

New York Wineland Reminiscent of Old World

By OTTO E. STURM

Naples, N.Y. — (UPI) — There's an autumn nip in the air as you leave the city of Rochester, N.Y., and head south along a state highway.

Soon the suburbs are left behind and you're out in the country. The peak brilliance of the fall foliage has passed but there's enough color left to make an enchanting view.

Gradually the scene changes and the country becomes hilly. You no longer pass truck or dairy farms. Now, wherever you turn, your eyes rest on serried ranks of trellises bearing grape vines the leaves now brown under the autumn sun.

Occasionally the road winds between straight rows of tall, slender poplar. You glance down a slope to your left and a blue-green body of water comes into view.

'Old World'

Suddenly you feel that you're in another world — the Old World. Those poplars are right smack from a French landscape. These vineclad hills could be rising above the Rhine.

But that body of water tapering to a point parallel to the road is not the Rhine. It's Lake Canandaigua, which the Seneca Indians called "The Chosen Place." And this is not the Rhine valley, but the Naples valley in the beautiful Finger Lakes country of New York state.

Here, in 1882, John Jacob Widmer, a young immigrant from Switzerland, found the same climate, the same peculiar blend of shale soil and natural drainage as those of the famous vineyards of Europe.

He planted his first vines and laid the foundation for an American Wineland that would produce Rieslings, champagnes and sherries equal to those of the Old World.

But it is not only in geography and topography that this land of the grape is comparable to the Rhine valley.

Wine is the lifeblood of this area. It cultivation, from the vine to the bottle, is the way of life of its people.

These descendants of Swiss, German, French and Alsatian immigrants are fiercely proud of their tradition and all the Old World art and tender care of their forebears goes into their wine-making.

They have been so successful that their vines have been transplanted in European vineyards. And that a leader of the local wine industry can say confidently:

"This is potentially the greatest wine country in the world."

The grape is the King of Wineland and this is his day. You're on your way to the annual Naples Grape Festival. The harvest is in, the long, hard days of climbing up the steep, winding vineyard trails to pick the grapes are over. This is the day for bands, speeches, crowning of a festival King and Queen, trophy awards, street dancing and fireworks.

Gala Mood

A gala mood is in the air as you enter the little village of Naples. Flags and bunting drape the buildings on Main street and the homes of villagers. People in costumes gather for a parade. It's the first sunny day in more than a week and the ordinarily sparsely traveled road is crowded with a steady stream of cars. This day will see Naples' population of 1,200 swelled to 10 times that number.

An odd sight greets you from the road. Stacked on the roof of a winery are tier upon tier of barrels. There are some 10,000 of them and each holds 50 gallons of sherry.

Here, under sun, rain, snow and wind, the wine ages and mellows for four years before it is bottled. It's an Old World touch because this is the famous solero system used in Spain.

Identifies Wine

At the winery the Old World crops up again when you talk to "Will" Widmer, 70-year-old son of John Jacob. He is said to be able to identify by year any wine he has ever tasted. A tour of the winery is a unique blend of the Old and New Worlds. In the sweet-smelling pressing room, huge modern mechanical presses squeeze the juice from the grapes. Traditional oak fermentation vats have been replaced in the pungent and yeasty fermentation room with glass-lined stainless steel tanks, towering 20 to 30 feet high and holding as much as 10,000 gallons.

But the wine-carrying hoses which snake in twisting patterns across the damp floor are made of pure white rubber, carrying on the Old World adage of "new hose for old wine."

Modern mechanical means are used, too, to filter and clarify the fermented liquids but then the Old World takes over. Nothing can replace sapless white oak casks and tanks during aging. Row upon row of them 20 feet tall and holding thousands of gallons, loom in the murky depths of the

cool aging cellar.

Lunch in the old-fashioned dining room of the little Naples Hotel is a real trip to the Old World. Seated near you is a prominent vineyard owner of the area, dressed in an Austrian "Jaeger," or hunter's outfit, a blue-gray coat of military cut with metal buttons and worn over a black velvet vest decorated with little floral designs.

There is entertainment by a troupe of Swiss yodelers, on a tour of the United States. You're not surprised to hear one of them comment that they never felt so much at home.

Now Main street in front of the hotel is lined with an eager throng awaiting the parade. This is their big day, the culmination of a year of work. Springtime saw them covering the hills, tying vines in umbrella fashion to wire between cedar stakes.

The long summer days were filled with tilling and spraying and weeding. And harvesting hasn't changed much from Jacob Widmer's day. It's still a careful hand procedure so that tender grapes will not be crushed or bruised.

These people, celebrating before the year-round cycle of wine-making begins again, spent many hours and much

ingenuity putting together picturesque floats.

Ancient Garb

Appropriately, one of the leaders of the parade is a portly gent dressed in ancient garb. A sign identifies him as "Bacchus—God of Wine."

Grapes and wine are the theme of most of the floats. They depict people at work in vineyards, a "Bubble Car" of huge artificial grapes, an old-fashioned hand wine press.

At nightfall, a band takes over the parade-reviewing platform in front of the hotel. Traffic is blocked off and the street dancing begins. With such Old and New World variations as the Schottische and

the Twist.

The dancing is called off at ten o'clock and the people flock to a fireworks display to end their festival. It's obvious they're happy in the thought they have earned its theme: "Honor the Keepers of the Vines."

You head back for the trip of about 40 miles north to Rochester. The valley and the lake now are bathed in the soft light of a full harvest moon. When the lights of the city come into view, you find it hard to realize you haven't been in the valley of the Rhine.

Old World, U.S.A., you might call it.

SECTION B

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MEDFORD TRIBUNE

MEDFORD, OREGON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1962

Scio Youth Dies Of Crash Injuries

Stayton — (UPI) — Glenn Dean Gibbons, 18, Scio, was dead on arrival at a Stayton hospital Wednesday night from injuries incurred in a head-on traffic crash near here on the Stayton-Scio highway.

Four other persons were injured.

The Linn county sheriff's office said Gibbons was the driver of one of the cars, and was alone.

The four persons in the other

car were Malcolm King, 23, Ernest King, 19; Irby Batey, 21, and Tyrone Batey, 18, all of Scio. Officers said Malcolm King was the driver of the second car.

SORRY, VULCAN

Sheffield, England — (UPI) — A clothing store in this steel-making center today unveiled a statue of Vulcan, the god of metals. It was made of glass fiber.

Damascus, Syria — (UPI) — Po- land has agreed in principle to lend Syria \$15 million to finance industrial projects, according to a government spokesman here. He said Syria would repay the loan in eight years.

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Blue
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SIZES

• Petite 6 to 16
• Misses 8 to 18
• Juniors 7 to 15

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