



Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide, 7th Edition

By Robert M. Parker

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Featuring a fresh layout, revised maps, and more detail than ever before, the eagerly anticipated seventh edition of *Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide* offers collectors and amateurs alike the ultimate resource to the world's best wines. In every way, this edition bears out Parker's stated goal: "To make you a more formidable, more confident wine buyer by providing you with sufficient insider's information to permit the wisest possible choice when you make a wine-buying decision."

Understanding that buyers on every level appreciate a good deal, Parker separates overvalued bottles from undervalued, with wine prices instantly shifting according to his evaluations. Indifferent to the wine's pedigree, Parker's eminent 100-point rating system allows for independent, consumer-oriented, inside information.

The latest edition of *Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide* includes expanded information on Spain, Portugal, Germany, Australia, Argentina, and Chile, as well as new sections on Israel and Central Europe. As in his previous editions, Parker provides the reassurance of a simple number rating, predictions for future buying potential, and practical overviews of regions and grapes. Altogether, an indispensable resource from the man the *Los Angeles Times* calls "the most powerful critic of any kind."



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Editorial Review

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Parker, a major force in the wine world, has both avid fans and legions who despise him. The French government has made him a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, and Italy has made him a Commander in the Order of Merit, so he does know wine. The seventh edition of his buyer's guide has been fully revised and updated. Parker's introduction notes the growth of the wine industry and the increasing popularity of wine. He discusses the techniques of winemaking and explains his rating system. He also gives advice about buying and storing wine as well as serving it and pairing it with food. A discussion of "the dark side of wine" warns readers about things that winemakers may do to ruin wine, inflated prices in restaurants, wine fraud, and other "unspeakable practices." Parker also offers his opinion on what constitutes great wine and provides a reading list of useful books on the subject. The main part of the book is the guide itself, with sections for western Europe, North America, and "The Best of the Rest" (Argentina, Australia, central Europe, Israel, New Zealand, and South America). These sections are divided alphabetically by country or region, with further divisions in the sections for France and Italy. Each treatment begins with a map and an article about the area's wines, followed by ratings for the best wine growers and producers and an alphabetical list of wineries with vintage ratings and brief commentaries. In the interests of space, the specific tasting notes found in earlier editions have been eliminated. The index helps readers find information on specific wineries. This is a good resource for wine collections in public libraries. --Barbara Bibel

About the Author

Robert M. Parker, Jr., has been the author and publisher of *The Wine Advocate* for more than twenty-five years. He has won countless awards, including two of France's highest presidential honors: in 1993, President Francois Mitterrand pronounced him a Chevalier dans l'Ordre National du Merite. In 1999, President Jacques Chirac signed a decree appointing Parker a Chevalier dans L'Ordre de la Legion d'Honneur, and in 2005, elevated his title to Officier. He is the author of many books about wine, including *Bordeaux*, *Burgundy*, *The Wines of the Rhône Valley*, and *Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide*. Visit the author online at www.eRobertParker.com.

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This book is both an educational manual and a buying guide; it is not an encyclopedic listing of wine producers and growers. It is intended to make you a more formidable, more confident wine buyer by providing you with sufficient insider's information to permit the wisest possible choice when you make a wine-buying decision. The finest producers as well as the best known (not necessarily a guarantee of quality) from the world's greatest viticultural regions are evaluated, as well as many of the current and upcoming releases available in the marketplace. If readers cannot find a specific vintage of a highly regarded wine, they still have at their fingertips a wealth of information and evaluations concerning the best producers for each viticultural area. Readers should be confident in knowing that they will rarely make a mistake (unless, of course, the vintage is absolutely dreadful) with a producer rated "outstanding" or "excellent" in this buyer's guide. These producers are the finest and most consistent in the world. Taste is obviously subjective, but we have done our best to provide an impartial and comprehensive consumer's guide, whose heart, soul, and value are the evaluations (star ratings) of the world's finest producers.

Note: Readers should recognize that I am fully responsible for the chapters on Bordeaux, Provence, the Rhône Valley, and California. My colleagues, who work full-time for me, are responsible for the following chapters: David Schildknecht covers Alsace, Austria, Burgundy, Central Europe, Champagne, East of the West Coast, France's Southwest, Germany, the Jura and the Savoie, the Languedoc and Roussillon, and the Loire Valley. Dr. Jay Miller is responsible for Argentina, Australia, Chile, Oregon, Spain, Washington State, and the section on Port. Antonio Galloni has written all the chapters on Italy; Mark Squires covers Israel and Portugal; and my British counterpart, Neal Martin, is responsible for the chapters on New Zealand and South Africa.

ORGANIZATION

Each section on a specific viticultural region covered in this manual is generally organized as follows:

1. An overview of the viticultural region
2. A buying strategy
3. A summary of the quality of recent vintages for the area
4. A quick-reference list to that area's best producers/growers
5. For upcoming, current, and very recent releases, a specific numerical rating and anticipated maturity curve have been provided. We have added an estimated price range for a 750-ml bottle of wine. As most American consumers know, with our 50 states and Byzantine system of local liquor laws, prices vary dramatically from state to state, city to city, and even from wine shop to wine shop. The new *Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide* essentially focuses on wines that are available in the marketplace now as well as those coming into the market over the next 24 months. The specific tasting commentaries, which I included in previous editions, have gotten so comprehensive, we would have had to sacrifice coverage of some areas in order to incorporate them. We decided that the tasting notes would be eliminated since, in the introductory section, the general profiles of the wines from that area are amply covered.

VITICULTURAL AREAS COVERED

This guide cannot cover every viticultural area in the world, but the world's most significant areas are well represented. In western Europe, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, and Portugal are profiled in detail. In North America, California continues to receive significant coverage, reflecting its dominance in the marketplace, but Washington State and Oregon have far greater coverage than they have had in the past. Also from the New World, so to speak, the increased importance of the wines of Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Chile, and, to a lesser extent, South Africa, have dictated dramatically more coverage for those regions than in previous editions.

RATING THE PRODUCERS AND GROWERS

Who's who in the world of wine becomes readily apparent after years of tasting the wines, visiting the vineyards, and touring the wine cellars of the world's producers and growers. Great producers are, unfortunately, still quite rare, but certainly more growers and producers today are making better wine, with better technology and more knowledge. Just before the producer profiles and wine ratings that come at the end of each section are lists that rate the best producers on a five-star system: five stars and an "outstanding" to producers deemed to be the very best; four stars to producers who are "excellent," three stars to "good" producers, and two stars to producers rated "average." Since the aim of this book is to provide you with the names of the very best producers, its overall content is dominated by the top producers rather than the less

successful ones.

Those few growers/producers who have received five-star ratings are those who make the world's finest wines, and they have been selected for this rating for two reasons: first, because they make the greatest wine of their particular viticultural region, and second, because they are remarkably consistent and reliable even in mediocre and poor vintages. Ratings, whether numerical ratings of individual wines or classifications of growers, are always likely to create controversy among not only the growers but wine tasters themselves. But if done impartially, with a global viewpoint and firsthand, on-the-premises (*sur place*) knowledge of the wines, the producers, and the type and quality of the winemaking, such ratings can be reliable and powerfully informative. The important thing for readers to remember is that those growers/producers who received either a four-star or five-star rating are producers worth searching out; I suspect few consumers will ever be disappointed with one of their wines. The three-star growers/producers are less consistent but can be expected to make average to above-average wines in the very good to excellent vintages. Their weaknesses can be either from the fact that their vineyards are not as strategically placed, or because for financial or other reasons they are unable to make the severe selections necessary for the finest-quality wine.

The rating of the growers/producers of the world's major viticultural regions is perhaps the most important point of this book. Years of wine tasting have taught me many things, but the more one tastes and assimilates the knowledge of the world's regions, the more one begins to isolate the handful of truly world-class growers and producers who seem to rise above the crowd in great as well as mediocre vintages. I always admonish consumers against blind faith in one grower or producer, or in one specific vintage. But the producers and growers rated "outstanding" and "excellent" are as close to a guarantee of high quality as you are likely to find.

VINTAGE SUMMARIES

Although wine advertisements proclaiming "a great vintage" abound, I have never known more than several viticultural areas of the world to have a great vintage in the same year. The chances of a uniformly great vintage are extremely remote, simply because of significantly different microclimates, soils, and so on in every wine-producing region. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that because Bordeaux had great vintages in 1982, 1990, and 2000, every place else in Europe did, too. Certainly, in both 1982 and 2000, nothing could be further from the truth. Nevertheless, a Bordeaux vintage's reputation unfortunately seems to dictate what the world thinks about many other wine-producing areas. This obviously creates many problems, since in poor Bordeaux vintages the Rhône or Alsace or Champagne could have an excellent year, and in great Bordeaux vintages those same areas could have bad years because of poor climate conditions. For California, many casual observers seem to think every year is a top year, and this image is, of course, promoted by that state's publicity-conscious Wine Institute. It may be true that California rarely has a disastrous vintage, but tasting certainly proves that 1988, 1989, and 1998 are different in style and more irregular in quality than 1994 or 1995, or for that matter, more recent years such as 2004 or 2005. Yet it is true that no other viticultural area in the world has enjoyed as many consecutive great vintages as California since 1990. With the exception of 1998, California has had a bevy of very good to terrific years. In this guide, there are vintage summaries for each viticultural area because the vintages are so very different in both quantity and quality. Never make the mistake of assuming that one particular year is great everywhere or poor everywhere. For example, 2005 was an absolutely sensational vintage in California for varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Syrah, and Sauvignon Blanc, but it was a terrible year for Zinfandel.

TASTING NOTES AND RATINGS

When possible, most of my tastings are done under peer-group, single-blind conditions; in other words, the

same types of wines are tasted against each other, and the producers' names are not known. The ratings reflect an independent, critical look at the wines. Neither price nor the reputation of the grower/producer affects the rating in any manner. I spend three months of every year tasting in vineyards. During the other nine months of the year, I devote six-and sometimes seven-day workweeks to tasting and writing. I do not participate in wine judgments or trade tastings for many reasons, but principal among these are: 1) I prefer to taste from an entire bottle of wine; 2) I find it essential to have professional tasting glasses, properly sized and cleaned; 3) the temperatures of the wines must be correct; and 4) I prefer to determine the allocation of time for the number of wines I will critique.

The numerical ratings are a guide to what I think of the wine vis-à-vis its peer group: Wines rated above 85 are good to excellent...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Margaret Williams:

The book Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide, 7th Edition gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can being your best friend when you getting tension or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make reading a book Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide, 7th Edition to get your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your own capable, increase your knowledge about some or all subjects. You could know everything if you like wide open and read a publication Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide, 7th Edition. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science guide or encyclopedia or some others. So , how do you think about this publication?

Theo Garcia:

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Alexander Ray:

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