

The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty

By Julia Flynn Siler



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An epic, scandal-plagued story of the immigrant family that built—and then spectacularly lost—a global wine empire

Set in California's lush Napa Valley and spanning four generations of a talented and visionary family, *The House of Mondavi* is a tale of genius, sibling rivalry, and betrayal. From 1906, when Italian immigrant Cesare Mondavi passed through Ellis Island, to the Robert Mondavi Corp.'s twenty-first-century battle over a billion-dollar fortune, award-winning journalist Julia Flynn brings to life both the place and the people in this riveting family drama.

The blood feuds are as spectacular as the business triumphs. Cesare's sons, Robert and Peter, literally came to blows in the 1960s during a dispute touched off by the purchase of a mink coat, resulting in Robert's exile from the family—and his subsequent founding of a winery that would set off a revolution in American winemaking. Robert's sons, Michael and Timothy, as passionate in their own ways as their visionary father, waged battle with each other for control of the company before Michael's expansive ambitions ultimately led to a board coup and the sale of the business to an international conglomerate.

A meticulously reported narrative based on thousands of hours of interviews, *The House of Mondavi* is bound to become a classic.



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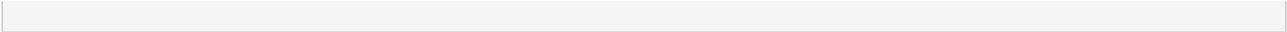
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Editorial Review

Review

aCall it Greek tragedy or Shakespearean drama, Biblical strife, Freudian acting out, or even soap opera. . . . Compelling.a

aEric Asimov, "The New York Times"

aA fascinating chronicle . . . a twisted tale filled with big egos, beautiful backdrops, and charismatic-yet-flawed characters who pull off towering feats and then throw them all away.a

a"Business Week"

aA first-rate job of creating a balanced view of this epic American drama. . . . The book reads like a novel and her crisp style makes the book compelling regardless of whether the reader has an interest in wine. . . .

It's a great summer read but it also belongs on the reference shelf of any wine library.a

a"Seattle Post aIntelligencer"

aExplores the Mondavis' bumpy journey in grand and fascinating detail. . . . Fluid and well-written.a

aJames Laube, "Wine Spectator"

aEpic a"U.S. News & World Report"

aA riveting story that is part soap opera, part Shakespearean family drama.a

aNPRas "Day to Day"

aBased on exhaustive research and interviews, each page is packed with facts and footnotes which, by dint of superb writing, manage to engage the reader and avoid the data brain-lock that would have plagued a less-talented journalist.a

a"Barron's"

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About the Author

Julia Flynn writes front-page stories for *The Wall Street Journal* from San Francisco, reporting extensively on the recent turbulence at the Robert Mondavi Corp. She was a London-based foreign correspondent for the *Journal* and *BusinessWeek*, and has written for *The New York Times*. She is a graduate of Brown University and Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism.

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How did a family business, a billion-dollar enterprise such as the House of Mondavi, find itself open to a

hostile takeover? Was it hubris, bad financial management, or a bit of both? Listening to Alan Sklar is always worthwhile, but with a story this fraught with biblical dimensions and Elizabethan complexities, he absolutely enthralls. Even with ambition, sibling rivalry, betrayal, and exile as staples of the story, Sklar doesn't overdramatize. His sensitive narration does more than air the family's wine-spotted linens in public. Thanks to Silers meticulous research, through interviews with all principal family members, court documents, and depositions, and Sklar's vibrant performance, the story doesn't deteriorate into a soap opera. Instead it offers fascinating insights into a dysfunctional family and the wine-growing industry in Napa. S.J.H. © AudioFile 2007, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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