

WINE News

*A bright new day for
vintage Bordeaux.*



JANUARY 11, 2021 FEATURES

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Top Bordeaux Wines Just Arrived — And Arriving in Mid-January

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



I'll keep this brief, because I only have four pages for a Bordeaux newsletter, and many new wines have just arrived. Here on page 1 are classic Bordeaux wines. Then on page 2 and 3, values in new-arrivals; and some oldies are on page 4. The d— virus is still with us, but that has not affected our great Bordeaux selection. All of these wines will be in by January 20.

2010 Haut-Bergey Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$44.99) Full and quite lush for 2010. The older Haut-Bergeys like 2004 and 2006 are delicious for drinking now. This 2010 is special with plenty of minerality and life for ten more cellar years. **92 RP**

2010 Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$174.99)

Plenty of sweet toasty oak and creamy texture. Only 96 bottles left. **98 Robert Parker:** "This is an extraordinary performance once again from the Cathiard family."

2010 Leoville-Poyferre, St Julien (\$179.99; 6-Pack OWC \$1,039.00) Fabulous vintage and a great Bordeaux property. **98 RP:**

"Full-bodied, dense purple in color, with floral notes intermixed with blackberries, cassis, graphite and spring flowers, this full-bodied, legendary effort is long and opulent, with wonderfully abundant yet sweet tannin."



2009 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$299.99) One of the most successful Bordeaux properties over the last 25 years, and my favorite Bordeaux vintage (except for 1945 of course). We have sold thousands of bottles of this tour de force! **100 RP:** "An amazing wine in every sense, this classic, full-bodied Pauillac is the quintessential Pontet Canet from proprietor Alfred Tesseron."

2015 Vieux Chateau Certan, Pomerol (\$379.99) One of the best Bordeaux properties—but very tiny production here. This past December I drank the 2010 and 2000, and both were perfect Bordeaux—perfect Pomerol, too. Lush on the palate with a core of ripe tannins in the background. All Bordeaux lovers must try a bottle of VCC, the benchmark for Pomerol and Bordeaux. **100 VN:** "Rich, sumptuous and explosive in the glass, the 2015 is pure class. The flavors are deep and boldly sketched in this sumptuous, spectacularly ripe Pomerol."



Cover: Light in the darkness—K&L's Bordeaux team inspect the private cellar of Daniel and Florence Cathiard, at Smith Haut Lafitte during en primeur 2017. Left, K&L's Steve Beardon; right, Daniel Cathiard. We discovered the "new" Smith Haut Lafitte in 1992, the year after the Cathiards bought the run-down property and transformed it into one of the best properties in Bordeaux—for both white and red wines.

Superb New Arrival (or Restocked) Bordeaux Values

The value-driven Bordeaux wines have been selling out quickly, and that, combined with shipping delays of two to three weeks, left us in December with the lowest Bordeaux inventory in years. Luckily, three containers have either just come in or are docking any day.

2006 Arnould, Haut-Médoc (\$21.99) Back in again for the third time in a year. Maybe the last one hundred cases! The property is located between Margaux and Moulis, on a large gravel outcropping on the edge of the Gironde, neighboring Chasse-Spleen and Poujeaux. The wines are made in a traditional style made to withstand the cellar: black-fruited with spicy complexity from barrel, a rich mid-palate, and fine tannin structure balanced by natural acidity. In other words, it is a steal for under 25 bucks!



Some Superb 2016 Values — Left Bank Power and Right Bank Elegance

2016 Lestage, Lustrac (\$19.99) Chateau Lestage is located at the highest point of the entire Médoc, on the Puy de Menjon, 130 feet above sea level—a mountain for Bordeaux. The vineyard is planted to 63% Merlot, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 1% Petit Verdot, with an average vine age of 20 years. This wonderful, medium bodied Bordeaux is still young, but it is opening up nicely. Much softer than their 2010 which we also carry.

2016 Cap de Faugetes, Côtes de Castillon (\$19.99)

92 JS: “Attractive and neatly focused raspberries and red plums with a very supple, polished and succulent palate that delivers plenty of flavor in a refreshing, sturdy frame. This offers plenty.”

2016 Lalande de Gravet, St-Emilion (\$24.99)

A new wine for us. It has an expressive and complex nose, with red and black berries, blackcurrant and cassis, mixed with subtle aromas of toast and spices. The velvety and rounded attack rises in power and freshness towards very ripe tannins. Sweet and delicious.



2016 Le Crock, St-Estephe (\$39.99)

Here is a property we first tasted and bought in the 1985 vintage—a Bill Blatch favorite and now owned by the Cuvelier family, who also own Leoville-Poyferre. Making old style wines in the past, the property has really improved, and this 2016 is superb—packed with red berry fruit. It was a great vintage in St-Estephe, and this wine will cellar well for a long time. Decant one hour if you try it in 2021.

Super Delicious Value 2018s Just In

2018 Hyot, Côtes de Castillon (\$13.99) Located to the west of Castillon-la-Bataille, this vineyard is close in geography and style to Saint-Émilion. The 2018 delivers a rich texture from the ripe Merlot as well as generous, warm berry fruits. At the same time, the wine has a light touch of acidity and a crisp aftertaste.

2018 Peyrabon, Haut Medoc (\$15.99) A property very close to Pauillac that is one to watch for great values. Well-made, value-driven wines with good depth and length. This 2018 is exceptionally good, with lots of red roses on the nose. Cassis flavors and fine finish—all this for \$16! We sold over 3,500 bottles of their 2009 (which is coming back in) and many bottles of their 2001.

Party Wines from the 2007 Vintage — Just In

The elegance of the 2007 Bordeaux vintage blends perfectly with these two “old-school” magnums.

2007 Malescasse, Haut Medoc (1.5L \$36.99)

One of Ralph’s favorite properties. Château Malescasse is an historic property ideally situated on gravel soils close to the Gironde River just north of Margaux. While it is true that 2007 will never have the power or authority of the finest vintages of the decade, this wine displays a remarkable ripeness and an admirable richness of texture. A medium-bodied red with soft tannins that makes great drinking now. We have sold over 4,000 bottles of this beauty—do not miss it.



2007 du Val d’Or, St Emilion (1.5L \$49.99) Here is a fine find from the Right Bank. We just discovered this property in 2019, and we have already sold quite a bit of their 1995 and 1996. Super old-school label for an “old school” property. This wine has lots of red berry aromas and flavors. It really opens up with some decanting.

2018 La Tour de Mons, Margaux (\$26.99) One of the best values in the Margaux region. We have been carrying this property since the 1990s. Elegant wine with some violet nuances on the nose. Some oak and plenty of black fruit flavors. A must-try.

2018 Haut-Brisson, St Emilion (\$27.99)

95-96 JS: “This is a very powerful and structured Haut-Brisson, showing incredible depth and richness. Full-bodied and layered with incredible depth and purity. Layers of fruit and tannin. Best ever.” We have been following this property for about six years and it is improving yearly. These Peter Kwok wines are super values.



A Bordeaux for Every Pocketbook

2014 St-Paul, Haut Medoc (\$13.99) What a great value for those who like old-school Bordeaux. Dark ruby-garnet, with notes of sweet red and black currants, licorice and roasted herbs. Decant and enjoy.

2016 Bellegrave du Poujeau, Haut-Medoc (\$19.99) This opens with lively aromas of cherry, chocolate, limestone and spice. The body is fresh, supple and filled with ripe but subtle red fruits that lead to a finish of cocoa powder and fine talc. Delicious and ready to drink tonight. This vineyard in the southern part of the Médoc is so close to Bordeaux city that only a small part has been saved from buildings.

2016 Darius, Saint-Emilion Grand Cru (\$21.99) Don't let the price fool you—this both tastes like and is structured like a Grand Cru Saint-Emilion. Aromas of Bing cherries, vanilla spice and smoke hit your senses as you dive into the rich and smooth middle of darker fruits. Although hidden underneath the copious mid-palate fruit, the structure is evident on the long, grippy finish of ripe tannin and mineral. This is a delicious value that punches well above its weight class. Super spicy.

2016 La Tour de By "K&L Cuvée" Haut Medoc (\$19.99) Lovely value wine from one of K&L's favorites since the 1970s. We used to buy this property from Eddie Lefcourt, a legend in the wine trade business.

2016 La Tour de By "Héritage Marc Pagès" Medoc (\$29.99) 92 JS: "This is a really beautiful red from the oldest parcels of Cabernet and Merlot. Full body. Firm and fine tannins deliver a classy and enticing red. Just a hint of smoke and toasted oak. Fine finish."

2016 Charmail, Haut Medoc (750ml \$24.99; 1.5L \$49.99) 91 VN: "The 2016 Charmail has a generous bouquet with black cherries, boysenberry and discrete floral scents. The oak is nicely integrated here. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannin, a lovely bead of acidity, an impressive precision and persistence on the finish. This Charmail revels in a great Bordeaux vintage—wonderful."

2015 Clos Marsalette Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$24.99) 92 JS: "A full-bodied red with blackberries, chocolate, spices and earth. Soft and layered tannins. Flavorful finish. So juicy and beautiful." This property from our good friend Stephan von Neipperg always flies under the radar. I love the minerality of this wine.

2016 Fombrauge, St-Emilion (\$36.99) This consistent property, run by the owner of Pape-Clement, seems to get more elegant and sophisticated with each vintage. Opening with aromas of violets, toast, ripe black cherries, and a trace of licorice, the wine is filled with cherry and plum flavors that pick up a touch of spice as they linger on the finish. **94 VN**



2010 Prieure de Meyney, St-Estephe (1.5L \$49.99) JS: "Lots of ripe strawberries, with juicy orange and chalky mineral notes. Sweet red fruit on the palate with a juicy acidity and fine ripe tannins. Medium-full body and a pleasant medium-long finish with nice red fruit. Elegant. Second wine of Meyney." Such a bargain.

2012 Sociando-Mallet, Haut Medoc (\$39.99) 90 RP: "Once again proprietor Jean Gautreau has hit pay dirt with a beautiful blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. Wonderfully sweet, ripe tannins seem to be a rule of thumb from this great terroir just to the north of St.-Estèphe's Château Montrose."

2017 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac (\$159.99) I love this wine—they are doing a great job at Pichon-Lalande these days. One of the best of the vintage for me. Spicy, cedary aromas and flavors. Good weight on the palate. Lovely, spicy, lush wine, like they made in the '80s. **94 VN:** "A dark, powerful, somber Pauillac."

2016 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$169.99) 100 WE: "A voluptuous wine, this is rich and fruity yet properly balanced by a magnificent structure. Pure, crisp and packed with a black currant flavor, this will be a remarkable wine as it develops."

2016 Léoville-Barton, St Julien (\$169.99; 6-Pack OWC \$995) Wine Spectator's top wine of 2019. We knew this wine was great from our first taste in April 2017. The wine was big and powerful, but with layers of ripe sweet red fruits. Round tannins and a super long finish. A must buy here.



Two Sauternes That Arrived Too Late for the Holidays

2003 Guiraud, Sauternes (\$48.99) A ton of richness and sweetness, with loads of apple tart, caramel, and spice character. The noble rot certainly did its good here. Long, long finish. Beautiful, sweet wine. Great balance for such a hot year. **95 WS:** "This is very sweet and rich on the nose, with toffee, honey and spices. Full-bodied, with thick honey, spice, dried apricot and syrup flavors. Lasts for minutes on the palate. Big botrytis bomb. Love it."



2007 Suduiraut, Sauternes (\$58.99) A perfect "5" for value here. We sold it for over \$60 and found a small parcel at a great price. So lush and peachy. Will age for many more years. **97 WE:** "Powered by dry botrytis, this is a wine with immense potential. It has weight, complexity and richness, all under the cloak of botrytis. To leaven the power, there is acidity, but this is certainly for aging."



Some Oldies But Goodies— And Just Arrived!

1996 du Val d'Or, St. Emilion (\$29.99) We sold out of the 1995 in a matter of one e-mail. Now we have the more powerful 1996, with the same old-fashioned label. We also received their **2015 (\$21.99)** and magnums of their **2007 (1.5L \$49.99)** in December.

1997 Gaudin, Pauillac (\$29.99) Super old school and a neighbor of Pichon-Lalande. Located on the gravelly ridges of the village of Saint-Lambert in Pauillac, Château Gaudin is a vineyard of 11 hectares acquired in 1901. Three generations later, the estate is still family owned and run.

1997 Grandis, Haut Medoc (\$18.99) A K&L new discovery in 2020. Originally a hunting lodge, Chateau Grandis is a little-known Chateau planted to approximately 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and 10% Cabernet Franc. Its gravel and clay-filled limestone soils have been home to vineyards since the early 1700s. Elegant wine to drink now. We sold 2000 bottles of the 1998! We love 1997s.

1999 Meyney, St Estephe (\$64.99) Château Meyney is an estate in St-Estèphe that was formed as an ecclesiastical vineyard in 1662. It's one of the oldest estates in the Médoc, although its modern history began in 1917 when it was acquired by the Cordier family. Absolutely first rate now at 21 years young.

2000 de Viaud, Lalande de Pomerol (\$39.99) Back in for the fourth time in two years. This is it, I believe.

2004 Haut-Bergey, Pessac (\$24.99) Just buy it and enjoy delicious 16-year-old Bordeaux.

2005 Belgrave, Haut Medoc (\$59.99) 91 JS: "There's black licorice, coffee bean and ripe fruit on the nose. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a wonderful concentration of ripe fruit and currant. Shows tar and vanilla on the finish."



Two Special Wines

Made by our good friend Hubert de Boüard of Angelus fame, the white is not a Bordeaux because it is Chardonnay; the Merlot is from Bordeaux. These super values must be tasted.

2018 Hubert de Boüard Chardonnay, Vin de Pays de l'Atlantique (\$21.99) I love this wine, which is on the richer side, but with fine acidity. Rombauer with acid. Antonio Galloni: "The 2018 Chardonnay is a rich, racy wine loaded with varietal notes of candied lemon peel, tangerine and tropical fruit."

2018 Hubert de Boüard Merlot, Bordeaux (\$14.99) 91-92 JS: "A delicious and juicy red with plenty of fruit, lightly fine tannins." I like this wine for my Tuesday night hamburger or veggie burger.



2009 Coufran, Medoc (\$24.99) A stablemate of the Verdignan below, this wine is mostly Merlot and will probably be sold out by the time you read this.

2010 Verdignan, Haut Medoc (\$19.99) JS: "Currants and blueberries with hints of minerals. Medium to full body, with integrated tannins and a pretty finish."

Sad News

In late December, I and K&L lost a great friend and business associate—Mark Levin. Mark and I were friends and business associates since the early 1980s. Mark was the most instrumental person to bring K&L into the "direct buy" business, to the point that now K&L is known as the premier "direct buy" retailer in the US. Mark—we will miss you greatly. Rest in peace.

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