

# FOOD & WINE

## Robert Parker: 30 Years of Wine Trends

A concise history from the world's most famous wine critic.

BY ROBERT M. PARKER, JR.

Looking back at the wine world over the past 30 years, it seems to me that we have moved from medieval times to a golden age. It's nearly impossible to believe just how provincial the wine world was in 1978, the year I launched my journal, *The Wine Advocate*. There were no wines exported from New Zealand and virtually none from Australia (including Penfolds Grange, one of the greatest wines in existence). Only a handful of **Riojas** came to America from **Spain**, and its greatest wine, Vega-Sicilia, wasn't available here. Italy was represented largely by Chiantis and an ocean of industrial jug wines from Bardolino and Valpolicella. **California** was largely a nonentity, and none of its so-called cult wines existed. South America was another non-factor: **Argentina** was unknown as a wine-producing region, and the **value bottles from Chile** were still a decade away. Even France, the reference point for so many of the world's greatest wines, was a perennial underachiever; only a handful of Bordeaux's most famous classified growths (those châteaux recognized over 150 years ago as making the best in the region) were actually producing palatable wines. And yet dramatic changes were about to occur—notably the ones I've outlined here.

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- The Rise of the Winemaking Consultant
- The World's Most Influential Wine Consultants
- The Rise of the Wine Critic
- The Culinary Revolution
- The Explosion of Diversity in Wine
- Exciting New Wine Regions
- The New Philosophy of Winemaking
- The Creation of Healthier Vineyards
- Wine Is Now Number One
- Huge Increases in Popularity and High Prices

*Robert M. Parker, Jr., the publisher and founder of **The Wine Advocate**, has been an F&W contributing editor since 1987.*

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### Robert Parker on Wine Trends: The World's Most Influential Wine Consultants

BY ROBERT M. PARKER, JR.

**ANDY SMITH**

An under-the-radar name; has done great work at California wineries like Larkmead and DuMOL.

**DENIS DUBOURDIEU**

A Bordeaux native and the world's white wine guru.

**ÉMILE PEYNAUD**

The (late) great Bordeaux guru of high-quality winemaking (pictured, at right).

**HELEN TURLEY**

One of the true pioneers in natural winemaking in California.

**MARK AUBERT**

Famed for applying classic Burgundian winemaking techniques to the best California fruit.

**MICHEL ROLLAND**

Modern-day disciple of Peynaud; has worked with estates from India to Washington state.

**PAUL HOBBS**

Makes great wines in California, Chile and Argentina.

**PHILIPPE MELKA**

Combines French training and technique with top California fruit to great effect.

**STÉPHANE DERENONCOURT**

A Bordelais who believes that 90 percent of a wine's quality is due to the vineyard.

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