



The History of St. Julian Wine Company

By Sharon Kegerreis and Lorri Hathaway

Mariano Meconi was born October 28, 1895 in Faleria in the Province of Viterbo, Italy. At age 13, in 1909, he immigrated to Canada with his two brothers following the death of their parents, Dominic and Francesca Meconi. Meconi's father was a judge at the time of his passing.

Meconi did not come from a long line of commercial winemakers, even though vineyards and family wineries were prevalent in Italy for centuries. It was in 1921 as an enterprising 26-year-old that Meconi launched Border City Wine Cellars and the advent of his family's longstanding wine history.

In Windsor, Meconi initially worked at the Studebaker auto factory and for the railroad, most likely the Canadian Pacific Railway or Great Western Railway. The railway provided the transportation needed to lug native Canadian grapes (*labrusca*) from the Essex County region to Windsor to support Meconi's winemaking business.

Using native grapes enabled Meconi to operate a winery during Ontario's Prohibition years, as wine was the only legal alcoholic beverage that could be consumed at the time.¹ Meconi, who was voted the first president of the Border Cities Italian Club (later renamed Giovanni Caboto Club) in 1925, had a customer base consisting of the large influx of Italians who had immigrated to Canada, starting in the early 1900s.²

Prohibition

Across the Detroit River on May 1, 1918, Michigan became a dry state, a year and a half before the 18th Amendment banned alcoholic beverages in all states in the union. The 18th Amendment was ratified in 1919 and became effective January 16, 1920.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Prohibition in the United States inspired the entrepreneur to be creative in distributing his wines. Family lore says that Meconi's wines – and largely whiskey – traversed the Detroit River a number of ways, including by boat using a collapsible motor.

A 1929 Everroot "fold light" Motor was used for stealth crossings of the Detroit River to take the contraband into Detroit. The motor attached to a small outrigger boat. Once safely across the river, the transporters detached the motor, folded it up and hid it for later retrieval.³

In the late 1920s, it is believed that Meconi either became a partner of or collected money for Joseph Kennedy in the sale of whiskey in the Detroit/Windsor and the Port Huron/Sarnia areas under the name of Essex Import and Export Company.⁴ This partnership further enabled the winemaker to grow his business when The Purple Gang in Detroit, a mob-like group of bootleggers and gangsters, largely controlled the distribution of contraband into the United States.

Interestingly, roughly 75 percent of all alcoholic beverages came into the U. S. through Canada and across the Detroit River before being distributed throughout the country.⁵ Detroit's location on the Canadian border and the short width of the Detroit River made it easy for smugglers to safely get products from border to border.

"Grandpa recalled Al Capone trying to muscle his way into Detroit," shares Grandson David Braganini. "The Purple Gang made Capone and his cronies look like a bunch of choir boys and kicked them out of Detroit."

This was a rare exchange of words about the Prohibition years from Meconi with his grandson, as it was an era that was rarely discussed amid the close-knit Italian family members.

On Monday, December 5, 1932, Meconi's wine facility in Windsor, Ontario, was destroyed by a fire caused by a boiler explosion.⁶

Post-Prohibition Years: Detroit



Mariano Meconi produced this “dry-style” wine in 1934 or 1935. Label indicates Meconi Wine Company as Bonded Winery No. 4.

On February 20, 1933, the 21st Amendment repealing Prohibition was proposed by Congress. Michigan was the first state to ratify the proposal, which was on April 10, 1933. Prohibition officially ended on December 5, 1933, when Utah became the 36th state to ratify the proposal. (Thirty-six states were needed to ratify the amendment nationally.)

Shortly after the repeal of Prohibition in the United States, Meconi relocated his winery to Detroit as Meconi Wines, Ltd. This move proved prudent as many Italian-Canadian men were interned in prison camps when Canada entered World War II.⁷

In Detroit, Meconi briefly partnered with Risdon Wines and Champagne, Inc. to produce and bottle wines.⁸ One of Meconi's white wines was Meconi Dry, which was produced with 13% alcohol. With the move to Detroit, Meconi Wine Company became the fourth bonded winery in Michigan, playing a major role in the revitalization of Michigan's legal wine industry that had disappeared since the onset of Prohibition.

During this time, grapes were flourishing in southwest Michigan. Meconi often traveled west to Michigan's well-established vineyards to collect grapes for his winemaking operations. It was

during a particularly challenging trek in wintry weather that he decided it was time to move closer to the grapes along Lake Michigan's shoreline.

Relocation to Paw Paw

In 1936, Meconi relocated his winemaking operations to Paw Paw after purchasing the former Paw Paw Canning Company facility strategically located alongside the railroad. Ice blocks from Lake Michigan arrived by railroad and were used in the cellar to keep grapes cool to prevent early fermentation. In turn, these ice blocks were also used to preserve grapes during transport by railway to the Chicago market.

The relocation to Paw Paw prompted Meconi to rename his winery operations to The Italian Wine Company to honor his heritage. Under the new name, the business was re-bonded as Michigan's 23rd winery. In 1938, The Italian Wine Company pressed 1,000 tons of grapes, paying farmers \$55 per ton to take advantage of the tax break from fifty cents to four cents per gallon offered under Michigan law 16-A.⁹

One of the biggest selling products for Meconi from the 1930s through the 1950s was Sholom, a sweet Concord wine, under the brand name St. Julian. Kosher-Certified Sholom is still produced by the winery to this day (2009).



St. Julian Wine Co. truck, promoting Sholom Kosher wine. (Photo: St. Julian archives)

Michigan Wine Institute

In 1938, Meconi was a founding member of the Michigan Wine Institute, the state's first wine lobbying and promotion organization.¹⁰ The institute was organized by eight wineries to "further the development of the Michigan wine industry. It was

created for the express purpose of promoting the manufacture, distribution and consumption of native Michigan wines,"¹¹ according to a Michigan Wine Institute poster of the time. Meconi was named president of the Institute.

World War II and Post-War Era

In 1940, St. Julian implemented an assembly line, using an automatic conveyor belt, for labeling and sealing its wines. This system helped to streamline the production process, which was becoming vitally important as the winery continued to grow.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, instigated the immediate renaming of The Italian Wine Company to St. Julian Wine Company on December 12, 1941 by Meconi. The State of Michigan officially recognized the name change on January 6, 1942.¹² The transition was seamless as one of the winery's most prevalent wine labels was St. Julian. The name pays respect to the San Guilano, the Patron Saint of Faleria, Italy, where Meconi was born.

For a short time in the 1940s, Otto Schincariol was winemaker for St. Julian. Schincariol was related to Meconi through marriage to Hedwige, the sister of Meconi's wife, Avelia. During his employment at St. Julian, Schincariol started a new business venture at the end of the war around 1945 to distribute wine. From the trunk of his car, he grew the business into what is now known as Paw Paw Wine Distributors, a third generation-operated wine, beer and beverage distribution organization.¹³

Over the ensuing years, Meconi acquired a number of vineyards, eventually owning approximately 800 to 900 acres of farmland over three counties: Allegan, Van Buren and Berrien. These vineyards consisted largely of Delaware, Concord and Niagara grapes. Notably, a few newspaper accounts state that Meconi played a "major role in bringing the Niagara grape to Michigan soils."¹⁴



Mariano Meconi
(Photo: St. Julian archives.)

By 1943, Michigan was one of the largest producers of grapes in the country. The state's wine industry was booming, and Michigan was a known leader for wine production.

On a Michigan Wine Institute poster hanging in St. Julian's Paw Paw location:

*"Michigan was producing a larger quantity of grapes annually than any other state east of the Rockies... In cooperation with the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the growers were encouraged to increase their plantings of wine grapes and "up" the juice content of their crops. Bars, restaurants, taverns, groceries, beer and wine stores – all had to be stimulated with the merchandising possibilities of wine as a new and greater source of profit. It took time and money and patience. But the people of Michigan... can point to their wine industry with pride. Michigan is a recognized leader in the wine industry just 10 brief years after Repeal."*¹⁵

Still Sweet

As sugar was rationed during World War II, there was a large demand for sweet wine when the war ended in 1945. Fortified wines, which are sweeter and higher in alcohol content, were the preferred drink of choice. According to state law in Michigan, wines produced with 16 percent alcohol or less were considered natural and anything higher than that must be labeled as distilled spirits.

Federal law considered fortified wines to be a minimum of 16 percent alcohol. California was controlling the market with fortified wines closer to 20 percent alcohol content, thus sweeter, making them the preference over Michigan's 16 percent wines. In 1950, a law passed – in which Meconi heavily petitioned -- that eliminated a \$5,000 licensing fee making it feasible for Michigan wineries to produce 20 percent alcohol wines.¹⁶

St. Julian and several other Michigan wineries established in the 1930s flourished by producing "sweet and fortified" wines using Niagara, Concord and Delaware grapes. The demand for muscatels, ports, sherries and other fruit wines exploded.

For many years, starting in the late 1940s, Bob Alden, who was head of maintenance, and Walter Maron, who was a former Polish prisoner of World War II, oversaw the bottling and

warehousing for St. Julian. The two workers spent the majority of their working lives at St. Julian, effectively running the winery's "back of the house."

St. Julian Sparkles

In 1946, St. Julian produced its first sparkling wine after installing four Charmant tanks, each able to ferment up to 1,000 gallons of wine at a time. Nine additional tanks were added since then and, by 1991, St. Julian was processing 16,000 gallons of "effervescent wine."¹⁷

In the 1950s, I-94 was constructed alongside Paw Paw, beginning a new era for St. Julian. Meconi's son-in-law, Apollo "Paul" Braganini, vice president, co-winemaker and plant manager at the time, began offering tours of the winemaking facility and opened a tasting room for the flood of tourists traveling the highway corridor. This also prompted Braganini to implement the production of "non-alcoholic champagne" to appease the youngest visitors who tagged along with their parents into the tasting room. He devised the company's sparkling juice line using white grapes and apples grown in the region.



1956 wine tasting

Front row: W. J. McVeigh,
Angelo Spinazzé, Apollo
Braganini

Back row: Harry Wittels, Arthur
Hileski, Antoni Misuraca, James
Warner, John Treuhof and
Harold Edwards.

(Photo: Unidentified newspaper
in St. Julian archives.)

In the late 1950s, Ed Haynes joined St. Julian as winemaker. Haynes was a well-educated and skilled winemaker who originally hailed from Canada. He helped elevate the quality standards of St. Julian's portfolio and created a stream of new products to meet the demands of the marketplace. His skills as a winemaker earned the respect of his peers and his presence elevated the image and status of St. Julian within the industry.

Also in the 1950s, St. Julian expanded with a distributorship in Detroit to market the company's wines. Meconi's son, Eugene, oversaw the sales force of 25 who sold imported and domestic wines, in addition to St. Julian's product line. The distributorship remained open until the early 1970s.

On the California coast, by the 1960s, a new wine industry had evolved. Winery giant Gallo, recognized as an American leader in winemaking at the time, began planting specific grape varieties for the production of table wines and sparkling wines. Unfortunately, the Michigan wine industry didn't take note right away and respond to the changing palate of American wine drinkers.

Success continued for St. Julian, though, and, in 1961, the winery won an international honor for Michigan Champagne at the 3rd International Wine Exposition in Budapest, Hungary.¹⁸ Three years later, St. Julian and Bronte Champagne and Wine Company pioneered Cold Duck combining red Michigan grapes with sparkling wine.¹⁹ The wine concept has many origins, including being created by Harold Borgman, an owner of Detroit's Pontchartrain Wine Cellars. In 1937, Borgman is known to have blended leftover red wine with sparkling wine.²⁰

In 1965, St. Julian won two bronze medals for its Rose and Rheine and one silver medal for Cream D'or at the International Wine Fair in Yugoslavia, competing against 1,132 wines.²¹

Demand for sweet-style wines by St. Julian thrived until the mid-1960s. At this time, Meconi sold off his vineyards and began to work solely with contracted growers. As the winery business grew, it became more difficult to do farming on a large scale. This was an era before the mechanical harvester arrived in Michigan in 1968.²²

Eugene and Meconi's other son, Robert, worked with Meconi until his retirement in the late 1960s. In 1970, St. Julian acquired La Salle Wines and Champagnes of Farmington and continued to produce La Salle Wines using original formulas until 1978.²³

1970s: The challenging Years

French-American hybrid grapes, like Seyval and Baco Noir, had been planted as early as the late 1930s and 1940s in Michigan.²⁴ Bronte Champagne and Wine Company's Winemaker Angelo Spinazzé had been producing a Baco Noir wine since the 1960s, using grapes he had planted in 1954.²⁵ In 1970, Tabor Hill planted significant vineyard acreage with French-American hybrid grapes, which further attracted statewide attention for wines produced with these grape varieties.

Finally recognizing this shift in preference for drier-style table wines over sweet and fortified wines, St. Julian began to work with its growers to plant vineyards with hybrid wine grapes in the 1970s. Around this time, St. Julian also began consulting with Dr. G. Stanley Howell of Michigan State University.

Unfortunately, a series of calamities presented new financial challenges to the winery. On May 24, 1972, a large portion of St. Julian's winery building was destroyed by fire. Additionally, thousands of gallons of imported wine in storage had been covered by water from the fire hoses. By law, the wine had to be destroyed.²⁶

In the early 1970s, all three of Meconi's children, and all executive members of the winery, passed away. On January 20, 1973, Robert Meconi, vice president and secretary for St. Julian, died at age 54. Within a few weeks, on March 17, 1973, Eugene Meconi, president of St. Julian, died at age 43. Their sister, Julia (Meconi) Braganini, treasurer and secretary for St. Julian, preceded them in death on May 28, 1971 at age 45.



The 1972 fire damaged a significant portion of St. Julian's production facility. (Photo: St. Julian archives)

Paul Braganini, Julia's widow, returned to the business, after leaving the company in 1965, and was elected as president of the company in May 1973. Nathan Stackhouse, St. Julian's winemaker and enologist, was elected vice president and chief winemaker. Paul's son, David Braganini, joined the company as Sales and Marketing Director.

Shortly afterward, David's schoolmate Charles (Chas) Catherman visited the younger Braganini while pursuing a masters degree in marine microbiology. The Braganinis offered him a job, paying a starting salary of \$165 per week. To the impoverished graduate student who was making \$3 an hour mowing lawns, the opportunity couldn't be passed up. He started at St. Julian the first day of the 1973 harvest.

When Stackhouse resigned in June 1974, the elder Braganini asked Catherman if he was able to handle the job of winemaker to which Catherman responded by "lying through his teeth" – which was exactly how his old classmate coached him to respond.²⁷ He remained with St. Julian until his retirement from the company 34 years later, during which the company developed a port-style wine named "Catherman's Port."

Another notable employee was hired in 1975. Larry Gilbert was hired as cellar master right after he finished high school to help the cellar crew with menial tasks. He quickly rose through the ranks and has been in charge of cellar operations and processes for three decades (2009).

A very notable product was launched in 1973 when the winery established a new process to create Solera Cream Sherry using the Niagara grape. The first Solera Cream Sherry was produced in 1975, using sherry wines made over the previous two vintages. St. Julian's Solera is comprised of three "stages" and contains a total of just under 20,000 gallons. The Solera system is set up as a stack of barrels, which internally acts as an intricate and fractional blending operation. Every bottle of St. Julian Solera Cream Sherry is a blend of sherry wines from every vintage, starting with the 1973 vintage and ending four years



Today (2009), Solera Cream Sherry is St. Julian's most awarded wine in the company's history.

prior to the year of any given bottling.

While St. Julian was launching the impressive new Solera system, the State of Michigan changed law 16A in 1972, increasing the amount wineries needed to pay to farmers for grapes to receive a much-needed tax break. The requirement, which changed from \$55 to \$85 in 1966, was now \$100 per ton. The tax-break allowed for a reduction of forty-six cents per gallon provided the wine was 16 percent or less alcohol and made from 75 percent Michigan-grown grapes. The wineries fought against the increase via the Michigan Wine Institute. However, 16A prevailed and shut down operations for many of Michigan's long-standing wineries that had operated since the 1930s.

On the edge of financial disaster, St. Julian struggled for several years waiting for the French-American hybrid grapevines, including Marechal Foch, Seyval and Chancellor, to produce grapes, thus enabling the winery to transition from just dessert-style wines to drier-style table wines. Fortunately, due to the fortitude of the Braganinis, St. Julian regained its financial foothold in the marketplace in the subsequent years.

The centennial year of 1976 marked a milestone for St. Julian. The winery celebrated "bottle number four million" of Cream D'or on October 22 at 9:30 a.m.²⁸ St. Julian's new facility, reconstructed after the fire, was dedicated to Meconi's three children: Robert, Eugene and Julia.

The winery was also honored by Governor Milliken with the State of Michigan's 1976 Ambassadors of Tours Award in recognition of the winery's long-standing leadership role in winery tourism. David Braganini became Vice President of St. Julian in 1977.

1980s: Rising From the Ashes

Within a year, David Braganini became General Manager of St. Julian and President of the Michigan Wine Institute. At the time, St. Julian was producing 300,000 gallons of wine and had 35 employees.²⁹ Solera Cream Sherry and table wines began generating significant revenue for the winery.

By 1981, St. Julian's recently-opened Frankemuth winery was in full operations, using grapes grown in Michigan's Saginaw Valley, including Aurora, Vidal Blanc, Seyval, Delaware, Concord and Niagara. St. Julian was the first commercial winery to utilize grapes for wine from Michigan's Lake Huron shoreline since Lapeer Winery closed in 1947.³⁰ This new destination was built with a hospitality center and storage for the 400-barrel Solera system to produce St. Julian's Solera Cream Sherry. In 1982, St. Julian won Michigan Week's Product of the Year award for its Frankenmuth White and Rosé table wines.

On Monday, February 25, 1980, Mariano Merconi passed away at age 84. Incidentally, Meconi's wife of more than 60 years, Avelia, passed away seven weeks later.



David Braganini (left) meets with Governor William Milliken (third from left) to celebrate Michigan Wine Week, October 4-10, 1981. (Photo: St. Julian archives)

In 1983, David Braganni bought controlling interest in St. Julian and became president.

In 1984, State Senator Robert Welborn, a close family friend of the Braganinis, initiated the development of the grape and wine industry council for the state of Michigan, which led to the funding of a new research winery, Spartan Cellars, for Michigan State University's horticulture department. The funding for the winery enabled

MSU's grape and wine research team, led by Howell, to perform thorough research from the test vineyards to the glass. Paul Braganini assisted Welborn in the process, while Dave Braganini played a minor role. Welborn, though, was instrumental in launching the effort.³¹ Unfortunately, Welborn died of a heart attack on May 29, 1985.³²

On September 19, 1987, St. Julian's 1986 Seyval Blanc was honored as the selection for a mass by Pope John Paul II for 90,000 people at the Pontiac Silverdome.³³

Two years later, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources honored St. Julian with a 1989 Environmental Excellence Award for the company's "effort to recycle and market materials that

were once considered waste.” At the time, St. Julian had recycled 500,000 bottles and was identified as the only winery in the United States that was recycling its own bottles.³⁴

It was also in the 1980s that Joe Zuiderveen joined the company as vice president of sales and marketing. Zuiderveen has since been responsible for St. Julian's presence in the marketplace. He is especially adept at obtaining coveted product shelf placement. The winery's brand presence in key chain stores has played a pivotal role in Michigan's wine industry. More consumers are aware of Michigan's wines because of St. Julian's leadership in marketing and strategic product placements.

1990s and Early 2000s

St. Julian became the first Michigan winery in judging history to win two Best of Shows at the 1992 Michigan State Fair for its 1990 Chancellor and 1991 Vidal Blanc Ice Wine.³⁵

In 1993, St. Julian's Michigan Raspberry Champagne was a finalist for the Michigan Week Product of the Year. It was also this year that Braganini shared it was, “the best in (St. Julian's) history in terms of sales” in a September 1993 *Enterprise* article.³⁶



The Apollo banquet hall is a time capsule of artifacts and tribute to Apollo Braganini.

To honor his father, Apollo, David Braganini opened the Apollo Wine Bar & Trattoria in 1995 to offer small plates paired with glasses of wines. Since then, the space has been converted into a banquet hall that displays winery artifacts, dating back to the 1930s, such as grape presses and wine bottles. Antique collectibles, including Harley Davidson motorcycles and transistor radios, are also displayed. Apollo “Paul” Braganini, who had taken a hiatus from working at St. Julian in 1978 and returned in 1985, passed away on August 14, 1997.

In 1996, St. Julian teamed with Michigan State University, Heart of the Vineyard (now Round Barn Winery), Chateau Chantal

and Black Star Farms to cultivate Michigan's brandy industry.³⁷ The group worked with Christian CARL, the oldest still maker in Germany, to make brandy for the first time in the state. In 1998, Gilbert, who had now been with St. Julian for 23 years, taught himself the art of distilling. By 1999, St. Julian's first fruit brandies were available for tasting. St. Julian's early brandy experiments included using tart cherries, peaches, raspberries, pears and the pawpaw fruit that grows wild in nearby river valleys in Michigan.³⁸ As still master, in addition to his cellar master role, Gilbert earned St. Julian a gold medal for the winery's William's Christ (pear eau-de-vie) at an Austrian distilled spirits competition in 2001.³⁹

In the meantime, in 1997, Dr. Dave Miller joined St. Julian as associate winemaker. Miller had spent the previous 14 years at Michigan State University in grape physiology and research, running Spartan Cellars under the direction of Howell. Miller immediately began to work in the vineyards with growers, in particular, Joe Herman, to implement proven growing techniques. Miller worked with growers to plant better clones of Riesling, Pinot Noir, Pinot Grigio and other varietals to create more complex wines for St. Julian. He also applied improved trellising, crop control, microbiology monitoring, cleaning and sanitation programs.

In 1998, Tasters Guild International named St. Julian co-recipient of the Winery of the Year.⁴⁰ A year later, St. Julian received a \$30,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to develop an oak barrel program using Michigan white oak, initiated by Miller. In 2000, Miller was promoted to winemaker. The company released its first Michigan-oak barreled wines in 2003, the 2001 Cabernet Franc and 2001 Chancellor, under the Braganini Reserve label used to identify the company's line of European vinifera wine.



Blue Heron is Michigan's top-selling wine - exclusively produced with Michigan grapes.

Blue Heron, the winery's top-selling wine of all time, was first launched in 2000. A half-million bottles of the semi-sweet proprietary blend of Riesling, Seyval and Vidal are sold each year, making Blue Heron the state's top-selling wine made with Michigan grapes. Blue Heron has won numerous awards in national competitions. This

wine is crafted using a German process that, ultimately, imparts a natural level of sweetness and fresh fruit aroma and finish that can be precisely controlled by the winemaker.

“The combination of Michigan's climate, the three white wine varietals and this style of winemaking creates the winemaker’s Holy Grail; a match made in heaven,” says Catherman.

St. Julian earned another notable accolade for Solera Cream Sherry when it won the prestigious Jefferson Cup in 2002 for the category of “the best wine in America not made from a European grape variety.” Braganini recalls the Competition Judge Jerry Mead as being quoted saying, “This is the best sherry outside of Spain.”

In 2004, David Braganini’s son, Gene, joined the company upon earning a business degree. Gene was responsible for sales and was positioned to learn all aspects of running the day-to-day operations of the winery. Unfortunately, Gene died on March 15, 2007 at the age of 25.

Also in 2007, Catherman retired after 34 years at St. Julian.

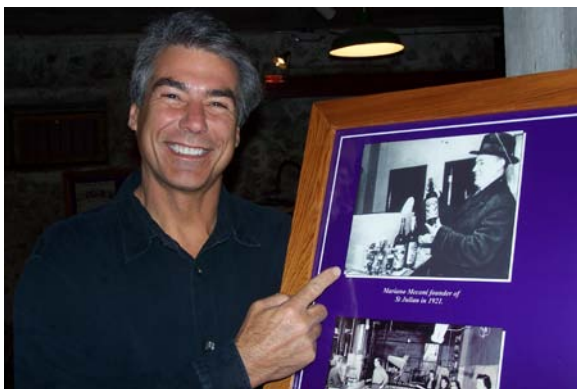
2009 and St. Julian’s Legacy

Today, St. Julian works with 55 growers across three counties, with the majority located in Berrien County. The company owns two vineyards, growing Riesling, Frontenac and Maréchal Foch. Miller, now vice president of winemaking, continues to implement processes to improve wine quality along with Nancie Corum, St. Julian’s associate winemaker.

This wine quality is showing up in the glass and garnering national and international attention. Notably, *Wine & Spirits Magazine’s* Top 100 Values of the Year has featured the St. J Riesling (’03 and ’06) on its list twice. The 2004 vintage St. J Riesling won best of class at the International Wine Competition in 2006. The 2005 Pinot Grigio earned double gold medals at the notable San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition in 2007.⁴¹

St. Julian continues to retain a stronghold on Michigan's wine industry in the production and distribution of wines. Fourth generation family member Angela Braganini is working closely with her father to learn the entire business operations, from meeting with growers, attending meetings with legislative contacts, learning winemaking to implementing new marketing and sales programs.

Fourth-generation family member Angela Braganini is involved in all winery operations.



David Braganini points to a photo of Grandfather Mariano Meconi at the Lawton Lions Community Center Heritage Museum.

A notable new release in 2010 is Founder's Pride. The new dessert wine is a blend of tastes reminiscent of a tawny port and sherry and is fortified with nine-year-old Michigan brandy aged in Michigan white oak. The new wine label features St. Julian Founder Mariano Meconi as a tribute to the wine pioneer.

In closing, David Braganini shares this quote from Robert Mondavi Winery, which mirrors his philosophy on wine. As printed in a September 1993 *Enterprise* article:

"Wine has been with us since the beginning of civilization. It is a temperate, civilized, romantic mealtime beverage. Wine has been praised for centuries by statesmen, philosophers, poets and scholars. Wine in moderation is an integral part of our family's culture, heritage and the gracious way of life."

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Endnotes

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- ¹ Certificate in St. Julian archives. www.stjulian.com history. Meconi set up his business due to a loophole in the Prohibition legislation in Ontario, which exempted native wines from the provision of the Ontario Temperance Act, passed in 1916. Prohibition lasted until 1927 in Ontario.
- ² Caboto Club, 12 April 2009 < www.cabotoclub.com >
- ³ David Braganini, Personal interview, 28 March 2009.
- ⁴ David Braganini, Personal interviews, 28 March 2009 and 7 October 2009.
- ⁴ David Braganini, Personal interview, 28 March 2009.
- ⁵ Jenny Nolan, "How Prohibition made Detroit a bootlegger's dream town," Detroit News, 15 June 1999.
- ⁶ Winnipeg Free Press, 6 December 1932.
- ⁷ Andrea Grimes (David Braganini's cousin and co-author of 2009 release, Impronte), Email interviews, October 2009.
- ⁸ Meconi wine label
- ⁹ Patrick T. Shea, "Wine Consumptions and Imports" 10 September 2009 <www.ageconsearch.umnedu/bitstream/11140/1/pb77sh01.pdf>
- ¹⁰ David Braganini, Personal interview, 7 October 2009.
- ¹¹ Michigan Wine Institute, poster in Apollo Banquet Hall, St. Julian Wine Company
- ¹² St. Julian, Articles of Incorporation.
- ¹³ Charles Catherman, Email interview, 2 December 2009.
- ¹⁴ David Braganini, Personal interview, 28 March 2009 plus three Obituary articles on Meconi's passing in St Julian archives.
- ¹⁵ Framed Michigan Wine Institute poster located in conference room at St. Julian Wine Company.
- ¹⁶ "New Fortified Wine Law in Effect Seen As Boost To Grape Industry," 1972 (publication unknown).
- ¹⁷ Charles Catherman, "St. Julian Wine Company: Michigan's oldest, largest winery keeps growing," Vintner & Vineyard, May 1991.
- ¹⁸ Letter from Hungary, St. Julian archives
- ¹⁹ G. Stanley Howell, Personal interview, March 2009 attributes Bronte as pioneer; newspaper articles attribute St. Julian and Bronte as the pioneers.
- ²⁰ Wikipedia, 12 April 2009 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_Duck>
- ²¹ The News Palladium, 11 September 1965, Benton Harbor: page 22.
- ²² Unidentified newspaper source. Lawton Community Center Heritage Museum.
- ²³ The Courier-Leader, Advertisement within article courtesy of Paw Paw Grape and Wine Festival Association, July 2, 1976.

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- ²⁴ The News-Palladium 1930s: Al Arend. 12 February, 1971., Benton Harbor, "Foreign Grape Research Expanding" / 1940s: Author unknown. National Geographic Society News Service press release in St. Julian archives, 5 October 1983.
- ²⁵ Michigan Wine Institute, brochure.
- ²⁶ Ruth Ellen Church, Chicago Tribune, 13 June 1974.
- ²⁷ Charles Catherman, Email interview, 2 December 2009.
- ²⁸ Reference photograph and article.
- ²⁹ Lansing State Journal, 14 September 1980.
- ³⁰ 27 September 1981 (source)
- ³¹ David Braganini, Personal interview. 28 March 2009 and 7 October 2009.
- ³² Toledo Blade, Death notice, 30 May, 1985.
- ³³ Detroit News, "State vintner proudly donates product to mass," 26 August 1987.
- ³⁴ Dennis Cogswell, Herald-Palladium Van Buren Bureau, date unknown.
- ³⁵ David Braganini. Personal Interview, 28 March 2009.
- ³⁶ Enterprise, September 1993.
- ³⁷ William Wood, Kalamazoo Gazette, 24 August 1996.
- ³⁸ Karen Gentry, "St. Julian fires up still to produce tasty fruit brandies," The Fruit Growers News, July 1999.
- ³⁹ Charles Catherman. Email interview, 2 December 2009.
- ⁴⁰ Courier Leader, 21 May 1999.
- ⁴¹ David Miller. 5 November, 2009. Telephone Interview.