

WINE News

Bordeaux.



JUNE 22, 2015 FEATURES

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Bordeaux, Still the King—*Long Live the King*

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

I will be brief with my comments as we only have four pages to write our Bordeaux e-news for June. We have so much older Bordeaux (see Steve's article), along with a great new assortment of 2012 Bordeaux values (see Jacques's article), and some outstanding 2014 Bordeaux pre-arrivals (see this page and Ralph's article), that wine descriptions are more important than my commentary. I must also mention that Jeff has done a great article on one of our favorite properties: Château Angludet, Margaux.

I have just returned from my second two-week trip of this year to France, where I again tasted some outstanding 2014s among a lot of other vintages dating back to 1945. I must say that the 2014s offer a lot of wine for the money, with much of the decrease in prices due to our strong U.S. dollar. I recommend buying some 2014s on a pre-arrival basis—there's something for every pocketbook. Here are nine of my top picks for 2014.

Value Wines Under \$30

2014 Labegorce, Margaux (\$22.99)

This wine is stunning, and at under \$25, it represents a superb bargain. Showing aromas of fresh raspberry, red licorice, and cedar. Delicious on the palate.

2014 Meyney, St-Estèphe (\$24.99)

Power and strength. Quite tannic. Black fruits abound. A ton of flavor for such a good price. Some of the lesser-known wines from St-Estèphe have done magnificently in 2014.

2014 Ormes de Pez, St-Estèphe

(\$24.99) Blackberry aromas and flavors. Great texture—very balanced and sweet. This is a fabulous value for 2014.

Mid-term Agers Under \$60

2014 Langoa Barton, St-Julien

(\$42.99) I love this wine, and Ralph scored it as high as Léoville-Barton. Lots of black cherry and cherry cola aromas. This is a very elegant wine now, but will age well for many years.

2014 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux

(\$44.95) Lovely spice on nose—sweet fruit and red berry flavors. Long, meaty and delicious. Always one of our favorites.

2014 Canon-La-Gaffelière,

St-Emilion (\$59.99) Lovely wine—sweet and easy with red berry flavors and so much fruit showing. One of my favorite Right Bank 2014s. Tastes great now.

Classics Under \$150

Top Pick! 2014 Ducru-Beaucaillou,

St-Julien (\$109.99) Dark, rich and full-bodied, with hints of cola and spice. Really nice, with great length. Blackberry and layers upon layers of ripe fruit.

2014 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac

(\$89.99) Lots of lovely, exotic, grapey fruit here—very elegant and precise. Back to the glory days of the '80s for this property.

2014 Pontet Canet, Pauillac (\$92.99)

A truly great wine and one of the best of the vintage. Alfred Tesseron can do no wrong. One of my clients—who is a famous Napa Valley winemaker—bought two cases on the spot.



Cover: Château Ducru-Beaucaillou.

2014 Northern Médoc Power and Concentration Provide The Foundation

By Ralph Sands

The story line on the 2014 vintage in Bordeaux is that for the first time in four years, Mother Nature cooperated, the U.S. dollar strengthened and level-headed pricing emerged. So, for the first time since the 2010 offering, we have a successful pre-arrival campaign and the wines are selling well. The wines from 2014 will start to drink nicely in 7 to 10 years and last easily to 20. That should firmly place this delicious vintage in the spotlight for wine lovers and collectors of all ages.

I feel that the very best wines were made in the upper Médoc. Some of Bordeaux's top estates there produced wine with fruit that features an extra element of power and concentration. If you are young and thinking about laying the foundation of a cellar, this is a great opportunity to buy some of Bordeaux's most famous estates at reasonable prices. Here are my top picks with my tasting notes. They include four second growths, one third, one fourth and two fifth growths, and one that we thought was the greatest value we tasted, bar none. Money is no object at these estates and the wines taste like it. I also rated each wine two of out three stars, which means outstanding wine!

Fifth growths from the Mouton Rothschild stable: The **2014 d'Armailhac, Pauillac (750ml \$34.99; 1.5L \$69.99)** shows lovely, up-front sweet red fruits; very attractive, with nice, thick middle fruit and good tannins. The Mouton wine you can drink young, and it is a winner! **2014 Clerc Milon, Pauillac (750ml \$48.99; 1.5L \$99.99)** Definitely in the classic style of Mouton but with a touch more forward sweetness—which is nice, but is still very concentrated. Long, serious wine, and one of the great values for aging.

From the ownership of Château Lafite comes the fourth growth **2014 Duhart-Milon, Pauillac (750ml \$59.99; 1.5L \$124.99)**. Strong, dark wine with deep fruit, flavors of blackberry jam and grilled meats, good middle fruit and tannin control. More flesh and lots to like here!

The great third growth **2014 Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe (750ml \$62.99; 1.5L \$129.99)** has the wine world excited under its new ownership. Aromas of ripe, spicy raspberries lead into a deep, silky wine with serious old vine taste. Round tannins; long, serious wine; attractive and tasty. And we found the **2014 Capbern, St-Estèphe (750ml \$17.99; 1.5L \$39.99)**, made by Calon, to be the finest value of the vintage!

The second growths include the **2014 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (750ml \$62.99; 1.5L \$124.99; 3L \$259.99)**. The deep purple fruit of blueberry and blackberries is very zesty and bright, and features racy acidity. Firm, more rounded tannins than in many of the great Barton vintages, with just the right amount of extraction.

2014 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac (750ml \$89.99; 1.5L \$179.99; 3L \$359.99) Lots of lovely, exotic, grapey fruit, elegant and precise. Pichon-Lalande is back in a big way!

2014 Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$109.99) Seriously strong but elegant at the same time. Lots of silky black fruit and cassis fruit. Stylish and delicious, as it usually is!

2014 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (750ml \$119.99; 1.5L \$239.99) Big juice here! Saturated, sweet black-red fruits with hints of black licorice. Features a powerful attack of fruit, freshness and minerals, great texture and long finish. Complete package; fantastic wine!

Older Bordeaux A Mixed Half-Case

By Steve Bearden

We strive to be your go-to spot for affordable and ready-to-drink older Bordeaux. These delicious values are sourced direct from the properties or from the best cellars in Bordeaux:

2002 La Tour de By, Médoc (\$17.99) This solid value comes from the challenging 2002 vintage but drinks like a champ, and is priced for everyday enjoyment. Bright, sweet and solid, this has a nose of earth and cherry just beginning to ease toward slight hints of cedar. The palate is firm, with hints of spice and savory herb to balance the sweetness of the fruit. This is a no-brainer for Tuesday night burgers.

2004 Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99) The initial aroma of crunchy red fruits and berries gives way to dusty soil and smoke as this opens. This is supple and restrained, yet complex, with an array of fresh Bing cherry and currant fruit that fans out along the energetic and mineral-laced finish. This seems as fresh as the day it was released but with added nuance from bottle age.

1996 Corbin Michotte, St-Emilion (\$29.99) This obscure wine from the border near Pomerol will surprise you with its overall quality and gentle charm. This is soft and lush for the vintage and has an

iron mineral component that matches well the hints of leather in the smooth and generous mid-palate. Plush, elegant and gentle, this tastes of cedar, plum, dusty cherry and mineral all wrapped in satin.

2005 Coufran, Haut-Médoc (\$28.99) Here is a beefy, muscular wine with tons of dark blackberry fruit and hints of toast, herb and mint. This hearty bottle shows the depth of the vintage in its full body, chewy texture, firm and fruity personality and fine grip imbedded in the rich finish. Decant this tonight with hearty fare.

2005 Balestard La Tonnelle, St-Emilion (\$29.99) Originally somewhat ragged around the edges, this brash wine has mellowed as it enters middle age, allowing the copious dark fruit to emerge in the mid-palate. The limestone traces on the finish add length to the rich and weighty middle and there is just a whisper of tannin on the finish.

2005 Latour-Martillac, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99) Blackberry and dark currant fruit, graphite, scorched earth and a wisp of smoke lend complexity to this exuberant wine. This has layers of dark fruit and mineral in a bold and lively style.

Discover d'Angludet

By Jeff Garneau

One of our last containers from France brought a treasure trove of older vintages from one of my favorite Margaux properties: Château d'Angludet. Direct from the château to you, these include some of the finest vintages of the past three decades.

Never heard of Angludet? The estate occupies a favored position at the southern end of Margaux, its vineyards sandwiched between fifth growth du Tertre and third growth Giscours. Second growth Brane-Cantenac lies just to the north.

While it is surrounded by classified growths, and was itself considered the equal of a fourth growth at the peak of its fame in the mid-18th century, at the time of the 1855 Classification it had been divided among several heirs and was not included. Today, Angludet stands apart from both the cru classé and cru bourgeois classifications, setting its own high standard vintage after vintage.

The 1986 vintage produced dense, powerful wines that were forbiddingly tannic in their youth. Nearly 30 years on, many of these wines are just reaching their peak. The **1986 d'Angludet, Margaux (\$69.99)** is intensely savory, with a nose redolent of cured meats and aged tobacco. On the palate, tart red currant and sweet red cherry. Lively acidity, good weight and full-bodied. The tannins are quite fine.

Both 1989 and 1990 were nearly identical successes, with hot, dry summers and good weather continuing throughout the fall harvest. Both yielded large crops of very ripe fruit, and magnificent wines.

The **1989 d'Angludet, Margaux (\$69.99)** is pure pleasure, ripe and round and richly textured. Bordeaux claret in its prime. A perfect marriage of sweet, youthful fruit and savory, aged character. The **1990 d'Angludet, Margaux (\$69.99)** is a bit more restrained with less obvious ripeness and more notable acidity.

Both the **1995 d'Angludet, Margaux (750ml \$69.99; 1.5L \$139.99)** and the **1996 d'Angludet, Margaux (750ml \$69.99; 1.5L \$139.99)** are very true to their respective vintages. It is hard to resist the appeal of the '95. Lightly floral on the nose with notes of violets (classic Margaux!). Loads of sweet red and black fruits with cherry predominating. Ripe and round with fine tannins framing the finish. Still very youthful by comparison, the '96 appears to be aging at a much slower pace. There is a similar sweetness of fruit, however, and quite admirable length. A treat for Cab lovers.

The first decade of the 21st century was a remarkable success in Bordeaux, and 2000 and 2005 were two of the best. The **2000 d'Angludet, Margaux (750ml \$79.99; 1.5L \$169.99; 5L \$599.99)** is very round and ripe with plenty of sweet fruit. Tannins are still firm but not impenetrable. I tasted last tasted the **2005 d'Angludet, Margaux (750ml \$64.99; 1.5L \$139.99)** at the château when we traveled to Bordeaux to preview the 2009 vintage. I had some enthusiastic notes praising the wine's freshness and ripeness of fruit. Five years later, my notes don't vary much, but it needs time in the cellar.

2012 Bordeaux *The Ugly Duckling is Turning into a Swan*

By Jacques Moreira

Once thought to be a less-than-good vintage, at least for Cabernet Sauvignon and the Left Bank, the 2012 vintage is now developing very fine feathers indeed. It fooled everyone, it seems!

Sometimes I wonder if, after all is said and done, the mysteries of how grape juice transforms itself into wine—good wine, that is—is still only known to the wine gods. Once the best grapes are chosen, fermented, pressed, turned into wine, and allowed to rest a bit, the good wines reveal themselves. Our job as wine merchants is to seek them out regardless of the vintage and offer them to you, the wine drinker, so you don't have to deal with those wine gods—as they are indeed quite whimsical!

2012 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$29.99) It is showing very elegant aromatics, of cassis, cigar box, crushed stones and leather. On the palate, its sweet dark fruit reveals itself with its dark cherries, cassis, a touch of wood smoke and leather. The tannins are quite rounded and in perfect tune with the acidity. It is a delicious wine and one of my favorites for its quality/price.

2012 Clarke Rothschild, Lustrac (\$19.99) This cru bourgeois has always had an early appeal, with rich aromatics of vanilla, licorice and plenty of oak spices. The palate offers spicy cinnamon and exotic incense, very dark fruit with plenty of cassis and leather, medium tannins and a full-on concentration.

2012 Joanin Bécot, Côtes de Castillon (\$19.99) Owned by the Bécot brothers from Beau-Sejour-Bécot in Saint-Émilion, this property is located in a rather privileged terroir in Castillon. It has loads of dark cherries in its aromatics along with cocoa powder and kirsch (very Right Bank, indeed). The palate shows a bit more restraint, but still the chocolate, spicy oak and plums bound along with the firm tannins.

2012 La Dauphine, Fronsac (\$17.99) This one is not holding anything back. It is a full, rich wine with the aromatics showing off its cherry and cocoa notes. The palate reveals its fullness with chocolate, kirsch and underbrush notes. A steal at this price!

2012 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$16.99) A staple at K&L, showing elegant notes of crushed stones, wood spices and cassis. On the palate it is medium-bodied, with cassis fruit and dark cherries. The touch of spices and earthiness lend it elegance. Absolutely a no-brainer.

2013 Haut Rian Blanc, Bordeaux (\$9.99) A very nice and refreshing white wine for the summer. Delicate muskmelon and pomelo aromatics, with the palate showing an almost ethereal crispness, an almost sweet pétillant sensation on the tongue that is absolutely charming and refreshing. It has a nice balance between the sharpness of the Sauvignon Blanc and the suppleness of the Sémillon. All of this for \$10!

Bordeaux Values *Old and New*

1997 Pavie Decesse, St-Emilion (\$59.99) Who could ever forget Jean Paul Valette, the late owner of Château Pavie. This was his last vintage—seems like only yesterday we were dining with him and his lovely wife at the property. 90 points WS: “Seriously good. Lots of blackberry, vanilla and tobacco character on the nose. Medium- to full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long finish of polished texture. Finely crafted wine. Best after 2000.” Well, it’s 2015—must be ready.

2003 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (375ml \$9.99; 750ml \$19.99) Spicy nose and flavors. Very ripe and fine tannins. Lively and sweet. Ready now. The combination of rustic property and hot vintage makes this a superb value. Lanessan is another great success for K&L—we sell more of this property than any store in the world!

2003 Sarget de Gruaud Larose, St-Julien (\$29.99) A super delicious 2003 that has balance and structure and plenty of sweet, ripe fruit flavors. We sold 1,000 bottles at \$37.99 and now King Dollar has us with the price under \$30. A steal.

2004 Malescasse, Haut-Médoc (\$18.99) This wine is flat-out delicious. Enjoy right now with a juicy hamburger. It has sold out once before in two weeks.



2009 Lestruelle, Médoc (1.5L \$27.99) Over 3,000 bottles of the 750ml sold by us last year. 90 points WS: “Nicely toasty, with vanilla and espresso notes up front, but the core of raspberry, blackberry and boysenberry fruit rushes in behind it, with a long, licorice-filled finish.”

2009 Maison Blanche, Médoc (1.5L \$29.99) We sold over 14,000 bottles of this wine in the 750ml bottle. It is stunningly delicious—blackberries and toasty oak abound. Will cellar well for five-plus years. Fresh and vibrant. 91 points WS.

2009 de Chantegrive Rouge, Graves (\$19.99) We have sold over 150 cases of this beauty. Smooth as glass, and it has a lingering finish with some mineral notes. Goes well with fish or meat, but it is perfect with roasted chicken. 92 points JS.

2009 Cambon la Pelouse, Haut-Médoc (\$22.99) One of K&L’s favorites for giving a lot of pleasure while not hurting the pocketbook. 90 points RP: “Wonderfully dark ruby/purple in color, with loads of sweet berry fruit as well as hints of licorice and charcoal, the wine displays a lush texture, medium to full body, and the vintage’s tell-tale ripeness, high glycerin and silky texture.”

2009 Lalande Borie, St-Julien (\$29.99) This wine is getting better and better. Tons of ripe red fruit flavors. 91-93 points WE: “Rich and smooth, with tannins that are ripe, some spice and also intense acidity. The blackcurrant character is dominant.”

2010 La Tour de Mons, Margaux (\$24.99) One of my favorites for value from the 2010 vintage. 90 points JS: “Raspberry and flowers with hints of citrus rind. Full body, with velvety tannins and a juicy finish. Clean and well-crafted.”

2012 Tour St-Christophe, St-Emilion (\$27.99) A property to watch in the future, and this is their first great value wine. Lots of blackberry aromas and flavor with a kiss of oak. Their 2014 is also quite good. Limited availability.

2014 Rosé de Haut-Bailly (\$14.99) Their red wines are one of my favorites and this rosé hits the spot for the summer. Bright and lively, but only 25 cases available.

—Clyde Beffa Jr.

Key: PA Pre-arrival RP Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate WS Wine Spectator JS James Suckling WE Wine Enthusiast

K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

P (650) 364-8544 F (650) 364-4687

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KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637

Email: Wines@KLWines.com

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1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028

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