

WINE News

We are flush with great vintages and values in Bordeaux.
Find wines for your cellar and for drinking tonight.



OCTOBER 20, 2014 FEATURES

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Bordeaux: Nothing but the Best

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

K&L always has some of Bordeaux's best values, even from already-legendary vintages like 2009 and 2010. These may be the best ever vintages from Bordeaux (though 1945, 1961 and 1982 will give them a run for their money). We continue to stock up on wines from these vintages whenever we can find parcels at good prices. In this newsletter, Jacques writes about some of the great values we have from 2009 on page 6, while Ralph extols the virtues of some 2010s on page 2. Some of my favorites for collectors are listed on page 3.

On pages 5 and 7, respectively, Steve and Jeff will tell you about some of their favorite in-stock Bordeaux dating back to 1997. We uncover the history of one wine label on page 4, and on page 8 I prove, yet again, that Bordeaux doesn't need to be expensive.

I'm going to kick things off with six wines for you to try from different regions of Bordeaux, all at different price points and all in stock.

2011 Lilian Ladouys, St-Estèphe (\$21.99) We first told you about this up-and-coming property after tasting their fabulous 2009 offering. Their 2011 is right there in quality, and it is

priced much lower than the 2009. 93 points WE: "While the wood is still very apparent in this wine, it does also have the rich fruit as a balance. The acidity, dark berry fruits and a fine juicy character go with the firm tannins and spicy wood character."

2010 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$44.99) Cantemerle is one of my favorite Bordeaux properties. I thought the 2006 and 2009 were great, but this is the best-ever from them, right up there with their legendary 1949. We have sold more than 6,000 bottles of this wine, and we just received our last 50 cases. 94 points RP: "...this is the finest Cantemerle I have encountered in my professional career of tasting young vintages."

2011 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$54.99) We at K&L love this property. I have at least 10 vintages of their wines in my cellar because their wines are always well-priced and offer plenty of everything. While the 2011 vintage was challenging, the foks at Chevalier made a great wine. Sublime elegance and earthy flavors. 94 points RP, and at least that from me.

2010 Canon-La-Gaffelière, St-Emilion (\$139.99) Seamless and absolutely delicious. Hold for at least 10 more years. 96 points WS: "This takes the power of the vintage and puts it in its pocket for later, preferring instead to let mouthwatering briar, loganberry, mulberry and blackberry fruit strut its way forward, enlivened with roasted wood spice and supported by suavely but thoroughly embedded iron-tinged structure..."

The Best of the Best
2010 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$229.99) 100 points RP: "...Having tasted it four times in Bordeaux, and rating it perfect three times and 99 the fourth time, this final blend of 51% Merlot, 47.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1.5% Petit Verdot is perfection in a bottle. Its sublime elegance, the power, the medium to full-bodied texture, the silky tannins, the subtle notes of smoke, lead pencil shavings, black currants, charcoal, camphor, blueberry and cassis fruit are all remarkable. It is a rich, full-throttle wine, but the elegance and the great terroir of Pape Clément come through in abundance."

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Serious Bordeaux, Phenomenal Values

By Ralph Sands



It's rare to have back-to-back great vintages like 2009 and 2010, and it is even rarer to have them be so different. The 2009s are rich, supple wines with tremendous fruit and seamless balance. The 2010s are classic in style, with powerful dark fruit, firm tannins and racy acidity. I recently had the opportunity to share some great value 2010s at a tasting at Alexander's Steak House in San Francisco.

2010 Le Thil Comte Clary, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99) I have been telling everyone I can that this is the best bottle of Bordeaux in the store for less than \$30, so its stunning quality was no surprise to me. I love the rich, dark fruit and complex structure that this wine offers, and so did everyone else at the tasting. Daniel and Florence Cathiard, the owners of Smith Haut Lafitte, purchased Le Thil in 2012 and will continue to make it in small amounts; they always make great wine, but they will be hard pressed to make one better than this.

I hadn't tasted the next two *petit châteaux* wines since we bought them, and they really blew me away for the quality and price.

One of the things all of these wines have in common is their "sweet middle fruit," which shines despite their masculine structure. This was the result of a substantial amount of Merlot in all the blends (75% Le Thil, 60% Larrivau and 60% for Lamothe-Bergeron).

2010 Larrivau, Haut-Médoc (\$16.99) This beauty features restrained-but-concentrated dark fruit that really opens with some air. It made me think, "Wow! This is serious wine. Where the heck is it located?" When I looked it up, it all made sense. Larrivau is just a few minutes dead west of First Growth Lafite Rothschild in the commune of Cissac, and the wine is absolutely in the style of Lafite! While it may not have the absolute perfectness of the First Growth, it comes amazingly close for \$1380 less a bottle.

2010 Lamothe-Bergeron, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) This is from Cussac, which is between Margaux and St-Julien. Clyde and I have tasted this wine since 1989 and bought it in most years since. The wine always possessed



impressive ripe fruit, but also had a rustic and tannic edge to it. Since Clyde and I are a bit tough and rustic, we liked it. Clearly things have changed here, though, as the 2010 is very pure and full-fruited, but with nice round tannins.

2010 des Annereaux, Lalande-de-Pomerol (\$19.99)

One of the first estates in the recorded history of Lalande-de-Pomerol, des Annereaux was established in 1390, and along with Fronsac it is the great value commune for Right Bank Merlot. Bright, deep and spicy, this wine is no softie either: zesty raspberry fruit with a touch of earth, structure and great freshness. Very tasty. The Malescot family were part owners of this estate from 1660 to 1860.

On the subject of Malescot-St-Exupéry, there is no doubt that since Jean-Luc Zuger took over from his father Roger in 2003, the estate has become a star of the Margaux appellation. Sales are skyrocketing, while sales from other estates with superstar names and prices plummet. The reason is value.

Malescot excels in both quality and price. Consider the **2010 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$99.99)**. My first tasting note from April 2011 at the Château reads: Ripe fruit with good grip. Very good, thick mid-palate fruit and weight; a really long finish. Serious, complex wine that has exquisite balance and will age beautifully. A classic Malescot. Two stars! Since then I have tasted the wine numerous times, and it continues to perform just as the note suggests.

Finally, don't miss out on two wines from 2010 that I adore: the **2010 Cante-merle, Haut-Médoc (\$44.99)** and the **2010 Canon-La-Gaffelière, St-Emilion (\$139.99)**.

Both sold out very quickly the last time they were in stock, so don't miss them again.

Enjoy, and feel free to contact me with any questions or for advice on the wines of Bordeaux.

Cheers and Go Niners!



BORDEAUX *For the Cellar*

Everyone agrees that the best Bordeaux wines cellar better than any other wines in the world. The selections below are some of my favorites from our stocks. These are classic wines from very good to great vintages that will reward the patient collector.

2011 Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$89.99) We have watched this château emerge from the doldrums, becoming quite sensational since Florence and Daniel Cathiard took over in 1991. They received 100 points for their 2009, and while this is a step behind that monumental wine, it is also less than one-third the price. An outstanding value, and one of the best wines of the vintage. 94+ points RP: "...Another great success (and that's saying something after the remarkable duo of 2009 and 2010...) This wine exhibits a dense purple color along with a big, sweet nose of crème de cassis, mulberries, licorice and subtle background oak. Full-bodied with silky tannins, nicely integrated acidity, wood and alcohol, a multilayered mouthfeel, and a finish that lasts 45 seconds, this brilliant wine should drink well for 15-20 years."



2009 Pauillac de Latour, Pauillac (\$99.99) A case of this delicious wine sells for much less than a single bottle of the 2009 Latour! Enjoy this wine over the next 10 years. 92 points JS: "Juicy and rich, with velvety tannins. Full and round, with lots of juicy fruit and meat, blackberries and currants. Classified growth quality. Broad shoulder. Third wine of Latour. Better in 2016."

2010 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$99.99) One of our favorite properties in Bordeaux. Jean-Luc Zuger is a master at making great value, cellar-worthy wines every year. 95 points RP: "...Black raspberries, creme de cassis and spring floral notes intermixed with forest floor and a hint of charcoal are followed by an opulent, sexy, full-bodied wine whose tannins have become much sweeter, while the wine is less restrained yet still exuberant and impressive. Three to four years of bottle age will do wonders to make it more accessible, but this wine is set for 25-30 years of longevity."

1995 Gruaud Larose, St-Julien (\$119.99)

A superb vintage and a great property that offers exceptional values year in and year out. 91 points WS: "Intense aromas of crushed blackberries, licorice and Spanish cedar. Full-bodied, concentrated and structured. Give it some time."

2007 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (\$129.99) This is an affordable Cos that can be enjoyed from 2016-2036. 95 points WE and an Editors' Choice: "With its perfumed aromas, this is a wine that has richness and sweetness, with soft velvet power. It has an intense wood element that needs to blend into the rest of the wine, but the sweet black currant and freshness provide good balance. This is a seductive wine, with a fine solid character."

2006 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$129.99) Do not miss this fantastic wine. Our price is one of the best in the U.S. 95 points RP: "The dense purple-colored 2006 boasts an extraordinary perfume of lead pencil shavings, crème de cassis, burning embers, and a sensation that can only be described as like walking through a damp forest on a hot, humid day. Full-bodied, extraordinarily textured, and multidimensional with an amazingly long finish of nearly 60 seconds—one of the stars of the vintage."

2009 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$139.99) Always one of my favorites. This wine is made for long-term aging. Massive and yet so sweet! 98 points WE: "Number 3 on *Wine Enthusiast's* Top 100 Cellar Selections of 2012* A major success of the vintage. The wine exhibits extreme richness of the fruit, with all its sweet blackberry flavors. It also has underlying firm structure, density and solid tannins. Bring in the acidity at the end, and this is both impressive and ready for long-term aging."

2010 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac (\$189.99) I have a case of this in my cellar, and you should too. 98 points JS: "A wine with great beauty and finesse. Such elegance and ethereal quality for this estate. Full body, with ultra-fine tannins and a juicy delicious finish. Long and beautiful. This is the best Lynch in a long, long time. I love the precision here. Try in 2018."

2011 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$94.99) 94 points RP and 95 from me. This property makes great wines every year, and their 2011 is one of the best of the vintage. Tons of fruit and minerality.

—Clyde Beffa Jr.



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2010 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$289.99) No introduction needed here. Both the 2010 and the 2009 received 100 points from Robert Parker. Alfred Tesseron has taken this property into the First Growth stratosphere in quality. And yet it sells for a fraction of the price. Very limited availability.

BORDEAUX EVENTS

Save the Date

January 18, 2015: We will be hosting the annual Fête du Bordeaux dinner at One Market on Sunday, January 18th. The 2012 vintage will be featured, as well as a selection of older wines.

January 30, 2015: Don't miss the annual Union Grand Crus (UGC) tasting on January 30th from 6:00-8:00 p.m at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, which will again feature the 2012 Bordeaux vintage. More than 100 châteaux will be present to pour the new vintage. It is the tasting of the year.

Tickets for both events go on sale on November 15th.

BORDEAUX *In Stock*

Bordeaux is a seasonal business, with one vintage following the next, year by year. Under normal circumstances, our shelves by now would be stocked almost entirely with wines from the 2011 vintage, with a few lower-priced 2012s starting to roll in the door. However, with the almost unheard of situation of two historically great vintages followed by three very challenging ones, we are hedging our bets. As newer wines arrive, we are continuing to maintain a stock of proven '09s and '10s that we are certain our customers will love, in addition to our best finds from 2011 and 2012.

2011 Malmaison, Moulis (\$19.99) Purchased by Baron Edmond de Rothschild in 1973. There are 33 hectares of vineyards planted on predominantly clay limestone soils that favor the production of Merlot over Cabernet. The blend, therefore, is 80% Merlot to 20% Cabernet. The 2011 vintage has a pronounced floral quality on the nose, with hints of graham cracker and ginger snap that reflect the oak influence. Medium to full-bodied, with a surprising richness of texture and good ripeness, there is also plenty of sweet, dark fruit. There is a tannic backbone to this wine that firms up on the finish. A solid effort in a difficult vintage. Give it a couple of years.

It has been interesting to reassess the 2010s one year after their release. The 2010 vintage was extraordinary—a true drought year with *more* of everything: acidity, ripeness, alcohol and tannin. Many world class wines were made in this vintage, but it was by no means a slam dunk like 2009. There was exceptional raw material, yes, but adroit, expert winemaking was required to strike the perfect balance. Frankly, I feared that many wines under \$20 might prove to be overly tannic or overly ripe. I am happy to report that my fears appear to be ill-founded. These are big wines, no doubt, but they are

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Left: Alfred Kressmann's notebook. Right: The La Tour-Martillac label.

Bordeaux's Enduring Legacy

There are a lot of memorable labels in the wine world—like the famous paintings that adorn bottles of Mouton Rothschild—but one particular label stands out as different in our minds: La Tour-Martillac.

At last month's value Bordeaux tasting at Alexander's Steakhouse, Ralph Sands and Clyde got to talking with Wilfrid Groizard of La Tour-Martillac in Graves about the winery's black-and-gold striped label. It turns out, as it usually does with these things, that there's a cool story behind it. The Art Deco-inspired label is based on a drawing done by Jean Kressmann after his father, Alfred Kressmann, bought the estate in 1930 and changed its name from Château Latour to La Tour-Martillac to avoid confusion with the famed Pauillac estate. The label's inspiration was a small notebook that the elder Kressmann carried around with him at the time to note the wines that he had tasted.

Groizard happened to have the notebook with him, and he showed it to Ralph and Clyde, who were blown away. Among the notes inside that notebook were a handful about one of K&L's favorite estates, Malescot-St-Exupéry:

April 4, 1931: 1864 Château Malescot: "Oh! one of the most powerful noses that I have ever smelled. Very fine and alert. Crazy sugar. Where is the Malescot from today? Too good!"

December 25, 1931: 1871 Château Malescot: "Extraordinary resemblance with Issan but more elegant, finer and more harmonious. (Edouard Kressmann) Remarkable, perfect, surprisingly young! (Alfred Kressmann)"

January 19, 1932: 1875 Château Malescot: "Excessively fine and harmonious. A lot of sugar. By far the best!"

It seems appropriate that the Kressmanns would be such fans of the Malescot, as they too are known for making exceptional, high-value wine. So much so, in fact, that we are sold out of all but their most recent vintages. Fortunately, they even make remarkable wine in less notable years, as evidenced by the 90-plus-point scores from Parker and *Wine Enthusiast* for their unbelievably affordable **2013 La Tour-Martillac, Graves (\$29.99)**. Availability is limited.

—Leah Greenstein



A range of Cantemerles.

Bordeaux to Drink While Your '09s and '10s Age

By Steve Bearden

If you are like me and sometimes find yourself drinking wines from great vintages when they are too young, perhaps you should be browsing the aisles of ready-to-drink Bordeaux here at K&L. Letting the great 2009 and 2010 vintages have the cellar time they deserve is easier when you can take home an affordable bottle that will be delicious tonight. No matter what your price range or style preferences, let your young wines rest and choose something from the wide array of older vintages and *petit châteaux* that recently came into stock.

1997 Potensac, Médoc (\$26.99) Anyone who has not yet tried this delicious, rich, soft and silky bargain made by the folks at Léoville-Las Cases should grab a bottle before it is too late. This is gentle and earthy, with black cherry fruit, cedar and smoky plums on the satin-textured finish. You don't have to spend a fortune for perfectly mature Bordeaux, and it doesn't get much better than this "Old School" claret.

2005 Bernadotte, Haut-Médoc (\$29.99) Fashioned under the stewardship of Pichon-Lalande and showing class and pedigree way beyond its humble price, this is just an unbeatable bargain in great wine from a great vintage. Although still dark, firm and somewhat tannic, this is approachable for such a powerful vintage and requires only an hour in the decanter to fully show its potential. Raspberries, blackberries and tobacco abound in the deep, husky middle and compete with the long, mineral-infused finish for your attention. Decant this tonight or age five more years.

2006 Fourcas Dupré, Lustrac (\$19.99) What can you say about a well-aged wine from a good vintage that sells for less than 20 bucks? This Cru Bourgeois is a solid value and a great example of the overall rise in quality that we have seen from the appellation of Lustrac over the years. Lifted, flowery aromas and a smooth, clay-tinged finish give this a fresh and energetic personality. With black cherry and dark plum fruit, tobacco, savory herb and coffee bean shining through the mid-palate, this is perfect for decanting tonight.

2009 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$46.99) Early upon release this was the picture of elegance, but it has steadily put on weight over the years and now shows the plump, ripe, fruity middle we have come to associate with the super warm 2009 vintage. Aromas of crushed flowers, warm cherry compote and baked plums soar from the decanter after about 20 minutes. The smooth middle shows roasted blackberry and black cherry fruit and seems to expand as the wine opens up. The finish is sweet and complex with lots of graphite minerality and very ripe tannins.

2009 Villegeorge, Haut-Médoc (\$24.99) This deep, solid wine starts with toasty aromas of dark fruits, oak and savory herb. There are oodles of blackberry jam, vanilla and spice in this hearty, lush and modern beauty, which can be enjoyed tonight or aged another five years. The tannins are so enveloped in fruit as to be unnoticeable.

2011 Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$89.99) The 2009 version of this wine garnered 100 points from practically everyone, and this is a worthy follow-up (although with a cooler and more elegant personality). This still has plenty of the gravel and earth tones mixed with dark currant fruit and the creamy texture you expect from Smith Haut Lafitte, but there is freshness and lift not usually associated with this powerhouse property. The full-bodied middle is crammed with boysenberries, toast, mineral and smoky fig enlivened by an electric tension that gives the wine great length. This is beautifully crafted 2011 Bordeaux that is just too difficult to keep your hands off, so decant tonight if you can't wait.

2010 Raymond-Lafon, Sauternes (375ml \$19.99; 750ml \$39.99) Surprisingly viscous, fat and waxy, but with great balancing acidity to boot, this seems to hit the sweet spot between flamboyant richness and cool, electric freshness. The pineapple, honey, citrus and marmalade flavors would be an ideal match for veined cheeses, fruit tarts, pound cake or a plate of butter cookies. Sauternes are very versatile and can be matched not just to foie gras, but chicken or veal dishes or, my favorite, drunk as an apéritif.

2009 VALUES *Quality Bordeaux at Fantastic Prices*

So, it has been exactly five years since the harvest of the historic 2009 vintage, the year when everything that could possibly go right in the vineyards, did. The wines were considered the best of our young century, with immense complexity, concentration and a perfect balance between the phenolic ripeness of the fruit and the acidity, but the prices... Well, they were high, and they will always be high for the *grands, premiers, seconds* and the like. Were there values? Sure, we told you all about them in prior newsletters. Are there any values now? Absolutely. Of course, I am not talking “cheap wines” (and consequently, lower quality), but wines that deliver a tremendous level of quality for the price asked. With that in mind, the staff here in our Hollywood location got together for some serious tasting with Clyde Beffa, and these are the 2009 Bordeaux values we feel are well worth your attention:



2009 Malmaison, Moulis-en-Médoc (\$24.99)

This property was bought by Edmond de Rothschild in 1973, and since then the vineyards have been completely replanted. The 2009 is showing a deep garnet color, dark plums and blackberry and a touch of tobacco on the nose. Besides a soft entry, it has its tannins in place, framing the fruit. Very elegant and quite ready to be enjoyed now.

2009 Poujeaux, Moulis-en-Médoc

(\$49.99) Without a doubt one of the brightest jewels of the Moulis-en-Médoc appellation, with most of its vineyards located on a single parcel on the top terroir in Moulis, the Grand Poujeaux plateau. Dark garnet color with a marvelous nose of cocoa powder, black currant, plums and the much sought-after graphite. The marvel continues on the palate with all of the above, plus spicy oak notes, along with chocolate and earth. This is classic Bordeaux and a perfect wine to be put in a cellar. Top value here.

2009 Charmail, Haut-Médoc (\$24.99) This Cru Bourgeois is an over-achiever, and the 2009 showed beautifully in our tasting. It needs a bit of decanting to achieve its potential as it is closing down a bit now. After some air: chocolate, coffee beans, currants, tobacco and graphite. The tannins are very much present, and this would make a perfect pairing to a *steak-au-poivre*. Excellent candidate for the cellar as well.

2009 Croix de Rambeau, Lussac-St-Emilion (\$21.99) This Right Bank wine is showing beautifully right now. Lots of plums and chocolate with soft to medium tannins. A very approachable wine that is ready to drink. With winter fast approaching—for some of you, definitely not in SoCal right now—I can think of nothing better than a glass of this wine and some beef stew or a bowl of spicy chili!

2009 de Perron, Lalande-de-Pomerol (\$19.99) Another great Right Bank wine. The 2009 de Perron is a deep garnet color, with a serious nose and palate. Coffee beans, chocolate, plums, dark berries and oak spices, are all balanced beautifully by earthy notes. Very elegant and quite a value. Ready to go now.

2009 Paloumey, Haut-Médoc (\$23.99) A blend of half Cabernet Sauvignon and half Merlot, this wine is also showing remarkably well now, although it needs some decanting to coax its delicious flavors out. And what flavors it has: chocolate, plums and tobacco, along with earthiness and noticeable tannins. Very much a Bordeaux wine, and easily one for the cellar.

2009 La Tour de Bessan, Margaux (\$21.99)

One of the best deals we have available. A classic Margaux, with a very pretty violet and cassis nose. Sweet fruit on the palate, with spicy vanilla notes and wet stone. Dare I say to those California fans who want to dabble in French wines that this is a great candidate for it? It's a perfect pairing with lamb as well.

2009 La Tour de Mons, Margaux (\$29.95)

And yet another classic Margaux and fantastic value. Compared to the Bessan, I found the de Mons to have a firmer structure, the tannins are more pronounced, along with all the beautiful floral notes, cassis and exotic spices. This one I would pair with venison.



2009 Nairac, Barsac (\$39.99) A fantastic wine from this highly praised Sauternes/Barsac chateau. Nicolas Heeter-Tari prefers to pick the Sauvignon Blanc over-ripened, rather than fully botrytised, which may explain the higher acidity that gives this wine the perfect counter-balance to its sweetness and richness. Pineapple and coconut. Apricots, pears and floral tones. Absolutely delicious, and with a long life ahead of it, perhaps half a century. But how can one wait if it's pure pleasure right now? That's the great Sauternes dilemma. 95 points RP: "...Exuberant, explosive scents of acacia honey, dried apricot and a hint of petrol that transposes the exoticism of the vintage. The palate is well-balanced with a viscous opening. There is plenty of vibrant spicy fruit, interwoven with orange rind and pineapple, leading to a beautifully focused an intense finish."

—Jacques Moreira

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also wonderfully balanced and surprisingly accessible. Many will benefit from another three to five years in the cellar, but I suspect that, once tasted, many will be drunk up right away.

2010 Mauvais Garçon “Bad Boy” Bordeaux (\$19.99) St-Emilion winemaker Jean-Luc Thunevin (also of Château Valandraud) is an unrepentant *garagiste* and a self-confessed “bad boy” who favors richly textured, hedonistic reds that are made to be enjoyed upon release. The 2010 Bordeaux Bad Boy is one of his better efforts *and* one of the most affordable. Very deeply colored and so purple it’s almost black, with loads of red fruits; very rich and ripe. Slightly confectionary in style, with flavors reminiscent of cinnamon- and allspice-accented cherry compote. Full-bodied, but with an unequivocal balance and structure that belies the listed 15% alcohol. While this has sufficient tannins to age well for the near term, the wine is clearly intended for those with poor impulse control. It is shockingly accessible, even now, and practically begs you to drink it. Even while merely tasting, I found myself itching to pour another glass.

2010 Le Bonnat, Graves (\$15.99) The Lesgourgues family, producers of fine Armagnac under the Château de Laubade label, also own Château Le Bonnat in the Graves region of Bordeaux. There are 22 hectares of vines on the property, split more or less evenly between Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. This reflects the blend of the 2010 bottling, which is deeply colored and combines bright acidity with a rich texture, ripe, sweet fruit and fine tannins. This wine really over-delivers at this price point. It is drinking well already but should also prove a good near term cellar candidate (three to five years).

2010 Tour St-Bonnet, Médoc (\$19.99) The Seigneury de Saint Bonnet is hundreds of years old, with written records dating the estate as far back as the 16th century. In the 19th century the wines of Château La Tour Saint Bonnet were well known and regarded. Since 1996 the bottles have been labeled simply “Tour Saint Bonnet” in order to avoid confusion with a slightly more famous property to the south. Considered one of the better Cru Bourgeois properties in the Médoc, Tour Saint Bonnet is very well situated on gravel soils in close proximity to the Gironde River. The 40 hectares of vineyards are planted mostly to Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with a little bit of Petit Verdot and Malbec. The current owners are the third generation of their family to run the estate, which has been in their hands since 1903. The wines—rather unusually—are aged mostly in large vats. Only a small proportion is aged in barrel (10%), half new. The 2010, like most wines from the vintage, is very deeply colored, with notes of licorice and blackberry jam. Plenty of ripe, sweet fruit. Very full-bodied with a firm finish and fine tannins.



2009 Pauillac de Latour, Pauillac (\$99.99) The third wine of First Growth Château Latour. First produced in 1973 and only twice thereafter until 1990. Since then it has been made on an annual basis from lots not used for the second wine, Les Forts de Latour, and from younger vines from areas not immediately adjacent to the château. It is only in the past few years that the wine has been available here in the United States. A delicious and affordable introduction to the wines of this most famous of Bordeaux properties, the 2009 Pauillac de Latour is the very embodiment of the vintage. There is a ripeness of fruit combined with a maturity of tannin—so silky, so sweet—that is the absolute hallmark of 2009 Bordeaux. You could easily drink this wine tonight, but you will do much better to wait another five or 10 years or so. It can only improve with time. You won’t be disappointed.

2005 Bernadotte, Haut-Médoc (\$29.99) This very fine Haut-Médoc château was acquired in the mid-1990s by Second Growth Château Pichon-Lalande. The property, located in the commune of Saint Saviour to the west of Pauillac, included nine hectares of vineyards that were classified as AOC Pauillac, while the remainder fell outside the appellation. Today the fruit from those vineyards goes mostly into Pichon-Lalande’s second wine, the Reserve de Comtesse, while the production from the remaining vineyards is bottled as Bernadotte, under the supervision of the winemaking team at Pichon-Lalande. The excellent 2005 vintage blend consists of 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc. Aged 12 months in 30% new oak, it is approaching 10 years of age and remains very youthful in character. Full-bodied, with plenty of ripeness, it really shows the strength of the vintage. Very well built with good acidity and tannin, it will no doubt benefit from another couple of years in the cellar. A cut above the regular class of Haut Medoc wines. The association with Pichon-Lalande is telling here.

2010 Doisy-Daëne, Barsac (\$49.99) This Second Growth Barsac property is owned by Denis Dubourdieu, who manages it with his two sons. Intriguingly, the great vintages for Sauternes are often difficult years for red wine in Bordeaux. Cooler, wetter conditions lead to higher acid levels and better development of botrytis. In exceptional vintages for reds (such as 2009 and 2010) the Sauternes are often overlooked or overshadowed. That is a shame, since such vintages often produce Sauternes of outstanding character. The 2010 Doisy-Daëne is 89% Sémillon and 11% Sauvignon Blanc and the Doisy-Daëne is a case in point. Its nose is honeyed and botrytis-inflected and simply invites you to take a sip. On the palate the wine is very rich and unctuously sweet, with notes of ripe apricot and exotic pineapple. Perfectly enjoyable now, it should continue to age well for another 10 to 20 years.

—Jeff Garneau

BORDEAUX *It Doesn't Have to Be Expensive*

The biggest myth in the fine wine business? “Bordeaux means expensive.” Try these for value.

2009 de Birot, Côtes de Bordeaux (\$9.99) From the outstanding 2009 vintage comes this absolutely killer Bordeaux value. The blend contains about a quarter Cabernet Sauvignon, lending dark fruit and structure to the base of juicy Merlot fruit, with a dollop of Cabernet Franc for aromatic lift. Aged for 18 months in approximately 20% new barriques. We have sold more than 500 cases of this beauty so far.

1998 Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (\$27.99) A fabulous, mature wine to enjoy now. From RP: “Elegant, spicy, tobacco, cranberry, and red cherry characteristics emerge from this finesse-styled, sweet, flavorful, medium-bodied wine. Already delicious as well as complex...”

2009 Ducluzeau, Lustrac (\$19.99) This wine is made by Bruno Borie of Ducru-Beaucaillou from a Lustrac property he bought in the 1970s. Made predominantly from Merlot (98%), the Ducluzeau is very feminine for a Lustrac, and in 2009 it is packed with juicy fruit that practically obscures the wine’s tannins.

2006 Senejac, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) Aromas of blackberry, Indian spices and mocha. Medium to full-bodied, with well-integrated tannins and a medium finish. Well-made for the vintage.

2006 Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99) 91 points RP: “Consistently one of the top, under-the-radar wines of Pessac-Léognan, Haut-Bergey’s beautiful 2006 boasts a deep ruby/purple hue as well as a classic bouquet of hot rocks intermixed with graphite, cassis, incense and charcoal. Medium to full-bodied with noticeable but sweet tannin, impressive purity and an alluring texture, it is relatively evolved for a 2006”.

2005 Soleil, Puisseguin St-Emilion (\$29.99) “This lower pedigree wine represents undeniable quality/value rapport in 2005,” wrote Robert Parker upon tasting from barrel in April 2006. “This vintage is so deep in quality among the better run, less-heralded

estates, that these wines should appeal to readers looking for terrific values from Bordeaux. Most of these wines are Merlot-based and will be drinkable young.” This wine is made by the team at Canon-La-Gaffelière and is a superb value.

2010 Raymond-Lafon, Sauternes (375ml \$19.99; 750ml \$39.99)

An absolutely delicious value. Compare at over \$50 a bottle elsewhere. 93 points from Neal Martin (writing for eRobert-Parker): “The Raymond-Lafon 2010 has a complex bouquet with lemon peel, almond and quince aromas, and is well-defined with an impressive sense of energy. The palate is well-balanced with a viscous opening and well-judged acidity. It builds toward a rounded, pineapple and marmalade-tinged finish. This has good weight and presence with plenty of strikingly fresh acidity to keep everything balanced. This wine deserves a round of applause.”

2007 Phélan-Ségur, St-Estèphe (\$39.99) Upfront cherry fruit. Superb. At the property this wine showed lots of spice. Production was down 25% in 2007. A blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot. At UGC this wine showed quite nicely, with plenty of forward fruit. 90 points *WE*.

2009 Phélan-Ségur, St-Estèphe (\$49.99) 92 points *WS*: “This is fleshy and polished, with layers of crushed plum, fig sauce and blackberry paste that unfurl slowly, backed by Maduro tobacco, charcoal and iron. There’s lots of minerality on the finish, but it’s nicely enveloped in the fruit.” Also, 93 points *JS* and 90 points each *ST* and *RP*.

2010 Gloria, St-Julien (\$49.99) 93 points *RP*: “The 2010 Gloria is an ass-kicking, fabulous value once again from this estate, which would probably be classified if the 1855 hierarchy of the wines of the Médoc were ever done again. Abundant notes of cedar wood, fruitcake, flowers, crème de cassis and kirsch are all present in this full-bodied, opulent, dense, dark ruby/purple wine. It is slightly more restrained than the flamboyant 2009, but equal in quality.”

—Clyde Beffa Jr.



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