

# Bordeaux 2021 Vintage Report



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## 2021: Unexpected! Classic! Useful. Priceworthy?

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



**I wrote this last year in my vintage report: "In stating the weather conditions in most of my past vintage reports since the late 1980s, I used the notes of the famous Bill Blatch—Mr Bordeaux. Bill retired from the négociant business several years ago, and I lost my weather source. This year I read a fine 2020 vintage report from two professors from Bordeaux University (Laurence Geny and Axel Marchal), and**

used a lot of their observations and facts for my weather condition portion of this report. I thank them profusely." Well, this year I also used their fine report as it seemed to be the most factual and unbiased. Again, I thank them. By the way, our team had dinner with Mr. Blatch in Bordeaux, and I must say he seemed to be in fine form.

Yes—we actually sent a team to Bordeaux late in April to assess the 2021 vintage. In addition to myself was my son, Trey, who organized the appointments; the cagey veteran Ralph Sands on his 30th Bordeaux vintage-tasting trip; long-time Bordeaux lover from the L.A. store, Jacques Moreira, who also speaks fluent French; Key Accounts Head and Master Blogger, Ryan Moses; and Key Accounts Manager and Backup Driver, Gary Norton, on his first trip to Bordeaux.

From all the Bordeaux reports we had been reading over the past year, we were not expecting a great vintage—maybe not even a good vintage. However: we must say the vintage 2021 was better than we expected. Granted we went to Bordeaux about a month later than normal, and this

gave the young wines time to settle down and "fine" themselves. Since the late 1980s, we have been complaining about tasting the new wines too early in their lifecycle. That extra month really helped on this trip.

We went to Bordeaux just a day after some very bad, cold, rainy weather. The week before our departure, we were getting reports telling us to bring warm clothes, bring umbrellas, bring the sun. Well, we brought ALL three—most importantly we brought good wine-tasting weather from California. We arrived as a big storm was just leaving the area, and we saw almost NO drops of rain for the week we were there. Plus, we tasted on mostly "fruit" days and no "root" days. Wines taste better on fruit days and not so good on root days. Check the Farmers' Almanac.

**Unexpected:** After enjoying five out of six very good-to-excellent Bordeaux vintages (2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020), we were expecting a bust 2021 vintage. Low expectations were the norm in our group before we tasted. Yet, after a week of tasting some 200+ wines from 2021, all six of us agreed that the vintage was not nearly as bad as we had anticipated. Yes, the vintage performed well in certain properties, but not every property. There were winners and



*This year's powerhouse Bordeaux Team with Bruno Borie at Ducru-Beaucaillou.*





losers in all regions of Bordeaux. In fact, there were great wines made at properties next door to those that had had a difficult time. Some properties had a lot of frost, hail, and/or mildew problems, producing very small yields, while the next-door château may have had a normal production. Overall, the wines proved to be better than expected.

**Classic:** Many people were describing the 2021s as a classic Bordeaux vintage, harkening back to the olden-days-style of Bordeaux: low alcohol levels, high acidity, high tannin levels, etc., in the style of pre-Parker claret, which the Brits have always loved. The 2018, 2019, 2020, and even 2016 and 2015 vintages were NOT classic. They were ripe and lush with higher alcohol—fatter-style clarets. For 2021, we heard comparisons thrown around about another 2011 or 2008 or 2004 vintage. We found the 2021s much like the underrated 2001s or 1999s, or going back before Parker, 1981s. Many of the 2001s are drinking fabulously right now—so I hope the 2021s turn out that well. I will probably never know because in 21 years I would be 98!!

**Useful:** Our very good friend Jean-Guillaume Prats, when he was running Château Cos d'Estournel some years ago, would always tell us that Bordeaux has only two kinds of vintages: great vintages and useful vintages. The great vintages of the 21st century so far would be 2000, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2016, and maybe 2018, 2019, and 2020! So, 2021 falls into the useful-vintage category—the red wines will be very enjoyable early on and will give pleasure for a good many years. A few of the 2021s we tasted hit the great category, but most hit the useful category. But given the advances in winemaking and cellar technology that have been developed over the years, there was an even greater amount of precision and consistency across the board than in some earlier useful vintages. There are many good wines to be had.

## The Weather

As we said last year in the 2020 report, there are five prerequisites to creating a great Bordeaux vintage, and I find them important to reiterate:

1) and 2) Relatively quick and even flowering and fruit-set during weather that is sufficiently warm and dry enough to ensure good pollination and predispose the fruit toward even ripening. This step is absolutely key to a successful vintage.

3) Gradual onset of water stress thanks to a warm, dry month of July, in order to slow down and then put a definitive stop to vine growth, happening no later than véraison (color change).

4) Completely ripe grapes thanks to optimum photosynthesis in the leaves up until the harvest, without any noteworthy resumption of vegetative growth.

5) Fine (relatively dry and medium-warm) weather during the harvest, making it possible to pick the grapes in each plot at optimum ripeness without running the risk of dilution, rot, or loss of fruity aromas.

These prerequisites should be considered as a guide to understanding the vintage rather than as a score card for the year. This is particularly true for the 2021 vintage, where the diversity of situations and technical decisions calls for a nuanced analysis.

**Winter and Spring:** The winter had alternating cold and mild spells with lots of rain. January temperatures were close to the seasonal norm, but February was very mild—the third mildest, exceeded only by 1990 and 2020. March was dryer than normal, and the soil started to get parched. Under these conditions, the buds began to swell by the end of March, although bud break did not become widespread until early April—one week later than 2020.

The nights of April 7 and 8 saw frost of historic proportions affecting all regions of Bordeaux, except in Pessac, which is always a bit warmer than the rest of Bordeaux. Properties along the Gironde Estuary were better off—just like in 1991. This led to varying yield losses, which were drastic in certain areas, setting the stage for uneven ripening.

**May and June:** Some localized frosts were recorded even in early May, which was gloomy, cool, and wet. Vine growth slowed down. Summer weather finally set in from early June, and flowering unfolded in favorable conditions, a week later than the 20-year average. The last half of June saw storms and abundant



*Last night in Bordeaux on the 2021 trip. Many laughs while the summer storm thundered all around us.*

rainfall—even some hail! We were lucky on our June tasting trip (10th–19th) as the weather was fine throughout except the last night at Sources de Caudalie where it absolutely poured buckets along with thunder and lightning. We heard it rained a lot from then until late August when we returned to France for a wine tour.

**Summer:** Rain continued throughout July, a month that was grey and cool overall. The third prerequisite above was not happening, and therefore there wasn't vine stress, and mildew attacks, which first appeared in June, increased at an alarming rate. Throw in some brown rot, and the crop size was drastically reduced in many regions. Unfortunately, Veraison (color change) occurred in mid-August as the vines were still growing. Another blow to the third prerequisite above. Luckily, the weather in late summer was much better and more conducive to ripening.

## Harvest

The red wine harvest started much later than in previous years. It was underway in most estates by late September, under ominous skies. The year produced large berries with high malic acid and low sugar levels. The saving grace was the Indian summer and sunny skies in October. The Cabernet grapes were picked in favorable conditions. The grapes for the outstanding dry whites were picked in September—the wines are fantastic. That longer growing season seemed to help a lot—superb acidity with fine aromatics. The sweet wines from Sauternes were adversely affected by the 2021 frost and hail, and there is a very small stickie crop in 2021. Fortunately the few that we tasted were quite good.

## The Wines: Right Bank

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

### St-Emilion

The Merlot suffered quite a bit in 2021 Right Bank wines, while the Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon did better. We tasted some very good wines from Pomerol and St-Emilion—and some not-so-good wines. Some properties produced 20% less than their 2020. Notes are Clyde's unless labeled as GN, which is Gary Norton.

**Haut-Brisson \$24.99** Big frost problem here. They lost over 65% of crop. Only 10000 bottles made. Deep black color and licorice aromas mixed with clovelike spices. Very spicy on the palate. Quite delicious. Mid-weight on the palate.

**Tour Saint Christophe \$27.99** Deep blueish-black color. More closed up on the nose. Almost normal sized crop, not affected by the mildew much. Small berries made for a shorter crop. High acid and tannin here. Needs to settle down. Big wine.

**Bellefont-Belcier \$37.99** They are proud of this wine for 2021. Very sweet entry after red fruit aromas. The 5% Cab Sauv shows strongly here. 60% Merlot. Chunky wine with fine acidity.

**Carillon de Angéus \$99.99** They call it the “unexpected” vintage

## Conclusion and the Marketplace

After the so-called trilogy of great, ripe Bordeaux red vintages (2018–2019–2020), 2021 is clearly cut from a different cloth. From warm and full-sun wines, we go to a set of wines that remind us of the “good old days”—when Bordeaux's vintages were less generous with their ripe fruit, mid-palate richness, low acid, and high-alcohol levels. The 2021s take us back to vintages like 1981, 1999, 2001, or 2004—all classic years in Bordeaux—or, per young Jean-Guillaume Prats, useful vintages. Be mindful that we did taste quite a few lovely wines from all regions in Bordeaux, and we mention them in the following pages. Some of these will do well in your cellar. Tasting a few delightful 2001s this past year, I found the wines to be pure Bordeaux and so gratifying. I wonder how some of these better 2021s will be in 2042? I may never know as I would be 97 then! So, to the young collectors out there, please put a few bottles away, and remember me in 2042!

How come we always finish the reports with the the money aspect of the vintage? The 2021s should be priced below the three famous previous vintages if they are to be considered worthy of buying on futures. Ninety percent of the 2021s have released their prices already. Most properties kept their 2021 price about the same as the 2020. Here in the U.S., with the strong dollar, we are seeing the wines to be 10–15% below the 2020s.

Bravo to the properties who priced their 2021 wines lower than their 2020—thank you Leoville-Barton, Leoville-Las-Cases, Montrose, etc. My advice is to pick and choose some of these 2021s, and put them down in your cellar. And let me know ten years from now—were they priceworthy?

at Angelus as it did not look good for them before late August. Lots of frost and some mildew problems. Carrillon lost 60% of its production. The final blend is 80% Merlot and 20% Cab Franc. Red fruits here on the nose and palate. Rather closed up early in the morning.

**Angéus \$339.99** The first time in Angelus history that they have 60% Cab Franc in the blend—that was how much better the Cab Franc grapes were vs. the Merlot. Tons of red berry fruit in the nose—good mid-palate but tannic at the back end. An ager, I think. Too soon to taste.

**Ausone \$679.99** Not tasted.

**Canon \$119.99** A star of the past 10 years, Canon does not disappoint with their 2021. No frost problems and normal production of 40 hectoliters per hectare. 70% Merlot and 30% Cab Franc. Blackberry and spice aromas. Sweet palate entry and good mid-palate fruit. Full bodied, dense, high-acid, fresh style. A bit closed at the back end. Old-school Canon like the delightful 1983. Canon produced a lovely Grand Vin that's marked by its supple entry, flavors of black



Bike at Château Canon.



and red fruits, and a mid-palate richness that was not a frequent occurrence in '21. With a touch of air the aromatics soar from the glass, as do supplemental notes of dark florals and white pepper. It's a rich wine but not imposingly so. The Canon 2021 is a brilliant wine that will be a thrill to follow for years to come. GN

**Pierre \$19.99** Lots of ripe, blackberry fruit. Nice mid-palate and back palate.

**Laroque \$28.99** 99% Merlot. Good richness on palate. Blackberries. Buy this one as a fine value.

**La Gaffelière \$64.99** 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc. Fabulous wine. In 2021, the Ausone-adjacent La Gaffelière extends its hot streak. They have crafted a wine that will compete with the top St-Emilions at a comparative bargain. Offering intense aromas of red raspberries and Bing cherries that continue into an elegant palate with more red fruits, berries, and a dry, mineral-driven finale. The 2021 showcases the unrivaled terroir of this fan-favorite estate. GN

**Grand Mayne \$39.99** Sweet wine, very good. Easy to drink.

**Fleur Cardinale \$39.99** 75% Merlot. Good texture on palate. A very nice wine.

**Larcis Ducasse \$74.99** 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Better at Joanne tasting than at the property. Good entry, but a bit tough on the back end.

**Pavie-Macquin \$79.99** The 2021 Pavie-Macquin is a stellar wine in the making. Dark fruits and florals interplay with complex notes of cedar and mesquite to create a wine that is endowed with incredible energy and balance. In an unpredictable year for St-Emilion, Pavie-Macquin is an undeniable success that will all but assuredly be a top-value play for consumers at large. GN

**Canon-la-Gaffelière \$69.99** 35% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. Only 30 hectoliters per hectare. Closed up on the nose, but forward on the palate. Good mid-palate sweetness.

**Clos de L'Oratoire \$32.99** 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. Ripe red berry aromas with some pepper on the nose and palate. Fine, fruity finish.

**Valandraud \$129.99** and **Sansonnet \$33.99** Somehow we missed tasting these wines on our trip.

**Belair Monange (\$Inquire)** 99% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. Red fruit aromas on a 99% Merlot. Very lush and sweet palate entry—big body, big wine.

**Clos Fourtet \$99.99** Did not taste it somehow.

**Figeac \$214.99** The 2021 Figeac is a regal effort and easily stands among the wines of the vintage. It's an outlier in the Right Bank due to its Médoc makeup, and is anchored by 40% Cabernet Sauvignon in '21, but it's an undeniable accomplishment by any measure. It brims with red and dark currants, graphite, and red floral inflections that demand attention. Medium-to-full bodied, long yet concise. The latest showing is further evidence that Figeac is as rewarding and remarkable as any château on either side of the Gironde. GN



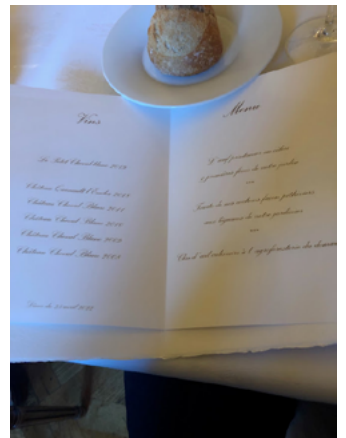
**Pavie \$299.99** Black color. Closed at first, but then everything hits you: tons of acid, fruit, and tannin. 52% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon. Needs long time to evolve.

**Quinault l'Enclos** They lost 50% here: half from frost and half from mildew. Reserved in the nose, but sweet, black fruit flavors and tannic on the finish. 59% Merlot, 23% Cab Franc, 18% Cab Sauvignon. A lot of red fruits at the back end. We will sell this wine when it is in stock.

**Le Petit Cheval \$179.99** 40% Cabernets, 60% Merlot. No new oak here. Closed up nose but fine red fruit flavors. Solid wine.

**Cheval Blanc \$529.99** 52% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot. The high Cabernet percentage harkens back to the old days of this fine estate. The 2021 was built on and with tannins (as per Pierre Olivier, winemaker). Ripe, red fruit aromas with lots of clove-like spice on the nose. Red fruit on the middle palate. Sweet back end. Top quality.

We had a wonderful dinner at Cheval Blanc with the the winemaker and managing director. We tasted 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and the absolutely delicious 2001 vintages. Of course the 2009 and 2010



*A highlight of the trip: dinner at Chateau Cheval Blanc*



*Hélène Garcin-Lévêque makes the magic happen at Barde-Haut and Poesia, perennial K&L favorites.*

were fabulous, but the 2011 and 2001 were superb also. The folks at Cheval think their 2021 is much in the style of these two vintages—especially the 2001. If 2021 turns out as well as 2001, we have a winner this vintage. CB

This is the wine of the Right Bank in 2021 and an exercise in controlled elegance. While strict and likely requiring a decade to shed its edges, this is a Cheval Blanc for Bordeaux purists. It offers red and black fruits, violets, dark currants, bay leaf, and cedar, with perfectly ripe yet very present tannins. Built like a skyscraper, this is a Cheval Blanc that has a half-century's worth of positive development ahead of it. Very possibly more. GN

**Beausejour-Becot \$59.99** 85% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Sauvignon. Solid wine. Depends on the price.



**Tropelong Mondot \$94.99**  
Endowed with striking aromatics filled with fresh violets, crushed raspberries, red currants, and licorice, the 2021 Tropelong Mondot is a brilliant wine in the making. It's soft yet structured, medium-to-full bodied, and profoundly elegant. The 2021 is built for a lengthy evolution in bottle and is

another example of the estate's continued upward trajectory. GN

**Barde-Haut \$31.99** An 80/20 blend of Merlot and Cab Franc, the 2021 Barde-Haut is a polished yet refined wine that displays concentrated notes of ripe blackberries, dark fruits, brown spices, dark chocolate, and violets. Hélène Garcin-Lévêque and company have done it once again and produced an absolute gem that will pay dividends to value-minded consumers. GN

**Poesia \$29.99** A delightful wine. Very expressive on the nose with lots of blueberry aromas. 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc. Round tannins at the back end. This is a deal.

## Pomerol

**La Patache** Very effusive nose of blackberries. Black fruit aromas and flavor. A very good effort—will be soft and easy to drink. Will sell on arrival.

**Enclos Tourmaline \$129.99** Only 2000 bottles produced, as they lost 66% of their crop—three plots all next to top properties like Petrus, Eglise Clinet, and Trotanoy. Huge wine and very closed up on nose. Red fruit flavors masked by some serious tannins.

**Hosanna \$139.99** Wow! Violets on the nose and a bit of a flashy style—modern, I would say, with plenty of toasty oak. Wine goes right through to a long, lingering palate impression. Very good. 75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc.

**Bourgneuf \$64.99** 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc. Blueberry and blackberry aromas that follow to the palate. Good middle palate fruit flavors. A bit dry at the back—decent value.

**La Conseillante \$209.99**

Unquestionably among the top Pomerols for the year and a paradigm for the château, the 2021 La Conseillante is a striking wine however you look at it. Seamless and flashy while keeping perfect balance, the wine shows delicate notes of wild strawberries, red florals, and kirsch liqueur. It's perfectly ripe, medium-bodied, and brilliantly encapsulates the "Burgundian" style of Pomerol that defines the estate. Bon vin! GN



*Key Accounts Manager Gary Norton is a huge fan of La Conseillante's 2021.*

**l'Evangile \$239.99** The 2021

l'Evangile is a masterclass in tannin management. Round and supple while displaying understated length and elegance, the latest edition from the Rothschild's Right Bank estate is one to target for the campaign. It shows beautiful notes of purple fruits, pipe tobacco, and gravelly undertones on the long and persistent finish. The tannins are omnipresent, but prolifically integrated even at this early stage. Bravo. GN

**Vieux Château Certan \$299.99** Unfortunately, we did not taste.

**La Fleur Petrus \$239.99** 95% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Lots of blackberry jam aromas and flavors. Well-balanced with gobs of ripe fruit on mid-palate. They did well this year.

**Trotanoy** Top quality with gobs of black licorice and spice aromas. Great texture on the palate and a sweet fruit finish. One of the best of the vintage. We will sell on arrival.

**Clos l'Eglise \$74.99** Blackish color, this 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc blend is fine on the palate. It will need time to evolve.

**Clinet \$89.99** Unfortunately we missed tasting this beauty.

**Le Bon Pasteur \$56.99** 80% Merlot, 20% Cab Franc. Made in a modern style but well balanced.



## Pessac-Léognan: The Whites Shine Bright in 2021

By Clyde Beffa Jr. and Jacques Moreira

**Clyde's impressions:** Here again there were some very fine wines and some not-so-fine wines. The best have an expressive minerality on the nose and palate.



**Jacques' impressions:** Challenging. Useful. Classic. There are as many words being used to describe this vintage as there are writers, négociant, retail, and château owners. We're all anxious to neatly classify and label the vintage, to feature it so to better present and ultimately trade it. Certainly, it was a challenging year to produce "wines of the century"—frost and mildew reared their ugly heads in 2021. But let's take a step back from

this simplistic view, and look a little deeper.

One important feature of this appellation is its proximity to the city of Bordeaux—with parts of it indeed inside its metropolitan area—and its microclimates. Even though, as a whole, the region was terribly affected by frost and mildew, the estates closer to the city, with slightly warmer terroirs, suffered less. Merlot did not stand a chance elsewhere, and most of what could be harvested was never used in the Grand Vins, but the Cabernets (both Sauvignon and Franc) excelled in a sunny mid-October harvest, which went on much later than usual. That is intrinsically Bordeaux: it is not a monocépage wine, it is blended; being so, more of the excellent Cabernets were used in the final assemblages. Neither a bad nor a good fact, per se, just an advantage of Bordeaux and a peek at the style of the wines.

The cool, long growing season overall contributed to the lower-than-usual alcohol levels. By "usual," I mean what we've come to expect in the last 25 years or so, versus the historically average 12.5%. I particularly enjoy wines that are less heady and heavy, as I find them more agreeable for pairing with food. You will find several wines with this more traditional, moderate level of alcohol throughout the region in this vintage.

### Pessac-Léognan: Reds

**de Chantegrive, Graves** 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Black licorice on nose and blackberry flavors. Will sell when in stock. CB

**Clos Marsalette** \$18.99 Very perfumy aromas of cherry, blackberry, and earth. Mineral flavors. I like it. CB

**Les Carmes Haut-Brion** \$109.99 We missed tasting this property. CB

**Latour-Martillac** \$29.99 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot. It will be raised in 40% new barriques. Showing tremendous complexity at its young age—a good sign of things to come. From its lifted aromatics to its fruity palate, with an intriguing note of blood oranges and caressing tannins, it is well balanced throughout. JM

**Malartic-Lagravière** \$39.99 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. At Joanne tasting: Nice and easy on palate. At the property: elegant red berry aromas with super-spicy palate impression. CB

A rigorous sorting of only the healthiest of the grapes were used for vinification, and it shows on the wine. It is elegant all through, with lifted aromatics and a rich yet balanced palate with plenty of creamy cocoa and spices. JM

**Smith Haut Lafitte** \$119.99 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, plus a bit of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Very spicy on the nose and palate, with notes of cloves, tobacco leaf, liquorice. Tons of upfront fruit with some tannins at the back end. Round tannins. Mid-term ager. CB

**La Mission Haut-Brion** \$295.00 50% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc. Full upfront black fruit, aromas that follow to the palate. Superb mid-palate blackberry and cassis flavors. Long finish with some tannin evident at the back end. CB

**Haut-Brion** \$549.99 One of the best wines of the vintage in my opinion. Regal wine that has so much to offer, but it will need time. Very mineral on the palate with perfect balance, then very long on the palate. Worth a few bottles in your cellar. Luckily there were normal yields at Haut-Brion and La Mission. CB

**Pape Clément** \$79.99 At Joanne tasting: full-blown on palate. At the property: sweet palate entry after a fine black fruit aroma. Very good length on the palate. Quite nice. CB

**Haut-Bailly** \$124.99 60% of the production was lost due to frost, coulure, and millerandage. With the remaining 40%, a lot of hard work in the vineyards, and their new and fabulous underground cellars, this property was able to make exceptional wines—as usual. A clear example of why not to paint this vintage with a broad brush. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc. A sip of this puts you in cocoa/mocha paradise, with rich spices and a tremendous depth of fruit. I love its finesse and the mystery of what it will become, for this is a wine we will be talking about for many years to come. JM

**Haut-Bailly II** Formally known as La Parde de Haut-Bailly. 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. Precise, and its primary aromatics are very refined. A complex palate with a mellow note of strawberry, and kirsch. Will sell on arrival. JM

**Domaine de Chevalier** \$69.99 No Merlot in the blend, just like in 1985 and 1986. Fine, sweet, palate entry—very earthy on the palate. Opens up after airing. CB



*Talk about longevity!  
Haut-Bailly's Veronique  
Sanders and Clyde shared a  
bottle from the 1928 vintage!*



*Domaine de Chevalier's  
Olivier Bernard and his  
vineyard dog.*

This domaine, surrounded by a forest, is in the process of transitioning to organic farming. The visit made a strong impression on me. "The horses plow with the help of the birds. If the birds come to pick the worms in the morning, that tells me that place is full of life. If the birds do not come, it shows there is no life, and I must work on it. C'est ça le terroir!" said Remy Edange. Unsurprisingly, Merlot was very affected by frost and mildew, and very little was used in its assemblage, but the Cabernet excelled in

its gravelly soil. 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot - Picked after October 15. Dark, inky color, rich and profound, tremendous depth of fruit and complexity. The embodiment of finesse. JM

**Esprit de Chevalier** 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot. As second wines go, the Esprit de Chevalier was by far one of my favorites of the vintage—from its dark purple color, dusty gravel nose, and black pepper, to its blue fruit, and sweet tannins. It is just remarkable. Certainly, a wine to seek out for any wine lover. Will sell on arrival. JM

**Lespault-Martillac** 50% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot. This is an all-around seamless wine with an elegant, dusty, and gravelly nose. It displays enticing notes of sweet plums and full, warm baking spices. All these flavors are perfectly framed by ripe tannins. Will sell when in stock. JM

## Pessac-Léognan: Whites

**Clyde's impressions:** No problem with 2021 whites as far as quality goes—but the frosts and mildew wreaked havoc with the quantities.

**Jacques's impressions:** The white wines are the stars of the appellation in 2021. The cool growing season allowed the grapes to maintain their freshness (which translates to acidity) and aromatics, all crucial factors in quality white wines. The year 2017, which was excellent for whites, has been mentioned as a comparison to those of 2021.

**Clos Marsalette** \$17.99 What a great value here. I loved this wine, but production was quite low. 60% Sauvignon Blanc, 40% Sémillon. Ripe melon and citrus notes on the nose and palate. CB

**Carbonnieux** \$34.99 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon. Lacking in middle today. Nice up front and in the finish. This wine should turn out well. CB

**Latour-Martillac** \$34.99 60% Sauvignon Blanc, 40% Sémillon. Good perfume and mouthfeel. CB

**Malartic-Lagravière** \$59.99 Rich and round. Very expressive. CB 89% Sauvignon Blanc, 11% Sémillon. The assemblage has a bit less Sémillon due to frost, and that did not affect at all the quality of this wine, if maybe the style. Enticing aromatics with notes of flint and grapefruit. The palate is rich, with pineapple and a touch of cloves.

Great acid tension, that balances its fruit very well. JM

**Smith Haut Lafitte** \$149.99 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon, and 5% Sauvignon Gris. Very aromatic with lots of lemony aromas mixed with white flowers. Full middle palate with fine balance. Will age well. CB



*Lunch at Smith-Haut-Lafitte with owners Florence and Daniel  
Cathiard.*

**Domaine de Chevalier** \$99.99 Toasty aromas with some cumin and curry notes underneath. Fabulous balance, and a long, lingering finish. Bravo! Maybe it is so good because they listen to the birds to determine when they pick—which is usually 2 hours after sunrise. CB

75% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Sémillon. Hand-picked in small crates within the 1st hour of sunrise to maintain its fresh aromatics and the lowest oxidation possible. Fascinating notes of ripe nectarines, citrus, and even an exotic note of cumin. Outstanding wine. JM

**Esprit de Chevalier** 5% Sauvignon Blanc, 35% Sémillon A bit subdued right now in terms of aromatics, but it does offer an unctuous yet refreshing palate with notes citrus, apricots, and white flowers. Perfectly balanced by its acidity. Will sell on arrival. JM

**Pape Clément** \$129.99 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 26% Sémillon, 4% other. Ripe and balanced with lots of earthy undertones. Wonderful balance with great acidity. Not overdone—very fine indeed. CB

**Lespault-Martillac** 65% Sauvignon Blanc, 35% Sémillon. Exotic tropical fruit aromatics (Star fruit), Full of spices and honeyed ripe peach. A delicious wine. Will sell when in stock. JM



*Rooftops and a beautiful spring sky in St-Emilion.*



## Saving Grace: 2021 Margaux

By Ryan Moses



Many times on our Bordeaux trips, there comes a moment that really strikes the same chord for everybody. Sometimes it is an enlightening wine, other times it is a tidbit of information that gives us new perspective. When tasting the 2021s, the wines of Margaux lit that spark, with everybody coming to the consensus that they exhibited some of the best characteristics of the vintage. Typicité is a big thread for 2021s from

Margaux—pure floral aromatics, graceful fruit, and toned minerality. One sip will leave few doubts as to where the wines are from. For some this might be a surprise, as Merlot often suffered in 2021, and Margaux can be relatively Merlot-heavy (for the Left Bank, at least). But with some exacting winemaking and Cabernet proportions pushed to the max at many estates, the results ended up being very compelling. With low alcohols (in the 12.8% to 13.3% range for most) but a measure of poise and definition, the best will be fascinating counterpoints to the previous three vintages, but not for a lack of character or sense of place.

Leading the way is a delightful duo from the region's First Growth—the scintillating **Château Margaux** \$559.99 and the brilliant **Pavillon Blanc** \$319.99. The Grand Vin displayed an aromatic depth that was expressive and beguiling, with seamless, pure, and regal layers of black fruit surrounding incredibly fine tannin. The Pavillon Blanc shows how great the whites can be in 2021 and is simply stunning. Pure luxury, it is balanced and weightlessly textured, a wine that keeps you coming back for one nuance after another. Both are potential wines of the vintage.

**Palmer** \$319.99 is a deep and resplendent Margaux, a wine full of character that shows how Palmer seems to be able to make the most of any given vintage. It has a density and mid-palate that define its quality, with ripe layered fruit that carries through a long, lingering finish. **Alter Ego de Palmer** \$74.99 also hits the mark but will be scarce—they lost 9ha of Merlot that usually goes into the blend. It is one of the better second wines from anywhere in 2021, and worth keeping an eye on.

Other highlights include a set of wines that seem to be able to do no



*The storied Château Margaux.*

wrong these days, going from one strength to another. **Rauzan-Ségla** \$79.99 is focused and pure, combining floral aromas with black fruits and spice, showing good intensity and depth. Richness and a strong mid-palate presence reflect a composed wine that's cool and classic. **d'Issan** \$54.99 is going to find a lot of admirers, as it is classic Margaux through and through. A high proportion of Cabernet (65%) results in a profile of violets, cocoa, and graphite aromas, leading to a cool, composed, seamless palate that has a core of juicy blackberry and dark cherry. **Brane-Cantenac** \$64.99 rounds out a trio of wines that have defined collectible value in modern Margaux, and each delivers a striking elegance along with remarkably fine tannins in 2021. This is another compelling chapter in the modern era of a fan-favorite estate.

For those looking for great value, you might not be surprised by the following selections—but these estates have produced another set of fine examples. **Malescot-St-Exupéry** \$49.99 is as easy to adore as always. Proportioned and balanced, but with a good depth of richness, it is a wine that marries complexity and accessibility in this vintage. And a report on Margaux wouldn't be complete without checking in on **Labégorce** \$29.99 and **Marquis d'Alesme** \$39.99. Labégorce is endlessly charming in 2021. Juicy with sweet cherry, blood orange, and a slight spiciness, it has a wonderful silky texture that builds on the palate with fine grain tannins. Marquis d'Alesme shows a bit more structure and richness. With substance to spare, it will be fascinating to taste this again out of bottle. But then again, the same could be said for all of these Margaux gems, some of the true winners from 2021.



*Marjolaine and Delphine with Clyde at Marquis d'Alesme.*



## Clyde's Take on Margaux

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

A huge Bordeaux region that is hard to figure in 2021. Malescot is a star and of course Palmer and Margaux. I really think this region did very well overall in 2021.

**Siran \$28.99** Quite elegant on nose and soft sweet—very good wine. Value for sure.

**Labégorce \$29.99** Marjolaine and Delphine are doing great things at this property and Marquis d'Alesme (below). 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Merlot. Some fresh toasty bread aromas with violets underneath. A touch of smoke is intriguing. Wonderful red berry flavors on the palate. Sweet middle. They lost 25% of crop as the Merlot was frosted.

**Marquis d'Alesme \$39.99** 60% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot, 2% Cabernet Franc. This property is doing well these past few years. Only 12.7% alc. Red fruit and cassis aromas. Soft, elegant palate entry. Not extracted, but pure and fresh.

**Prieuré-Lichine \$34.99** 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% other. Well made: good fruit.

**Cantenac Brown \$44.99** 65% Cabernet Sauvignon. Quite nice on palate—sweet and lovely throughout.

**Malescot-St-Exupéry \$49.99** 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot. Super wine. One of my favorites of the vintage. Quite sweet on nose and palate, with notes of red roses and cherries. Soft, sexy, and sweet.

**Giscours \$54.99** Very solid wine, finely balanced.

**Brane-Cantenac \$64.99** 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% other. Very nice aromas of cherries and violets. Fine mid-palate and fruit at back end.

**Kirwan \$41.99** We missed tasting this wine this year.

**d'Issan \$54.99** 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. 38 hectoliters per hectare. 10% more Cab in the blend this year than normal. Lots of pepper and spice on the nose and palate. Racy wine—cassis fruit with red current undertones. Sweet, long finish.

**Rauzan-Ségla \$79.99** 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot. At Joanne: Big wine and long on palate. At the property: more Cabernet than usual here. 38 hectoliters per hectare. Blackish color and perfumy nose. Though it has a lot of Cabernet, black fruits come out in the nose. Very round tannins with good middle fruit flavors. Very good.

**Alter Ego de Palmer \$74.99** 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot. So sweet and sexy—very elegant feminine style. Blackberries shine through the blackcurrant aromas. Very ripe tannins—lovely.

**Palmer \$319.99** Lost 9 hectoliters per hectare from frost. 56% Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot. The Cab really shines through this top wine of 2021 (certainly one of the top). Velvety Merlot combines with the depth of the Cabernet fruit to produce one of my favorites of 2021. Long and deep while being easy to drink. Excellent.

**Pavillon Blanc de Margaux \$319.99** (Sold out.) Only about 5 hectoliters per hectare was lost due to frost. No mildew problems at the property. The white is 13.5% alcohol with ripe, lemony aromas from the 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Fresh and ripe. Great balance. Fine indeed. Same analysis as their superb 2019.

**Pavillon Rouge de Margaux \$199.99** Very floral with violets on the nose. Fabulous long finish. Very limited ability.

**Château Margaux \$559.99** 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 5% others. Same quantity as 2020. Much richer than the Pavillon Rouge. This is a full-throttled beauty. Violets abound—one of the best of the vintage surely.

## St-Julien: Style, Power, and Elegance

By Ralph Sands



Ralph with Jean-Charles Cazès in front of the new cellars at Lynch-Bages.

The greatness of Bordeaux wine—its terrior, technology, and talents—were on full display during the *En Premier* tastings last week. The formula in 2021 included frost, mildew, heavy rain, a cool summer, a blessed “Indian Summer,” and for many, a late harvest. These were complicated issues indeed but are more the norm here than the exception—winemakers have been working with the Bordeaux climate since vines were first planted in the fourth century.

The wines of 2021 were impressive efforts for the conditions, but everyone was candid about the fact that this cool-climate year is not in the class of the recent good-to-great solar vintages of 2020, 2019, 2018, 2016, and 2015.

I found about 40 impressive wines that I would buy for K&L and

myself; and six to ten wines that may be considered outstanding in any vintage—if the price is right. This was not the case everywhere, and there were famous wines on both sides of the river that I left off my list. For our report I'm assigned St-Julien and consider myself lucky as it is a commune that, in 2021, made many very good wines that showed individual stylistic flare, power, and elegance. I'll start with the elegance of wines from the southern border and move north a total of 1.5 miles to the more powerful wines. Notes are mine unless you see a CB after them, in which case they are Clyde's.

If you do not own the wines of **Branaire-Ducru \$43.99**, you absolutely should. The estate has been on a lovely roll of quality in the past decade, making delicious wines. The 2021 is so clean and fresh! It has an effusive nose of roses and red-black fruits, and those flavors continue to float elegantly across the palate. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot.

Across the street at **Beychevelle \$79.99**, the new winemaking facility

is killing it. The wine shows layers of delicious, juicy blue-black fruits while retaining all the elegance, cool mouthfeel and beautiful balance. 52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot.



The intensity ramps up at **Ducru-Beaucaillou \$199.99**, where the wines are always focused, precise, and laced with pure fruit. The 2021 features layers of exotic black fruits that are sleek and long with hints of vanilla. Strong wine with great elegance! 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12.8% alcohol. It spent 18 months in 100% new oak. The second

wine, **Ducru-Beaucaillou “Croix de Beaucaillou” \$44.99**, was also delicious and as great a bridge to the first wine as it ages.

**Gloria \$36.99** as usual made a tasty wine with forward fruit (Clyde says hints of cola), a nice touch of middle richness, and rounded tannins. It's very good front to back and a fine value. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

Cherry cola aromas and cherries on the palate. Very well made. A value. CB

**Talbot \$54.99** also made a fine value in 2021. This is a good-tasting wine that features deep fruit with old-vine flavors and a touch of earth. Good-tasting, balanced, long, and made in a classic style. 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot.

**Léoville-Poyferre \$99.99** is, without question, the “silky smooth swinger” of the Léoville family, and what's not to like? Nothing! They make delicious wine here. The 2021 explodes out of the glass with ripe fruits of Bing and black cherries and ripe raspberries. The fruit is fine and sweet and there is good texture on the palate with rounded tannins. A polished wine here, no hard edges, which is very nice and an exception in this vintage.



I believe the above wines will give some good pleasure starting in the seven-to-ten years range, but the next three wines from the powerful north will require a longer wait.

While our good friend Anthony Barton may be gone, we cherish the memories of our lunches and dinners together. Those events always included a 10-to-15-year old Langoa-Barton and a 15-to-30-year old Léoville-Barton. The 2021s from the Barton family will surely fit right in this drinking window. The wines are stern, firm, fresh and loaded with concentrated bright fruits with sparkling acidity. **Langoa-Barton \$41.99** is 61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc. It's a red-fruit-driven wine with tart cherry and raspberry-red currant notes. **Léoville-Barton \$77.99** is composed of 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. It has a deep core of blue-black fruits, blueberry, blackberry, and plum. Both are classic Barton-style clarets!



*The cellars at Langoa-Barton.*

When Mouton was elevated to First Growth status in 1973, Baron Philippe de Rothschild famously said “First I am, Second I was, Mouton does not change”—this quote made history. The same thing can be said of Jean Hubert Delon's **Léoville-Las-Cases \$229.99**. After tasting this wine over 30 years, I can say that it never changes. If, in our lifetime there is another elevation to First Growth, this is without question the wine. The 2021 is 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, and 5% Cabernet Franc. It gives you a whiff of fresh strawberry and just-ripened red-black fruits. On the palate, it is Cabernet Sauvignon at its finest: sleek, powerful, and long finishing, with lots of minerality and racy acidity. At Las-Cases, they say it “cuts like a knife.” This will be a very long-aging wine from this cool vintage.

So where does 2021 fit vintage-wise? The 2001 vintage is a good comparison—it was overshadowed by 2000, but still delivering fine value and drinking enjoyment over the years. Three wines we recently tasted bore this out. 2001 Gazin, 2001 Lynch-Bages, and a stunning bottle of 2001 Lagrange. I think 2001 is better than 2006 and 2008, better than 2011, 2013, and the charming 2017s—in fact it is better than the also-late vintage of 2012. These 2012s, which are starting to open and show well at 12 years, may actually be the best comparison.

Will 2021 be blackjack or bust? Rest assured, just like, 1997, 2007, 2011, 2013, and 2017, the 2021 will eventually find its place in the world marketplace—whether now or later.

Cheers and Go Giants!

## *Three More to Consider from Clyde*

**Clos du Marquis \$57.99** Not a lot was produced, as the estate pulled out some of their old vineyards this year. Coca Cola aromas. Rich on the palate with some tannin at the back end. Ager.

**Lagrange \$44.99** 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. Toasty oak aromas. Lovers of rich California Cabs will love it.

**Saint-Pierre \$49.99** 75% Cabernet Sauvignon. Very fruity nose of red rose and cassis. Good, made in a modern style.



## Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Moulis

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

There are vast regions from north of St-Estèphe (Médoc) to south of the Margaux region. Some of the wines this year were very good; some not too good. We found some surprisingly good values in the north.

**Sociando-Mallet, Haut-Médoc \$29.99** 55% Merlot, 43% Cabernet Sauvignon. Black cherries on nose. Dry at back end, but good middle fruit on the palate. Ager and value.

**Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc \$26.99** 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 12% others. Fruity red berry aromas and flavor. Quite nice for the region. We will really miss Phillip Dambrine who brought Cantemerle back to its former glory. He retired and now is consulting.

**Mauvesin Barton, Moulis-en-Médoc \$16.99** Only 22 hectoliters per hectare were produced here. 52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 48% Merlot. A ripe, fruity value.

**Poujeaux, Moulis \$25.99** 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. Fruity red berry with some spice notes. Nice texture.

**Chasse-Spleen, Moulis-en-Médoc** 52% Cabernet Sauvignon and 39% Merlot. Fruity boysenberry aromas on the entry. Tannic back. Will sell on arrival.

**La Lagune, Haut-Médoc \$37.99** 60% Cabernet, 30% Merlot, 10% other. The wine shows some sweet red rose notes and fruit aromas on the entry.

**La Tour de By, Médoc** 75% Cabernet Sauvignon. Good value wine that will sell well on delivery. Plenty of sweet red berry flavors.

## Pauillac: Top-Notch Winemaking Makes the Most of the Vintage

By Trey Beffa



Pauillac turned out to be one of the more successful communes in 2021, one reason being all the work that was done in the vineyards and in the cellars. Pauillac has many illustrious properties, hence they have the resources to deal with all the issues that arose. Along with all the work that went into the vineyards, the winemakers were put to the test this vintage. Grapes came in uneven and a strict selection on the sorting table was

extremely important. Winemakers who tried to make a legendary, blockbuster wine from this vintage struggled. The grapes would simply not provide this. The majority of the properties from Pauillac seemed to understand this and worked within the limits of the vintage to make excellent wines. There were very few—if any—notable failures in 2021 from Pauillac. Many collectors of Bordeaux wines follow certain properties every vintage, and a large percentage of the most-followed properties happen to be in Pauillac, perhaps for this consistent display of winemaking expertise.

I am happy to report that the 2021 vintage is a vintage worth adding to your collection, especially following the powerful trio of vintages from 2018–2020. The advantage here in 2021 is that these are wines that will not need 20–30 years to develop. I would expect many of them to drink very well 10–15 years after release. During our week in Bordeaux, we heard “classic-style vintage” quite a bit. I think this holds true, in part because the wines have lower alcohols, especially when compared to the last several vintages.

**Lafite Rothschild \$600.00** One of the highlights of the vintage for me, the 2021 Lafite again goes back to that more “classic” style of winemaking. This is a balanced, fresh wine with a layered texture, nice richness in the mid-palate and fine, integrated tannins. Hints of cedar, lead pencil, and graphite come across on the palate. This seems to be more of a medium-term cellar pick that will show well young. The blend is 96% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Merlot, and 1% Petit Verdot.



**Ponet-Canet \$99.99** The 2021 Ponet-Canet shows a different fruit profile than other wines we tasted on this trip. It must have something to do with their strict biodynamic winemaking and farming process. Upfront, the wine was very ripe with a fresh, savory quality that I find unique in this region. The texture was soft and sweet with a nice balance of fruit and tannin. This vintage is a blend of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 6% Petit Verdot. Lovely wine.

**Mouton Rothschild \$559.99** A “classic” style Mouton. A bit closed at this point. This wine leans more towards an understated and elegant Mouton with lovely fruit and a velvety texture lingering in the background. Tannins are evident but not harsh. Should come together after some time in barrel. A blend of 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot, and 1% Cabernet Franc.

**Mouton Rothschild “Aile d’Argent” Bordeaux Blanc \$124.99** Another 2021 white winner! Decadent and fleshy fruit is richly textured but held up by a wonderful acidic backbone. Hints of melon, cream, and lime linger on the finish. Very tasty!

**Clerc Millon \$74.99** A bit closed and angular at this young stage. There is some complex fruit and spice that is underneath the toasty oak. Should develop as it ages in barrel.



Pichon-Baron.

**D'Armailhac** Hints of cedar and lead pencil shavings in the aromas and palate. Lots of fruit with sweet velvety texture and lots of minerality in the background. A balanced, pleasant wine. A blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Will sell on arrival.

**Lynch-Bages \$119.99** The 2021 Lynch-Bages shows lovely upfront fruit and spice. In the mouth the wine is fleshy and rich, with ripe fruit tannins that carry the wine through to the finish. Lots of polish with plenty of concentrated black fruits. The blend in 2021 is 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petit Verdot.



New cellar at Lynch-Bages.

**Haut-Batailley \$Inquire** A blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot, this is a great example of a wine made in that “classic style.” Restrained, earthy fruit, medium-bodied with a firm tannic backbone, this wine should continue to flesh out in the middle and be a nice pick for the vintage.

**Pichon-Lalande \$179.99** A blend of 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot, and 10% Cabernet Franc, which represents a very high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon for this property. Unfortunately, the other story in 2021 is that production is one-third of normal. Upfront this wine is toasty and perfumy with hints of blackberry, minerals, and savory fruit. The wine is a bit tight right now but should come together with some time in barrel. Tannins are firm but integrated with the rest of the wine. Good cellar pick!

**Pichon-Baron \$139.99** The 2021 Pichon Baron shows hints of cocoa powder and toasty oak in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is rich, deep, and concentrated. There is a nice core of fruit that is followed by firm muscular tannins. This wine should come together nicely with some time in barrel and be a good cellar pick for the vintage. Another wine with the a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon: 88%, with 12% Merlot.

## More Pauillac Notes from Clyde

**2021 Grand-Puy-Lacoste \$67.99** Very nice all the way through — wonderful red fruits.

**Echo de Lynch-Bages \$39.99** Lots of blackberry fruit flavors and aromas. 56% Merlot.

**Blanc de Lynch-Bages Bordeaux Blanc \$49.99** Wow—this is so delicious. The best ever? They have come a long way since they made the 1985. Lemon and white flower flavors, all perfectly balanced.

**Le Petit Mouton Rothschild \$229.99** Very sweet black raspberry aromas that follow to the palate.

**Duhart-Milon \$74.99** 81% Cabernet Sauvignon—high for the property. Round, sweet, elegant. Bravo! Superb.

**Réserve de la Comtesse de Lalande \$44.99** They lost 70% of their crop in 2021. Only 15 hectoliters per hectare. Very aromatic on the nose and sweet and lush on the palate. Well made.

**2016 Les Forts de Latour \$249.99** and **2014 Latour \$599.99** Lucky for them that they do not release en premier. They are releasing the surprisingly great 2014 Latour—a fine mid-term ager for them and released at a good price. Also the big, knock-you-over-the-head 2016 Les Forts de Latour. Put this baby in your cellar ten more years.

Both the Forts and Latour 2021 were top of their class. We just have to wait a few years to buy them. By the way, the 2017 Pauillac de Latour was delicious and coming out soon. A real drinker.





## St-Estéphe: When They're Good, They're Very Good

By Clyde and Trey Beffa

Again, another region with variable results for 2021. Some great wines were made next door to some not-very-good wines. Lots of Merlot in this region, which had difficulties during the season. Note that TB signifies Trey's notes.

**Cos d'Estournel \$199.99** A blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. The 2021 Cos shows more of a restrained style than in years past. It is crunchy, bright, and shows pleasant, sweet red fruits and minerals in the middle of the wine. It is, however, a bit tight at this stage of its life.



It's a well-made Cos that should be a good pick to cellar for some years upon release. TB

**Haut-Marbuzet** Spicy, oaky aromas. Round wine. Exotic. We will sell on arrival. CB

**Montrose \$149.99** Very expressive and aromatic, the 2021 Montrose shows lots of power and depth, yet still shows a surprisingly velvety and sweet texture in the mid-palate. Hints of graphite and minerals lie underneath a core of red cherry and blackberry fruit. The tannins are supple and integrated. This is a nice mid-term cellar pick for the vintage. Alcohol is around 13%. TB

**Calon-Ségur \$109.99** The red fruits shine up front with this wine, both in the nose and in the middle of the palate. It shows a velvety

texture and a balanced, fresh finish. Elegant and understated but very polished and well made. A very successful wine for the vintage. Under 13% alcohol, this wine is a blend of 81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Cabernet Franc, 7% Merlot, and 1% Petit Verdot. TB

**Tronquoy-Lalande** Fruity and perfumy aromas with hints of toast, blackberry, and red fruits comprise the core for a very pleasant, polished wine. A huge success in 2021. We will sell it on arrival. TB

**Lilian Ladouys** We will sell this on arrival. Black licorice aromas and flavor. Full and balanced. Fine. 50% Merlot. CB

**Meyney \$27.99** Straight-forward wine no rough edges. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 15% Petit Verdot. CB



Véronique Dausse,  
General Manager of  
Château Phélan Ségur

**Ormes de Pez \$26.99** Lots of blackberry and raspberry fruit on the nose and following to the palate. Good value. CB

**Les Pagodes de Cos \$42.99** 60% Merlot. Blueberry aromas and fruity, black fruits on the palate. A bit more reserved on the palate.

**Phélan-Ségur \$42.99** 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot, 5% other. Very fruity aromas and entry. Some tannins at back. These guys and gals are on a roll here. CB

## Sauternes: A Small Crop but a Mighty One

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



We only tasted a handful of stickies. It's a decent vintage for Sauternes, except there was almost no production in this region. Too many problems with weather during the growing season and during the harvest. We will sell most of the others when they arrive in the stores.

**Suduiraut \$84.99 750ml** Only 500 cases made for the world, but it is very good. Super botrytis, and the wine is perfectly balanced. Very rich and thick on the palate. Buy it!

**Clos Haut-Peyraguey** Exceptionally fine balance here. Quite lush on the palate. 60% Sauvignon Blanc and 40% Sémillon. We will sell it when it is released.

## Trey's Fab Five: St-Emilion

By Trey Beffa

**Angélus \$339.99** 60% Cabernet Franc and 40% Merlot. The Cabernet Franc really shines through in the aromas. Aromatic and perfumy nose with lots of red fruits in the mouth. Hints of earth and savory spicy fruit. A bit tight and focused with a medium-bodied mid-palate.

**Canon \$119.99** A blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc. Aromatic and fresh on the nose. Velvety texture, lots of juicy, fresh mid-palate fruit, long finish. Balanced and elegant.

**La Gaffelière \$64.99** Production was down 20% at this estate in 2021, which is unfortunate since they produced one of the top wines we tasted. Tons of crunchy red fruits—very bright. It has a wonderful finesse and polish that carries through to the finish. Should be very drinkable

early in its life. A blend of 42% Cabernet Franc and 58% Merlot.

**Figeac \$214.99** 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, and 31% Cabernet Franc. The 2021 Figeac is a beauty. Savory, aromatic, and medium-bodied. At quite a low alcohol (13%), the 2021 could be described as being made in a classic style. Very drinkable and fresh, this wine should be approachable upon release.

**Pavie-Macquin \$79.99** Very dark inky color, toasty aromas, with a fleshy rich texture. A bit extracted and intense, this wine shows more power than many we have tasted. Hints of coco powder and graphite linger in the background. 79% Merlot, 19% Cabernet Franc, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon.



## The Dining Report

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

One of the perks of our “grueling” treks through Bordeaux is that we get a few fine meals to help us along.

### Lunches

From the delicious hamburgers and fabulous cheese selection at Pontet-Canet’s burger truck to the ever-delightful and delicious meal in the kitchen of Daniel and Florence Cathiard of Smith Haut Lafite, we were given the strength we needed to continue our important assignment of tasting 2021 Bordeaux and bringing the news back to our customers. Let’s not forget the always fine lunch with H el ene Garcin-L ev eque at Barde-Haut, where we were able to taste ten different vintages of Barde Haut. There was the lunch at one of our favorite places, Marquis d’ Alesme with Marjolaine and Delphine, where we tasted the very delicious 1982 Labegorce. And there was the mind-blowing lunch with Bruno Borie at Ducru-Beaucaillou. It was off the charts! It started with Bruno asking me if I preferred to start with Salon Champagne or vintage Krug! A perfect lunch followed by bottles of the 1995 and 1982 Ducru—an unforgettable meal.

### Dinners

Starting with an eight course food extravaganza at Logis de La Cad ene, Hubert de Bouard’s restaurant in St-Emilion, and finishing with two spectacular dinners at Sources de Caudalie —one in the bistro and one

in the two-Michelin-starred restaurant, dinners were unbelievable each night. Not to mention the wines! A few of the wines we drank include 1957 La Gaffeli re, 1983 Pavi e, 1996 Margaux, and 1990 Latour. Monday’s dinner at Cheval Blanc with the winemaker was perhaps the most informative dinner ever in Bordeaux! Drinking bottles of 2001, 2009, 2010 Cheval Blanc among other vintages helped us through the meal. The gala dinner celebrating Lynch Bages new cellar was unbelievable—400 people with perfect food service and plenty of double magnums of classic Lynch vintages.

And two of our always-favorite dinner stops on our Bordeaux trips did not disappoint. At Mary Claude and Pierre Antoine Casteja’s lovely home, we had a wonderful meal with the likes of 1996 Margaux, 2009 Figeac, and 1989 Palmer—not to mention 1950 Angelus, which was Mary Claude and Pierre’s birth year! At Haut-Bailly with Veronique Sanders and her hubby Alexander Van Beek, we so much enjoyed the company and the wonderful food. The 1982 Giscours and 1978 Haut-Bailly were superb, while the 1928 Haut-Bailly was perfection in a bottle! Thank you to all our wonderful hosts!



### K&L REDWOOD CITY

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