

## Ch Pavie 2003 - peace breaks out

3 Nov 2004 by JR  
At last, a sense of proportion seems to have pervaded the overheated conflict (debate would be too flattering a word for it) between those of us who see Pavie 2003 as an aberration as a St-Emilion and the faction led by Robert Parker who adore it. Parker himself has suggested that "we all need to approach this with a sense of humor....it's time to have a celebrity death match...with the loser being drowned in a vat of St-Emilion garagiste brew".

Fine by me, so long as the brew is, in 2003, Ch de Valandraud, one of my favourite right bank wines. The sooner we can all relax and remember that this is just a glass of wine, after all, the happier I will be. And in suitably pacific (as opposed to Pacific) mode, I am deliberately not publishing your many messages of support on this issue.

For the record and for those who have managed to avoid reading about all this nonsense, here's my contribution already published on the home page, written from Berkeley on 15 apr:

Oh dear. Here I am trying to have a nice peaceful week with the family, perhaps the last time we'll manage to lure all three children away on holiday with us, and suddenly I receive a torrent of emails saying things like "Pavie: Bravo!" (from the owner of the best private cellar I know), "Parker's attack on you is disgraceful" (from a fellow wine writer) and "I'm with you on this one" (from a leading Bordeaux courtier).

Turns out Robert Parker, the wine guru of Maryland, doesn't like the fact that I don't like what I have tasted of Ch Pavie 2003 - and takes the trouble to write hundreds of words attacking my opinion. I suppose I should be flattered but, yet again, all I really want to say is that wine assessment is subjective. Am I really not allowed to have my own opinion? Only so long as it agrees with Monsieur Parker's it would seem. I do wish we could simply agree to differ.

He even suggests that I am lying in my [2003 bordeaux tasting notes](#) when I state that I wrote my notes without knowing the identity of the wine:

Moreover, the line about "not knowing" is funny....yes, one can do these tastings blind, but Pavie is the only premier grand cru estate to use an antique form of bottle that...even when covered up, stands out like a black sheep.

As it happens, the Ch Pavie cask sample I tasted, at an official UGC tasting, was not in a particularly heavy bottle, or not so far as I noticed, and there is no reason for a cask sample to be put in the bottle in which it will finally be sold. (I did notice that one wine in this tasting, which turned out to be Ch Pavie Decesse, also one of Monsieur Perse's and one to which I didn't give as bad a note, was in a very heavy bottle, but not the Ch Pavie.)

And for the record, I am not aware of having written any "nasty swipes" about Ch Pavie 1998. Q: What's the difference between a nasty swipe and a critical tasting note? A: The former does not chime with the most powerful palate in the world while the latter does.

Ah well. Back to Zinfandels from the right side of the Atlantic....