## Entertainment

Monday, September 30, 1985 O&E



What makes Rambo tick?



Johnny Rambo (Sylvester Stallone) is comforted by a Vietnamese agent (Julia Nickson) in "Rambo: First Blood Part II," an entertaining yet regrettably over-simplified movie that's cleared \$150 million at the box

"What megabuck miracle bath Stallone wrought?" I aked myself as I motored somewhat apprehensively off to see Manusche First Blood Part II." Hong attulously avoided "Rambo" during the many months in which it grossed \$150 million. I decided it was time to pay my dues and join the legions who had already queued up. In spite of my distaste for violence and my disregard for Stallone, I was curious why the film was so successful.

As it turns out, "Rambo" linht as gross as one might expect, the violence has a detached, unreal quality and the film has a couple of things to say that people want to hear.

Johnny Rambo (Sylvester Stallone), a highly decorated, well-trained combat veteran of the Vietnam War, is released from prison on the condition he undertake a dangerous secoting mission. Special Forces Col. Trautman (Richard Crenna) collects Johnny from

the movies 🐰 Dan Greenberg

the chain gang and takes him to meet Marshall Murdock (Charles Napler) who is in charge of the mission.

Murdock's position is never clearly described but it quickly becomes evident that he is a conglomerate character representative of everything negative that might be said about politicians, the CIA and other clandestine types.

cans, use CIA and other clandestine types.

RAMBO'S MISSION is to parachute into Victnam and search for American MIAs but not rescue them, merely take pictures. On jumping out of the plane, he is faced with the first of many incredible obstacles. His chute harness hangs up on the plane and he loses all his equipment, except a terrific faile and a bow with a quiver full of arrows that magically remains full harness that magically remains full harness that the second of the contract of the second of the second of the contract of the second of the

of colorful explosions and bodies flying in all directions, courtesy of the stunt separtment. The prop department has supplied endless rounds of ammunition for guns that never jam and quivers always filled with arrows.

BUT THE LACK of realism dilutes the endless, unconvincing violence. It becomes ridiculous, detached and unreal. With arrows both steel and explosive-tipped, machine guss, rockets, grenades, knife, bare fists and a stolen belicopter, Stalione single-handedly destroys large units of Russian and Victnamese troops.

It may be incredible, but we all love to un un the score.

namest troops.

It may be incredible, but we all love to run op the incredible, but we all love to run op the property of the state of

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degree

## Here's a toast to wine distributors

It seems to me that a great many of these col-umns make reference to a special, almost-unknown group of people in the world of wines, the distribu-

group of people in the world of wines, the distribu-tors.

Often neglected, they are the ones who make available to the stores and restaurants which we patronize the wines that we select. It is their ambi-tion, zeal, palate, sense of adventure and risk that are involved. What they feel we want to drink de-termines what we do indeed drink.

Every state in our nation has its own system of distribution, most of them highly regulated. The regulations are part morality, part business, part bistory and part politics.

history and part politics.

IN MICHIGAN, the flow of all apirits is governed vigorously by a state agency, the Michigan Liquor Coprol. Commission. They authorize all wine cought in and license all purveyors.

There are three kinds of licenses: importer, distributor and merchandizer. One can be both an importer and a distributor but the same person cannot also be a merchant. The first two acquire wine from abroad and from within this country and sell it to those who sell it to us.

The price of a bottle of wine may not be less than it was purchased for (all sales costs are "posted with the LCC and only under certain conditions may discounting occur), thus protecting the mom and pop operations which cannot but in the volume some of our larger merchanted for we have been considered in the state, though you can be some and the LCC does, as in all businesses, to day's success becomes tomorrow's failure; they come and go.

Some serve only regional areas, some are stand and the contract of the same deal in boar as well a men.

come and go.

Some serve only regional areas, some are statewide in their scope. Some deal in beer as well, some
in hard spirits. Some are true wine enthuslasts,
some are businessmen (only). Some are highly dependable and ethical, some are less so, in short,
they are probably a good cross-section of our busi-

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wine

Watson ness community and society in general.

Richard

I RECENTLY had occasion to view 15 of them at the same event, gathered in a semi-competitive en-vironment. To their credit, they can be decently civil to one another, probably more so than some other competitive groups would be under like cir-cumstances.

other competitive groups would be under like cir-cumstances.

It is they who contact a winemaker, or a national sales representative, and enter into a contract to bring in this wine and not another. They select. It is a highly competitive matter, full of risk.

The financial conditions under which they oper-ate are informative and go a long way toward de-termining what you and I pay for a bottle of wine. Remember, some of these conditions are deter-mined by law, some by custom and some by the law of the marketplace.

We will use as an example a case of California wine because it is a somewhat less complex situa-tion than obtains with imported wines. However, whatever the wine's origin, the conditions of distri-bution are essentially the same.

THE CASE is made to be sold from the winery for \$40 wholesale to a national rocal distributor. Most wineries, desirous of getting their merchandize into the national pipeline, will discount that case for an out-of-state sale by about one-third, making it \$40 states and by about one-third, where he must pay for it on delivery and absorb the costs of shipping (about \$3 or \$4 a case). He will then sell it to a merchant or restaurant for about

\$50, or about the same price for which it can be purchased in its home state.

This means that wines can, and usually do, cost the same here as they do in California. This is important to us all. (If the winemaker does not discount, as some do not, then that original, \$50 case arrives here at about \$90. The margin begins to

arrives here at about \$90. The margin begins to spread arrives here at a about \$90. The margin begins to spread arrives here at the same that are the case and the \$80 item owe sells to you and me for \$90, or \$7.50 a bottle. Most merchants give a 10 percent case discount to help us out a bit, cutting into their 33 percent profit. A restaurateur, on the other hand, doubles his cost for the case when he sells it, so his \$80 investment goes on his wine list of \$10 a bottle. So we pay \$7.50 for a bottle of Zinfandel which he winemaker sold originally for \$3.33. Further, he bad to make the wine, bottle and label it, put in cork and foll and package it and in some way promote it as well. They say in Cilifornia that the quickest way to become a millionaire is to have 10 million dollars and buy a where.

IT MUST be stressed that these cost figures are approximations and that the whole pricing structure is more complex than I have reported, but the essence is correct.

A good estimate is that the \$7.50 bottle of wine you drank with dinner the other night contains about \$1.50 worth of wine and \$6 went for packaging and handling.

Enjoy it anyway!







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