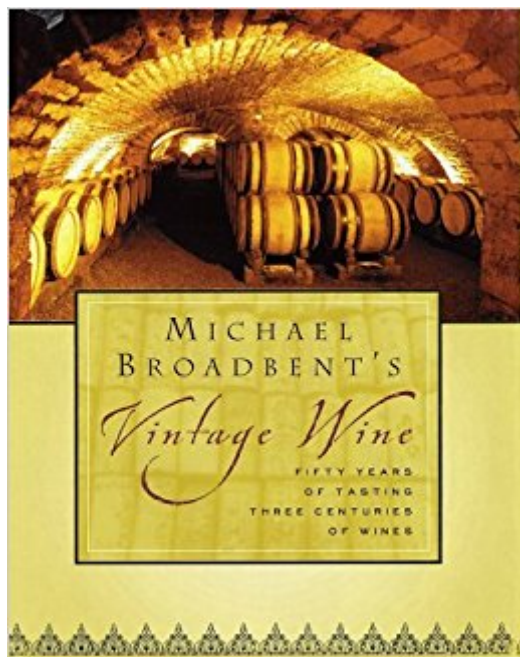


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# Michael Broadbent's Vintage Wine



## Synopsis

Unquestionably unique, demonstrably delightful, Michael Broadbent's *Vintage Wine* is the culmination of one of the most extraordinary careers in the world of wine. Michael Broadbent quite possibly knows more about fine, old wines than anyone else alive, and he writes about them with unparalleled expertise. Hired by Christie's in 1966 to revive their wine auctions, Broadbent threw himself into his work, searching out great collections of the world's finest wine--and keeping meticulous tasting notes. Here are evocations of Chateau d'Yquem from 1784--one of Thomas Jefferson's favorites--and hundreds of vintages and thousands of wines right up to the present. Years of "cellars visited and pillaged, involving the checking and packing of dust- and grime-laden bottles in distinctly dank and chilly conditions," jet-set auctions around the world, legendary tastings and society events, have all helped to create an unrivalled store of vinous anecdotes as well as an unsurpassed wine-tasting history.

EXCERPT From a tasting of 1784 Chateau Yquem: "The most renowned vintage of the late 18th century and well-documented thanks mainly to the original copies of the letters and orders of Thomas Jefferson. . . . Jefferson did not trust wine merchants and insisted on bottling at the chateau. . . . The wine has a warm mahogany-amber colour with a pronounced yellow-green rim. Initially, the nose, unsurprisingly, was creakingly old but after fifteen minutes settled down to reveal a remarkably rich, tangy, honeyed scent."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After devoting five decades to sampling, studying and selling wine, Broadbent boasts encyclopedic

vinous knowledge. Head of Christie's wine department since 1966, the author has tasted almost everything. In this volume, Broadbent offers detailed accounts of wines he's tried (always mentioning when his last tasting took place), peppered with anecdotes of wine dinners and wealthy oenophiles. Each major wine-producing region, from Bordeaux to California to New Zealand and everywhere in between, has its own chapter. Chapters are subdivided into time periods, with an introduction to the region during each period, a list of specific years that produced great vintages, year-by-year highlights, and a zero-to-five star rating system for each wine catalogued. Broadbent gushes about his favorites, but he remains forthright: while a 1945 Bordeaux from Chateau Latour is a "great wine. Surely one of the best ever Latours, drinking beautifully now but with many years more life," a 1954 Bordeaux from that same vineyard is "chunky, coarse, and blunt." Anyone considering a vintage purchase or wondering about the right time to uncork a dusty bottle could consult this extensive guide. And anyone seeking to impress friends with wine bravado could easily quote Broadbent's colloquial opinions. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

PRAISE FOR MICHAEL BROADBENT"Michael Broadbent is in the first rank of wine authorities, and has led the way in defining and commenting on wine for the past 50 years. His early recognition of the possibilities for California wine, and his analysis and support over the years, have been crucial in our development. There is no one whose judgment I trust more than Michael's."--Robert Mondavi"[Michael Broadbent] has traded in and tasted a greater number of fine and rare wines than anyone else in the world." --Jancis Robinson

A very interesting read. Broadbent offers another voice and perspective on wine ... compared to WS and WA. Look elsewhere for recommendations for wines from 2000 and younger and if you really like big bold high alcohol wines. The book is in great shape and was received within the timeframe provided.

I first fell under Mr. Broadbent's spell during my earliest days as a fledgling sommelier. His slender volume, Michael Broadbent's Complete Guide to Wine Tasting and Wine Cellars (1982) has long been, like they say about middleweight boxers, pound-for-pound the best book I've ever read about appreciating wine. When the wine auction scene arrived in Chicago in the mid-eighties. I can still remember attending some of the first few events at the University Club, sponsored by Christie's and conducted by the legendary MB. I was overwhelmed watching him lead auctions, but way too shy and in awe of him to introduce myself. Because MB is a wine tasting hero. He's quite possibly the

most accomplished wine taster in the world, certainly when it comes to Bordeaux, and heir to centuries of Britain's dominance as the arbiter of European and thus the world's best wines. This book, *Vintage Wines*, is a compilation of tasting notes spanning his career. It presents notes on thousands of wines in MB's impeccable, staccato style in which he is often able to elucidate the innate character or value of a wine in a few succinct phrases, along with his 0-5 star rating system. It also weaves in wonderful details of vintages, wines, and people he has known and loved. Mr. Broadbent is a classicist, by which I mean his definition of quality predates Robert Parker's arrival on the wine scene. Inconceivable as it may be to many Americans, good wines were both made and enjoyed before Parker redefined the terms. Which is not to say that Parker adds no value to the debate, it's just that more modest authorities like Mr. Broadbent advocate a traditional style of wine making in which the individual character provided by soil and climate is given its expression rather than the creation of soulless fruit-bombs. Finesse, breed, elegance, typicity, potential to improve with age, but most of all drinkability and compatibility with food are the hallmarks of great wines for Mr. Broadbent. Nothing illustrates the comparison better or helps you understand why you would want to consult MB's notes more than a look at the ratings of the same wines presented by MB's *Vintage Wines*, the *Wine Spectator*, and the *Wine Advocate*.

Chateau Pavie, 2000. Very deep, velvety; tobacco-like, sweaty tannins; sweet, full-bodied, charred and tarry taste. Impressive, but I much prefer the late Jean-Paul Valette's Pavie, which was so much more drinkable. For me. \*\*.

For wine competitions and our American cousins, (\*\*\*\*\*). (Michael Broadbent)"2000 Chateau Pavie (St.-Emilion): This is a super model of a wine. Super grapey, with red licorice and perfumed aromas. Full-bodied and very tight, with racy tannins and a sleek finish. Best wine of the hillsides of St.-Emilion. Lasts for minutes." 95-100 Points - *Wine Spectator*, March 30, 2001"

2000 Chateau Pavie (St.-Emilion): With no shortage of confidence, Gerard Perse feels the 2000 is the greatest Pavie ever produced. Premature you say? Don't discount the proprietor's rhetoric. A blend of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, it is a backward, super-concentrated effort displaying an inky purple color, and a thrilling bouquet of minerals, black fruits, vitamins, and toast. It possesses a wealth of fruit, glycerin, and extract as well as high levels of tannin, and a finish that lasts nearly a minute. It will undoubtedly close down after bottling, and not be close to prime time drinking until 2010 or later. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2050." 96-98 Points - Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s, *The Wine Advocate*, Issue 139

Are they all talking about the same wine? Who is right? Only you can be the judge. While this happens to be a wine that MB doesn't much care for, you can get a good feeling for how his notes work. It's important to point out that he is definitely willing to call a spade a spade when he doesn't like a wine and the book has many such graceful and witty

putdowns. Back to the book itself. The book is arranged by wine growing region, and while it touches all corners of the wine world, the pages devoted to each area are a telltale sign of where Mr. Broadbent's passion and experience lie. For example, here are the regions with the most notes, with pages in (): Red Bordeaux (150), White Bordeaux (46), Red Burgundy (58), White Burgundy (29), Germany (50), Italy (18), California (35). Each chapter starts out with a few paragraphs of background and then presents the notes, all arranged by vintage from the oldest to the most recent. Fortunately, the book was published in time to allow him to include some notes from the heralded 2000 Bordeaux vintage. I think it would be fair to say that Mr. Broadbent has access to and gets to taste a lot higher quality of wine than most of us, so many of the reviews are probably for wines that we will never see let alone get a chance to try. He starts each Bordeaux vintage with the first growths and the Burgundy vintage with DRC wines, such that if I bought a single bottle of each in one vintage it would cost more than I spend on wine in total in a good year. So that brings us to the downside of this wonderful compendium. What is it good for? If you're a die-hard MB fan like me, it's a treat to enter his world and vicariously taste yourself through his lifetime in wine. For others, it will prove valuable if you've got the money and inclination to buy great wines at auction (and avoid some over-rated clunkers). Even then, it's not by any means exhaustive, and if you're buying anything but the best of the best you can't always find what you want. For many of us it's a little like having your nose pressed against the glass, wishing that just once we'd get to taste (or even smell!) the 1945 Latour that MB has tasted and dutifully logged 28 times.

Love it! Can't get enough of it! It look so so So Gorgeous ! my friends and family loved them. very good condition for the price live up to its promise Perfect condition, easy to use Good sellers, it is very good. I would definitely recommend purchasing especially for the low price and you will not be disappointed.

Michael Broadbent is a justifiably legendary critic whose perspective is especially valuable in a Shanken/Parker-dominated world. This book is great. However, one word of caution on this book -- a non-negligible fraction of his tasting notes from old wines are likely inaccurate, because the wines in question were likely fake. Namely, Broadbent (and many other critics) relied heavily on a German dealer/collector named Hardy Rodenstock for samples of the oldest wines noted in the book (by which I mean pre-WWII and especially pre-1900). For example, if you look at MB's tasting notes on pre-1900 Chateau d'Yquem, it appears that one-third or more of the TN's are attributable to Rodenstock-sourced bottles. Rodenstock is now the subject of lawsuits filed by two prominent

collectors, Bill Koch and Russell Frye, as detailed in a recent WSJ article. He is steadily developing a reputation as one of the bigger [...] in the history of the fine wine business. This is not to say that most of the old wines tasted by MB weren't genuine, but because Rodenstock was such a major source of old wines, it is now difficult to know which were fake and which were real. MB was likely a victim of Rodenstock's chicanery, pure and simple. But the responsible thing to do at this point would be to issue a new edition down the road with known Rodenstock-sourced bottles stripped from the book.

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