



EVERYDAY DRINKING

WITH JASON WILSON

IS JASON WILSON

PUNK?

IS WINE WRITING?

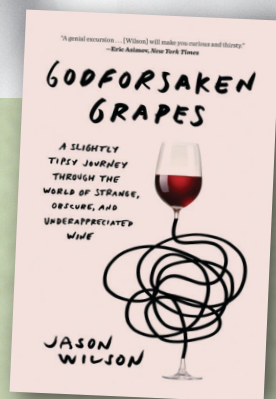
ARE YOU? AM I?

THAT'S A HARD "MAYBE."

So we gave the Food/Travel/Wine writer the lightning round to ascertain street cred. (www.everydaydrinking.com)

Your newsletter and articles deftly push back on bullshit regularly. I think this can be a great spearhead to dethrone figureheads in ivory towers, but in your view, how can typical audiences push back when encountering someone who is trying to peddle/espouse something that is clearly bullshit?

People always comment on my having a "no bullshit" approach, or as you say that I "push back on the bullshit," but I guess I don't really see it that way. Obviously, yes, there's a ton of bullshit in the wine business. But mostly I just ignore the bullshit. Ultimately, I feel like the only way to successfully fend off bullshit is to ignore it. Which is why my approach is more about celebrating and advocating for things I believe represent quality and value. Certainly, I've done my share of rants. But I really do try to limit how often I'm the ranting curmudgeon. It's much easier to write a snarky takedown than to write a piece expressing sincerely why something is really good, and I like to focus on the latter as much as possible.





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Hypothetical scenario: 1) Wine Scores/ Points. 2) Terroir Deniers. 3) Wine Certification/Credentials Programs (i.e. WSET, Court Of Master Somms, etc.) - You get to pick which of these three topics gets banished from wine discourse forever - which one hits the road and why?

Wow, I mean, you could make a case for all three. Terroir Deniers are idiots and so will eventually banish themselves from the discourse. Wine scores are lame, but as long as they're done with integrity, they're harmless. They help some (mostly older) people in their wine buying, I guess. It's not the scores themselves, but particular critics that are the issue. I guess if I had to pick, I would say certifications and credentials because, at this point, I don't really know what they're actually for. A lot of the exams just seems like spending a lot of time and money to prepare for a wine version of Trivial Pursuit. Oh, you memorized the 13 grapes used in Châteauneuf-du-Pape? Cool, bro. Yeah, I forgot four of the grapes but I have Google on my phone so I'm good. One problem with the credentialing is that it reinforces the idea that wine needs gatekeepers. The second problem is that continues to normalize the idea that wine is something you need to be educated on, that it's this topic you need to study if you want to enjoy it.

Asking questions, challenging the status quo, do-it-yourself attitude, and speaking your mind-with volume and heart-is at the core of punk, metal, hardcore... just like your writing. So just how crazy are your music listening habits compared to your feisty articles about wine, food, and travel?

Hahaha, I think I may have rather boring music tastes. I wish I could tell the Blood of Gods audience I listen to Norwegian black metal or Finnish death metal. But my metal era was very short, in the late 1980s South Jersey, culminating with maybe Dio or Cinderella. I still occasionally listen to the skate punk and grunge of my youth, stuff like the Descendents, Minor Threat, The Faction, Agent Orange, Hole, L7, The Gits, and more contemporary ones like FIDLAR, Bleached, The Orwells, etc. but not as often. Though I have interrogated this in an essay for Everyday Drinking, I am decidedly not punk.

When I write now, I mostly listen to some sort of EDM. House, techno, ambient, trance, big room, whatever. I never totally know the definitions of the various rave-y sub-genres but I like it all. When I write I need that wall of sound and repetition and absence of lyrics.

When not writing, I listen to a mish-mash of pop punk, eurotrash, 60s French pop, 90s hip hop, reggaeton, alt country, emo, and what some friends call "whiny" alt rock. Which I don't think is fair, but there we are. When I was recently on a long drive in Spain, I put on a playlist called something like "Sad Girl Starter Kit" and after an hour of listening to Mitski, Phoebe Bridgers, Beach Bunny, Angel Olsen, Haley Heynderickx, Mazzy Star, etc. my travel companion finally was like, "I'm going to throw myself out of the car if we keep listening to this," and she put on disco. That's fine, agree to disagree, but I do love that kind of sad music.

What is going to be the next big trend in wine, or the next biggest "hot button" issue?

I've been saying it for a while, but the whole idea of mainstream wine is changing. That \$11.99 wine the industry is trying to sell us just isn't engaging younger wine drinkers. Look at the numbers worldwide - there's an overproduction of middling wines. The emerging generation of wine drinkers wants something that's either a) even cheaper (wine in cans, wine in boxes) or b) well-made, good-value wine that's more expensive. For the latter, we keep seeing study after study saying that the younger generation drinks less but spends more. And for the former, the wine industry doesn't seem to understand that it's competing at the lower end with seltzers, High Noon, and other shit in a can.

Based on feedback, what has been your spiciest hot take of an article you've written, and why do you think it elicited such responses?

I think my recent piece entitled "Does Wine Writing Have To Be So Embarrassing?" in which I call out the way that legacy, general-interest publications (in this case The NY Times) covers wine— I used the Times Magazine's recent profile of Oregon winemaker Maggie Harrison as the main example. Basically, I asked why wine can never be covered like any other normal part of culture, but instead always has some false conflict or narrative foisted on it. I definitely got more comments, emails, and likes on that than other pieces. I don't know why though. I've definitely called out other things more aggressively in the past. Maybe it's a question that's been on a lot of other people's minds. If we want wine to move forward and grow the engagement and acceptance of a wider audience, wine communication certainly has to become less embarrassing.

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