

# WINE News

*Bordeaux for the future;  
Bordeaux for right now.*



## MAY 17, 2021 FEATURES

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## Top Bordeaux Wines for the Summer or Cellar

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



I was supposed to have the 2020 Bordeaux vintage report ready this week, but as of now I have only tasted about 120 wines from the fine 2020 vintage. We will taste many more in the next few weeks. Finally, after months of delay, we are getting some more old and rare Bordeaux, and the fine 2018s are coming in weekly. But I only have four pages here in this Bordeaux newsletter: On this page are a few of

my favorite in-stock wines, with one pre-arrival. Then on page 2 and 4 we have new arrivals; and you can find some oldies on page 3. Lastly—and at long last—all of our stores are now open for walk-in customers. We are so glad to welcome you back.

**2016 Fombrauge, St-Emilion (\$34.99)** This is one of our favorite Bernard Magrez properties, ever since the fabulous 2010 vintage. If you can pick up the very heavy bottle, you will enjoy this vibrant wine now, but you can cellar it for another ten years. We have sold over 2,500 bottles of this beauty. **94 James Suckling:** “There’s a very rich and powerful core of red-plum and mulberry aromas and flavors here, delivering an assertive and very shimmering, polished palate. Great tannin texture. Long and regal.”

**2016 Berliquet, St-Emilion (\$49.99)** This property is now operated by the brilliant Nicolas Thienpont, and the wine is lovely. Some nice spice on the nose with blackberry notes. Vibrant, lively wine that is so nice on the palate. Superb balance. A touch of toasty oak, round tannins on the back, and an undertone of red berry or rose on the finish. **93 JS, 93 RP**

**2010 La Pointe, Pomerol (\$54.99)** What a super value to enjoy now and for the next ten years. **93 Neal Martin in Robert Parker Wine Advocate:** “I have always held up the 2010 La Pointe as one of the high points of recent vintages of this Pomerol estate. After five years in bottle, it has retained that quintessential Pomerol bouquet with black fruit laced with truffle and a touch of iron filings.”

**2015 Kirwan, Margaux (\$74.99)** One of our favorite Bordeaux properties for many reasons. 2015 wines from the Margaux region are outstanding and this is no exception. After half an hour open, the nose of white violets and toasty oak emerges. Rich and round, and delicious on the palate. Sweet and lovely wine for drinking in the next ten years. Quite elegant—bravo to Sophie and her gang at Kirwan. **96 WE**

**2016 Pape Clément Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$116.99)** Another great 2016 from the Bernard Magrez stable. Lots of ripe red and black fruits and plenty of mineral flavors. **98 JS:** “Stunning concentration of perfectly ripe blackcurrants here with a delicate whiff of vanilla oak and extremely fine tannins that are almost perfectly integrated on the seductive and delicate palate, right through the almost literally breathtaking, super-long and very polished finish.” This wine is due in at the end of May. **97 JD, 96 RP**



Cover: *Vitis vinifera* veritably reaches for the sky at Château Léoville-Barton.

## Superb New Arrival (or Restocked) Bordeaux Values Under \$50

Finally—some containers are arriving! And we have a bunch of new values just in stock.

**2018 La Roque de By, Médoc (750ml \$14.99; 1.5L \$29.99)** This property of the Pagès family has given us an attractively fruity wine. Tannins are softening and the blackcurrant fruit is still fresh and juicy. This half-and-half blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon will develop well—decant if serving now. Great party wine. **90 DC**

**2018 La Tour de By, Médoc (750ml \$19.99; 1.5L \$39.99)** One of our favorite value Bordeaux since we started selling it in 1979. **91 WE:** “The structured Cabernet Sauvignon in this ripe wine gives attractive blackcurrant flavors and a core of tannins that will allow it to age. It is a great food wine: fruity, structured and sure to age well.”

**2001 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc (\$21.99)** These 2001s are really showing well. Drink them up. This wine is well-made, value-driven, with good depth and length. Proprietor Patrick Bernard owns 50 hectares of gravel soils, and with the aid of winemaker Xavier Michelet produces elegant, silky, and vibrant Left Bank wines that won't break the bank. We have sold thousands of bottles of this wine.

**2018 Busquet, Lussac-Saint-Émilion (\$17.99)** Another of the fine wines of Dominique Robin. Grapes are harvested at full maturity and aged in casks to round out the wine's generous profile, while it retains a mineral-driven finish. Superb buy. Plenty of blackberries on the palate.

**2016 Haut Vigneau, Pessac-Léognan (\$18.99)** One of our favorite unknown properties. This one is owned by the Perrin brothers of Carbonnieux fame. **92-93 JS:** “Full and juicy with lots of currant and blackberry character. Hot-stone undertones. Chewy tannins. Has the stuffing to come around nicely.”

**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.

**2010 Branas Grand Poujeaux, Moulis (\$34.99) 92 RP:** “A stunning sleeper of the vintage, this blend of 50% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 5% Petit Verdot from the Onclin family is a homerun. It got a big ‘Wow’ from me, given its blueberry and blackberry fruit, hints of camphor and charcoal, superb texture, full-bodied mouth-feel and stunningly long finish. A major over-achiever in 2010, this wine should drink well for 15 or more years.” I agree totally.

**2018 Guitignan, Moulis-en-Médoc (\$17.99) 91 JS:** “Black-fruit and dark-spice aromas on the nose with tobacco and bitter chocolate. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins. Structured.”

**2007 Malescasse, Haut-Médoc (1.5L \$34.99)** 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 make great drinking now. We have sold over 4,000 bottles of this beauty.

**1997 La Pointe, Pomerol (\$39.99)** I love these 1997s and many are perfect right now—we called them restaurant wines back in the day. Now you can drink them. Last 19 cases in the world?

**1997 Fourcas Dupré, Lustrac (1.5L \$44.99)** Lustrac wines are usually tannic, and this property makes more rustic-styled wines. 1997 wines are soft and elegant. Hey—the perfect combination. **Robert Parker:** “Black-fruit and dark-spice aromas on the nose with tobacco and bitter chocolate. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins. Structured.”

**2010 Prieure de Meyney, St-Estèphe (1.5L \$49.99) James Suckling:** “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.

**2016 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (\$49.99)** K&L sells more Barde-Haut than any other retailer in the US. Always a fine value, each and every year. Great job, Hélène and Patrice. **94 JS:** “This shows such complex and beautiful aromas of flowers, lavender, light spearmint and currants. Medium to full body, very fine tannins and a long finish. All about finesse and length.” **96 VN, 95 JD**

**2016 Meyney, St-Estèphe (PA \$54.99)** This should be coming in soon, but if it does not arrive on time, you can buy it pre-arrival—and OK, it's a little over \$50. **96 JS:** “Wild nose. Impressive, deep hue and a wealth of fresh, violet-like aromas, as well as cassis, graphite and dark cherries. The palate has a very sleek, fine, powerful core of tannins that bring a lot of depth and deliver rich dark-fruit flavor. A classic Meyney. Best since 1961!”





## Oldies but Goodies—a K&L Specialty

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

**2010 Vieux Robin, Médoc (\$26.99)** Old-school wine—straightforward with plenty of tannin on the back end. Château Vieux Robin is a family-owned Cru Bourgeois estate located in Bégadan at the far north of the Médoc. This estate has been owned by members of the same extended family since 1840 and is currently managed by Maryse Roba, her husband Didier, and son Olivier. Didier, who learned his trade at Château Clarke, is a skilled winemaker and now produces four different cuvées of ascending quality. **90 WE**

**1999 Vieux Robin, Médoc (\$29.99)** The wines have a long history of dependable quality as a standout among the Cru Bourgeois. A Bill Blatch favorite.

**2003 l'Avocat “Cuvée Spéciale” Rouge, Graves (\$34.99)** Very limited availability here. Ralph Sands: “Château l'Avocat is from the small commune of Cerons, which is located just north of Barsac and Sauternes in the southern Graves appellation. I met Nicola Allison at a small conference of women from Bordeaux and Napa Valley in Napa earlier. She followed my advice by sending her wines to our hotel in April to be tasted, and Clyde and I liked them. I followed up by visiting the estate almost eight weeks later and was shown the gravelly, plateau vineyards by her husband Sean, who manages the vines. The vineyards were purchased by the Allison in 2002.”

**2004 l'Avocat “Cuvée Spéciale” Rouge, Graves (\$34.99)** More classically Bordeaux than the 2003, which is quite round and exotic.

**1999 Franc Mayne, St-Emilion (\$39.99)**  
**Robert Parker:** “The deep purple-colored 1999 is an impressive effort from Franc-Mayne. It possesses sweet tannin, and a luscious, concentrated, multilayered mid-palate, abundant quantities of black fruits intermixed with smoke, licorice, and earth.” The 1999 is 100% Merlot.

**2005 Belgrave, Haut-Médoc (\$59.99)**  
**91 JS:** “There is 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.”

**1994 La Tour Figeac, St-Emilion (1.5L \$129.99)** I really enjoyed a delicious bottle in April. Only a couple of cases left.



**2009 Lafon-Rochet, St-Estèphe (\$74.99) 93 RP:** “This is a strong performance from Lafon-Rochet. There is a lot of high-class new oak on the nose here, but there is plenty of ripe black fruit to support it: dark plum, blackcurrant and graphite.”

**2009 La Gaffeliere, St-Emilion (\$139.99)** Fabulous terroir here. Decant and enjoy in the next 10 years.  
**95 RP:** “An absolutely spectacular effort, the 2009 is one of the all-time great La Gaffelieres produced. One would have to go back to the 2005, 1947 or 1961 to find this level of quality from this ancient, historic vineyard planted adjacent to the walls of St-Emilion, on the Cote Pavie.”

**1983 Canon, St-Emilion (\$249.99)**  
This wine is as good as their magnificent 1982. Still alive and kicking with blackberry aromas and flavors. Robert Parker missed this wine's greatness. He must have had a bad bottle. I have drunk six bottles of this wine over the last two years, and all were delicious. **93 JG**

**1982 Leoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$349.99) 91 Neal Martin's Wine Journal:**  
“This vintage of Leoville Barton can be a little variable from bottle to bottle, although this is one of the better examples that I have encountered. It has a very elegant, very ‘classic’ bouquet with leafy black autumnal fruit, sandalwood, tobacco, and a citric edge. The palate is vibrant and not overly complex with superb tension. This is so fresh and pretty, perhaps cutting away a little too swiftly on the finish, but you are satisfied by then.” I am a **92** on this wine. Old school, but still sweet and lovely.

**1983 Pavie, St-Emilion (\$369.99)** Exceptionally lively and delicious. We just drank a bottle at The French Club in April.

**2009 Palmer, Margaux (1.5L 1-Pack OWC \$749.00)**

**98 Lisa Perrotti-Brown in Wine Advocate:** “Deep garnet colored, the 2009 Palmer delivers a beguiling array of black fruit—warm plums, cassis and black cherry compote—with kirsch and wild sage sparks plus profound suggestions of fragrant earth, black truffles, iron ore and liquid licorice. Full-bodied, rich and decadently seductive in the mouth, the generous fruit is superbly framed with plush tannins and seamless freshness, finishing long and mineral laced.”

**2011 Latour, Pauillac 2019 Ex- Château release (\$799.99)** The best wine of the vintage—enough said.  
**97 WE, 96 WS**



## A Bordeaux for Every Pocketbook

**2015 Puygueraud, Côtes de Francs (\$18.99) 94 JS:** “A dense and layered red that is tight and focused with blackberries, currants and blueberries. Pure. Full body, superfine tannins and a long finish. Sophisticated. Best ever. Drink in 2020 but already beautiful.”

**2016 Puygueraud, Côtes de Francs (\$18.99)** I love this wine—great Tuesday night drinker. **94 JS:** “This is so good! I want to drink it now. Iodine, mushrooms, dark fruit and orange peel on the nose and palate. Full-bodied, yet polished and fresh. Lovely tension.”

**2016 Cap de Faugetes, Côtes de Castillon (\$19.99) 90 JS:** “Attractive dark berries and plums with gently flinty warm stones and a very plush, fruity palate with ripe darker plums from start to finish.”

**2016 Lalande de Gravet, St-Emilion (\$24.99)** A new wine for us. 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. **92 JS**

**2016 La Tour de By “Héritage Marc Pagès” Médoc (\$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.”

**2015 Larmande, St-Emilion (\$32.99) 93 JS:** “Aromas of currants, fresh sweet tobacco, flowers, sandalwood and rose petals. Full-bodied, very rich and flavorful with minerals, white pepper and salt and hints of black tea. Intense finish with a bitter undertone for now. Needs a couple of years to come completely together.”

**2016 Tronquoy-Lalande, St-Estèphe (\$39.99)** This property is on fire these days—just making great wines ever since Montrose bought the château. A great vintage for the north Médoc wines. The recent addition of some vines from Phélan Ségur has helped immensely. **93 JS, 93 RP**

**2016 Charmail, Haut-Médoc (1.5L \$49.99) 91 VN:** “The 2016 Charmail has turned out beautifully. Dark cherry, plum, bittersweet chocolate, leather, tobacco and spice give the 2016 notable richness and density. Powerful and very ripe in style, the 2016 has so much to offer. The 2016 is a big wine with tons of character and sheer personality.”



**2015 Latour-Martillac, Pessac-Léognan (\$44.99)** One of the rising stars from this region, they make very affordable red and white wines. 2015 was a great vintage for this region and this wine really shines. Minerals on the nose and finish. Ripe and sweet red fruits on the palate. *Nice.* **95 WE, 94 VN, 93 RP**

**2012 Gloria, St-Julien (\$59.99)** I have followed the wines of this property since the days of Henri Martin in the mid '60s. Find a bottle of 1966 or 1967 and enjoy. Superb value property—I sure loved their 2020, and this 2012 is soft and fruity, with a little cherry cola on the nose. Easy drinker for *now*.

**2018 d'Issan, Margaux (\$79.99)** I really like and collect the wines from this beautiful property. The 2018 is an elegant wine—very fruit-forward with a bit of that violet aroma. **96 JS, 95 JD**

**2016 Beau-Séjour Bécot, St-Emilion (\$99.99) 95 VN:** “The 2016 Beauséjour Bécot has a sensual bouquet of pure red cherries and crushed strawberry laced with cedar and light graphite scents. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin and well-judged acidity. The finish is harmonious and somehow just effortless. This actually reminds me of its neighbor, Château Canon. Could the 2016 represent the best Beauséjour Bécot ever made? Quite possibly.” **95 RP, 95 JS**

**2016 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$169.99)** This was the No. 1 Wine of 2019 in *Wine Spectator*. We knew this wine was great from our first taste in April 2017—it was big and powerful, but with layers of ripe sweet red fruits. Round tannins and a super long finish. A must-buy here. **97 JS, 97 WS**

**2016 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (1.5L \$569.99) 100 JS:** “This is muscular yet so well defined and toned. Full-bodied with deep and dense fruit on the palate, yet powerful and rich at the same time. So much sandalwood and blackberry character. Chewy and rich at the finish. This is a warm and generous wine, but the alcohol is just over 13 degrees. Not that high. Love the finish. Extravagant. Magical.” Several other 100-point scores. Truly great wine, but only 30 mags left. **100 RP, 100 VN**



### K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

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