



2007 Bordeaux

Special Report

As I write this report on April 20-21, 2008, it seems that I/we am/are quite late with my/our comments about the 2007 Bordeaux vintage. Many of the major wine writers have already published their reports. I guess they think the first one out gets the most attention these days. Heck, we were hearing whispers about the vintage as early as last July and August—many people were already writing off the vintage because of the rather dull and drizzly summer. Are we really heading to a time when the vintage will be declared either good or bad before the grapes are even harvested?

Trey, Ralph and I arrived on March 30th at Pichon-Baron to start our quick nine-day journey through the Bordeaux countryside, tasting many 2007s at the Chateaux, at the UGC tastings and at various negociant offices. It was seven days of constant motion, with rest breaks measured in minutes and tastings measured in hours, often running from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and later.

Basically, we found the majority of red wines to be somewhat better than the *Wine Spectator's* Mr. James Suckling reported on March 30th. I will say that the weather conditions during the nine days of our tasting were quite good, except for one day of light rain. The better the weather is (assuming higher barometric pressure), the better young wines taste from cask. Perhaps a few of the early tasters in Bordeaux tasted under adverse weather conditions and/or caught the wines at a bad stage. All of us, including the famous tasters like Robert Parker, James Suckling and Neil Martin only get a glimpse of the vintage. Tasting 400-plus wines in a short period of time, and only tasting some wines once, just gives you an impression of a wine. We tasted some wines three times and a few of them were quite different each time. All of the first growths and some of the super seconds, as well as the "big guns" of the Right Bank, were tasted just once at the properties or at the Moueix cellars.

I have always preached to the Bordeaux community that tasting young Bordeaux in March and early April is much too soon to get a good feeling for the wines' quality. These cask tastings should be done in June when the weather is better and the wines are more settled. Alas, no one listens to a retailer, and I'm sure that next year the wines will be out to taste in March again.

Speaking of the weather: in June 2007 the vintage was all about the weather and not all of it was good. Bad weather in May and June spun out the flowering with considerable *coulure* in the later part. Then June continued overcast and grey, turning into a dull, drizzly July, and, to cap it all, a cool, showery second half of August stretched the grapes' resistance to the limit. At the start of each of these dreary

2007 BORDEAUX VINTAGE REPORT

Clyde's Vintage

or

It's All About Price/Value

months, we thought it was just about to change...but it never did. "We had sniggered at the old folks who had said at Christmas that a year with 13 Moons could never be good...and now maybe they had been right." (Bill Blatch 2007 Report) And again we must thank Mr. Blatch for his excellent vintage report and his detailed notes on the weather conditions that lead up to and through the harvest.

Winter 2006-2007 and Spring 2007

One of the main reasons why the 2007 Bordeaux vintage even came in at all after a pretty miserable summer was the fact that the winter had been quite mild, and this mild winter prepared the way for an early start to the season. Warm periods in January 2007 and the end of February through the first part of March, caused the sap to rise early, not good if there are frosts in April or May. The extreme warmth and some continuing rainfall in early March caused some bud bursts as early as the March 14th in Pomerol merlots and Pessac whites—a good two weeks early. Early budding is positive in that it gets the season off to an early start, which, if it holds up, ensures an earlier and riper harvest (as in '89 and '90). The negative side to it, of course, is that it increases frost risk. But 2007, like 2001 (another early starting and late finishing season) had a few frost alerts but no real damage. Some cold weather late in March did stop the bud burst in the cabernet vines and it took until early April for the total bud-burst to be completed. Some of the cabs were just breaking at the same time as some merlots were already onto their fourth leaf. Irregular flowering turned into an irregular véraison (color change in the grapes) and a spin-out harvest.

April and May continued warm and there was plenty of moisture in the soil from the rains of February and March. Everything was grow-

ing quickly and the flowering started around the May 15th—two weeks ahead of normal. Then the weather turned cold and the second half of the flowering was delayed. Vines do not like this kind of yo-yo weather during flowering and the later flowering parts of the vineyards didn't set correctly, causing a lot of damage. The parts of Pomerol and Pessac-Léognan that flowered early did set well, but there was trouble with the later-flowering merlots, cabernets and sémillons. Throw in some oidium (mildew) and snails and the vineyards were really suffering. The 2007 vintage was great for the chemical companies who supply the sprays to the Bordeaux properties, many of which had to spray 15 times before the summer weather changed. Only the financially sound properties were able to spend so much money on labor and sprayings from April to August. As Bill Blatch aptly put it: "Anyone who says he lost nothing to mildew is lying, but generally it was the better-managed and more financially able estates that did best, and the lesser generic estates that sometimes lost entire hectares of production. And we have to spare a thought for the tribulations of the brave biodynamic growers in all of this."

July and August 2007

Had the high pressure systems returned for the summer all would have been fine, as it had been in 2000. Suffice to say, that did not happen. July and August were dull and drizzly—bad for vacationers in August. Meanwhile the véraison was happening. It started about July 18th and, as for the flowering, or rather, because of the flowering, got spun out well into August. Most estates had a very irregular véraison, which would translate into an irregular and difficult-to-manage harvest later. By mid-August the the mildew in the vineyards was just about under control, but now there was a new problem appearing: the grapes had expanded and were becoming prone to early rot. And the rain storm of Black Wednesday—August 29th— just about broke the spirits of everyone in Bordeaux. With some grapes starting to split, growers abandoned their usual optimism. One more day of such conditions, they said, and we could forget the 2007 vintage.

August 30, 2007—The turn-around day

What a difference a day makes! August 30th dawned bright and clear and a high pressure system settled over Europe. The sun stayed out for the next two months, the rot disappeared overnight and split grapes quickly scarred under the healing influence of the dry north-easterly

breezes. A miracle? Many think so. Hubert de Bouard of Château Angléus said that on August 29th he had planned on picking the unripe grapes in early September, but as August 30th turned warm, and the weather held out the next day and the next, he was able to wait until the grapes came in ripe and healthy.

September-October and the harvest

Most of the whites in Pessac-Léognan were picked under perfectly clear skies from around September 3rd until late in the month. Everything came in perfectly healthy, especially the sauvignon blanc. As for the red wines, some lesser estates and generic producers who had not done proper spraying had to pick unripe grapes early in September. The better properties, who had worked so hard in the vineyards during the spring and summer, resisted picking too soon and benefited from the very dry September. The normal "45-days from véraison to picking" rule went out the window as producers let their grapes hang as long as possible. And remember, the big disparity (up to three weeks) between parcels we had seen at véraison did affect the harvest. Most merlots were picked at end of September and beginning of October. The cabernets followed around October 10th. Sauternes really benefited from the September and October weather and harvests continued well into November.

The Wines of 2007 and Our Impressions

It was a challenge to get a read on yields in 2007; each property either had normal yields or way below normal yields and these properties could be right next to each other. It seems that the much-talked about mildew was more of a problem in the north Médoc than in the south.

The dry white wines of 2007 are exceptionally good. They were picked under perfect conditions, had plenty of hang time and the purity of fruit is amazing. They are fresh, fruity and quite tangy, more in the style of cool years like 2001, 2002 and 2004. They are very vibrant and lively and a few are as good as they get (Pavillon Blanc, Laville Haut-Brion, etc). In other words, they taste very good right now.

The Sauternes of 2007 are among the best of the wines produced in this year. They are not quite as good as 2001, but I prefer them to any vintage since then. They are not heavy and overly sweet—rather pure and vibrant as, say, 1988 or 1989. I really loved and still love the 1988s, so if these turn out that good, we have a stellar vintage here.

The red wines are a somewhat different story. Some of the cabernet franc and merlot from the warmer soils of the Right Bank did quite well. They did not fare as well on the Left Bank. The cabernet sauvignon did well on the Left Bank and will have to carry the blend there. Most alcohol levels are more in the pre-1982 range with merlots at 12.5-13.5 degrees and cabernets at 11.5-13 degrees. Where is global warming when you need it? The wines have less mid-palate weight than the 2006s and a more open-knit style. They seem more forward with a smoother texture.

As I said at the beginning of this report, we found the 2007 Bordeaux to be better than we had anticipated given all the negative publicity leading up to and through the harvest. They were easy to taste—even easier than 2006 and 2005. There were no mouth-searing tannins here



The first night's dinner at Pichon-Baron



Left: Ralph and Clyde taste the great 2007 Ducru Right: Trey, Gildas d'Ollone and Clyde at Pichon-Lalande

nor were there many over-extracted, pushed wines with which to deal. There were some green notes on some of the wines (I describe that as “tough” in the notes below). Many of the wines were quite fruity, forward and fairly open. They are generally low in alcohol and acidity and the tannins in most are on the rounder side. Some wines show a bit of drying wood tannins at the end and some lack the mid-fruit palate impression and length. Some of the very small properties (Lafleur, Le Gay, Certan de May, a few garagists) made outstanding wines that will rival and surpass their 2006s and be just a bit behind their magnificent 2005s. It seems that in a difficult weather year like 2007, the smaller, well-financed estates were able to control the vineyard problems better than the larger properties. It is far easier to work a three-hectare vineyard than a 30-hectare one. It is interesting to note that while we do not usually love the style of the “garage” wines in Bordeaux, we found them quite nice in 2007. Perhaps the combination of weather conditions and the resulting lighter style of wines worked better with the rich, knock-you-over-the-head style of the “garagists.”

Conclusions

Why do I call 2007 “Clyde’s vintage” in one of the headlines? As I grow older (at the ripe old age of 63), I am looking at wines in a different light than I used to years ago. Then it was, “I will buy this wine and cellar it for x years before I enjoy it.” Like our good friend, the late-Peter Perry used to say: “Nowadays, I don’t even buy green bananas!” For me these 2007 Bordeaux wines will be a very “useful” vintage, ready to enjoy much sooner than the gigantic 2005s and tightly-structured 2004s and 2006s. Many of these 2007s tasted quite good right out of the cask and I believe they will give many people pleasurable drinking within ten years—even five. What do they remind me of vintage-wise? Ralph, Trey, and I thought that the 2007s were close in style to 1999 or 2001. Certainly 2007 was much better than 1997 and boy we still love to drink those ’97s (try Langoa-Barton or Labegorce right now). The 1999 Bordeaux wines, for the most part, taste great right now just nine years after the harvest (the Haut-Bailly is stunning) and we all know how delicious the 2001s are and will be (2001 Cos is to die for and better than their 2000). 2007 is much along these lines—a vintage to give you pleasure early on and not take up cellar space for 20 years or more. Clyde’s vintage to a tee.

My second headline is more complicated. This has a lot to do with the property owners and how they price the 2007s. We know that Bordeaux is the most sought-after wine in the world, with strong markets not only in the USA and UK, but also throughout Europe, in Russia, China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, etc, etc. There was, and still is a big demand for 2005 Bordeaux—even at the stratospheric prices, especially in the emerging wine markets of Russia and its neighbors, as well as China and among speculators in the UK. There is less of a market for the very fine 2006s, but these wines are starting to sell quite well. We have sold about 65% of our rather large position in 2006 Bordeaux.

Now 2007 comes along at a time when the Euro is king in the world (a bad thing for us in the USA, and even in the UK and Asia). If you figure that as of this writing it’s \$1.60 to one Euro; we are at a big disadvantage (about 15-18%) if the properties merely open their prices at the same levels as their 2006 wines. If they decrease their prices by 20% we would be at about the same levels as the 2006s are and I would recommend buying the 2006s—a better vintage. If they open the 2007s on par with the original 2004 prices, we should have a successful en primeur campaign. That is not a likely scenario. I have written a letter to most of the big negociants and many of the owners of the top properties expressing my/our concern on the pricing and the wine market for 2007 Bordeaux in the USA. We must just wait and see what unfolds. A value vintage like 2007 Bordeaux must be priced so that the wines ARE VALUES.

Last point to be made concerns the reluctance of some retailers in the USA to go to taste the 2007s. If anyone is serious about Bordeaux, like we are at K&L, they should go to taste EVERY vintage. This marks the 24th year that we have ventured off to Bordeaux to taste the new wine. God willing, we will all be there next year.

—Clyde Beffa Jr (with the help of Trey Beffa and Ralph Sands)

2007 Rating System

- ** to*** Outstanding to Classic wines. Best of the vintage
- * to *½+ Very good to excellent wines
- ½* Good wines—could be values

2007 BORDEAUX VINTAGE TASTING NOTES

The following wines were tasted from March 30 through April 7, 2008. The first note for each wine (unless it states “at the property” or “at UGC tasting”) is from the massive Joanne tasting of April 4th. At the bottom are the notes from two very important separate tastings. The first, at the Jean-Pierre Moueix Offices in Libourne on Monday, April 7 and the second tasting at Jeffrey Davies (Signature Selections) Office in Bordeaux on Saturday, April 5th.

White Bordeaux

Delicious wines in 2007. The sauvignon blanc did fantastically well. Buy most after arrival and only the hard to find on primeur.

“S” de Suduiraut, Bordeaux

At Pichon-Baron, 70% sauvignon blanc and 30% sémillon. Finely balanced, lively wine with plenty of citrus on the palate. Some pear is evident also. Nice.

Caillou Blanc de Château Talbot, Bordeaux

* At the property this blend of 68% sauvignon blanc and 32% sémillon shows some toasty oak aromas and a fresh, zippy palate impression. Some citric notes. Quite rich and well-made. Melon and minerals at the end.

Château Brown, Pessac

*+ Flowery nose and flavor. Quite good—even outstanding.
Ralph: * Good fruit, white flowers. Very nice.

Château Carbonnieux, Pessac

* Clean, perfumy-citrus notes. Very nice. Ralph: * Light lime and real fine on palate.

Château Couhins-Lurton Blanc, Pessac

* Tasted at Dauzac, this wine was exhibiting creamy, vanilla, toasty oak aromas. Quite rich and fine body.

Château Latour Martillac, Pessac

More citric flavors. Refreshing.

Château Malartic Lagravière, Pessac

*+ Very sweet and flowery and fruity up front. Pear flavors. At the UGC it was bright and lively with more citric nuances than pear.

Château Pape-Clément, Pessac

*+ Slightly oaky flavors. Fine balance. Hot finish. At the UGC this wine was melony on the nose and quite rich and oily on the palate. Big wine and well-balanced.

Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte, Pessac

*½ Sweet and flowery up front and a citric clean finish. Delicious. At the UGC the wine was delicious again with lemony flavors and some toasty oak undertones. Great balance. At the property this wine had a tremendous, flowery nose with great perfume. Full-flavored wine with great palate entry and clean, crisp, citric finish. Nice richness. Superb!

Ralph: * Full and vinous. Great acid finish.

Domaine de Chevalier, Pessac

*½ Very delicate with white flower aromas and clean crisp citric finish. I love it. Trey and Ralph thought it was a bit light. At UGC this wine was pure and zesty with tons of ripe citric fruit on the palate. Tastes great right now!

Château Lynch-Bages Blanc, Bordeaux

½ * Tasted at Lynch: this wine was flowery on the nose with some honeysuckle undertones. Blend of 45% sémillon, 45% sauv blanc and 10% muscadelle. Fresh and sweet citric flavors. Not much oak evident. New style for them. They went through the vineyard four times, picking just the grapes that were perfectly ripe.

Sauternes

Superb wines here; much like the famous 1988 vintage. Just a step behind 2001.

Château Coutet

* Spicy wine. Middle? Ralph likes it. Caramel at the end. At UGC it showed the same. Ralph: ½* Honey and then citrus—nice complexity.

Château de Fargues

*+ Rich and oily. Thick—huge wine. Should be great. At UGC: rich style and very lush on the palate. Long and deep. Ralph: * Super fat and rich. Everyone will love it

Château Doisy-Daëne

** At UGC this wine was fabulous. Lush and perfectly balanced on the palate. A winner! Tons of botrytis. Only 15 hectoliters per hectare.

Château Doisy-Védrières

* At UGC the wine showed sweet, spicy fruit and some coconut. Great balance and superb palate impression. Delicious now. Ralph: * Nice, honeyed and quite elegant.



Frederic Engerer's reaction when Ralph and Clyde asked if the 2007 Ch. Latour would be affordable.



Clyde with Alexander Van Beek (Giscours/du Terte) and the radiant Veronique Sanders (Haut-Bailly)

Château Filhot

Apricot flavors and slight bitter finish.

Château Guiraud

*½ Honey and pineapple. Perfect acid balance. Long and lingering. Everyone loves this. At UGC this was stunning—fat, rich, lush, balanced and sweet. One of the stars of 2007. Ralph: ** Ripe, apricot notes and very rich on the palate—nice citrus finish.

Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey

* So spicy—coconut aromas and flavors. Clyde loves this. Ralph: * Nice honey and citrus undertones.

Château Raymond Lafon

* Fat and lush—tons of botrytis. Ralph: * Good richness. Fat and nice palate impression.

SAUTERNES TASTED at UGC

Château de Malle, Sauternes

* Super ripe and excellent balance. Delicious.

Château Rabaud Promis, Sauternes

* The lemony side of the stickies. Very rich at the back end. Love it.

Château Sigalas-Rabaud, Sauternes

* Another fine 2007. Lush flavors of coconut and pineapple.

Château Rieussec, Sauternes

*+ Huge wine. Very concentrated. Lush and fat on the palate. Will need many years.

Château Suduiraut, Sauternes

* Big wine showing a bit of alcohol. Thick, ripe, lush. Should be fine. Ralph: *½ All of the sweetness and great balance.

Côtes de Castillon and Côtes de Bordeaux

Some fabulous values from the Castillon area. This is one of the “hot” areas for Bordeaux.

Carignan Prima, Côtes de Bordeaux

½* Good entry and finish. Rich and round. Quite nice.

Château d'Aiguilhe, Côtes de Castillon

* Cassis—spicy, herbal. Fine. At the property the wine had a great nose, full of tobacco and coffee. Elegant and sweet on the palate. Tons of blackberry fruit. These guys are on a roll. Ralph: * Super sweet, cassis/spice with herbs.

Château de Birot, Côtes de Bordeaux

Toasty nose—elegant, clean, easy to drink; 50% merlot. Buy on arrival. Value!

Château de Francs Les Cerisiers, Côtes de Bordeaux

Ripe—sweet and extracted. Long, good flavors.

Château Joanin Becot, Côtes de Castillon

Ripe sweet—tough back end.

Clos l'Eglise, Côtes de Castillon

Spicy, peppery with lots of blackberry. Dry back.

Domaine de l'A, Côtes de Castillon

½* Balance is fine; sweet on palate. Good length. Nice. Ralph: * Lots of sweet fruit—very good.

Fronsac and Lalande de Pomerol

These are two areas to watch in the future. Lots of money flowing into these satellite areas, much like what happened in Côtes de Castillon in the early 2000s.

Château Les Trois Croix, Fronsac

½* Good richness. Black fruits abound. Nice—watch this property.

La Fleur de Bouard, Lalande de Pomerol

* Nice nose and sweet fruit. Lovely. At the property—tons of red fruit, lush, full-flavored wine. Rich, but balanced. Tastes great right now. 35 hectoliters per hectare. Ralph: * Real nice. Serious fruit, but not pushed over the top.

Le Plus de La Fleur de Bouard, Lalande de Pomerol

* Huge wine—tannic, extracted. Ralph likes it better than 2006. At the property, black in color, showing chocolate flavors and toasty oak aromas.

Tasted at Haut-Brion

La Chapelle de La-Mission-Haut-Brion, Pessac

½* Good sweetness on palate. Fine balance and quite rich for the vintage.

Le Clarence de Haut-Brion, Pessac

A new name for Bahans Haut-Brion this wine has a musty, earthy aroma—sample? Sweet finish.

Château La-Mission-Haut-Brion, Pessac

*½+ 48% cabernet, 43% merlot, 9% cab franc. Fine sweetness and richness on the palate. Black licorice and some spices evident. Silky tannins. Long and lovely. Ralph: ** Strong, sweet finish. Has more power than most 2007s.

Château Haut-Brion, Pessac

** One of our favorites of this vintage. 44% cab, 43% merlot, 13% cab franc. Only 8,800 cases made. Lush and sweet. Full-flavored with great body and structure. Distinguished wine. Lots of minerals; already lush and delicious. Integrated tannins. We all thought it the best of the first-growths on the Left Bank. Ralph: **½ Regal wine from old vine fruit. Extra dimension from purity of fruit. Round, rich and perfectly balanced.

Laville Haut-Brion Blanc, Pessac

** 83% sémillon and 17% sauvignon blanc. Perfumed and oaky with heavenly flavors. So smooth and very rich. Wow! Totally great wine. Only 600 cases made.

Château Haut-Brion Blanc, Pessac

** 55% sauvignon blanc and 45% sémillon. This is otherworldly. Toasty oak and rich palate impression. Lingering on the palate—a bit more austere than Laville. Ralph: ** Incredible gardenia nose; very rich on the back palate.

Graves and Pessac-Léognan Reds

In general the red wines of 2007 from this appellation were quite good. There were less mildew problems here than in the north Médoc.

Château Haut-Bergey, Pessac

½* Tasted at property. Ripe and rich. Black licorice flavors. Deep color. A touch short.

Château Branon, Pessac

½* Tasted at the property; this wine showed good sweetness and integrated oak. Best Branon I have tasted in a while. 50% merlot and 50% cab franc. 100% new oak.

Château Brown, Pessac

* Earthy, mineral-laden—good finish. Well-balanced.

Château Carbonnieux, Pessac

½* Fruity, candy-like nose and flavor, but appealing. At the UGC it was bright and spicy.

Clos Marsalette, Pessac

½* Tasted at Canon-La-Gaffelière: this wine was soft and elegant with toasty undertones and mineral flavors. Stephan Von Neipperg has a good property here.

Château Haut-Bailly, Pessac

*½ Good entry—sweet middle. Aristocratic. Very good. At the UGC the wine was full and ripe. Big wine on palate and sweet mid-palate impression. Tannic finish. At the property the wine exhibited a deep purplish color and fine red berry aromas and flavor. On the bigger side. 50 hectoliters per hectare here which is normal. 70% cabernet and 26% merlot with the rest cab franc.

Château Larrivet Haut-Brion, Pessac

Very earthy wine. Decent middle.

Château Malartic Lagravière, Pessac

* Powerful and ripe—quite rich. Good. Everyone likes this. At UGC the wine was toasty on the nose and palate. Good mid-palate impression and a bit tannic at the back end. Ralph: * Big and rich here—do I detect a change of style?

Château Pape-Clément, Pessac

*½ Very sweet, lovely wine. Quite nice. At the UGC it was zesty and lively with a fine palate impression; a touch tannic at the end.

Château Smith-Haut-Laffite, Pessac

*½ Ripe and sweet. Toasty oak. Delicious wine—everyone loves it. Perfect balance and lingering finish. At UGC the wine was spot-on again. Toasty, oaky, sweet fruit. Long finish. At the property the wine showed toasty, smoky bacon aromas. Flashy and sweet on the palate. Superb balance—will drink well young. Ralph: *+ Ripe but not overdone, some earth and good flesh.

Domaine de Chevalier, Pessac

*½+ Great nose—earthy with perfect balance. I love this and so does Ralph. Great wine. At the UGC the wine had an elegant, toasty, perfumy nose. Sweet fruit entry and long finish. Some tannin evident at the back. Ralph: *+ Elegant and delicious.

Margaux

Good and not so good wines in this large appellation. Hard to give an overall rating, but many of the wines remind me of the fine 1999 vintage. High pH and lower acidities make for wines that taste good at a young stage. Less mildew problems here than the north Médoc.

Château Brane-Cantenac, Margaux

½ * Sweet and up front—soft. Falls off a bit at end. I like it again. Silky. At UGC this wine was elegant and light. Drink it now. Ralph: * Nice pure raspberry—good middle—honest and silky.

At Margaux

Pavillon Rouge, Margaux

* This wine is 58% cabernet sauvignon and 37% merlot with some petit verdot. They needed two great weather weeks in August for a great wine—they did not get it, but September and October were fine. Reserved in the nose and good weight on the palate. Aromas of blackberries, but flavor of red fruits. Creamy, ripe tannins. Quite silky.

Château Margaux, Margaux

*½+ Medium color and minty aromas. Red currant flavors and very elegant on the palate. A sweet, pure and refined wine that will drink well at an early age. Like their 2001? 87% cabernet and 11% merlot, 2% cabernet franc. Ralph: ** If you want to drink Margaux young, try this vintage.

Pavillon Blanc de Margaux, Margaux

** One of the best of the whites in 2007. This 100% sauvignon blanc had a perfumy, slightly oaky nose. Very rich and full-bodied with citric finish. Very long on palate. 15.5% alcohol but you can't tell. Delicious wine. Ralph: ** Outrageously good. White flowers. Super-elegant.



Ch. Margaux's Paul Pontallier

Château Cantenac Brown, Margaux

Slightly extracted. Richer style—good balance. At UGC this wine showed power and some toughness. Bigger style of wine.

Château Dauzac, Margaux

½* Tasted at property. Deep blackish color. Meaty, smoky, toasty aromas. Tannic at back end. Extracted but good balance.

Château d'Issan, Margaux

Decent on palate. Lacks something?

Château du Tertre, Margaux

Herbal notes from cabernet franc. At UGC the wine was about the same. At the property (and what a beautiful property it is) the wine showed better, but the high percentage of cabernet franc (18%) at this time overpowers the blend and the wine is a bit herbal. 59% cabernet sauvignon and 23% merlot with 47 hectoliters per hectare—high for 2007. Very little mildew problems here. This is a different style of du Tertre than I am used to. I'm also not a big fan of Left Bank cabernet franc. Should be fine after bottling. Alexander Van Beek doing a fine job here.

Château d'Angludet, Margaux

½* Tasted at property the wine had a sweet black fruit aroma. Sweet up front and at the end. Medium weight. Enjoy it young.

Château Durfort Vivens, Margaux

Sweet and easy to drink. Could be a value.

Château Ferrière, Margaux

* At the property this wine had a great core of fruit and fine length on the palate—the 45-year old merlot vines did well here. Claire Villars is making great value wines in the Médoc. 51 hectoliters per hectare, which is high for 2007. Healthy grapes here are the result of fine vineyard management. Almost organic and biodynamic at Ferrière, but almost impossible to be fully organic in Bordeaux because of the terroir and maritime location.

Château Giscours, Margaux

* At UGC the wine was lively and zesty—long and elegant. At the property this 65% cabernet sauvignon and 35% merlot blend shows good richness on the palate. Elegant and refined. Very good.

Château La Gurgue, Margaux

At the property this wine had good up front fruit but showed a bit acidic or green at the end.

Château Labégorce, Margaux

At the property the wine was light and elegant. 50% cabernet sauvignon, 45% merlot, 5% cabernet franc.

AT PALMER

Alter Ego, Margaux

* Malty nose with boysenberries. Very fresh and lively wine. Bright and soft. Easy drinker. I like this a lot.

Château Palmer, Margaux

*½ 49% merlot, 44% cabernet, 4% petit verdot. Blackberry jam nose and flavor. Medium weight on the palate. Elegant wine and low acidity makes for early drinking. Well-balanced. Ralph: ** Rich and full—good masculine middle.

Château Labegorce Zede, Margaux

At the property, this wine had black licorice aromas and flavor. Good mid-palate and some evident harshness at the back end. 50% cabernet and 40% merlot with the rest petit verdot and cab franc.

Château Lascombes, Margaux

*+ At property this wine showed rich and full—a bit new wave in style. Good balance. Ripe and sexy.

Château Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux

*+ Tasted at the property, this 60% cab and 30% merlot blend (5 each of petit verdot and cabernet franc) had a cinnamon-spicy nose. It goes down so easily—a pleasure wine. Good acid and balance and decent length. Ready young. Ralph: *½ Serious wine with fine ripeness. Complete and pure. Very elegant overall.

Château Marquis d'Alesme, Margaux

* At the property this third growth showed tons of red currant aromas and flavor. Finely balanced, this big wine showed extremely well. One property to watch. 66% cabernet sauvignon, 29% merlot and 5% petit verdot.

Château Prieure Lichine, Margaux

Little angular. And sharp. Not great sample. At UGC the wine was lighter in style and a touch short. Ralph: ½* Elegant, honest, tasty.

Château Rauzan-Segla, Margaux

* Very sweet and lovely. Good texture and mouthfeel. Sweet, lovely.

Château Tour de Mons, Margaux

Lots of fruit—fresh and lively. Sweet core. Pure.

Médoc

Always some great values in this appellation—buy on arrival.

Château Beaumont, Haut-Médoc

½* Sweet—elegant, nice taste—light, good purity of fruit. At UGC this wine was solid with a smooth palate impression and great length. Drink it up. Value! Ralph: * Very honest wine—fruity with some grip—not overdone.

Château Bernadotte, Haut-Médoc

Big and tannic. At the property this wine was sweet and balanced

showing red berry fruit flavors. 55% merlot.

Château Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc

* Tastes very good here. Sweet and lovely. Very nice wine. At the property the wine shows ripe blackberry fruit. Full and rich and a great value again. Lovely. Ralph: * Sweet and herbal, long finish. Better than their 2005.

Château Caronne Ste-Gemme, Haut-Médoc

½* Nose of cranberry. Minty flavor. These guys make good wines.

Château Chasse-Spleen, Haut-Médoc

Tough finish. Tannic. High acid. At UGC: power and guts with a sweet finish.

Château Coufran, Haut-Médoc

At the property this wine was light and elegant. A touch green on palate, but tastes pretty good. Light.

Château Verdigan, Haut-Médoc

Tasted at Coufran: only 25 hectoliters per hectare. Very low yields here. Red fruits and a bit rustic like Verdigans in the '80s.

Château Soudars, Haut-Médoc

Tasted at Coufran: 50% merlot and cabernet. More modern style. Good entry on palate, but short on finish. Dry at back end.

Château d'Aurilhac, Haut-Médoc

½* Meaty, smoky, tobacco. Taste is good

Château de Camensac, Haut-Médoc

½* Fruity and perfumy, mid-weight. Cranberry and cherry notes. At UGC the wine showed forward, fresh fruit flavors with fine sweetness on the palate. Ralph: ½* Fruity, chocolate front—round tannins.

Château La Lagune, Moulis

½* Hard to taste at Joanne. At UGC the wine was smoky and toasty on the nose with spicy red fruit flavors. Quite nice.

Château La Tour Carnet, Haut-Médoc

½* Rich and extracted—full and very ripe. New wave, but in balance. At UGC the wine was much the same. Lots of evident new oak and quite ripe on the palate.

Château Lanessan, Haut-Médoc

Blackberry fruit. Intense and full—quite good.

Château Paloumey, Haut-Médoc

½* Muted nose—good on palate. Clean, easy. At the property this wine showed lively and spicy fruit. Nice toasty oak flavors. An old school property making almost new wave wines. Very well-balanced wine. 63% merlot and 37% cab sauvignon. Ralph: ½* Good overall fruit—smooth finish.

Tasted at Lafite!

Château Duhart-Milon, Pauillac

At Lafite it was closed on the nose and rather fat on the palate. Some greenness on the palate, too. Fairly tannic wine.

Carruades de Lafite, Pauillac

½* At Lafite, a slightly sour nose at first, but sweetens up with air. Nice palate entry, elegant style. Very spicy with compact impression. Not bad.

Château Lafite-Rothschild, Pauillac

*½ At the property it had nice color and a sweet red fruit flavor. Lighter style, but fine mid-palate feeling. Decent finish; it tastes pretty good right now. 84% cabernet and 15% merlot with 1% petit verdot. Ralph: ** Violets and vanilla. So elegant and so long.

Château Potensac, Médoc

Tasted at Las Cases; more closed and less generous here. Tough and a bit rustic—some green notes.

Château Poujeaux, Haut-Médoc

* Full-flavored. Good sweetness. At UGC the wine was soft and sweet on the palate. Some oaky nuances. Lively and fresh. Very fine. This property was just sold to the family that owns Clos Fourtet. Ralph: * Good honest extract—super solid.

Château Senejac, Haut-Médoc

½* Sweet and lovely—sweet finish. Very good. I like it. Ralph: * Classy, classic, honest.

Château Sociando-Mallet, Haut-Médoc

½* Big and tannic. Structured. Old school—honest. Ralph: ½* High-toned, fresh and clean. Pretty good.

Pauillac

One of my favorite appellations, but not the best one in 2007. Some very fine wines, but some disappointments too. Mildew problems affected yields here.

Château Clerc-Milon, Pauillac

½* Ok up front. Red fruits—finish is short. At property the wine had little on the nose and lots of red berry fruit on the palate. Some earthy notes on finish. At UGC the wine showed tough and tannic.

Château d'Armailhac, Pauillac

* Spicy, peppery, blackberry fruit. Long and well-made. I really like this. At property it showed black fruit aromas and licorice notes. Soft entry and a bit sharp at back. At UGC the wine had good perfume and fine middle fruit. Ralph: * Very bright and spicy. Hint of licorice.

Château Grand Puy Ducasse, Pauillac

Sweet up front and good acid and balance at back. Quite good at Joanne. At UGC it was short and hollow.

Château Grand Puy Lacoste, Pauillac

* Classic Pauillac—quite well-made. Rich and powerful. Super.

Château Haut-Bages-Libéral, Pauillac

½* At UGC the wine was tough at back end, but had good weight on the palate. At the property this wine had a deep color and was a bit harsh on the palate. Claire Villars has really turned this property around. Usually a great value Pauillac. Only 35 hectoliters per hectare as mildew was a big problem. 88% cabernet and 12% merlot.

Les Forts de Latour, Pauillac

*+ At the property: great spice on the nose and fine mid-palate impression. Lively wine, not too big. Well-balanced and nice lingering finish. 41% merlot.

Château Latour, Pauillac

* ½ + Tasted at the property. This wine looks to be a cross between 1999 and 2004. Not a monster, but 91% cabernet sauvignon and 9% merlot. 16% press wine in blend—quite high. About normal yields here. This wine has earthy aromas and red fruits on the palate. Good weight on the palate and very smooth. Quite forward for Latour. Pure and not over-extracted. An elegant Latour! 11,000 cases. Ralph: ** Strong and crisp at front end. Elegant cranberry on palate. Spicy and fresh finish.

Château Lynch-Bages, Pauillac

*+ Tasted at UGC, it was sweet and lush on the palate. Fine balance. At the property it was sweet and sexy. Lots of cassis and currant flavors. Very silky on the palate. Will be very good in only a few years. Ralph: * Round and sweet, very good and consistent. Completely ripe and sweet.

Château Mouton-Rothschild, Pauillac

* ½ At the property this wine had an earthy nose and good sweetness on the palate. A bit short at end, but overall quite tasty. Should be drinkable way before their 2004, 2005 and 2006. 81% cabernet sauvignon and 19% merlot.

Le Petit Mouton, Pauillac

Tasted at Mouton. The wine showed brambly aromas and flavors. Quite hard and ungiving today—hard to taste.

Château Pedesclaux, Pauillac

Elegant—tastes quite good. They are improving quickly at this property.

Château Pibran, Pauillac

At Pichon-Baron: 55% cabernet and 45% merlot and only 3,000 cases produced. Here the average production is 35 hectoliters per hectare—quite low. Earthy aromas with a bit of volatile acidity on the nose. A touch of green on the palate, soft otherwise.

The Tasting at Château Lafleur, Pomerol

Grand Village Rouge, Bordeaux Superieur

½ * 80% merlot and 20% cab franc. Smells like black licorice and spice. Sweet and lovely wine. Should be a value.

Pensees Lafleur, Pomerol

½* Only 250 cases here. Last merlot picked went into this easy drinking, lush red. Lively and fresh.

Château Lafleur, Pomerol

+ One of the best, if not the best, wine we tasted in the 2007 vintage. 1,000 cases made. The cabernet franc was most important here. Sweet minerals and tons of red berry fruit flavors. Elegant and long on the palate. Great structure—not pushed, just pure. Fabulous balance and length. Don't spit this. Ralph: * My only 3-star of the 2007 vintage. Killer tasting—perfect body and weight. Red currant and cassis.

Grand Village Blanc, Bordeaux

* Some pear on the nose. 60% sémillon, the rest sauvignon blanc. Long and lingering with fresh citrus notes. Clean and zippy. Value!

At Cos d'Estournel

Pagodes de Cos, St-Estèphe

58% merlot and 40% cabernet, 2% petit verdot. Slight green aromas with some bready nuances. Blackberries on the palate. Nice entry and decent finish.

Château Goulée, Haut-Médoc

½* 80% cabernet and 20% merlot. Interesting sweet, toasty aromas. Very ripe and good mouthfeel. A bit of greenness on the back end, but nice length. Easy drinker.

Château Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe

*+ At the property, this wine had a toasty, oaky nose and was blackish in color. 85% cabernet, which is quite high. Very fine, smooth palate entry with red fruits abounding. Powerful wine—seems a bit extracted. Ripe tannic finish. Ralph: ** Powerful, but restrained. Long finish. Exotic dark chocolate. Textbook claret.

Reserve de Comtesse Lalande, Pauillac

½ * Tasted at Pichon-Lalande. 41% merlot, 46%, cab and 13% cab franc. Just a fine-tasting, easy-drinking, red-fruit-driven wine. Plenty of fruit. Enjoy young.

Château Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac

*+ Tasted at the property. Sweet and seductive. Feels good on the palate with lots of red berry flavors and quite long on the palate. Hubert de Bouard is consulting here. 58% cabernet, which is a bit high.

Château Pichon-Baron, Pauillac

*? Tasted at the property. Only 30 hectoliters per hectare. 74% cabernet sauvignon, 26% merlot. Deep color. Nose a bit reserved early in the day. Some minerals on the nose and palate. Still hard to taste. At the UGC tasting, this wine was again reserved on the nose, but had good sweet fruit on palate. Ralph: * Nice, deep fruity texture and flavor. Good mouthfeel.

Château Pontet-Canet, Pauillac

*½ Our bottle—another winner—sweet and lovely. Top flight. Boysenberry aromas; I love it. At property it was also very fine. Black licorice nose and some earthy notes. Lush on palate—long and sexy. Very pure wine! Round tannins. Only 28 hectoliters per hectare compared to 38 in 2006. 70% cabernet, 25% merlot and a bit of petit verdot and cab franc. At UGC the wine was pure and sweet. Lovely. They always decant this wine at UGC, others should also do the same. Ralph: * Full and rich. Fine palate impression.

Pomerol

My pick, in general, as the best wines of 2007. The cabernet franc did well here and not so well on the Left Bank.

Château Beau Soleil, Pomerol

*+ Nice entry—good middle. Will be fine. At the property this wine had black licorice notes on the nose and black fruit flavors. Excellent balance. Very good wine. 100% merlot.

Château Beauregard, Pomerol

A bit tougher. At UGC it was softer and better balanced. Boysenberry flavors. Hard to taste.

La Cabanne, Pomerol

½* Good fruit and sweet on the palate. Old school wine, which I like.

Clinet, Pomerol

*+ Blackish color. Sweet and lively. Fine structure and excellent harmony here. Not pushed—pure!

Château Gazin, Pomerol

At UGC: black color and black fruit flavors. A bit tough here.

Château La Conseillante, Pomerol

*½ Great sweetness and fine flavor. This wine is delicious. At UGC it was great again. Very elegant and soft on the palate. Ripe blackberry flavors. Sweet and long—I love it. 85% merlot and 15% cab franc. Ralph: * ½ Outstanding. Incredible balance.

Château La Pointe, Pomerol

*+ Very nice and rich wine—a winner. Could be great value! Everyone loves it. At UGC it was lovely again. Toasty, oaky aromas—long on the palate. Sweet. Ralph: * Spicy, natural, good!

Château Le Gay, Pomerol

*½ Tons of sweet fruit and some oak—long finish. Quite nice. Fruit

overshadows the tannins. Tasted at UGC this wine was one of my favorite 2007s. Spicy, racy, sexy. Very sweet and lush on the palate.

Château Nenin, Pomerol

* Tasted at Las Cases. This 76% merlot and 24% cab franc blend was very good. Quite structured and ripe. Soft on palate and fine length. Very well-made and ripe.

Château Petit-Villages, Pomerol

½* Tasted at Pichon-Baron. 78% merlot, 16% cab sauvignon, 6% cabernet franc. Very nice sweetness on the palate. Lots of ripe fruit here. Quite nice. At the UGC this wine shone. It was spicy, lively and thoroughly enjoyable, even now.

Château Rouget, Pomerol

* Sweet and ripe. Lovely up front. Delicious right now.

Clos l'Église, Pomerol

* At the property the wine showed great power and richness. Fairly tannic. Big wine. 80% merlot and 20% cabernet sauvignon.

St-Estèphe

Some mildew problems here, but there are still some very fine wines.

Château Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe

* Lush on palate. Sweet. Ralph and Trey think it's green, but I like it. At the property it had a cola nose with red licorice notes. Red berry flavors abound. Not huge, just very good tasting. 75% cabernet and 25% merlot. 40 hectoliters per hectare or 20% less than 2006. Harvested very late here—all in October.

Château Cos Labory, St-Estèphe

½* Some elegance, but still powerful and old school in style. Honest wine. This property is doing well. At UGC: a bit harsh and tannic.

Château Haut Marbuzet, St-Estèphe

Sweet oak and feminine. Sexy wine. Consistent all of the time.

Château Meyney, St-Estèphe

Meaty nose and flavor. Fairly tannic.

Château Montrose, St-Estèphe

½* Tasted at the property. 65% cab and 30% merlot and the rest petit verdot and cab franc. Nose holding back here. Very sweet palate entry. Quite soft and fat on the palate. And this is Montrose? Seems flabby, but easy to drink.

Château Ormes de Pez, St-Estèphe

½* Tasted at UGC this wine was a bit tough and green on palate. Nice finish though. At Lynch-Bages the wine showed much better. Deep color and black fruits abound on nose. Quite silky. Big production—more than 2006. Round tannins.



Clyde and the Baron of St-Louis at Pontet-Canet

Château Phélan-Ségur, St-Estèphe

½* Up front cherry fruit. Superb. At property this wine showed lots of spice. Good weight, though it was a bit harsh at back end. 25% less than normal production this year. 55% cab sauvignon and 45% merlot. At UGC this wine showed quite nicely—plenty of forward fruit. Ralph: ½* Very elegant cherry fruit from front to back.

Fee Aux Roses, St-Estèphe

½* Tasted at Phélan-Ségur. This wine was intense with tons of black-berry fruit and toasty, tobacco aromas. A new wine from them and a bit new wave. Tastes good. 67% cabernet.

Château Tronquoy Lalande, St-Estèphe

½* Good flavor and richness. Quite nice. At property, this wine showed quite well. Lots of black fruit up front and some tannin at back. 58% merlot, 30% cabernet and 12% petit verdot.

St-Julien

A lot of very nice, soft, fruity wines in this appellation—maybe the best on the Left Bank.

Château Beychevelle, St-Julien

½* Nose reduced—not great sample. At UGC the wine was smoky and toasty on the nose. Great sweet fruit flavors. Enjoy soon. Ralph: * Bright and fresh—not overdone.

Château Branaire-Ducru, St-Julien

* Good structure—ripe and full. Quite nice. At the property, this wine was elegant and forward. Cranberry and cherry aromas. Floral undertones. Lively and fresh on the palate. Very round tannins, an easy-drinking wine. Normal size crop here, in fact a bit more than 2006 vintage. 63% cabernet sauvignon and 30% merlot with a bit of petit verdot and cab franc. At UGC this showed great strength and power with sweet core of fruit.

Croix de Beaucaillou, St-Julien

½* At Ducru this wine was quite sweet on the palate. Lots of black fruit flavors even though it has quite a bit of cabernet in the blend. This is a very good second wine.

Château Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien

½ At Ducru this wine showed great. 90% cabernet. They worked the vineyards a lot here with a pink harvest (versus a green harvest) in August. A solid wine with plenty of rose petal on the nose, lots of currants on the palate. Real sexy wine, full and chewy. Very impressive for the vintage. Sweet and lush red berry fruits. Ralph: ** Very deep and powerful on the palate. Firm finish—traditional style.

Château Gloria, St-Julien

½* Super sweet and lovely—nice.

Sarget de Gruaud Larose, St-Julien

Sweet nose and toasty blackberry aromas. Sweet and light. Tastes good enough to drink now. A touch hot at end.

Château Gruaud Larose, St-Julien

½* Tasted at the property. Only 20 hectoliters per hectare—almost like Sauternes. 71% cab and 21% merlot, the rest petit verdot and cab franc. Slight cranberry nose with cherry hints. Sweet and lush on the palate. A touch short and green at the end. Decent structure.

Château Lagrange, St-Julien

Sweet oaky nose and flavor. Typical taste of Lagrange. Toasty oak.

Château Langoa-Barton, St-Julien

* At the property cranberry and currant aromas and flavors. A bit reserved but fruit is latent. Very tasty, elegant wine. At UGC this wine was sweet and lovely—superb middle fruit on palate. Cranberries and cherries.

Château Léoville-Barton, St-Julien

*+ Tastes much better at Joanne than at property. Stunning wine. Elegant up front, firm. I love this wine. At the property, the wine was closed up on the nose at first and then came out after airing. Lots of blackberry. At UGC it was spot-on. Lush, sweet with good backbone. Tannic finish but tannins are polished.

Clos du Marquis, St-Julien

½ * Tasted at Las Cases, this wine had a deep vibrant purple color. A minty aroma and very round palate. Black fruits abound and some tannin at back. Quite nice.

Château Léoville-Las-Cases, St-Julien

½ Tasted at property. 82% cabernet, 8% merlot, 10% cabernet franc. Very deep color, Blackberry nose with some red currant nuances. Superb mid-palate impression. Big wine with lots of layers. Still has core of ripe fruit. One of the bigger wines of the day. Same yield here as in 2006. Ralph: ** Great texture and overall balance. Round tannins. Ripe Bing cherry.

Château Léoville-Poyferré, St-Julien

½* Sweet edge. A bit dry on back of palate. At the property the wine was sweet up front and harsh at back end. Shows a bit tough on the palate. 65% cab sauv and 24% merlot with 7% petit verdot and 4% cab franc. At UGC this was very good—full, rich and round. Ralph: * Good middle sweetness and balance.

Château St-Pierre, St-Julien

½* Spicy and fresh, peppery wine. Fresh and lively. Very nice. At UGC the wine was sweet and lush on the palate. Well-made.

Château Talbot, St-Julien AOC

* Blackberry fruit—long on palate. Well-made. Nice, honest and pure. At the property the nose is rich and round. Spice and pepper aromas. Has good grip and length. 68% cabernet sauvignon, 29% merlot and a bit of others. At UGC very sweet and lovely—tastes great now!

St-Emilion

Some very good ripe wines here and a few disappointments. The quality here is quite good in general.

Château Angélu, St-Emilion

½ Sweet and lush—big wine. Tannic at back. Superb. Better here than at UGC. At UGC wine was difficult to taste. Judgement reserved. At the property the wine showed great (as usual) with red fruits and red licorice on the palate. They did lots of work in the vineyards this year and it paid off. More elegant than 2005 and 2006 and will be ready to drink sooner. 62% merlot and 38% cab franc. Somewhat in the style of 2001.

Château Beausejour Becot, St-Emilion

* Superb mouthfeel. Rich and round. Better at Joanne. At UGC this wine was delicious. Spicy, racy, sexy. Very fine indeed.

Château Canon, St-Emilion

* Old school with good ripe fruit. Sweet middle. Fine.

Château Canon-La-Gaffelière, St-Emilion

*+ At the property the wine was more reserved on the nose. Opens up with airing. Great palate impression. 55% merlot, 35% cab sauvignon, 10% cab franc. At UGC the wine was reserved on nose and sweet on palate.

Tasted At Thunevin Tasting

Virginie de Valandraud, St-Emilion

½ * Very fruity and quite rich. Not over the top. Fine length.

Clos Badon, St-Emilion

½ * Only 1,200 cases produced. Fine entry and good length. Some oak evident.

Château Valandraud, St-Emilion

* Very ripe and sweet. Good mouthfeel. A bit extracted but tastes pretty good.

Château Haut Carles, Fronsac

Meaty, new wave. Toasty, almost overdone.

Château Cheval Blanc, St-Emilion

*½+ Tasted at the property. 55% cab franc and 45% merlot. Only 38 hectoliters per hectare. Very spicy nose and flavor. Ripe up front and smooth mid-palate. Medium weight wine that tastes very good now. Red fruits—pure and in balance. Very nice.

Clos de l'Oratoire, St-Emilion

½* At property the wine was lively and spicy with cranberry-like aromas. Lighter style—sweet and lovely. Fine acid. Enjoy soon. 90% merlot and 10% cabernet franc.

Clos Fournet, St-Emilion

½* Tons of fruit. Ripe and sweet. Powerful. I love it. At UGC again it was great. Tons of spice. Lovely texture—long and lingering. Ralph: ½* Ripe raspberry—a little tough at back end. Fairly rich.

Clos la Madelaine, St-Emilion

*+ Tasted at UGC, this tiny property produced a great wine in 2007. Sweet and ripe and lush on the palate. Great body. Some chocolate flavors. Lovely.

Clos St-Martin, St-Emilion

Lush sweet fruit and oak nuances. Quite interesting. Spicy notes.

Couvent des Jacobins, St-Emilion

Brambly fruit and sweet finish.

Château Corbin, St-Emilion

Red berry fruits. Up front wine with a ripe/sweet edge.

Château Dassault, St-Emilion

* Good and chunky wine. Has sweetness. Nice. At UGC it was sweet and forward. Easy drinker right now!

Château Destieux, St-Emilion

½* Meaty, toasty and ripe. Nice.

Château Faugeres, St-Emilion

½* Sweet and lovely up front. Tannic at back. At property the wine was rich and round. Has power on palate. Good.

Château Figeac, St-Emilion

*+ Another winner, old school. Fine balance. At UGC this wine was lovely with oak nuances. Very well-balanced. Ralph: ** Outstanding again—everything in perfect harmony.

Château Fleur Cardinale, St-Emilion

* Big and ripe, tannic. Powerful. Extracted. At the property this wine was almost black in color. Very ripe on the nose and palate. Chocolate tones. New wave style. Well-balanced. Ralph: ½* Flashy but firm.

Château Fombrauge, St-Emilion

Spicy ripe—extracted but tastes good.

Château Fonroque, St-Emilion

Biodynamic. Difficult year for it. Nice and sweet. Good balance. Should be a value.

Château Grand Corbin Despagne, St-Emilion

Bready on the nose. Some flash. Tight at back.

Château Grand Pontet, St-Emilion

½* Straight-forward and very clean. Well-made. Ralph: ½* Good high-toned fruit; natural and quite good.

Château La Confession, St-Emilion

* Good up front. New wave style. Black fruit and extraction.

Château La Gaffelière, St-Emilion

½* Very spicy nose and great entry on palate. Delicious.

Château Larcis Ducasse, St-Emilion

*+ At UGC: Fabulous wine with meaty aromas and tons of ripe, sweet fruit. Very long and delicious. Enjoy young.

Château La Tour du Pin, St-Emilion

*+ Blackberry jam. Owned by Cheval Blanc. Good flavor and finish. Easy-drinking. 25% cab franc and 75% merlot. At the property, black cherry aromas and flavors. Elegant wine. A bit jammy, but balanced. Fresh and lively. Very good.

Château l'Arrosee, St-Emilion

½ * Old school style with lots of ripe fruit. Fresh and lively though light on palate. Ralph * Very pure fruit. Fresh, natural and classy.

Château Les Grandes Murailles, St-Emilion

Good up front. Dry at back end. Some meaty nuances.

Château La Mondotte, St-Emilion

Tasted at Canon-La-Gaffelière and it was closed up and hard to judge. Garage wine with an edge.

Château Monbousquet, St-Emilion

Black raspberry fruit—extracted. New wave. Very jammy.

Château Pavie, St-Emilion

** Lovely sweet fruit. Very rich and quite well-balanced. Sweet on palate. Black raspberry and blackberry flavors.

Château Pavie Decesse, St-Emilion

Huge wine—extracted. Powerful, almost whisky-like. Not my style.

Château Pavie Macquin, St-Emilion

*+ Another winner at UGC. A bit reserved on nose, but tons of fruit on palate. Elegant and balanced. Very ripe tannins.

Château Peby Faugeres, St-Emilion

This is too much for me. Whisky barrel aromas and flavors.

Château Quinault “L’Enclos” St-Emilion

* Sweet spice and blackberries. Tannic edge. Good middle. Nice. At the property the wine showed smoked meats on the nose and palate. Blackberries abound. Ralph, Trey and I like this wine.

Château Rol Valentin, St-Emilion

Sweet and fine up front. Dry at back.

Château Soleil, St-Emilion

½* Tasted at Canon-La-Gaffelière. Toasty oak nose and great mouthfeel. Fine length and structure. Should be good to drink upon release.

Château Soutard, St-Emilion

Well-made wine. Spicy and rich.

Château St-Georges Côte Pavie, St-Emilion

* Black licorice and pepper. Sexy wine. Racy and flashy. Very nice wine. Everyone loves it.

Château Troplong Mondot, St-Emilion

* ½ + Serious wine—superb, with great structure and long, lingering palate. Fabulous. At UGC this was lovely and sweet on the palate. Sexy wine, ripe and forward. Great mouthfeel! Ralph: ** Ripe and strong. Very long on palate. This has it all.



Ralph, Clyde and Jean Guillaume Prats at Cos d’Estournel

The Wines of Pierre Moueix

Puy Blanquet, St-Emilion

½* Black licorice aromas and flavor. Toasty nuances. Nice palate impression.

Magdelaine, St-Emilion

Big wine, quite tannic and has a rough edge. Hard to taste today. We had heard it was quite good. Ralph: ** Great thickness and length. A very serious wine.

Belair, St-Emilion

½* More perfume on the nose. Red fruits and more elegant style. Good length.

de Sales, Pomerol

First sample was tired (like me on the last day of the trip). Second sample much better, but still a bit green and herbal.

La Grave à Pomerol, Pomerol

* Spicy aromas and flavor. Very lively on the palate and plenty of blackberry fruit flavors. Quite nice and easy to drink.

Bourgneuf, Pomerol

Quite powerful and a bit rustic. Tough and tannic at the back and does not seem to have the depth of the previous vintage.

Hosanna, Pomerol (formerly Certan Giraud)

*½ Black fruit aromas. Black licorice flavors with sweet fruit and touch of toasty oak. Very generous and giving wine.

Certan de May, Pomerol

** Bacon fat aromas, smoky, toasty. Very sweet and long. Sexy wine that tastes great right now. Long and lingering on the palate. Has some red fruit tones. Lovely wine. I can imagine its neighbor Vieux Château Certan did as well. Ralph: ** Big, thick wine with layers of flavors—super smooth.

Trotanoy, Pomerol

*½+ Reserved on the nose, but very zippy and zesty on the palate. Great core of sweet fruit. Somewhat larger scale than previous wine. Very nice. Ralph: * A real high-toned wine. Bright and zesty. Quite elegant.

Petrus, Pomerol

** Very spicy and rich on the nose. Big wine with plenty of acid, tannin and fruit. Great richness on the palate. Refined and pure. Violets and blackberries. Extremely long.

The Wines of Signature Selections Office

April 5th (yes, we work on Saturdays)

Whites

Tour de Monestier Bergerac Blanc

½ * Perfumy honeysuckle aromas. Lots of lime and lemon on the finish. Very good value. Only 1,000 cases produced.

Château Fougères “La Folie” Graves Blanc

Quite rich and oily on the palate. More pear aromas and flavor. Well-balanced.

Château Luchey-Halde, Pessac

* Elegant citrus driven wine. Floral, perfumy on the nose and long on the palate. Plenty of snappy sauvignon blanc at the back. Nice wine.

Reds

Château Au Grand Paris, Bordeaux Superieur

½* This property is doing very well lately. Try their fabulous 2005 when it arrives in May. This wine, with its beautiful label, offers a lot in bottle. Rich blackberry fruits on the nose and palate. Buy on arrival.

Domaine du Bouscaut, Bordeaux Superieur

Big wine that is hard to taste today. Seems a bit hollow.

Château Beaulieu “Comtes de Tastes” Bordeaux Superieur

½* Blackish color and great up front flavor profile. Some toasty undertones. Another Stephane Derencourt beauty. 60% merlot.

Château Bolaire, Bordeaux Superieur, Macau

* Big wine, but in perfect balance. Powerful nose and quite tannic on the back end. The tannins are round. Smoky/toasty nuances. 39% petit verdot in this blend with 34% merlot and 27% cab sauv. Could be a value.

Domaine du Bouscat “Cuvee Gargone” St-Romain La Virvee

½* Lots of blackberry aromas that follow to the palate. Jeffrey Davies says that is due to high percentage of malbec in the blend (20%). Very solid, well-made wine that at first extracted seems, but is quite well-balanced.

Château Petrus Gaia, Bordeaux Superieur

½* Yes the name is legal—they won in court! More old school in style, which I like. It has nice black fruit aromas and a sweet palate impression. Should be a good value and probably priced well below the other Petrus.

Château Gree-Laroque, Bordeaux Superieur, Laroque

Very powerful and tannic. Too much for me.

Domaine du Bouscat “Les Portes de l’Am,” Bordeaux Superieur St-Romain La Virvee

* Black color. Great exotic nose of Asian spices and pepper. Blackberry

and blueberry flavors. Wow! Intense wine but perfectly balanced. 50% merlot, 25% malbec, 25% cabernet franc.

Château Fougères “La Folle,” Graves

* Tons of mineral and some chocolate on the nose. Very sweet middle fruit on the palate. Great mouthfeel. A bit New World, but balanced. Another Stephane Derencourt wine that shines. 65% merlot and 35% cabernet.

Château Majean, Graves

*+ This wine will bring a smile to your face when you taste it if you like luscious, rich, in-your-face Bordeaux from Graves. Chocolate and toasty oak aromas lead to tons of blackberry and cassis flavors. A bit flashy, but it pulls it off. Usually not my style, but I like it very much.

Château Le Thil Comte Clary, Pessac

* Smoky, almost inky aromas. Great mouthfeel and lingering after-taste. A winery to watch. It is located near Smith-Haut-Lafitte. 70% merlot and 30% cabernet.

Château de Gironville, Macau

*+ Purple-black color. Not for the faint of heart. This wine has a sweet chocolate and black raspberry flavor profile. Very lush and sexy wine. Close to New World, but it is delicious right now, to drink or pour over vanilla ice cream.

Château Belle-Vue, Macau

½ * Good solid wine more in the older school of Bordeaux wines. Very pure wine with mid-weight palate impression and fine balance. 50% cabernet sauvignon, 20% petit verdot and 27% merlot.

Château Charmail, Haut-Médoc

Bittersweet chocolate aromas and flavor. Lots of length on the palate. A bit tannic at the back end.

Château Clos Chaumont, 1er Côtes de Bordeaux

* Elegant and pure wine. Really my style. Not overdone. Just all fruit and can be enjoyed right now. Very long on the palate. Hubert de Bouard from Angleus fame consults here and it shows.

Château La Rouselle, Fronsac

½ * Mineral notes on the nose and sweet, ripe fruit flavors with some red berry fruits at the end. Well-made.

Château Pierre de Lune, St-Emilion

*+ I like this property and this 2007 is very good. Almost black color with black licorice aromas and flavors. 95% merlot and 5% cabernet franc, this vineyard is only two acres. Super delicious finish.

Château La Fleur Morange, St-Emilion

* Though it is 70% merlot, it has a red fruit flavor profile. Sweet and a bit brambly on the palate. Some mineral and a bit of iron on the finish. Three acres and 100 year old vines.

Visit www.klwines.com for our waiting list for pre-arrival purchase of all 2007s!



Clockwise from top left: The poolhouse at du Terte; Christine Lurton and Clyde at Ch. Dauzac; Clyde Beffa Jr, Gildas d'Ollone and Ralph Sands at Pichon-Lalande; At Lion d'Or with Barbara Engerer (Paloumey), Clyde, Ralph, Trey, negociant Christophe Reboul Salze, Chef Jean Paul Barbier and Frederic Engerer; Dinner at Ch. Lascombes with Tina Bizard and Pia Befve.



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