

The impact of gurus: Parker grades and *en primeur* wine prices

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The purpose of this paper is to measure the impact of Robert Parker's oenological grades on Bordeaux wine prices. We study their impact on the so-called *en primeur* wine prices, i.e., the prices established at the moment when the wines are still extremely young and not yet bottled (in general only the top Bordeaux wines are sold *en primeur*). The Parker grades are usually published in the spring of each year (in the *The Wine Advocate*), before the wine prices are established. However, the wine grades attributed for the 2002 vintage have been published much later (in October 2003), *alter* the determination of the prices. We argue that this unusual reversal can be seen as a natural experiment. We exploit it by measuring the Parker effect as the difference between the observed *en primeur* price and a predicted price. The predicted price is calculated using a simple hedonic equation. This hedonic equation is estimated using a large sample of *en primeur* prices, Parker grades and a set of very detailed meteorological variables.