

## Galloning it alone

13 Feb 2013 by Jancis Robinson

I've never met Mrs Antonio Galloni but she must be very patient and supportive. There she is, expecting her first child, or perhaps with a young baby already, and a husband gainfully employed at Deutsche Bank in New York. His strong leisure interest in wine is usefully funnelled into a respected newsletter *The Piedmont Report*.

In 2006 he is paid the compliment of being invited to join Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate* team to replace Daniel Thomases as Parker's Italian specialist. He adds Champagne to his responsibilities. So far so good, though Galloni must have had to spend a lot of time on the road.

Then, almost exactly two years ago, he says he's going to give up his career in finance entirely, to concentrate on wine and go and [work for Parker full time](#). This now involves taking over reporting on California from Parker himself and Burgundy from Purple Pager [David Schildknecht](#), as well as the whole of Italy and Champagne. Alder Yarrow reports [here](#) on the impact of Galloni on the California wine scene. Galloni also starts to talk about how the future of *The Wine Advocate* might pan out and his plans for associated events and other media. It is widely assumed that he is heir apparent to Robert Parker.

Forward to last December when Robert Parker announced that he had [sold](#) the majority stake in his business to Singapore investors, mainly the man behind wine merchant Hermitage who had previously organised his tours of Asia, for a reported \$15 million. The editorial office was to move to Singapore under the auspices of *Wine Advocate*'s Australian specialist Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW. There was no specific mention of Galloni but Lisa was quoted as suggesting there was no shortage of wine-writing talent to choose from should any of the team members be unhappy with the new arrangements.

And then late yesterday Galloni announces he is going it alone with an email to many of us wine professionals and [this news story](#) in the *New York Times* online, launching [antoniogalloni.com](#) with coverage of his old areas. He says he will transfer his 25,000 wine reviews from [erobertparker.com](#) to [antoniogalloni.com](#), but they are not there yet and I would imagine that the transfer will be keeping some lawyers and software developers profitably employed for some time.

What's particularly intriguing is that it is also clear that the funding for this venture is by no means firmly settled. Being of a cautious nature, I think I might have waited to have this rock solid before making any announcement. As I say, Mrs Galloni is obviously exceptional.

Some will be struck by the closeness of the parallel between Galloni's plans and the adventures of James Suckling, who was the lead wine reviewer for *Wine Spectator* but similarly decided to strike out on his own with [jamesuckling.com](#), which seems to have gone a little quiet recently. It has to be said that Robert Parker (on his bulletin board) has been very much more gracious about his ex-reviewer's departure, even though he heard about it only yesterday, than Suckling's previous employer was in a similar position.

What is clear is that there is now an exciting number of situations vacant for wine reviewers, of which the most obvious are:

- [The Wine Advocate](#) - Burgundy, Champagne, Italy, California
- [antoniogalloni.com](#) - Bordeaux, Rhône, Spain, Germany, South America, Australia & New Zealand

These are rare opportunities for the right people, and you may care to make some concrete suggestions via the Comments box below.

But beware the Burgundy slot on *The Wine Advocate*. Parker himself did it until it all ended after a lawsuit from François

Faiveley. Pierre-Antoine Rovani took over, only to return to his previous life as a Washington wine retailer. David Schildknecht was next, but only for a few years - some Burgundians having been puzzled by the arrival of another member of the *Advocate* team, UK-based Neal Martin, before Schildknecht. David ceded to Galloni, having reviewed fewer vintages than had been expected.

Needless to say, considerable discontent was expressed on the bulletin board (forum) of [erobertparker.com](http://erobertparker.com) that they all heard about it via the *New York Times* rather than from Galloni's ex-employer. One poster commented, 'Talk about a wild week... the Pope resigns, North Korea tinkers with a nuke test, and now AG leaves TWA.... is this the end of the world?'