

## Schildknecht goes to Parker

30 Aug 2005 by JR

David Schildknecht, the purple pager with the fastest fingers in the west, a pretty sharp philosopher's brain, a keen palate and a long-suffering dictaphone, is to change publishing horses for his annual reports on the German, Austrian and central European wines about which he knows so much. Since 1989 his annual vintage reports on Germany and more recently Austria have been published in Stephen Tanzer's *International Wine Cellar* but from now on they will appear in Robert M. Parker Jr's *Wine Advocate* - quite a coup for Maryland over New York.

Those who subscribe to [purple pages](#) will already have benefited from thousands of words he has contributed to those pages on subjects as wide-ranging as classical music and epistemology as well as sharing his expertise and enthusiasm for the greatest white wine grape in the world. I for one am delighted if this move brings his championing of top quality Riesling to an even greater readership and helps to swell the band of Riesling lovers in every corner of the globe just so long as it doesn't have too great an inflationary sting in the tail.

David assures me that he will somehow find time to continue his unparalleled contribution to purple pages, particularly the lively and erudite forum that is [your turn](#). Below is the bio he is posting on [erobertparker.com](#).

### Schildknecht on Schildknecht:

After a brief stint in academe and several years in the restaurant business, David Schildknecht logged more than a decade as a wine retailer in Washington, DC, with the late Rex Wine & Spirits (from 1982), with Mayflower Wine and Spirits, and lastly with Pearson's.

This was an exciting time to be Washington-based and David, who grew up nearby, rediscovered his personal roots while discovering wine in company with the many luminaries who were then regularly passing through or who, like Robert Parker, were establishing their formidable future reputations from a Capital Area base. It was David's pleasure to repay some of Bob's enthusiasm, information and assistance in kind when he regularly assembled and presented wines from German growers for Bob's reports in the *Wine Advocate* from 1990 through 1996.

David's commentary on diverse wine regions began appearing in Stephen Tanzer's *International* (then *New York Wine Cellar*) in 1986 [DS has a fine historical grasp but I think he means 1986 - JR]. His comprehensive vintage reports from Germany (beginning in 1989) and Austria (from 1997) became a staple fixture of that journal.

In 1993, David moved the scene of his retail operations and his family of six to the banks of the Ohio River, establishing the wide-ranging wine program at Bellevue, Kentucky-based The Party Source. From 1997-2002, Schildknecht divided his time between reporting from Austria, Germany and Hungary for *Wine & Spirits* and the *International Wine Cellar*, and importing wines of France (as well as fulfilling numerous other roles) for Cincinnati, Ohio-based wine distributor Vintner Select.

David and his work as a retailer were frequently cited in the pages of the *Wine Advocate* and the subject of a Matt Kramer profile in the October 31, 1995 *Wine Spectator*. He has been a James Beard Award finalist for his wine journalism, and has just completed revising and rewriting for Jancis Robinson the material on German wines in the upcoming 3rd edition of the *Oxford Companion to Wine* [thank you so much, David]. In recent years, David's diverse musings and obdurate opinions on sundry vinous topics have regularly infiltrated the ethereal pages of [jancisrobinson.com](#) and [erobertparker.com](#). He is currently engaged in bringing his early work in philosophical fields to bear on wine, in which connection he was recently invited as a guest instructor in a pilot course in Aesthetics at UC Davis.

David's inaugural (vintage 2004) reports in the pages of Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate* are based on his twenty-first annual tasting tour of Germany (averaging more than 70 winery visits) and his ninth to Austria. He seldom breaks a sweat until the number of wines (or their score) breaks three figures, and only once caught himself napping on his numb feet, glass in hand, in the middle of a freezing cellar. Since that day, he has taped thousands of hours of tasting notes with nary another inexplicable silence. With the *Wine Advocate* as his new sounding board, that record can be expected to continue for many years.

After one memorable mid-1990s session, Robert Parker wrote to compliment David on his "legendary tasting abilities" and "laser-like precision", concluding: "I am delighted that you are content to be only a part-time wine writer." That's still the case! But readers can rest assured that David's work as an importer and distributor in no way involves wines or wine regions about which he publishes notes in *The Wine Advocate*.