Off to Bordeaux via Verona

30 Mar 2007 by JR

Very probably as you read this I will be attempting to make some sense of Vinitaly, the massive, attractively anarchic, annual wine fair in Verona. From Sunday Julia and I will be hurtling around the vineyard landscape of Bordeaux (or, heaven forfend, sitting in traffic jams on the rocade) trying to amass as many useful tasting notes for you as possible.

We will as usual taste blind wherever possible because that is so useful. We almost always know the appellation but it can be so educative to judge representatives from each appellation without knowing the château name, especially in the current era when, especially but not exclusively on the right bank, winemaking teams, philosophies and even ownerships are changing so rapidly.

Please forgive us if we are not able to update the site or respond to emails quite as often as usual. We will generally be able to get online only in the evenings and then after a very hard day's tasting, so prepare yourself for even less accurate typing than usual.

I may manage the occasional Bordeaux blog but don't want to promise anything.

By coincidence, yesterday morning I found myself tasting wines that provided an object lesson in why we spend all this time on red bordeaux anyway. As part of my role as a member of the Royal Household Wine Committee I was 'looking at' the red bordeaux from the 1995, 1996 and 1998 vintages currently lying in the cellars under Buckingham Palace assessing their quality and readiness.

The notes are being transcribed for eventual publication but I can pass on that at this level of quality, generally for Her Majesty good value classed growth or superior cru bourgeois, many of the **1995s** are beginning to drink well; the **1998s** are pretty marked by freshness and sometimes greenness and of these three vintages will generally be ready before the 1996s; while the **1996s** have very good density but pretty massive tannins and most should be kept for quite a while yet.