

AMERICAN *wine* AWARDS

BY RICHARD NALLEY

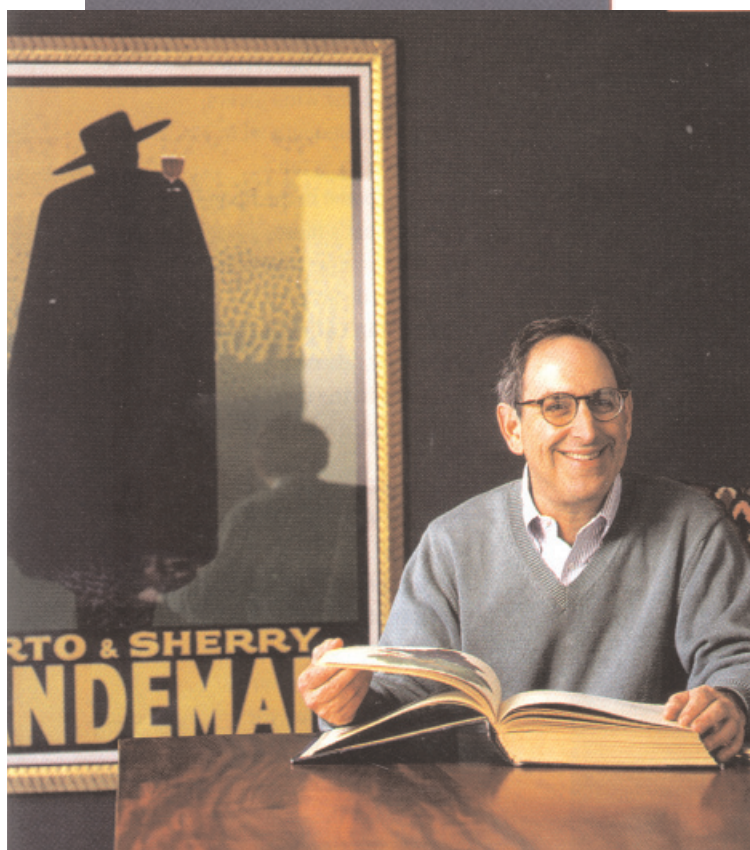
As the results of our sixth annual American Wine Awards show, Washington State's winemakers are a growing force to be reckoned with—they captured an impressive seven awards this year, including Best New Winery. Our judges (see list on page 238) found great selections not only from Washington, but from all over California—17 top bottles—among the thousands and thousands of recently released American wines. They also singled out a fabulous new wine

shop in Baltimore, an inspiring winemaker in Napa Valley and a top importer who's been a well-kept secret for years (until now).

mannie berk rare wine co.

ACHIEVEMENT: BEST WINE IMPORTER

Mannie Berk does not target casual wine drinkers. His credo: "We're for wine lovers who want hard-to-find wines at fair prices." His outfit, The Rare Wine Co., is both an importer and, via newsletter, a retailer. His is a word-of-mouth operation that does no advertising. If you're not one of the 6,000 recipients of his newsletter, you may never know what you've missed—not only wine but antique decanters, rare wine books and olive oils. Maybe you've never heard of, say, Tenu-ta di Trinoro from Tuscany or Clos Manyetes from Spain's Priorato. But if you see that Berk has imported it, you already know it's a wine from a first-rate winemaker. Since he started The Rare Wine Co. in 1989, Berk has introduced Americans to cult favorites such as Tua Rita from Tuscany. He's also one of the world's great scouts for famous older wines—Grange from Penfolds or Raveneau Chablis—and he is *the* man to go to for rare old Madeiras, a subject on which he has written scholarly monographs. "Some people see us as a classic collectors' source," Berk says, "but we're a little more oddball than that."



BEST WINE IMPORTER

MANNIE BERK, THE RARE WINE CO.

WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR

ELIAS FERNANDEZ, SHAFER VINEYARDS

MOST PROMISING NEW WINERY

CAYUSE VINEYARDS

BEST NEW WINE SHOP

BIN 604 WINE SELLERS, BALTIMORE

FOOD & WINE

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