



C A M B R I D G E W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Bordeaux 2010 Vintage Report

Vintage conditions

As I sit and contemplate the 2010 vintage, the sun beats down on a Cambridge garden where my lawn is already turning yellow and I am reminded of a sentence from Bill Blatch's report on the drought conditions in Bordeaux last year:

"(In September) Coming off such a dry period, with lawns yellow and roadsides like savannah, it was amazing to see the vines such a beautiful dark green, like Las Vegas golf courses, showing no signs of stress.."

Apart from new vines and those planted on particularly sandy soil, Bordeaux's vines had escaped the perils of lack of rainfall through a lack of extreme heat and higher than average rainfall over the winter. It had not been all plain sailing though and the extreme weather conditions stamp themselves firmly on the rich, concentrated, alcoholic yet enjoyably fresh wines that many winemakers have produced.



Pricing

For those of us interested in buying this vintage, yields were affected because of poor flowering, in the Merlot especially, and the lack of any meaningful rainfall from mid-June to October. Low yields have the rather depressing effect of pushing up prices. Some of the potential loss was restricted because winter freeze had killed off many bugs and the summer drought eliminated the risk of rot, leaving the vines healthy. For many the 'green harvest', the practice of thinning out bunches of grapes in summer, was less necessary to restrict yields if desirable to remove bunches affected by 'millerandage'. Still yields of 30 –40 hl/ha were common which fall well below the norms of 40-50 hl/ha. I did what I could to explain to Chateaux owners that the UK was still the biggest export market for Bordeaux wines but was undergoing continuing economic difficulties. The best we can hope for is some sort of restraint on further increases from 2009, but early indications suggest that will not be the case, with the first dozen wines released all 5-11% higher than 2009. The pound is still suffering against the euro as expectations of an interest rate rise in the UK recede, which my calculator tells me means a 6% increase in cost before any increase from the chateaux. Ouch!

Most successful regions – Left Bank wins

I was particularly impressed with wines from Pessac-Leognan (red and white), Margaux and the Southern Medoc, where the wines are generally better than in 2009. Margaux was hit badly by hail in 2009 so that could be a factor. The 'middle' Medoc wines, from Saint Julien, Pauillac and the Haut Medoc communes such as Cussac and Saint-Laurent, were again very successful. The further north I tasted and the more Merlot is traditionally used, I found greater variability, although many St Estephe wines are again excellent.

From the Right Bank Pomerol shines and Saint Emilion struggles to impress but as ever there are very good wines to be found in all areas including the Cotes de Bordeaux and I hope some really good value wines to offer, as I explain below.

Top Recommendations for wines under £200 per dozen IBD

Value Wines (should be under £100 IBD)

'Pezat', Domaine de Courteillac, Chateau Penin, Château Cote-Montpezat, Chateau Reynon, Château Caronne-Ste.-Gemme, Château Beaumont, Château Malescasse, Château Larrivieux, Château Aurilhac (d'), Château Tour Saint Bonnet, Château Griviere, Château Sigognac, Château Baret, Château Patache d'Aux, Château La Rose Perriere

Seriously good and affordable wines (should be under £200 IBD)

Château Cambon La Pelouse, Château Cap de Faugeres, Château Teyssier, Château Lilian Ladouys, Château Boutisse, Château Haut-Bages Monpelou, Château Guibot La Fourvielle, Château Tour Sieujean, Château Deyrem Valentin, Château Pontac Lynch, Clos Floridene, Château Pique Caillou, Château de France, Château le Thil Comte Clary, Château la Clare, Château Cissac, Château BELGRAVE



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PART 1 - THE RIGHT BANK

During the week I was in Bordeaux, 2 days were spent in the Right Bank visiting Chateaux, The Union des Grands Crus Saint Emilion and Pomerol tastings, the Syndicats tastings in Saint Emilion and Pomerol and the Cercle de Rive Droite tasting which combines wines from Saint Emilion, its satellites, Pomerol and the Cotes de Bordeaux.

The Right Bank is twice the area of the Medoc and Graves/Sauternes regions combined with twice as many appellations, more geological variation and much more wine made. It is natural therefore that there is a much larger variation in quality to be found than in the Medoc/Graves. There are still some wonderful and affordable wines to be found here and my recommendations include many wines I would urge you to buy and enjoy in the medium to long term.



Merlot is supposed to be the loser grape variety in this dry hot vintage. Early ripening, if Merlot was harvested before the showers of late September and much cooler nights in October, there is a danger that the resulting wines become jammy, marmaladey, cooked and too alcoholic. Merlot makes up the majority of plantings in the Right Bank, followed by Cabernet Franc, so it should not be a 'Right Bank vintage'. Indeed, it is not a uniformly great vintage in the Right Bank, the conditions were too difficult to allow that to happen, but viticulture and viniculture have advanced to such an extent that many of the problems thrown at chateaux owners are solvable, especially if cost is not a concern.

Yields, reported to be 30% down on 2009, are sometimes higher than 2009 given that the region avoided hail in 2010. The poor flowering was compensated for to some extent by the decision to restrict green harvesting and most vineyards didn't suffer from too much hydric stress because of the large amount of winter and spring rain which the more clay and limestone rich vineyards stored quite effectively.

So, it is not the conditions so much as the conscious decisions of the winemakers that concern me in this vintage. Given the ability to rein in the extremely high levels of alcohol and tannin, why do many wines taste confected, super extracted and lacking in balance?

The style of 2010 Right Bank red wines can be generalised as:

Rich and hedonistic,

Alcoholic,

Packed full of ripe rich tannins,

Structured and demanding cellaring/patience,

Balanced by a freshness from higher acidity both trapped in the concentrated juice or from the naturally higher levels of acidity present in Cabernet Franc.

Spare a thought too for the whites of 2010. The cool nights in September retained acidity in the grapes as well as providing maximum ripeness. Sauvignon Blanc-dominated whites are particularly crisp and intense and worth a look, especially from lesser appellations.

I use a 20 point scoring system and regard any wine over 15 as worthy. The more revered the appellation, the higher the score needs to be to be recommended, as the prices will be higher.

Some favourites include:



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Bordeaux and Bordeaux Superieurs – Whites, Reds and a Rosé!

Chateau Marjosse – A super pair of wines from Pierre Lurton of Ch Yquem.
Tasty, clean and vibrant white dominated by citrusy Sauvignon Blanc 15.5
A juicy, kirsch-scented red that is deliciously easy to drink. Drink 2012-2017 15.5

Chateau Thieuley

The whole suite of wines from this estate impressed me.

Bordeaux Blanc - Attractive, fresh crisp, fruit salad flavours (apples, lemon, grapefruit, gooseberry. Fresh and pretty long. 15.5

Bordeaux Blanc Reserve Francis Courselle – Weightier with oak maturation evident. Citrus fruit and rich texture. 15.5

Bordeaux Rouge – A little coarse but ripe fruit and impressive concentration for an inexpensive red. 15

Bordeaux Rouge Reserve Francis Courselle – Very dark ruby, rich, hedonistic nose of blackberry and kirsch. Ripe tannins hold the fruit to a long finish. 16.5

'Pezat' 70% Merlot 30 % Cabernet Franc

From vines just beyond the St Emilion boundary but attached to the Chateau Teyssier vineyard. Hints of brambles, smokey bacon, spice and liquorice. Very ripe, sweet fruit with soft tannins holding the wine for a good fresh finish. Definitely over delivers. Drink 2013-2020 16

Chateau de Brondeau – First of a pair of wines from Dominique Meneret and always a good value. Certainly ripe and alcoholic with good grip from ripe tannin. Shortish by very pleasant. Drink 2013-18 15

Domaine de Courteillac 70% Merlot Deep purple, sweet vanilla and blackberry aroma. Plenty of extraction but not unbalanced. Soft tannins make the whole wine feel sumptuous but the acidity gives a lift to the wine. Another fine effort from Dominique Meneret and a potential value. Drink 2013-2020 16

Chateau Penin - The Carteyron make a good range of wines from their 40 ha estate in Genissac near Libourne and it is easy to recommend them as they are affordable, drink young and are consistently good.

Bordeaux Blanc 65% Sauvignon Blanc 20% Sauvignon Gris 15% Semillon. Quite full, with citrus fruit, prickly acidity and nice lick of cream 15

Bordeaux Rosé - Very attractive, fresh and fruity delicious rosé. Uncomplicated 15.5

Bordeaux Supérieur Tradition 80% M 20% CS. All made in vat this has a deep ruby colour, clean aromas of blackberry and a pure palate with a nice lift at the finish. 15

Bordeaux Supérieur Cuvee Cailloux 100% Merlot Guide Hachette Coup de Coeur for the 2007 and 2008 vintages, this 2010 follows on in the same vein as the delicious 2009. Soft and velvety. Very soft, ripe style without feeling flabby – just long and rich and summer pudding flavoured. 16

"Natur". 100% Merlot The Carteyron family also make a natural wine without additional sulphites. Dark ruby, brooding cocoa and blackberry nose, extracted and grippy tannin. 15

Ch Croix Mouton – Opaque black ruby, with sweet and spicy hedgerow jelly and cedar nose. Chewy and extracted tannins are ripe. Full ripe fruity palate resolves nicely with some fresh acidity. Very well made. Drink 2015-2020. 16

Bordeaux Superieur Ch Pey La Tour Reserve – 90% Merlot. Almost black with a black cherry nose and palate. Flashy and juicy it is easy to drink young 2012-2017. 16

Cotes de Bordeaux -Castillon/Francis/Bourg/Blaye/Cadillac & Fronsac

Cotes de Bordeaux Ch Ricaud 'Grand Vin' – Deep ruby, glossy, sticky looking and a palate saturated with black cherry and blackberry. Ripe tannin and juicy finish. Could be a bargain. Drink 2013-2020. 16

Castillon Chateau Cap de Faugetes 85%M10%CF5%CS Exotic, bitter sweet cocoa and cassis aromas with Asian spices, cedar and grilled meat too. Rich fruit, nice oak and good acid balance plus a wallop of ripe tannin. Another very good Castillon wine. 16.5



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Castillon Château Cote-Montpezat 80%M 20%CF 14.5% A favourite of ours since the excellent 2005, which Jean-Francois Lalle followed with a pure 2008 and seductive 2009. The 2010 has intense aromas of black fruit, spice and oak (25% new barrels used). The oak adds a slightly roasted quality to the palate but there are big bold flavours and a long exotic finish. 16+

Côtes de Francs Château de Prade Rich and sumptuous – the way the freshening acidity balances tannin and ripe fruit is a joy 16.5

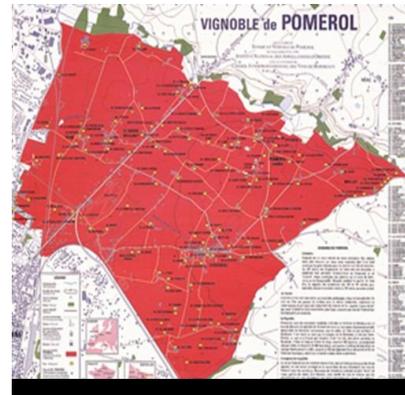
Cadillac – Château Reynon From Denis Dubourdeiu this has lively fruit in a new wave style, rich and sumptuous with lovely acidity. Will drink young and is hard to put down 16

Fronsac Château Dalem. 90%M 10% CF Very ripe and with macho extraction. Probably very alcoholic but enough balance to make this worth watching. 16

POMEROL

It is no surprise that in this drought year the best wines of Pomerol will come from the water-retaining clay and limestone soils that are to be found on the north and eastern flanks. The properties that impressed I must say that I was really impressed with wines from all parts of the commune. There is great richness, perfume, handsome structure and weight combined with fresh acidity and powerful tannins that will reward the patient. I had the opportunity of tasting many wines on several occasions, with pretty consistent notes.

I love to drink Pomerol and believe the estates below offer wines at prices one can afford to buy for pure pleasure.



Château Bourgneuf-Vayron 90% M 10% CF. Noticeably darker than normal for Bourgneuf, owing to the vineyard's heavy clay content. Violets, plums and cocoa on nose. Bright and juicy, with good concentration. Focused. Fine tannins. Lots of pleasure, even if a bit chewy for the moment. 16.5

Château La Cabanne 90% M 10% CF Enticing aromas of crème de mure, plums and vanilla. Warm and ripe black fruits and great structure. Generous, mouth-filling, moreish. Drink 2016-2026 17

Château La Croix du Casse 88%M 12%CF. Now under the ownership of Philippe Casteja, owner of Ch Batailley and other important Bordeaux estates as well as negociant Borie-Manoux. This is big, bold dark and handsome, with damson and cocoa aromas, bitter chocolate and richly fruited, with rich tannins and great balance. 17

Château La Croix de Gay Owned by the Raynaud family who also own la Fleur de gay and Ch Faizeau in Montagne-St Emilion. Made by Chantal Lebreton and her brother Dr Alain Raynaud of Lascombes and Quinault l'Enclos fame. Opaque purple/garnet. Black cherry, pencil lead aromas. Elegant, ripe, powerful. Juicy acidity at finish along with chewy tannins. Will develop reasonably soon Drink 2017-2027 17

Château du Domaine de l'Eglise A 7ha (respectable size for Pomerol) property also in the Casteja stable along with Croix du Casse. 93%M 7% CF. Dark, chewy and ripe yet fresh at finish. 16.5

Château Haut Maillet 79%M 21%CF Next to Ch Petrus but with more gravel soil. Owned by the Estager family who also own Ch La Cabanne which I recommend above. Extracted but with lovely minerality and acidity. The chewy tannins should resolve. 17

Château Montviel 80%M 20%CF. Spicy, quite closed nose, graphite. Nicely extracted, intense fruit, plush feel with clean acidity and good length. Clay and gravel soils. Drink 2017-2027 16.5

Château Moulinet 90% M 10%CF From more sandy, gravel soils. Very dark ruby, with a lirsch and cedar nose. Ripe, full bodied and dense with tannin and glycerol. Long, liquorice finish. 2018-2028 17

Château St. Pierre 75%M 25%CF This is a very old school estate, small and known mainly because it is situated next to the church that dominates Pomerol. I really like the wine though. Perfectly ripe, elegant and sinewy, it is a wine made in the vineyard and made traditionally. 17

Château Petit Village Deep ruby/garnet. Ripe, open bouquet of spice, cedar and black cherry. Ripe and sweet fruit, minerally, graphite texture. Plenty of fruit to the finish and charming lifted feel. 17.5



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Château Tour Maillet 100% M from clay, gravel soil. Very ripe black cherry/cocoa. Great texture and fine tannins. Acidity, tannin and alcohol all under control. I think this is splendid. 17+

Lalande de Pomerol:

Château de Chambrun. 94%M 6%CF A big wine from a small appellation, this delivers way above its price level. Owned by Sylvio Denz, who also owns the hedonistic Ch Faugeres in Saint Emilion, this small estate has been making increasingly better wines over the past decade, and this 2010 appears to be the best yet. Dense purple colour with gorgeously sweet perfume of black truffles, plum, black cherry and cassis, superb fruit here, all black fruits, cocoa and tarry, full bodied and yet fresh at the same time, this is great stuff. 16.5

Château La Sergue From Pascal Chatonnet comes this delicious Lalande-de-Pomerol. Very dark crimson, exotic open spicy nose with cassis liqueur. Glossy feel and lovely chocolatey finish. 16.5

Château Tournefeuille Overlooking Ch Gazin across the little river that separates Pomerol from Lalande-de-Pomerol. The charming Emeric Petit confirmed that the 30% Cabernet Franc added greatly to the complexity and length in 2010. Charming nose of blueberry and cocoa. Fresh. 16



SAINT-EMILION

Some vigneronns struggled in Saint Emilion because of the effects of the drought on predominantly Merlot vines, causing a lack of phenolic ripeness along with high sugar levels. There are some highlights and again some good value wines to enjoy in the medium term.

Saint-Emilion Grands Crus:

Château Boutisse Situated in Saint-Christophe des Bardes, a commune to the east of Saint Emilion town on a clay-limestone plateau. I liked several wines from this commune, including Destieux and Laroque. Great value here if the price remains at the £130 per dozen IBD range as for 2009. Lovely rich, cherry fruit. Concentrated and mineral, with a chocolatey, liquorice and oaky finish. Super-charged and enjoyable 16.5

Château Le Dome Jonathan Maltus' star wine from a single block of old vines, mainly Cabernet Franc, next to Angelus. It's very expensive but seriously interesting. Cassis, tobacco, brambles, liquorice and spicy new oak. Full-bodied fruits give way to cashmere tannins. Great length. 18

Château Faugeres Swiss industrialist Sylvio Denz bought this estate from the enthusiastic Corinne Guisez in 2005. It has always delivered a hedonistic style of wine, glossy, exotic, alcoholic and well balanced. I think this is one of their finest efforts, the exotic flavours balanced with tannin. 16.5

Château Laforge 800 cases made 92% M 8% CF. Deep purple. Nice dense colour. More classic Merlot aromas of mocha, plums, blueberry with new French oak evident. Lovely structure. 16

Château Teyssier Jonathan Maltus is working wonders at this off the beaten track area near Vignonet. He now makes seven different cuvees, up to and including the superb Le Dome. The 2010s are all highly recommendable and I re-tasted some 2008s which I found to be fruity, elegant, well-balanced and forward. The 2010s in contrast are weightier wines, with more extraction, fuller mouthfeel and more complexity in aroma and flavour. 12,000 cases made 70% Merlot, Cab France the balance. Deep crimson. Very generous aromas of blackberry, plum, vanilla, spice. Lots of brambly and spicy flavours and ripe tannin, clearly no fear of extracting. Fullish body and lots of dry extract. This will keep for 12 years plus. 16.5

Château Trimoulet 75%M 20%CF 5%CS Pretty aromas of violets, blackcurrant and kirsch. Black fruit and chocolate. Great texture. Really rather attractive for youngish drinking 2016-2025 16.5



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Saint-Emilion Satellites, Lussac, Montagne, Puisseguin and St Georges

- Château Faizeau** (Montagne) Chantal Lebreton's petit chateau is nearly as delicious as her Pomerols. Juicy and attractive marmalade freshness 16.5
- Château Guibot La Fourvielle** (Puisseguin) Big flavours of blackberry/black cherry, powerful but nicely balanced. Very long. 16.5
- Château Messile Aubert** (Montagne) Dark, rich and heavenly aromas of cedar, crème de cassis and cocoa. Firm tannins and plenty of exotic fruit and the critical acidity from 20% Cabernet Franc . 16.5
- Château La Rose Perriere** (Lussac) Tempting aromas of violets, black cherry and spices. Richly fruity and beautifully balanced. A discovery for me and hopefully a very good value. One to watch. 16.5+

Saint-Emilion Grand Cru Classé

- Château Berliquet** 17+
70%M 25%CF 5%CS This is heady stuff, thick and glossy to behold, saturated and sweet with black fruit. Fortunately the freshness does return to save this opulent wine from being OTT. One of the better balanced wines from St Emilion.
- Château Canon La Gaffeliere** 16.5
This is very sweet and extracted with blackberry liqueur on the nose and alcoholic, sweet fruit and juicy acidity. Not really my cup of tea but I can't deny the exuberance of the whole.
- Château Fleur Cardinale** 70%M 15% CF 15%CS A real charmer Very ripe and full, extracted yet lively – lots of dark fruits and fat tannin. Fine length, lots of alcohol but balanced and impressive 16.5+
- Château Fonplegade** Black core, deep ruby rim, complex nose of cassis, chocolate and black cherry. Big body, big tannins and good length. Hard at first, then gets juicy. 16.5+
- Château Clos Fourtet** 88%M 8%CS 4%CF Gorgeous blackberry fruit, huge concentration full long and sweet fruit with a charcoaly mineral edge. Delightful if super-charged. 17
- Château La Dominique** All very ripe, juicy and extracted, then a mineral, racy fine structure emerges. 17.5
- Château La Gaffelière** Toasty oak and sweet fruits on the nose. Glossy feel to the fruit and tannins and great length. The acidity is beautiful, giving this big wine an elegant finish. Lots of pleasure 17
- Château Larmande** Rich, sticky, extracted look. Black sheen and a huge sticky palate, saved by acidity. More Barossa than Bordeaux but I don't mind a good Barossa wine either. 16+
- Château La Marzelle** Ripe blackberry and custard nose. Elegant and not over extracted. Elegant and restrained and refreshing after all the tannin and over extraction I found. 16
- Château La Serre** Pretty, glossy look. Brambles, kirsch, yummy fruit aromas. The acidity gives the ripe fruit lovely balance and the tannins are not astringent. An early drinker. 17
- Château Trottevielle** 58%CF 42% M Lots of finesse here behind a slightly austere tannic shell. Lots of length and minerality along with a ripe, black fruit frame. For the long haul 17.5
- Château Villemaurine** a Derenoncourt wine. Blackberry and spicy nose. Intense and rich and with quite enough body to stand up to the tannin. Long. Needs time. 16.5





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Part 2 – The Left Bank

THE LEFT BANK -MEDOC

2010 was a year for the Cabernets, with another dry and sunny September and October allowing harvesting over a prolonged period. What rain did fall in September helped to invigorate the vines, but some of this fell after it could help the Merlot vines, which ripen earlier than the Cabernets. Cool October nights helped to retain the acidity in the vines by slowing the production of sugars and it is the freshness in many of the Medoc wines that saves them from tasting too extracted and tannic.



THE CLASSIFIED GROWTHS OF THE MEDOC IN 1855

Of the 60 Chateaux that still exist from the 1855 classification I tasted all but twelve and can easily recommend thirty of them on quality grounds. Price is a different matter. I did not taste the following wines, primarily because the estates do not show their wines at the UGC tastings and I do not find time to make personal visits, much as the experience is a fascinating one. I give Jancis Robinson's scores for reference: Château Lafite Rothschild (19) Château Latour (19), Château Margaux (19), Château Mouton Rothschild (18.5), Château Ducru-Beaucaillou (18), Château Leoville Las Cases (17.5), Château Cos d'Estournel (18.5), Château Montrose (17), Château Calon-Segur (18), Château Palmer (18), Château Duhart-Milon (17+), Château Pontet-Canet (17.5+). I sort the wines by appellation, including the Crus Bourgeois.

THE CRU BOURGEOIS OF THE MEDOC

I'm a glass-half-full kind of guy so I think it is great that there are so many emerging properties in the Medoc making excellent wine. Quality in 2009 and 2010 has never been so high nor reached such levels of consistency. It is a pity of course that the established Crus Classés of the Medoc are becoming less and less affordable but it is my job to find wines that people want to buy and drink and the Crus Bourgeois of the Medoc provide a rich seam to mine for lesser known jewels. I like the challenge.

As the Medoc's second division of wines it is also a pity that the 'Cru Bourgeois' classification is itself facing an identity crisis, with many famous members leaving the club and other members challenging the legitimacy of the 2003 reclassification. The classification was annulled in 2007, the term 'Cru Bourgeois' now exists as a label of quality that is issued on an annual basis to wines that satisfy an independent body. Any property in the Medoc may submit its wine. The Alliance des Cru Bourgeois now hold an annual tasting that is a well organised, simple and unfussy affair that I spend a lot of time at. It is a comprehensive Medoc tasting, organised by appellation and allows the taster to get a great feel for the terroir and relative successes of each commune.

Does the classification mean anything any more if famous properties like Chateau Sociando Mallet do not wish to apply for it? Probably not if you know exactly what you are looking for. For those of us looking for new properties to discover the Cru Bourgeois status is now more than membership of a club – it is a mark of quality.

Tasting the 2010 samples confirmed that it is a mistake to think that the vintage is uniformly good across the region but that were many super wines made. While tasting I sorted wines into their communes, even amongst the Haut Medoc and Medoc appellation wines, to try and appreciate how the conditions generally affected vineyards from a given microclimate. I include notes below on the Crus Bourgeois and Crus Classés for the celebrated communes (Pauillac, Margaux etc) but also take things further below to help readers situate Haut Medoc and Medoc wines more easily. Obviously good winemaking techniques must be employed but where they were it is clear that some areas suffered or excelled due to the climatic and geological differences in each area, i.e. 'terroir' in action.



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Margaux

The wines from the southern Medoc are consistently successful in 2010 and that includes the Haut Medoc 'new wave' wines from just south of Margux (see below). In a vintage where the taster's palate was beset with hard tannins, concentrated flavours and high alcohol, the relatively restrained and elegant nature of wines from Margaux were a blessed relief. There was a lovely combination of ripeness and freshness without a tendency to overextract so there are many recommendations below. I am hoping that the lesser known Crus Bourgeois will offer really good value.

Château d'Arsac Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2025 16.5

Deep crimson, ripe and toasty aromas. Svelte feel to the tannins and altogether charming yet full-bodied. Value

Château BRANE-CANTENAC 2nd GROWTH Drink 2020-2030 17

Glossy black/ruby core. Ripe fruits, custard creams, kirsch on the nose. Pretty serious extraction which keeps fruits and tannins together for a full-bodied, long finish. Tannins melt away and fruit keep going. Charming and very pleasant.

Château Le Coteau, Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2022 16

Deep ruby, ripe black fruits, succulent fruit flavours, moderate and ripe tannins. Soft and easy-going wine.

Château DAUZAC 5th GROWTH Drink 2020-2030 17

Margaux-like elegance but with big ripe blackberry fruit and plenty of structure. Big frame and chewy texture with firm tannins and dry at the finish but there is lots to like here. Neither heavy nor clumsy this is quite exquisite and should drink well for two decades.

Château Deyrem Valentin Drink 2015-2025 17

Another successful vintage for Deyrem and a property I have followed since 2005. Kirsch, cherry, cream on the nose. Really attractive fruity palate with ripe and balanced tannins.

Château DU TERTRE 5th GROWTH Drink 2018-2030 17

Very attractive and opulent. Plenty of extraction and a wonderful texture of satiny fruit and glossy tannins which eventually melt away to reveal a fresh moreish acidity. I hope this is sensibly priced.

Château DURFORT-VIVENS 2nd GROWTH Drink 2017-2030 16

I want to like this wine more than I ended up actually doing so, as it has many promising characteristics. It is not over extracted (never a problem with this chateau) and it had a lovely mix of floral, mineral, citrus and berry aromas that is different and inviting. A bit dry on the finish and a bit hollow but this could knit together well in time.

Château GISCOURS 3rd GROWTH Drink 2016-2028 17.5

Deep ruby. Already open nose of raspberry, cream, cedar and vanilla. Medium-full body showing a preference for gentle extraction at low temperatures. Juicy acidity and melting tannin. Not hugely long but delicious.

Château d'ISSAN 3rd GROWTH Drink 2020-2032 17

Very deep crimson. Perfumed, sweet aromas. Impressive structure, with sweet fruitcake and kirsch flavours, long and fruity – pleasantly bitter tannins and juicy finish.

Château LASCOMBES 2nd GROWTH Drink 2020-2040 17

Very dark ruby and richly extracted. Loads of black cherry, kirsch and vanilla. Certain amount of elegance in a full bodied frame. Heavy duty tannins add a mineral, charcoal like texture along with bitter chocolate and blueberry.

Château MALESCOT SAINT-EXUPERY 3rd GROWTH Drink 2019-2032 17.5

I'm a fan of Malescot, buy it often and thought the 2009 was sensational. This is as good. 50%CS 35%M 10%CF 5%PV Deep ruby cedary oak, raspberry, blackberry and vanilla present on the nose. Lovely svelte feel on the palate with firm tannins, tempting acidity and good length

Château Marojallia Drink 2015-2025 16.5

Ripe, juicy, elegant, all very Margaux but drying a little at finish.

Château MARQUIS-DE-TERME 4th GROWTH Drink 2020-2035 17

Very dark ruby. 65%CS 25%M 10% PV. Very dark with a spicy, perfumed nose. Black fruits and a vanilla top note. Chewy tannins dominate at present but there is a lift at the end. Very long.

Château Pontac Lynch Cru Bourgeois Drink 2017-2025 16.5

Owned by the Casteja family of Ch Batailley, this is dense and powerful for a Margaux, but not too concentrated and has admirable weight of fruit. Not a wine you see much and could be a good value.

Château RAUZAN-SEGLA 2nd GROWTH Drink 2025-2040 18+



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There is an extra level of complexity and assuredness evident in the winemaking here. Big, bold, ripe, full-bodied and dense. Loads of delicious fruit and plump tannins. One reason to look forward to the passing of the next 20 years.

Château Siran Cru Bourgeois Drink 2017-2025 17.5

Well-balanced sweet ripe fruit, elegant acidity and firm tannin, this is an exuberant wine that has the grace that one associates with Margaux but finds less and less as the area warms up. Sumptuous

Pauillac

Clearly a very successful vintage for Cabernet Sauvignon in Pauillac, many wines I tasted were full-bodied but avoided the drying tannins and overripe flavours of other areas.

Château d'ARMAILHAC 5th GROWTH Drink 2018-2032
17.5

Everything here is a pleasure for the senses. The deep glossy crimson sheen, the elegant cedar nose, the delicious blackcurrant flavour, the long plush finish and the attractively bitter tannins. Slightly low acid means it may drink well young and not last the course.

Château BATAILLEY 5th GROWTH Drink 2017-2030
16.5

Lovely ripe sensuous feel on the palate. Relaxed tannins and not over-extracted. Nice ripe black fruits, full body but elegant through and through. Good length

Château CLERC MILON 5th GROWTH Drink 2020-2030 17

Rich and exotic nose. Black cherry. Very ripe tannin, long, fresh and plump.

Château Fonbadet Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2025 16.5

Lovely creamy /cassis aromas, all very sweet and luxurious. Elegant palate, medium-bodied, harmonious. Tannins in check and nothing overdone. An unheralded Pauillac that deserves attention.

Château GRAND-PUY-LACOSTE 5th GROWTH Drink 2021-2035 17

Finesse immediately apparent. Very fine structure, big, complex, tasty fruit flavours. A keeper that will age gracefully

Château Haut-Bages-Monpélou Cru Bourgeois Drink 2017-2027 16.5+

I tasted three times and have consistent notes. Another success from the Casteja estate and a fine Pauillac. prominent oak on the nose with blackberry and cedar. The palate is medium-bodied with firm tannins, good fruit concentration and excellent structure. Well balanced. A bargain in 2009 @ £139 per dozen.

Château LYNCH MOUSSAS 5th GROWTH Drink 2017-2029. 17

Textbook Cabernet/Pauillac nose, Blackcurrant, pencil shavings, vanilla. Easy to drink in comparison, because everything aiming for balance. Nice length and lift at finish. Lovely medium term drinking

Château PICHON BARON 2nd GROWTH Drink 2018-2038 18

79%CS 21%M Very deep ruby with a glossy look. Sumptuous, rich, alcoholic and dense, this fruity, quite forward wine has ripe black forest gateau flavours. Hugely enjoyable to taste and hedonistic

Château PICHON-LONGUEVILLE COMTESSE DE LALANDE 2nd GROWTH Drink 2019-2035 18

Grilled, meaty notes as well as liquorice, blackberry and kirsch. Very ripe fruit and tannins. Not over-extracted at all but rich, long and hedonistic. A bit more flash than serious but still with superb length and beautiful finish.

Château Tour SieuJean Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2025 16.5+

I confess that I don't know anything about this property but I am happy that I tasted it at the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois tasting. Very good structure, precision and textbook Pauillac character. Deep crimson, with a nose of cassis, cedar and mint. Fresh, ripe and powerful palate. A wine to follow? I'll certainly pay more attention to it and try to show it.





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St-Estèphe

Tracking down St Estephe wines to taste, even in Primeurs week, is strangely difficult. Only 5 at the UGC, a handful at various negociants plus a flight of Crus Bourgeois at the Alliance tasting. I did not make the trek to St Estephe so missed out on tasting Calon Segur, Cos d'Estournel and Montrose. As in 2009, there are many chateaux in St Estephe producing rich, complex and classic Bordeaux wines and I am happy to be a convert where I used to find the wines impenetrably tannic and charmless. I think many Crus Bourgeois are well-priced and offer some of the best value Medoc wines around.

Château Andron Blanquet Cru Bourgeois Drink 2016-2028	16.5+
Situated next to Cos d'Estournel and Cos Labory this property has lived up to its potential in 2010. Nice and plummy, sweet nose. Very attractive palate, red and black fruits, liquorice, elegant acidity. Very good	
Château Beau-Site Cru Bourgeois Drink 2016-2028	16+
Beautifully made wine from this neighbour of Ch Calon Segur. Ripe, elegant and seductive, ripe and balanced tannins.	
Château le Boscq Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2022	16
Svelte, ripe fruit and chewy tannins. Approachable young and a bit short.	
Château Clauzet Cru Bourgeois	16
Black glossy look. Blackcurrant and vanilla on the nose. There's plenty of extracted tannin here but it is more than matched by the glossy ripe fruits. Powerful finish. Drink 2018-2030. Second wine Ch de Come also good.	
Château COS LABORY 5th GROWTH Drink 2020-2030	17
Nice summer fruits nose with a little mint. Plush ripe cabernet fruit, wallop of tannins. Nice fresh finish though	
Château le Crock Cru Bourgeois Drink 2017-2027	16+
Impressively concentrated without feeling too heavy this has classic structure, cleansing acidity and great length.	
Château Haut Marbuzet Drink 2017-2027	17.5
Deep, inky purple – lovely cassis and violet-perfumed nose. Ripe and multi-layered. Great texture. Plenty of tannin but wonderful ripe, chocolatey. Very fine layered finish with blueberry and bitter chocolate. Excellent.	
Château la Haye Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2027	16
This property excelled in 2009 and although the 2010 doesn't quite reach the same standard it has nicely judged tannins, pretty red and black fruits, cool acidity. It feels a little limp somehow.	
Château Lilian Ladouys Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2027	16.5
Very good extraction and lots of flavour. Buckets of fruit with plenty of structure and juicy acidity and good length. It's all there and this should be as popular as it was in 2009. Very good.	
Château Ormes de Pez Cru Bourgeois Drink 2019-2029	17
Big and impressive, not lacking fruit but not much attempt at elegance. Needs time but has refreshing acidity so I think it will be worth the wait.	
Château Ségur de Cabanac Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2027	16
Attractive and well-judged extraction. Big black sweet cassis flavours, nice length with some freshening acidity.	
Château Sérilhan Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2027	17
A beautiful wine, and a great follow up to the impressive 2009. Sweet ripe, cassis and vanilla aromas, some cedar. Loads of late summer fruits, svelte tannins and juiciness at the finish. A real charmer	
Château Tour Saint Fort Cru Bourgeois Drink 2015-2027	16
Classic Cabernet nose, with cassis and bilberry, a little mint and aniseed making it feel a bit New World. Juicy and fruity	



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Saint-Julien

Like Pauillac a little further north, the wines of Saint Julien are Cabernet dominated and wine makers revelled in the great conditions for this grape variety to make splendid claret for medium to long-term cellaring. There just don't seem to be enough properties in this modestly sized 920ha appellation (Pauillac has 1200ha, Margaux 1350ha). There are only 30 properties and this keeps prices high and rising.

Château BEYCHEVELLE 4th GROWTH Drink 2021-2038	17
New oak, classic St Julien with Blackcurrant, dried fruit, coal, cedar. Hard tannins deny mouth flavour definition but there is balancing acidity and tannins eventually yield. Patience required	
Château BRANAIRE-DUCRU 4th GROWTH Drink 2021-2038	17.5
Attractive fruity nose, currants and blackberry. Tannin full on but acidity clean and the whole is opulent and charming.	
Château du Glana Cru Bourgeois Drink 2016-2027	16.5+
Perfumed and cherry nose. Ripe blackcurrant fruit, very firm and structured. Classic, drying tannins, lowish acidity. Hearty core of fruit.	
Château Gloria Drink 2022-2038	17.5+
Deep opaque crimson. Precise nose with ripe blackberry, raspberry, cedar and graphite. The palate is medium-bodied with dry tannins, very good acidity, reserved and focused with a very powerful finish of dried fruit, cassis, cedar. Long in the mouth, this is a great Gloria for long-term ageing.	
Château GRUAUD LAROSE 2nd GROWTH Drink 2021-2040	17
Deep ruby. Exotic nose of blackberry, liquorice, charcoal and spice. Rich vivid flavours, full of black fruits. Lots of tannin but not too hard at first, then drying up. Impressive.	
Château LAGRANGE 3rd GROWTH Drink 2018-2036	17
Impressive, not over-extracted stylish classic Saint Julien. Chewy, dense curranty fruit. Very Cabernet. Firm tannins that are hard work now but should resolve.	
Château LANGOA-BARTON 3rd GROWTH Drink 2018-2036	18+
54%CS 34%M 12%CF. This property produced one of the most impressive wines of the week. Impressive, deep glossy opaque crimson. Smoke, toast, cedar on nose. Very attractive fruit and fabulous length. Ripe and sensuous to the end.	
Château LEOVILLE-BARTON 2nd GROWTH Drink 2020-2045	18.5
Marvellous wine. 77% CS 22.5%M 0.5%CF. Very dark ruby with oak and blackberry on the nose. Ripe, intense, focused fruit. Powerful yet graceful tannins. Long and finish lifted.	
Château LEOVILLE-POYFERRE 2nd GROWTH Drink 2020-2040	18
69%CS 20%M 5%CF 6%PV Yield 42 hl/ha. Very dark, saturated, glossy look. Velvet blackberry liqueur feel with blanket of ripe tannins and ripe sweet jammy filling. Relaxes into a long, fresh finish.	
Château Les Ormes Drink 2016-2027	16.5
An unknown wine to all the assembled merchants at a tasting organised by Charles Sichel at Chateau d'Angludet. It's a real treat. Very attractive black fruits dominate the nose and lead to a fruity, well-structured palate which is long and elegant with fine tannins and good acidity. Well done. Only 1,000 cases made.	
Château SAINT-PIERRE 4th GROWTH Drink 2020-2040.	17+
81%CS 19%M. Sweet cassis nose – cedar and glossy black fruit. Plenty of extraction but the ripe fruit runs though. Fat, thick texture and very long. Dry finish.	
Château Teynac Cru Bourgeois Drink 2016-2027	16.5
Complex and pretty, easy fruit and chewy tannin.	





CAMBRIDGE WINE MERCHANTS

Part 3 - Haut Medoc, Moulis, Lustrac and Medoc

Haut-Médoc

The Haut Médoc appellation includes fifteen communes stretched out over 60km of the Medoc peninsular, so it is unsurprising that there is as much difference between the styles of Haut Medoc AC wines from Macau in the south and Vertheuil in the North, as there is between Margaux and St Estephe. I feel it is helpful to separate the estates geographically into Southern, Middle and Northern communes, as these communes will have more in common with their neighbours than those further a field.

See map. To the South lie Macau, Ludon, Le Pian-Médoc, Parempuyre, Blanquefort and Le Taillan.

In the middle Medoc lie Arcins, Avensan, Lamarque, Cussac and Saint-Laurent-Médoc. I have included the appellations of Moulis and Lustrac in the middle Medoc section below.

Saint-Sauveur, Cissac, Vertheuil and Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne lie to the North.

There are only five Crus Classés found in Haut Medoc AOC communes: Belgrave, Camensac and Tour Carnet are in the Middle Medoc, while La Lagune and Cantemerle are in the South.



Southern Haut-Medoc communes include Macau, Ludon, Le Pian-Médoc, Le Taillan, Blanquefort and Parempuyre. Most of the best Crus Bourgeois are found in the Macau and Ludon communes. Indeed, a group of growers have formed a marketing alliance and hold a primeur tasting of their own called Biturica and I was delighted with the high quality here, especially since the area was particularly hard hit by hail in 2009. The best Southern Haut Medoc wines expressed suave ripeness, Margaux-like finesse and forward drinkability. I liked them a lot.



Commune Château

Ludon Château d'Agassac Cru Bourgeois Drink 2017-2025 16.5

Really ripe and pretty blueberry aroma, medium bodied, slightly dry tannins, gentle acidity and really very attractive finish.

Macau Château Belle-Vue Cru Bourgeois Drink 2017-2025 16.5

This is concentrated and rich and structured, with ripe black fruits, plenty of tannin and good acidity.

Bordeaux Superieur 'Bolaire' 16

From the Mulliez family stable (Belle-Vue, Gironville), this is flashy, big ripe chewy and fresh. Vanilla and blackcurrant aromas with some violet. Concentrated and well structured.

Macau Château Cambon la Pelouse Cru Bourgeois Drink 2014-2023 17

I'm a soft touch for these luxurious, svelte, easy to appreciate, flashy, juicy, scented and fruity wines from Macau. Who can blame me! This Cambon is right up there with any 2010 wine for immediate pleasure and early drinking.

Macau Château CANTEMERLE 5th GROWTH Drink 2015-2025 16.5

Much prettier than many at the UGC tasting held at Ch Citran. Summer fruits, blackberry and toasty oak evident. Ripe and exotic palate of sweet

blackcurrant, spices and liquorice with plenty of ripe tannins. Long and even finish.

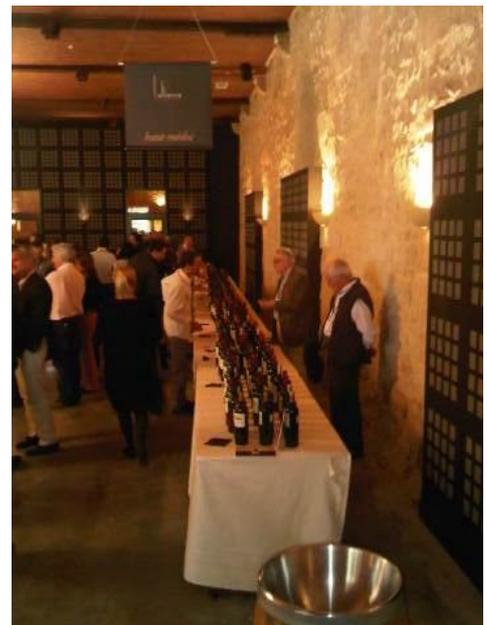


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- Macau Château de Gironville Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-2023 16.5
Ripe and juicy, deep crimson. Lovely sweet black fruits with Margaux like finesse. Ripe but not jammy, even if pretty alcoholic. Ripe tannins. Early drinking?
- Ludon Château LA LAGUNE 3rd GROWTH** Drink 2020-2035 16
Very dark purple. Compared to some other over-extracted at least Lagune is attempting elegance with its red and black fruit compote nose and controlled oak. It all feels too heavy and tough at the end and a little lacking in acidity. Could develop in time.
- Ludon Château Paloumey Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2023 16.5
Dark, opaque crimson. Big, rich blackberry nose with a little mocha and cedar. The tannins are firm but not overpowering. Refreshing lift at finish. Very good
- Le Pian Château Sénéjac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2023 16.5
Tasted three times, with some variation. At best very fine, with rich fruit that lasts the course while the thick bitter chocolate tannins do their work. Attractive and long.

Middle Haut-Medoc – Moulis, Listrac, Arcins, Avensan, Lamarque, Cussac and Saint-Laurent-Médoc

This region experienced excellent ripening conditions for all the grape varieties in 2010 although flowering was poor, especially for the Merlot. Many of the vineyards are largely planted with equal quantities of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot making up a balance of plantings. I imagine winemakers put as much Cabernet Sauvignon as they could into the blend in this vintage and that really is why Bordeaux fold adopt a multi cepage vineyard strategy. Perhaps the Merlot started to lose its acidity and therefore freshness before full phenolic ripeness was achieved and alcohol levels are certainly high (13.5-14.5%). Whereas the Cabernet Franc provided much needed freshness to the wines of the Right Bank to balance Merlot, it is was the job of the Cabernet Sauvignon to add complexity, acidity and balance to the blend.



My recommendations are:

Commune Château

- Arcins Château Arnaud Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-2025 16.5
This property was bought recently by Ch Larose Trintaudon. No wine was made in 2009 so it is great to see it back and on such good form. Full bodied, rich and ripe, with firm tannins that dry up a little.
- Saint-Laurent Château BELGRAVE 5th GROWTH** Drink 2015-2025 16.5+
Situated in the Saint-Laurent commune, adjacent to Saint Julien on gravels similar to those in Pauillac. Very good structure and a wine for the long haul. Slightly confected nose, with exotic crème de mure, crème caramel and toasty oak. Ripe fruit, very ripe, punchy tannins, quite alcoholic but with sufficient acidity. Long, juicy and impressive.
- Cussac Fort Château Beaumont Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-2025 16.5
Another large property making very good wine consistently and with real elegance. This does mean some variation in samples and possibly the finished wine. Slightly odd sour milk nose. Full bodied but with ripe fruits on the nose and not at all overpowered by tannins at this stage. Mirobullage may have been used to soften the feel of the whole on the palate. Nice ripe fruit and length.
- Saint-Laurent Château Caronne-Ste.-Gemme Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2028 16.5
Saint Laurent lies to the west of Saint Julien. Caronne Ste Gemme lies adjacent to the 3rd Growth Ch Lagrange. Clearly a classic Saint Julien style wine with blackcurrant and cedar. On the palate full bodied and perhaps lacks a bit of acidity but it is full-bodied, rich and chewy. Finishes a little dry
- Moulis Château Chasse Spleen** Drink 2016-2028 16.5
Attractive nose of black cherry, kirsch, vamnilla. Charming with lashings of black fruits but pleasant acidity and ripe tannins.



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- Avensan Château Citran** 2013-2020 16
Pretty, late summer fruit nose. Toasty oak evident. Ripe and exotic palate, sweet blackcurrant. Stylish, ripe and classic.
- Listrac Château Clarke** Drink 2016-2027 16.5
Deep glossy black/ruby. Lovely explosive fruit. Tannin firm but ripe, lowish acidity giving a stylish plump finish. Drink
- Arcins Château d'Arcins Cru Bourgeois** 2013-2020 16
This large property produced an attractive wine in presumably large quantities and hopefully at an affordable price. Delicious already with well balanced tannins and acidity, plenty of primary black fruits and hints of roasted nuts and liquorice. Will drink young
- Listrac Château Fourcas Dupré** Drink 2018 -2029 16
Regularly the best wine from Listrac after Ch Clarke. Full-bodied with masses of black fruits and cedar, tannins to the fore. Minerality here as well as acidity and tough tannins.
- Lamarque Château Malescasse Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2014-2025 16
47%M 47%CS 6%PV Opaque deep ruby. Grilled meat and blackcurrant on nose. Lovely ripe, elegant, Margaux style. Sweet, velvety feel to the tannins. Just the right level of extraction to make the wine feel full but balanced. Delicious and hard not to swallow even now.
- Moulis Château Maucaillou** Drink 2018 -2029 16
Deep ruby. Lovely creamy, vanilla and cassis nose. Very attractive summer fruits. Good length and tannins in check. Drying at finish but will resolve.

Northern Haut-Medoc – Saint-Sauveur, Cissac, Vertheuil and Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne

This is where the wines got seriously good. The gravels of Pauillac produce 'hot soils' that allowed the Cabernet Sauvignon to ripen very well before sugar levels got too high. The clay-rich soils of St Estephe and its environs helped keep the Merlot vines from getting stressed and provided cooler areas which benefited the Merlot. The commune of Cissac threw up some lovely wines, surprisingly elegant and fresh. There have to be some good value wines from this region.

Commune Château

- Saint-Seurin Château d'Aurillac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2014-2021 16
I've admired this property's wines and the 2009 sold very well. I'm sure the 2010 will be a great . Lovely extraction, with a glossy feel in the mouth and ripe blackberry fruit. Just lovely.
- Saint-Sauveur Château Bernadotte** Drink 2015-2025 16.5
Now owned by Champagne Louis Roederer after it bought Ch Pichon-Lalande. Characterful nose with blackberry, a cedar and pencil shavings. The palate is medium-bodied with firm tannins. Pauillac styled
- Cissac-Médoc Château Cissac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-2025 16.5
This has surprising charm, with its balanced acidity, ripe black fruits and subtle tannins. Long and balanced it should prove very popular and offer good value.
- Cissac-Médoc Château Larrivau Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2013-2019 16+
Medium-bodied and well made again after a very successful 2009. There is good intensity on the nose with crème de cassis and violets, quite opulent in style. The palate is medium-bodied with good tension, pure blackberry and plum fruits with a linear but focused finish.
- Saint-Sauveur Château Haut Madrac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2013-2019 16+
Made to be drunk young, this is elegant medium-bodied with ripe tannin and fruit.
- Saint-Seurin Château Maurac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-2024 16+
Firm tannins here but bright precise black cherry fruit. Lots of extract. Fruity finish. The best I've tried from this property.



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Medoc Appellation

The appellation Medoc comprises sixteen communes and 4700 hectares to the north of St Estephe. The best known communes for quality are Begadan, Ordonnac and St Cristoly. The terroir is different from the Haut Medoc further south, comprising richer, moisture retaining soils more suited to the Merlot grape. The style of the wines therefore changes. The properties are well known for offering value for money, producing sturdy wines if sometimes lacking finesse. Because of the majority of Merlot planted in these communes there are fewer stand out excellent wines. Many tasted tough and dry and lacking finesse although the best had ripe fruit, well handled tannin and solid structure.



Commune Château

- Blaignan Château Blaignan Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2014-2020 16
Lovely glossy deep ruby colour. Lots of fruits on the nose, plus vanilla and spices. Ripe mouth feel and tannins recede before fruit finishes. Medium-body and good.
- Begadan Château la Branne Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2025 16
Good deep blackberry flavour. Ripe and powerful palate packed with ripe tannin. Dries out a little but is long.
- Blaignan Château la Cardonne Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2018-2029 16
Pure blackcurrant and oak nose, lots of new oak it appears. Lots of ripe fruit but heavy duty tannins are present.
- Begadan Château la Clare Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2017-2029 16.5
Sweet fruit and flashy new oak evident, as is some mirobullage (controlled micro-oxidation) which peps up a young wine. Lots of flavours of ripe black fruits. Huge tannins may be problematic but it is certainly impressive.
- Blaignan Château la Gorce Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-2025 16+
Medium body and extraction. Very tasty, elegant fruit with tannins nicely in check. Will drink young. Very good
- Bégadan Château Greysac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2017-2025 16
Ripe fruits in a big chunky frame. Loads of tannins but they resolve.
- Blaignan Château Griviere Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2017-2025 16.5
The winemaker M. Charloux has gone for extra extraction in this vintage and profited from it. Ripe and easy going fruit, blackberry, kirsch, coffee. Tasty ripe palate with long fresh finish.
- Bégadan Château Labadie Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2025 16+
Nicely judged ripeness of fruit and tannin balance. Classic and long
- Couqueques Château les Ormes Sorbet Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2025 16+
Supple and tasty with ripe Cabernet flavours and handsome structure.
- Bégadan Château Patache d'Aux Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2014-2021 16.5
Very well structured wine. Lovely ripe blackcurrant flavours, weighty tannins but elegant acidity. Good job (again)!
- Bégadan Château Plagnac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2014-2022 16.5
Ripe, fullish primary fruit. Lovely weight and ripe tannin. Good length. Delicious.
- Bégadan Château Rollan de By Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2014-2022 16.5
Flashy oak and very ripe fruits on the nose (Michel Rolland is the consultant here). Can't help but be impressed by the sweet fruit and well-judged tannins. Showy and sumptuous.
- Valeyraç Château Rousseau de Sipian Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-2025 16
We enjoy working with this chateau and have sold wines from the 2002, 03, 04 and 05 vintages. I'd never tried the wine en primeur and found another well made wine, with tasty blackcurrant fruit, firm tannins and nice lift.
- Saint-Yzans Château Sigognac Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2016-20125 16+
Classic Cabernet nose. Plenty of extraction but nice black fruit flavours and toasty oak and the tannins soften off after a long finish. Very good
- St-Christoly Château Tour Saint Bonnet Cru Bourgeois** Drink 2015-20125 16+
Lovely ripe, fruity, accessible style that should be very popular.



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Part 4 - PESSAC-LEOGNAN / GRAVES

These regions, to the South-West of Bordeaux and some of which is actually grown in its suburbs, received consistently good marks from me. In general I was really impressed with the performance from the wines, with successes in both reds and whites. The drought conditions were tough on younger vines but the heat was not extreme, which often is intensified in the urban environs of the Pessac vineyards. For the reds, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot are all planted to various degrees and were usefully employed to add texture, fruit and acidity. The whites were wonderfully fresh and rich, a lovely combination.

The wines of Pessac-Leognan and Graves to its south seem to be out of favour but I urge people to have a look at the wines from this vintage. The prices for 2009 weren't attractive because there were better red wines in the Medoc for the same money. If prices stay the same for 2010 I think many of the wines below will offer great value. Fingers crossed!

Pessac-Leognan/Graves Whites:

Graves Château de Chantegrive Drink 2013-2021	16
Lemony Sauvignon Blanc and clean oak. Moderate weight but fresh fruit salad flavours and clean acidity	
Graves Château Rahoul Drink 2015-2021	16.5
Good grippy acidity, citrus nose and tropical fruit and good weight add up to a very fine white.	
Pessac Château Bouscaut Drink 2015-2021	17
Oak and grapefruit, cedar. Sweet and sharp flavours combine beautifully, lemon bonbons, juicy and rich. Very good	
Pessac Château Brown Drink 2015-2021	16
This white doesn't quite deliver the complexity of some other Pessac's but is still extremely tasty, with ripe apple, lemon and lime and an easy-going, creamy lowish acid finish.	
Pessac Château Carbonnieux Drink 2015-2021	16.5
Fine oak and citrus nose, lemon and lime. Good tropical fruit with grapefruit edge. Focussed and long. Fine	
Pessac Domaine de Chevalier Drink 2017-2026	17+
This racy, clean yet concentrated Chevalier is super elegant but biding its time and has a lot more to give.	
Pessac Château de Fieuzal Drink 2015-2021	17
Gorgeous weight and racy. Stylish. Hint of Juicy Fruit chewing gum (a dirty secret long behind me). Lemony and honeyed. Concentrated and long.	
Graves Clos Floridene Drink 2015-2021	17
Denis Dubourdieu's white Graves is a compelling, beautiful wine, with ripe peach fruit, teasing acidity and length.	
Pessac Château Haut Bergey Drink 2015-2021	17
Exotic nose, with new oak, lime, cream on the nose. Lots of acidity and concentration makes this complex and elegant.	
Pessac Château Latour-Martillac Drink 2015-2021	17
Ripe and floral nose, very inviting. Intensely fruity with lemon and lime. Very rich with great acidity and length.	
Pessac Château Malartic Lagraviere Drink 2015-2021	17.5
This is exquisite white wine. Well defined aromas of vanilla, grapefruit and peach lead to a ripe, mineral palate with lots of acidity, ripe peach and lime fruit. Delicious through the whole taste.	
Pessac Château Smith Haut Lafite Drink 2015-2021	17.5
I can't help but be captivated by this exuberant, ripe, stylish, rich and exotic white. Never fat yet concentrated and long, the persistent acidity holds the creamy, lemony flavours in a delicious, fine finish.	

Pessac-Leognan Reds:

Pessac Château Baret Drink 2016-2026	16
Ripe and sweet, weighing in at nearly 15% alcohol this might feel hot but it has a fresh balance and exuberant personality it is hard not to enjoy.	
Pessac Château Bouscaut Drink 2018-2029	17
Black/ruby. Deliciously rich and toasty nose of blackberry and cedar. Elegant, medium bodied, ripe and textured.	



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- Pessac Château Brown** Drink 2018-2029 17
Very ripe, lush and aromatic. Although flamboyant and fleshy there is plenty of structure here. I think it will settle down quite quickly and drink young.
- Pessac Domaine de Chevalier** Drink 2020-2036 18
Opaqur black/crimson. Complex aristocratic nose, full of cassi, cedar, aniseed, toast, ripe and dark fruits and cocoa. Ripe, intense fruit, huge tannins and seriously impressive body and length.
- Graves Château Haura** Drink 2015-2022 16
This juicy, ripe red from Denis Dubourdeiu's stable (Doisy Daene, Reynon, Cantegril, Clos Floridene) should offer value. I am happy that Denis' wines are so successful this year and intend to show quite a few of them in forthcoming tastings.
- Graves Clos Floridene** Drink 2016-2023 16.5
Given all the concentrated flavours, alcohol and tannins that dominate the notes above, it is refreshing to come across a wine that doesn't hit you in the teeth when you taste it but caresses the palate with freshness, elegance and beautifully balanced fruit. Thank you!
- Pessac Château de France** Drink 2015-2025 17.5
A classic beauty, this wine seems to have it all and will be accessible young. Nicely structured, lots of sweet black fruits, ripe full tannins and great length.
- Pessac Château Haut Bergey** Drink 2018-2028 17.5
Complex and beautiful. Glossy black/ruby, lovely open aromas of blackberry and cedar. Fruity and heady with a lovely minerality amidst the tannin. Should develop wonderfully
- Pessac Château Latour Martillac** Drink 2017-2028 17
Sweet and savoury elements compete on the nose here, with blackberry, cedar and olives. The palate is medium-bodied with dry tannins on the entry, good weight, good flavour and minerality.
- Pessac Château Malartic Lagraviere** Drink 2017-2028 17
Inky black/crimson. Lots of tannin but also juicy red currant and cassis fruit combine in this complex and exotic wine.
- Pessac Château Olivier** Drink 2017-2028 17
Very well-structured yet elegant wine. Classic Cabernet flavour profile, not over-extracted but ripe and alcoholic.
- Pessac Château Pique Caillou** Drink 2016-2024 16.5
This estate and its vineyards lie in the Bordeaux suburbs and being so familiar I have always wanted the wine to be a little better than it normally is. It certainly hits the mark this vintage and unless the price jumps this is a good value buy. 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot, weighing in at 14% alcohol. Full body with lots of flavour, blackberry, plums, creamy oak and a little spice. Nice long finish.
- Graves Château Rahoul** Drink 2016-2023 16.5
Ripe and dense-looking opaque ruby colour. Full and sweet aromas of blackberry. Ripe but nicely savoury on the palate with good acidity.
- Pessac Château Smith Haut Lafitte** Drink 2016-2024 18
This is a classically structured, rich, sweet-fruited, exotic, delicious Pessac that is becoming, with La Mission-Haut-Brion and Pape-Clement, the best Pessac red after Haut Brion.
- Pessac Château le Thil Comte Clary** Drink 2015-2024 17
Another rich yet elegant, forward, juicy and drinkable red from Pessac. If it stays at 2009 prices this will cost £120 IBD which really is a lot of wine for the money.

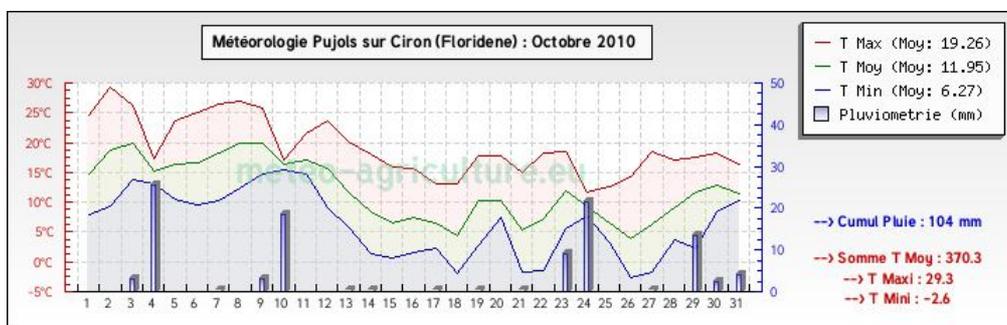


CAMBRIDGE WINE MERCHANTS

Part 5 - Sauternes / Barsac

An extended drought is unlikely to herald a great Sauternes vintage, given the requirement for rain and humidity in September which didn't happen for the most part. In his report on the vintage Professor Denis Dubourdieu says of Sauternes:

"In the Sauternes region, the harvest did not really begin until late September. The onset of botrytis depended on the terroir and the estate. Noble rot became widespread in October further to showers on the 3rd and 4th, and then again on the 9th and 10th of that month. The resulting concentration over the following two weeks without rain was remarkable (20-22 degrees potential alcohol), but not as impressive as the 2009 vintage. The sugar content was greater in those vineyards where botrytis arrived early and was therefore able to concentrate the grapes in the first two weeks of October, before the temperature dropped."



Temperatures (C), precipitation (mm) in October 2010 in the Sauternes region

Many of the wines I tasted were very sweet and full-bodied, with less botrytis character and more varietal character (lemon, lime) than in a great year for botrytis. The cool nights in October allowed acidity to be retained so there is a freshness to many of the wines. There are some very fine wines but I can't get very excited about selling these wines. They are likely to be more expensive than wines from the run of very good vintages over the last ten years that are already bottled.

The wines I think stand out are:

- Château D'ARCHE 16.5
- Château BASTOR LAMONTAGNE 16
- Château de FARGUES 16.5
- Château COUTET 17
- Château DOISY DAENE 16.5
- Château DOISY VEDRINES 17
- Château FILHOT 16.5
- Château GUIRAUD 17.5
- Château CLOS HAUT PEYRAGUEY 18+
- Château MYRAT 17
- Château NAIRAC 16.5
- Château CAILLOU 16.5
- Château RABAUD PROMIS 17+
- Château SIGALAS RABAUD 17.5
- Château SUDUIRAUT 18
- Château LA TOUR BLANCHE 18

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The views in this report are those of the author.