topography of the Missouri River Valley are appreciated throughout the world. These iconic artists are joined today by extraordinary living artists who truly know and love the river. We might call them “explorer artists.” They are Missourians with rare talent who float, fish, and photograph the river and then interpret it for us through their painting. Although their styles are different, their contemporary work illuminates the river in a new way, giving us yet another way to experience it.

William Michael O'Donnell, better known as Billyo, was born in 1956 on Lost Creek Road in Warrenton, a small town just west of St. Louis where tall grass gently fades into the rolling Ozark hills that cradle the Missouri River. He has not strayed far from

his roots, and although he travels and paints the world, he currently lives and works in Eureka. Billyo often attributes his success as a landscape painter to the love and respect for nature that he developed at a young age.

As an artist, he devotes most of his time to painting *en plein air*, meaning he works outdoors, so that the exact moment he is experiencing, such as the light in the sky at sunset or the bend of a tree in the breeze, is what ends up on his canvas. This process, pioneered by the great Impressionists of the 19th century, is also embraced by Missouri painters Benjamin Guffee, Joan Parker, Bixby Childress, Linda Green-Metzler, and Ed Menges, all of whom use natural light and color to depict landscape in its purest form.

Bilyo is recognized as the founder of Artists Along the Katy Trail. Founded in 2000, this event brings Missouri's best artists



Bryan Haynes

Billyo shares a moment in time from one of his many journeys on the river in his impressionist painting, *River Bluffs* (left), which he painted *en plein air*. Another artist, Bryan Haynes, captures historical aspects of the Missouri River near his studio at Labadie in *Prelude* (above).



Bilyo O'Donnell

together to paint the 240-mile trail, which cuts across almost the entire state. Billyo's impressionist paintings of Missouri were illustrated in his book *Painting Missouri: The Counties en Plein Air*, a collaboration with author Karen Glines. This volume, published in 2008, was the culmination of Billyo's travels through all 114 counties and the City of St. Louis. Billyo's paintings in combination with Glines's historical descriptions captured the essence of each unique region in our state. In 2012, Missouri's Governor Jay Nixon presented Billyo with the distinguished Independent Artist of the Year Award.

Another artist who draws on the legacy of the great regionalist painters of the 1930s is Bryan Haynes, born in 1959. He con-

tinues the American narrative started by artists such as Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Steuart Curry into the 21st century. Haynes lives in St. Albans and began his career as an outstanding commercial artist with great dedication to the creative process. Haynes's commercial illustrations have graced the pages of national magazines, international advertising campaigns, and book covers.

Today, Haynes directs his attention toward the area surrounding his studio, the rolling hills near Labadie. He rediscovers moments in times past. The historical and cultural aspects of his compositions imply his understanding of his native home. The narrative that flows through his work, like the rivers themselves,

## I PAINT FROM SANDBARS AND BANKS

By Billyo O'Donnell

Since I was very young, the Missouri River has continually drawn me to it as if it were an old friend that I wanted to meet again and again. With its magical mystery, it has become a window to another dimension under that murky earth-colored water. I reminisce about times when I, hoping to get a glimpse of the Big Muddy River, followed small creeks all day that led to larger ones under dark forests. I've always wanted to touch and be near the river.

Since then, I have painted from the sandbars and banks of the Mighty Missouri for several years now, traveling by canoe to discover the design and character of this old friend. Once, I headed down the river late into the night to paint the effects of the full moon's light on the river. Following is an excerpt from my journal:

"As I painted at about 2 AM, a mist started to rise off of the water. It made me a little nervous since the area was far too muddy and I needed to find a campsite soon. Affected by the moon's bright light, so powerful that it required putting my hat on to shade my eyes, I floated downriver in the mist to locate a spot on the south side. My flashlight didn't help, and the south bank was cast in pitch-black shadows created by the trees along the bank. As I paddled into the shadows, I couldn't see the bank. In the strong current, trees and stumps suddenly emerged from the darkness, threatening to pull me in. The current continued to push me downstream, and the bank was too steep to find a place to stop. I made several attempts, but this was too dangerous. And then paddling away from the blackness toward the center of the river, I suddenly noticed that the far side was clear due to a gentle breeze."

# TOO THICK TO DRINK, TOO THIN TO PLOW

BY FRANK KARTMANN



Bob Brinkmann

**B**ORN AT THE CONFLUENCE of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, the water supply for St. Louis City and St. Louis County has always been abundant. The quality of the water was, however, a different story in the past. Before 1900, the muddy Missouri River and the lower Mississippi River system transported an estimated 400 million metric tons per year of sediment from the interior United States to coastal Louisiana.

Mark Twain's classic river memoir *Life on the Mississippi*, published in 1883, painted a picture of drinking water in St. Louis in the late 19th century. "If you will let your glass stand half an hour, you can separate the land from the water as easy as Genesis. ... The land is very nourishing, the water is thoroughly wholesome." Indeed, the residents of the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States at the time had to "wait for the mud to settle" in their glass, a daily reality in the region back then.

But at the turn of the century, as St. Louis made plans to host the 1904 World's Fair, Mayor Rolla Wells promised the planning committee clean, clear water for the Fair. At that time, the St. Louis City Water Division drew water from the Mississippi River, allowed it to settle in large basins, and pumped it to customers.

The city hired John Wixford, a Washington University-trained chemist, to find a way to implement the mayor's promise. Wixford set up a laboratory that also served as his home until he found the solution: using lime and ferric sulfate as coagulants to separate the solids from the water. Wixford was successful. The sparkling clean water in the fountains became the talk of the Fair, and St. Louisans began to enjoy the benefits of the new technology.

Earlier, James Kirkwood, for whom the town of Kirkwood is named, had pioneered water filtration in the United States. His plans to improve the clarity of St. Louis's water through filtration

FRANK KARTMANN is President of Missouri American Water, the largest investor-owned water utility in the state. He joined the company in 1989, has been Vice President of Operations and Engineering, and is also a registered professional engineer.



*Steve Schulte*

The Howard Bend Treatment Plant has provided water for the City of St. Louis since 1929. It is upriver from Missouri American Water, which supplies water to St. Louis County. This photo (May 2013) shows the river at flood stage.



Missouri American Water



Missouri History Museum and Library

were initially rejected by the city in 1866 but were implemented decades later.

At the same time the city was preparing for the World's Fair, St. Louis County was developing its first water supply system to serve a population of about 50,000 who had relied on wells and cisterns. In 1904, a new water plant drew water from the Missouri River, pumped it to settling basins, and incorporated the concept of water filtration that James Kirkwood had proposed. Just in time for the Fair, filtered water flowed to the growing cities of Kirkwood, Webster Groves, University City, and Ferguson. Wixford's coagulation process was added to the plant a few years later.

In the late-19th century, life expectancy at birth was only 47 years. About 44 percent of all deaths were caused by infectious disease. In some U.S. cities, up to thirty percent of infants died before their first birthday. Although there were many causes for the low life expectancy and high infant death rate, including medical knowledge at the time, water no doubt also played a role. Medical and scientific journals at the time noted the dramatic public health improvement as filtration and disinfection

became common practice. In 1900, about 35,000 people died from typhoid fever, the most common waterborne disease. A U.S. Geological Survey report in 1915 announced that the steady reduction in the typhoid death rate was "undoubtedly due, to a very large measure, to new water filtration works." The report estimated that the new technology "would reduce the typhoid death rate by 75 percent and materially reduce the death rate from other infectious diseases."

The estimation proved to be true. By 1920, most residents of both St. Louis City and St. Louis County were drinking filtered and disinfected water, and the first forty years of the 20th century marked a historic transformation in St. Louis and across the nation. Mortality rates fell by forty percent. Life expectancy at birth rose from 47 to 63 years of age. Typhoid death rates plummeted, and the water filtering and disinfection technologies pioneered in St. Louis wiped out the threat of typhoid in the United States.

Historical research a century later pinpointed a common force that propelled the biggest decline in mortality rates in American

A macabre cartoon by Edward Zimmerman ran in the weekly *Judge*, a magazine published from 1881 to 1947. The plentiful, sparkling, clear water at the 1904 World's Fair was the talk of the Fair, thanks to the mayor's resolve to provide clean water.