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Gallo Be Thy Name: The Inside Story Of How One Family Rose To Dominate The US Wine Market



Synopsis

Rising from abject poverty in the early 1900s to create the most successful wine company in the world, the Gallo family used hard work, strong values and unfettered ambition to fuel their success. In *Gallo Be Thy Name*, biographer Jerome Tuccille follows the Gallo family as they ride the turbulent tides of American history, from Prohibition to the Great Depression, from the '90s wine boom to today's financial gyrations. He goes beneath the shiny surface of the Ernest & Julio Gallo Winery to unearth a sweeping story of passion and power that could only be told in America.

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Customer Reviews

"Gallo Be Thy Name" tells the story of the family which came to be a major player in the world wine market. The book mostly presents the family stories of three generations of Gallos. It chronicles the development of the company from a small California provider to a large company whose products spread across the globe. During Prohibition, generally a difficult time for wineries, the Gallos prospered and expanded, largely by selling grapes, for cash, to the Capone operation in Chicago. Patriarch Mike Gallo liked to get his payments directly from Capone. With the repeal of Prohibition the Gallos went legit and continued to expand for decades. After the death of the founder, the growth of the winery continued under the leadership of his sons, Ernest and Julio, who would become the names associated with the business in the eyes of the nation. They would each take on duties of the business, Ernest for marketing and Julio for production. Throughout the years the business would prosper in the low cost, mass wine market, while aspiring to be recognized as contenders in the higher quality markets. Author Jerome Tuccille does a good job of telling a story of

business success marred by personal tragedy, a family torn by lawsuits but resilient enough to achieve dizzying heights of success. Founder Mike, who was viewed as a tyrant by his sons, and his wife Susie were found dead in 1933, either by murder or murder-suicide. Their grandson would later commit suicide. Their son, Mike, Jr., would later be sued by his brothers, Ernest and Julio, over an alleged trademark infringement and would counter sue over his parents' estate. Ernest and Julio would prevail in litigation, at the cost of permanent estrangement from Mike.

I really really wanted to like this book. It's a subject that interests me and I was very anxious to learn more. Unfortunately, this book left me disappointed. It just wasn't well written. The whole time I was reading it, one word kept popping into my head: Lightweight. The writing style, the language, and the presentation of the topics just felt immature to me. My powers of self-deception are strong, and when I expect to like something, I usually do. That made this book even that more disappointing to me. One of the sources the author relied heavily upon was Blood and Wine: Unauthorized Story of the Gallo Wine Empire--to the point that the account actually read like a book report instead of an original work. A short list of things that bothered me: * I was surprised by the vulgar wording in the phrases he chose to use throughout the book. For example, "Simon demonstrated that it was not always necessary to knee somebody in the [parts] and then head-butt him into the next county to be a successful businessman" or "an environment of [parts]-shriveling economic deprivation". Really? Is that the only way he could describe the situations? His account was also peppered with words like "glop" and "plonk" to describe the low grade Gallo wines. Although I agree with the descriptions, I was surprised by the unimaginative use of these two terms throughout the entire book. * The book title and the section titles used a turn of phrase on the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father", "Thy Will Be Done", "Thy Kingdom Come", "Deliver Us From Evil", and "Gallo By Thy Name".

Gallo and Exxon have much in common. Gasoline is still a little cheaper, but their production volumes have a certain affinity for their markets. They both age. A little. Both face a glut. As for aroma and taste, well, in a blind taste test...no I will not spoil it. This is a story of the Gallo family. Jerome Tuccille has some twenty-five books credited to him. He boasts several lines of business in books. If you like books that explore the broken headed families of those grasping for riches, you might enjoy this book. Do not come here for history, business or wine. There are some informative passages on California wine companies, government and advertising. Book I is the nightmare story of the immigrant founding family, full of death and then cops and mobsters. Less than interesting as here written, but it explains how the second generation was deformed. Book II begins with an

economics lesson. Before 1913, the government of the United States took in one third of its revenues from alcohol tax. We were very close to the Russians of the same period. The most interesting idea in this book is that Prohibition was repealed because the government revenues from the new Income Tax were shriveled by the Great Depression. Sounds familiar now, does it not? By 1935, Gallo produced 350,000 gallons. They had storage for 350,000 gallons. Mr. Tuccille writes that Gallo sold 941,000 gallons. I wish he told us how. Gallo did not age wine. They produced a syrup of what Mr. Tuccille calls Dago Red. It was illegal, but he does not give any details. Rather than cultivating, aging and caring, Gallo preferred additives like caramel, sugar, and stronger spirits. Gallo was a customer of the local coal-tar producer, but claimed never to have bought any.

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