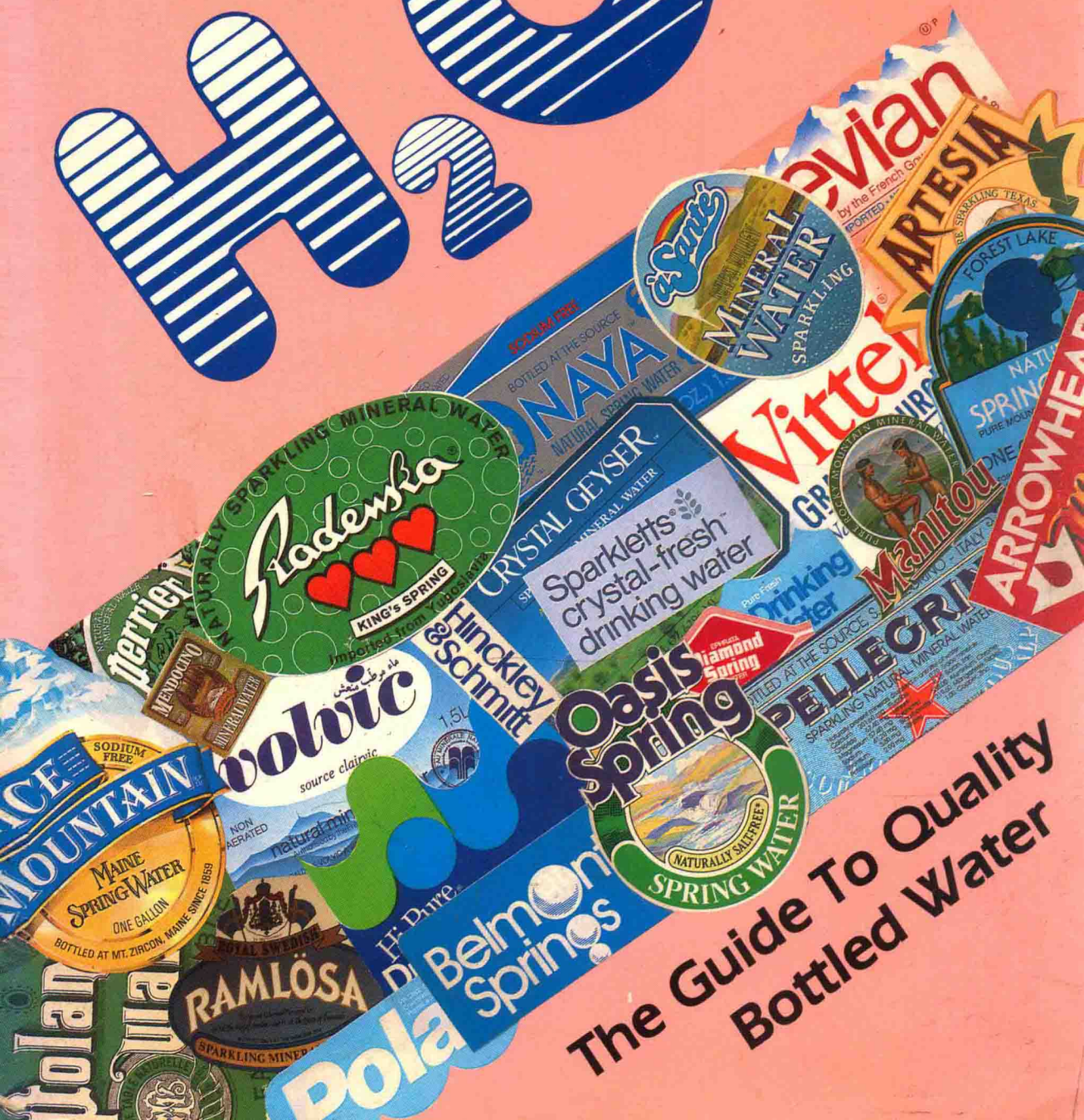
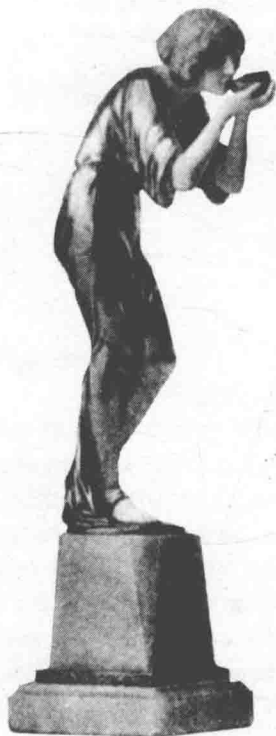


Arthur
von Wiesenberger

H2O



The Guide To Quality
Bottled Water



H₂O:
The Guide to
Quality Bottled Water

Arthur von Wiesenberger

Woodbridge Press
Santa Barbara

This book has evolved from ancient and modern writings, scientific findings, newspaper reports, lectures, personal interviews and conventions. I make no claims that weight reduction, improvement of appearance, or cures for any physical or mental ailments will result from drinking water.

—ARTHUR VON WIESENBERGER

Published and distributed by

Woodbridge Press Publishing Company
Post Office Box 6189
Santa Barbara, CA 93160
815 De La Vina Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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Printed in the United States of America.

Distributed simultaneously in Canada.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

von Wiesenberger, Arthur.
H₂O: the guide to quality bottled water.

Bibliography: p.
Includes index.

1. Drinking water, Bottled.	I. Title.	
TP620.V67 1988	663'.61	88-5699
ISBN 0-88007-166-4		

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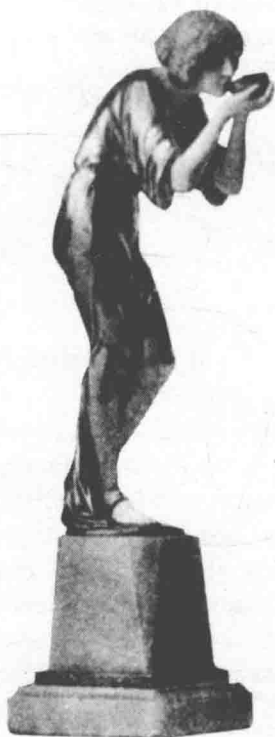
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Acknowledgements

Bottled water is an industry which brings together people who, as a group, seem to have a higher goal. Although there is great financial reward in water, there is also a common current toward health, purity and quality. Water, by its unique mystical and essential role in our lives, touches those who study it for science, profit or pure fascination. I have been fortunate to meet many of those individuals along the path of writing H₂O. From spring owners to philosophers, from scientists to entrepreneurs, each has added greatly to this book.

Leading my acknowledgements is one to Anne Lowenkopf whose unending enthusiasm and personal water knowledge have helped to make H₂O a reality. John Scott of Mountain Valley Water has given much guidance over the years, and William Deal of the International Bottled Water Association has been very helpful. I also want to thank Ron Davis and Jane Lazgin of The Perrier Group; Jack Maguire, Rene Antoine, Vincent Ducasse and Thirry Le Duc of Evian; Guy de la Motte-

Bouloumie and Philippe Lecas of Vittel; Dr. Marino Viola at San Pellegrino; August Busch III, Thomas Aldrich and Mike Richter at Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.; George J. Schmitt of Hinckley & Schmitt, Inc.; Marcus Bender of Hawaiian Water Partners; Rick Scoville of Artesia; Austen and Richard Hess of Ephrata Diamond Spring; Fred Sipper of M&M Distributing; Rick Sajbel at Manitou Corporation; Dr. Jack M. Sheneman at the California Department of Health Services; Thomas C. Bell at *U.S. Water News*; Julia Child; Robert Mondavi; Wolfgang Puck; Claudia Stone; William Tomicki; Pamela Lechtman; Carol Buteau; Howard Weeks; and Noel Young.

The men and women that work with the bottled water companies listed in Part Two have all added to this book and space does not allow acknowledging them in detail. However, to those who have given me suggestions and inspiration, from home delivery man to corporate president, thank you. For any excellence in this volume, these men and women share the credit.

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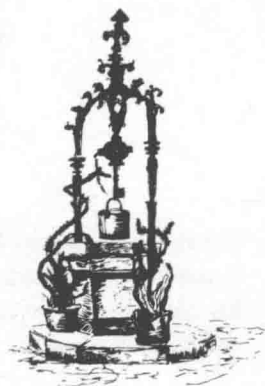
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Imagine, to Have Tasted of All the Waters!

A story is told of a man journeying from the north of Europe to experience exotic climes foreign to his native land of ice and snow. His wanderlust brought him to Spain, traveling by train across the splendid Sevilla plain, following the arrow of river pointing to the high Sierra Nevada mountains, to the city of Granada, crowned by the most splendid of Moorish palaces, the Alhambra. To the Moors, who swept out of the parched, windblown lands of North Africa centuries before, the Alhambra was a temple erected to celebrate heaven on earth. Heaven was an endless supply of water, water roaring and gushing, clear, deep and pure, fountainhead of all creation, wellspring of life. Through their fabulous Alhambra the Moors guided sacred water in elegant riverbanks of tiles and glistening marble, spraying through fountains, cascading down intricate carved walls into an endless procession of gardens.

Nowhere in the Alhambra was one ever beyond earshot of water, trickling, gurgling, gushing, always the sound of heaven on earth. The Alhambra was an altar designed to em-

brace the flow of earth in a thousand forms; as the Spanish poet said, hell is to be blind in Granada. Being a robust spirit, our traveler set off into the mountains above Granada, following the strong river plunging from towering mountain peaks, coming eventually to a town of many footbridges and whitewashed houses nestled at river's edge. A Spaniard came across one of the bridges, a man with a stern eye and stout stick, herding goats before him. The Spaniard spied our traveler and stopped, wondering at this queerly dressed interloper. "Good sir," our traveler spoke out, "I am but a stranger in your bountiful land, and I must congratulate you. Never in my years of wander have I beheld such a landscape to delight the eye and dazzle the soul."

The Spaniard eyed the traveler quizzically, "You have journeyed far?"

"Far, far, far, my friend, all around this sweet earth, to every country that be."

The Spaniard stroked his beard with great deliberation, an odd grin beginning to tug up the corners of his mouth as a look of genuine humility came into his face. He embraced our traveler, tears of joy springing from his eyes. "Imagine," the Spaniard cried, "traveling to all countries that be, to be so fortunate to have tasted of all the waters!"

—THOMAS SANCHEZ



Preface

Water is the beverage of the decade. This age-old industry has been revolutionized with millions of new consumers and billions of new dollars. All indicators suggest that it will continue to flow with increasing popularity in the year 2000.

In the late 1970s the stage was set in the United States for bottled water's rebirth. Americans were becoming increasingly aware of fitness and health. T-bone steaks, martinis and midriff bulge were out. The baby-boomers were coming of age and wanted to hold onto their youth as long as possible. Lighter fare in food, in wine, in beverages were part of the solution, and nothing could be lighter than water.

Concurrently, in part propelling the transformation, water became a hot political issue. Tap water in the United States was under fire; the long-accepted belief that American water was safe to drink was challenged by the Environmental Protection Agency, consumer groups and millions of dissatisfied tap-water users. Not only did tap water taste, smell and sometimes look bad, people were getting sick and dying because of contamination.

As bottled water continued to grow through the late 1980s by 15 percent per year, other beverages, spirits for one, were on the decline. Taste buds that had been celebrating bourbon, scotch and brandy began preferring water. Connoisseurs emerged, able to distinguish the range of flavor and styles of this seemingly prosaic liquid.

Water-tasting was nothing new, but suddenly these professionals were in the limelight. Jannette Best, New York City's official water-taster for the municipal supply system, received national recognition because of her ability to distinguish by taste Central Park reservoir water from water dipped out

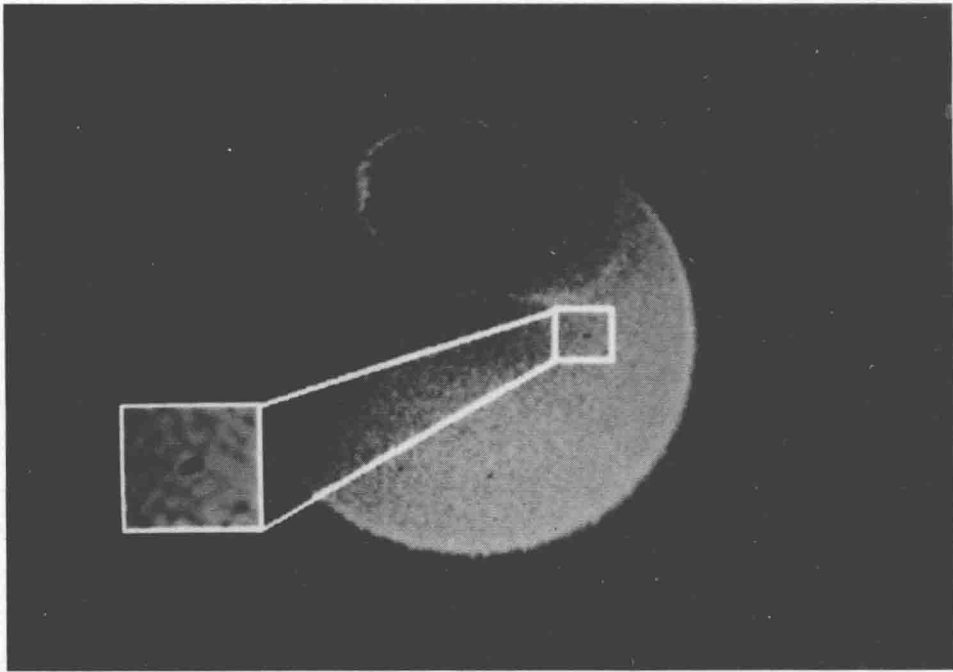
of Bronx's Jerome reservoir or Staten Island's Silver Lake, or Hillview reservoir in Yonkers. Water-tasting supplied trendy stories for national publications and television talk shows. And with every sip the national water awareness grew.

How Do You Describe Water?

Mineral water, spring water, well water, municipal water, carbonated water and even flavored water can now be described and discussed with the kind of enthusiasm and expertise once reserved for wine aficionados. Next time you open a bottle of your favorite H₂O, ask yourself, "Does this water have a slow, medium bead, a random bead, or a profuse, fast bead. Is it crisp? Bubbly? Slippery on the palate? Alkaline or slightly acidic on the tongue? Does it contain a hint of sweetness? Is it sharp and spritzzy? Well-balanced? Refreshing? Can it claim a full, elegant mousse, a sharp spritz, a cheerful entry followed by a clean refreshing finish? Of course you will reject brands that have a chemical aftertaste, a metallic finish, sulphurous or chalky aromas, an artificial effect, a taint of cloudiness, or those that are poor thirst-quenchers.

With 500 brands of noncarbonated bottled water and 130 brands of carbonated bottled water to choose from, each with a personality of its own, the language of water-tasting is still growing.

The bottled waters presented in this book represent a selection of high quality and diverse styles. Some are bottled by corporate giants and others are mom-and-pop operations. They are all linked by the quest to provide the cleanest, purest water available; a healthy alternative to our fattening soft drinks, intoxicating spirits and deteriorating municipal water.



A new theory suggests that water may come to earth from outer space. Satellite photo shows auroral ring in the northern hemisphere. Section in square shows close-up of one of many "holes" thought to be "clouds" of water vapor from small comets that have been disrupted at altitudes just above the earth's atmosphere.

Photo courtesy of L. A. Frank and J. B. Sigwarth, University of Iowa.