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## The Wine Book Leader Board

By Jeff Lefevere

The wine book category continues to be one of the most oft published categories in the book world. Large publishers have published six wine-related books in the last five weeks alone. Yet, have you ever wondered if these books actually sell?

Thanks to a couple of dollars out of my pocket and the graciousness of a couple of publicists, I have five out of the six books in my possession. They are in the reading queue behind “The Battle for Wine and Love: or How I saved the World from Parkerization” by Alice Feiring, a title that I am dog-earing because there is a year’s worth of blog fodder contained within—inspiration for me offering up scathing counterpoints and beseeching requests for an acknowledgement of conventional wisdom while imploring rationality, mostly.

The recently published books include the aforementioned and the following:

Reflections of a Wine Merchant by Neal Rosenthal

The Wine Trials by Robin Goldstein

The Billionaire’s Vinegar by Benjamin Wallace

Passion on the Vine by Sergio Esposito

Gary Vaynerchuk’s 101 Wines: Guaranteed to Inspire, Delight, and Bring Thunder to Your World by some dude named Gary

Based on legitimate (albeit confidential) industry data, it looks like all are performing admirably, though I have to keep the actual sales data under wraps. Herewith, your wine book leader board based on actual cumulative sell-through sales (this is what a consumer actually buys, not what is sold to a bookstore):

1) Passion on the Vine—a likely bestseller the way this title is moving

2) The Wine Trials—Strong performance with big numbers in the last week or so

3) The Battle for Wine and Love—narrowly beat out by The Wine Trials, good performance overall and trending upward

4) Reflections of a Wine Merchant—overall good performance on this title, as well. However, it has a couple of bad Amazon.com reviews, which can stop book sales in their tracks

5) Gary Vaynerchuk’s 101 Wines—Gary has a couple of weeks less sales opportunity and having 9 or 10 Amazon.com reviews bodes well as this gathers momentum

6) The Billionaire’s Vinegar—This title is coming out of the gates sloooooow despite a ton of promotion. Not quite a stinker, but not helping any Editor make their bonus, either.

If you asked me ahead of time, I would not have guessed that Passion on the Vine would have started so strong, but I think it is because it is a crossover title that appeals to armchair travelers in addition to wine fans.

Two additional things are interesting to me, and, of course, they have to do with Vaynerchuk. The first is that if you look at the “Customers who bought this also bought” listing on Amazon.com you will quickly see that Gary is appealing to a whole ‘nother demographic. Amongst items that customers also purchased from Amazon.com alongside his book include video games like Mario Kart for the Nintendo Wii and Grand Theft Auto.

Another interesting aspect of Vaynerchuk’s promotional tactics for his book is some of the marketing tactics he is employing. I’m not sure if Gary’s social marketing is going to work, but if I had to bet my money it would be on the crossover title—Passion on the Vine—that appeals to a wide swath of an audience—Italianates, travelers and wine lovers and not on sweaty palmed guys that buy five books to listen to a conference call and ask questions.

As somebody who feels like they have a book inside them, I wish all of these authors continued best wishes and hopefully I will get through all of these books before Dr. Vino’s two books hit the shelves.