

2019 Bordeaux Vintage Report



2019 BORDEAUX VINTAGE REPORT FEATURES

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2019 Bordeaux: Is Bordeaux Back?

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



Using a combination of Robert Parker Wine Advocate and Neal Martin (in Vinous) scores, 2019 is the highest scoring Bordeaux vintage (on average) of the past 15 years.

I start with that line, adapted from our friends at Liv-ex, because I do not know where to start this report. I won't do the normal weather report for the months leading up to picking,

because it is somewhat irrelevant at this time. I won't quote a Bill Blatch report, because there is no Bill Blatch report. I won't tell you about our tasting team's trek through Bordeaux, tasting hundreds of 2019s and a good number of older gems, because there was no trip to Bordeaux this year. Blame it all on a virus.

What I will tell you is that as far as that first sentence is concerned, after tasting 60 or so wines from the vintage and communicating with many people in Bordeaux, 2019 is a very good vintage—*but*, not as good as 2005, 2009, 2010, or 2016. All those vintages fall into a 15-year span of vintages mentioned in the first sentence of this report. I will say that all the wine raters went crazy high with scores for 2019, and 95% of them were *not* in Bordeaux to taste the wines. Like the K&L team, the Bordeaux expert scorers relied on having barrel samples (which are quite fragile) sent to them from the properties and negociants. Collecting samples and sending via air to all parts of the world is a daunting task. Some samples do not survive the experience. So, trust me that 2019 Bordeaux is a very fine vintage for both red and white wines, but do not expect the opulence of 2009, or the power of 2005 and 2010, or the freshness and vitality of 2016.

What I will tell you is that at this writing, the 2019 campaign is over—it came and went in about five weeks (end of May to start of July). Normally, it would start at the end of April and go through the end of June, or early July. Many top wines were released on the same day, so there was no daily focus on a wine or two. Some great properties' sales suffered because of the length of the campaign. A concise weather report below is thanks to Jean-Michel Cazes and our friends at Château Lynch-Bages.

Winter and Spring

The 2018-2019 winter saw mild temperatures and about 15% less rainfall than normal, and bud break was a bit earlier than normal. Spring was cooler than normal, and rainfall was higher than normal, which slowed leaf development and slowed down the ripening process. The vineyards remained healthy thanks to weather conditions that were unfavorable to pests and disease (not like 2018). There were two episodes of frost: A "normal" one, recorded on April 13, affected the traditionally frosty areas away from the waterways; the second one, on May 5 and 6, covered a much larger area and caused some significant damage. Regions near the Gironde estuary were spared, just like in 1991. And, flowering and fruit set in late May were not homogeneous, because of the variations in temperature and rainfall over the vast Bordeaux area.

Summer

June was the pivotal month for the 2019 vintage, with the first two weeks quite unsettled, but then summery, quite hot temperatures followed

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during the last half of the month. The rapid and high accumulation of heat, aided by the hydric deficit, affected the size of the developing grape berries. Veraison in late July continued smoothly, due to favorable weather conditions. The ensuing dry and sunny weather ensured optimal ripening of the small berries, rich in sugar. August was fine weather-wise, and at the end of August, the grapes showed high sugar content *and* high acidity. With most vineyards in fine condition, an excellent harvest was projected.

Harvest

The white wine grapes were harvested from late August through early September under mostly ideal conditions. The white wines we sampled were quite outstanding, with the acidity of 2013 and the richness of 2015—two very good white wine vintages, indeed. There were some rain showers during the harvest of the red grapes in late September. The moisture, in general, was beneficial to the ripening of the Cabernet grapes, but it caused a bit of dilution in some. The last official day of harvest was October 11. Most regions had a good, healthy crop. The main characteristics of the 2019s were small berries (water shortage in the summer), slightly higher pH values, and good sugar contents. But, there were also, in general, a lot of berries to pick, resulting in rather large harvest overall.

Some Bordeaux people say that Pauillac, St-Estèphe, and Pomerol fared the best in 2019—heck, Pomerol is always mentioned as doing well in every vintage. Other people pointed to some great wines from Pessac-Léognan as being outstanding, while others touted the Margaux region (a la 2015). In my tasting of about 60 wines, I found top wines in each region. Pauillac's Pichon-Lalande was off-the-charts great—as good as their 1982 and 1983? But alas, it's sold out. Phélan-Ségur, from St-Estèphe, was the best from them I ever tasted! Great value, too. Léoville-Poyferre and Barton were superb from St-Julien, with Branaire, Beychevelle, and Gloria not far behind. Three super values from Margaux were Giscours, Labégorce, and Marquis d'Alesme. Cantemerle was spectacular, as usual, from the Haut-Médoc. Haut-Bailly was one of the best wines I tasted and its No. II is so sweet and affordable. And don't miss Pape-Clement and

Malartic-Lagravière (red and white) from the Pessac-Léognan region. I tasted quite a few Right Bankers, and some of the best were Angelus, Clinet, La Gaffeliere, Feytit-Clinet, and Canon La Gaffeliere. Do not miss Tour-St-Christophe and Bellefont-Belcier for values.

Conclusion

We did not travel to Bordeaux to taste the 2019s. So, we bought and sold the wines of 2019 before this report came out. We still have some fine wines available to sell. We did not taste *many* of the top wines of Bordeaux, but we got an idea of how the vintage is. One of the *best* aspects (good news) of the 2019s is the pricing of most of the wines. Some priced from 20% to 30% less than the 2018s—thanks to Alfred Tesseron's Pontet-Canet, as the first wine to be released at 30% less than 2018, and then Palmer at the same discount! Those wines set the tone for the campaign. One of the *worst* aspects (bad news) of 2019 was, and is, the quantities released by the properties! Many cut their first tranche quantities from 20% to 35%. We were allocated less of our favorites, even though most all properties made a lot of 2019! We have sold out of quite a few wines, and we will not play the secondary market for 2019s—heck, K&L almost stayed out of the 2019 campaign altogether, but the Pontet-Canet and Palmer pricing brought us in. Hopefully, the 2020 campaign will see us back in Bordeaux with a *normal* campaign—virus-free!

PS—So, to answer the headline "Is Bordeaux Back?" I think it is, depending on the specific properties. Those who followed Pontet-Canet and Palmer's lead in making substantial price decreases (over 20% below 2018 prices) sold well for us, but we had a hard time selling those who took a small decrease or no decrease. Then, the allocations took effect on us. In 2009 we sold over 300 cases (12 bottle cases) of Pontet-Canet on pre-arrival, but this year we only were allocated a bit more than 150 cases! I am sure we could have sold 300 cases. The same is true with other wines like Pichon-Lalande, Mouton, Margaux, Haut-Brion, Petrus, Clinet, Malescot, etc. I wish that the various property owners would have released more of their wine on first tranche. Then, we could have satisfied a lot more of our Bordeaux lovers, and the 2019 pre-arrival campaign would have been a smashing success for K&L.



On 2019 Bordeaux: Ralph's Impressions

By Ralph Sands



I hope that this note finds you, your families, and friends, healthy and safe during these difficult and terrible times we are experiencing.

Not a lot of great news out there these days, and, like many of you, I am adjusting to working from home after 41-plus years of going to the store. Clyde and I were, as usual, excited to taste the 2019s—even a bit more so, as it would be Clyde's thirty-fifth year of evaluation of Bordeaux, and my thirtieth. For the first time, many châteaux air-freighted samples to Clyde. The samples moved around quickly, to preserve freshness and to get to as many palates as possible. Since I had not been at the store since March 16, I was actually excited to get up at 6 a.m. and *taste* before the wines were then transferred up to San Francisco. For a short time, my life felt normal again as I quickly tasted and took my notes.

I was very happy, in fact I was blown away by the 26 wines I tasted at 7:00 am, literally in front of the store on the main street of El Camino Real. If I could envision in my mind a perfect vintage for this moment in time and marketplace conditions, these wines are it!

The wines were beautiful, amazingly elegant and attractive, and will be delicious early drinking wines in the three, five, seven, and ten-to-fifteen-year range. Showing aromas of pure, super fresh maritime fruits, almost every wine seemed to be perfectly extracted, with rounded, soft tannins, loaded with charm, and perfectly balanced. There are no hints whatsoever of an “off vintage” here. In fact, the quality level of the fruit is extremely high.

Of course, I realize that tasting just 26 wines, all classified Left Bank estates, is not the 1,000 wines we usually taste in Bordeaux; but after 30 years of tasting the during the *en primeur*, I'm absolutely sure this is a lovely drinking vintage, and I can't wait to taste the rest of them.



Normal times: Ralph Sands takes notes at his customary window at Château Léoville-Barton during a previous vintage campaign.

Even after this small sample size tasting, it's clear that 2019 is not, overall, in the class of great vintages like 2016, 2010, 2009, and 2005, but only because they are not powerfully built and full of complexity for extended aging. In my opinion, 2019 has the body and soul of the



Making the best of these times: Ralph posts up on El Camino Real by our Redwood City store to power-taste the 2019 samples.

extremely underrated vintage of 2001, a vintage that Clyde and I, as well as all the employees of K&L, have revered—and depleted stocks of—over the years for its value, great taste, and early drinkability. While the 2019s have much higher quality fruit and better texture than 2001, the fantastic freshness reminds me a bit of 2005. The whiff of sweet fruit in these wines harks back to 2009, the exquisite balance reminds me of the 2015s from the commune of Margaux, and their early drinking pleasure reminds me of 1999. These samples had just been flown in but showed no “shock” of any kind—pretty impressive.

A few of my friends in Bordeaux saw the Instagram post from the tasting and responded to me right away. They have tasted all the wines, and said to me: “Ralph, you are dead right on the money.” No matter your age, this vintage lets everybody in! I had no intention of buying any 2019s at age 64, but after tasting some, I've now purchased 10 estates.

In my opinion, 2019 is very unusual for Bordeaux: they are delicious wines, well-priced, and will give great early-drinking pleasure. No recent vintage has this combination of factors. It is my hope that this vintage will ignite the Bordeaux market here in America, and especially give young Americans the opportunity to taste fine Bordeaux at a fair price.

Cheers, Toujours Bordeaux, and Go Giants!

Tasting 2019 Bordeaux on the El Camino Real

By Ralph Sands

Ralph's notes by commune. Prices as of July 25, subject to change.

Score Key: I rate barrel samples with a three-star system. One star ★ means this is a very good wine and would surely 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 own it! Three stars ★★★ means a wine of legendary greatness and quality.

St-Estèphe

Phélan-Ségur (\$39.99) Sweet, effusive aromatics take over right away! Elegant red fruits all in perfect harmony; rounded tannins. A very fine P-S! ★

Pauillac

Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande Sold out. Fantastic aromatics of wild herbs and sweet, elegant-ripe fruit that beautifully float across the palate. Fine, with great elegance and perfect balance; and so tasty. Reminds me of 1991 and 2001 but fresher. ★★

Clerc Milon (\$69.99) Clerc features a fresh, vibrant attack of strong, crisp, Cabernet fruit. Firm, very bright, and elegant. This classic claret will age well in this drink-me-young vintage! ★

d'Armailhac (\$41.99) Without question the finest young d'Armailhac I've ever tasted! The pure red fruit is round, lush, and sweet. You hardly feel any tannins, as all elements are perfectly integrated even at this young age. Not powerhouse wine, but great-tasting wine! ★★

St-Julien

Léoville-Poyferre (\$84.99) Almost out. Great concentration of deep, dark, dense red fruits, with notes of black cherry. Good power, richness; and long-finishing. ★

Saint-Pierre (\$49.99) From the first sip, I thought *wow*, this is different. In recent vintages this wine has been very extracted and clumsy; this '19 is very different. Plump, sweet, charming fruit; elegant, easy, and very tasty. ★



Wait—is this still the dream? Ralph pauses on the way to Château Branaire-Ducru during the vintage campaign, somewhere in time.

Branaire-Ducru (\$43.99) Almost out. Classy, elegant wine, with great freshness, deep raspberry fruit, and hints of passion fruit. Maritime freshness presides over the entire wine. So tasty; just superb! ★★



We'll have to take the slow road back to Château Marquis d'Alesme.

Gloria (\$36.99) Lots of solid, dark fruit. Rustic edge, with some hints of black olive. A firm, direct, classically styled Gloria. ★

Margaux

Marquis d'Alesme (\$39.99) Excitingly fresh! Effusive blue fruits (blueberry, blackberry, violets) and even some tropical fruit notes come bursting out of this wine. Soft, succulent fruit. Rounded tannins finish this delicious wine, to drink young. ★

Labégorce (\$29.99)

The forward fruit is extremely deep and sweet, with lots of black currant notes. It screams of "old vines." Rich wine, with a full-bodied texture, perfect balance for the weight, and long-finishing. Seriously good! Wow, great job by winemaker Marge Connick, who oversees Marquis d'Alesme as well as Labégorce. ★★

Haut-Médoc

Cantemerle (\$26.99) Flavors of deep, sweet raspberries, earth, and wood. Strong wine; great freshness; lots of fruit, acid, and semi-firm tannins. Impressive wine that's a combination of power, elegance. ★★

Pessac-Léognan

Malartic-Lagravière Rouge (\$41.99) Beautiful wine. Pure, sweet, round red fruit; lovely mouthfeel and flesh; a long-finishing wine with rounded tannins. It is hard to believe the red wine can get better here, but it has. ★★

Malartic-Lagravière Blanc (\$49.99) Also showed brilliantly! Complex aromas of lime and gardenia are at the forefront of this super-fresh white. Invigorating and just delicious! ★★

La Tour Martillac (\$29.99) Super high-toned red fruits; fresh and lively on the palate; very pure and very nice. This is the first vintage made in the fermentation facility and cellar. ★

Domaine de Chevalier Rouge (\$59.99) Lovely, round, sweet fruit on the nose and palate; creamy layers of silky, deep red fruit drench the mouth, leading to the long, rich finish. Perfectly balanced and delicious DDC. ★★

Right Bank: 2019 St-Emilion, Pomerol

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

As Ralph mentioned on page 3, this year we were very limited in tasting samples—we never tasted any first growths or some of the top other wines of 2019. Some properties did send us samples and we tasted them as soon as they arrived. The UGC (Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux) sent us several boxes of 2019s. But remember: these bottles had to be collected from all the properties and then air freighted to us. Some samples we tasted were not correct and therefore we could not write about them. Some dates on the bottles (when the bottle was filled) showed two to three weeks had elapsed from bottling to tasting. When we are in Bordeaux, we taste samples from one to five days old, as the new wines are quite fragile. This year, we were tasting the wines in late May and early June, through early July, whereas when we taste normally it's in late March and early April. It was nice to taste the 2019s with a bit more age on them. Check Ralph's notes on page 4 for some of his Left Bank picks—I will not list them here unless I have something to add. Wines listed with only prices were not tasted.

St-Emilion

Croix de Labrie (\$89.99) The first 2019 I tasted, and I tasted it in April. A great wine to start the vintage tastings. Toasty oak aromas, with a fine elegance. Very ripe and blackberry-driven on the palate. Soft, round tannins, and a smooth, long finish. Very fine wine for sure—but not very well known in the US. **95-97 JD**

Tour St-Christophe (\$33.99) And selling quickly! The second group of 2019s I tasted were sent by the fine Peter Kwok operation in St-Emilion. Tasted on May 18. Probably our biggest bottle seller of 2019, as it was in 2015 and 2016. Soft, elegant, floral aromas, deep color, and some tannins evident on the palate. Should turn out great as a value. **96-97 JS, 95-97 JD**

Haut-Brisson (\$24.99) Dark, dark color. Very spicy aromas that follow to the palate, with raspberry nuances. Tons of sexy, ripe black fruit flavors. A sure value. **93-94 JS**

Bellefont-Belcier (\$44.99) Wow! What a treat here. Raspberry aromas abound. Very feminine and elegant on the palate. Rich, ripe, and sweet black fruit flavors. Round tannins; elegant finish. Delicious. **95-97 JD**

Carillon d'Angelus (\$84.99) The third group of samples arrived on May 28. 90% M, 10% CF. Licorice on the nose. Quite floral and pretty upfront, with a fair amount of tannin and structure in the back.

Bellevue (\$41.99) 94-96 JD

La Gaffeliere (\$59.99) Another must buy from this property—they are on a roll. Fabulous aromas of black raspberry and blackberry. Very perfumy. Quite full-bodied, thick, and palate-filling. Lush, sweet, and sexy. Seamless; regal. **95-97 RP**



Clyde evaluates a sample of the 2019 La Gaffeliere.

Canon La Gaffeliere (\$69.99) Very perfumy aromas with cinnamon notes. Quite spicy on the palate. Fat and lush, with oak evident. Solid. Long finish. **96-98 JD, 95-97 RP, 95 DC**

La Mondotte (\$159.99) Lots of oak evident here. Modern style.

Valandraud (\$129.99) Big, black wine. Powerhouse here, with tons of fruit, acid, tannin, oak. One of the biggest 2019s I tasted. Spicy undertones and plenty of oak. **98-100 WE, 96-98 VN**

Angelus (\$299.99) 60% M, 40% CF. Aromas of roses and blackberries. Powerful wine, with great structure and balance. Lots of red berry flavors thanks to the Cab Franc. Full-bodied, long-term ager here. Similar to 2005? This really opens up after half an hour. Tremendous quality; good price. **98-99 JS, 97-99 RP**

Ausone (\$629.99)

Clos de L'Oratoire (\$34.99) 92-94 RP, 92-94 JD, 92-94 VN

Canon (\$104.99) 98 DC

Barde-Haut (\$31.99) 94-96 JD, 92-94 RP

Poesia (\$29.99) 93-95 VN, 92-94 RP

Berliquet (\$44.99)

Beau-Séjour Bécot (\$59.99) 96 DC

Beau-Séjour Duffau (\$119.99) 96-98 RP, 95-97 VN

Larcis-Ducasse (\$69.99) Almost out. **98-99 JS, 95-97 RP**

Pavie Macquin (\$69.99) 98-99 JS, 95-97 RP

Troplong Mondot (\$89.99) 96-98 RP, 96-98 VN, 96-98 WE

Clos Fourtet (\$99.99) 96-98 WE

Fonplégade (\$39.99) 94-96 VN, 93-95 RP

Sansonnet (\$34.99) Always a value. **94-96 RP, 94-95 JS**

Pomerol

Feytit-Clinet (\$59.99) 92% M, 8% CF. A superb wine. Tons of Asian spice on the nose and palate. Sweet, ripe, black fruit flavors, with clove undertones. Velvet tannins. Tops. **95-97 JD, 95-96 JS**

Petit-Village (\$69.99) Shows lots of finesse, balance, and purity. Silky texture. Round and warm, with sweetness on palate. No tannin evident on the finish. **92-94 JD, 92-94 VN**

Le Bon Pasteur (\$54.99) Blackberry aromas and flavors. Nice balance; good fruit and structure. **95-96 JS, 94-96 VN, 92-94 RP**

Gazin (\$69.99) Wonderful, sweet core of blueberry fruit. Lovely spice. Very pure and focused. Ripe, silky tannins. **95-97 VN**

Clinet (\$89.99) Sold out! Fabulous wine—one of the best I tasted from 2019. Wonderful aromas of spice and black fruits.

Rouget (\$44.99) Cinnamon and spice aromas. Full-bodied and round on the palate. Tannins at the back. **95-96 JS**

La Conseillante (\$174.99) 98-100 JD, 97-99 VN, 97-98 JS

Right Bank 2019: Pomerol, Fronsac

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

Le Gay (\$89.99) 96-99 JD, 94-96 VN

Clos l'Église (\$79.99) 95-97 JD, 94-96 VN

Bourgneuf (\$64.99) 92-94 JD, 92-94 VN

Certan de May (\$119.99) 94-95 JS

Lafleur-Gazin (\$49.99) 91-93 JD, 91-93 RP

La Fleur-Petrus (\$189.99) 97 DC, 94-96 RP

l'Église Clinet (\$329.99) Sold out.

Fronsac

Dalem (\$21.99) 93-95 VN

Left Bank 2019: Pessac-Léognan, Margaux, St-Estèphe

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

Pessac-Léognan Reds

Haut-Brion Sold out.

La Mission Haut-Brion Sold out.

Pape Clement (\$84.99) The first non-Right Bank wine tasted, as Bernard Magrez sent us a nice care package with all their wines included. Very earthy aromas, with a touch of oak on the palate entry. Lots of red berry flavors linger on the palate. Superb balance and soft, warm tannins. Very good—best since 2015. **96-99 JD, 96-98 RP**

Latour Martillac (\$29.99) See Ralph's notes on page 4. **92-94 RP**

Domaine de Chevalier Rouge (\$59.99) See Ralph's notes. **96-98 JD**

Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge (\$94.99) **96-98 RP**

Clos Marsalette (\$21.99) **92-94 JD, 91-93 RP**

Haut-Bailly II (\$34.99) Sent from the property to us in early June. Extremely fruity, elegant wine—so many red berry flavors. Soft and sweet. Drink now. **92-94 VN**

Haut-Bailly (\$94.99) One of the best wines I tasted from 2019. Mineral and spice aromas, with a touch of violets. Full-bodied on the palate. Warm and elegant, with latent tannins covered by tons of ripe red berry fruit. Super! **98-99 JS, 97-99 RP**

Les Carmes Haut-Brion (\$119.99) **96 DC**

Malartic-Lagravière Rouge (\$41.99) See Ralph's notes. **95-97 WE**

Margaux

Château Margaux Sold out.

Palmer (\$239.99) Great buy! **98 DC**

Malescot St-Exupery Sold out.

d'Issan, Margaux (\$49.99) **96-97 JS, 94-96 RP**

Rauzan-Ségla (\$84.99) **96 DC**

Marquis d'Alesme (\$39.99) See Ralph's notes on page 4. This wine is a knock-out. Deep color; blackberry flavors. **94-96 JD, 94-96 VN**

Labégorce (\$29.99) See Ralph's notes on page 4. Very Margaux in texture—elegant, red berry wine, with some violets on the nose. Soft and sweet—and sexy. **93-95 JD, 93-95 VN**

Brane-Cantenac (\$59.99) Elegant, earthy aromas, with a lot of Asian spice and clove on the palate. Plenty of tannins for extended cellaring. **96 DC, 94-96 VN**

du Tertre (\$39.99) Spicy, herbal aromas. Very warm and sweet palate entry—a bit modern. Fine value. **96 DC, 92-94 JD, 92-94 VN**

Giscours (\$49.99) Right up there with their superb 2015. Red berry aromas. Some earthiness on the palate; lingering finish with a touch of tannin showing. **94-96 VN, 93-95 JD**

Priuré-Lichine (\$35.99) Meaty aromas and spicy palate entry. Clean and solid. **94-96 WE**

Siran (\$29.99) Bad sample. **93-95 VN**

Kirwan (\$39.99) Very spicy aromas with blackberries in abundance. Soft, round tannins. Quite nice, with violet undertones. **95-97 WE**

Lascombes (\$69.99) Bad sample. **94-95 JS, 93-95 RP**



Nice to see they're leaving the light on for us at Château Brane-Cantenac. (Photo courtesy of the chateau.)

Left Bank 2019: St-Julien, Médoc, Pauillac, St-Estèphe

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

St-Julien

Léoville-Las Cases (\$199.99) 96-98 JS, 97-99 JD, 97-99 RP

Clos du Marquis (\$49.99) 95-97 JD, 93-95 RP

Léoville-Barton (\$79.99) Tasted twice, as the UGC and the property both sent me samples. Black color. Super sweet aromas of red roses and cassis. Big wine; full-bodied; tons of everything. Ager, and one of the better wines I tasted. **97-99 JD, 97-99 WE**

Langoa-Barton (\$44.99) Black berry aromas and cherry cola flavors from one sample. Asian spice aromas and clove flavors on second sample. Great upfront fruit with some tannins on the back palate.

Léoville-Poyferre (\$84.99) Almost out. See Ralph's note on page 4.

Ducru-Beaucaillou (\$179.99) Almost out. **99-100 JS**

Croix de Beaucaillou (\$39.99) 94-96 VN

Le Petit de Beaucaillou (\$29.99) 89-91 RP

Branerie-Ducru (\$43.99) Almost sold out. See Ralph's note, page 4.

Gloria (\$36.99) See Ralph's note, page 4. **94-96 JD**

Lagrange (\$44.99) Very oaky, flashy style. **94-96 VN**

Saint-Pierre (\$49.99) See Ralph's note, page 4. **94-96 RP**

Talbot (\$49.99) **94-96 WE**

Beychevelle (\$79.99) Wonderful spicy aromas; sweet, black cherry fruit flavors; and a touch of cola. Soft and warm on the palate.

Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Moulis

Sociando-Mallet, Haut-Médoc (\$31.99) **94 DC**

Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$26.99) See Ralph's comments on page 4.

Mauvesin Barton, Moulis (\$17.99) Red fruits; spice; very fresh, savory, and crisp tannins. **91-93 WE**

Poujeaux, Moulis (\$24.99) 93-95 VN

Potensac, Médoc (\$28.99) 91-93 JD

La Tour de By, Médoc (NA) This will be great—but we'll sell it upon delivery. Elegant nose of flowers and rose. A touch oaky on the palate. Quite full bodied. Lots of wine for the reasonable price it will be.

Pauillac

Lafite Rothschild (\$599.99) 99-100 JS, 98-100 JD, 97-99 RP

Mouton Rothschild Sold out.

Le Petit du Mouton Rothschild (\$199.99) 96-97 JS, 93-95 VN

Duhart-Milon (\$64.99) 95-96 JS, 93-95 VN

Clerc Milon (\$69.99) See Ralph's comments on page 4. **94-96 WE**

d'Armailhac (\$41.99) See Ralph's comments on page 4. **93-95 WE**

Pichon-Lalande Sold out. See Ralph's notes on page 4. To me, this is one of the best Pichons ever. These guys are on a roll—like the fabulous '80s.



In the garden of lions: Château Léoville-Las-Cases roars in 2019. (Photo courtesy of the château.)

Réserve de la Comtesse de Lalande (\$39.99) 93-94 JS, 92-94 RP

Pichon-Baron (\$149.99) Almost out. **97-100 RP, 97-99 WE**

Les Tourelles de Longueville (\$39.99) 91-93 RP

Pontet-Canet Sold out. Brilliant opening price by Alfred Tesseron. But very reduced allocations here. We had 400 cases of the 2009, and we were lucky to get 150 this year.

Lynch-Bages (\$99.99) We did not get a sample by time this report came out. **96-98 VN, 97 DC**

Echo de Lynch-Bages (\$34.99)

Pedesclaux (\$34.99) 94-95 JS, 93-95 JD, 93-95 RP

Grand-Puy-Lacoste (\$64.99) 95-97 VN, 94-95 JS

Haut-Batailley (\$49.99) 93-95 JD, 93-95 VN

St-Estèphe

Calon-Ségur Sold out.

Montrose (\$139.99) **98 DC**

Cos d'Estournel (\$149.99) 98-99 JS, 97-99 RP

La Dame de Montrose (\$39.99) 94-95 JS, 93-95 WE

Pagodes de Cos (\$44.99) 94-95 JS, 92-94 RP

Phélan-Ségur (\$39.99) One of the best Phélan's ever! Black color. Blueberry and rose aromas. Quite perfumy. Full-bodied; has tannins under all the fruit. Ager. Bravo! **96-97 JS, 93-95 VN**

Ormes de Pez (\$24.99) 92-94 JD, 92-94 VN

Lilian Ladouys (\$19.99) 92-94 VN, 91-93 RP



Sun-ripened Sauternes. (Photo courtesy of Château Coutet)

The Bordeaux White Wines and Sauternes of 2019

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

Dry White Wines

The few 2019 white Bordeaux wines that we tasted were very good—much better than 2018. They are lovely wines, with tremendous aromatics and rich mid-palate texture that leads to a crisp, citric finish. We tasted very few, unfortunately.

Clos Floridene Blanc, Graves (NA) Will arrive late this year.

Blanc de Lynch-Bages, Bordeaux (\$44.99)

Pavillon Blanc de Margaux, Bordeaux (\$229.99) 100% Sauvignon Blanc. **96 DC**

Malartic-Lagravière Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99) See Ralph's notes on page 4. I loved this wine. **96-97 JS, 94 DC**

Domaine de Chevalier Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$89.99) Perfumy white peach aromas. Quite lush on the palate, with plenty of acidity, and a touch of oak, but very well balanced. Long and lovely. **96-98 JD**

Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$109.99) **96 DC**



Tasting in 2020: Clyde Beffa trials the 2019 Malartic-Lagravière Blanc in a real-world situation—poolside.

Pape Clement Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$124.99)

An exotic beauty with hints of passion fruit, pineapple, and honey. Rich on the front palate and good acidity at the back end. **95-97 RP**

La Mission Haut Brion Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (\$599.99) **96-100 JD**

2019 Sauternes

We did not taste any 2019 Sauternes, and so far we have only bought two. But there are so many great-value in-stock Sauternes from 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 available.

Coutet, Sauternes (\$39.99) **97 DC, 94-96 VN**

Suduiraut, Sauternes (\$49.99) **95-97 JD, 95-97 VN, 94-96 RP**



The gates are open to a new vintage, and better times ahead. (Photo courtesy of Château Coutet)

All wines in red, bold type (hyperlinked in the PDF version) in this Vintage Report are 2019 vintage with pre-arrival pricing. If no price is listed, we will only offer them as they arrive. **Prices quoted are as of July 31, 2020 and may change at any time.** Key: (\$Inquire) Price not yet released (NA) Not available on pre-arrival RP Robert Parker Wine Advocate WS Wine Spectator VN Antonio Galloni's Vinous JS James Suckling WE Wine Enthusiast JD Jeb Dunnuck DC Decanter CS Cabernet Sauvignon M Merlot CF Cabernet Franc PV Petit Verdot

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