

### **“Some memories”...**

I was in a restaurant here in Vancouver on Friday, celebrating our oldest daughter's 40th birthday. I was given the wine list, and looking through it said, "There is not a wine I know here."

Then I stopped looking when I saw a wine featuring the Gruner Veltliner grape. I had not seen that for some years. Then I noticed the name--Laurenz.

I guessed this was another offering by the Moser's, and was correct. It is a very fine wine, and you--and Sophie--are to be congratulated.

Now, the story of how I know anything about Gruner Veltliner or the Moser wine making family in Austria.

In 1977, I was the Deputy Minister in the Government of BC department responsible for all matters relating to liquor. At the time, our Province (our country!) was emerging from the Dark Ages as it related to wine selection and quality. In the ordinary course of events, a Deputy Minister does not necessarily get involved with the fine points of policy, but the General Managers of Liquor Distribution and Liquor Licensing loathed one another and it therefore fell to me and my staff to in fact do all the policy work relating to wine in BC. Eventually, I completely changed most everything, but that is another story.

At the time Lenz Moser "Blue Danube" was, I believe, the biggest selling imported white wine in Canada.

Thus, when my wife, I, and two friends decided to take a motor trip around Europe in September of 1977, I asked your Agent here if he could arrange for me to visit the Lenz Moser winery. He did so, giving me the contact information of your father (I presume). So, the first day we were in Vienna, I called. Laurenz was not there. Same the second day. The third day, I called. He was expecting me, and said he would arrange a tour the next day. I told him that, unfortunately, we were off to Venice the next day, and thanked him. He said, not to worry, he'd rearrange his day. He would send in the car to pick us up.

"I presume you are at the Sacher?" he asked, presuming I was on a business trip, I guessed. "No," I responded.

He named another very nice hotel, or maybe two. "No", I had to respond.

"Where are you, then?"

I gave him a street address. He said he was not familiar with it. It was the student residence of the University of Vienna, a booking choice my wife has never forgiven me for. I had asked the tourist kiosk on the outside of Vienna for some place that was inexpensive and central. It certainly met those criteria. But it was a shade beneath my wife's (and our friends' ) expectations. Me? I liked the opportunity to chat with the students.

So, the Mercedes arrived. The chauffeur gave every impression that he thought he was in the wrong place. We returned to the winery et al at a frightening speed. When we arrived, your father (again, I presume) was elsewhere and your grandfather and an Englishwoman/translator met us, explained the situation, and showed us into your grandfather's house, and your grandfather gave us a tour of the artwork and sculpture around the atrium. It was a truly unique collection, each with a fascinating history. Just as we were finishing our tour, your father arrived. He immediately impressed the ladies. He was very handsome, they later said. He was wearing a checked sports jacket, black slacks, and Gucci loafers. He bowed to each of the ladies, and kissed the backs of their hands, shook my friend's hand, then turned to me, clicked his heels, bowed, and said, "Excellency, so delighted you could come."

My friends and I were looking around to see who he was speaking to. Excellency? Who was that? After all, I was only a 37 year old minor government functionary of no particular consequence.

Well, once the confusion subsided, we had a very pleasant and informative tour, and were your parents' guests at lunch. During lunch, your father enquired as to what all we had seen. He noted the omission of mention of the opera. My wife said there were no tickets available, which she was sorry about, because I liked opera.

Your father excused himself for a few minutes and returned to say that we would be his and your mother's guests at the opera that evening, with dinner at the Sacher afterwards.

I will not go into a great deal more detail--my wife has recounted everything from a truly wonderful evening when our youngest daughter asked what we were talking about after the lunch on Friday. My wife remembered it all in its minutest detail--after 31 years. I do not want to bore you with it, but it remains in the memories of the four of us as a truly unique and enjoyable day. The hospitality and graciousness of your parents was exceptional.

The following year, I found it necessary to dismiss the General Manager of Liquor Distribution, and run the whole store system myself for about 8 months, during which I privatized the warehousing of imported product and otherwise modernized a very antiquated operation. However, because of our very pleasant memories of that day with your parents and grandfather, I sort of kept track of the Mosers and that day comes up in conversation once in a while, even 30 years later. My wife and friends occasionally tease me and call me "Excellency". In fact, we were on Italy for a holiday in October this year and someone mentioned it again.

Thus it was with great sadness that I heard about the tragedy that struck the Austrian wine industry some years later, and learned of the death of your grandfather, who was a truly fine and delightful man. I wondered in all the bad luck what had happened to the reclining bronze figures eating grapes, the amphoras from Tito, and the two quite wonderful paintings on the end wall, the names of which I cannot clearly recall. It was an experience to remember that room. And I wondered what all had happened to the Mosers.

Thus, when I saw the label and the name, then read the fine print, I just had to write and wish you well, before I go out to the 41st and Oak liquor store on Monday and buy a few bottles for Christmas. (Opening that store in 1978 was my idea, to fit in with the privatization of liquor importation. It was by far the largest liquor store in Canada at the time.) I am glad to see the Austrian wine industry making a comeback.

I hope you have a very good Christmas and a prosperous new year. Thank you for letting me tell you this story. And if your parents are still alive--they have no reason to remember us in a steady stream of visitors--do wish them well. They are remembered most fondly.

Tex Enemark