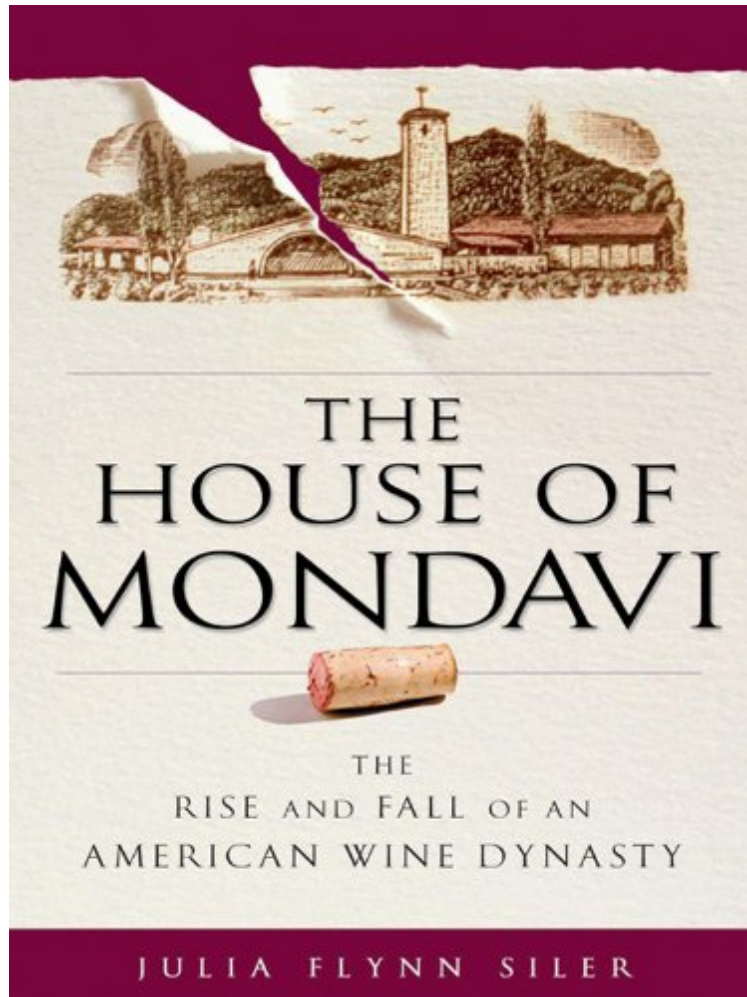


The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty

Julia Flynn Siler

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Julia Flynn Siler : The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty:

59 of 60 people found the following review helpful. A history of the Mondavi wine empireBy Steven PetersonThis is a terrific history of the Mondavi family and the rise and fall of its wine empire. Family infighting and unwise business decisions and a dash of bad luck are part and parcel of this story. The author, Julia Flynn Siler, writes in a spellbinding manner. The approach and theme (page ix): "Over a period of two and a half years, the author interviewed all of the principle family members involved in the events leading to the sale of Robert Mondavi Corporation, seeking to understand how and why a seemingly "takeover proof" family-controlled company was sold over the objections of

several key family members."The book takes us through four generations of the family. There at the beginning: Cesare and Rosa Mondavi (there is a useful genealogy on the inside of the cover page). The book describes their journey to California and the start of the family wine business. The book is divided into four parts--Foundation, Construction, Expansion, and the lugubrious finale, Demolition. Key themes: family infighting. Cesare's two sons, Robert and Peter had a major falling out, with Peter winning the family battle and ousting him from the family business. The father had sought a single condition when he began the purchase of the Charles Krug Winery--(page 23): "Robert and Peter must work together to build the business." The promise failed. After he left Charles Krug, Robert Mondavi engaged in a legal scorched earth policy against his brother and mother (who sided with Peter). The end result? Robert won and the rest of the family, in essence, lost. This sad story is told engagingly and leaves one scratching one's head as to what could have accounted for a family meltdown. Robert began his own wine business and brought his sons and daughter into key positions. Over time, he acquired other businesses and the venture expanded. However, eerily reminiscent of his own family falling out, his two sons had serious tensions between them, with very different visions of where the company should go. Interesting vignettes: the joint venture with the legendary Baron Philippe de Rothschild and his wife, who took over the reins after the Baron's death, Baroness Philippine de Rothschild. The book itself reads almost like a Greek tragedy, where the reader can see all the fault lines and can see disaster looming; however, the characters themselves as they lived their lives were unable to control events. This is a well written book that brings one into the world of winemaking and one family's successes and failures. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. What a Family!!! By Dogmom510A well-researched book on the Mondavi family of Napa Valley. The family entertained Napa Valley for decades with their quarrels, lawsuits, affairs, extravagant bashes, etc. The book starts with the founders, Cesare and Rosa and continues into the fourth generation. This book is an eye-opener on this wine family. Their story was also the basis for Falcon Crest. It's easy to see why. The book is worth reading. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sad struggle By B. Switzer Sad, sad internecine struggles, but a tribute to Robert Mondavi's belief in Napa and wine.

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.