

# 2014 Bordeaux

## Vintage Report



### 2014 BORDEAUX VINTAGE REPORT FEATURES

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## Bordeaux is Back: Priced Right—for the Most Part

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

As we arrived in Bordeaux on March 28th (after driving from Paris to Reims, to Sancerre, to Beaune, to Châteauneuf, to Saint-Chinian, to Limoux), we were apprehensive as to what we would find in terms of quality for the 2014 Bordeaux vintage. They had to be good—right? Bordeaux had to have a great or very good vintage after three difficult ones (though the '12s are showing fabulously right now).

We thought back to rough stretches of vintages like 1971-1974 or 1991-1994. After two tastings of older wines on the 28th and a dinner with three negociants that night, we were prepared to taste our first 2014 at a Sunday night dinner at Issan in Margaux. The 2014 Issan was delicious, and on the next day of tasting, some of the top 2014s in the north Médoc and others served at dinner at Labégorce confirmed that 2014 was a fine vintage indeed. The wines were so easy to drink—soft and elegant with plenty of fruit on the nose and palate.

So how did Bordeaux pull it off? We had heard gloomy reports during the summer, as the weather was cold and rainy. Let's go back and look at the weather conditions that led to the 2014 vintage. Again I must thank my friend and Bordeaux weather expert/negociant Bill Blatch for his 2014 report, which I used as a guide for this report.

On a sad note, I must mention the recent passing of my very good friend for over forty years: Mike Temple, the founder of Grape Expectations. Mike died suddenly in late April and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him. A consummate gentleman, Mike took me to Bordeaux in 1985 and introduced me to many of the châteaux owners and winemakers and to Bill Blatch. Mike—you will be missed.

### A Beneficial Winter

It all started with the second wettest winter in 50 years and the warmest in 24 years. Such high winter rainfall and temperatures were extremely welcome, setting up the year ahead for a well-nourished and early cycle. The warmth was to be of even greater importance than the rainfall, encouraging the vine to make a very early start. This would give it a comfortable advance—which was indispensable for the summer slow-down that was to come.

### A Promising Spring

Spring kicked off with a flourish when the daytime temperature shot up on the 7th of March a full six degrees above the norm. Such warmth after such a mild winter would have provoked an immediate budding right then if it hadn't been for the cold nighttime temperatures that followed. So, it wasn't until the end of this period (mid-month) that the budding really started, still a full two weeks ahead of the norm and two days ahead of the exceptionally early 1990 and 2011 vintages. One note to this: I really remember being in Paris after tasting the 1990 vintage *en premier* on April 16th, 1991. It was warm and beautiful and I remarked to my cohort that 1991, which had a good head start already, could be another 1990 vintage. One week later, a devastating frost hit Bordeaux, and you know the result. Luckily, April 2014 turned out not only very warm but also very dry, especially mid-month, and this temporarily slowed down the vines' growth.

May was a cool, damp month, with a strong spike of heat in the middle, just before the flowering was to start. Such variable conditions are never conducive to effective flowering and they accounted for some *coulure*

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and *millerandage*, especially on the earliest Merlots and Sémillons. However, most of the grapes flowered fast and efficiently during the very hot first half of June, confirming the prospect of an early harvest.

### A Disappointing Summer

June was a wonderful month of good heat, but the final days of June were to be the last of the summer until September. July saw a meager three hot days and August none at all, when normally we would have expected at least 13 over these two months. July visitors were very disappointed in the cool weather. It was just a dull, damp month, with small showers (little and often) on 16 of the 31 days, and with many fewer sun hours.

August turned into another gray month, reported at the time as a wet month but in fact it was cold rather than wet, with temperatures a whole 2° below the average and 85% of normal sun hours. It was only slightly wetter than usual, but all the rainfall came from extremely localized storms, and the Médoc remained almost totally dry.

### An Incredible, Glorious Autumn

It was a very gloomy scene in Bordeaux in mid-August. Towards the end of August, the high pressure systems that had been so weak in July and August ballooned over Europe, chasing away the Atlantic depressions and enabling the weather to change at long last. The long-range forecasts became suddenly more confident as Bordeaux cruised into the longest Indian summer of all time. From the end of August until the last day of October, the sun shone almost permanently, with the endless succession of hot, dry days only alleviated by several isolated and very local, but violent, thundery days. September's average maximum temperature was 10% higher than August and even higher than that of July. It was also the third-driest September of the last 100 years, after 1921 and 1985, and the third hottest after 1921 and 1961. All of these were quite good Bordeaux vintages.

The whites were harvested under ideal dry conditions in mid-September. All talk was of the aromas, the freshness, and also the power. The dry white wine producers were the very first Bordeaux producers to smile after all that August doubting.

Meanwhile, the Merlots had been losing no time to catch up on ripening. The summer had perhaps been more detrimental to growers' mood than to the vine's own performance, which, provided it had received constant attention, had been less dormant than it had appeared during these two difficult months. Most of the Merlots were picked late in September under clear skies. The harvest of Merlots in St-Emilion lasted from September 20th to October 20th.

Then there was a gap between the Merlot and Cabernet harvests. Cabernet adores an Indian summer harvest with its very long hang time and slow ripening cycle. Remember, they were two weeks early at budding and one week late in harvesting, meaning a full three weeks extra hang time.

Meanwhile, down in Sauternes, the relentlessly dry conditions of September prevented all but a few individual grapes from botrytising. In October, rain unleashed a widespread botrytis bloom and a much more serious wave of harvesting started during the unusually hot days that followed.

### The Red Wines

Such a glorious autumn allowed for both maximum ripening and maximum concentration. The alcohol levels are naturally high—generally from 13.5% to 14.5% for the Merlots, and 12.5% to 13.5% (sometimes more) for the Cabernets. However, it was the cool summer weather and the prolonged functioning of the vines' foliage that have determined the style of the wines with their low pHs and at first high acidities. The wines will therefore give a sensation of power as well as of great freshness.



*The vineyard at Château Brane-Cantenac.*

We loved what we tasted in the reds this year. Even the four-hour Joanne tasting was a piece of cake, with the fruit overshadowing any harsh tannins. While the Merlot wines were good, we mainly preferred the Cabernet wines. All districts produced good and not-so-good wines. Most of us preferred the wines from St-Julien and Pauillac over the other districts, but Alex loved the Pessac wines, and some of the Margaux wines really were stunning. Many St-Estèphes were also at the top of our lists. We preferred Pomerol to St-Emilion, but there are so many châteaux in St-Emilion and not very many in Pomerol, so the comparison may not be exactly fair. The multi-blended Right Bank wines like Figeac showed extremely well. One important point on the vintage is the quantity produced. Most properties produced a good quantity of wine—much more than the previous year. Only the properties that got hail damage seemed to produce small quantities.

We were discussing the vintage 2014 in terms of what it compares to in past vintages. We concluded that it was similar to 2001, with 13 more years of technical and vineyard improvement. Also, the selection process now is much stricter than in 2001. I think the 2014s showed more apparent fruit than the 2001s showed at the same time of the year.

The 2014 Cabernets generally have considerably more power and riper tannins than those of 2001. Some people mention a similarity to the 1996, 2006 and 2000 vintages, and in some cases even 2005, because of their more solidly integrated tannins—especially in the more dominant Cabernet Sauvignon areas, and on certain later-harvested Right Bank Merlots. The 2014s are not nearly as big or as good as 2009 or 2010, but their prices are much less.

### The Dry White Wines

There is no doubt that 2014 is a great white wine vintage. The wines have the acidity of the 2013s, but have an extra dimension of flavor and richness—probably because of the longer hang time. Wines like Aile d'Argent and Lynch Bages blanc from Bordeaux are stunning,

while the Pessac-Léognan whites are pure and delicious. Priced correctly, they will be a great buy—plenty of floral notes on the nose. The quantities of dry white are less than the red production.

### Sauternes

How can the Sauternes producers rack up another great vintage? It must be global warming. Whatever the cause, the Sauternes are stunning, with lots of evident botrytis. And this is the first even-year Sauternes I have liked since 2000. This vintage is right there with the magnificent 2001 vintage. It has good richness, tremendous aromas of pineapple and coconut, fabulous acidity, and lingering finishes. Priced reasonably, they are steals in today's sweet wine market. Nobody does it better than Sauternes for sweet wine.

### Conclusion

We finally have a Bordeaux vintage to buy on a futures basis. To date, most of the prices seem fair. Hence, my headline for this report. As of now, several top wines have opened their prices, and the tendency to price the same as 2012 or 2013 is welcome indeed. A much better vintage than those two (although the '12s are delicious right now), combined with our strong dollar, makes for prices we have not seen for a while. Some wines, like Capbern and Labégorce, are slam dunks for value wines, but don't wait for those to come in—there is not a huge supply of either. The classified growths should be well-priced, like Lynch when it opened April 30th, or the Lafite and Mouton stables. Lafite lowered their prices by 10% from 2013, while Mouton opened exactly at the 2012 price. Do not miss Armailhac or Duhart-Milon—both very great values. Pending the release prices of the rest of the classified growths, I will cautiously say of 2014 Bordeaux... *Bordeaux is back.*

P.S. Some properties have not opened their price as of this writing—check our website. Also, prices can change due to limited availabilities on some items. These pre-arrival prices were as of May 15th.

## Red Bordeaux 2014: Clyde's Tasting Notes

### Haut Médoc, Moulis, Llistrac, Lalande-de-Pomerol and Blaye

Some excellent wines and some not so excellent. And, some you can buy on arrival.

#### Beaumont, Haut-Médoc (\$Inquire)

Delicious, soft, easy-to-drink wine. Enjoy in a few years.

**Bernadotte, Haut-Médoc (\$Inquire)** Bright fruits, sweet and nice finish. Good wine.

**Poujeaux, Moulis (\$25.99)** Good entry and sweet middle. Very nice as usual. One of the most consistent properties in the Médoc, and the new owners have kept up the quality. 50% Cabernet and 40% Merlot with the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc.

#### Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$26.99)

Perfumed nose, very ripe fruits on the palate, red berry. Sweet and delicious. Philippe Dambrière has done it again.

#### La Tour Carnet, Haut-Médoc (\$Inquire)

Sweet oaky entry. Plenty of wood with tannic finish. Even better at Pape Clément, with tons of red berry fruit.

**Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$14.99)** More modern style—nice flavor—good value at under \$15.

**Mauvasin Barton, Moulis (\$Inquire)** Intense nose. Good ripeness and sweet middle. Buy when it arrives.

**Senejac, Médoc (\$Inquire)** Sweet red fruits, lovely sweetness. Buy when it arrives.

#### La Fleur de Boüard, Lalande-de-Pomerol

**(\$24.99)** Well-made wine, sweet with a touch of toasty oak. Pleasing to palate. Lush wine with good depth and great texture. Value!

**Malmaison, Moulis (\$Inquire)** Will be a fine value. Very fruity on the nose and so easy to taste. Soft and supple. Buy when it arrives.

**Clarke Rothschild, Llistrac (\$Inquire)** Very masculine style with plenty of weight on the palate and fine acidity. Some tannins to soften. Cellar it a minimum of five years—it will reward your patience.

**Gigault "Cuvée Viva" Côtes de Bordeaux Blaye (\$Inquire)** Tons of black licorice on the nose and in the mouth. Superb value!

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Left: The K&L team at Château D'Issan: Jim Chanteloup, Ralph Sands, Clyde Beffa Jr., Sanford Rich, Alex Pross, Jacques Moreira. Right: The barrel chai at Angelus.

## Another Miracle Vintage?

By Ralph Sands

Is 2014 another “miracle vintage,” or is this just the norm in Bordeaux, where the weather is consistently inconsistent? My opinion is definitely the latter. But the good news is, that in vintages like 2014, some very good wines can be produced. It's a Cabernet Sauvignon-dominated vintage, with Cabernet taking on a spicy characteristic and high acidity. Vintages like 1978, 1986, 1996, and yes, even 2000, experienced similar weather conditions, and they were Cabernet-dominated.

For the first time in three years, we have a crop of relatively normal size that has produced many attractively styled wines with nice spice, ripeness and freshness. And most importantly of all: these are good-tasting wines! 2014 is not a vintage of deep, powerful,

concentrated and tannic wines. Gentle extraction was a key phrase for 2014. To find a recent vintage to compare to is difficult, but it reminds me of the finest wines from 2001—attractive, elegant and well balanced. The best possess more ripeness, and many have the great freshness of the 2005s, with a dapple of the sweetness found in 2009s. Overall, very nice wines!

There is no question 2014 is an outstanding vintage for the white wines, as they are bright, fresh and precisely focused. The same can be said for the sweet wines of Sauternes and Barsac, which feature a complex combination of great freshness, racy acidity and richness.

Here are some of my favorites from 2014:

## Bordeaux 2014: Ralph's Tasting Notes

**Score Key:** I rate barrel samples with a three-star system. One star ★ means I like the wine and would buy it for K&L as well as for myself; Two stars ★★ means I feel it is an outstanding wine and I would love to have it in my collection. Three stars ★★★ means a wine of absolute greatness and possibly legendary.

### St-Estèphe

In my opinion, the northern Médoc produced some outstanding wine.

**Cos d'Estournel (\$119.99)** 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot and 2% Cab Franc. Big juice here! Saturated, sweet, black-red fruits with hints of black licorice. Cos features a powerful attack of fruit, freshness and minerals, great texture and a long finish. Complete package; fantastic wine! ★★½

**Phélan-Ségur (\$34.99)** 64% Cabernet Sauvignon and 36% Merlot. Perfectly true to the style of Phélan: fresh, elegant and zesty! Pure, just-ripe red fruits, good, elegant concentration and mouthfeel. ★

### Pauillac

**Latour (\$NA)** Classic Latour, loaded with deep, grapey old vine fruit. Hints of leather, earth and maritime freshness. As usual, the bold fruit of Latour's old vines really stands out in a good way in this very elegant vintage. Price not released for years *en premier*. ★★

**Pichon-Baron (\$89.99)** 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot. Big, heady Cabernet nose and strike. Very strong, zesty and spicy! Super, classic claret here with lively acidity. Linear and long. No baby fat here.

★ ...for now.

**Mouton Rothschild (\$369.99)** Very deep and powerful, with underlying sweet fruits of black cherry and herbal notes. This wine is very classic and strong, with laser-beam focus and brisk acidity. One of the long runners in 2014. ★★

**Clerc-Milon (\$48.99)** Definitely in the classic style of Mouton, but with a touch more forward sweet fruit, which is nice, but it's still very concentrated. Long, serious wine and should be one of the great aging values. ★½

**Lafite Rothschild (\$Inquire)** Sweet, saturated red-black fruits on the nose; in the mouth, red fruits and chocolate. Good middle texture and long, polished tannins. Everything in perfect focus and balance—just lovely. ★★½!

**Duhart-Milon (\$61.99)** Strong, dark wine with deep fruit, flavors of blackberry jam and



Ralph Sands with Jim Chanteloup toasting Ralph's birth-year 1955 Latour, at Latour.



grilled meats, good middle fruit and tannin control. More flesh and lots to like here! ★½

**Pichon-Lalande (\$89.99)** 65% Cabernet, 22% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petit Verdot. Lots of lovely, exotic, grapey fruit; elegant and precise. Tasty, with a long finish. Pichon-Lalande is back in a big way after complete reconstruction of the vinification facility and the way the fruit is handled. ★★

### St-Julien

**Léoville-Las Cases (\$134.99)** 79% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot and 11% Cabernet Franc. Raspberry pie nose followed by a powerful attack of zesty red fruits, with a good, sweet middle texture and large but polished tannins. Another fine LLC. ★★

**Langoa-Barton (\$42.99)** 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc. Very few times in my career have I given the third growth Langoa the same mark as the second growth Léoville, but that is the case this year. The deep blood-red fruit is bright and features lots of raspberries, has a silky texture, and comes at you in layers. Perfectly balanced and impressive! ★★

### Margaux

**Château Margaux (\$329.99)** The first wine represents 35% of the harvest. Good, sweet fruit of just-ripe grapes and toasty oak, but not overdone. This is a very regal but elegantly styled Château Margaux. ★★

**Palmer (\$224.99)** 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot. A very serious and strong Palmer. Intense, dark fruit with boysenberry hints; zesty and spicy. Complex,

powerful, linear, and long in the mouth, this baby needs time! ★★

**Alter Ego de Palmer (\$54.99)** 52% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Petit Verdot. While the first wine is all power and a bit closed on the nose, the opposite is on display here. Incredibly attractive aromas of black fruits and violets—classic claret, as it is firm and fresh. Lots to like! ★

### Pessac-Léognan

**Pape Clément (\$69.99)** Loads of tasty, grapey fruit with the hallmark hint of clove! Lush wine with plenty of evident oak and good structure. Very good! ★★

**La Mission Haut-Brion (\$209.99)** Great old vine grapey aromas and flavors; deep middle fruit, and a little grainy-woody. While showing good power, it finishes with great finesse and freshness. ★★

**Haut-Brion (\$329.99)** Aromas of perfectly ripe black grapes. Bold, rich wine; very strong, dry, classic finish. Along with the first growths of Latour, Lafite, Mouton and also La Mission, this is one of the 2014s that will require extended aging. ★★

### Pomerol

**Petrus (\$Inquire)** Good, strong, red apple and black cherry fruit; not heavy or over-extracted in any way. Classic style with racy acidity; a powerful finish with fine tannins. Not a plush Petrus. ★★

**Rouget (\$36.99)** Good, deep sweet fruit with lots of chalk and minerals. Classic style and very good! Could be a top value. ★★

**Gazin (\$56.99)** Deep layers of toasty black fruits and silky texture. Very fine! ★★

**Clinet (\$64.99)** Flashy style. Ripe Merlot with hints of raspberry; round and tasty! What's not to like? ★½

**Le Bon Pasteur (\$Inquire)** Deep, silky exotic fruit! Good tannins and texture—very good! ★★

**La Conseillante (\$89.99)** Lovely, high-toned blue fruits and cassis. Very elegant, classy and tasty. Drink young. ★★

### St-Émilion

#### The Wines from Stephan von Neipperg

**Clos Marsalette (\$Inquire)** Juicy, soft black fruit with hints of licorice and a little grip on the finish. ★

**d'Aiguilhe (\$19.99)** As usual, a tremendous value! Tons of silky red fruits, tasty as heck. Will be a great drink young. ★

**Clos de L'Oratoire (\$29.99)** Super fresh and attractive nose! Formidable, bright, zesty purple fruit. Very nice! ★

**Canon-La-Gaffelière (\$59.99)** Lovely nose, sweet, silky blood-red fruits, all in absolutely perfect harmony. Great natural feel to this wine—outstanding both times tasted. ★★

**La Mondotte (\$Inquire)** Powerful wine with tons of sweet, heavily extracted fruit. The key to this serious wine is, the tannins are round. Reminds me of big Napa Valley Merlot. ★★

**Barde-Haut (\$26.99)** 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Very attractive. Lots of lively red fruits, with good strength and minerals. ★

**Rol Valentin (\$Inquire)** Flashy, sweet fruit but very well balanced. Delicious wine. ★★

**Fleur Cardinale (\$34.99)** Flashy sweet fruit, round tannins and good, sweet fruit on the finish. Lots to like! ★★

**Beau-Séjour Bécot (\$49.99)** Really nice, perfectly balanced sweet red fruits; not overdone in any way. Very nice! ★★

**Larcis Ducasse (\$54.99)** Lots of sweet raspberry fruit; silky, and a touch exotic. Tasty. ★

# A Phoenix Rising?

By Alex Pross

If you had spoken with almost every château owner in August of 2014, they would have expressed “grave doubts” in regards to the quality and disposition of the vintage. Up until then, they had been beset with rainy weather off and on, and the grapes were in such poor condition that thoughts of the early 1970s (’71, ’72, ’73 and ’74) came to mind. Incredibly (and thankfully), in late August, the weather took a turn for the better. “Indian Summer” came into full swing, giving Bordeaux its third-warmest September on record, followed by an extremely warm October. Thanks to this turnaround, the grapes ripened, and 2014 went from looking like a very disappointing vintage to a possibly outstanding one in the blink of an eye.

This was my sixth *en premier* campaign, which means I am no longer a “rookie,” but by no means a veteran like my coworkers, Ralph Sands (26 campaigns) and owner Clyde Beffa (coming since 1985!). I try to go

into every vintage open-minded about the potential of the vintage we are about to taste. Before we go over to Bordeaux, we do hear rumors about the potential quality of the vintage. But until you’re knee-deep in the tastings (75-plus wines a day), you don’t really have an opinion that holds much water. After the first day of tasting (mostly Pauillac, including almost all of the First Growths), it was clear that this was a very good vintage. While not quite up to the lofty standards of 2000, 2005, 2009 or 2010, it is infinitely superior to all the other vintages of the 21st century. This is a vintage where the Cabernet Sauvignon flourished, especially on the Left Bank. With that being said, I was pleasantly surprised with how well the Merlot and Cabernet Franc performed on the Right Bank (St-Emilion and Pomerol).

Below are my picks for the top red wines from each appellation on the Left Bank.

## Bordeaux 2014: Alex’s Tasting Notes

**Alex Pross Score Key:** \*\*\*\* Excellent  
\*\*\* Very good \*\* Average \* Below average

### Pauillac

**Pontet-Canet (\$92.99)** Sexy nose of bright red fruits, spice and a hint of mineral and minced meat, with energetic feel, peppery acid and fine tannins. Excellent! \*\*\*½

**Grand-Puy-Lacoste (\$54.99)** Pretty, elegant, layered; cassis fruit, with a full body. Everything you want in a fine Bordeaux. Classic. \*\*\*½

**Lynch-Bages (\$84.99)** Deep, dark berry fruit, coffee, tobacco, hints of pencil lead. A very fine Lynch that is built to age. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½

### St-Julien

**Ducru-Beaucaillou (\$109.99)** One of the wines of the vintage. Dark, rich and full-bodied, with hints of cola and spice. Really nice, great length with blackberry fruit and layers upon layers. \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*\*

**Léoville-Barton (\$62.99)** A fantastic wine. Dark cherry fruit, notes of cherry liqueur, spice and black plum notes. Good length, layers and layers; a smooth, complex finish. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½

**Léoville-Poyferré (\$64.99)** Beautiful nose of crushed red berries with floral notes. A palate brimming with red berry fruit. Great depth and length, with a velvety texture. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½

**Talbot (\$44.99)** Could be a great value! Notes of licorice, molten earth, black plum and spice; very good length and texture. One of the better young Talbots I have tasted in a while. \*\*\*

### St-Estèphe

**Calon-Ségur (\$62.99)** Loaded with notes of pretty red fruit and dried herbs, this beauty is packed with layer upon layer of delineated red fruit and notes of camphor. This feels like an Old World-style Bordeaux. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½

**Capbern (formerly Capbern Gasqueton) (\$17.99)** Value! Part of the Calon-Ségur ownership group. Loaded with spice and red fruits. Blows away wines of comparable price point from anywhere else and is a reminder why Bordeaux is king. \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*

**Montrose (\$Inquire)** Super complex, dark, loaded with black fruits, dried herbs and layered, this is a big wine that feels regal in size and structure. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½

### Margaux

**Labégorce (\$22.99)** Value! One of my top values of the last few vintages, the 2014 Labégorce is once again a great value. *Pain grille* notes as well as intense notes of licorice and sweet oak, lots of deep fruit notes. A very nice wine, well done. \*\*\*

**Giscours (\$39.99)** Smooth and sexy, this wine is sleek with red berry fruit, velvety

tannins and a seamless feel. Feels like a 2009 with a tad less size and structure. Very pretty and just delicious. \*\*\*



The red wine chai at Smith Haut Lafitte.

### Pessac-Léognan

**Latour-Martillac (\$29.99)** An impressive wine, the 2014 has lots of crunchy red fruit, spicy minerals and a layered, complex body. This wine has far exceeded my expectations and should be a value. \*\*\*

**Domaine de Chevalier (\$49.99)** Red fruits and spice notes buffered nicely by minerals, acid and fine tannins. Great drive to the finish and nice length. \*\*\*

**Smith Haut Lafitte (\$64.99)** Since 1991 the Cathiard family has overseen an amazing turnaround at Smith Haut Lafitte, and the quality has risen to place them among the top producers in all of Pessac-Léognan. Sleek, packed with red and dark berry fruit, spices and molten earth, this wine is complex, long and pretty. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½



*The moat at Château D'Issan.*

## Values Under \$70 in 2014 Bordeaux

By Jim Chanteloup

**The 2014 vintage may not go down as a great vintage, like 2009 and 2010, but it will be a very serviceable vintage and one to buy on a pre-arrival basis.** In addition to the quality, the wines are priced, in most cases, from 25% to 30% less than those two fabulous vintages. Given that it's a Cabernet Sauvignon vintage with good acidity, I think that the wines will be a good addition to collectors' cellars for mid-term aging. These should balance out any '09s and '10s they have, and will reward the long haul. Here is a selection of wines that I thought showed particularly well in the value category.

**D'Issan, Margaux (\$44.99)** A blend of 77% Cabernet Sauvignon and 23% Merlot, D'Issan offers a bouquet of cedar, plum, framboise, dark cherry, a hint of violets and a mineral accent. On the palate it is medium-bodied and elegant with fine balance and length.

**d'Armailhac, Pauillac (\$34.99)** This wine really stood out when we tasted at Mouton Rothschild. That day I thought it showed better than the Petit Mouton. Made from 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, the nose shows currant, dark cherry, cedar, light blueberry notes and violet. On the palate there is fine balancing acidity, good length and a refined tannin structure laced with a dusty cocoa powder texture.

**Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$42.99)** This is a blend of 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc. Made by the team at Léoville-Las-Cases (and *not* a second wine, as often thought), this wine shows that pedigree of winemaking and shares its sense of structure.

There is fine purity to the fruit here, with currant, dark cherry, boysenberry and mineral notes in the aromatic profile. On the palate, the wine at this point is a bit firm and linear, with flesh to come, and yet has harmonious balance and fine length.

**Croix de Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$Inquire)** Croix de Beaucaillou is the second wine of Ducru Beaucaillou, which, by the way, I found to be superb in 2014, and the Croix is an overachiever as well. Made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot, the Croix, like its "Daddy" is a pretty sexy beast! The bouquet shows notes of earth, blueberry, blackberry, a touch of bittersweet chocolate and a mineral accent. On the palate the wine is rich, with supple, ripe tannins and excellent balance and length.

**d'Angludet, Margaux (\$34.99)** Made from 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot and 11% Petit Verdot, the Angludet is a wine full of charm and elegance. The nose brings notes of dark plum, cherry, a pretty floral lavender note and a hint of graham cracker. On the palate, it's medium-bodied with good balancing acidity, along with fine tannins, balance and length.

**Labégorce, Margaux (\$22.99)** I have to say, I think this may be the best vintage of Labégorce to date that I have tasted. A blend of 58% Merlot, 40% Cabernet and 2% Petit Verdot, the aromas are lifted with fresh raspberry, black cherry, red licorice and cedar. On the palate there's a hint of milk chocolate with fine-grained tannins, good acidity and a long finish.

# Shining a September Light on Bordeaux 2014

By Jacques Moreira

In a vintage about which everybody we spoke to repeated over and over again how the months of September and October were the defining factors of its greatness, the whites shone brighter than ever before. It sure started out very well with a welcome, warm and wet winter, followed by normal conditions in spring. Then, as Pontet-Canet put it: “The snails arrived en masse, which is nature’s way of letting us know that rain was on its way.” And it sure was. It stayed wet and cool for two months of summer, which in my view, gave the perfect touch

of “seasoning” to the white wines—acidity. But that alone is just one aspect of these beautiful wines. For the recipe to turn out perfectly, it also needed sunny and dry conditions, especially towards the end of the cycle, and most importantly at harvest time. That gives beautiful aromatics and power to the wines, along with the acid structure. And sun they had, from that glorious September all the way through late October—the recipe indeed turned out perfectly! Here are some of my favorite whites and reds I tasted during the trip.

## Bordeaux White (and Red) 2014: Jacques’ Tasting Notes

### Whites

#### **Mouton Rothschild Aile d’Argent, Bordeaux Blanc (\$69.99)**

A very limited production from Mouton, from white grapes planted on sandy, gravelly soils. This beautiful wine is composed of 65% Sauvignon Blanc and 35% Sémillon. A very complex wine, and a great example of a great Bordeaux white. The Sauvignon shows well on the nose with its very pretty citrus along with acacia flower and vanilla. On the palate the creaminess of the texture shows through the perfect balance of acidity and ripeness of fruit. Peaches, apricots, minerality and a very long, elegant finish.

#### **Pape Clément Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$134.99)**

One of the best white wines of Bordeaux, the 2014 Pape Clément Blanc glows with elegance. Delicately fruity on the nose, with honeysuckle, citrus, vanilla and a subtle note of clove, tell-tale of its passage in new oak barrels. On the palate it remains beautifully fresh besides the nice, creamy texture and the fullness of its body.

#### **Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$84.99)**

Another bright star! Despite the high amount of Sauvignon Blanc (90%), this wine has no grassiness at all—perhaps due to the old age of the vines, the north exposure that ensures a late maturity of the grapes, and what they call their “secret weapon,” Sauvignon Gris (5%), which brings its own aromatics and spices, and of course Sémillon (5%) with its texture and beeswax/lanolin notes. The nose has a delicate citrus note with some cream and a touch of wood spice in the background. The palate is a gorgeous amalgamation of all of the above, along with a juicy acidity that holds everything in place

and brings a perfect balance to this wine. Did I mention that they are practicing organic farming techniques? A beauty!

#### **Haut-Bergey Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99)**

This wine has a definitely Burgundian quality to it. It is the rich minerality that reveals on the forefront. Having said that, it does possess beautiful aromatics of white peach blossoms, lemon and vanilla notes. The creamy palate has a touch of pomelo and tons of minerality. It is crisp and absolutely delicious.

#### **Lynch-Bages Blanc, Bordeaux (\$37.99)**

Although they always had some white grapes in their vineyards in the heart of the sacred red wine country that is Pauillac (used for family consumption only), it wasn’t until 1990 that Lynch-Bages started producing their white commercially. And what a white wine that is! Exotic, almost tropical fruit aromatics, along with a touch of citrus, white flowers and vanilla. The palate offers that delicious creaminess that so often one finds in the best Bordeaux whites. It is quite fresh and lively, yet complex and elegant. One of the best Sauvignon Blanc-based wines I have tasted in a long time.

### Reds

**Potensac, Médoc (\$21.99)** The first line I wrote upon tasting this wine in Bordeaux was: Just beautiful! Indeed, the very lifted and floral aromatics absolutely seduced me. Perhaps it was due to the higher than usual proportion of Cabernet Franc. Dark berry fruit intermingled with graphite gives it a touch of elegance. Medium tannins and high acidity tell us this one will age beautifully and increase in complexity.

#### **Smith Haut Lafitte, Pessac-Léognan (\$64.99)**

A very elegant nose of black currant, plums, brown sugar, coffee and graphite, which follows on the palate. It is all a bit restrained now, not surprising being such a young wine, but it is all there. The body is medium to full, and the acidity gives it a nice freshness throughout. It will blossom into an incredible wine. I liked it very much. 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.

**Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$59.99)** A very enticing nose of blood oranges, tobacco, forest floor and a touch of vanilla. Very fine tannins on the palate making it all round and balanced. Very nice wine. I expect it to receive high scores for sure. 66% Cabernet Sauvignon and 34% Merlot.

**Tronquoy-Lalande (\$Inquire)** Intense dark fruit on the nose along with a dusty minerality. On the palate, sweet fruits abound: blueberry, blackberry, kirsch and cocoa. Medium-bodied, and the grainy tannins lend a nice touch to the whole experience. 56% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc. This is an extremely good value.

**d’Armailhac, Pauillac (\$34.99)** Classic Pauillac, with cassis, violets, coffee and vanilla on both nose and palate. Medium-bodied, and medium tannins; sweet and easy, a pleasure to drink! 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Indeed a good candidate for a couple of cases.

# The Great 2014 Bordeaux White Wines

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

## White Bordeaux

I think these 2014 whites are as good as any other vintage in the past 15 years.

### S de Suduiraut, Bordeaux (\$Inquire)

60% Sémillon and 40% Sauvignon Blanc. Grapefruit nose and good, sweet mid-palate. Clean and refreshing.

### Mouton Rothschild Aile d'Argent, Bordeaux

(\$69.99) 65% Sauvignon Blanc. Great floral aromas and creamy texture. Clean and crisp and lingering finish.

### Cos d'Estournel Blanc, Bordeaux (\$69.99)

66% Sauvignon Blanc, 34% Sémillon. Tons of citric/grapefruit aromas. Creamy nuances and tons of richness. Pineapple and honey with minerals and flint. Stunning and best ever from them.

### Lynch-Bages Blanc, Bordeaux (\$37.99)

52% Sauvignon Blanc, 28% Sémillon and 20% Muscadelle. Lush up front and a sweet middle, with superb balancing acidity. Superb.

**Reynon VV, Graves (\$Inquire)** This beauty from Dubourdieu is lovely as it has the acidity of 2013 and the richness of the 2009. It will arrive late this summer.

**Clos Floridene, Graves (\$Inquire)** Crisp and clean with richness at back end. The most complete Floridene I have tasted in many years. Buy it when it arrives at end of 2015.

**Domaine de Chevalier, Pessac-Léognan (\$89.99)** Lovely aromas of citrus and lychee nuts. Elegant and reserved. Bravo.



*Botrytis-infected grapes at Tour Blanche.*



*The vineyard at Coutet.*

**Fieuzal, Pessac-Léognan (\$39.99)** Rich and powerful, thick, and it has a distinctive floral aroma and flavor.

**Larivet Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$34.99)** More spice and sweetness. I like this very much.

**Latour-Martillac, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99)** Very perfumy, figgy nose. Quite rich on palate. Clean finish. Could be a value.

**Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99)** Clean and crisp with loads of richness on palate. Very good.

**Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$134.99)** Heavier and richer than most. At the property: Very aromatic nose. Fabulous richness. Big boy for the cellar.

**Smith Haut Lafitte, Pessac-Léognan (\$84.99)** 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Sémillon. Honey and citrus and cinnamon on the nose. Power and balance. Stunning. Superb texture and balance.

## Sauternes/Barsac

Another fabulous vintage on par with 2001, and they are priced very well.

**Coutet (375ml \$17.99; 750ml \$35.99)** Very lush and thick. Heavy style—tons of botrytis. Cellar it.

**Doisy-Daëne (375ml \$19.99; 750ml \$39.99)** Exotic spices and sweet/tarts. Lovely and different. Super fresh—I love it right now.

**Doisy-Védrines (375ml \$16.99; 750ml \$32.99)** Lush and delicious; great acidity. I will buy this one—could be another 1989!

**Guiraud (375ml \$22.99; 750ml \$44.99)** Fat and lush. Heavier style but very clean. Fabulous depth of flavor.

**La Tour Blanche (375ml \$19.99; 750ml \$37.99)** Clean and balanced, great mid-palate and lush at end.

**Lafaurie-Peyraguey (375ml \$24.99; 750ml \$49.99)** Clean and refreshing, very good and fresh. At the property: Tons of lush coconut flavors.

**Rayne Vigneau (\$Inquire)** Heavier style, fat and unctuous. Burgundy oak.

**Sigalas Rabaud (\$Inquire)** A bit more citric. Refreshing.

**Suduiraut (375ml \$29.99; 750ml \$59.99)** Honey nose and some coconut flavors, with pineapple. Lush on the palate and great balance. Fine acidity. Outstanding.

**Clos Haut Peyraguey (375ml \$17.99; 750ml \$34.99)** For fans of the richest styles.

**Climens (375ml \$32.99; 750ml \$64.99)** One of best Sauternes of the vintage.

## Red Bordeaux 2014: Clyde's Tasting Notes

(Continued from page 3)

### Pessac-Léognan

**Haut-Bergey (\$21.99)** Deep and rich on the palate. Flashy style but well balanced. Should be a value. Lush wine and tons of sweet fruit flavor.

**Haut-Bailly (\$59.99)** Red fruits. Shows well—sweet and elegant. At property: 66% Cabernet, 34% Merlot. Lovely perfume of red berries. Great texture and balance. Dry and mineral finish. One of the better wines of the vintage. Bravo Véronique!

**La Parde de Haut-Bailly (\$Inquire)** Some juicy boysenberry flavors. Will be a value to buy on arrival.

**Larivet Haut-Brion Rouge (\$Inquire)** Black fruit and licorice aromas. Good weight. Black licorice spice.

**de Fieuzal Rouge (\$29.99)** Very nice red berry aromas and flavor. Feels good.

**Les Carmes Haut-Brion (\$46.99)** Red fruits, bright and lively, tannic finish. OK.

**Malartic-Lagravière Rouge (\$39.99)** Juicy and red fruit. Well-made and fine value.

**Clos Marsalette (\$Inquire)** Clean and balanced. Very nice wine—will be a value.

**Pape Clément Rouge (\$69.99)** 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot. Lovely red fruits. Smooth. At the property: Perfumy, toasty oaky nose. Sweet and lush with oaky undertones. Quite good. They are on a roll.

**Le Thil (\$Inquire)** Sweet and lush with black licorice flavors. Fine structure. Made by the Smith team and it is great wine to buy on delivery.

**Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge (\$64.99)** Good oaky toasty aromas. Racy. At property: 30% Merlot, 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Extremely rich and lush with mineral finish. Long and deep. Great wine.

**Domaine De Chevalier Rouge (\$49.99)** Lush and very mineral—lots of earth. Red berry. Another great one from them.

### The Fabulous Wines of the Haut-Brion Clan

**La Clarte de Haut-Brion Blanc (\$86.99)** 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon. Fruity and lush on palate. Perfumy, floral nose. Very good.

**La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc (\$699.99)** Fabulous richness and length—rather expensive. Highly allocated.

**Haut-Brion Blanc (\$849.99)** Citric aromas and tons of lemon. Precise and perfect. And to think they planted white grapes here to use in the red wine and now the white is twice the price (or more) of the red.

### Reds

**La Chapelle de La Mission Haut-Brion (\$49.99)** Very fine wine—their best for me in a long time. Ripe, rich and sweet red fruits. Quite spicy.

**Le Clarence de Haut-Brion (\$79.99)** Red berry and cherry aromas and flavors. Great mouthfeel and fine texture. It just tastes great.

**La Mission Haut-Brion Rouge (\$209.99)** 54% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tons of fruit. Powerful wine with a sweet edge. Blueberry flavors. Big wine, but tasting quite nice right now.

**Haut-Brion (\$329.99)** 50% Merlot, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Cabernet Franc. Lovely wine with a sweet floral nose of red berries and toasty oak. Red berry flavors abound. Lush on the palate. Sexy and elegant.

### Margaux

Big region and the wines vary quite a bit. Many wines are written up in this issue. Here are the rest:

**Pavillon Rouge (\$119.99)** Red currant aromas with a hint of spice. Very sweet on the palate. Good backbone and length. Good selection here. Similar weather pattern to 1996 where the Cabernet ripened best.

**Brane-Cantenac (\$45.99)** Nice strength—full flavored, sweet, lovely. At UGC: Very perfumy on nose and great depth of flavor.

**Cantenac Brown (\$39.99)** Lush mouthful; sweet with tannic finish. Best Merlot is in the Margaux region.

**du Tertre (\$29.99)** Red fruit flavors abound. Value for the vintage. AT UGC: Very spicy, black fruits.

**Durfort-Vivens (\$39.99)** Nice sweet nose—classic wine with lovely balance. Very good.

**Malescot-St-Exupéry (\$44.95)** Lovely spice on nose; sweet fruit and red berry flavors; long, meaty, delicious. Always one of our favorites.

**Marquis d'Alesme Becker (\$34.99)** Spicy nose, good entry, big at back.

**Prieuré-Lichine (\$31.99)** Exotic Chinese spices. Bright, good. A delicious, well-priced wine.

**Rauzan-Ségla (\$55.99)** Elegance and finesse. Red fruits. Very good. At UGC: Wonderful nose of ripe blackberries. Great mouthful, long and lingering.

**Siran (\$21.99)** A bit rustic and old school—good weight and fine balance. Very well-priced. At UGC: Much more lush on the palate.

### St-Julien

Small region with quite a few top wines. One of the best for 2014. Many properties already mentioned in this newsletter by the staff. Here are a few more:

**Beychevelle (\$64.99)** 51% Merlot, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petite Verdot. Sweet and lush on the palate. Easy.

**Brancaire-Ducru (\$44.99)** Red berry fruit aromas and flavors. Elegant, well-made and straightforward.

**Gloria (\$31.99)** 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petite Verdot. At Joanne: Fine richness and black fruit aromas—full and rich. Value. At UGC: Red berry fruit on the nose and palate. Very sweet on the palate.



An evening stroll to the tower at Latour.

**Saint-Pierre (\$Inquire)** Sweet fruit flavors, well-made. Lush. Red fruits. Structure.

**Lalande-Borie (\$Inquire)** No green harvest at Ducru properties this year. This 50% Cabernet Sauvignon wine is quite tasty and represents a fine value. As good as their fine 2009?

#### **Petit Lion du Marquis de Las Cases**

**(\$Inquire)** Good upfront sweetness with tannic finish. Red berry.

#### **St-Estèphe**

Perhaps the most successful region in 2014. The wines have power and elegance at the same time. Much less rain up here, but there was some hail damage. Many wines already written up—here are a few more:

**Lafon-Rochet (\$31.99)** Powerful and tannic. One for the cellar.

**Lilian Ladouys (\$17.99)** This property, under new ownership, has been a great value since the 2009 vintage.

**Meyney (\$24.99)** Power and strength. Quite tannic. Black fruits. Quite a lot of flavor for such a good price.

**Ormes de Pez (\$24.99)** 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Tons of blackberry aromas and flavors. Great texture—very balanced and sweet. Had to contend with three hail storms in May, June and July. This is a fabulous value for 2014.

#### **Pauillac**

The most famous region in Bordeaux—at least for K&L—and very successful in 2014.

**Pibran (\$29.99)** 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Hail in July affected the yields here. Blackberry fruit aromas that follow to the palate. Fine structure—a great value?

**Tournelles de Pichon (\$Inquire)** A separate parcel of the Pichon Baron vineyard. Perfumy nose and more red berry fruits here. Red currant flavors.

**Pauillac de Latour (NA)** Fresh and lively. Will not be released this year.

**Les Forts de Latour (NA)** 71.4% Cabernet and 28.6% Merlot. Blueberry aromas and flavor. Big wine with great structure. Not released *en premier*. Same for the Château Latour, one of the great wines of 2014.

**Pontet-Canet (\$92.99)** Already written up, but I must say this is truly a great wine and one of the best of the vintage. Alfred Tesseron can do no wrong.

**Haut-Batailley (\$Inquire)** Very fruity and elegant. Nice texture.

**Pedesciaux (\$34.99)** Nice richness, fine length. Ever since the new owners came in 2009 this wine is a great value. A Fifth Growth at a great price.

**La Fleur Peyrabon (\$Inquire)** Sweet wine—buy it when in stock. Its other wine Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc is one of our best sellers.

#### **Le Petit Mouton-Rothschild (\$119.99)**

One of the only times we have offered this on futures. It is exceptionally good in 2014. Toasted oak aromas with cigar and coffee on the nose. Powerful and a little closed on the palate. Should be great.

**Echo de Lynch Bages (\$31.99)** If Lynch Bages is one of the best high-end values of the 2014s, then this wine is surely one of the best 2nd wine values. Tons of red berry fruits.

**Reserve de La Comtesse Lalande (\$29.99)** 59% Cabernet Sauvignon and 41% Merlot. Sweet nose of cassis and red currant. Fine texture.

#### **Pomerol**

**Petrus (\$Inquire)** If you have to inquire you can't afford it. This 100% Merlot is spectacular. Intense aromas and some meaty nuances on the nose and on the palate. Big, massive wine that has layers of fruit. Long and lingering on the palate. Blackberry jam, with a fine texture. Perhaps the best I tasted on this trip.

**Clinet (\$64.99)** Blackberry fruit aromas. Powerful and a bit linear. Focused and closed up a bit. Alex loves it.

**Gazin (\$56.99)** Difficult to taste at UGC. Did not taste again.

**La Conseillante (\$89.99)** Tons of ripe fruit, red cherry flavors. Ripe and fine on palate.

**Le Bon Pasteur (\$Inquire)** Good sweetness on palate, fresh and balanced. Bernard de Laage of Palmer fame thinks it is very pure. At UGC: Spicy aromas and flavors. Fine texture and mouthfeel. Lovely.

**Le Gay (\$Inquire)** Rich and full-bodied. Good entry, tannic at back.

**Petit-Village (\$59.99)** 72% Merlot, 16% Cabernet Franc and 12% Cabernet Sauvignon. Only 32 hectoliters per hectare. Elegant style with soft, red fruit flavors. Good middle palate. Takes time to soften up.

**Rouget (\$36.99)** Lush and lovely on palate. Merlot, blackberry. Value. Chalky finish.

**Clos Eglise (\$Inquire)** Tons of sweet, blackberry fruit. Lively wine—quite good.

#### **Christian Moueix Wines**

**Bourgneuf (\$34.99)** Smoky nose and flavors. Sexy on the palate. Fine balance.

**Certan de May (\$94.99)** Tons of red fruits and sweet palate entry.

**Hosanna (\$109.99)** Big, powerful blockbuster wine that is hard to taste right now. Should be fine.

**La Fleur Petrus (\$Inquire)** Fabulous wine with a very spicy nose and tons of fruit on the palate. Long and lingering.

**Trotanoy (\$Inquire)** Big, massive wine. Starting to come out after one hour open. Should be great.

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(Continued from page 11)

## St-Emilion

Many properties in this region and a lot of variability. I am only highlighting here.

**Angelus (\$249.99)** Big wine and in perfect balance. Needs long cellaring but it will reward the patient collector. Slightly “new wave.”

**Bellevue (\$Inquire)** 100% Merlot. Sweet, sexy, and lush on the palate.

**Belair-Monange (\$Inquire)** Nice spice and good palate entry. Wish they had kept the name Belair.

**Puy-Blanquet (\$17.99)** A great value wine to buy on delivery. Blackberry and black cherry aromas and flavor.

**Barde-Haut (\$26.99)** 90% Merlot. Good strength. Blueberry aromas. Lifted and quite sexy. Should be a value.

**Poesia (\$Inquire)** 70% Merlot. Only 8,000 bottles for this new property under the guidance of Hélène Garcin-Lévêque. Spicy aromas and flavors. Great acid—superb.

**d’Arce, Castillon (\$Inquire)** 100% Merlot. Also a new property from the Lévêques. Black fruit with pepper and spice flavors. Quite good.

**Canon (\$Inquire)** Sweet palate entry with lots of black fruit flavors. Clean and straightforward. Elegant.

**Figeac (\$84.99)** Sweet red fruits—roses and cassis. Dry at back. Nice sweetness and one of Alex’s favorites. 35% Cabernet Sauvignon.

**La Gaffelière (\$Inquire)** Sweet, lovely red berry and cherry fruit. A little alcoholic. Elegant style, though.

**Troplong Mondot (\$79.99)** Big wine with toasty, oaky aromas. Good sweetness, but a bit hot.



*Clyde with Victoire Tuoton of Château Angelus.*

**Fonplegade (\$Inquire)** Spicy wine—big and full-flavored. Nice. Fresh.

**Faugeres (\$Inquire)** Intense flavor and good richness. Tannic back.

**Fleur Cardinale (\$34.99)** Chewy red fruits—more extracted—flashy. California style but balanced.

**Clos Fourtet (\$69.99)** Good middle fruit. Sweet on palate. Very nice.

**Chauvin (\$Inquire)** Elegant, sweet aromas of black cherry and licorice on back end. Sylvie Cazes’ first vintage here.

**Corbin (\$Inquire)** Very sweet and easy to taste. Nice finish. Good value?

**Grand Mayne (\$Inquire)** Black fruit—good sweetness. Tannic back. Classic style.

**Larcis Ducasse (\$54.99)** Ripe and full bodied—a bit extracted. Big, “new wave” style.

**Pavie Macquin (\$59.99)** Very big and sweet with extraction evident at back end. Dry back.

**La Dominique (\$35.99)** Very perfumy nose—sweet red fruits. A touch short.

**Beau-Séjour Bécot (\$49.99)** Black fruit and toasty oak. Tougher at back end. Will score well.

**Beauséjour Duffau (\$Inquire)** Sweet and full-flavored. Big, delicious. Balance good. Round.

**Pierre 1er (Ex Ch. La Croix Figeac) (\$Inquire)** Sweet licorice—good start for a new name.

**Rol Valentin (\$Inquire)** Sweet and lush. Very perfumy. Nice wine—buy it. Great texture, and a value.

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