

Grape for red wine holds promise

Regular readers of this column know that I have increasingly become enthusiastic about the efforts of several of our Michigan wineries. Especially favorable comments have been made about the recent releases of the Leelanau County wineries (Mawby, Good Harbor and Leelanau Ltd.), our own Seven Lakes and, of course, Tabor Hill on occasion.

Nearly all the statements have been about white wines, the marvelous things being done with the vintages, seveal and Vidal grapes, all hybrids. Of the red varieties little has been said because of the poor quality of the wines made from foeh and baco, our chief red hybrids.

The viticultural conditions are too severe to permit proper ripening of these varieties anywhere in our state. The one small exception has been occasional efforts with chancelor, but those have been few. The caveat has been obvious: Avoid Michigan red wines.

All of that may be undergoing a change, however. There is a grape, new to me until recently, that is exceptional and holds a great deal of promise for the future. That is the chambourcin.

UNFORTUNATELY, this is one of those good news/bad news situations. The good news is that this grape can produce excellent red wine. The bad news is that you can't get it. Not yet, anyway, unless you drive to Kalamazoo or some Ohio wineries.

This is the story, and I am indebted to those fine writers Ray and Eleanor Heald of the Ann Arbor News for much of this.

There is presently but one commercial, bearing plot of chambourcin in the state, one on "the highest hill in Van Buren County" (how's that for distinction!) at the Lawton Ridge Vineyards. The entire crop in '82 and '83 was sold to the St. Julian Winery in Paw Paw. Only modest amounts were made in each year.

St. Julian in turn sold its entire production to the restaurant Oakley's at the Haymarket in downtown Kalamazoo. None to be had at the winery. So, if you want to try this, your path is obvious. (Or get a friend to get you a bottle, as I did. Thanks, Bev.)

The '82 vintage is currently being poured there; the '83 will come up next. There is no '84 crop in the wings, but that is another story.



wine
Richard Watson

THE WINE is likened by its makers to a rich beaumont, a fair description. It could also be compared to a decent California pinot noir. It develops deep color, has a fine bouquet and lovely fresh fruit. It shows real aging potential interestingly, even though it has only 11 percent alcohol.

But help is on the way. Diverse plantings of the grape are occurring from Texas through South Carolina, with principle efforts in Ohio and Pennsylvania. There is little promise for it in Michigan because the grapes require a minimum of 250 degree days to ripen, and Michigan usually cannot be relied on for this.

The various plots throughout our state are just this year coming into bearing and the grapes are being sold

off to home winemakers. The commercial potential here is small, and it is worse in New York where the grape does not do at all well.

But in the ever-increasing viticultural area along the southern shore of Lake Erie, there is much potential and more action. Last fall a tasting was held at which 20 different chambourcins were entered, most of them from this region. The judges reported at least 16 of these were excellent and representative efforts. From such events as this, winemakers take great encouragement.

So, the next time you K College and Branco alums go back to Westwood Avenue, or anyone else drives dull I-94 to Chicago, stop by Oakley's. It may be the beginning of a new romance for you.



Judy Davis is Adela Quested, an Englishwoman who wants to find out about the "real" India in "A Passage to India."



the movies
Dan Greenberg

'Passage to India' boldly recaptures time of British rule

David Lean's "Passage to India" is a rich visual experience that ranks with his earlier epic films, "Dr. Zhivago," "Lawrence of Arabia" and "The Bridge on the River Kwai."

In those three films Lean captured heroic moments in exotic times and places. He does so again in "Passage," based on E.M. Forster's novel set in British India of the '20s.

A young, adventurous Englishwoman, Adela Quested (Judy Davis), travels to India as friend and companion to Mrs. Moore (Dame Peggy Ashcroft), mother of Ronny Heaslop (Nigel Havers), British Magistrate in Chandrapore, a fictitious Indian city in Forster's novel. Ronny is romantically involved with Adela.

The film was shot on location in the southern Indian city of Bangalore and in northern India, the Kashmir surrounded by the Himalayas. Among other reasons, Lean chose Bangalore because of its proximity to the Dharwar where the film's pivotal scenes about the Caves of Marabar were filmed.

ADELA'S ADVENTUROUS spirit leads to those caves. In spite of her romantic attachment to Magistrate Heaslop, the restrictive attitudes of the British community in India and her repressed sexuality, perhaps because of the last, she explores the "real" India. Adela's interest in India outside the British compound leads first to Richard Fielding (James Fox), headmaster of the British College in Chandrapore. Fielding deals with people as people, not as stereotypical categories. Among his friends are Hindu teacher/holy man Godbole (Sir Alec Guinness) and Moslem physician Dr. Aziz (Victor Banerjee). Fielding introduces Adela to them.

Dr. Aziz, a sexually unfulfilled widower, is subservient and servile in the presence of Britishers. He is eager to please and overwhelmed when Adela accepts his invitation to a picnic at the Caves of Marabar.

Clearly both have overstepped accepted boundaries and must suffer for their transgressions. As in the novel, what occurs in the caves is ambiguous, but Aziz is charged with rape and the ensuing politicizing of his trial changes everyone's life.

There is no question but that Dr. Aziz had plenty of reason to become bitter because of his treatment by the British, but dramatically his conversion to Indian activism is too abrupt.

"PASSAGE TO INDIA" is a long (165-minute) but rewarding visual and dramatic experience. Lean's direction and editing paint rich canvases of Indian life under the British Raj. To some extent the British characters are oversteered in their insensitivity, but it was the quality of aloofness that enabled the English to maintain their power and culture when vastly outnumbered by subject peoples.

Ernest Day's cinematography fills the screen with brilliant images that portray a beautiful, though sanitized, India — the British storybook India rather than the squalor and dirt we know exists. In this case it works because that's what this story is all about, the romantic, historical attitude of the British to their empire.

The acting by the entire company is a marvelous ensemble presentation. While I may quibble with the unidimensional aloofness and insensitivity of most of the Britishers, that was their technique to conquer the world and avoid going "native." That the actors portray extremely well, particularly Michael Cui as Superintendent McBryde.

As for the more sensitive English, Dame Peggy Ashcroft is, as always, superb. James Fox, with a dashing, Douglas Fairbanks appearance, is warm, human and sensitive in his personal relationships.

The principals, Judy Davis and Victor Banerjee, are fine, realistic characterizations, particularly Davis whose subtle style with Lean's direction and Day's closeups enables her to convey troubled emotions with small gestures, lip quivers and brief glances.

"Passage to India" is romantic, historical, visually brilliant and a rewarding film experience.

what's at the movies

AMADEUS (PG), Superb rendition of Mozart's life with Tom Hulce and F. Murray Abraham. Directed by Milos Forman.

BEVERLY HILLS COP (R), Eddie Murphy is funny, but Detroit comes off second best in this cop show.

BREAKIN' 2 (PG), The TKO crew from "Breakin'" does it again.

BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET (Unrated but probably PG-13), Humorous and clever, as black extraterrestrial slave escapes and lands in Harlem. Marred by murky conclusion.

CITY HEAT (PG), Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds combine forces as a cop and private eye in this free-wheeling film set in 1933 Kansas City.

THE COTTON CLUB (R), Splashy but disappointing epic about Harlem nightclub during Prohibition. Richard Gere, Diane Lane, Gregory Hines and good supporting cast. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

DUNE (PG-13), Cast of thousands in epic flick based on Frank Herbert's sci-fi classic. OK but disappointing.

FLAMINGO KID (PG-13), High school graduate's summer vacation before college. A very busy summer, with Matt Dillon, Richard Crenna and Jessica Walter.

THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY (PG), Nomadic tribesman discovers

Coke bottle and believes it's a magic talisman. Comedy from South Africa.

JOHNNY DANGEROUSLY (PG-13), Honest John Kelly joins the underworld and becomes Johnny Dangerously. With Michael Keaton, Joe Piscopo, Maureen Stapleton and Dom DeLuise.

THE KILLING FIELD (R), Must-see, intense story of brotherhood amidst the horrors of war in Cambodia, based on Pulitzer-Prize-winning article by New York Times correspondent Sydney Schanberg.

MICKI AND MAUDE (PG-13), Dudley Moore winds up in trouble with Amy Irving and Ann Reinking. Directed by Blake Edwards.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA (PG), David Lean directed this story of love and class struggle in 1928 India. Based on E.M. Forster novel, with Judy Davis.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences. All ages admitted.

PG Parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for pre-teenagers.

PG-13 Parents are strongly cautioned to give special guidance for attendance of children under 13. Some material may be inappropriate for young children.

R Restricted. Under 18 requires accompanying parent or guardian.

X No one under 18 admitted.

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Victor Banerjee is Dr. Aziz, who is charged with rape after her and Adela visit the Caves of Marabar.