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WINE News

*New king, same as
the old king.*



JANUARY 1, 2018 FEATURES

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Bordeaux: The King of Wine Reigns in 2018

By Clyde Beffa Jr.



The Bordeaux wine market is hot, for sure—at least for K&L it is. Not since 2011, when the back-to-back vintages of 2009 and 2010 enthused most all Bordeaux drinkers and collectors, have we seen such a demand for good and great Bordeaux wines.

Of course, the excellent vintages of 2015 and 2016 have spurred a lot of excitement and buying, but all good vintages seem to be in high demand. The US economy is booming, and while that is a good thing, the problem it creates is higher prices from the producers. We have a great range of wines in this issue including 2015 and 2016 pre-arrivals, a few in-stock value 2015s and a great assortment of superbly priced 2014s also in stock. We also have some exceptional 2009s and 2010s for sale and some “old” Bordeaux beauties. *Toujours Bordeaux!*

Here are some of my “oldie” Bordeaux favorites with which to begin the new year:

1988 Le Clémentin du Pape Clément (\$39.99) and **2002 Le Clémentin du Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$39.99)** We found these two gems when we visited Pape Clément on our April 2017 tasting trip. Somehow a few cases of each were discovered in the cellars and offered to us. We bought them on the spot. Open and enjoy the 1988 right now—it is soft and toasty. The 2002 needs one hour decanting, but it is earthy and delicious drinking after that.

1989 Lacoste-Borie, Pauillac (\$69.99) This was one of the sweetest vintages in the last 50 years of Bordeaux. The Lacoste-Borie, which is the second wine of Grand-Puy-Lacoste, is excellent with a half-hour decanting. *Wine Spectator* says: “Beautifully sculpted, with luscious cassis and herb aromas and flavors and fine, elegant tannins. A wine that pinpoints its fruit on your palate.”

1989 Dauzac, Margaux (\$99.99) Old-school Bordeaux without all the oak and extract. Some violets on the nose and palate. Just retasted it on September 5, 2017—so sweet up front and a lingering finish.

1990 Bel Air Lagrave, Moulis-en-Médoc (\$34.99) This wine is a fabulous buy if you like old-school Bordeaux. One of our favorite negociants in Bordeaux was invited to taste many vintages from the new owner of this *unknown* property. He bought most on the spot and had many vintages recorked. We have magnums coming in, as well as the 1989 in magnums.

1996 Kirwan, Margaux (\$89.99) I have a soft spot in my heart for this property and its former owner, the late Jean-Henri Schÿler (he passed in 2016). Pretty plum and blackberry character. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a fresh finish.

1998 Gruaud-Larose, St-Julien (\$99.99) We tasted this on our April 2017 Bordeaux trip. Very plummy, with berry, currant and stone aromas. Medium-bodied, with berry flavors.



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2000 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$89.99) Another find in April 2017. It is sweet and lovely after decanting one hour. It has that St-Julien cola flavor. **94 WS**

2001 Brane-Cantenac, Margaux (\$99.99) I totally love this wine right now. These 2001s are so good—and very well priced. This one is soft and toasty with a lingering, sweet finish. Robert Parker's Wine Advocate liked it also in 2016 at 92 points.

2006 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$119.99) Re-released by the property in 2017 at a rather high price. We found a parcel at a much lower price and here it is. Limited availability. One of the best 2006s for sure—all the scorers gave it **92-94** points.

2007 Tronquoy-Lalande, St-Estèphe (\$27.99) and **2007 Labégorce Zédé, Margaux (\$29.99)** I loved and still love most of the 1997 Bordeaux wines, after they adjusted their prices downward. We have sold more bottles of 1997 Bordeaux than any vintage from 1970 to 2008! But the 2007 Bordeaux vintage is the 1997 on steroids. These two are so good—sweet and lovely now. Restaurant wines for sure.

And Two Special Stickies

1989 Suduiraut, Sauternes (\$59.99) A truly great vintage in Sauternes and this beauty sells for much less than it did several years ago. Sweet and lush with apricots on the nose.

1997 Suduiraut, Sauternes (\$49.99) Another fine stickie vintage. These sweet Bordeaux wines represent fantastic buys, as their prices have come down over the last few years.

The Original WC: The Better Way to Collect Bordeaux

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

We are selling quite a lot of Bordeaux these days in the OWC format. What does that mean, you ask? OWC stands for “Original Wood Case.” Nowadays, provenance of wine is so important to the Bordeaux wine collector. All of these cases either come directly from the property or from reliable negociants with whom we do business in Bordeaux. They have not made the world tour through various countries and then to us. Most of our Bordeaux offerings are in either 6-OWC (6-bottle wood case) or 12-OWC (12-bottle wood case). Some of the higher-end Bordeaux can come in 3-OWC.

Here is a small sampling of wines we had in inventory December 12:

2006 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (6-pack OWC \$259.00) 92 RP: “What an outstanding 2006 Claret—a Cantemerle that punches well above its weight.”

2014 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (12-pack OWC \$529.00) 94 JS: “So perfumed with a freshness and beauty that is amazing. Blackberries, black cherries and violets. Full-bodied yet so polished and velvety. Gorgeous finish. A beauty.”

2014 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (6-pack OWC \$295.00; 12-pack OWC \$589.00) and magnums (1.5L 6-pack OWC \$589.00) 95 WE, 93 RP, 94 JS: “Anyone who says that the 2014s aren't elegant needs to taste this beautifully balanced wine. Ripe redcurrant and delicate herbal aromas with just a hint of spicy oak on the nose precede a fresh, medium-bodied palate with underplayed power and a lot of subtle nuances on the long finish.”

2012 Pauillac de Latour, Pauillac (12-pack OWC \$826.00) 90 JS: “This is so delicious and wonderful now with fresh strawberries, peppermint and flowers. Medium body, fine tannins and a crisp finish. Elegant.” It blew us away on our 2017 visit to Château Latour. A baby Latour for a fraction of the price. Decant and enjoy now with a steak dinner or cellar it for 10 more years.

2005 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (12-pack OWC \$829.00) The star of the 2016 Fête de Bordeaux dinner. Superb year and this wine will age effortlessly for another 15 years. **93 RP, 92 WS**

2010 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (12-pack OWC \$719.99) 93+ RP: “It is full-bodied and impressively endowed with subtle oak, rich cassis fruit and notes of new saddle leather, forest floor, cedar wood and spice box. Full, authoritative and dense, this wine should be at its best between 2018 and 2035.”

2014 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (6-pack OWC \$468.00) A superstar property that always makes great wines—especially since 1998 when Véronique Sanders took over the winemaking team.

2006 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (12-pack OWC \$1,439.00) A great vintage for them and priced at 40% of the 2009 and 2010 vintages.



2014 Montrose, St-Estèphe (6-pack OWC \$768.00) One of the best wines from this value vintage. Better than their 2015! **97 WE, 97 JS, 96 RP**

2014 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (6-pack OWC \$769.00) Along with Montrose, one of the best wines from this value vintage—and again better than their 2015! **98 JS, 97 WE**

2005 Canon, St-Emilion (12-pack OWC \$1,629.00) A superb wine from a venerable property that's come back strong since 2000.

2005 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac (12-pack OWC \$2,379.00) One of the top wines of the vintage and always one of our favorites.

2014 d'Yquem, Sauternes (375ml 12-pack OWC \$2,028.00) A fabulous year for the king of the sweet wines. Great balance and plenty of richness to age for 25 more years.

2014 Bordeaux: Consistent, Classic and Classy

By Ralph Sands



The 2014 vintage is full of wines that are bright and lively, feature lovely purity of fruit and have classic Bordeaux freshness, balance and structure. They are indeed classic in style, and while they are not blockbusters and 30-year wines, I believe they will be fantastic at 15 to 20 years of age, and can be enjoyed young with a few hours of air in the decanter.

2014 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (\$129.99)

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc. Big juice here! The wine has layers of saturated, sweet black-red fruits with hints of black licorice. This Cos features a powerful attack of fruit, freshness and minerals, great texture and a long finish. This fantastic wine is the complete package, and a candidate for wine of the vintage!

Just like at Cos, I always get very pumped up and excited to taste the great wine of Château Montrose, but in the last few years I'm every bit as excited to taste the other estate owned and made by the Montrose team, Château Tronquoy-Lalande. Separated from Montrose by only a two-lane road, in five years this wine has gone from one I knew nothing about to one of my favorite wines to sell in my 40 years in the wine trade. At my desk it has always been about quality for the money, and the **2014 Tronquoy-Lalande, St-Estèphe (\$34.99)** just kills it! The fabulous quality of the St-Estèphe Merlot is the key to this wine as it has dark, sweet fruit and is a touch exotic. The blend is 56% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc. My exact note from March 30, 2015 is also how it tastes now in bottle: "Juicy blackberry and blueberry fruit, lively acidity, firm, fresh and delicious, superb value!" I love the wine and the price.

Château Gloria has been the greatest wine for the money in all of St-Julien for the last four decades and I kick myself often for not buying more. This was once again driven home recently when I enjoyed a bottle of the 1989. It was just lovely at 28 years of age. When I started here in 1978 Gloria cost \$6.99 and today the **2014 Gloria, St-Julien (\$34.99)** remains a monster bargain! To compete in St-Julien with the Leovilles and the Ducrus at this price is very impressive. I rated this wine two-thirds stars, which means it is outstanding and that I would love to have it in my cellar. My exact note: "Attractive grapey fruit with nice middle palate flesh/texture and solid structure; outstanding value!"



Since my first visit to Bordeaux in 1990 the hierarchy or pecking order of the Margaux appellation has not changed—only the prices have. For **2014 Margaux is \$499.99, Palmer is \$239.99** and as much as I adore those wines, I no longer buy them for myself. I buy **Rauzan-Ségla at \$69.99**. Since Chanel bought the property in 1994 and renovated the entire estate, the wine has been dead-on perfect. Like the vintages before it, the 2014 features Cabernet Sauvignon (56%) in its most elegant, sleek and racy form. Lovely, just-ripe fruit with hints of cassis, cherry and spice all in absolutely perfect balance and harmony. Rauzan was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson who stopped by the estate in 1790 and placed an order for 10 cases.

It is interesting that the two greatest values and top-selling wines from St-Emilion at K&L today are both completely renovated estates that look directly at each other: Tour St-Christophe and **2014 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (\$29.99)**. The wine of Barde-Haut has undergone a drastic change in quality, going from rustic old school to perfect purity of fruit with the state of the art and "totally green" renovation by famous architect Nadau Lavergne. The dynamic ownership is anything but green! The engine that drives the estate is the energetic owner Hélène Garcin-Lévêque, and her husband Patrice makes the wine. The 2014 is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc and is a very attractive blend with lots of lively red fruit with good strength and a touch of chalk and spice.

Toujours Bordeaux and Go Giants, Niners and Dubs!



Bordeaux Loses Two Icons

We are very sad to report the loss of two revered men in the Bordeaux wine business who happened to be good friends of K&L. In November, Patrick Maroteaux died after a long fight with cancer. He was the owner of Château Branaire-Ducru for 30 years, making some of the best value reds in all of Bordeaux. He was a gentlemen and well loved by all who knew him. On December 16, Robert "Bob" Wilmers passed away suddenly. He was the owner of Château Haut-Bailly since 1998 and was the president of one of the country's top banking institutions for 34 years. He also was a good friend of K&L, and we will miss him greatly. Our prayers go out to their families.

Reflections on the Year of QPR: Favorites from 2014

By Jeff Garneau



Quality. Price. Value. I am going to go out on a limb here and say that, based on these criteria alone, 2014 may be the greatest Bordeaux vintage ever. Following a warm, rainy winter the year got off to an early start, and while the warm weather in June gave way to dull, damp days in July and August, from late August to late October there was a

nearly unbroken string of dry, sunny days. September was the third driest of the last 100 years, after 1921 and 1985, and the third hottest after 1921 and 1961, all great Bordeaux vintages. A cooler than average July and August and a postcard-perfect Indian summer yielded wines that combine lively acidity with ripe, sweet fruit and fine tannins. Prices for these wines are up only slightly from the trough of 2012 and 2013, often 30% to 50% below their peak in 2009 and 2010. Clyde is bullish on 2014, so we have plenty of wines to choose from—too many to mention, really.

Some of my recent favorites, in no particular order:

The northern Médoc did particularly well in 2014. Among the classed growths in St-Estèphe, **2014 Montrose, St-Estèphe (\$129.99)** is especially fine. Since its acquisition in 2006 by Martin and Olivier Bouygues, the quality of the wines produced at this historic estate has been on an upward trajectory that seems to know no bounds. One of the top wines of the vintage. A must for the collector. The second wine, the **2014 La Dame de Montrose (\$36.99)** is offered at a lower price point and with a bit more Merlot in the blend for those with smaller budgets and less patience. **93 WE**

And speaking of second labels of second growths dominated by Merlot (what a segue!), the **2014 Les Tourelles de Longueville (\$37.99)** from Pichon-Baron in Pauillac is worthy of mention. With loads of sweet, ripe fruit deftly seasoned with oak, this is a clean, polished effort that is already drinking shockingly well. **92 JS**

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Pichon-Baron was managed by Jean-Michel Cazes, owner of Château Lynch-Bages. Just three years ago, Jean-Michel's

younger sister, Sylvie Cazes, announced her family's first venture on the Right Bank, purchasing historic Château Chauvin in St-Emilion. One of her first decisions was to introduce a second wine, the **Folie de Chauvin**, with **2014 (\$19.99)** as the inaugural vintage. A blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, round and forward of fruit, this is a Right Bank bargain that can be enjoyed tonight.

Perennial K&L favorite **Château Poujeaux (\$31.99)** in Moulis did well in 2014. If anything, the wine is a bit more open-knit than usual, and should make for good early drinking. Those looking for even better value will enjoy the **2014 Haut de Poujeaux, Haut-Médoc (\$18.99)**. Not a second label but from a neighboring property, though from the same winemaking team and in a similar style.

In the mid-1990s, Eric Albada Jelgersma, a Dutch businessman, acquired both Château Giscours (third growth) and Château du Tertre (fifth growth) in southern Margaux. The two neighboring properties have flourished under his stewardship (and that of general manager Alexander van Beek), with the wines much improved over the past twenty years. The **2014 Giscours, Margaux (\$49.99)** has all of the usual black fruits and full-bodied appeal, but seems a bit reticent at the moment. A good candidate for the cellar.

The **2014 du Tertre, Margaux (\$38.99)**, from a slightly warmer site, is much more accessible at this stage. There is lovely weight here with generous black fruits and fine tannins. The wine is very bright and fresh with lively acidity, yet has an almost jammy ripeness.

And speaking of jam, the Gervoson family, owners of Château Larrivet Haut-Brion since 1987, also own the company that produces the line of Bonne Maman jams and jellies (fun Bordeaux fact!). Larrivet Haut-Brion is a neighbor of Haut-Bailly and Malartic-Lagravière, and consistently one of the best values in the northern Graves. The **2014 Larrivet Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan Rouge (\$37.99)** has a firm, mineral-laden core, and offers ripe, sweet black fruits. Drink or hold.



2009 Bordeaux in the Sweet Spot—or in the Cellar

By Steve Bearden



It's hard to believe that the fantastic 2009 Bordeaux started arriving here at K&L a full six years ago. These warm, rich, inviting and complete wines seem to just get better and better as they mellow and mature, although they have many years of life ahead of them. Thankfully, 2009 was a large crop, and as they ease into their drinking window there is no better time to

stock up on these superstars. These great bottles are all in stock now:

2009 Valentons Canteloup “Cuvée Excentrique” Bordeaux Supérieur (\$15.99) Here is an unusual blend of 70% Petit Verdot and 30% Merlot that is a delicious wine in its own right. The middle of baked cherry compote eases into a fine, lingering finish of great restraint. This is smooth, plush, ready for tonight and a great bargain. Don't be afraid to cellar this amazing value for five or more years.

2009 Bel Orme Tronquoy de Lalande, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) This earthy “old school” bottle is surprisingly lively and crisp for a 2009 and will appeal to those looking for traditionally made bargain Bordeaux. The fruit profile is dark and compact with the faintest whiff of earth and leather on the steely finish. Here is a food-friendly bargain that over-delivers.

2009 Branas Grand Poujeaux, Moulis (\$29.99) Another delicious and over-achieving 2009. This is juicy and lush with earthy black raspberry cream and dark plum throughout the substantial middle. This shows oak shadings, a whiff of cocoa and hints of damp clay that round out the long finish. Typical of the vintage, this can be consumed now or aged for 10 or more years.

2009 Sarget de Gruaud Larose, St-Julien (\$39.99) The second wine of Gruaud-Larose is big and rather brooding at present with substantial red and dark fruits crammed into the chewy-textured middle. This will be very long lived and decanting is recommended at present, but the second growth pedigree is unmistakable and a bargain at this price. One of our most reliable go-to bottles.

2009 Larrivet Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$39.99) This lively, sweet and complex wine starts with smoky and crunchy dark currant fruit, spiced berries and raspberry liqueur. This is thick and deep with a touch of tar and ash complementing the rolls of fruit on the long, mineral finish. Here is an outstanding bottle for now or 10 to 20 years from now. **93 JS**



2009 Latour-Martillac, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99) This was released five years ago, and what I once considered “modern” in style has evolved into a classic with aromas of hot asphalt, toast and intense mixed berries. There is great concentration in the middle of ripe and roasted black fruits followed by rocky soil and mineral undertones. It is delicious and almost decadent for the appellation. **94 JS**

2009 Lagrange, St-Julien (\$59.99) Do not attempt to drink this wine without first decanting for an hour! But if you do decant you will get soaring aromas of raspberries, blackberries and earthy potting soil in a muscular but caressing mid-palate with a huge mineral core. There is a deep and enveloping warmth to the ripe fruit and a full-bodied but gentle mouthfeel to the substantial middle. Decant a bottle tonight and lay another away for 20 years. **94 WE**



Winter in the vineyard at Malartic-Lagravière.

2009 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (\$64.99) This is ripe and earthy with an almost sappy quality to the warm red fruit flavors. This rich and approachable wine showcases the Pessac-Léognan appellation at its gravely best, but with tons of sweet and roasted fruit. **94 RP**

2010 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (\$69.99) This property is on a roll, so I had to include the 2010 version which shows sweet red and black currants and roasted earth in the middle and a toasty freshness throughout. This is dark and substantial with a wonderful mineral expression. Is this powerful wine even better than their spectacular 2009? **95 JS, 94 RP**

From the Classic to the Defiant: 2015 Bordeaux for Every Day

By Jacques Moreira



New year, new hopes, perhaps a few regrets, and a whole bunch of Bordeaux wines from the marvelous 2015 vintage. Some are already here, tantalizing us with the bounty of exquisite wines coming our way on the latter part of the year. And let's not forget about second wines—always a smart buy in this vintage. So let's start with this very wallet-friendly list.

2015 Mauvais Garçon “Bad Boy” Bordeaux (\$15.99)

Christened the “Bad Boy of Bordeaux” by none other than Robert Parker, Jean-Luc Thunevin thoroughly embraced his new sobriquet with gusto. This is a 100% Merlot wine that shows a bit more complexity than previous vintages. Very pleasant and perfection with a steak. A wine for immediate consumption, and I see nothing wrong with that! I got word he's producing a Chardonnay... in Bordeaux – Bad, bad boy.



2015 Seigneurs d'Aiguilhe, Côtes de Castillon (\$16.99)

Seigneurs is the second wine of d'Aiguilhe, and it certainly shows the tremendous quality and the unmistakably touch of Stephan von Neipperg. It is a rich and lush Right Bank, but also floral and lifted. The deeper notes of leather along with plums tell me with will develop beautifully in the cellars.



2015 Busquet, Lussac St-Émilion (\$15.99)

This St-Émilion satellite located just north of the main appellation, always offers good value for the money, and in fantastic vintages like 2015 it can be a bounty of goodies. Delicious notes of cherries and a touch of cocoa first greet you, later revealing its medium body, plenty of minerality, and firm but ripe tannins. I would suggest cellaring for five years or so. **90 RP**



2015 De Brousse, Côtes de Castillon (\$14.99)

I have always had a penchant for the juicy wines of Castillon, and the de Brousse is no exception. Deep, rich plum, cherries and chocolate. The approachable tannins along with the richness of the fruit lead to a very pleasant experience indeed!

2015 Le Clémentin du Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$34.99)

And on to the classics... None less than the second wine of Pape Clément. This fantastic producer of Pessac-Léognan, delivers an also outstanding second. Very elegant notes of cocoa powder and wet stone, along with plums and spices. A beautiful wine to open at any occasion, or to cellar.



2015 Croix Mouton, Bordeaux Supérieur (\$14.99)

One of our best values for quality, the Croix Mouton 2015 is mostly Merlot with a tiny touch of Cabernet Franc (2%). Not at all related to the Mouton on the Left Bank, this Mouton nonetheless offers quite a lot of quality with its wild berry notes and well defined structure.

2015 Moulin du Sud, Bordeaux Supérieur (\$12.99)

A certified organic wine produced by Château La Croix Taillefer in Pomerol. Carefully crafted and with a complexity that defies its price. Although the fruit is on the forefront with plum, and cassis notes, it also possesses beautiful cedar and even a touch of leather. A very nice wine to pair with a cheese platter.



2015 Saint-Paul, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)

Another classic Médoc that is medium bodied, with plenty of minerality, as well as pretty notes of berries. Still showing some tightness and grip. It needs some cellar time, but it is all there, and it will age quite nicely.

2015 D'Alix, Pessac-Léognan (\$19.99)

Built from the ground up, including the planting of the vines, in 2008, this new château is producing excellent wines in a classic Pessac-Léognan style. Don't get fooled by its pretty violet aromatics. The d'Alix is a wine for the cellar, despite its price. It possesses the classic earthiness of Pessac, along a fruit core. It is serious and needs time in the bottle or a good decanting. Great buy.



2015 Motte Maucourt, Bordeaux Supérieur (\$10.99)

From a small producer in the heart of the Right Bank. Another easy going Bordeaux showing a fruity core and lifted aromatics. Good quality for every and any day drinking.

2015 Bordeaux: The “Big Easy” 10 Years Later: On Pre-Arrival

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

2015 La Tour de Mons, Margaux (\$22.99) This wine is a great value from the vintage—wonderfully ripe and fleshy with an elegant, long and supple finish. Excellent freshness and lift. **92 RP**

2015 Labégorce, Margaux (\$27.99) A perennial K&L favorite, this once again surpasses all our expectations with silky, red cherry fruit, milk chocolate and mocha notes all rolled into one velvety, smooth package. **94-96 WE, 93-94 JS**

2015 Poujeaux, Moulis (\$31.99) A perfect example why this wine has been a top-selling wine here for decades. Beautifully polished, ripe, sweet fruit with classic structure. The kicker here is the exquisite balance this wine always possesses. **92-93 JS**

2015 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$34.99) Aromatic and wonderfully fresh, crisp fruit that is nearly silky in the mouth; tannins are ripe and sweet with a long, lingering finish. I must also mention it is my No. 1 favorite value of 2015. **95-96 JS**

2015 Fleur Cardinale, St-Emilion (\$39.99) This wine shows you all the flashy, attractive Merlot fruit and oak you could ever want without spending hundreds of dollars! Definitely New World or international in style and just flat-out delicious! **95-96 JS**

2015 du Tertre, Margaux (\$39.99; 1.5L \$79.99) Their best ever, in my opinion. It is full-bodied and full-flavored with red berry fruits.

2015 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (\$49.99) This property, along with Malescot St-Exupéry, could be the value of the vintage. With incredibly delineated red fruit and intoxicating floral notes, this is a beautiful wine that is a steal of a deal. **94-96 RP, 96-97 JS**

2015 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (\$49.99) Fine and elegant. The fruit is a straight-lined beam of black cherry, plum and mocha in a medium-bodied and balanced frame. Good finish. I like the fruit and the bit of tannic grip. **92-93 JS**

2015 d’Issan, Margaux (\$57.99) As always, this wine has a minerality at its core, but the 2015’s freshness and lively fruit grab your attention.

2015 Malescot St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$66.99) One of my possible candidates for wine of the vintage! Very dark color, lovely spicy nose, hints of bittersweet chocolate, and polished, juicy texture with a hint of mint and savory herbs. Tannins are ripe and integrated. Very fresh and balanced with a long, lingering finish. **97-98 JS**

2015 Alter Ego de Palmer, Margaux (\$69.99) Alter Ego is fabulous in 2015. The color is dark and inky, with black cherry, cassis and chocolate flavors intertwined within the lovely velvety texture of this wine. This is nearly exotic but still shows a wonderful structure.

2015 Les Carmes Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$69.99) This comes from a walled-in property that sits within the city of Bordeaux and is literally a stone’s throw away from Haut-Brion. **96-97 JS, 92-95 WS**

2015 Grand-Puy-Lacoste, Pauillac (\$69.99) Aromatic and toasty, with lots of ripe fruit, velvety middle, nice balance and length. Usually a bit tough for my taste, but this wine is delicious and well made.

2015 Duhart-Milon, Pauillac (\$69.99) This wine shows sweet and savory, loaded with ripe fruit while still maintaining wonderful freshness and lift. **93-95 WE**

2015 Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe (\$74.99) Great fruit with Cabernet-driven nose of blackcurrant, cedar, mint and smoke. One to watch, as the quality of the wines is rising and the property is undergoing a significant investment in the vineyards and winery. **94 DC, 93-94 JS**

2015 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$77.99) Classic, firm and intense with brooding dark fruits, brambly blackberry, coffee and scorched earth. Excellent depth and old-vine clarity. **94-96 RP, 93-96 VN**

2015 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$114.99)

As usual, one of the top wines of the vintage. Not a monster like 2010, nor as voluptuous as their 2009, but it is one-third the price! Alfred Tesseron says this is his best year for the quality of the fruit at picking time. Bio (organic) wine. Dark, spicy, lovely sweetness and peppery.



Clyde Beffa Jr. tastes at Château Pontet-Canet with Alfred Tesseron in 2016. Clyde referred to 2005 as the “Big Easy” vintage, and feels 2015 is similar.

2015 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$119.99) This is a seriously good wine. Dark, chewy fruit; intensely concentrated, showing hints of meat and smoke but not overdone; spicy, ripe and fleshy in the mid-palate. The finish is long and fresh. Definite buy!

2015 Certan de May, Pomerol (\$129.99) Great terroir across the street from VCC. Fabulous blackberry aromas and toasty oak nuances. Great black fruit flavors; tremendous depth and fine balance. A touch of black licorice. Best in a long time. **97-98 JS**

2015 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$139.99) Another one of the top wines from the vintage, this is an elegant, sweet and fleshy Haut-Bailly. It is loaded with a wonderful core of red fruits that is complemented with hints of minerals, cedar and graphite.

2015 La Conseillante, Pomerol (\$169.99) Ultra spicy with tobacco aromas; super sweet on the palate. Velvety. **95-97 RP**

2015 Léoville-Las Cases, St-Julien (\$199.99) Classically built claret in the finest way. Dark-fruited and complex, with scorched earth, anise, violet, cedar, smoke and mineral. Iron fist in a velvet glove. **95-98 VN, 96-97 JS**

2016 Bordeaux on Pre-Arrival

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

This is a very fine vintage for sure. Precise and focused. Lively and vibrant. Along with 2015, this vintage is close in quality to the 2009 and 2010 Bordeaux.

2016 Bellegrave, Pauillac (\$24.99) Great terroir—this wine is probably the best value Pauillac we have in the store.

2016 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$29.99; 12-pack OWC \$359.00) 94-96 WE: “This is another successful vintage from this estate. It is so finely structured that you notice the blackberry fruit more than the tannins, with a seam of crisp acidity throughout.”

2016 Siran, Margaux (\$29.99; 12-pack OWC \$359.00) Violets and blackberry fruit aromas. Black licorice flavor. Very sweet and very well balanced. On a level with their 2015. **94-96 WE, 94-95 JS**

2016 Labégorce, Margaux (\$34.99; 12-pack OWC \$389.00) *The best buy Bordeaux 2016 for under \$40!* Super spicy with violet undertones. Very elegant, red fruit entry. It taste so good, you want to drink it now. Pure pleasure! **94-96 RP, 94-96 WE**

2016 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (\$49.99; 12-pack OWC \$599.00) 94-96 WS: “The fresh blueberry, cherry and black currant flavors give this a wide range, while racy graphite and a mouthwatering anise streak drive the finish. The fruit is so enticing that you lose track of how solidly built this is through the finish.”

2016 Malartic Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan (\$57.99; 12-pack OWC \$689.00) Very spicy, jammy, blackberry aromas. Voluptuous wine in the modern style, but with fine acidity to balance.

2016 Giscours, Margaux (\$59.99; 12-pack OWC \$719.00) Tough to beat their spectacular 2015, but this comes close. So fresh and vibrant—very lush and balanced. **96-98 WE, 96-97 JS**

2016 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$59.99; 12-pack OWC \$699.00) Another standout with fantastic berry fruit, baker’s chocolate and super-silky tannins with that unmistakable Margaux feel. Bright and lively. So lush and ripe. **98-99 JS**

2016 Alter Ego de Palmer, Margaux (\$69.99; 12-pack OWC \$799.00) Lots of Petit Verdot here. Serious wine with a concentrated nose of black sherry and toasty oak. Lovely wine but only 6,000 cases made. **95-96 JS**

2016 Larcis-Ducasse, St-Emilion (\$71.99; 12-pack OWC \$859.00) As good as their 2015? Exotic aromas of Asian spice and tobacco. Serious wine for the long haul. Sexy and ripe.

2016 Rauzan-Ségla, Margaux (\$84.99; 12-pack OWC \$999.00) This super-sweet second growth is one of the best of all Margaux in 2016. Very concentrated and structured for the cellar, but it has gobs of ripe fruit on the palate. A lot of 95-98s from all.

2016 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (\$86.99; 6-pack OWC \$529.00) 97-99 WE: “This is a powerful wine, with superb tannins and blackberry fruits. It has a dense texture allied to stylish fruitiness and acidity. The result is a wine with the potential to age over a long period of time, while probably showing well starting in 2028.”

2016 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$89.99; 6-pack OWC \$539.00) Earthy elements in the nose and on the palate. Quite spicy. Fine tannins on the finish. This wine will need some time even though it is lush on the palate.

2016 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$136.99; 6-pack OWC \$809.00) With all the weather issues this year, Pontet-Canet still made one of the best of the vintage. I think the wine is as good as their 2015 with spicy, meaty aromas and layers of fruit on the palate. Sexy and silky.

2016 Cos d’Estournel, St-Estèphe (\$184.99; 6-pack OWC \$1,089.00) 98-100 RP: “A brilliant Cos d’Estournel that oozes class and sophistication, moreover, a wine that is going to give serious amounts of drinking pleasure over a very long period of time.”

2016 Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$199.99; 6-pack OWC \$1,149.00) 97-100 WS: “Offers a scintillating display of roasted apple wood, incense and warm ganache before the core of cassis, plum preserves and raspberry reduction starts to step forward. The finish, loaded with grip but remarkably polished.”

2016 Margaux, Margaux (\$569.99; 6-pack OWC \$3,400.00) Red roses and violets on the nose and red currant flavors. Very lush—very good. **97-99 RP, 97-99 WE**

2016 Haut-Brion Rouge, Pessac (\$569.99; 6-pack OWC \$3,369.00) One of my top 10 wines of the vintage. Ethereal nose—a regal wine. Layers of ripe fruit and minerality. Full mouthful. **100 JS**

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