

OVERSEAS NEWS

Red alert as America's most renowned critical force takes a back seat.

PARKER REVAMPS REVIEWER ROSTER

In a big editorial shake-up at Robert Parker Jr's Baltimore-based *Wine Advocate*, three new wine reviewers will replace long-time writers Daniel Thomases and Pierre Rovani, who recently parted company with the Lord of the Grapes. Parker's role as a reviewer will also be substantially diminished.

One of the new recruits, David Schildknecht, has been contributing part-time to the publication since 2005, with critiques of German, Austrian, Central European and American Eastern and Midwestern regional wines. As a full-time *Wine Advocate* staffer, he adds New Zealand and South Africa to his portfolio. He will also cover France, except for the Rhône Valley, Provence and Bordeaux. Assessing wines from these areas, together with California, remain the preserve of Parker. The publisher of wine newsletter *Piedmont Report*, Antonio Galloni, joins Parker to



provide coverage of Italian wines. Third in the trilogy of newbies is Dr Jay Miller. He has been a "dear friend" of Parker's for 25 years. Despite reservations about undermining their relationship, he has agreed to team up with Parker to review

wines from the Pacific Northwest, Spain, South America, Portugal and Australia. His experience as the buyer for one of Parker's favourite local bottle shops, Bin 604, and participation in the great panjandrum's wine tasting inner circle, Les Oenarchs, should serve him better in this new role than his doctorate in child psychology.

Parker has frequently sparred with prominent wine gurus over his tasting judgments and wine-by-numbers philosophy. But no-one can deny the influence of his opinions, particularly as far as the market for French wines is concerned, where *parkerisé* now characterises any wine corresponding to his oft-quoted "hedonistic fruit bomb" palate preferences. He has been no less adept at furthering the cause of Australian wines, particularly shiraz. To what extent Miller will have the same clout with devotees of drops from down-under remains to be seen. ANTHONY MANIFOLD