

BROADBENT VS PARKER

A TASTING AT ROBERSON WINE

THURSDAY JULY 10TH 2008

BROADBENT VS PARKER

THE MEN

MICHAEL BROADBENT

Mr Broadbent is without doubt one of the wine world's most important and revered personalities, who has, through his *Vintage Wine* book, shared with the world his unrivalled tasting experience of fine, rare, old and archaic wines.

Having originally trained as an architect, Broadbent decided on a change of direction and entered the wine trade as a trainee with Tom Layton.

After a year with Layton's, he went on to work with Saccone & Speed before making his mark at Harvey's of Bristol where he was to become UK sales director.

It was from there that he left for Christie's where he became Director of the wine department and re-started their wine auction business, which continues to go from strength to strength to this day.

Mr Broadbent is the President of the International Food & Wine society, Chairman of the Institute of Masters of Wine, and was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre du Merite National in 1979.

In addition to his titles and distinguished career in the wine trade, Mr Broadbent is famed for having tasted more old and rare wines than anyone else on the planet.

His classic book '*Vintage Wine*' features notes for

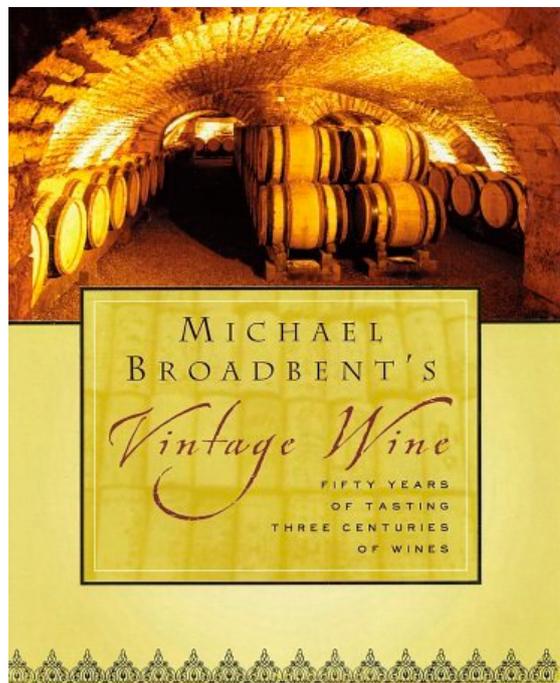
much of what he has tasted over the years, including Bordeaux wines dating back to 1784 and Madeira believed to be from 1680!

Mr Broadbent has always rated wines out of 5 stars (although some of his favourites have been scored 6*), believing that this allows for enough flexibility to account for bottle variation and the context of the tasting

He has been an outspoken critic of the 100 point system pioneered by Robert Parker, believing that it is too exact for it to be applicable to a large number of palates.

He has also regularly voiced concern over what he sees as the homogenisation of winemaking and a culture of points-chasing that has spread throughout his beloved Bordeaux.

Now in his 81st year, Mr Broadbent continues to write a monthly column for *Decanter Magazine* and recently released an updated version of his *Vintage Wine* book in the form of a pocket companion.



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ROBERT PARKER

Known as 'The Emperor of Wine', Robert Parker is the world's most influential wine critic, famed for his vast tasting experience and 100 point scoring system. When he speaks, the wine-buying public listen - and prices have a tendency to move accordingly.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Parker qualified as a lawyer and spent ten years in the profession before leaving to dedicate himself to wine writing full time.

It was during his time as a lawyer that he began writing *The Wine Advocate*, a consumer-oriented publication that was intended to offer the wine-buying public objective critical comment about thousands of wines.

He developed a 100 point scoring system that was based on the US High School marking system. This was warmly embraced by American consumers, many of whom followed and continue to follow his scores religiously.

The 1982 Bordeaux vintage was where Parker cemented his reputation. He wrote enthusiastically about the wines, raving about their quality and

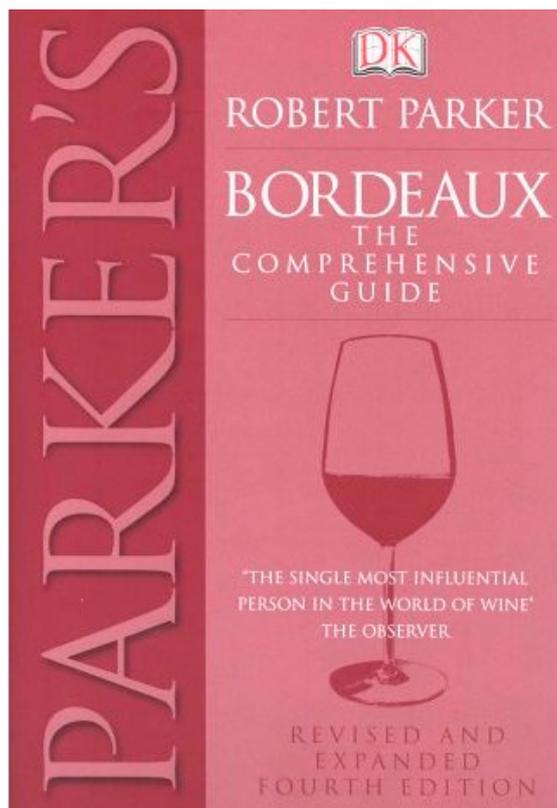
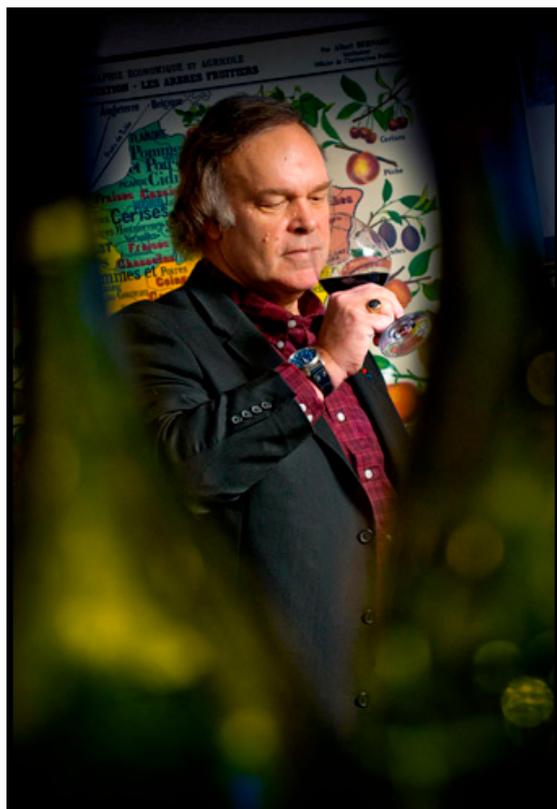
potential, while most critics seemed decidedly unimpressed. It was Parker's assessment that proved to be the accurate one, and since then he has had the final word on what Bordeaux wines customers should be buying.

His influence has become so pervasive that prices are set after Parker has given his verdict on each vintage, with a score of 90+ points enough to add a considerable premium to a wine.

In addition to his influence on prices, there is a growing number of voices that claim vigneronns are modifying their approach to winemaking in order to solicit the maximum amount of points.

Is this leading to a convergence in styles of wines from around the world?

Parker would of course deny this and despite criticism, the 'million dollar palate' continues to guide consumer choices around the world.



BROADBENT VS PARKER THE ESTATES

Chateau Lafite-Rothschild (Paulliac, Bordeaux)

An estate that needs no introduction, Chateau Lafite-Rothschild is one of the elite club of Bordeaux's Grand Cru Classé 1er Cru estates, and the one considered first among equals when the 1855 classification was done.

In the pantheon of Paulliac chateaux, Latour is famed for its power and Mouton for its opulence, while Lafite is renowned for the consummate elegance of its wines.

While the estate dates back to medieval times, wine has been produced at Lafite since the early 1600s, and today is the flagship property of the prestigious Domaines Barons de Rothschild, which also includes Du-hart-Milon, l'Evangile & Rieussec. Interestingly, not all of Chateau Lafite's vines are located in Paulliac - 4.5 hectares are actually across the border in neighbouring St-Estephe, although they are entitled to the Paulliac appellation.



Chateau Pichon-Lalande (Paulliac, Bordeaux)

Located in the southern part of Paulliac, towards the border with the St-Julien commune, Pichon-Lalande is one of the Grand Cru Classé 2eme Cru estates known as the 'Super Seconds', and often considered to be first among them. Formerly part of the same estate as Pichon-Baron, they were separated in 1850, although both given the same classification in 1855.

Pichon-Lalande is known for the high proportion (at least for Paulliac) of Merlot in the blend, with 35% of the 75ha vineyard planted with this varietal.

This appears to imbue the wines with a certain voluptuousness of character, although elegance is what the estate always aspires to, and invariably achieves.



Chateau d'Issan (Margaux, Bordeaux)

According to (d'Issan) legend, the wines of Chateau d'Issan were served at the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine & King Henry II of England in 1152. The estate is in fact one of the oldest in the Medoc, and the moated Chateau one of its most beautiful.

In 1855 it was afforded the title of Grand Cru Classé 3eme Cru, and is known for producing light, subtle and elegant wines that still demonstrate the tell-tale Margaux fragrance. 70% of the vineyard is planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and the average age of the vines is around 35 years old.



Chateau Beychevelle (St-Julien, Bordeaux)

This estate was at one time owned by the Duc d'Epemon, at that time the Admiral of France. The name (and label) is derived from the act of lowering the sails ("bêche velle" en Francais) in salute to the Admiral by boats that passed Beychevelle in the Gironde estuary.

Today the estate is co-owned by France's GMF Insurance company and the Suntory Corporation of Japan.

Having been classified as Grand Cru Classé 4eme Cru in 1855, Beychevelle was long considered to be an underperforming property, although recent vintages have met with more promising reactions from wine critics.

Chateau Léoville-Barton (St-Julien, Bordeaux)

This estate was originally part of the expansive Léoville estate owned by the Marquis de Las Cases, which was broken up during the French Revolution after the Marquis fled the country.

It was purchased by the Bartons, originally a family of Irish émigrés, who were already in the possession of Chateau Langoa-Barton. Léoville-Barton was classified as a Grand Cru Classé 2eme Cru in 1855, and is another illustrious member of the so-called 'Super Seconds'.

A perennial favourite of many a Bordeaux lover, Léoville-Barton is renowned for being at once both quintessential St-Julien claret and superb value for money. Anthony Barton, the current owner, is one of the most popular men in Bordeaux and his wines are considered to be some of the region's finest.



BROADBENT VS PARKER THE ESTATES

Chateau Figeac (St Emilion, Bordeaux)

Not many estates in Bordeaux can trace their history back as far as Chateau Figeac. The current property is on the site of a Gallo-Roman villa dating back to the 2nd century that was built by Figeacus.

Of course, the estate is vastly different today, both in terms of what stands there and how large it is.



It boasts some of the finest terroir in St Emilion, indeed Chateau Cheval Blanc, the most prestigious of St-Emilion properties was once part of the Figeac estate, being sold-off in 1838

The wines of this St-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé are frequently considered to be among the best in the appellation.

Chateau Grand Mayne (St-Emilion, Bordeaux)

The vineyards at Chateau Grand Mayne date back to the 15th century, and are planted with 75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon.

It is often said that this property underwent serious improvements during the '90s, and is now heralded as a leading contender for promotion to Premier Grand Cru Classé.

The wines are powerful & sturdy but full of finesse, and are aged in different amounts of new oak (from 60% - 100%) depending on the vintage.



Chateau l'Eglise Clinet (Pomerol, Bordeaux)

As the name would suggest, Eglise-Clinet is one of a group of properties that have vines close to the church in Pomerol, although it is unquestionably one of the commune's more traditional estates.

Eglise-Clinet's owner Denis Durantou shies away from modern winemaking techniques such as micro-oxygenation, sorting tables (selection is done in the vineyard) or many new oak barrels.

His is a vin de gard, which in good vintages will maintain freshness and vitality for many years.



Chateau Pavie (St-Emilion, Bordeaux)

This Premier Grand Cru Classé estate and its wines have always been held in high regard, although during recent times few Bordeaux properties have been the subject of as much controversy and debate.

The arrival of new proprietor Gerard Perse in 1998 heralded the dawn of heated arguments, with one camp lauding him as a savior, and the other damning him for abandoning all that is sacred about Bordeaux.

The previous owner Jean-Paul Vallette was renowned for making long-lived wines of poise & elegance, although Mr Perse had altogether different ideas about the style of wine Pavie should produce, and set about a radical program of 'improvements', both in terms of facilities and the approach to winemaking.

Having been met with critical acclaim & damnation in seemingly equal measure, it will be fascinating to see how opinions of Perse & Pavie continue to develop.



Hermitage 'La Chapelle', Jaboulet (Rhône Valley)

A Rhône Valley icon, Paul Jaboulet Aine dates back to the early 1800s when Paul's father planted the family's first vines. Today the company is owned by the Frey family of Chateau La Lagune.

The 20th century vintages of 1961, 1978 & 1990 cemented the place of Hermitage 'La Chapelle', Jaboulet's flagship wine, in the pantheon of vinous greats. It is a wine of power, structure and complexity.

The wine and vineyard are named after the chapel of Saint-Christophe that is nestled amongst the vines, and Jaboulet has been the sole proprietor since 1919.



BROADBENT VS PARKER

THEIR VIEWS

1989 Chateau d'Issan

Robert Parker (Bordeaux Book, 3rd Edition):

"D'Issan is normally a light, delicate wine, so it is foolish to expect a powerful or blockbuster wine. Even so, lightness has its limits. The 1989 provides a fruity, straightforward, smooth, agreeable glass of wine, but there are Bordeaux Superieurs that offer the same characteristics. It is ripe, but low in acidity."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2002. Last tasted, 3/95. [83 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

No tasting note given.

Last tasted mid-late '90s. ****

1986 Chateau Beychevelle

Robert Parker (Bordeaux Book, 3rd Edition):

"While quite outstanding and deserving to be in any conscientiously stocked wine cellar, the 1986 Beychevelle does not quite have the extraordinary concentration and potential for longevity that I had thought it would. Nevertheless, this is still one of the best Beychevelles in the last 30 years. With its black/ruby color and huge bouquet of roasted fruit, this full-bodied, concentrated, rich wine should not be drunk before the mid-1990s."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2010. Last tasted, 1/91. [92 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"Ten notes, from cask onwards. Nine not too complementary. 'Lean', 'sinewy', 'astringent' cropping up. Alas, my two most recent notes somewhat contradictory. At a tasting of nine vintages in 1997 I noted 'surprisingly sweet, good fruit, yet astringent & teeth gripping'. Then, on Concorde en route to New York, though deep and still youthful-looking, softer than expected. Must have been the height, speed & dizzy expectations."

Last tasted October 1999. **(*)

1986 Chateau l'Eglise Clinet

Robert Parker (Bordeaux Book, 3rd Edition):

"The 1986 L'Eglise-Clinet remains a young, densely-colored wine with gobs of fruit and intensity. I have always preferred it to such other vintages as 1982, 1983, and 1989. The full-bodied 1986 exhibits excellent concentration and an over-ripe component. It can be drunk now or cellared for another 20-30 years."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2025. Last tasted 12/95. [92 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"Four notes. Opaque, intense. Low keyed, a touch of greenness. Drier than expected, spicy but raw and tannic. Most recently a bottle and a double magnum, one of the least appealing of the flight 1982-1994."

Last tasted September 1996. (**)

1985 Chateau Lafite-Rothschild

Robert Parker (Bordeaux Book, 3rd Edition):

"The 1985 Lafite should be better, but for followers of fashion, its star-studded price will fetch you a moderately intense, cedary, woody, herb-and-leather-scented bouquet, and attractive, very forward and developed flavors displayed in a medium-bodied format. The finish is softly tannic and after a pensive sip, one is likely to ask, Is this all there is?"

Anticipated maturity: 2008. Last tasted, 3/91. [87 Points](#).

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 88 Aug 1993):

"The 1985 Lafite is revealing more class and complexity than I predicted. A moderately intense, cedary, woody, herb and berry-scented bouquet is attractive. The wine is open-knit and ripe, with fine tannins, sweet, medium-bodied, mineral, and cassis-scented flavors, fine depth, and a graceful, harmonious feel. It is beginning to blossom and appears to possess more depth and character than I had thought."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2010. Last tasted, 6/93. [90 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"I am, of course, fortunate. It is my job, my hobby, my pleasure, to have the opportunity so frequently to taste wines of this quality, and not, I can assure you, always at someone else's expense. I have just short of two dozen notes of the '85 Lafite, tracing its progress not from cask but from October 1988. It crops up at least once in a dozen of my tasting books since 1992, and in a wide variety of contexts."

BROADBENT VS PARKER THEIR VIEWS

1985 Chateau Lafite-Rothschild (cont.)

Of the more recent: masterclasses (New York 1995); luncheons at Christie's 1999 and (also in 1999) rather appropriately at New Court, the Rothschild bank in the City of London. Several wine dinners: James Beard Foundation, New York, 1995; for the Credit Suisse, at the Shangri-La in Hong-Kong, 1999; at yet another Kaplan event, this time devoted to the great '85s (in Chicago, April 2000). Then at home the following month (a magnum), and so on.

With the exception of straightforward lunches & dinners, my job is frequently, to conduct or 'moderate' tastings. And I am almost invariably obliged to sing for my supper, which happily is always a pleasure.

Well, what is the '85 Lafite like? At Lloyd Flatt's monumental Lafite tasting in 1988 I gave it one of my highest marks (19/20). At the age of three it had a very deep, lovely purple colour; sweet, rich, very fragrant nose and, on the palate, good fruit, with all the component parts in place. Not too massive, not too dry, not too anything; just with excellent potential.

It has progressed steadily, with scarcely a note out of place. It is, however, like so many good vintages of Lafite, if not actually withdrawn, certainly not an extrovert. It is a wine that does a slow sort of striptease, revealing more each time one sniffs & sips. It is still fairly deep in colour, with a dark velvety core; still a fairly youthful 15 year old, with the inimitable bricky, oyster shell nose which unravels in the glass. Perfect weight, balance, texture & control. Still fairly tannic and though it makes a delicious drink, still needing more time.

My penultimate note: a delicious magnum at a dinner party at home, but still with time in hand. Most recently, a surprise - to say the least - bottle bought by my friend Christian Sauska from his cellar in New York via his apartment in Budapest, and drunk with his winemaker Zanos Arvay in a roadside restaurant between Tokay & Saraspatak. It had travelled well.

Delicious now, but another effortless 20 years."

Last noted (in Hungary) August 2000. ****(*)

1997 Chateau Figeac

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 128 Apr 2000):

"This wine, which was light but charming prior to bottling, appears to have lost what little flesh and allure it once possessed. Light ruby-colored, with insignificant body, a cedary, washed-out, vegetal nose, and short finish, it is a thin, disappointing St.-Emilion. Drink it over the next 3-4 years."

Anticipated maturity: 2004. Last tasted 04/00. 76 Points.

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"Fragrant, light style, delicious, forward."

Last tasted November 2001. ****

1998 Chateau Grand Mayne

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 134 Apr 2001):

"The 1998 has continued to gain weight, richness, and volume. Even better from bottle than it was from barrel, this may be the most concentrated and powerful Grand Mayne yet produced. A saturated purple color is accompanied by a phenomenal nose of licorice, smoke, graphite, and cassis aromas (reminiscent of dry vintage port). This huge, massive effort is low in acidity, highly extracted, with an unctuous texture, gobs of glycerin, and a multidimensional, chewy, long finish. A dazzling wine, it is undoubtedly a sleeper of the vintage."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2020. Last tasted 4/01. 93 Points.

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"Strange, malty nose; rich yet coarse texture, bitter tannins. Needs time."

Last tasted April 1999. (**)

1993 Chateau Pichon-Lalande

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 109 Feb 1997):

"Pichon-Lalande's 1993 is not as fruity and soft as I expected. The wine exhibits light to medium body, an herbal, sweet, curranty nose, disjointed, awkward flavors, and an evolved personality with a pervasive greenness to its aromas and flavors. The wine is soft, and thus best consumed over the next 5-6 years."

Anticipated maturity: 1997-2003. Last tasted, 2/97. 85 Points.

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Pocket Vintage Wine Companion):

"Impressive, mature; rich 'brown paper and brown sugar'; very distinctive, good fruit, fleshy, specious, lovely to drink."

Last tasted May 2007. ****

BROADBENT VS PARKER THEIR VIEWS

1996 Chateau Leoville-Barton

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 122 Apr 1999):

"This impressive wine is a classic. Although backward, it exhibits a dense ruby/purple color in addition to abundant black currant fruit intertwined with spicy oak and truffle-like scents. The wine is brilliantly made, full-bodied, and tightly-structured with plenty of muscle and outstanding concentration and purity. It should turn out to be a long-lived Leoville Barton, and somewhat of a sleeper. However, patience will be required."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2030. Last tasted, 4/99. [92 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"Showing well at the opening Union des Grands Crus tasting, April 1997: opaque; cedery; good flavour, silky-leathery tannic texture; fragrant. Classic fragrant, similar texture, good length but acidity noted (MW tasting November 2000). Most recently: now a plummy purple; mocha, coffee nose, more meaty than the '95; crisp fruit, lean, good but rather tart.

Last tasted November 2001. [*\(**\)](#)

2000 Hermitage 'La Chapelle'; Paul Jaboulet

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 147 Jun 2003):

"The dark ruby-colored 2000 Hermitage La Chapelle possesses light to medium body, high acidity, sweet cherry and black currant fruit, but a leanness and tartness that are surprising in a wine of this fame and stature. The finish is austere and hollow."

Anticipated maturity: Now-2012. Last tasted, 6/03. [86 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Pocket Vintage Wine Companion):

"Medium-deep, open rim, good fruit,; sweet, rich, rounded, blackberry-like fruit."

Last tasted May 2006. [****](#)

2000 Chateau Pavie

Robert Parker (Wine Advocate # 146 Apr 2003):

"Give Gerard Perse credit. People thought his numerous assurances that 2000 was the greatest Pavie ever produced were premature as well as arrogant. However, after tasting this extraordinary blend of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon (made from low yields of 28-30 hectoliters per hectare) six separate times in 2003, it is unquestionably one of the most monumental wines Bordeaux has ever produced. Bottled in March, 2003, about nine months later than other 2000s, the color is an opaque purple, and the bouquet offers up notes of liquid minerals, blackberries, cherries, and cassis intermixed with spice box, cedar, and white flowers. On the palate, it exhibits a massive display of richness and extract, yet with pinpoint delineation and vibrancy as well as a 60+ second finish, this is the kind of phenomenal wine that Perse's critics were afraid he might produce - a no-compromise, immortal wonder that represents the essence of one of Bordeaux's greatest terroirs. Life is too short not to own and consume the 2000 Pavie."

Anticipated maturity: 2012-2050. Last tasted 4/03. [100 Points](#).

Michael Broadbent (Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine):

"Very deep, velvety; tobacco-like, sweaty tannins; sweet, full-bodied, charred and tarry taste. Impressive, but I much prefer the late Jean-Paul Valette's Pavie, which was so much more drinkable."

Last tasted in the chai. For me [**](#) for wine competitions and our American cousins ([*****](#))