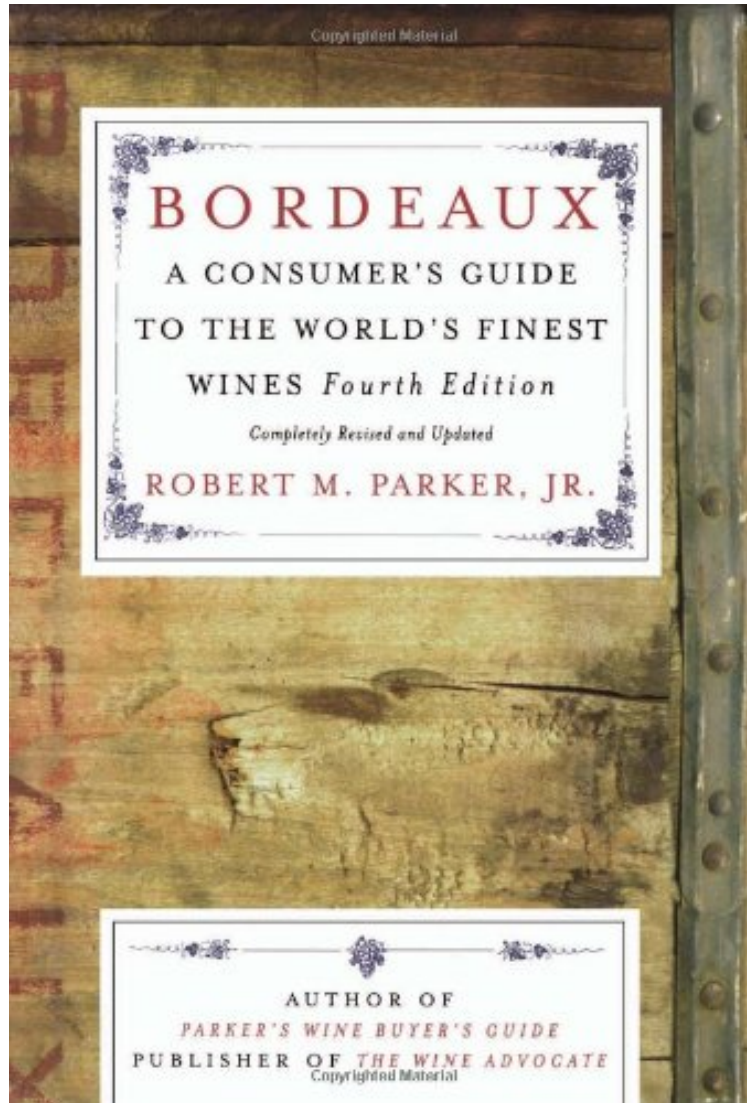


Bordeaux: A Consumer's Guide to the World's Finest Wines

Robert M. Parker

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Robert M. Parker : Bordeaux: A Consumer's Guide to the World's Finest Wines before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bordeaux: A Consumer's Guide to the World's Finest Wines:

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Bordeaux wines. A must have for the wine lover!!0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. bordeaux bibleBy howard kleinthe bordeaux bible- no bordeaux fan should be without it.

Wine drinkers around the world refer to Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s Bordeaux simply as "The Bible." First published in 1985, this landmark consumer guide launched one of the most illustrious careers in wine criticism. Robert Parker's mission, in his newsletter *The Wine Advocate* and his many bestselling books, has always been to give wine drinkers honest, informed advice about which wines are worth their money, and which wines aren't. The fourth edition of *Bordeaux* presents a complete guide to vintages between 1961 and 2001. This latest volume brings readers up-to-date on the abundance of new producers in France's most important wine region and for the first time includes more than 700 wine labels. Parker has retasted and reevaluated many of Bordeaux's finest wines -- and adjusted their ratings accordingly -- so readers of his previous editions will discover herein a wealth of new material. Parker begins with an overview of each year, which includes insight into growing conditions and yields, notes on anticipated maturity, general price ranges, and lists of best wines. The heart of the book is the chapter "Evaluating the Wines of Bordeaux," in which he meticulously reviews wine producers of every appellation. Organized geographically, the chateaux are listed in alphabetical order, and entries include contact information, vineyard size, details about the wine-making style, and a general evaluation of the chateau's wines. Best of all, each entry includes extensive tasting notes on important vintages, all of them featuring Parker's celebrated rating system -- in which every wine is assessed on a scale ranging from 50 to 100. In later chapters, he also offers essential information about the elements of a great Bordeaux wine, practical travel information about the region, a glossary of wine terms, and more. An invaluable guide for consumers, Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s *Bordeaux* provides all the information amateurs and connoisseurs alike could possibly need in their search for that perfect bottle.

Newsweek Parker has revolutionized American wine criticism and...has brought [to it] the stringent standards of a fanatic, the high moral purpose of a reformer. Los Angeles Times Parker is universally regarded as incorruptible and indefatigable. Paul Levy The Observer Robert Parker is easily the single most influential person in the world of wine. Jancis Robinson, M.W. The Sunday Times (London) Parker is the owner of one of the most feared, most exercised noses in the wine world. What distinguishes Parker from most wine writers is his absolute determination to pay his own way. The Washington Post An ombudsman for the wine consumer. The Sun (Baltimore) Parker is a revolutionary. More than any other person he led the overthrow of the old order in wine communication with its English-style reverence for tradition and incestuous ties to the wine trade. In its place he has helped create a uniquely American school of wine criticism -- inspired more by Ralph Nader. International Herald Tribune Parker is the most influential commentator on wine. Time The man with the paragon palate...For countless wine lovers, Robert Parker's tastes are infallible. People The one voice of the wine world. 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 Rhone Valley*, and *Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide*. Visit the author online at www.eRobertParker.com. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 11: USING THIS BOOK There can be no question that the romance, if not downright mysticism, of opening a bottle of Bordeaux from a famous chateau has a grip and allure that are hard to resist. For years writers have written glowing accounts of Bordeaux wines, sometimes giving them more respect and exalted status than they have deserved. How often has that fine bottle of Bordeaux from what was allegedly an excellent vintage turned out to be diluted, barely palatable, or even repugnant? How often has a wine from a famous Chateau let you and your friends down when tasted? On the other hand, how often has a vintage written off by the critics provided some of your most enjoyable bottles of Bordeaux? And how often have you tasted a great Bordeaux wine, only to learn that the name of the chateau is uncelebrated? This book is about just such matters. It is a wine consumer's guide to Bordeaux. Who is making Bordeaux's best and worst wines? What has a specific chateau's track record been over the last 20-30 years? Which chateaux are overrated and overpriced, and, of course, which are underrated and underpriced? These issues are discussed in detail. The evaluations that are contained in this work are the result of extensive tastings conducted in Bordeaux and in America. I have been visiting Bordeaux every year since 1970, and since 1978 I have gone to Bordeaux as a professional at least twice a year to conduct barrel tastings of the young wines, as well as to do comparative tastings of different wines and vintages that have been bottled and released for sale. Since 1970 I have tasted most of the wines in the top years a half dozen or more times. It is patently unfair to an estate to issue a final judgment about a wine after tasting it only once. Consequently, when I do tastings of young Bordeaux, I try to taste them as many times as possible to get a clear, concise picture of the wine's quality and potential. I have often equated the tasting of an infant, unbottled wine with that of taking a photograph of a long-distance runner at the beginning of a race. One look or tasting of such a wine is only a split-second glimpse of an

object that is constantly changing and moving. To effectively evaluate the performance and quality in a given vintage, one must look at the wine time after time during its 16-24-month prebottling evolution and then evaluate it numerous times after bottling to see if the quality or expected potential is still present. Obviously, some wines as well as general vintages are much easier to assess than others. For certain, tasting young wine requires total concentration and an extreme dedication to tasting the wine as many times as possible in its youth, both at the individual Chateau and in comparative tastings against its peers. This is the only valid method by which to obtain an accurate look at the quality and potential of the wine. For this reason, I travel to Bordeaux at least twice a year, spending over a month in the region each year visiting all the major chateaux in all of the principal appellations of the Mdoc, Graves, Sauternes, St.-Emilion, and Pomerol. The chateaux visits and interviews with the winemakers are extremely important in accumulating the critical data about the growing season, harvest dates, and vinification of the chateau wines. Most of the winemakers at the Bordeaux chateaux are remarkably straightforward and honest in their answers, whereas owners will go to great lengths to glorify the wine they have produced. In addition to doing extensive visits to the specific Bordeaux chateaux in all appellations of Bordeaux in good, poor, and great vintages, I insist on comparative tastings of cask samples of these new vintages. For these tastings I call many of Bordeaux's leading negociants to set up what most consumers would call massive comparative day-long tastings of 60-100 wines. In groups of 10-15 wines at a time, an entire vintage, from major classified growths to minor Crus Bourgeois, can be reviewed several times over a course of 2 weeks of extensive tastings. Such tastings corroborate or refute the quality I have found to exist when I have visited the specific Chateau. Because I do these types of broad, all-inclusive tastings at least three times before the young Bordeaux wine is bottled, I am able to obtain numerous looks at the infant wine at 6, 9, and 18 months of age, which usually give a very clear picture of the wines' quality. Despite the fact that young Bordeaux wines are constantly changing during their evolution and aging process in the barrel, the great wines of a given vintage are usually apparent. It has also been my experience that some wines that ultimately turn out to be good or very good may be unimpressive or just dumb when tasted in their youth from the cask. But the true superstars of a great vintage are sensational, whether they are 6 months or 20 months old. When I taste young Bordeaux from the cask, I prefer to judge the wine after the final blend or assemblage has been completed. At this stage, the new wine has had only negligible aging in oak casks. For me, it is essential to look at a wine at this infant stage (normally in late March and early April following the vintage) because most wines can be judged without the influence of oak, which can mask fruit and impart additional tannin and aromas to the wine. What one sees at this stage is a naked wine that can be evaluated on the basis of its richness and ripeness of fruit, depth, concentration, body, acidity, and natural tannin content, unobscured by evidence of oak aging. The most important component I look for in a young Bordeaux is fruit. Great vintages, characterized by ample amounts of sunshine and warmth, result in grapes that are fully mature and produce rich, ripe, deeply fruity wines. If the fruit is missing, or unripe and green, the wine can never be great. In contrast, grapes that are allowed to stay on the vine too long in hot, humid weather become over-ripe and taste pruny and sometimes raisiny and are also deficient in acidity. They too have little future. Recent vintages that, in their youth, throughout all appellations of Bordeaux, have been marked by the greatest ripeness, richness, and purity of fruit are 1982, 1985, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1995, and 1996, all high-quality vintages for Bordeaux. Vintages that exhibited the least fruit and an annoying vegetal character have been 1974, 1977, and 1984, poor to mediocre vintages. In early summer or fall following the vintage, I return to Bordeaux to get another extensive look at the wines. At this time the wines have settled down completely but are also marked by the scent of new oak barrels. The intense grapy character of their youth has begun to peel away, as the wines have now had at least 3-4 months of cask aging. If extensive tastings in March or April give a clear overall view of the vintage's level of quality, comprehensive tastings in June and again the second March following the vintage are almost always conclusive evidence of where the vintage stands in relation to other Bordeaux vintages and how specific wines relate in quality to each other. With regard to vintages of Bordeaux in the bottle, I prefer to taste these wines in what is called a "blind tasting." A blind tasting can be either "single blind" or "double blind." This does not mean one is actually blindfolded and served the wines, but rather that in a single-blind tasting, the taster knows the wines are from Bordeaux but does not know the identities of the chateaux or the vintages. In a double-blind tasting, the taster knows nothing other than that several wines from anywhere in the world, in any order, from any vintage, are about to be served. For bottled Bordeaux, I usually conduct all my Bordeaux tastings under single-blind conditions. I do not know the identity of the wine, but since I prefer to taste in peer groups, I always taste wines from the same vintage. Additionally, I never mix Bordeaux with non-Bordeaux wines, simply because whether it be California or Australia Cabernet Sauvignons, the wines are distinctly different, and while comparative tastings of Bordeaux versus California may be fun and make interesting reading, the results are never very reliable or especially meaningful to the wine consumer who desires the most accurate information. Remember that whether one employs a 100-point rating system or a 20-point rating system, the objectives and aims of professional wine evaluations are the same -- to assess the quality of the wine vis-a-vis its peers and to determine its relative value and importance in the international commercial world of wine. When evaluating wines professionally, it goes without saying that proper glasses and the correct serving temperature of the wine must be prerequisites to any objective and meaningful tasting. The best generally available glass for critical tasting is that

approved by the International Standards Organization. Called the ISO glass, it is tulip shaped and has been designed specifically for ta...