

March 17, 2014

# WINE News

*There's no region of the world that offers more values, drinkable classics and collectible wines than Bordeaux.*

*Find some of our favorites inside...*



*The San Francisco UGC tasting. Photo courtesy of Balzac Communications.*

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## Bordeaux: New and Old

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

**Are you looking to build a wine collection and want to buy pre-arrival wines or futures?** Do you want to buy current releases? Are you looking for aged classics to enjoy now or stash away? How about old and rare wines to drink now that won't break the bank? Bordeaux is the only wine region in the world that offers all of the above, because the simple fact is that Bordeaux makes the most collectible wines in the world *and* great values for everyday drinking.

### 2009 de Macard, Bordeaux Supérieur

**(\$11.99)** This is the last 190 cases from the property, so do not hesitate. 90 points WS: "Ripe and dense, but fresh, with silky-textured plum, blackberry and blueberry fruit carried by sweet spice and maduro tobacco notes. The fleshy finish shows nice drive. Should open up more with brief cellaring."

**2007 Fourcas Hosten, Llistrac (\$19.99)** This property was bought by the Hermès people; the renovation is stunning and the wine is delicious. Usually rustic, this château is now making easy-drinking, elegant wines. For aging. Also try the **2010 (\$19.99)**.

**1997 Potensac, Pauillac (\$26.99)** This wine will be great for another 10 years, and it is delicious right now. Tons of ripe fruit and very rounded tannins. Buy a case, for sure.

**2005 Soleil, St-Emilion (\$29.99)** Made by the Comte Stephan von Neipperg of Canon-La-Gaffelière fame, this wine shows great balance and elegance—silky smooth.

**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. 94 points Robert Parker: "...This is the finest Cantemerle I have encountered in my professional career of tasting young vintages."

**1997 Labégorce, Margaux (1.5L \$59.99)** If you are having a party, this magnum is perfect. These were the last cases of this at the property, and they just arrived, all 38 of them. Served with a steak, it goes down quickly and offers immediate gratification. Decant 30

In this issue of K&L's eNews we've got Bordeaux gems to satisfy every palate and pocketbook, from just-in-stock and pre-arrival 2011s, which offer superb value, to classic Château Palmers from the 1970s that have been stored at the best wine cellar in Bordeaux—Mahler-Besse. We only have four pages this issue, so let's get right into it with eight of my favorite in-stock picks for value.

minutes and enjoy. A magnum of 10-year-plus mature Bordeaux at this low price is unheard of in this day of high Bordeaux prices. Old school and delicious.

**2009 Pauillac de Latour, Pauillac (\$99.99)** Only the Facebook and What's App guys can afford 2009 Latour, so why not try this stunning wine—a baby Latour from the greatest Bordeaux vintage in memory. 92 points James Suckling and 94 points from me.

**2009 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$129.99)** 98 points James Suckling and me. A wine with intense spice and berry character and hints of sweet tobacco. Suckling picked it as the best wine he tasted in 2012, and I rated it as offering the best price/quality ratio from the 2009 vintage.

## FABULOUS VALUES *in Aged Bordeaux*

As I write this (in late February) a container has just landed full of Bordeaux, and here at K&L we are busily filling our shelves. In addition to 2009s, 2010s and 2011s, we received many older vintages that have been perfectly stored in Bordeaux cellars and represent fantastic value wines that are ready to drink tonight.

**2004 Larrivet Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$32.99)** We are huge fans of this small, quality-conscious property, which seems to produce great wine regardless of vintage. Aromas of gravelly earth, hot rocks, baked cherries and a whiff of smoke jump from the glass when this is poured. Ripe currant fruit, minerals and spice are present in the middle, which is surprisingly rich for the vintage and appellation.

**2001 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (\$39.99)** This boutique-size, high-quality operation has become one of our go-to properties for both current and older vintages that represent value and drinkability. This is round, smooth, softly textured and displays a very caressing personality for 2001 vintage Bordeaux. Limestone-rich soils and good acidity provide freshness and lift to the rich and plush mid-palate fruit in this inviting and easy-to-drink wine.

**2001 Malescasse, Haut-Médoc (\$21.99)** This screaming value is one of the riper and sweeter wines I've had from this very good vintage.

This is earthy and plummy, with oodles of dark, husky fruit in the deep middle, yet good freshness throughout.



**1999 Fugue de Nenin, Pomerol (\$34.99)** The Delon family of Léoville-Las Cases has made great strides with Pomerol's Nenin, and this second wine has become a consistent over-achiever. This is elegant, clean, classy and sweet, offering an iron-tinged mineral edge to the fine finish. Drinking perfectly right now, this offers the sophistication of the first wine at a fraction of the cost.

**1998 Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99)** Drinkers will be surprised by the richness this hearty, earthy wine displays. Tobacco, mineral and cherry and plum fruit are more obvious than the slightly firm edge to the stony finish. Enjoy this value with rustic fare.

**2009 Thénac, Bergerac Rouge (\$19.99)** This Bordeaux wannabe has a warm, rich entry of sweet, roasted dark fruits and a nice hint of earth. Plush, gentle and somewhat modern in style, this has plenty of fine, ripe tannin on the finish to hold everything in check.

—Steve Bearden

## 2011 BORDEAUX *Surprise, Surprise*

I admit it: I was very worried before this year's UGC event. Few customers are used to sampling such young Bordeaux from such a difficult vintage, and I had not tasted the 2011s since we first tried them in April of 2012. Young Bordeaux is always very austere and tight young, no matter how good the vintage is, and 2011 had been tough to evaluate. But after tasting every wine before the public entered the building I exhaled in relief; the wines were showing well.

The Left Bank Cabernets all showed very nice, zesty, bright aromas and tight, spicy fruit, but not a lot of sweet middle fruit. These wines, much to my delight, had fleshed out a bit, but I think they will always be firm, linear and direct. They are solid, and indeed they are a testament to the extremely high level of winemaking in Bordeaux today. The red wines from Pessac-Léognan and the Right Bank showcased more forward, sweet fruit and texture and, overall, showed much better at this stage. This tasting was proof that difficult weather vintages like 2011 can still produce very nice drinking wines. I'm confident the 2011 reds will soften up nicely if given 3-5-7 years of cellaring time to integrate, and then they will then turn out to be great drinking wines very similar to another underrated vintage that has been a hugely successful here at K&L, 2001. Moreover, there is no question that 2011 is a great vintage for the white wines of Graves and the sweet wines of Sauternes and Barsac across the board!

Some famous 2011s that stood out for me were: **Lynch Bages (PA \$139.99)**, **Cantemerle (\$34.99)**, **Léoville-Poyferré (PA \$89.99)**, **Giscours (PA \$47.99)**, **Malescot-St-Exupéry (PA \$53.99)**, **Cantenac Brown (PA \$54.99)**, **Domaine de Chevalier (PA \$49.99)**,

**de Fieuzal (PA \$39.99)**, **Larrivet Haut-Brion (PA \$37.99)**, **Malartic-Lagravière (\$44.99)**, **Smith Haut Lafitte (PA \$89.99)**, **Pape Clément (PA \$89.99)**, **Figeac (PA \$139.99)**, **Clos Fourtet (PA \$79.99)**, **Bon Pasteur (PA \$69.99)**, **Canon-La-Gaffelière (PA \$59.99)** and **Troplong Mondot (PA \$87.99)**.

Some of the great values available from the 2011 vintage include: **Angludet (PA \$29.99)**, **Ormes de Pez (PA \$29.99)**, **Chasse-Spleen (PA \$29.99)**, **Poujeaux (\$29.99)** and **Clarke (\$24.99)**!

—Ralph Sands

### Tour Des Deux Rives Tasting & Dinner, April 28th

The Tour des Deux Rives, presented by WineBook, will be holding a consumer tasting at Wine and Wall in San Francisco from 5-7 p.m. on Monday, April 28th. Special guests will include Christian Moueix (Hosanna and Pétrus), Veronique Sanders (Haut-Bailly), Thomas Duroux (Palmer), Bruno-Eugène Borie (Ducru-Beaucaillou), Nicolas Glumineau (Pichon-Lalande), Hervé Gouin (Mouton Rothschild) and Laurent Elichondoborde (Maison Descaves). \$60 per person plus tax. Small bites served. A list of wines is available online.

An intimate six-course dinner at One Market in San Francisco will follow the tasting. Guests will get to chat with producers and enjoy a thoughtfully paired six-course meal with special vintages from Hosanna, Mouton Rothschild, Pichon-Lalande, Ducru-Beaucaillou, Haut-Bailly and Palmer; 12 wines in all. Only 50 tickets available. Call 1.800.247.5987 or visit [KLWines.com](http://KLWines.com) for price and details.

## 2011 BORDEAUX *Surprising Successes*

The 2011 vintage in Bordeaux was difficult by all accounts—hot when it ought to have been cool and cool when it ought to have been hot, with both too little rain and too much, all at the wrong times. Tough vintages often make for tough wines, but over the last few hundred years the Bordelais have learned a thing or two about growing grapes and making wine under less than ideal circumstances. Adverse conditions sometimes yield surprising successes.

It was possible to make full-bodied reds with more ripeness and weight in 2011, but those who “swung for the fences,” chasing greater extraction, often couldn’t avoid introducing fairly bitter, astringent tannins. In my opinion, the most successful wines of the vintage are those that adopted a lighter style, emphasizing acidity and freshness. These will no doubt provide much enjoyment in the near to midterm, assuming prices are at appropriate levels for the vintage. With respect to red wines, 2011 is a vintage that resists broad generalizations as to quality, one that will require a judicious, selective approach on the part of the consumer. The best, most consistent wines of the vintage are dry whites and Sauternes. Both are endowed with lively acidity and freshness, while the sweet wines enjoyed a level of near-perfect botrytis development.

Among the reds, I found quite a few where a subtle, deft touch by the winemaker, combined with a sense of restraint imposed by the vintage, yielded wines of surprising grace and poise. Many of these came from St-Julien, where the success rate in 2011 seemed to be somewhat above average. The **2011 Léoville-Barton (PA \$89.99)** was a particular standout, as was the **2011 Léoville-Poyferré (PA \$89.99)**. The **2011 Haut-Bailly (PA \$84.99)**, one of my favorite

properties in Pessac-Léognan, enjoyed a very successful vintage. And, of course, one of the best values in Bordeaux continues to be *cinquieme* cru **Château Cantemerle (\$34.99)**, one of only five Haut-Médoc properties designated a classified growth. The 2011 is a steal.

My top pick among the dry whites is the **2011 de Fieuzal Blanc (PA \$49.99)**. One of the most balanced wines of the vintage, it has classic Bordeaux blanc appeal. Not surprisingly, at roughly twice the price, the **2011 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc (PA \$99.99)** and the **2011 Domaine de Chevalier Blanc (PA \$109.99)** both offer even more richness and weight. Creamy, even decadently lush in texture, with remarkable acidity and drive and superb length.

While the red wines of 2011 will endure much scrutiny and attention, and the whites will receive much-deserved praise, it is the Sauternes that are truly the wines of the vintage. These are big, powerful wines that combine extraordinary weight and richness with lively acidity and superb botrytis character. These are some of the best Sauternes I have ever tasted.

The **2011 Lafaurie-Peyraguey (PA \$49.99)** is impressive for its sheer weight alone. Simply massive. Huge and very rich, but bright and lively at the same time. The **2011 Guiraud (PA 375ml \$29.99; 750ml \$59.99)**, a perennial favorite at K&L, is vibrant, with fresh citrus notes: tangerine and Cara Cara orange. Honeyed, sweet and very rich. The **2011 Suduiraut (Inquire)** is a balanced effort, smoothly combining the rich texture and lively acidity typical of the vintage. Very polished with excellent length.

—Jeff Garneau

## MORE BORDEAUX *for Drinking Now*

It’s an exciting month for Bordeaux. En Primeur is set to kick off for the 2013 vintage, the newly tasted 2011s will be arriving soon, the monthly Bordeaux tastings are back in full swing and lots of older vintages of Bordeaux are arriving in our stores. At K&L Hollywood, we just conducted two tastings: one for the staff and one for the public, both featuring some new arrivals and some old hits and a variety of vintages. Below are some of the standouts.



The **2009 Trébiac, Graves (\$15.99)** showed dark fruit, cassis and spice, with a touch of sweet tobacco and a bright, long finish. My favorite was the **2009 Tronquoy-Lalande, St-Estèphe (\$39.99)**, layered, ripe and polished, with red and black berry fruit, Asian spice, iron minerality, cedar, fig paste, chewy tannins and a long finish. Wow. The “off-vintage” Domaine de Chevaliers once again proved that the advancements in viticulture and winemaking over recent years can bring out the best even in difficult vintages. The **2006 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$64.99)** was my pick of the pair we tried, and it drank even better the next night, showing dried cherry, floral notes, cedar, peppery spice and red currant fruit. It has fleshed out since we last tried it in

2009, but there is still plenty of structure, with finer tannins and bright acidity. It was great with dinner. The 2007 vintage was marked by an off summer, but a great August saved the vintage. The wines had lower alcohol levels and smooth textures. The **2007 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (\$59.99)** reflects this, showing all that approachability and elegance with raspberry and currants, tobacco and earth, spice and cedar. We also revisited a couple of 2005s to see how they were developing. The **2005 Soleil, St-Emilion (\$29.99)**, which is back in stock, stood out with a beautiful nose of dark fruit and wood spice; the fruit was reserved on the palate and needed some decanting to come out, but it could drink now with dinner or spend more time in the cellar. The **1996 Clément-Pichon, Haut Médoc (\$23.99)** is also back in stock and still tasting as good as last year. At the tasting the wine showed a lovely mix of dried herbs, tart dried currants and Asian spices, along with fragrant red fruit and peppery spice. This wine will not last long on our shelves at this price. Finally, the **2005 the Labégorce-Zédé, Margaux (\$44.99)** is back in stock. If it is still available when you read this, grab some of it and some of the **1998 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)**, which is tasting better than it ever has!

—Steve Greer

# Bordeaux: The Ls Have It

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

We have just received more vintages from Lanessan and Labégorce—don't miss them this time. If you like old style Bordeaux these are for you, and they are exceptionally well-priced.

**1998 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** In February: So good! The wine has shed its tannic shell and the fruit has emerged.

**1999 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** Drinking perfectly now! According to Robert Parker: "This underrated Médoc consistently produces wines of fifth-growth quality..."

**2003 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)**

**2004 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** When young, the wines of Lanessan are typically a deep, intense ruby color, with an elegant nose and fruity, floral aromas. On the palate, the structure is complex and dense, melting away harmoniously to a good, long finish. When they are older, the wines take on a terracotta tint and the nose becomes increasingly complex, with plum, then undergrowth aromas. The flavors are smooth, warm and perfectly harmonious, ending with silky tannins. The 2003 is that warm, round style and the 2004 is classic Bordeaux style.

**2000 Labégorce, Margaux (750ml \$39.99; 1.5L \$79.99)**

We have sold more than 2,400 bottles of this wine in the 750ml, and now we have both sizes for sale. Right from the property, this wine has the finesse of the Margaux commune with the strength of the vintage. Tons of red berry flavors. Decant and enjoy with a steak dinner.

**2001 Labégorce, Margaux (1.5L \$74.99)** A bit more forward and elegant than the 2000.

## Two Other Non-L Gems

**2004 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc (375ml \$7.99)** We fell in love with this wine on our 2012 Bordeaux trip. It has sold out twice already!

**2001 Malescasse, Haut-Médoc (\$21.99)** This is superbly elegant, like many 2001s. Sweet with no hard edges. A must-try.

## Old and Rare Classics

Just in from the perfect Mahler-Besse Cellar.

**1974 Palmer, Margaux (\$279.00)**

**1975 Palmer, Margaux (\$299.00)** The '74 and '75 are fantastic birth-year values

**1986 Palmer, Margaux (\$279.00)** 94 points WS.

**1990 Palmer, Margaux (\$429.00)** 92 points WS and RP.

**1991 Palmer, Margaux (1.5L \$429.00)** One of the greatest wines from the most underrated vintage of the century in Bordeaux.

**1995 Palmer, Margaux (\$259.99)** 94 points RP and WS.

**1995 Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe (\$149.99)** 95 points WS: "Incredible nose of crushed berries, flowers, spices and nuts. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, long finish. Powerful and solid."

**1996 Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe (\$149.99)** 92 points RP: "Dark ruby-colored, with a complex nose of dried herbs, Asian spices, and black cherry jam intermixed with cassis..."

**2000 Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe (\$149.99)** Very dark in color, the 2000 Calon-Ségur shows ripe cassis and mocha aromas that linger in the mouth. 93 points WS.

**1991 Latour, Pauillac (\$699.00)** The best of the 1991s. This vintage was fabulous along the Gironde, with no frost to speak of. 91 points WS: "Dark ruby color. Decadent aromas of meat, figs and ripe fruit. Full-bodied, with a very good, compacted, fruity structure and a long, long, ripe fruit and earth finish.

This is a seriously good bottle. Great value. Love it.—Latour vertical. Best after 2005."

**1995 Latour, Pauillac (\$699.99)** 96 points RP: "A beauty, the opaque dense purple-colored 1995 exhibits jammy cassis, vanillin, and minerals in its fragrant but still youthful aromatics."



## K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

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## KLWINES.COM

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

Email: [Wines@KLWines.com](mailto:Wines@KLWines.com)

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## K&L SAN FRANCISCO

638 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

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