

### Riesling Rediscovered

Say “riesling” to the average consumer and chances are they’ll immediately think “sweet.” It’s a curious predicament for the world’s seventh most planted wine grape, as John Winthrop Haeger points out in *Riesling Rediscovered: Bold, Bright & Dry* (UC Press, 2016; \$30).

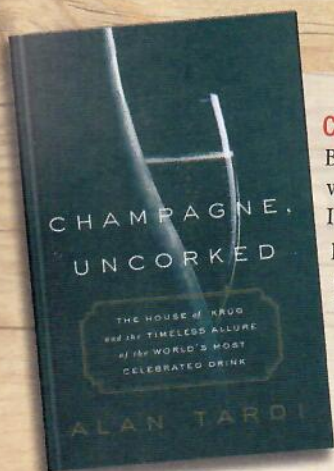
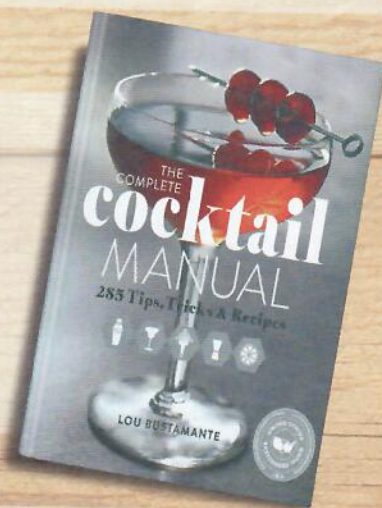
Haeger delves deep into the different factors that inform today’s rieslings, from history and culture to clones, production methods and climate change. This part alone is fascinating, as he traces the rise of sweet styles to technical advances over the last 60 years, and reveals the challenges that clones and warming temperatures have presented some vintners, who are looking to make balanced dry wines. It’s the second half of

the book, however, where this information comes alive, as Haeger profiles 89 vineyards across the Northern Hemisphere in detail. While some of his choices are opaque (Pündericher Marienberg over Scharzhofberg in the Mosel, for instance, or the omission of Dönnhoff, a leader in dry Nahe riesling), the profiles of the chosen 89 give the reader a chance to explore the elements that make a difference in the final wines. He rounds out these profiles with portraits of some of the key growers in each place, giving intimate insight into the particular challenges and advantages bestowed by site. If you haven’t been sold on dry riesling, this is required reading; if you’re already a fan, it’s an essential reference to add to your shelf.

—TARA Q. THOMAS

### Cocktail Manual

Working with the United States Bartenders’ Guild, Lou Bustamante, a former spirits columnist for this magazine, mined bartenders across the country for the tips that fill *The Complete Cocktail Manual: 285 Tips, Tricks & Recipes* (Weldon Owen, 2016; \$29). It’s filled with advice mixologists will appreciate, whether they’re aspiring or experienced: There’s a tip to keep ice cubes from sticking (sprit with vodka) and an alternative to egg whites in a drink (simple syrup thickened with gum arabic). With recipes for both classical cocktails and riffs, it’s a terrific guide for your next cocktail party. —CAITLIN GRIFFITH



### Champagne, Uncorked

Before he launched a career writing about wine, Alan Tardi ran one of the great Italian restaurants in New York City, a place called *Follonico*, on what was then a desolate block off Madison Square Park. He closed up shop after 9/11 and eventually moved to Piedmont, where he worked as a vineyard hand, hosted tastings at the Cantina Comunale in Castiglione Falletto and wrote a book about falling in love in Barolo—for which he won a James Beard Award.

His latest book, *Champagne, Uncorked: The House of Krug and the Timeless Allure of the World’s Most Celebrated Drink*, (Public Affairs, 2016; \$27) might sound a bit like sponsored content. And I was about to put it aside until I noticed the back cover blurb by Peter Liem, a *W&S* alum who now runs [champagneguide.net](http://champagneguide.net). “This is one of the best books to ever be written about Champagne,” Liem wrote. His note got me reading and it quickly became clear this is not a puff piece.

It is, in fact, the best work from Tardi to date, vying for primacy with the lightly fried oysters topped with caviar he once served at *Follonico*.

The book follows the story of the 2013 vintage, during which Tardi shadowed *chef de cave* Eric Lebel through the process of creating a bottle of Champagne, from meetings with growers during the winter months to harvesting at Clos du Mesnil, from pressing to barrel fermentation to tasting and bottling. But the genius of the book is how Tardi weaves the timeline of this vintage with the history of Champagne and the history of one of its great producers. By telling the two stories in parallel, Tardi maintains a momentum that is rare in wine books.

He includes tremendous technical detail without weighing down the prose, assigning much of the geekiest information to endnotes in an extensive appendix.

If there is a flaw in the book, it is the coverage of recent history, which elucidates a lot of important material but also takes a decidedly pro-LVMH stance. What suffers is the portrait of Henri Krug, one of the greatest blenders of his generation, who, with his more public brother, Remi, created the modern wine that we know as Krug today. Together, they ran Krug from the 1960s until 1999, when they sold it to LVMH.

By glossing over some of the challenges of the transition, Tardi ends the book with a promotional tone, a paean to the current team at Krug. Yet one could happily leave off after Chapter 9, taking in the best of Tardi’s carefully researched and beautifully presented story. —JOSHUA GREENE