

fun part of the work year. “My job is to taste them every day,” he says, “and decide to gently try steer [their] direction”—with more oxygen, perhaps, or more heat.

At Harvard, Russell concentrated in government, minored in economics, threw himself into the Glee Club, and planned a career in orchestra management. Like many college students from the exurbs or the country, he never thought he would move back home. But during a foreign study tour in Tuscany, he made wine for the first time. “I could never forget how much I enjoyed working with my hands, and the creative side of winemaking,” he says. The autumn after graduation, when a job at Jazz at Lincoln Center didn’t pan out, he visited Fox Run Vineyards near his hometown. He thought he had an interview, but the staff was busy with the first day of harvest. “They were knee deep in grapes,” he recalls. “They handed me a shovel: ‘Here you go.

Working in the East Coast’s fickle climate “allows you to throw out the false idol of a perfect wine.”

You can help out on the crush pad if you’d like.” He kept showing up, completing an unpaid internship.

Fascinated, he began an accelerated set of apprenticeships in winemaking. For three years, to double his harvest experience, he spent winters in New Zealand or Australia, and autumns in the Finger Lakes. He started his first year-round salaried job in spring 2012, as Red Newt’s assistant winemaker. By year’s end, Red Newt co-founder and longtime winemaker David Whiting stepped out of the wine cellar to oversee the winery’s bistro—and promoted Russell to head winemaker. “Right from the start,” Russell says, “[he] gave me tons of freedom to pursue the winemaking in the way that I saw fit.”

In the Finger Lakes, that means exploring the possibilities of Riesling, the best fit with the local climate. Russell considers Riesling a misunderstood grape. Americans, recalling mass-produced wines such as Blue Nun, tend to think of Rieslings as sweet, simple, and uninteresting. It’s “our cross to

O P E N B O O K

Glorious Genji

by some of the art discussed below), is simplicity itself—so long as one can overlook the remarkable survival of a fragile masterpiece for more than five centuries. An associated exhibition—on the artistic tradition inspired by the novel, curated by McCormick—opens at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on March 5. From the introduction:

In the year 1510, at a private residence in the capital city of Kyoto, two men raised their wine cups to celebrate the completion of an extraordinary project, an album of 54 pairs of calligraphy and painting leaves representing each chapter of Japan’s most celebrated work of fiction, *The Tale of Genji*. One of the men, the patron of the album Sue Saburo, would

take it back with him to his home province of Suo (present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture), on the western end of Japan’s main island. Six years later, in 1516, the album leaves would be donated to a local temple named Myoeiji, where the work’s traceable premodern history currently ends. In 1957 it came into the possession of Philip Hofer (1898-1984), founder of the Department of Prints and Graphic Arts at the Houghton Rare Book Library of Harvard University. A prolific collector of illustrated manuscripts, Hofer purchased the album along with numerous other Japanese books and scrolls, which were subsequently bequeathed to the Harvard Art Museums in 1985. This remarkable compendium has survived intact for over 500 years, making it the oldest complete album of *Genji* painting and calligraphy in the world....

Although steeped in the complex belief systems and moral codes of its own era...

bear,” he says, “to prove to people that that isn’t true, and that Riesling can be a great grape.” His own generation of wine-drinkers, he says, is shifting the market toward

One need not know how to read Japanese calligraphy, nor even have taken in the thousand-year-old *Tale of Genji* in translation, to savor *The Tale of Genji: A Visual Companion*, by Melissa McCormick, professor of Japanese art and culture (Princeton, \$45). The story she tells, drawing on the justly famous underlying work (see “Vita: Murasaki Shikibu,” May-June 2002, page 32, illustrated



A boat cast adrift: visualizing the text, “Though the orange tree isle/Remain fast in its color,/Tis not such change,/But this drifting boat’s whither/That is beyond all knowing.”

the tale can be read as a monumental exploration of human nature. No matter how characters may triumph or what virtues they may exhibit, all ultimately confront hardships and grapple with their own fallibility, none more so than the eponymous protagonist Genji. To give voice to her characters’ internal conflicts and thought processes, Murasaki Shikibu took unprecedented advantage of...the affective power and ironic distance effect of *waka* poetry, and a mode of prose narration similar to stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse in Western literature. The shifting perspective of the narrator throughout the work also makes for a reading experience surprisingly akin to that of the modern novel.

the Finger Lakes’ strengths: lower alcohol, more finesse—“They’re far more interested and open to new wine regions and new expressions.”

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