

# THE ABRAVANEL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

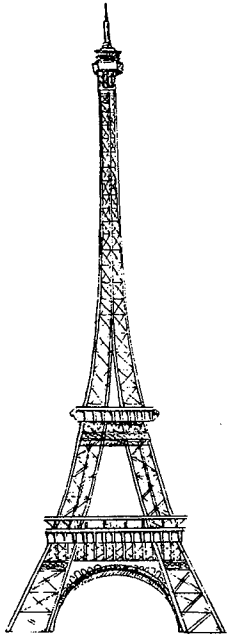
"Basta mi nombre que es Abravanel"

Newsletter No. 21

May 1996



## RENDEZVOUS IN PARIS - 1996



### A VINTAGE FROM FRANCE

Howard Barbanel (New York City) has introduced a new line of French kosher Abarbanel wines. The emblem to the right (painted by his mother, artist Alice Barbanel) will adorn the new French Blush wine. A more complete description of the wines that Howard introduced a few months ago is included as page 3 of this Newsletter.

The Abravanel-Abarbanel-Barbanel family will be gathering for an informal rendezvous in Paris on **Sunday evening, May 26, 1996**. Among the expected attendees are relatives from Greece, the Netherlands, and, of course, France, as well as the editor of this Newsletter and his family from Portland, Oregon. Please call Nicole Abravanel [011-33-1-42-09-59-02] or Franck Olivier Kindel [011-33-1-41-43-52-84] in Paris, or Allan Abravanel [503-292-2682] in Portland, for additional details. We hope as many as possible will be able to attend.



## Abarbanel



### FRENCH BLUSH™

1995

Grenache, Vin de Pays de Cassan  
Estate Bottled French Rosé Table Wine

**IMPORTED FROM FRANCE**

Alcohol 12.5% by Vol. 750 ml  
Kosher for Passover • Mevushal  
LES VIGNERONS DE LA CARIGNANO A F34320



### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that the Newsletter has a new address!

All correspondence for the Newsletter should be directed to:

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FROM THE MIDWEST

*For All to Hear.* Alan R. Abarbanell (Buffalo Grove, Illinois) sent the following letter to the Newsletter:

I am the last son (4 boys altogether) of Yetta and Joseph Abarbanell and reside in a suburb of Chicago. My parents (who are deaf) were instrumental and credited with establishing the first full time synagogue in the country for the hearing impaired.

Congregation Bene Shalom is a world renown synagogue in Skokie, Illinois which serves the needs of deaf and hearing Jews. The services are conducted in sign language, English and Hebrew. You can imagine how powerful the services are. Recently the founding Rabbi (Douglas Goldhamer) established a seminary to train and ordain Rabbis to work with the deaf and hearing Jewish communities nationwide. I am in my third year of this program (I am hearing), and expect to be ordained by 1996. I am currently employed by that synagogue as a student rabbi and will assume the assistantship upon my ordination. It is a wonderful feeling as I am carrying on the respected tradition of not only my parents, but my forefathers as well.

*Roast of a Writer.* The Newsletter received this invitation for an event in honor of Chicago drama critic, Jonathan Abarbanell:

with an  in his mouth...



the  
**Jonathan Abarbanell**  
Roast in honor of his fiftieth birthday

**MONDAY JUNE 3 1996 8PM**  
silent auction and cash bar 7pm

**BRIAR STREET THEATRE**  
3133 North Halsted  
Chicago Illinois

valet parking available

to benefit A SEASON OF CONCERN and the  
FOUNDATION OF THE  
AMERICAN THEATRE CRITICS ASSOCIATION

**MAGIC!!!**



JONATHAN'S  
BABY MOVIES!!!



WORLD  
PREMIERES!!!



SILENT  
AUCTION  
OF CELEBRITY  
AND  
THEATRE  
COLLECTIBLE  
!!!



CHAMPAGNE  
AND  
CHOCOLATE  
CAKE  
FOR ALL!!!



TALES  
TOLD  
OUT OF  
SCHOOL!!!

GREAT P.O.S.  
AVAILABLE--  
Shelf-Talkers,  
Bottle Neckers &  
Store-Signs

# Abarbanel

The Really Fine Kosher Wine<sup>SM</sup>

PASSOVER  
ADS IN  
MAJOR JEWISH  
NEWSPAPERS!

## PASSOVER SELECTIONS 1996

### Cabernet Sauvignon Heralds First of New Abarbanel Wines

A 1994 vintage Cabernet Sauvignon is the first of several new product introductions slated for 1996 from Abarbanel Wines. Produced in France, this Estate Bottled Vin de Pays hails from the exclusive Cassan district of the Herault Department in the Languedoc-Roussillon region.

The new Abarbanel Cabernet Sauvignon is a delightfully dry and fruity table wine with a hint of blackcurrants. It has a fine bouquet and wood aroma from the fine French oak casks in which it was aged.

As a *Kosher* wine, this Cabernet was produced under the strict Orthodox supervision of the Chief Rabbinate of Marseille on behalf of the chief Rabbinate of Paris. The wine is Kosher for Passover and Mevushal, thereby meeting the religious/dietary requirements of observant Jews. Available for Passover 1996, this Cabernet has a suggested retail price of under \$10 and joins Abarbanel Chardonnay and Merlot as upscale wines for the sophisticated kosher consumer.



### Abarbanel Chardonnay and Merlot -- 1992 Vintage Classics

Our highly acclaimed French Chardonnay and Merlot -- Vins de Pays D'Oc -- favorites of discriminating and discerning kosher consumers for the past two years are still available for this Passover. The Merlot, in particular, has won wide praise and has a passionate following. This will be the last offering of these superb vintages -- we don't anticipate having any 1992 left in-stock after April -- so order before its all gone. We've priced the Chardonnay very attractively to move, generating nice profits for you and great values for your customers!

### Abarbanel Wines Are Now Independent

On January 1, 1996, the Abarbanel family assumed full operational control for the brand from Canandaigua Wines, which had managed it since its founding in 1991.

The Abarbanel family is one of the most prominent and oldest, continuous Jewish families in the world, tracing its ancestry back thousands of years. Our most illustrious ancestor, Don Isaac Abarbanel was Chief Minister to Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and Sephardic Jewry's foremost bible commentator. The Abarbanel name represents to Sephardic Jews what Rothschild does to Ashkenazic (Northern and East European) Jews.



H.S. Abarbanel

Abarbanel Wine Company, LLC • 100 Cedarhurst Ave., Cedarhurst, NY 11516  
(516) 374-6080 • Fax- (516) 374-5406  
Imported by International Beverage Company, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA

## PORTRAIT OF THE POET AS A YOUNG WOMAN

I discovered the history of Nathalia Crane by accident. While working in my office, I heard from Rita Abarbanel (New York City), who had just received a telephone call from an art gallery in Carmel, California. The gallery was looking for the child poet of the 1920s and 1930s named Nathalia Crane, because they had come into the possession of a portrait of the young Nathalia, and wanted to ask her to pose with the portrait. The gallery did not know where to find Ms. Crane (who would by now be in her 80s), but the proprietor knew that Nathalia's name may have been Abarbanel and that she had been raised in New York City. The first inquiry in the Manhattan telephone directory under the name "Abarbanel" lead him to Rita, and Rita lead him to me.

Rita asked if I knew anything about the poet "Nathalia Crane." The name sounded familiar, but I could not attach it to anyone. After computer searches and trips to the library, I discovered that she is of the family, residing today in a senior care facility in San Diego, California, a victim of Alzheimer disease and near death.

My research revealed a poet who had her first collection, *The Janitor's Boy*, published in 1924 when she was ten years old. She attracted the attention of the poet and literary critic, Louis Untermeyer, who wrote about her fifteen years later in "Prodigies and Fugitives," a chapter from his 1939 autobiography, *From Another World*:

Nathalia Crane, the most remarkable literary prodigy since Marjorie Fleming, was eleven years old when I met her. She was already famous. She had published her first volume, *The Janitor's Boy*, when she was little more than ten. Kings County had proudly hailed her as 'the baby Browning of Brooklyn' and the English Society of Authors and Playwrights, a society of which Thomas Hardy was president, had invited her to become a member.

I had already made her acquaintance in print and by correspondence. I had read her first astonishing lines and I had heard the story of their publication. In 1922 Edmund Leamy, then poetry editor of the *New York Sun*, accepted some verses signed by an unknown name, accepted them wholly on their merits, delighted with the curious twists of phrase. After two of the poems had appeared, Leamy wrote his contributor suggesting an interview. A few days later there appeared in the editor's office a young woman in her gay twenties accompanied by a child of nine.

Leamy naturally addressed his questions to the vivacious woman until the child, hearing a reference to the publication of future verses, interrupted: "But I'm the poet. I'm Nathalia Crane. That's only my mother."

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"Basta mi nombre que es Abravanel!"

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The mother, I learned after I came to know the Cranes, was an Abarbanell, a descendant of the famous family of Spanish Jews who had been poets, musicians, artisans, and ministers of state. Nathalia's father, who was some thirty years his wife's senior, was a distant relation of both Frank and Stephen Crane, and claimed descent from John and Priscilla Alden. It was an amazing menage.

In an essay on Nathalia written in 1926, the writer, Nunnally Johnson, added other observations about Nathalia's mother:

Nathalia's mother does not, alas, contribute greatly to her omnivorous child's appetite for facts and words. A vivid young woman, not yet thirty, she emerges from an ancient Spanish Jewish family, the Abarbannels, the most distinguished member of which was prime minister at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. Thusnelda, or Nelda, Zurich, as she made it, was born in Switzerland, brought to this county when she was a child, and educated in a Catholic convent and at Wadleigh High School, New York City, which latter institution she left to marry Clarence Crane.

Describing the Crane household, Untermeyer paints a picture of a Brooklyn family of extraordinary motion:

The Cranes were at their best when things were most feverish; they luxuriated in a welter of happy noises. Nanny, whose full name was Nathalia Clara Ruth Crane, frequently did her school-work with the phonograph fortissimo, the telephone ringing, the parrot Sinbad screaming vituperatively, Nelda Crane calling from the kitchen, and Clarence Crane arguing with me that war was not only a normal but a noble way of life.

Nathalia's poetry ranged from an ode to a neighborhood boy, which began:

*Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,  
And the janitor's boy loves me;  
He's going to hunt for a desert isle  
In our geography.*

or this excerpt:

*I sing a song of greatness—  
Of grandeur in a grain;  
Of seas that rim the minim,  
Of dust that breeds a plain.*

and this excerpt:

*Crumpling a pyramid, humbling a rose,  
The dust has its reasons wherever it goes.*

Untermeyer, perhaps with some exaggeration, exclaimed, "It was as if, in the midst of quiet play, a child had begun speaking like Emily Dickinson or (as in 'I sing a song of greatness') had recited 'Little drops of water, Little grains of sand' the way William Blake might have rewritten it."

Untermeyer was actually accused of creating a hoax—of conspiring with some of his other poetry colleagues to present this young girl to the public as the author of poems that had been written by this cabal of older men. He vigorously denied such accusations, arguing that it would be unthinkable to perpetrate such a fraud upon a child with the cooperation of both of her parents. He also maintained that the young Nathalia understood what she was writing, despite the use in 1925 work, *Lava Lane*, of such words as "sindon," "perris," "sistrum," "barracoon," "parasang," "sarcenet," "nullah," "cincture," "cicatrix," and "blastoderm." He explained that she read the dictionary for pleasure, collecting unusual words, from the Greek to the Hindu.

She published several more works of poetry, and then stopped when she entered Barnard College. She claimed that "unknown powers" had offered to send her through college on condition that she publish nothing until after graduation in 1936. In 1937, the first post-collegiate collection, *Swear by the Night*, appeared, including a poem entitled "The Quest of Don Sebastian," which began:

Don Sebastian Barbanel—  
His years were only four—  
Upon a high adventure bent  
Unlatched a closet door.

Her husband, Peter O'Reilly, has sent me her resume with a long list of awards and academic positions. In later years she became a professor of English and Irish Literature at San Diego State University. In between, she even studied to become a certified diamond appraiser and a graduate gemologist, and she served as a "hostess under Nelson Rockefeller for cultural relationships between the U.S. and South American governments." While she continued to win awards for her poetry, she never matched the enormous promise of her earliest writings. Writing about her years after her initial successes, her editor, Edmund Leamy, noted:

It is not her gift of poetry. It is not her flair for a far-flung phrase or a twist to a word which makes it sing. It is not that she slapped into a deeper than a six-foot grave the stigma of having been an infant prodigy. It is this. She is the perfect feminine exemplification of that which Kipling had in mind when he wrote *If*. She has met Fame, and known Fame, and taken it in her stride.