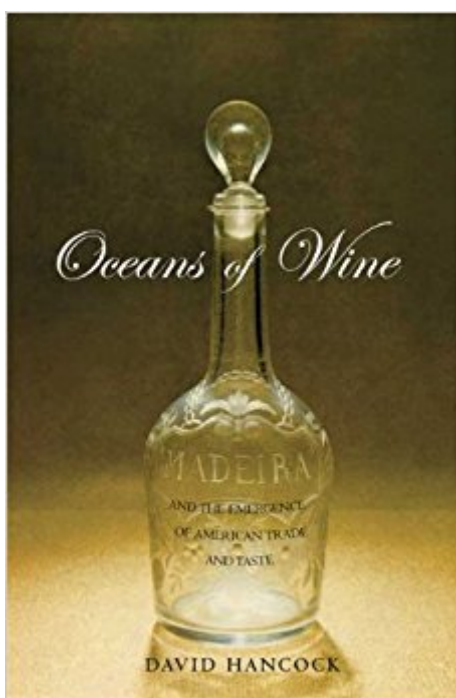


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Oceans Of Wine: Madeira And The Emergence Of American Trade And Taste (The Lewis Walpole Series In Eighteenth-Century Culture And History)



Synopsis

This innovative book examines how, between 1640 and 1815, the Portuguese Madeira wine trade shaped the Atlantic world and American society. David Hancock painstakingly reconstructs the lives of producers, distributors, and consumers, as well as the economic and social structures created by globalizing commerce, to reveal an intricate interplay between individuals and market forces. Wine lovers and Madeira enthusiasts will enjoy *Oceans of Wine*, as will historians interested in food, colonial trade, and the history of the Atlantic region. Using voluminous archives pertaining to wine, many of them previously unexamined, Hancock offers a dramatic new perspective on the economic and social development of the Atlantic world by challenging traditional interpretations that have identified states and empires as the driving force behind trade. He demonstrates convincingly just how decentralized the early modern commercial system was, as well as how self-organized, a system that emerged from the actions of market participants working across imperial lines. The networks they formed began as commercial structures and expanded into social and political systems that were conduits not only for wine but also for ideas about reform, revolution, and independence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is history on a grand scale, built from intensive knowledge of the day-to-day workings of planters, merchants, sailors, and drinkers across the Atlantic basin. David Hancock shows how

trade systems actually operated and in the process uses the wine business to illuminate the origins of the modern global economy." — Peter C. Mancall, University of Southern California (Peter C. Mancall)"This is an excellent, scholarly, and timely book." — Ian K. Steele, University of Western Ontario (Ian K. Steele)"David Hancock's celebration of the production, distribution, and consumption of Madeira wine is a tour de force, opening up important new perspectives on life in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world." — Richard S. Dunn, University of Pennsylvania (Richard S. Dunn)"David Hancock's work is exemplary both for his breadth of vision and the depth of his archival grounding; it is truly Atlantic in scope with its concentration on multi-centered activities and on the interconnectedness of Atlantic enterprises. *Oceans of Wine* offers a new conceptualization of the eighteenth-century economy by arguing that the Madeira trade was shaped by consumer demand, and that the fortification, packaging, and distribution of Madeira wines responded to the specific tastes of different markets. In this study he recreates the evolving networks and the countless individual choices by which commodity exchange lines knitted the Atlantic together and he draws on the perspectives of a remarkable range of disciplines in doing so." — Karen Ordahl Kupperman, author of *The Jamestown Project* (Karen Ordahl Kupperman)"— "Madeira is an Atlantic commodity with a difference: it moves from cheap table wine to luxury item; its distribution looks less like a hub-and-spokes model than a decentralized spider's web; it is thoroughly transimperial; it is America's wine; its consumption occurred more in the home than in public spaces. — This is a richly detailed, deeply textured, and superbly researched commodity study that reorients Atlantic history." — Philip Morgan, Johns Hopkins University (Philip Morgan)"Out of a mountain of hitherto unexplored manuscripts, David Hancock has constructed a vivid and rigorous history of one of the most important luxury commodities of the 18th century: Madeira wine. In exploring its production, trade, ubiquitous consumption, and social and cultural meanings, Hancock displays again his formidable capacity to combine precise economic analysis and trans-oceanic range." — Linda Colley, Princeton University (Linda Colley)Winner of the 2009 Gourmand World Cookbook Award in the Best Book of European Wine category (Best Book of European Wine Gourmand World Cookbook 2009-01-01)". . . a detailed and richly textured narrative. . . . *Oceans of Wine* breaks new ground [and] pioneers a new approach to Atlantic history." — William & Mary Quarterly (William & Mary Quarterly)"*Oceans of Wine* celebrates human sociability and ingenuity, not least Hancock's skill in viscerally recreating eighteenth-century elite society." — American Historical Review (American Historical Review)

David Hancock is professor of history, University of Michigan. He is the author of *Citizens of the*

World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785, The Letters of William Freeman, 1678-1685, and History of World Trade since 1450.

The book OCEANS OF WINE, along with Alex Liddell's MADEIRA, were invaluable in preparing for a Madeira tasting. The former provides a rich history of understanding how a quite crude local table wine from a lonely Atlantic island during the mid-15th century evolved into a rich, fortified, sweet beverage of the young US nation's elite class - worthy of being the toasting beverage at the signing of the Declaration of Independence and George Washington's inauguration. No significant aspect of Madeira viniculture and viticulture development and refinement over the 3 centuries from 1450 to 1815 are left out. The bonus is Mr. Hancock's research into previously unexamined merchant documents and forgotten archives on both sides of the Atlantic. The work reveals what role(s) Madeira played in the triangular Atlantic trade. Madeira's niche in development of the triangular Atlantic trading enterprises and the role America's Colonial settlers, merchants, traders, and even (franchise) retailers in developing expanding commercial markets is thoroughly examined. Whether your locus is Madeira the wine - and what part 18th & 19th century US tastes influenced long term Maderia styles - or what part Madeira the wine played in early American commercial endeavors, this exhaustive volume will satisfy your curiosities. Cerebral at times, but worth the work!

Hancock's Oceans of Wine is such a great book: why hasn't anyone else thought to write a really well-researched, but also well-written book on a wine? Too many of the well researched books are stodgy, at best, and the well-written ones pretty thin. Hancock traces the rise of Madeira wine in the 18th century from its development in the island of Madeira -- where producers continually tried new techniques to improve its appeal to customers -- through several distribution layers to the final drinkers in British America -- where people used it to show their status and refinement. If you really want to know how international business was conducted before the 19th century, this book and Hancock's first book Citizens of the World are by far the most thorough and detailed. And readable, too.

Why hasn't anyone else thought to write a really well-researched, but also well-written book on a wine? Too many of the well researched books are stodgy, at best, and the well-written ones pretty thin.

This examination of the Madeira trade is unnecessarily wordy, loosely organized, and is plagued with long awkward sentence construction. I found myself frequently stopping to re-read sentences, and when finally parsing them, realizing that the idea buried in the sentence was actually quite simple, and could have been conveyed in a more direct way. The notes are extensive, but more often than not filled with rambling tangents. I encountered a few half page notes which included no source support for the actual statement made in the text. I would expect Yale University Press to employ more able editors than they did in this case. Writing matters. Please respect your reader.

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