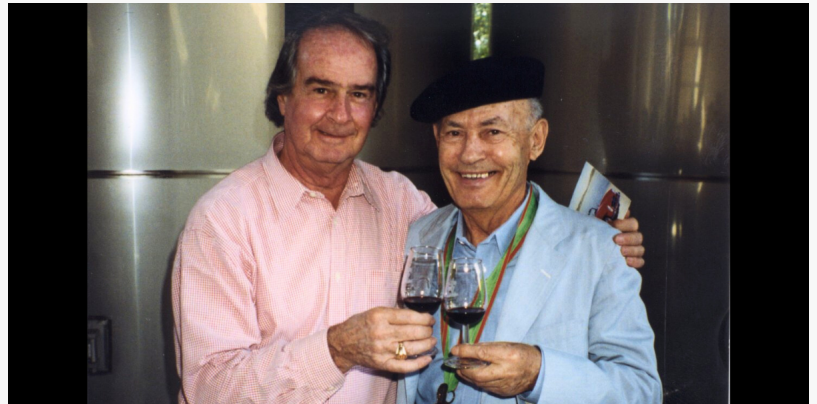


Mark Gudgel Marks 50th Anniversary of Judgment of Paris, the Historic Wine Tasting That Changed the Global Wine Industry

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, February 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Author [Mark Gudgel](#) commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Judgment of Paris, the 1976 blind wine tasting that shocked the world when California wines triumphed over France's finest Bordeaux and Burgundies - a moment that forever changed the global wine industry. Drawing from his 2023 book, [The Rise of Napa Valley Wineries: How the Judgment of Paris Put California Wine on the Map](#) (The History Press), Gudgel shares insights on this landmark event and its enduring legacy.



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At the historic tasting, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon won the red category, while Chateau Montelena 1973 Chardonnay took first place for whites, defeating legendary French wines including Château Mouton-Rothschild, Château Haut-Brion, and Bâtard-Montrachet. This unprecedented victory put Napa Valley on the map and opened doors for wine regions around the world.

"Prior to the Judgment of Paris in 1976, it was generally accepted that the French made the world-class wine, and it was sort of novel that other nations made their own," said Gudgel. "This event is essentially why we can buy South African Pinotage and Finger Lakes Riesling in any good wine shop today."

Gudgel's comprehensive history involved extensive field research and dozens of interviews with winemakers and key figures who played pivotal roles in the event. The book presents the history of Napa Valley across five chapters, providing readers with the most complete and current account of this watershed moment. The event also inspired the film "Bottle Shock" starring Alan Rickman.

"It has to be understood that this wasn't a fluke, it wasn't a one-off or some mistake," Gudgel noted. "After this event, there were countless other tastings from the Olympiad du Vin to the Great Chicago Chardonnay Showdown, and time and time again the California wines came out on top."

Gudgel is an associate professor of education and Director of the Environmental Sustainability Minor at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha. He is also President of the Board of Directors of the vinNEBRASKA Foundation, which has raised nearly \$10 million for charities and offers scholarships for wine professionals. Gudgel produces his own wine, Gudgel Ranch, in collaboration with winemaker Jean Hoefliger in Napa Valley.

The author has two forthcoming books on Napa Valley, including one on Hamden McIntyre, the architect of Inglenook and Far Niente, and "The Oakville Chronicles," focused on the legendary Oakville AVA. Gudgel is available for speaking engagements related to wine history and the 50th anniversary of the Judgment of Paris.

Contact:

Dr. Mark Gudgel
mark.gudgel@yahoo.com
402 730 7530

Press Team
Gulf Coast Brands LLC
[email us here](#)

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