Julia Ornelas-Higdon presents a fascinating look at the California wine industry's long nineteenth century in her work, *The Grapes of Conquest*. For many connoisseurs of California wine, the industry represents a period of success following the Second World War, but as Ornelas-Higdon shows through her research, California wine was the culmination of the region's long nineteenth century. Her work also raises interesting points about how the wine industry's control of agricultural lands was a tool for constructing racial identities and forms of power under three successive regimes—Spain, Mexico, and the United States—and how these shifts occurred based on the understanding identity and economics. As she explains, “members of this industry—from field workers to vineyard owners—shaped, contested, and remade race and class hierarchies, as well as boundaries of citizenship and whiteness against the backdrop of California’s changing politics” (p. 3). As these issues were shaped and changed, so was the region's understanding of land ownership and usage, affecting how those living there understood their environment.

The first two chapters of Ornelas-Higdon's book explore the eras of Spanish and subsequent Mexican control of California and its vineyards. Interestingly, as she explains, the California wine industry's inception was connected to questions of religion and race, as Spanish missionaries used wine production to colonize the region environmentally and then used this wine and agriculture to convert the Indigenous to Catholicism: “For the Spanish missionaries, training California Natives in agriculture was about Hispanizing and asserting control over them” (p. 20). These missions controlled the land, the crops grown on them, and the labor used on them, and wine was a vital crop needed to sustain Catholic communion. While these missionaries relied on Native labor, Mexican independence was supposed to offer a return of some land, but it failed. The secularization pro-
grams meant to offer more equitable outcomes instead “simply replaced that of the Franciscan missionaries with a new, albeit less permanent, master—the Mexican Californio rancher” (p. 43). This new system still relied on Indigenous labor and restricted the laborers’ freedoms and economic agency. Wine was now an economic more than spiritual product, but the wine industry was still a symbol of power and control.

The next four chapters of Ornelas-Higdon’s work turn to the role of the wine industry under a new administrator, the United States. This new regime wanted to find ways to open more California land to agriculture and frequently turned to European ideals as Euro-American expansion “was part of a broader campaign to reform land use from cattle ranching toward modern, scientific agriculture that would civilize and remake California as an American place,” and wine would be a perfect commodity for this practice (p. 75). Euro-American winegrowers wanted to import their understandings of European practices to the region, which “asserted their cultural superiority over their Spanish and Mexican predecessors” (p. 77). Academics and scientists established groups in California to improve production and quality and to supposedly make it culturally superior to previous wines. As Ornelas-Higdon explains of this era, “viticulturalists needed support for research into grape varietals, soil, climate, and fermentation methods—essentially building a solid foundation on which to construct a viable industrial wine empire” (p. 85). These concerns were not isolated to California, as countries like Spain also grappled with these questions during the nineteenth century. Questions of terroir (the environment in which the wine is grown) and science began to dominate the conversations about wine, especially when confronting the major producer, France.

Following these conversations about modernization, Ornelas-Higdon turns to impacts of other migrants to the region, namely, Germans, the Chinese, and Italians. German immigrants in the latter half of the nineteenth century continued to redefine questions of race and modernity for the wine industry. “Through their modernization of the wine industry, these German immigrants helped Americanize and reform California,” but they also “redefine[d] the parameters of citizenship” (p. 106). German immigrants helped present a wine industry more in line with Europe than the previous Mexican system. Germans were not the only people to migrate to the region, and Ornelas-Higdon investigates the role of Chinese immigrants to California. Originally arriving for mining, soon these Chinese migrants found work in vineyards. This instance, however, presented a unique moment: producers wanted to portray an image of Europeananness, but they were relying more on non-European labor, again. The use of this non-European labor, though, was used as a defense of capitalism in the vineyards and, therefore, created a labor and income hierarchy that would once again show the dominance of one group over another when making wine.

The final chapter explores a key moment for California wine: the rise of temperance movements. With the fear of drinking too much growing in the world, and in the United States, California wine producers tried to sell their product as a natural drink that was “a healthful beverage that would improve the diets and overall well-being of Americans” (p. 173). This same argument was being made in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century in France, Spain, and Italy, so it made sense that California vintners, who wanted to be more like these European rivals, would espouse the same message. As Italian winegrowers moved to California, the wine industry hoped this idea of a nutritious and safe beverage would translate and protect wine, but in the end Prohibition won.

Julia Ornelas-Higdon completes an interesting look at the California wine industry during the long nineteenth century. As she explains in her epilogue, “the romanticized mythology surround-
ing the founding of the state’s wine industry continues to obscure its roots amid the conquest and racial violence of California’s long nineteenth century” (p. 200). California wine is not just the modern industry that fills millions of glasses but also the culmination of numerous powers controlling the region and trying to establish a wine industry in their own image. As she concludes, “California’s wine industry grew out of conquest, settler colonialism, changing land-use practices, and race making” (p. 204). Ornelas-Higdon shows in her work how California’s wine industry was part of a larger global industry facing many new technological and scientific concerns in the century, but she also shows how the story of California wines has its own narrative based on its unique cultural, racial, and environmental histories. This work is a useful addition to the field of wine history and California history.

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