

## Seven Best Wine Blogs

The Internet has spawned thousands of self-proclaimed wine critics. Here, the bloggers who truly have something to say.

BY MICKEY BUTTS ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CAIRNS

AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY OR NIGHT, someone somewhere is pouring out his or her thoughts about wine on a blog—the now-ubiquitous Web journal. Blogs offer an unfiltered, conversational and passionate point of view. And they can respond to events in the wine world faster than any kind of print media possibly could. You can keep tabs on dozens of wine blogs through Wine Blog Watch ([wineblogwatch.arrr.net](http://wineblogwatch.arrr.net)). Although most are rambling and full of monotonous recitations of “wines I’ve tasted,” a few stand out for their quality and timeliness. The ones mentioned here represent the best of the wine blogs and a variety of perspectives—from obsessive amateur to full-fledged wine pro.

### The Wine Importer

JOEDRESSNER.COM

Joe Dressner is part-owner of Louis/Dressner Selections, an American wine importer specializing in small producers, mostly French wines from highly regarded names like Bernard Baudry and Didier Barrouillet. When he’s not traveling the world on business, he publishes one of the least pretentious blogs on the Web. It’s wise and outspoken, as in a post about the state of wine tasting today. “Wine is not a vehicle for egomania, boastfulness and self-promotion. All the great ‘tasters’ I have known are able to submerge their ego and understand what is in the bottle.”

### Vinography

VINOGRAPHY.COM

Alder Yarrow is a San Francisco high-tech consultant and wine geek who runs Vinography, perhaps the Web’s most popular and comprehensive wine blog. Like many bloggers, he’s obsessed with what he calls his second career. “Instead of watching TV, I blog,” he says. “I believe telling stories about a wine helps remove it from the realm of



high status where all we know about it is the price.” In addition to Yarrow’s wine writing, Vinography includes his restaurant reviews. For instance, he raves about the duck and quince salad, the ravioli—and, yes, the wine list—at Quince in San Francisco. It also features links to articles in magazines, newspapers and other blogs.

### Jamie Goode's Blog

WINEANORAK.COM/BLOG.HTM

Jamie Goode, a Brit, writes for several well-known English wine magazines and runs the Wine Anorak Web site, which offers excellent articles about wine travel, winemakers and wine tasting. He saves his more casual writing for his blog, in which he’s refreshingly candid

*Mickey Butts is a business editor and writer and the creator of the short-lived e-mail wine newsletter Route du Vin.*

about the daily life of a wine professional. "We've had a huge rise in the number of samples landing on the doorstep chez Goode...It's not that there's anything wrong with samples; rather, the problem is that you end up focusing on a skewed population of wines—those that people are most anxious to flog."

### Dr. Vino's Wine Blog

**DRVINO.BLOGSPOT.COM**

Dr. Vino, a.k.a. Tyler Colman, really is a doctor—he wrote his doctoral dissertation at Northwestern University about the political economy of the wine industries in France and the United States. After teaching political science for two years, he settled into full-time wine writing and education. On his blog (a part of the Dr. Vino Web site), Colman intelligently explores the intersection of wine, politics and business. For example, he recently explained—in clear, compelling terms—how the Costco case before the Seattle federal district court could lead to an even bigger dismantling of the three-tier wine distribution system than the Supreme Court's recent decision on interstate shipment of wine.

### Veritas in Vino

**ALICEFEIRING.COM**

The wine and travel columnist for *Time* magazine, Alice Feiring uses her blog to share her thoughts on everything from biodynamic winemaking to pairing wild ramps and red Burgundy. In her mission statement, she

writes, "I'm looking for the Leon Trotskys, the Philip Roths, the Chaucers and the Edith Whartons of the wine world. I want my wines to tell a good story. I want them natural and most of all, like my dear friends, I want them to speak the truth even if we argue."

### VinoCibo.com

**VINOCIBO.TYPEPAD.COM**

Although Craig Camp, a former Italian-wine importer, recently moved from Italy to Oregon to take a job at Anne Amie Vineyards, he still maintains the most in-depth and knowledgeable blog on Italian wine. It's full of useful producer profiles and tasting notes, touting lesser-known labels like Fattoria Zerbina in Romagna. He writes about restaurants too, likening Milan's Boccondivino to a museum, ending cheerfully: "I love art."

### Wine Tasting, Vineyards, in France

**WINETERROIRS.COM**

French photographer Bertrand Celce travels the wine routes of his country and records his encounters in both vivid pictures and somewhat fractured English with the vigneron he meets along the way. For example, Celce profiles Junko Arai, a Japanese wine importer who recently began making wine in the Loire, describing her efforts to gain appellation status for her bottlings. Celce also offers insights on everything from corks to the best Paris wine bars, both legendary (the venerable Caves Legrand) and neighborhood (Le Verre à Pied).



## The Best Wine Discussion Forums

Check out these discussion forums (message boards), where some of the most interesting—and best-informed—wine discussions are held.

### Mark Squires' Wine Bulletin Board

**EROBERTPARKER.COM/BBOARD/BOARDINTRO.ASP**

This bulletin board on Robert Parker's Web site attracts geeky and very well-informed tasters, so the discussions can be quite serious. A post from Alex Anthopoulos, a.k.a. Dr. ScrewCap—"I still just don't 'get' why and how it is that restaurants with wine lists attempt to justify a

300 percent (or more!) markup on a bottle of wine as a necessary cost of doing business"—sparked a heated debate about restaurant economics, with more than 700 replies.

### Wine Lovers' Discussion Group

**WINELOVERSPAGE.COM/FORUM**

Robin Garr runs one of the Web's oldest wine forums on his encyclopedic Wine Lovers' Page, which debuted in 1994. This easy-to-navigate discussion forum accommodates the novice and expert alike. Newbies will like postings with travel tips about

wineries, while the more experienced will enjoy the detailed tasting notes and polite discussions.

### Wine Therapy

**ENEMYVESSEL.COM/FORUM**

Regular participants in this site's forum are called "patients" who are "in therapy" (to cure wine obsession?), but the discussions are blessedly sane. Though this board doesn't have as many posts as some of the larger forums, the ones here are low-key and intelligent; many members are wine-industry insiders, such as Joe Dressner of the Wine Importer blog.