

## WINE SCANDAL AND WINE CRITICS



There are many recent accusations being made in the world of fine wine. As of recently, a well-known wine blogger from London has alleged that a Spanish contact for The Wine Advocate, a publication that is based in Maryland, has asked various wineries for money and in exchange, they would receive visits from wine reviewers, according to the Baltimore Sun. The man accused is Jay Miller, who used to co-own Bin 604 in Harbor East. This week, he stepped down from his spot with The Wine Advocate. Miller has denied all of these allegations and claims that he had been planning to resign for quite some time as he is getting older. When interviewed, Miller said, "I have a totally clear conscience." He also says, "I haven't received one cent of remuneration from visiting either the region [of Spain] or the wineries. What I write is totally based on what's in the bottle." However, the London blogger begs to differ and has made reports that Miller has tried to make arrangements in Spain with Pancho Campo, to make struggling winemakers pay more than \$20,000 for a simple exchange of a short visit from Miller along with a good review. The writer of this blog, Jim Budd, even posted up various e-mails between Campo and several wine executives. The fact of the matter is, a wine publication on The Wine Advocate, which is read by many users, can result in many sales and lots of money for a winery. This is one of the prime reasons why these wineries were willing to pay out the money for a review because they wanted to do what they could to ensure their wine business would be successful. In order for a winery to even be reviewed, Jay Miller would have to take notice to the winery first and then create a review. Budd says, "If you wanted access to Jay, you needed to pay Campo." He also says, "The winery's hope was by having their wines tasted, they'd not only get a good review, they'd get high points for their wine and that would help them in the U.S. Market." Budd says that he is not completely accusing of Miller but that the entire situation is quite suspicious, to say the least. "I'm not saying that Miller pocketed this money," Budd Explains "I'm not saying these were prices Miller was demanding. It was much more Pancho Campo." Miller says that he does not know whether or not Campo tried to bribe wineries for good reviews in exchange for money. He says that only Campo would know the answer to that. However, Miller says that when he visited wineries to review and write about them, he went without a bias.