

**TANGLED VINES: GREED, MURDER,
OBSESSION, AND AN ARSONIST IN THE
VINEYARDS OF CALIFORNIA BY FRANCES
DINKELSPIEL**



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This letter may not affect you to be smarter, but the book *Tangled Vines: Greed, Murder, Obsession, And An Arsonist In The Vineyards Of California By Frances Dinkelspiel* that we offer will certainly evoke you to be smarter. Yeah, at the very least you'll recognize greater than others who do not. This is exactly what called as the high quality life improvisation. Why should this Tangled Vines: Greed, Murder, Obsession, And An Arsonist In The Vineyards Of California By Frances Dinkelspiel It's considering that this is your favourite style to review. If you such as this Tangled Vines: Greed, Murder, Obsession, And An Arsonist In The Vineyards Of California By Frances Dinkelspiel theme around, why don't you read guide Tangled Vines: Greed, Murder, Obsession, And An Arsonist In The Vineyards Of California By Frances Dinkelspiel to enrich your discussion?

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On October 12, 2005, a massive fire broke out in the Wines Central wine warehouse in Vallejo, California. Within hours, the flames had destroyed 4.5 million bottles of California's finest wine worth more than \$250 million, making it the largest destruction of wine in history. The fire had been deliberately set by a passionate oenophile named Mark Anderson, a skilled con man and thief with storage space at the warehouse who needed to cover his tracks.

With a propane torch and a bucket of gasoline-soaked rags, Anderson annihilated entire California vineyard libraries as well as bottles of some of the most sought-after wines in the world. Among the priceless bottles destroyed were 175 bottles of port and Angelica from one of the oldest vineyards in California, made by Frances Dinkelspiel's great-great grandfather, Isaias Hellman, in 1875.

Sadly, Mark Anderson was not the first to harm the industry. The history of the California wine trade, dating back to the 19th century, is a story of vineyards with dark and bloody pasts, tales of rich men, strangling monopolies, the brutal enslavement of vineyard workers, and murder. Five of the wine trade murders were associated with Isaias Hellman's vineyard in Rancho Cucamonga, beginning with the killing of John Rains, who owned the land at the time. He was shot several times, dragged from a wagon, and left off the main road for coyotes to feed on.

In her new book, Frances Dinkelspiel looks beneath the casually elegant veneer of California's wine regions to find the obsession, greed, and violence lying in wait. Few people sipping a fine California Cabernet can even guess at the Tangled Vines where its life began.

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5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

History that reads like a thriller

By Mal Warwick

Gold. Aerospace. Agriculture. Filmmaking and television. Computers and consumer electronics. Wine. Viewed through the lens of business and commerce, these industries dominate the history of the State of California. Examining any one of them as it has evolved over the three centuries since Spanish monks seized control of the land helps illuminate how California has become the wealthy and populous state it is today. In *Tangled Vines*, journalist Frances Dinkelspiel tells the colorful story of California's wine industry, enriching our understanding of the state's history — and she makes it read like a thriller.

Tangled Vines recounts the 18th-century origins of the state's wine industry in the rising demand for sacramental wine for use in the Catholic missions that were the first centers of European settlement in California. For two centuries, Californios (Spanish-speaking settlers) dominated the field until the Gold Rush brought tens of thousands of English-speakers to the state, newcomers who gained the ascendancy through hard work, shrewd investment, as well as fraud and even murder.

As Dinkelspiel tells the story, California's wine industry didn't come into its own until late in the 19th century when it finally gained acceptance on the East Coast of the U.S. as an alternative to fine European wines. The industry flourished, its center of gravity moving from Southern California to San Francisco, until the advent of Prohibition in 1920 — and then collapsed. Revival, and the rise of Napa and Sonoma counties, came late in the 1960s through the pioneering efforts of Robert Mondavi. We all know the rest.

The focal point of Dinkelspiel's tale is the tragic 2005 fire that destroyed as much as \$250 million worth of wine stored at the cavernous Wines Central warehouse in Vallejo. Set by a 300-pound, self-styled wine expert named Mark Anderson in an attempt to cover up his theft over many years of millions of dollars worth of wine entrusted to his care, the fire occasioned years of shameful antics by Anderson to delay action against him in both civil and criminal courts. Only seven years after the fire was the arsonist and thief sent to prison for a 27-year term that would end after he turned 87.

From the recently canonized Father Junipero Serra to Mark Anderson himself, the tale related in *Tangled Vines* is crammed with fascinating characters. It's a great read.

Frances Dinkelspiel, a former reporter for the San Jose Mercury-News and co-founder of the popular website *Berkeleyside*, is also the author of *Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaias Hellman Created California*. Hellman, the author's great-great grandfather, also figures prominently in *Tangled Vines*,

which is her second book.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

History that reads like a novel!

By Trader Bill

I lived in the Bay Area at the time of the wine warehouse fire at Mare Island. I accidentally ran across this book on Amazon.

What was more interesting than the arson was the number of scammers in the business. Mark Anderson, the arsonist, lived in Orinda where I also lived but had never heard of him. At the time of the fire he lived in Sausalito and was a 'respected' member of the community. Mark sold much of his wine to Premier Cru in Oakland, who took a big loss. Premier is in the news now, having sold futures mainly to Chinese and Japanese buyers and not making delivery. As with Mark, their reasons for failure are vague and not believable.

Francis' relatives owned vineyards in Los Angeles...and she spends much of the book on the history of the area...also very fascinating. Once, the Cucamonga area had more acreage in grapes than both Sonoma and Napa and was the biggest wine region in the U.S.!

The book is available in hardcover and as an e-book. Check it out! Fascinating and well-written

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A diversion into unknown topics

By purrkz

This is not a book I would have taken off the shelf in a bookstore since I'm not a wine drinker. Our book discussion group picked it and I figured out how many pages I'd have to read a day to finish in time. To the author's credit, I found myself reading more and more of each day's allotment, learning about why my wine-loving friends could become so obsessed with this obviously enjoyable way to stay hydrated. I am normally a news junkie, but don't recall hearing about the disastrous fire that is the focus of this book. Even if I had, I doubt I would have understood what a huge blow this was to the vintners of Napa Valley and other wine-producing areas. Now my problem is which of my other friends I could pass this book on to. That's a happy dilemma.

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