



# CAMBRIDGE WINE MERCHANTS

International Wine Challenge Merchant of the Year 2012-13

## Bordeaux 2018 Vintage Report

**A year defined by spring rain and extended summer drought which gave winemakers plenty of decisions to make.**



### **In brief**

2018 is shaping up to be the most heterogeneous vintage of recent times, with no single region or appellation consistently making great wine nor any particular grape variety or terroir claiming most benefit from the conditions. It is making the vintage very difficult to write about with any generality, other than it was a difficult one to make wines with a classic Bordeaux profile. Having tasted over 300 wines our conclusion is that those who excelled did so in spite of the conditions rather than because of them. Fortunately there are many extremely talented people making wine in Bordeaux.

Our report is at odds with some who declare that 2018 was an exceptionally good vintage. We call it as we see it and are happy to recommend some less familiar wines and omit some more celebrated ones.

### **Weather**

The growing season was extraordinary in a number of ways. From March to the end of June 30% more rain fell than the 30 year average, while July, August and September were extremely dry and sunny with just 43% of the 30 year average rainfall. The rainy period created severe mildew pressure, and downy mildew affected every area, requiring more treatments at the correct times. Organic producers needed to treat even more regularly and such was the virulence of the outbreak that organic and non-organic producers could be caught out, leading to significant reduction in potential yields. Mildew affects leaves and grapes, reducing canopy and demanding careful sorting of fruit. Excessive use of fungicides has been known to affect phenolic ripening of the grape skins. The 14 week drought and high temperatures led to fears of vine stress and blocked ripening. The drought also led to reduced yields, finishing below the 10 year average (which includes 2 very low yielding vintages of 2013 and 2017).

The weather patterns, which are consistent with scientific modelling of the anticipated effects of climate change, demanded many decisions to be made by vineyard managers and winemakers. Frédéric Bonnaffous, winemaker of Dourthe's estates, told us he had never tasted the grapes so much before harvest and the decision of when to pick was a real concern. There was a gap between when sugar ripeness and phenolic ripeness were achieved, as much as 15 days, with the overwhelming desire among winemakers to achieve both. The outcome of waiting for phenolic ripeness is high potential alcohol and low acid, and indeed alcohol levels ended up about 0.5% higher than in 2016, many over 14%, with pH levels higher as well, about 3.75.

## **Winemaking**

With high alcohol and low acid being accepted as the price of phenolic ripeness winemakers had to proceed with great caution regarding sorting and fermentation. Removing mildew-affected and sunburnt berries was paramount, as they would have added noticeable and unwanted bitterness to the must. The use of densimetric sorting machines seems to have made significant differences to the quality of must produced. After sorting comes the tricky process of fermenting the sugars to avoid over extraction of tannins. Fermentation temperatures were reduced in this vintage by more successful producers, pumping over was employed less and more at the beginning of fermentation rather than towards the end, as bitter tannins are more quickly extracted in higher alcoholic solutions.

Some winemakers reported that their wines had been put in barrel later than normal, with some fermentations being stuck with residual sugar left in the wine. It meant we were tasting even more immature and under-developed wines than we would expect at this time of year, even when the wines are obviously unfinished. Tasting notes from other merchants and critics have varied considerably with reports of barrel samples being inconsistent from one tasting to another. Wines tasted at the chateau have been more highly rated than the same wines at negociant or generic tasting events. All of that adds up to a difficult set of conditions in which to taste and give concrete recommendations of the 2018 vintage.

## **Style**

The best red wines have great intensity, body, richness, and flavour, with ripe tannins, unctuous textures and great length. Wines like this are to be found in all regions. Merlot-dominated wines have fared better in our experience, because a) its earlier ripening meant a shorter gap between sugar and phenolic ripeness, and b) it retains acidity better at higher sugar concentrations.

The precise terroir of the vineyards, the virulence of mildew, the decision on when to harvest and the *élevage* were therefore the factors that made the difference. There were enough vigneron lucky and skillful enough with all those factors to make exciting wines that I believe there will be sufficient demand for chateaux to offer their wines 'en primeur'. After the small 2017 vintage top chateaux and fine wine brokers certainly hope there will be better demand this year.

## **Pricing**

We have tasted extensively and looked beyond the most famous properties in the ongoing search for value. There are many admirable wines, and we imagine that better integration in the coming months of barrel ageing will improve the wines we taste at our en primeur events on 23rd and 24th May and after bottling.

Expect prices to rise from the 2017 vintage, with many top Chateaux likely to test the market. Take away the top 5% of wines and there is more price stability, with prices released so far being roughly the average of the last three vintages.

We will be sending this report as a hyperlink and will update the prices per dozen as they are released. Please keep referring to the webpage to find prices. Most wines will be available in other size and case formats but the base pricing is per 12x75cl.

## **Best value Crus Bourgeois – for now**

The Alliance des Crus Bourgeois continues on its path to reinstating its own classification, this time with Superieur and Exceptionnel status being awarded to chateaux for a five year term. The new classification will be implemented from the 2018 vintage. The new structure will help consumers understand the differences among the large number (271 for the 2015 vintage) of chateaux. It will also allow those at the top of the classification to demand more for their wines, which might encourage some Chateaux to return to the Crus Bourgeois family. The 2018 vintage will be offered for sale en primeur before the classification is made, so the best wines should still offer good value for money.

## Wines to buy

We will try to confine our recommendations to wines which deliver on quality and would be worth buying en primeur. We will rank wines below by our assessment of their quality in each appellation, starting with those that are outstanding and exceptional. From over 300 wines tasted our 'Wines to Buy' list is a severe selection of fewer than 130 wines.

## Scoring system

The 100 point system has come in for criticism following scores that seem ever to be on the rise. As a point of difference we will follow the British academic degree classification to rank wines. All wines ranked as Upper Second Class (High 2:1), First Class or Starred First Class are particularly noteworthy and stood out as having great potential. They roughly equate to scores in the following bands:  
High 2:1 = 89-91, First Class = 92-95, Starred First = 96+

## Favourite wines under £200 per dozen IBD

**Haut-Medoc/Medoc/Moulis/Listrac:** Fonreaud, Peyrabon, Poitevin, Labadie, Reysson

**Margaux:** d'Arsac

**Pauillac:** La Fleur Peyrabon

**St. Estephe:** Beau Site, Petit Bocq, La Haye

**St. Julien:** du Glana

**Castillon/Francis/Fronsac/Pomerol/St. Emilion & Satellites:** Godeau, Cote de Baleau, Manoir de Gay, Petit Faurie de Soutard, de Barbe Blanche, Haut Chaigneau

**Pessac-Leognan Rouge:** La Garde, Haut Bergey, Olivier

**Pessac-Leognan, Graves Blanc, Bordeaux Blanc:** La Garde, Fonreaud 'Le Cygne', Doisy Daene Sec  
**Sauternes, Barsac:** Filhot

## THE LEFT BANK

### Médoc

The appellation Médoc comprises sixteen communes and 5700 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.

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Beauvillage</b>	<b>Cru Bourgeois</b>	<b>£80-90</b>	
<i>Mid ruby, ripe, creamy red fruit nose, juicy and appealing palate. Black fruits, fine tannin, med+ length, fresh acid and balance.</i>			
<b>Ch. Labadie</b>	<b>Cru Bourgeois</b>	<b>£</b>	
<i>Deep ruby. Violets, plummy nose. Juicy acid, firm tannin, quite long dark secondary flavours, charcoal, black cherry. Impressive balance</i>			
<b>Ch. Poitevin</b>	<b>Cru Bourgeois</b>	<b>£70-80</b>	
<i>Mid ruby, oak, black fruit, cream, and cassis liqueur on the nose. Fresh and ripe fruit flavours, med+ acid, ripe tannins, well balanced alcohol. Well managed</i>			
<b>Ch. Potensac</b>		<b>£226</b>	<b>89-92</b>
<i>Deep ruby black. Touch muted on the nose. Sweet red fruit on the palate. Creamy. Warm. But with acidity to hold it all there. Fine grained tannins, good weight, and plenty of length. Solid effort.</i>			



## 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 name the communes that the chateaux are located in.

To the South lie Macau, Ludon, Le Pian-Médoc, Pampuyre, Blanquefort and Le Taillan.

In the middle Medoc lie Arcins, Avensan, Lamarque, Cussac, while Saint-Laurent-Médoc.

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.

Property	Commune	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Belgrave</b>	<b>Saint-Laurent</b>	<b>£257</b>	<b>88-92</b>
<i>High Cabernet Sauvignon content. Moderate ruby, purple colour. Coffee, mocha like aromas with ripe red and black cherries. Fruit driven, powerful, rich, creamy, structured, dense. Precise, linear tannin. Fresh red fruits and mocha on the finish..</i>			
<b>Ch. Bernadotte</b>		<b>£</b>	
<i>Herbal, milk chocolate, and raspberry jam aromas. Savoury, meaty, quite serious on palate. Dense tannin. Cocoa finish.</i>			
<b>Ch. Cantemerle</b>	<b>Macau</b>	<b>£248</b>	<b>87-90</b>
<i>Dark ruby, red and black fruits, mulberry and blackcurrant. Cocoa. Lifted acid, velvety tannins good length.</i>			
<b>Ch. de Camensac</b>		<b>£262</b>	
<i>Pretty red fruit florality. Dusty tannins and good concentration of fresh red fruits.. Creamy palate, lifted floral acidity, elegant texture.</i>			
<b>Ch. Lamothe Bergeron</b>	<b>Cussac</b>	<b>£125</b>	
<i>Ripe, forward, strawberry smoothie nose. V modern, polished, supple, vanillin. Well judged tannin. Medium bodied, rounded, and some length. Good.</i>			
<b>Ch. Lestage Simon</b>	<b>Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne</b>	<b>£83</b>	
<i>Ruby, red fruits, vanilla, compote, nicely balanced and alcohol under control. Medium bodied and fine length.</i>			
<b>Ch. Peyrabon</b>	<b>Saint-Sauveur</b>	<b>£98</b>	
<i>Dense deep ruby black. Appealing violet and creme de cassis aroma, sweet cassis fruit. Quite juicy. Persistent then elegant tannins, long and silky.</i>			
<b>Ch. Reysson</b>	<b>Vertheuil</b>	<b>£103</b>	
<i>87% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot (usually closer to 70% Merlot in the blend). Pretty, summer pudding, red fruit jelly nose. Fresh, floral, and summery. Bright acid. Mineral, textured tannin.</i>			

*Elegant, juicy red fruits. Well held alcohol. Vibrant, slightly floral, potpourri finish. Good. Classy. This wine will be ranked in the new top Cru Bourgeois category upon release.*

**Ch. Sociando Mallet** **£285** **90-93**

*Dense, purpling colour. Ripe blue and purple fruit. Herbal, savoury nose. Super juicy palate. Full bodied, quite sumptuous. Elegant tannin. Lingers. Balanced.*

## Listrac-Médoc

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
Bordeaux Blanc			

**Ch. Fonreaud Blanc 'Le Cygne'** **£155**

*Oak, vanillin, baked lemon. Stone fruits on palate, apricots, sweet oak. Almost ripe Chablis like structure behind it. Pretty good.*

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>First Class</b>			

**Ch. Fonreaud** **£115**

*Perfumed nose. Cream, cassis, blueberry cheesecake - really inviting, if primary and oak derived. Juicy, plenty of tannin but fun blueberry fruit. Well structured. Fruit remains though. As does acidity. Totally charming.*

### High 2:1

**Ch. Ducluzeau** **£115** **89-92**

*98% Merlot. Attractive leafiness on nose. Creamy, overt oak. Quite sumptuous. Fresh acidity on finish. Decent red fruit extraction, integrated tannin. The estate is owned by Bruno Borie's mother.*

**Ch. Fourcas Dupre** **£116**

*Deep ruby. Currants, coffee, and oak on the nose. Balanced red fruit palate. Sweet and juicy. Rubby tannin. Fresh lingering acidity. Pretty good.*

**Ch. Fourcas Hosten** **£167**

*Youthful and bright. Red currants and cherry jam. Creamy palate. Low extraction of tannin. Supple, light, and easy. Probably quite high pH.*

## Moulis

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>			

**Ch. Chasse Spleen** **£300**

*Really quite pleasing. Overt oak. Smoky back bone. Fresh, pure fruit, nice acid and structure. Dark cherries. Flavourful. Creamy. Balanced.*

**Ch. Le Garricq Cru Bourgeois** **£127**

*Currants and prunes, chewiness. Fresher on palate, dark plum and damson. Good acidity. Quite chocolatey tannins. Freshness increased on finish. Well handled alcohol.*

## St-Estèphe

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>First Class</b>			

**Ch. Meyney** **£255** **90-93**  
*Floral, supple, elegant. Lovely ripe fruit, blackcurrant with coconut-y oak. Well formed, ripe tannin. Slightly coffee / toffee finish. Surprising.*

**High 2:1**

**Ch. Beau Site** **Cru Bourgeois** **£158** **91-92**  
*Fresh floral aromas. Juiciness on palate. Creamy, some weight. Chocolate and damson, nice cocoa dusted tannins, some freshness on the finish. Still hot, but has enough stuffing. Owned by the Casteja family who own Ch Batailley and Ch Lynch Moussas in Pauillac and who are improving the quality of their wines rapidly.*

**Ch. Calon Segur** **3rd Growth** **£** **96-99**  
*Deep ruby, glossy. Red and black fruit, tree fruit. Plummy, chewy tannin. Some acid. Some balance. Coffee finish.*

**Ch. La Haye** **Cru Bourgeois** **£152**  
*Juicy, nicely scented and red fruited. Dry tannins with moderating acid and fruit weight, quite elegant. Some pleasant crunch. Balanced, mid weight, fresh and red.*

**Ch. Le Boscq** **Cru Bourgeois** **£211** **91-94**  
*Located in the northern part of St Estephe, and replanted with Cabernet Sauvignon rather than Merlot, particularly on the flat gravels at the peak of the hill. This area is a full 2.5 degrees cooler than St Emilion in the summer. Floral. Ripe and generous fruit, red raspberries, moderately plump tannins. Cedar and tobacco finish.*

**Le Marquis de Calon Segur** **2nd wine** **£248**  
*Mid ruby, raspberry, black cherry aromas, herbs and flowers. Supple, enjoyable tannin. Chalky and dusty. Warming, but not too warm. Slightly prune, but not too much. Balanced. Easy to like.*

**Ch. Petit Bocq** **Cru Bourgeois** **£164**  
*Deep ruby. Creamy and berried nose (blackberry, blackcurrant). Ripe and generous black fruits with chocolate. Medium body, warming, cedar, oak tannin, low acid but reasonable length and sweet fruit to finish.*

**Ch. Phelan Segur** **£375** **90-93**  
*Deep, purpling, savoury. Rich plummy fruit, raspberry coulis, fragrant, good acidity. Lithe and fresh palate. Crunchy ripe raspberries. Medium bodied. Slightly short.*

**Ch. Plantier Rose** **£**  
*Dense and inky. Plummy, licorice, violets, super ripe, chocolate, dusty oak. Port perfumes. V chocolatey tannin. Dense, juicy. Ripeness is persistent. Some freshness. Integrated alcohol.*

**Ch. Serilhan** **£155-165**  
*Coffee, toast, and creamy oak. Plush, plummy. Full bodied, fruit packed, slightly prunes in brandy, creamy oak, some freshness. Oak tannins and fruit tannins almost overwhelming.*

## Pauillac

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Duhart-Milon</b>	<b>4th Growth</b>	<b>£682</b>	<b>90-93</b>
<i>Herbal and savoury aromas. Black and blue fruit. Rounded tannin. Smoky and broad. Big extraction but somehow short.</i>			

**Ch. La Fleur Peyrabon** **Cru Bourgeois** **£232**

Dense colour, evident oak. Vanilla, coconut, violets, red and light black fruits. Fresh, juicy and crunchy red fruit. Solid texture. Round, super flavourful, supple, balanced. Pleasing, but probably for youthful drinking.

**Ch. Lynch-Bages 5th Growth £ 96-99**  
 Dark chocolate and kirsch. Ripe and expressive. Intense juicy black fruits, assertive tannins, long and big boned. Chewy. Hot.

**Ch. Pichon Baron 2nd Growth £1,330 95-98**  
 Ultra ripe expression of Cabernet Sauvignon. Herbal, fresh fruit, coffee. Juicy. Dark, savoury, sweet, ripe, oaky, mouth-filling. Ultra plush. Powerful, palate, dried fruit, low acid yet forceful, impactful impression with cocoa tannins.

## Saint-Julien

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>First Class</b>			
<b>Clos du Marquis</b>		<b>£477</b>	<b>92-95</b>
<i>Complex, layered, black fruit, and herbal nose. Quite sumptuous. Full on, warm, but well held. Complex fruit and sweet oak all through the finish. Very good weight, and concentration. Lovely tannin. Clos du Marquis is part of the Ch Leoville Las Cases estate but is not a second wine of that estate but made from a separate vineyard that lies close to Pichon Comtesse de Lalande at the western end. In fact both wines have their own second wines, and Clos du Marquis is treated and priced as a grand vin of St Julien, and it is easy to see why when one tastes it.</i>			
<b>Ch. Langoa Barton</b>	<b>3rd Growth</b>	<b>£434</b>	<b>93-96</b>
<i>Floral and red. Fragrant. Elegant backbone, focused tannin, fresh acidity, and medicinal finish. Fruit remains throughout. Dark ruby, glossy. Attractive chocolate blueberry aromas, Juicy, sweet palate with excellent balance, lift and ripe tannins, Long and very good</i>			
<b>Ch. Leoville Poyferre</b>	<b>2nd Growth</b>	<b>£789</b>	<b>95-98</b>
<i>Creamy blueberry jam nose. Ripe and floral. Powerful and vibrant palate, ripe damsons, baked fruit, chewy tannin. Long and impressive.</i>			
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Beychevelle</b>	<b>4th Growth</b>	<b>£743</b>	<b>94-97</b>
<i>Deep, dark, dense. Sweet and plummy with a dried fruit, mocha finish.</i>			
<b>Ch. Branaire Ducru</b>	<b>4th Growth</b>	<b>£477</b>	<b>94-97</b>
<i>Sweet red fruit, savoury and herbal. High extraction, dark fruit palate, Lift from some acid, then some dried fruit, and a sweet long tannic finish.</i>			
<b>Ch. de la Bridane</b>		<b>£167</b>	
<i>Dense colour. Ripe dark fruit compote. Expressive dark juiciness, something mineral on finish, but perhaps lacking some backbone. Not bad. Toothsome tannin with a decent wallop of ripe fruit, and just enough acidity.</i>			
<b>Ch. du Glana</b>		<b>£199</b>	
<i>Red fruits, floral, quite pretty. Really fresh acidity. Still warm, but balanced. Juicy length. Fair extraction.</i>			
<b>Ch. Guard Larose</b>	<b>2nd Growth</b>	<b>£661</b>	
<i>Dark ruby. Dense, herbal, extracted. Kirsch and currants. Coffee and cassis. Juicy creamy palate with pleasant lifted finish, robust tannins but very long if on very ripe fruit /dried fruit spectrum.</i>			
<b>Ch. Leoville Barton</b>	<b>2nd Growth</b>	<b>£750</b>	<b>96-99</b>

*Black forest gateau nose. Purple, dark fruits, cassis. Lots of extraction, graphite, bit of menthol coolness, low acid, intense dried fruit, ripe tannins and good length. More brooding and closed than it's brother Langoa.*

**Ch. Talbot 4th Growth £522 93-96**  
*Dense ruby, red flowers, and cedar oak on nose. Plump black fruit, black currant, and bitter chocolate. Good acidity, warm, spicy and ripe tannins.*

## Margaux

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
----------	----------------	-----------------	----------------

### **First Class**

**Ch. d'Arsac Cru Bourgeois £180 89-90**  
*Cassis, licorice, dark plum. Sumptuous ripe fruit on palate. Ruby, plums, liquorice and red fruit. Ripe full tannin. Integrated. Fresh acid. Warm heat from alcohol but enough acidity and elegance to be of interest. Split between the Margaux and Haut-Médoc appellations, Château d'Arsac is comprised of 112 hectares, 54 of which fall within Margaux.*

**Ch. Giscours 3rd Growth £516 93-96**  
*Earlier picked, with a higher Petit Verdot content in the final blend. Smoky, meaty, savoury, kirsch, dark fruits. Mouth-filling tannin, sinewy texture, good acid, long lasting, warm. Hard hitting, monumental, but can develop. Plum pudding, espresso finish. Plenty more to come.*

### **High 2:1**

**Blason d'Issan 2nd Wine £233**  
*Pretty aromas, but a touch cordial esque. Red flowers and cherry jam. On the palate, herbal, spicy, dense dark currant fruits. Rich, and quite powerful. Well handled, refined tannin. Floral finish. Elegant. This second wine has been a value buy for a number of years.*

**Ch. Cantenac Brown 3rd Growth £477 94-97**  
*Deep ruby, creamy and red fruited nose. Lithe palate, fleshy, ripe, dark fruit. Black cherries, black plums. Balanced acidity, integrated, big but juicy tannin. Good.*

**Haut-Breton Larigaudiere £189**  
*Black fruits, firm ripe tannins, enough acid, intense black fruits, not baked, rather charming*

**Ch. Labegorce £263 92-95**  
*Coffee and smoke aromas, layered fruit, cedar, blackcurrant. Big and powerful, tannin all over the palate but fortunately not too overwhelming. Low acid. Layered dark fruit, chocolate flavours, long.*

**Ch. Marquis de Terme 4th Growth £388 89-92**  
*Ripe easygoing palate with lots of berries, compote, ripe tannin, and a touch of freshness. Complex tannin structure. Glossy. Creamy. Lingers on fruit. Quite charming. Layered, but not overpowering.*

**Ch. Rauzan Segla 2nd Growth £ 96-99**  
*Chunky, blue, and jammy. Fleshy smoky damsons. More refined on palate. Plummy cocoa tannins, juicy, structured. Possibly wanting in acidity.*

## THE RIGHT BANK

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.

## Bordeaux Blanc

Property	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>		
<b>Ch. Doisy-Daene</b>	<b>£159</b>	
<i>Classic aromas, lemon grass, lime cordial, oak. Fleshy, lots of oak, and good acidity. Will come together.</i>		

## Francs - Cotes de Bordeaux

Property	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>First Class</b>		
<b>Ch. Alcée</b>	<b>£130</b>	<b>90-93</b>
<i>Dark ruby, sweet custard, plummy, cedary nose. Surprisingly layered on the palate. Ample fruit weight, rich oak, well balanced and moreish. Charming. Impressive.</i>		

## Castillon

Property	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>		
<b>Ch. Cap de Faugeres</b>	<b>£108</b>	
<i>Blue fruit, vanilla, cedar, cocoa, plums. Pleasing oak. Full and sweet. Chewy tannin, low acid but plenty of fruit. Balanced. Lingers longer than anticipated. We've followed this wine since the 1996 vintage, and it always delivers pleasure, quality and value for money.</i>		
<b>Ch. Joanin-Becot</b>	<b>£174</b>	<b>90-93</b>
<i>Confected, jammy, chocolate mousse nose. A sweet tooth's wine, lots of cream and blackcurrant preserve, chocolate flavour with soft tannin, but with a good lift of acidity. Really quite approachable. Milk choc finish.</i>		

## Cadillac

Property	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>		
<b>Ch. Ricaud</b>	<b>£115</b>	
<i>Sweet, red flowers, subtle prune, oregano. Robust, full, slightly chalky tannin. Warming finish, but intense purple fruit through to the end. Balanced acidity. Licorice. Clay gives opulence to the fruit.</i>		

## Canon-Fronsac

<b>High 2:1</b>		
<b>Ch. Vrai Canon Bouché</b>	<b>£167</b>	<b>90-93</b>
<i>Very blackcurrant-y. Creamy texture. Slightly simple, but enjoyable. Savoury tannin, good length.</i>		

## Fronsac

<b>High 2:1</b>		
<b>Ch. Moulin Haut Villars</b>	<b>£80-90</b>	
<i>93% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Ripe, port like fruit. Red flowers, freshness, and length. Shows structure and density. The tannins are a bit closed right now, but it seems to have mid term potential.</i>		
<b>Ch. Villars</b>	<b>£115-125</b>	
<i>71% Merlot, 21% Cab Franc, 2% Cab Sauv. 35% new oak. Quite modern, but appealing. Silky sweet fruit, toasty oak, dark cherry fruit. Very accessible.</i>		

**Ch. de Carles**

**£108**

*Big, rich, curranty, juicy fruit. Forward primary character. Light tannin. Easy but good*

## Lalande-de-Pomerol

**High 2:1**

**Ch. Chambrun**

**£**

*Menthol, herbal aromas. Cassis. Super juicy. Fresh bright acid, expressive tannin, light and savoury.*

**Ch. Haut-Chaigneau**

**£127**

**88-91**

*Grassy, green, lean aromas. Crunchy cab franc. Expressive, spicy, juicy, vibrant, supple palate. Coffee on the finish. 1/3rd new oak.*

**Ch. La Sergue**

**£226**

**88-91**

*Muted nose, but pleasant, gutsy fruit on palate. Red plums, lightly chocolatey tannin. Pretty Good.*

**Plus de Fleur de Bouard**

**£896**

*Ripe and floral. Almost new world. Sweet and creamy. Slightly baked fruits. Blue and black. Surprisingly good acidity. Structured tannin. Hot alcohol on finish.*



## Pomerol

It is no surprise that the best wines of Pomerol will come from the water-retaining clay and limestone soils that are to be found on the plateau that it shares with Saint-Emilion on its eastern border. Alcohols seem more balanced here, as by and large phenolic ripening came round earlier, and the Merlot certainly holds the alcohol better.

Property

Price Dozen IBD

Wine Spectator

**Starred First**

**Ch. Le Gay**

**£891**

**93-96**

*Sweet violets, cassis. Supple tannin, good extraction, so concentrated. Varied, complex, flavourful, long. Full blooded. Elegant, fresh, superb.*

## **First Class**

### **Ch. Bonalgue**

**£244**

*95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. Deep ruby black, plums, cocoa, creamy oak. Medium bodied and delicate, precise quite cool and feathery tannins. Layered, supple, spicy, pleasing, restrained.*

### **Clos René**

**£278**

*Pretty nose of flowers, red fruits, victoria plums, raspberries, and vanilla. Red fruits on palate, lovely tannin and fresh acid, gentle extraction, graphite tannin, and good length.*

### **Ch. La Cabanne**

**£290-310**

*Sweet black cherry nose. Ripe, medium-full bodied, sweet fruit, plums, juicy, easy to approach, ripe chalky tannins, chocolate and black cherry finish. Spicy, a touch drying on the tannin, but with vibrant acidity.*

### **Manoir Le Gay**

**£241**

*Licorice, floral, slightly candied aroma. Jammy, hot, fragrant, but good acidity. Coffee, chocolate. Touch dormant now, but will develop. Big for a second wine.*

### **Ch. Saint Pierre**

**£443**

*75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc. Lovely rich palate, juicy and fine tannins, medium bodied but good length. Cocoa dusted tannins at finish, satisfying. Stephane Derenencourt consults.*

### **Ch. Taillefer**

**£230**

*Blue fruit and blackberry jam. Creamy smokiness on palate. Warm and spicy. Full bodied structure. Good freshness. Long, fine, moreish, chocolatey finish.*

## **High 2:1**

### **Ch. Bel Air**

**£**

*100% Merlot, 33% new oak. Creamy, ripe, red fruit, more overt oak. Pretty good balance, integration. Quite herbal. Slight bitterness on finish*

### **Ch. Certan**

**£**

*Ripe black cherry nose, clean. sweet fruit, black and touch of graphite, medium body, sweet fruit, cocoa. Nice length, slight bitterness at end.*

### **Ch. Feytit Clinet**

**£562**

*Deep ruby, violet, black fruit aromas. Medium bodied. Good dark, brooding fruit on palate. Chocolatey tannin. Blueberry finish.*

### **Ch. Haut-Maillet**

**£**

*Forward, vibrant, dark plums, blueberries, just the right extraction. Easily accessible, early drinking. Good.*

### **Ch. La Creation**

**£**

*46% Cab Franc. Smells like the Loire. Herbal, floral, grassy, smoky, chocolatey. Super supple, crunchy acidity, crunchy tannin. Fresh. Smoky, quite long.*

### **Ch. La Patache**

**£226**

*70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc. Attractive, complex fruit nose. Black fruits and some toasty oak, cocoa. Ripe and juicy flashy, plump, well built but not OTT.*

### **Ch. La Pointe**

**£374**

**91-94**

*Strawberries, and chocolate. Rich, and forward. Touch lightweight on tannin, but attractive flavours.*

### **Ch. L'Enclos**

**£**

**92-95**

*Dried blueberry aromas, like blueberry muffins. Supple fruit, violets and blackberries, nice freshness, high alcohol, feathery/chalky tannins. Quite good. Dark and brooding. Mocha lingers.*

**Ch. Mazeyres** **£240-260** **92-95**  
*Sweet black cherry nose, liquorice, brambly fruit, light tannins, bright and juicy. Forward, early drinking, hugely accessible. Ch Mazeyres is a large estate by Pomerol standards, stretching to nearly 30 hectares.*

**Ch. Moulinet** **£**  
*Sweet herbs on nose, violets, dark raspberries, plump cherries., cocoa, and blueberry. Plenty of fruit on palate, quite persistent. Tannin and acid in balance. Medium bodied and easy to like, early to drink*

**Ch. Nenin** **£562** **93-96**  
*Full bodied, structured, fresh acid, and a block of tannin. Waiting for style to meld.*

**Fugue de Nenin** **£267**  
*Herbal, oregano, and red fruits on nose. Dark chocolate. Good fruits. Some layers, some length, some acidity. Moderate.*

**Vieux Plateau Certain** **£**  
*Redcurrants, raspberries, strawberries. Super creamy palate, overt ripe, obvious. Bright bouncy acidity, and moderately grippy tannins.*

**Vray Croix de Gay** **£625**  
*Plush juicy black fruits and chocolate, tasty tannins, bittersweet, nice length and balance*



*Saint Emilion and satellites tasting in the Salle des Dominicains*

## Lussac-Saint-Émilion

### **First Class**

**Ch. de Barbe Blanche** **£**  
*Super classy. Black cherries, kirsch, a pleasing minerality, good tannin, good oak, good acid. All there.*

### **High 2:1**

**Ch. de Lussac** **£120-130**  
*Pretty aromas, sweet red cherry flavour, fresh acid. 20% Cab Franc, just 10% new oak. Characterful.*

## Saint-Émilion

The deep limestone around Saint-Emilion helped to preserve water during the months of drought as well as add texture and freshness to the wines. Saint-Emilion produced dark, rich, extracted wines with high alcohol and supple tannins. Merlot really seemed to shine in this vintage, showing far more balance than it's cousin, Cabernet.

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>Starred First</b>			
<b>Ch. Larmande</b>		<b>£252</b>	
<i>Creamy aromas. Intense, juicy, and long. Very well formed tannin, perfectly ripe fruit (blueberries, chocolate, and cedar), with balanced acid and alcohol. Hugely expressive, long, and fresh. 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 60% new oak. Full bodied, really sumptuous, well made and Bordelais.</i>			
<b>First Class</b>			
<b>Ch. Cote de Baleau</b>	<b>Grand Cru Classé</b>	<b>£192</b>	
<i>Dark ruby black. Fragrant, red, blue, and porty fruit. Floral and attractive. Very expressive. Creme de framboise, chocolate, cream. Sumptuous but fresh. Really good. Thought it might be overdone on the palate, but balance is there. Raspberry liqueur chocolate coated in cocoa tannins.</i>			
<b>Ch. Faugeres</b>	<b>Grand Cru Classé</b>	<b>£366</b>	<b>92-95</b>
<i>85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 50% new oak. Delicious, vibrant blueberry fruit, then cedar, graphite, and good mineral lift. There's a savoury edge, juniper spice, and an herbaceous finish.</i>			
<b>Ch. Godeau</b>	<b>Grand Cru Classé</b>	<b>£173</b>	
<i>Sweet red cherries and raspberry coulis on the nose. Juicy blue fruit palate, mineral, sweet spice, incense. Generous, structured, mineral, and fresh with bright tannins. 30% aged in amphora.</i>			
<b>Ch. La Gaffeliere</b>	<b>1er Grand Cru Classé B</b>	<b>£604</b>	<b>94-97</b>
<i>Next to Pavie and Ausone - illustrious neighbours. Sleek, but structured. Clean, fresh red and blue fruit. Charming, pretty, and suave. Ample fruit but lovely acidity and soft tannins. Long and fine finish.</i>			
<b>Ch. Lynsolence</b>		<b>£307</b>	
<i>100% Merlot, 100% new oak. Big boned, well structured, juicy and richly fruited, with cocoa tannin. Luxurious and long.</i>			
<b>Ch. Petit Faurie de Soutard</b>		<b>£232</b>	
<i>Moderate density of colour. Damson and chocolate on nose. Appealing. Dense character on palate, juicy plums, ripe cherries, not overripe at all. Well integrated oak, polished, new. Super attractive, floral, elegant finish. Supple and seamless. Balanced alcohol, balanced acid. Classy.</i>			
<b>Ch. Soutard</b>		<b>£425</b>	
<i>51% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Malbec - quite a mix for the right bank. Deep ruby black, plummy cedar nose. Excellent body, lots of flavour. Precise red fruits, mineral, focussed, lingering. Well handled oak and tannin.</i>			
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Archange</b>		<b>£312</b>	<b>89-92</b>
<i>100% Merlot, 50% new oak. Mocha note on the nose. Blue and black fruit, oak tannin. Slightly pruney on finish.</i>			
<b>Ch. Badette</b>	<b>Grand Cru</b>	<b>£204</b>	

*Well structured, medium + body, fresh acid. Lots of oak and extraction but enough fruit concentration, juicy enough, a just a touch charcoal-y on the finish.*

**Ch. Beau-Sejour Becot Grand Cru Classé £538 96-99**  
*Supple. Drinking well now, but possibly a bit too sleek.*

**Ch. Bellefont Belcier Grand Cru Classé £374**  
*80% Merlot, 20% Cab Franc. Purple, blackcurrant chew. Dense, juicy pates de fruits of the palate. Smokiness. Supple and rich. Very concentrated. Good balance but lacks some length.*

**Ch. Boutisse Grand Cru £**  
*80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Carmenere. Very dark ruby, perfumed and jammy. Black cherry, kirsch, chewy tannins, good crunch, plenty of fruit and length. Lifted acidity. Herbal finish.*

**Ch. Cadet Bon Grand Cru Classé £290-310**  
*Youthful, fragrant, floral. Touch herbal and coffied, but not green. Super juicy on palate. Fresh acid. Soil like tannin. Touch baked. Black forest gateau finish.*

**Ch. Canon 1er Grand Cru Classé B £ 96-99**  
*Ruby, red and black fruits, juicy and medium bodied fruit, restrained and elegant. Conservative.*

**Ch. Grand Barrail Lamarzelle Figeac Grand Cru £164**  
*Lighter colour. Floral, rose and violets. Red and pink fruits. Dense tannin, but lifted acidity, and integrated alcohol. Subtle red fruits linger. Quite pretty. Medium bodied. 35% Cabernet Franc from Loire massal selection.*

**Ch. La Grace Fonrazade Grand Cru £**  
*90% new oak dominant on the nose. Flashy, plump, big extracted palate. Plenty of fruit, damson, cocoa, graphite tannins, long, with just enough acidity to perk it up.*

**Ch. Le Dome Grand Cru £ 90-93**  
*Dense chewy blackcurrant and dark cherry fruit. Tea leaf. Oolong. Voluptuous, weighty, but persistent fruit. Coffeed finish. Boozy cherries, slightly sour, crunchy. Drying tannins. Fresh acidity though.*

**Ch. Pierre 1er Grand Cru £148**  
*Chunky, coffee tannin. Plummy, but perhaps lacking some depth. Creamy finish. Dormant at the moment. Could develop well with age. 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. 1/3rd new oak.*

**Ch. Teyssier Grand Cru £144 89-92**  
*Spicy, warm, supple, creamy. Accessible now. Very plush. Some florality, and a fresh finish. Sweet coffee, red syrup, boozy prunes, and cream. Spicy alcohol. New world. Seamless.*

**Ch. Tour Saint Christophe Grand Cru £233**  
*Jean Christophe Meyrot, ex La Violette. Full on but good structure. Juicy palate. Certainly ripe. Powerful, bruising tannin. Warm, good acid, persistent. More powerful than elegant. Fortright.*

**Ch. Yon Figeac Grand Cru Classé £220-235**  
*On the sandy slopes of Saint Emilion. Sweet red and blue fruit, a touch port like again. Overt, creamy, forward. Attractive fruit weight on palate. Slightly medicinal, vermouth palate. Well built, slightly muscly tannin. Good structure, and weight of flavour. Concentrated and complex.*

## PESSAC-LEOGNAN / GRAVES / SAUTERNES

### Pessac-Leognan Blanc

Picking began early for the white grapes in Pessac. Ch. La Garde picked between 29th August - 6th September with a few days off in between, seeking the perfect balance between acidity levels and aromatic intensity. Sauvignon Blanc dominant wines certainly seemed to have the freshest characters, and a certain citrusy vibrancy, whilst Semillon dominant wines felt a touch flabby and muddy. As ever, the best wines are very high quality, and deserve more recognition than they get in the UK.

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Baret</b>		<b>£125</b>	
<i>100% Sauvignon Blanc. Intense nose, ripe, fleshy pineapple and melon flavours, fresh acidity, long, persistent.</i>			
<b>Ch. Brown</b>		<b>£241</b>	
<i>70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon. Intense citrus and creaminess. Modern. Rich. Floral. Long and powerful</i>			
<b>Ch. Couhins</b>	<b>Grand Cru Classé</b>	<b>£150-160</b>	
<i>100% Sauvignon Blanc. Tropical fleshy fruit. Tangy acidity. Very good.</i>			
<b>Domaine de Chevalier</b>	<b>Grand Cru Classé</b>	<b>£814</b>	
<i>70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon. Super fruity, spicy, and long. Tropical sweet fruit nose, passionfruit, and spicy oak. Powerful, fresh, refined.</i>			
<b>Ch. de Fieuzal</b>		<b>£477</b>	
<i>70% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Semillon, 5% Muscadelle. Remarkably full on. Fresh grapefruit, ripe lemon. Long and intense.</i>			
<b>Ch. Gazin Rocquencourt</b>		<b>£125-135</b>	
<i>100% Sauvignon Blanc. Bright lemony fruit, high acid, good intensity and length. A little sweet and sour.</i>			
<b>Ch. La Garde</b>		<b>£183</b>	
<i>85% Sauvignon Blanc, 15% Semillon. Fleshy tropical aromas. Well balanced acid and alcohol. Ripe flavours with oak complexity. Moreish.</i>			
<b>Ch. Lafargue</b>		<b>£</b>	
<i>80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sauvignon Gris. Expressive. Very good balance throughout, oak well integrated, tropical and citrus flavours. Long and fine.</i>			
<b>Ch. de Rochemorin</b>		<b>£</b>	
<i>100% Sauvignon Blanc. Broad, weighty, with a smoky savoury backbone, but plenty of weight of tropical fruit.</i>			
<b>Domaine de la Solitude</b>		<b>£</b>	
<i>65% Sauvignon Blanc, 35% Semillon. Citrusy and herbal. Spicy oak. Well balanced with good lick of lemony acid.</i>			

## Pessac-Leognan Rouge

Pessac reds seemed to struggle more this vintage. Whereas in 2017 the proximity of the city rescued the vineyards from heavy frosts, in the summer drought of 2018 the suburbs seem to have lowered the water table in Pessac leaving stressed vines, and some tough reds. These three showed class and potential.

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Haut Bergey</b>		<b>£189</b>	<b>87-90</b>
<i>Extracted cherry fruit, very ripe aromas and flavours, good length, low acid but some subtlety. Quite appealing. Persistent.</i>			
<b>Ch. La Garde</b>		<b>£170</b>	<b>91-94</b>
<i>34% Merlot grown on clay with limestone, and 63% Cabernet Sauvignon grown on gravel and clay. Both ripened at the same time in 2018 so winemaker Frederic Bonnaffous was able to successfully coferment the two wines. Fresh and elegant, with decent length, and careful extraction. Ripe and plump, creamy palate. Attractive now, but those tannins will develop nicely. 10% new oak.</i>			
<b>Ch. Olivier</b>	<b>Grand Cru Classé</b>	<b>£270</b>	<b>92-95</b>
<i>Cool, menthol, plump fruit, grippy tannins but overall well balanced. Serious, ripe, structured, savoury. Good length.</i>			

## Sauternes / Barsac

The hot dry summer did not make 2018 a conducive vintage for noble rot. So late was the onset of botrytis that some Sauternes producers were picking their sweet grapes a full two months after the dry whites in neighbouring Pessac. Many of the Sauternes and Barsac wines that we tasted were simply very good sweet wines, but they lacked the depth and intensity that botrytis brings to great Sauternes and which makes the wine so distinctive. These few stood out for us, though, both for quality and pure typicity of house style. They are reliable estates. Sauternes pricing continues to plateau, making it all superb value for money.

Property	Classification	Price Dozen IBD	Wine Spectator
<b>First Class</b>			
<b>Ch. Coutet</b>	<b>1st Growth</b>	<b>£344</b>	
<i>More classic Sauternes style. Rich stone fruits, a smoky backbone, and a syrupy finish. Declared a 1er Cru Classé at the 1855 Sauternes and Barsac Classification, Château Coutet has been producing wine since 1643. Boasting both the largest vineyard in Barsac (thirty-eight-and-a-half hectares) as well as the largest cellar (110 meters), Château Coutet has been owned by the Baly family since 1977 and managed by Aline Baly since 2009.</i>			
<b>Ch. Doisy Daene</b>	<b>2nd Growth</b>	<b>£276</b>	
<i>Juicy, elderflower, baked citrus, with tangy acidity. Zesty, peachy, sweet lemon, lemon tart. Good sugars, v flavourful, classic DD.</i>			
<b>Ch. Filhot</b>	<b>2nd Growth</b>	<b>£174</b>	
<i>Structured, bruised and smoky botrytised fruit. High sugar, balancing acid, creamy apricot finish. Quite classic.</i>			
<b>High 2:1</b>			
<b>Ch. Lafaurie Peyraguey</b>	<b>1st Growth</b>	<b>£401</b>	
<i>Bright, grassy, candied citrus peel. Some complexity, good acidity, but lacks botrytis richness.</i>			

Hal Wilson [hal@cambridgewine.com](mailto:hal@cambridgewine.com) , Alice Archer [alice.archer@cambridgewine.com](mailto:alice.archer@cambridgewine.com)

### ***How en primeur works***

*Bordeaux 2018 en primeur wines will be offered for purchase in May 2019, with delivery in 2021 once the wines have been bottled and shipped. Bordeaux 2018 en primeur wines will be offered excluding duty and VAT. Current duty rates are £26.78 per case of twelve bottles. The current VAT rate is 20%. Duty and VAT will be charged at the prevailing rate at the time of delivery. Wines may be stored in tax free warehouses' on arrival in the UK, by prior arrangement. Please ask for details of ordering wines for delivery to a bonded warehouse, as handling and rental charges apply.*