

PARCELLE PRESS

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1982

100 POINTS

# GREAT VINTAGES

**WHAT THEY ARE,  
WHY THEY MATTER**

*and why they don't*

# THE HIT LIST

This is not a comprehensive vintage chart. Rather, it's a list of vintages people say are the best in certain regions. It's also a list of some vintages people don't say are great but actually are pretty great.

This is an acclaimed year of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Burgundy and Bordeaux. At this time, few regions were bottling wine as a luxury product—and it all stayed in France until the Prohibition in America ended in 1933.

You're FANCY.

This vintage is perfect for Burgundy, the Rhône, and Barolo. Both the best producers and people who weren't as skilled made great wines because the weather conditions were so nice.

This year is the middle child of a run of three important years. It's lesser-known, but a great vintage. The wines are meaty, savory, and will age forever. It was not, however, a good Burgundy year.

The flavors of climate change started in 1990. Since then, wines have gotten bigger.

In every sense, the 1990s will not be that memorable—life was pretty good! And the vintages of the 1990s were all just pretty good too. 1996 Champagne, however, was very good.

This is the year Burgundy became really expensive. The American market started to pay up for wines on the secondary market, whereas previously it wasn't considered collectible. Before this year, no one really cared about it. Now everyone cares about it. 2005 Burgundy is the real deal.

The weather was hot across the map this year. In Burgundy, the prices jumped up across the board yet again. It's a powerful year and a high point year. We think it's pretty good—everyone does, really.

This is a nice round number. It's also a nice vintage for just about everywhere other than Champagne.

1929 1947 1959 1971 1978 1982 1988 1989 1990 1991 1996 2000 2005 2008 2010 2013 2015

Following World War II, France needed something to celebrate. 1947 is a Bordeaux vintage marked by the nearly perfect Cheval Blanc. 1947 Barolo is very rare, but equally great. At this point, Italian wine was just starting to take itself seriously enough not to be sold out of jugs.

This is a fancy vintage for Red Burgundy and Barolo. It's one of the greatest vintages right now if you want older wine.

Robert Parker made this vintage. He also made himself on this vintage. It's only good in Bordeaux, and although it's very good, it's not as great as its cultural association.

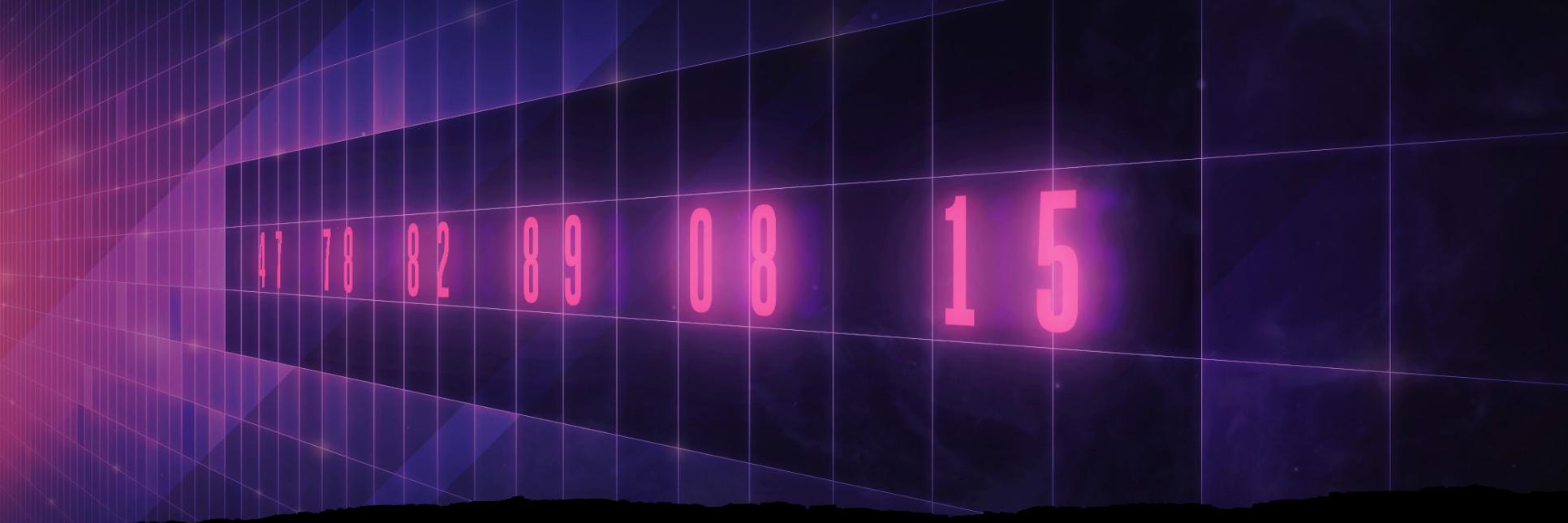
Almost everywhere made great wine this year—and it's drinking perfectly now too. Champagne, California, Barolo, the Rhône.

No one cared about this year until recently. It's like the posthumous effect for artists. Now, in Burgundy and the Rhône, it's the shit.

This was the year we all thought we were going to expire.

The 2008 vintage of Lafite Rothschild has the Chinese symbol for the number eight etched onto the bottle. Eight is the luckiest number in China, as it represents wealth, fortune, and prosperity. All of those words can be used to describe the success of Lafite 2008; its prices rose 20% with the addition of the symbol. Otherwise, it was NOT a great vintage.

This year is special to Barolo. Lots of the lesser-known producers started to get press without changing their style of wine to match what critics wanted. It's the type of vintage someone will say needs to age for a long time before it's tasty. 2013 is also a nice Red Burgundy vintage following two difficult years.



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**ON NEARLY EVERY BOTTLE OF WINE, YOU WILL SEE FOUR** numbers inscribed on the label. Unless you're very fancy, nowadays, the first two numbers will always be 19 or 20. This is the vintage. Simply put, the vintage is the year the grapes for that particular wine were picked. But why does that matter?

In wine, the vintage can tell you a lot about what's inside the bottle. People who "know about wine" use the vintage as a quick reference to identify both objective measures and, if they're savvy, the subjective forces that give the number meaning. The structure of the wine and the weather inherently affect how "good" a vintage is deemed. Add to that the opinions of critics and the view of collective culture, and you've got a list of factors that add up to

whether a vintage is something to be proud of, or if it will forever be sitting alone at the lunch table.

We believe if you care enough about what you drink to care about the vintage, then you should understand what happened that year to understand if you'll like the wine. (We don't necessarily think you should drink the wine just because someone *said* it's a good vintage.) But we also believe that as long as winemakers are able to get across the annual finish line of harvesting grapes, chances are there's some pleasure to be found in their wine, even if it's different from the last vintage you loved—and frankly, that's what keeps this whole wine-drinking thing fun. Vintage matters, but to us, the idea of a good year isn't as interesting as the idea of a good wine.

# THE STRUCTURE

**A VINTAGE IS MOST RELEVANT WHEN THE WINE AT HAND** is age-worthy and collectible. Usually, these wine are from the classic regions: Bordeaux, Burgundy, Barolo, Napa Valley, Champagne.\* This is the type of wine that someone may collect for ultimate satisfaction at a later date.

Aging wine is a hobby and for many, even an obsession. It requires storage without much movement at an optimal temperature. Some people have dedicated spaces just for this purpose. Aging wine does not work in your kitchen cabinet—you should just drink those wines.

Certain vintages age better than others because of the wines' structure, which is a combination of the acidity, the tannin, and the level of alcohol. It's how the wine tastes. Structure does not mean whether a wine is big or light; rather, it's a wine's raw material. A common assumption

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\* If you don't see any vintage on a bottle, that means it is a blend of multiple vintages. This practice is most common in Champagne.



is that big wines age best.\* But just like a lanky man can be the hot dog eating champion or a ballerina can be the strongest athlete, bigger does not always mean better. →

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\* A “big wine” is usually considered to be dark in color, rich in flavor, and boozy.

## The Wonder Years

Some producers will only make certain wines in what they feel are the best vintages—and that's because they only want to make the best wine. There's no formula of factors to determine a "best" vintage. Sometimes it's emotional, sometimes it's collectively recognized, or sometimes it's about making controversy.

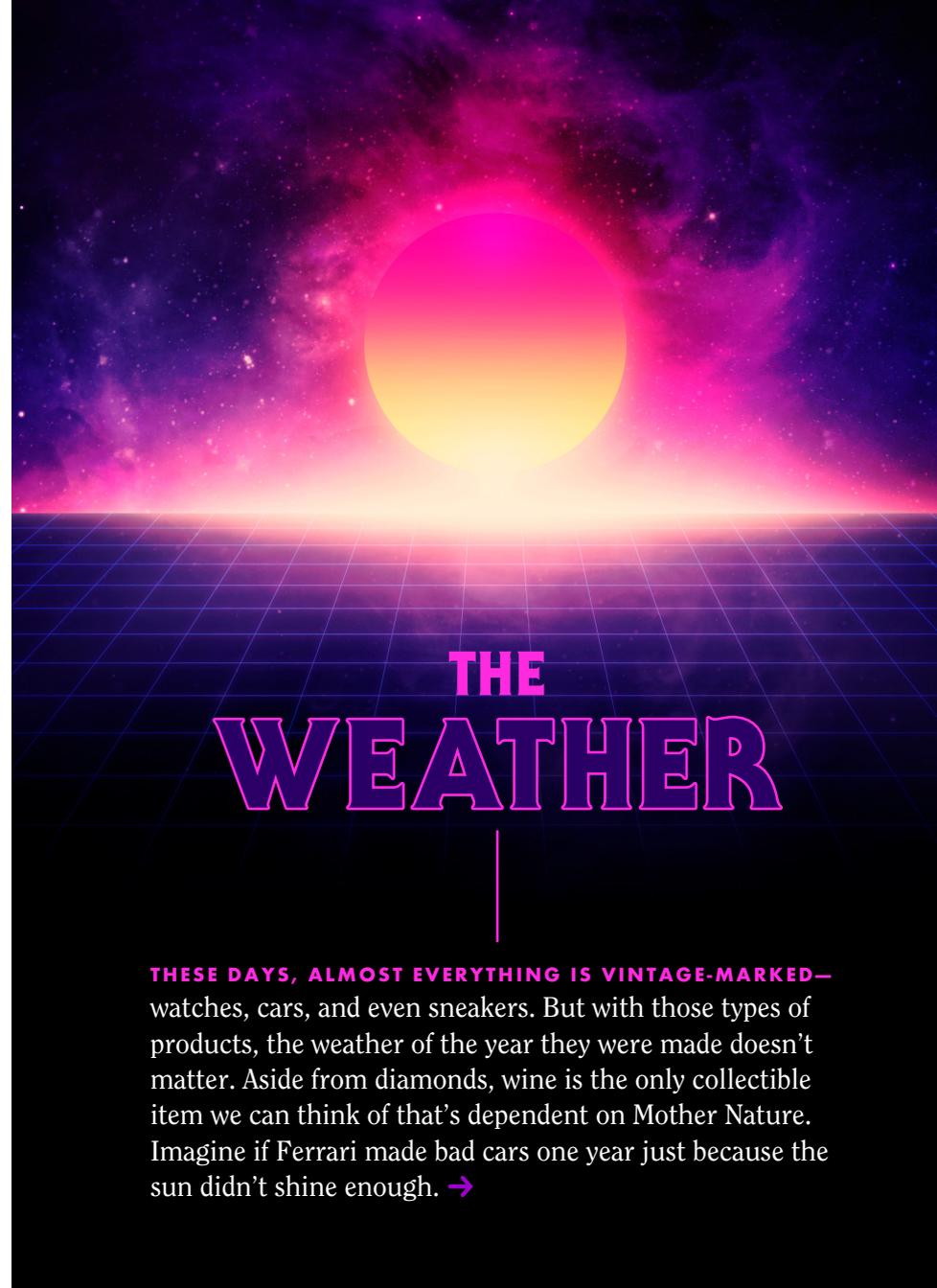
Giacomo Conterno has only released their prestigious Barolo Monfortino in nine years since 2000. In other years, the same grapes go into their standard Barolo Cascina Francia.

Vietti has only made their renowned Barolo Villero in 13 years since 1982. In other years, those grapes go into a wine that costs 80% less.

The famous Champagne house Salon only made 37 vintages in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Champagne is a particularly difficult place to declare a great vintage, and Salon represents the highest caliber of sparkling wine. For them, it would be shameful to make anything less than exceptional.

↓ Today, the best vintages are the wines that have the highest acidity. This shift is in part because consumers' collective taste has moved toward more refreshing wines—and with global warming (we'll get to that in a moment), some vintages are now too rich and too full-bodied. Think of a peach: It's optimal at its moment of peak ripeness. After that, when it turns from juicy to jammy, it's just... gross.

Some of the greatest old bottles in the world come from Burgundy, where the wines are light in body and low in alcohol—but Burgundy has high acidity. It's why certain white wines are actually age-worthy too. Although white wine does not have any tannin, some, such as riesling and White Burgundy, do contain an abundance of acidity.



# THE WEATHER

**THESE DAYS, ALMOST EVERYTHING IS VINTAGE-MARKED—**watches, cars, and even sneakers. But with those types of products, the weather of the year they were made doesn't matter. Aside from diamonds, wine is the only collectible item we can think of that's dependent on Mother Nature. Imagine if Ferrari made bad cars one year just because the sun didn't shine enough. →



## *The Taste of Climate Change*

Global Warming has caused the common flavor of some wine regions to change fundamentally, like Châteauneuf-du-Pape in France. The warmer the weather, the higher the alcohol content and the fruitier the flavor.\* This fact has pushed some wineries to explore areas that are higher in elevation, and has even put some regions on the map that were inhabitable for grapes previously—now you can get sparkling wine from England, for example.

Additionally, the unignorable increase in extreme storms and fires is so destructive that, really, we should worry a little more about saving the planet so we can continue to worry about how wine tastes. You know?

*\* Wine stops fermenting at 16% alcohol, which is why too much alcohol is problematic.*

↓ The impact of the climate on wine is nuanced, but the most basic breakdown is to look at whether a year was cold or, as is increasingly common, hot. We don't expect anyone to chart out the weather patterns of the South of France to determine whether they should be drinking this rosé or that one. In fact, vintage is nearly insignificant when discussing wines that are ready to drink in the first year they hit the market.\* But a general rule is that cooler years produce wines lower in alcohol, but higher in acidity, while wines from warm years are bigger in body and lower in acidity. Remember, the combination of alcohol and acidity are the bones of a wine's structure. So to some extent, structure and weather are connected.

How do you find a good vintage without studying The Weather Channel? You care more about how the wine tastes—and whether it tastes good to you—than what the vintage is. You'll be endlessly surprised by wines whose weather conditions don't follow the great vintage recipe, but have stood the test of time nevertheless.

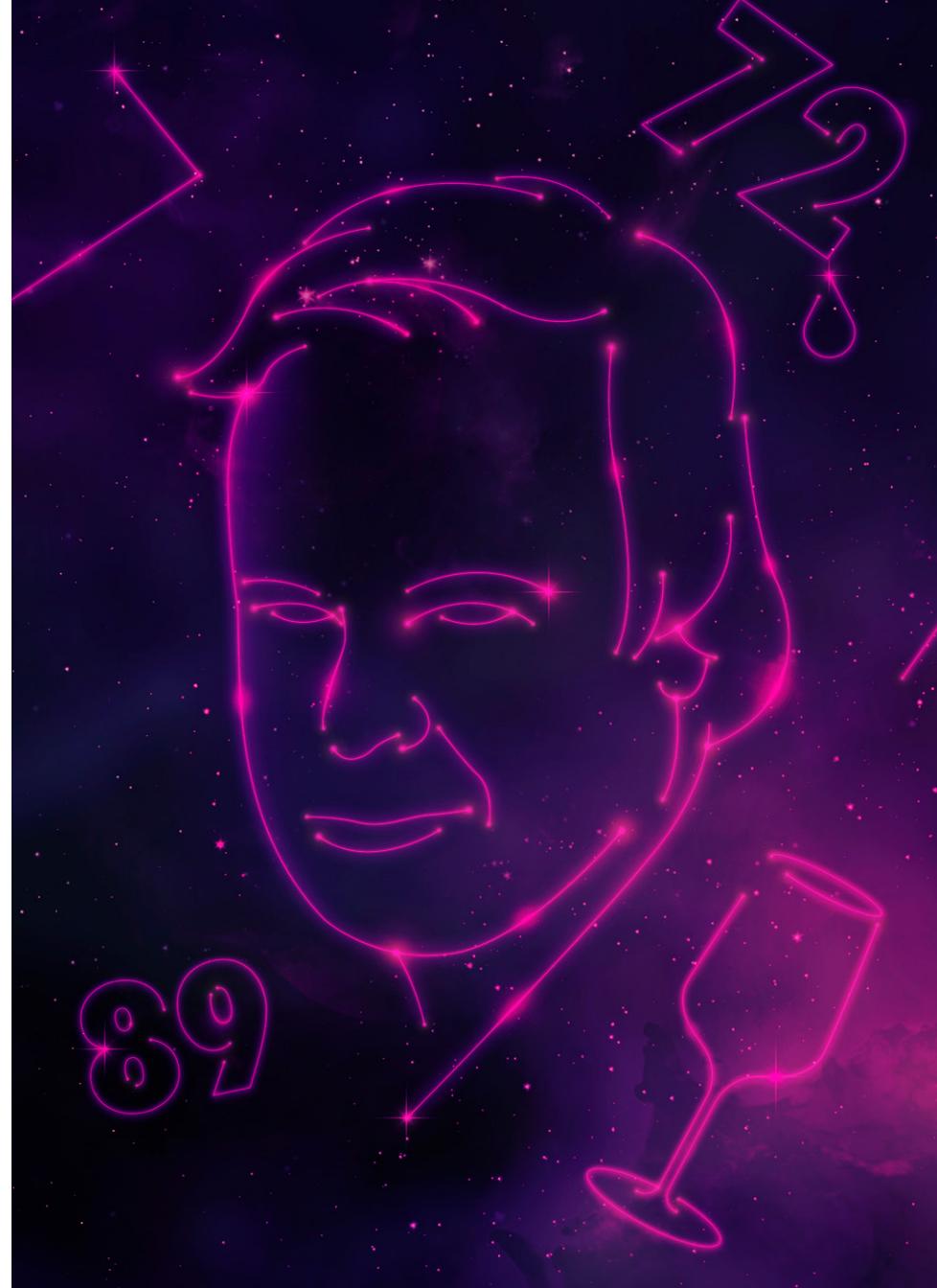
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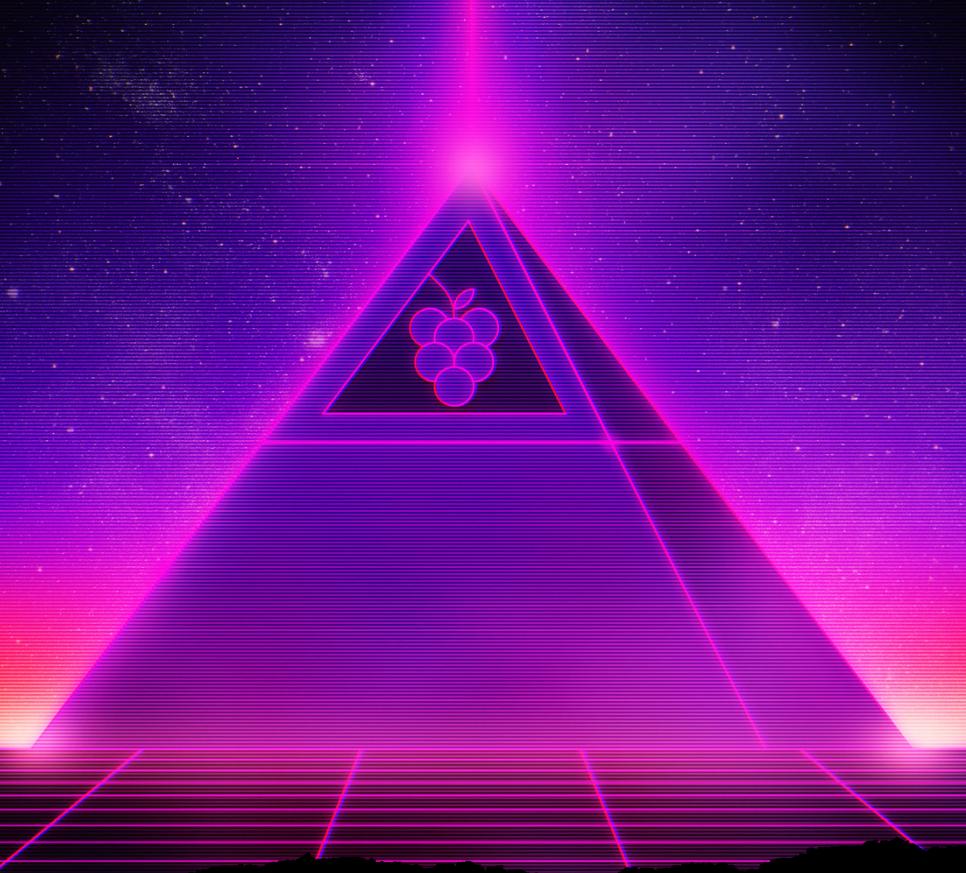
*\* Rosé is made to be enjoyed right away. But that's another conversation for another time.*

# THE CRITICS

**IT'S TOUGH TO REMEMBER, BUT BEFORE SOCIAL MEDIA** influencers, people read things on paper, like magazines and newsletters. One of those is *The Wine Advocate*. It was created by Robert Parker, America's first (and likely only) Famous Wine Guy. Parker created the 100-point quality scale; using its simple calculation, he could declare a vintage as great or not-so-great. We hold many vintages in high regard simply because he said so. This is the stuff of subjectivity: A great Parker vintage is one that's warm and has made the biggest and most powerful wines.

While any wine drinker today should respect what Parker achieved—and many do, as his point system is still widely used by other critics—it has created an obsession over the “best years” that deems some styles of wine as inferior simply because of the course the weather took that year. Not all wine is created equal, but in many instances, the vintage that was the dorky kid in high school went on to become your boss.





### *Points Make Money*

Critics matter. For many wineries, receiving high points has been a game-changer. We've seen wines increase 3x in price simply because of a great rating. For example, the winery Sassicaia's 1985 vintage is 100 points. It trades around \$3,000 a bottle, while the 1984 and 1986 vintages cost around \$500. The 1985 is inarguably a superior wine, but its cost is also inarguably inflated as a result of its high score. In most instances, once a high-scoring wine, always a high-scoring wine.

# THE CULTURE

**YOU CAN SEE HOW IT ALL COMES FULL CIRCLE: THE** weather impacts the structure, which impacts the points rating. Now layer on culture. By culture, we mean what's going on in the world as a whole as well as what's going on in the world to someone personally. Neither necessarily has anything to do with the quality of a wine.

Collectors love to stock up on wines from the birth years of loved ones, or in most instances, their own (we think it's OK to celebrate yourself). Some people like to build a collection of vintages for a new addition to the family so they have a killer gift to share when that kid turns 21. And then some vintages resonate with all of us. The year 2000 speaks for itself, of course—and you can imagine 2020 wines won't be flying off shelves any time soon...

Parcelle opened in 2018 with a team comprised of some of the country's best sommeliers; we have spent years introducing guests to wines in a restaurant setting. Our objective at Parcelle is to bring that experience and opportunity to you by offering smart, delicious wines for every scenario in your life.

Our selections reflect a limited number of producers, all of whom we consider best in class—they are committed to the craft of winemaking, rather than to the commercialization of the product, and most farm organically. We strive to bring you well-made wines at many price points and from many areas of the world.

Whether it's a bottle for every day or for a super special occasion, we are here to ensure you'll always be drinking something good.

# Parcelle

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