



Ashley Parker Q&A

Google Fess Parker Wines' Ashley Parker and you'll discover the 41-year-old shares two-thirds of a name with teen heartthrob Ashley Parker Angel. "He's got better hair," she says, offering evidence of a fast wit and a self-deprecation not always visible in the upper reaches of the wine industry. Daughter of American TV legend Fess "Davy Crockett" Parker, Ashley returned home to Santa Barbara in 1990 to help run her father's winery. Ashley's humor and logistical savvy - she once worked in the Advance Office in the White House - helps her juggle the responsibilities of being a mother of three and executive vice-president of public relations and marketing of an award-winning winery, which received the accolade of "Winemaker of the Year" in 2006.

You share 2/3rds a name with Boy Band heartthrob Ashley Parker Angel. Do you ever get mail for him?

I just figured out who this guy was last year. He has much better hair than I do, but I've gotten no mis-mailed fan mail.

Who was your role model when you were 12?

Carly Simon. I was in the junior high chorus and very into my singing. Everyone else was into Olivia Newton John and Grease but me. I was deep into my Carly Simon phase.

Who is it now?

I'd say Katie Couric. She's intelligent. She does her homework. She doesn't deserve the slams. Being cute is no reason for someone to dismiss you. I'm a huge fan. Margaret Thatcher is a great lady too!

What's in your briefcase right this very minute?

A nasty chewed-on tennis ball from my pet Labradoodle Molasses, who comes to work with me.

What's your astrological sign?

Libra.

Favorite color?

Peridot Green.

You worked in the White House after college. What did you learn there that's useful now?

To be quiet and listen. To not get flustered around well-known people and treat people the way you want to be treated. I learned that people are people. Plan accordingly.

Most gratifying moment professionally?

As a White House presidential trip coordinator with jaded journalists at the Berlin Wall in 1987 and listening to President Reagan demand, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." An electric current went through everyone at that moment.

What song is the perfect ring tone for your kids' calls?

"Crazy" by Gnarl Barkley.

For your husband's?

Van Morrison's "Moondance."

Which do you prefer:

Cash or charge? Cash.

Sean Connery or Daniel Craig? Sean Connery.

Aveda or Kiehls? Aveda.

Greece or Rome? Rome.

Pilates or Yoga? Yoga.

Red or white? No bubbly? Well, then red."

What do men underestimate in women in business?

Our will. A lot of men think they can bluff or half-joke us into something. Gals don't buy it anymore.

What wine should people take a chance on?

Viognier. It's beautiful. It can be delicate, or voluptuous, like ours. We produce the Bette Midler of Viognier. It's not everyone's taste, but if you love her you love her.

What don't people know about your father Fess Parker that they should?

That he's extremely well-read. He was a history major at the University of Texas. I played Trivial Pursuit with him once and he just smoked us. He knew every question.

Did you have a coonskin cap as a kid?

No, our big treat was to try on his boots when he got home from the TV show. They seemed like hip waders to me then.

How is the cultivation of children like that of vines?

You must pay attention to the details. You prune. You weed. And sometimes you spray. You have to listen to kids. And you have to walk through the vineyard to see what's going on, to get an emotional update from the child. We make a point of eating dinner together every night.

What wine do you enjoy with a family dinner?

Either Fess Parker's Frontier Red, a Rhone blend, or the '03 Santa Barbara County Syrah. It's one of our best vintages with great body, flavor and a little spice.

What wine would you pour to accompany your last supper on Earth?

It would be one my husband Tim and I had for an anniversary: Billecart Salmon - a Brut Rose that's gorgeous and yummy.

What dessert?

The cheese cart at Masa's, the San Francisco restaurant. I'm a fromage junkie and with it I'd probably go with a fabulous over-the-top red, a Syrah: Torbreck's Factor.