

WINE News

Bordeaux Is in the Air, with Excellent Collectibles and Values for Claret Lovers



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Spring Has Sprung; Bordeaux Is Blooming

by Clyde Beffa Jr, Co-owner and Bordeaux Buyer



We are loaded with Bordeaux values with over \$1M more Bordeaux in inventory than last April.

I list our faves and some high-scoring wines on this page and pages 2 and 8. On pages 3 and 4, Ryan Moses discusses the two superb vintages of 2019 and 2020. He also gives us a glance at the great 2022 vintage, which we tasted on our recent trip for En Primeur. John Majeski lists his favorites on page 5,

while Alex Schroeder waxes poetic on a few goodies on page 6. Last, but not least, Jacques shares his thoughts on some special wines on page 7.

2019 Lilian Ladouys, St-Estèphe \$22.99, 2019 Lilian Ladouys, St-Estèphe (1.5L) \$47.99 93DC 93WE One of the best values from the great 2019 vintage. The Lorenzetti family has restored the property to its glory days of the 80s and 90s. Jane Anson of *Decanter*: "I would put this right up there with the best vintages from Lilian Ladouys... extremely silky, with such plump blackberry fruits that you could almost drink it straight away but there are tannins here, and the body of the wine closes down as it travels through the palate, suggesting it intends to get serious about aging potential."

2009 Potensac, Médoc \$48.99 92JS 92VN 92WE 91JD This wine is totally delicious now and will age well for 10 years. 2009 is my pick for best vintage of the 21st Century. Combine the power of wines of this property with the sweet, forward-fruit quality of the vintage, and you have a near-perfect match for under \$50. Jeb Dunnuck: "Drinking at point now, but with another decade of life ahead of it, the 2009 Château Potensac offers a classic, mature nose of red and black currants, cedary herbs, tobacco, and flowers. It shows the ripe, powerful style of the vintage yet has remarkable freshness, ripe, polished tannins, a kick of

minerality, and a great finish. Beautifully done, you'll be happy if you have bottles of this in the cellar."

2005 Labégorce, Margaux \$69.99 94WE Wow—what a great Margaux from a property that flies under the radar. We just received a shipment of this beauty, and it is showing extremely well. Pure Margaux in its silky, feminine style. Many 2005s now are still showing tannin on the finish, but this is full of ripe red berries, soft and elegant on the palate with a smooth, long finish. Round tannins—a perfect wine to drink at 18 years old. I will surely buy a case for the cellar and enjoy it over the next five years. Great terroir makes for great wines, and this property, located a stone's throw from Château Margaux, certainly has the terroir. Drank it with short ribs last night, and it was a perfect match. *Wine Enthusiast*: "This property has certainly joined the big league in Margaux."



2018 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan \$84.99, 2018 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (1.5L) \$189.99 99JS 96-98DC 97JD 97VN

97WE 96WS 95WA If you want great wines at reasonable prices look for this superb property. Olivier Bernard has been making the wines since 1984, and they are super cellar candidates. This 2018 is so sweet and elegant. James Suckling: "The intensity and perfumes on the nose are extremely impressive, offering pure blackberries and violets, as well as bark, wild-mushroom and raw-tile notes. It's full-bodied with creamy tannins that envelop the wine and a gorgeous, subtly complex center palate with all the flavors found on the nose. Endless finish. Love the finesse and length to this. Greatest ever. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 5% Petit Verdot."

2019 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac \$119.99 (Elsewhere \$155.00) 99JS 98DC 98JA 98WE We found a great parcel at a super great price. Pontet-Canet, since the 2009 vintage, has been our biggest seller from Bordeaux in terms of dollar amount. After a disastrous 2018 vintage (tiny production because of weather), Alfred Tesseron opened the 2019 campaign with his Pontet-Canet from a great Left Bank vintage. Georgina Hindle of *Decanter*: “Such gorgeous aromatics of freshly picked violets, cherries, and bramble fruits; pretty and quite delicate. The texture is smooth and succulent, mouth coating but full of soft tannins which have the most delicious black cherry, blackcurrant flesh and liquorice tinge to them—so satisfying. Extremely well balanced and well-integrated, this has restrained power.”

2015 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc \$21.99 93JS I have been following the wines of this property since 1971—the year I started collecting wines! In fact, the first two Bordeaux wines I bought and drank were 1959 and 1961 Lanessan—about \$4 each! Ryan Moses speaks highly of the wine, “The first vintage that Hubert de Bouard (of Angélus fame) consulted on, this is a turning point for one of the more historical estates in all of Bordeaux. It doesn't hurt that it is also a great vintage in the region. This isn't too far from the old-school charmer that many have adored from the estate over the years, but perhaps with a bit more refinement and polish. A good amount of cassis, licorice, and cedar line the aromas, while the palate is full of crisp red fruit, fine tannin, and hints of leather. Make no mistake—this is still a reserved and classic style of claret that tastes like Old World Bordeaux all the way. At this stage it is certainly ready to drink, but still has more evolution to go before it hits maturity. Either way, the 2015 Lanessan is in a great place.”

2016 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc \$21.99 93JS The only reason that Lanessan is not a Fourth or Fifth Growth is because the owners in 1855 did not submit samples to the committee that classified the Médoc. This property is very close to Branaire-Ducru and Beychevelle in St-Julien. Unfortunately, I have heard that the new owners may change the name or put the grapes from the property into another château! Such a shame. Here's what Ryan Moses thinks: “More deeply hued than the 2015 tasted before it, the 2016 Lanessan



The rolling hills of Barde-Haut from our Bordeaux team's recent trip to taste the 2022 futures.

showcases the character of this remarkable vintage through its fine tannins, compact structure, and depth of flavor. Although usually about half Cabernet, it seems to take more of a center stage in the 2016. Violets, black cherry, and a touch of vanilla (only one-third new oak) on the aromas, the palate has compact dark red fruit, a thread of mouthwatering acidity, and an impressive texture that carries to a long, flavorful finish. This is an impressive showing and a wonderful contrast to the cool and charming 2015, but it never feels heavy or extracted by any means. I think it is the seriousness of the vintage that shines through, as it shows much younger and a lot deeper in flavor. For the Bouard generation at Lanessan, this is going to be a point of comparison for a long time to come.”

2016 Pierre 1er, St-Émilion \$22.99 93JS An under-the-radar property for great value Right Bank wines. James Suckling: “Plenty of ripe-plum and walnut aromas with hints of chocolate and leather. Full body, juicy fruit, and soft, velvety tannins. Flavorful finish... enjoy it now or wait two or three years for it to soften. Better in 2023.”

2019 Ferrand, Pomerol \$29.99 92JS One of the first times we have carried this property—a great value in 2019. James Suckling: “Mulberries, cherries, plums, dark chocolate and sweet spices on the nose. Medium-bodied with fine tannins. Round and creamy with a bright core of fruit on the mid-palate and a silky texture.”

2018 Clos la Gaffelière, St-Émilion \$32.99 92-93JS, 2019 Clos la Gaffelière, St-Émilion \$29.99 93-94JS La Gaffelière is one of the hottest properties on the market since its monumental 2017 vintage. And these second wines of La Gaffelière are stunning. James Suckling says of the 2018: “This is a very solid red with plum, wet-earth and tobacco character. Medium to full body and firm, lightly chewy tannins. Savory finish.” And the 2019 Suckling notes: “A medium-bodied red, offering deep, pretty fruit with walnut, wet-earth, mushroom, and chocolate character. It's full-bodied with juicy fruit at the end. Beautiful depth to this.”

2019 Poesia, St-Émilion \$37.99 96VN 95JS 93JD 93VN Hélène and Patrice Lévêque have made great strides with their new property, much like they did with Barde-Haut in the early 2000s. James Suckling writes: “Dried flowers, mimosa, blackcurrants, peppercorns and burnt orange on the nose. It's medium-bodied with firm, tightly wound tannins and crisp acidity. Zesty, mineral character on the tight finish. Lightly smokey at the end.”

2019 Carbonnieux Blanc, Pessac \$39.99 94WE 93DC 93JA 93JS I love 2019 white Bordeaux much more than 2017, 2018, and 2020. And I love this property for its great acid balance and elegant style. James Suckling notes: “Dried lemon, beeswax, sage, pineapple, and guava on the nose. Medium-bodied with tangy acidity. Vibrant citrus and tropical fruit. Compact, creamy, and intense. 65% Sauvignon Blanc and 35% Sémillon.”

2016 Barde-Haut, St-Émilion \$44.99 96VN 95JD 94SJ We've been a fan of this property for a long time at K&L, and even though we've adored some of the past vintages on release (not to mention once they've had some age), it is even more exciting to see how the house style has evolved to a more detailed and nuanced take on these recent

vintages. Hélène and Patrice Lévêque have made some of the best value wines from Bordeaux in the past 20 years. We always have several vintages of Barde-Haut for sale. Right now we have eight vintages of this superb property in stock: 2001, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2019!!!

2015 Labégorce, Margaux \$49.99 95WE 94JD 94JS Ryan Moses: "Labégorce has gone from an old-school favorite to one of the most exciting producers in Margaux. Although they made their mark with the 2014, the 2015 left an indelible impression (and watch out for the 2016!). Deep dark red and black fruits show through on the opulent aromas, highlighted by a slight earthiness. The palate is massively structured and, while powerful red fruit flavors nearly make the wine imposing, it finishes with incredible grace, refinement, and a striking minerality. This is a serious Margaux at a 'satellite' price. It will be best in a few years and be enjoyable for the next 20."

2018 Phélan-Ségur, St-Estèphe \$54.99 95JD 95JS 94DC 94VN Under the guidance of our very good friend Véronique Dausse (Directrice Générale), Phélan-Ségur has risen to one of the top properties in St-Estèphe and is surely the best value!

Jeb Dunnuck: "The flagship 2018 Château Phélan Ségur is a beauty based on 57% Cabernet Sauvignon and 43% Merlot. This was a great vintage for the Médoc, and the 2018 reveals a dense purple hue to go with powerful notes of blackcurrants, iron, smoked tobacco, chocolate, and earth. Rich, full-bodied, and concentrated, it has

beautiful tannins, remarkable purity of fruit, and just does everything right. It has some up-front appeal today (no doubt due to the high Merlot content), yet it builds with time in the glass and shows more and more structure with air. It deserves five to six years of bottle age and will keep for 20-25. It's every bit as good as the 2016, if not better."

2015 Malartic-Lagravière Rouge, Pessac-Léognan \$64.99 96DC 96JS 96VN 96WE The vintage of 2015 shone brightly on the Pessac-Léognan and Margaux regions and on the Right Bank. This property was one of the stars of the vintage. The Bonnie family has brought Malartic to the top of the Pessac-Léognan region while keeping the prices so affordable. In fact, this property has been on a roll for the last 10 years, making great wines every year. We've sold thousands of bottles of this 2015 beauty and are happy to have more in stock. Very fruity nose with some blackcherry aromas. On the palate, the wine is very minerally with bright, nuanced fruit. Some toasty oak adds to the complexity. This will cellar well for at least 10 years. If you drink it now, please decant for an hour. A complete Bordeaux from the nose to the long finish.



Phélan-Ségur's Véronique Dausse and Clyde enjoying a bottle of the château's 1982 in San Francisco after this year's Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux tasting.

The 2019 and 2020 Vintages Finally Come Into Relief

by Ryan Moses, Key Accounts and Retail Analytics Manager



Ryan Moses on left with K&L co-owner Trey Beffa, in front of Château Margaux in 2023.

It is commonplace these days to talk about the most recent vintages to market in Bordeaux as a warm-weather trio: 2018, 2019, and 2020. But I think for all of 2018's charms, the latter two seem to be a bit of a step above, in broad terms. Sure, 2018 is a highly successful vintage for the region and the best wines of the vintage can be stunning and revelatory, but there is a clear consensus forming that it is a rung on the ladder that leads up to the 2019s and 2020s.

Instead, I am beginning to think of the 2019s and 2020s as a pair: the pandemic

vintages. They were both unique in their relative anonymity, as nobody traveled to Bordeaux to taste the 2019s En Primeur, while the actual heart of the pandemic was going on in 2020. This created a distance in the market from the consumer to the wines, which became less easy to identify and connect with than their predecessors.

But now we've had the chance to put the wines through the ringer, between multiple Union des Grands Crus tastings and in-bottle

samples. The shape of this duo is becoming clearer by the day. Put simply, the 2019s are more consistent across the board—they showcase a bit more purity and brightness, and carry a higher level of alcohol and accessibility. 2019 is also more of a Cab vintage, for those who are looking for Left Bank reference points. Though the 2019s aren't currently at the ridiculously low prices that we saw En Primeur, they still present value against many of their peers.

To frame these characteristics, let's look at some of the wines on offer. Perhaps **2019 Gloria, St-Julien (Pre-Arrival) (Elsewhere \$65) \$39.99**, **2019 Gloria, St-Julien (1.5L) (Pre-Arrival) \$84.99 96VN 95JA 95JD** is the quintessential example of all of the above. It is a sub-\$40 value (and sub-\$90 magnum) that's stunning in the scheme of Left Bank reds, drinks wonderfully already, and is a potential benchmark wine for the estate. We've long adored Gloria, but this is at another level—it encapsulates the kind of upside that is present at many different estates in 2019.

Just down the road, Léoville-Barton also crafted an impeccable 2019. It's a bit difficult to use any best-ever language with an estate that goes from one strength to another in any given year, but it is certainly tempting with **2019 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (Pre-Arrival) \$119.99 97JA 97RP 97JD** A recent upgrade from Neal Martin of Vinous has it as the most successful Léoville of the



vintage, joining our team in putting it in the all-timer category for the property. For a classified growth buy that will age beautifully in any cool cellar, there are few wines that have this kind of pedigree and upside for the price.

Pauillac also showed across-the-board brilliance in 2019, exemplified by a simply stunning **2019 Grand-Puy-Lacoste, Pauillac** \$79.99 97VN 96DC 96JS 96RP. This wine combines its classicism with pinpoint purity and gains nuance with every sip. I've been a fan of the property for a while now, but this feels like another level. It simply screams terroir that comes from nowhere else and has all the benchmarks that you'd expect for a long-lived wine that will age gracefully for decades. I can't wait to revisit this down the road.

The 2020s, on the other hand, are wines of density and structure, with slightly lower alcohol levels and more defined tannins. They might require a bit more time. Overall, the wines are a bit less consistent across the board, which might have to do with the nature of the wines being a bit more brooding in their youth. That said, the heights of the vintage are often as good or even above some of their 2019 peers. It is also a more Merlot-friendly year, meaning the Right Bank often steals the show. But don't sleep on Pessac-Léognan either.



A bucolic morning among the vines at Troplong Mondot.

Of the wines that might be a bit under the radar but deserve any serious collector's attention, **2020 Troplong Mondot, St-Émilion (Pre-Arrival)** \$109.99 100DC 98+RP 98VN 98WE is perhaps at the top of the list. This is a property that has undergone a renaissance in the past decade—long gone are the hyper extracted and dense

renditions from 2009 and 2010 (that are delicious, but certainly of an era). Instead, this treasured terroir shines bright with a nuanced, complex, and seamless St-Émilion that *Wine Advocate's* William Kelley calls "one of the Right Bank's finest wines in this vintage." In a region that contains one \$300+ cult classic after another, the going rate for 2020 Troplong Mondot is remarkable and will afford even a casual collector a chance to experience the new regime at the estate.

For collectible value, it might not get any better than **2020 Bellefont-Belcier, St-Émilion (Pre-Arrival)** \$47.99 98JD 97JS. This is a wine that we've been fascinated by ever since it was taken over by the team that crafts the high-upside values at Tour Saint-Christophe and Haut-Brisson. The property itself is one that we have long appreciated for its charm and the way it takes advantage of its prime locale near Pavie and the aforementioned Troplong Mondot. As expected, when we tasted it last year, the 2020 Bellefont-Belcier seems to be a crown jewel of the estate's new era—all the more

impressive with its sub-\$50 price and press that's usually aligned with wines at many multiples of this rate.

While the Right Bank might try to steal the show, **2020 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (Pre-Arrival)** \$72.99 98+JD 96DC 96VN makes a strong case for Pessac-Léognan. I was floored by this when tasting at UGC and was able to confirm my enthusiasm with a recent bottle that performed at such a high level. At its best (and I hold the 2020 in that esteem) Domaine de Chevalier shows a remarkable textural refinement, a depth of fruit, and a gravelly minerality. It perfectly balances the inimitable terroir with an accessibility and structure that, as Jeb Dunnuck says, "is pure, classic, regal Pessac-Léognan... as good as anything in the vintage."

That mantle for Pessac-of-the-Vintage might also be challenged by the anniversary bottling of **2020 Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (Pre-Arrival)** \$169.99 100JD 99-100JS 98-100RP 98DC that is a triumph for the Cathiards and director Fabien Teitgen. A wine that will easily be in the conversation with the iconic 2009 and 2010 vintages, it is a new standard-bearer for the decorated château. Layered, composed, and at times opulent, it is a wine built on depth and structure, one that provides one nuance after another at this early stage. It will need a bit of time to evolve but will do so with ease over the decades to come. This is a wine that will find fans of the best of Cab blends from anywhere on the globe. With a special black and gold label, it is also destined to be a showcase wine anytime corks are popped.



Last, but certainly not least, is a triple 100-point **2020 Canon, St-Émilion (1.5L) (Pre-Arrival)** \$399.99 100JA 100WA 100VN 99DC featured here in large format. Canon has gone through a revolution in the past decade and a half, with many looking at the 2015 as a benchmark wine. This 2020 may have upped the game from even those incredible heights, but either way, both (along with perhaps the 2016) are landmark wines for not just the property, but the region as a whole.

Among the endless superlatives attached to this release, Jane Anson said it most clearly, that 2020 Canon is a "stunning, grab-a-friend, insanely good wine." Perhaps a few more friends are needed for those fortunate enough to have a few magnums of a wine that William Kelley says, "will be worth a special effort to track down." Hopefully we can make that last part easy for you.

Sneak Peak: Bordeaux 2022—Surprise, Surprise

by Ryan Moses, Key Accounts and Retail Analytics Manager

Bordeaux is full of surprises, but perhaps none more so than the 2022 vintage. Nearly every producer we talked to on our trip discussed the extreme heat of the vintage and how deeply surprised they were at the resulting fresh and balanced wines that were produced. Just surviving a hot vintage is one thing; but are the wines worth buying and worth securing early? Such is the En Primeur conundrum that we navigate every year.



We will discuss the wines in detail in the coming weeks, but early impressions are that there are some potentially brilliant examples of renowned properties that will be treasures for the cellar. We also found them from all over the region—as far north as Montrose, down to Pichon-Lalande and Baron in Pauillac, Léoville-Las Cases in St-Julien, and Figeac

and Canon on the Right Bank. There were also some high-upside renditions—we adored Malescot-St-Exupéry and Branaire-Ducru, while Léoville Barton continues a remarkable run of great vintages.

That said, it is not a vintage with consistent highs, such as 2019 and 2016. It took a delicate touch to hit the sweet spot between

concentration and refinement, and, where it misses, it is very discernible in the wine. Small berries in the Cabernet resulted in tough tannins if not balanced well in the blend. And even with gentle extractions (another keyword for the vintage) there was a sense of ripeness and even a bit of alcohol on the wines that seemed pushed too much by the vintage conditions.

These are wines that will drink well early, something that might provide us with a market full of irresistible young Bordeaux when they're in bottle. But our first focus will be on En Primeur. With lower yields, allocations will most likely be down, although there might be a slightly higher proportion of first wines in 2022, leveling the field a bit for the collectible side of the market. Pricing will be the question—it will be up from 2021 for sure, even in the face of a marketplace that might be a bit less willing to buy early. But at the heart of it, there will surely be some not-to-be-missed collectibles coming from the 2022 vintage, which is what buying early is all about.

Keep an eye on our site and emails for releases throughout May and June—we'll look forward to helping you navigate through this surprising vintage.

John's Sizzling San Francisco Favorites

by John Majeski, San Francisco Bordeaux Specialist



After what seemed an endless pattern of crazy atmospheric rivers and record snowfall in Northern California, a beautiful spring has finally arrived in all its sunlit glory, leaving our long, thirst-inducing drought in the dust. Fortunately,

we haven't suffered a drought in our stores, as our ample shelves are literally bursting with great Bordeaux vintages to be socked away or savored today.

One of our more estimable producers has to be St-Émilion's stunning Château Barde-Haut, under the wise, felicitous guidance of Hélène Garcin-Lévêque and her husband, Patrice. Her unmatched dynamism as an ambassador of her family's portfolio and his intimate, working knowledge of the estate's amphitheater of vines are the epitome of synergy. The **2015 Barde-Haut, St-Émilion \$44.99 96JD 95JS** is on track to be one of the best wines ever produced at this estate, echoing the words of Patrice Lévêque: "No makeup, just a truthful wine that will age!" An elegant, richly imbued wine, with aromas of ripe black plum and bright cherry following through on the palate with touches of spice, loam, and leather. This wine will evolve for another decade if you have the desired patience, but why wait?

Not to be outdone, the **2016 Barde-Haut St-Émilion \$44.99 96VN 95JD**, 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, reflects the power and finesse of the clay-over-limestone soils of the lustrous St-Émilion plateau. Opulent, richly textured, and complex, as the finest wines



of the vintage have proven to be, this possesses an abundance of pure fruits, cassis, and violets, bolstered by ripe, velvety tannins and a cruising finish of lovely acidity. Pair with grilled, herb-crusted ribeyes for a truly memorable meal.

From an excellent hilltop site with signature Pauillac gravels, the **2019 Gaudin, Pauillac \$28.99 92WE** is composed of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, and 5% Carménère, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. The raw materials are here to realize an impressive, ageworthy wine, with a generous black-fruit profile suffused with spicy oak and brooding tannins that should eventually soften, sending the fruit to the foreground.



Château Lilian Ladouys, with its historic château and imposing turrets a crow's cry from famed Château Cos d'Estournel, dates from 1564 and has undergone a colorfully fragmented history, entirely disappearing from the map during the travails of the First World War. Eventually reconstructed in 1985 from dozens of parcels, it was placed on the market in 2008 and both the vineyards and winemaking facilities were thoroughly renovated



by the new owner. Organically cultivated from 59% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot, and 1% Cabernet Franc, the **2019 Lilian Ladouys, St-Estèphe \$22.99 93DC 93WE** slept 14 months in 30% new oak and, upon awakening in bottle, has proven to be a tremendous value, displaying effortless charm with nuanced aromas and delicious flavors of ripe black and red fruits, wild herbs, and a graphite edge. All of this luscious fruit is well framed by supple tannins and a swath of acidity.



The 2019 vintage was certainly a banner year in Bordeaux for everyone from the top châteaux to the petite châteaux, as demonstrated by the **2019 Roylland, St-Emilion \$24.99 93VN**. Proprietors Martine and Jean-Bernard Chambard are strong advocates of organic farming and committed to enriching biodiversity in their vineyards. Their vines average over 45 years, rooted primarily on sandy-clay soils. Fragrant aromas of blackberry, plum, and vanilla waft from the glass, with blackberry, wild strawberry, licorice, and kitchen spices enchanting the palate. A balanced, enjoyable wine that definitely over-delivers!

Back up a year to the ripe and earlier-drinking 2018 vintage, and you'll be delighted by the wonderful value **2018 Segur de Cabanac,**

St-Estèphe \$29.99. This estate was carefully cobbled together by Guy Delon from a dozen parcels formerly in the local cooperative. Made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot and aged in barrels for 20 months, this wine is a fairly classic rendition of St-Estèphe, characterized by dark, suave fruits, a hint of pipe tobacco and firm, structured tannins.



During a recent Bordeaux event we had the opportunity to revisit the remarkable **2009 Potensac, Médoc \$48.99 92JS 92WE 92VN**, a large property in the Delon family (of Léoville-Las Cases renown) for over two hundred years. The 2009 vintage ranks as one of the finest since 1982, largely because of the sweet, pristine quality of the fruit. This is a superb blend of 48% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 14% Cabernet Franc, and by now all the elements in this wine—the buoyant, sweet black cherry and cassis fruit, the cedary pencil shavings and tobacco spice, the chocolate notes and smooth tannins—have fallen gracefully into place. There is definitely no midlife crisis in this bottle.

In all these wines, I found the belief in maximum pleasure for a reasonable price. Enjoy!

Alex's Redwood City Roundup

by Alex Schroeder, Redwood City Bordeaux Specialist



At the Redwood City tasting bar, Alex Schroeder on the right with Veronique Saunders of Haut-Bailly on the left.

It is good to be a Bordeaux lover right now! Rarely have I seen the number of great values we currently have in stock at one time. Moreover, the wines have largely avoided inflation—producers were willing to lower their prices to help offset the costs of the tariff years, and a series of recent excellent vintages has saturated the market with great wines. This is great news for Bordeaux lovers! Here are some of my top picks—in quality and in value—in stock right now.

2019 Carbonnieux Blanc, Pessac \$39.99 94WE 93DC 93JA 93JS 65% Sauvignon

Blanc, 35% Semillon. This is such a great value for top-tier Bordeaux Blanc and from a balanced vintage like 2019. It offers awesome guava and citrus aromatics from well-ripened fruit, great freshness and acidity, minerality and a touch of flinty smoke from oak aging. Carbonnieux sits on some of the best white wine terroir in the world, and this shows it off so well for a good price.



2020 Petites Ranga "Cuvee J.J.," Lalande-de-Pomerol \$14.99 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. This is an excellent low-priced hamburger wine that has a nice, rich blackberry fruit core, a little toast, and a dry, bright finish. The tannins are there for structure, but it's fresh, balanced, and very drinkable right now.

2019 Les Tourelles de Longueville, Pauillac \$44.99 94JS 93WE 68% Merlot, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Cabernet



Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. This is one of my favorite second wines of all the great Grand Crus. Though their best Cabernet goes into the grand vin, this is made from a dedicated plot of mostly Merlot on Pichon-Baron's prime Pauillac property and offers insane value for the price. On the nose it has a large range of red and dark fruits, toast, smoke, earth and violets, very expressive and complex. It is silky and full bodied on the palate, but displays the excellent elegance and balance of the vintage. This will age nicely over the next decade or two.



2019 Seigneurs d'Aiguille (Château d'Aiguille), Côtes de Castillon \$18.99 JS90 88% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc. This is a serious wine for under \$20. It has the resources of the Count von Neipperg (owner of Canon La Gaffelière) behind it, sees 30% new oak, and is drinking like a much more expensive bottle. Firm black is fruit framed by graphite and toast. Ripe tannins provide silky mouthfeel and nice structure with bright fruits on the finish. This would be fun to age over the next ten years.



2018 Duplessis, Moulis \$21.99 92JS 92WE 60% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot. The Merlot from the clay-heavy soils of Moulis did well in warm 2018. This is a great value and showing a ton of potential: blueberries and raspberries, mint, toast, smoked meats, violets. Rich and velvety already with a really long finish. This would go great with lamb.



2004 Vieux Robin, Médoc \$29.99 This perfectly mature claret is every old school Bordeaux lover's dream. Right out of the bottle, it offers aromas of cigar box, mint, eucalyptus, smoke, toast, wet earth and savory red fruits. The cool vintage has kept this wine fresh and alive and the perfect accompaniment for a prime ribeye with mushrooms.

2018 Haut-Vigneau, Pessac-Léognan \$18.99 92DC

92WE 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot. This is the perennial best value from the gravelly commune of Pessac-Léognan. It is owned by the excellent Château Carbonnieux and offers nice blueberry fruit, stony earthiness, and a touch of toast. Everything is so pleasant, silky, and balanced. It truly shows the signature earthiness of Pessac-Léognan. You can do a side-by-side with the 2020, also in stock.



2000 Vieux Landat, Haut-Médoc \$19.99 This has awesome savory raspberry fruit, with smoky earthy tones, cedar notes, and the kind of silky tannins only a couple decades in the bottle will bring you. It also has great, lively acidity on the finish. Though a bit more on the earthy side than some California Cabernet drinkers might be looking for, this is the old-school Bordeaux lover's delight—and priced to case up on.



2016 Caronne Ste-Gemme, Haut-Médoc \$19.99 92JS 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. Despite its youth, I'm placing this firmly in the ready-to-drink category. It has a beautiful nose: pretty red fruits, smoke, leather, cedar, and meat. It is so silky and fresh on the palate, and all the flavors are well-integrated around the savory red fruit. This is the perfect wine to buy and enjoy now and over the next decade.



2017 Haut Charmes, Sauternes (375ml) \$12.99 If you need a little bottle of dessert wine, look no further. This is real-deal Sauternes sourced from a top producer, but which must be kept secret. Let's just say that the price on this is ludicrous for the quality. It has an incredibly effusive nose of honeys, apricots, lemon, baked apples, pineapple. The acidity from the vintage amplifies the flavors on the palate. This is an awesome Sauternes with real aging potential for an unreal price. Grab it while it lasts.

Jacques's Top-Vintage Values from Hollywood

By Jacques Moreira, Hollywood Bordeaux Specialist



We hear a lot about the famous Bordeaux vintages like 2016, 2015, 2010, and 2009—and yes, they are indeed excellent.

What you might not expect is that you can still find very affordable prices in these heavy-hitter vintages. When the weather gods bless the land of Bordeaux with perfect conditions, even the lesser-known, less-prestigious appellations will also deliver high-quality wines—at a fraction of

the cost of the more celebrated ones. These gems have just arrived in our stores. They will most certainly surprise you.

2015 de Birot, Côtes de Bordeaux \$12.99 91WE 90JS Perhaps our top offering for Bordeaux at this incredible price. This is their main wine, and it offers good complexity with soft and round tannins. It is very approachable and would be my first choice to recommend for pouring at parties and events of any size. It will impress the guests.

2015 Birot "Vintage," Première Côtes De Bordeaux \$19.99 Birot "Vintage" is their premium wine. It comes from the oldest plots on the estate, and it has a bit more Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend (25%), which gives it a firmer tannic structure. It is aged for 12 months in 50% new barriques. Rich and complex, it can be appreciated now or put in a cellar for a good 10 years longer. This is indeed an excellent buy.

2009 Sainte-Marguerite, Médoc \$16.99 Showing the classic richness and softness of the perfectly ripened grapes of the 2009 vintage, this direct import delivers elegant aromatics full of plums, cherries, and cocoa. Soft, rich, and warm. It is ready to be drunk now and sure to please those looking for a good value in aged wine.

2010 Fontis, Médoc \$21.99 A Cru Bourgeois located just north of Saint-Estèphe that consistently produces wines of high quality. It is 50/50 Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, rich and spicy, with ripe tannins that are supple. It evokes more finesse than power, and it will pair really well with all sorts of Mediterranean-inspired dishes. It is another wine that is ready to be enjoyed tonight, although it can also be cellared for a few years!

2012 Fourcas Hosten, Listrac \$19.99 Though 2012 is considered an "off vintage," some wonderful wines were made, like this bottle. I've always found that Fourcas Hostein wines retain a nice balance between the old-school style and the ripeness of the fruit. The 2012 is no exception. Quite approachable, with the fruit profile still in the forefront. Its tannic structure gives it a touch of spiciness. It's overall a medium-bodied wine with a lot of freshness. Drink it now with a quick decanting.



Odds and Ends, All Great Values

by Clyde Beffa Jr., Bordeaux Buyer



2019 Tour Léognan Blanc, Pessac-Léognan \$17.99

Top value white from a great white Bordeaux vintage and a fine château. The second wine of Carbonnieux, which makes a great white Bordeaux (see pg 2). For less than half the price of the first wine you get classic white Bordeaux, with citrus and white flower aromas and lemony flavors. Great balance is a hallmark of this wine,

as it is in almost every vintage from them. Best white Bordeaux value in the store right now.

2015 Corbin, St-Émilion \$24.99 93JS: "Plum pastries with violets and spiced blueberry fruits. The palate has impressive plushness and rich, fleshy appeal. Long finish." The Right Bank 2015s are absolutely delicious as the Merlot came in perfectly. Sweet, forward wine that can be drunk now or cellared five plus years. I love Corbin.



2019 Milens, St-Émilion (Elsewhere

\$40) \$24.99 94JS: "This is gorgeous, with wonderful finesse and complexity. It has a texture of the finest silk. Full-bodied, yet so reserved and beautiful with currant, berry, chocolate, and bark in the aftertaste. Under-the-radar wine. Goes on for minutes." Mike Pires K&L: "Deep ruby color with notes of black fruit, graphite, cedar, and spice. A young, full-bodied wine with structure and plush tannins. Great to drink now, but will really shine with more age."

2016 Esprit de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan \$29.99

94JS: "Wonderful, fragrant blackberry and cherry nose with a delicate touch of oak. Concentrated and elegant with a beautiful balance of finely etched dry tannins and very bright acidity. Long, crisp and mineral finish with a ton of energy."



2018 l'Esprit de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan \$29.99 95JS:

"This is an extremely polished and refined young wine with gorgeous blackberry, blackcurrant, licorice, dark-chocolate, and bark character. It's full bodied with ever so fine tannins and a long, long finish. Fantastic second wine of Domaine de Chevalier."



2010 Chauvin, St-Émilion (Elsewhere \$55) \$39.99 93JS:

"Wow. This relatively unknown château shines with walnut, dark chocolate, and dark fruit. Full body, Juicy and sexy. Velvety." Sylvie Cazes recently purchased this property and will bring it to the forefront of Right Bank properties. This 2010 is a favorite of mine.

Classics

2016 Grand-Puy-Lacoste, Pauillac \$99.99 97JS 97VN 97JA: "Inky red in color, the fruits are concentrated and knitted down and need some coaxing out of the glass to really open up—make sure you carafe this even if leaving for another few years, and enthusiastically swirl

to let that oxygen in. As it opens you start to appreciate just how great this wine is—so balanced, so Pauillac, feathered but rich tannins, zero dip through the mid palate, black truffle, graphite and pencil lead set against cassis, cassis, and a little more cassis. Everything that you love about Grand Puy Lacoste is right here in this glass, and a vintage that shows what truly ripe fruits brings to Cabernet Sauvignon." The 2016 Bordeaux vintage ranks just behind the great 2009 and 2010 Bordeaux vintages—and the prices are much lower.

2019 Grand-Puy-Lacoste, Pauillac \$79.99

I love the 2019 vintage wines, especially from the Left Bank, and so does Neal Martin (97 points): "The 2019 Grand-Puy-Lacoste has a well-defined bouquet with cedar and graphite infused black fruit, hints of pencil shavings, controlled and refined. The palate is medium-bodied with filigreed tannins, taut and fresh with a pixelated and mineral-driven finish, lingering long in the mouth. What a heavenly 2019 Pauillac."



2015 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac \$149.99 96AG for Vinous:

"One of the finest Pauillacs of 2015, Lynch-Bages is rich, racy and voluptuous. A rush of dark red and purplish stone fruit, mint, new leather, spice and blood orange give the 2015 a very decidedly exotic character that is impossible to miss. Raspberry jam, mocha, new leather and expressive floral notes appear with time in the glass, rounding things out nicely."

2010 Troplong Mondot, St-Émilion (Elsewhere \$200)

\$149.99 99WA: "Inky, bluish/black/purple, with notes of spring flowers, licorice, camphor, graphite, and a boatload of blueberry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit, this is a powerful, full-bodied Troplong Mondot. All the building components of acidity, tannin, wood and alcohol are judiciously and impressively integrated. It is a blend of 90% Merlot and the rest equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc made by Christine Valette and her husband Xavier Pariente with the consultancy help of Michel Rolland... Forget this for five to seven years and drink it over the following three decades. An absolutely stunning wine from this estate, which seems to be on a mission to produce exquisite world-class wines with enormous aging potential, the 2010 is showing better from bottle than it even did from barrel." We only have about 36 bottles left of this beauty. So sweet and sexy—seems like 2009 Troplong, but it has a bit more stuffing for the cellar. Decadent wine that is sure to delight.



2016 Les Forts de Latour, Pauillac (Elsewhere \$250)

\$199.99 96JS: "The fresh currant and violet aromas are so complex and beautiful on the nose. Full body, ultra-refined tannins and lovely tannin tension. Shows focus and such finesse. Beautiful finish." **96VN:** "Undisputedly great. Readers will find a potent, dark wine endowed with massive concentration and depth."

I Don't Just Drink Bordeaux... The Gorgeous Grenache of Via Caritatis

by Clyde Beffa Jr., Bordeaux Buyer

I visited the Via Caritatis monastery at the foothills of Mont Ventoux in Southern Rhône in July 2022. This is a historic site where Pope Clement V planted the very first papal vineyard in 1309. I spent most of the afternoon with the monks who live there and make wine there, at the Benedictine Abbey of Le Barroux. My guide to this beautiful place was



Cécile Chassagne, maker of wonderful Gigondas and Clyde's guide to the wines of the Abbey of Le Barroux.

Cécile Chassagne, a very good friend and maker of some of our favorite Gigondas wines for the last 30 years. If you shop our Rhône aisle, I bet you are familiar with her delicious, affordable Grenache.

During our visit, we attended a prayer service where the 40 or so monks sang in Gregorian Chant. It was very impressive. Cécile and I did a tasting with a couple of the monks who were responsible for making wines and tending the vineyards. I liked the wines so much that I decided to bring them into K&L, and they're now available on our shelves. Check out the

monks' wines, so you can taste a bit of French vinous history for yourself! I think you'll love this as much as I do.

2019 Via Caritatis "Pax in Terra" Ventoux Rouge \$19.99

A Grenache-dominant blend with 15% Syrah from the picturesque village of Ventoux. The Via Caritatis bursts with ripe red fruit flavors accented by staccato bursts of garrigue and toasted oak. A collaboration between the monks and nuns of the Abbey le Barroux and the Caritatis winegrowers, Via Caritatis cultivates some of the oldest vineyards in France, originally cultivated by popes as early as the 14th century. The famous Mistral wind blows through the region to keep the fruit fresh and the acid bouyant in the wine. They've successfully and deliciously transmitted Southern Rhône's terroir in the glass, with energy and verve to spare. I love this wine for its freshness and balance. It's like eating a bunch of fresh raspberries!



But When I Do... 2009 Pontet-Canet Sits at the Top of My List

by Clyde Beffa Jr., Bordeaux Buyer

2009 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac \$289.99

2009 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac 6-pack in OWC \$1675.00 100JD

100WA 98-100WE 98JS 97JA This is probably my favorite Bordeaux of the 21st Century. SO lush and sweet and so Pauillac with a sexy touch. Everyone knows that my favorite Bordeaux vintage since 1945 (my birth year) is 2009! Some people prefer 2010, but at my age I can enjoy these 2009s now, and my grandkids can enjoy them in 30 years. Remember the best preservative of Bordeaux is their balance and fruit content—not their tannin structure. The 2009s were so delicious out of barrel, and they remain so after 13 years.

Robert Parker scored this wine a perfect 100 points: "An amazing wine in every sense, this classic, full-bodied Pauillac is the quintessential Pontet-Canet from proprietor Alfred Tesseron, who continues to reduce yields and farms his vineyards biodynamically, a rarity in

Bordeaux. Black as a moonless night, the 2009 Pontet-Canet offers up notes of incense, graphite, smoke, licorice, creme de cassis, and blackberries. A wine of irrefutable purity, laser-like precision, colossal weight and richness, and sensational freshness, this is a tour de force in winemaking that is capable of lasting 50 or more years." I score the wine 101 points!! We have sold over 7,000 bottles of this beauty. It's a must buy for the serious Bordeaux collector.



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