

February 16, 2015

WINE News

Tour our cellar of Bordeaux, updated daily with great old wines, and promising new vintages, at the best prices in years.



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Bordeaux and King Dollar

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

What a difference a few months make in the currency markets. In case you haven't noticed, the dollar is at a 12-year high in value. Not since 2003 has it been so strong. Remember that year when the Bordeaux Châteaux were reasonable in their pricing and the strong dollar enabled us to offer the 2002 Mouton Rothschild for \$99.99 on pre-arrival? Well, those days are gone forever, but there are some great values today thanks to the dollar's rebounding strength. On this page I will list some

of my favorites that we recently purchased with the strong dollar, and are passing the savings on to you. They are now selling for less than they did just last year, so take advantage of King Dollar.

This is only a four-page newsletter, so we will get right into the listings. Ralph talks of the fine 2012 vintage in his article. These good values are arriving daily. Jacques and Jeff pick some of their favorites, and Steve concentrates on the superb values from 2001 and 2000. Enjoy!

2010 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac (\$169.99) 96 points RP: "The 2010 Lynch Bages is an absolutely brilliant wine, and somewhat reminiscent at this stage in its development of the profound 1989." Selling for less than the pre-arrival price, but only about 10 cases available. This is due in late February. We also have a few cases of the spectacular **2009** for less than \$200 per bottle.

2010 Fombrage, St-Emilion (\$29.99) 92 points WS: "Soft red fruit and fresh coffee. Some chocolate and spice. Beautifully textured fruit on the palate with a bright acidity and velvety tannins. Very long and smooth finish. So enjoyable already. Best ever from here? Better in 2015." We fell in love with this wine as soon as we tasted it in 2011. We sold 150 cases at \$34.99—a greater value now. Because of a dock delay, this is due in late February.

1997 Potensac, Médoc (\$24.99) We have sold 1,000 cases of this wine in the last two years. And now the price is even better, but we are running out. This is made by the people at Léoville-Las Cases. It's a superb older Bordeaux for an extremely reasonable price. Buy it by the case. It's due in early March.

2009 Haut Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$159.99) Recently Robert Parker upgraded this wine from 98 to 100 points: "Given its virtually perfect balance, this brilliant Haut-Bailly should age effortlessly for 3-4 decades. This is a tour de force in winemaking, particularly for readers seeking the quintessential example of a Bordeaux that combines compelling complexity and finesse with significant flavor authority and intensity." Only 10 cases available in late February, and at less than the pre-arrival price.

2009 La Lagune, Haut-Médoc (750ml \$66.99; 1.5L \$139.99) I love this wine and we have sold over 150 cases of it. 95 points RP: "This sumptuous, full-bodied La Lagune possesses low acidity, abundant but ripe, sweet tannin and a long, 45-second finish....drink it over the following three decades." Late February.

2010 Gloria, St-Julien (\$46.99) 93 points RP: "The 2010 Gloria is an ass-kicking, fabulous value once again from this estate, which would probably be classified if the 1855 hierarchy of the wines of the Medoc were ever done again." 95+ points Clyde. Look for it in late February.



Millennial Bordeaux Comes of Age

By Steve Bearden

Most 2001 Bordeaux wines, although always in the shadow of their great 2000 predecessors, have reached 14 years of age gracefully. This vintage is one of my all-time favorites for affordable drinking. If you are looking for perfectly cellared and ready-to-drink, affordable Bordeaux, these smart choices are in stock right now.

2001 Moulin Haut-Laroque, Fronsac (\$29.99) This is darkly fruited and quite earthy but has a lush core of sweet, clean and fresh fruit. The tannins are well hidden and there is nice length to the lively finish. This is easy and forward even without decanting.

2001 Corbin Michotte, St-Emilion (\$39.99) Lots of ripe, red fruits here with a funky dig into the terroir of the St-Emilion/Pomerol border. There are very fine tannins holding the array of cherries and berries together, where the hints of chalk add persistence to the finish. This was a huge hit with customers at an in-store tasting last year.

2001 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$21.99) Probably our best-selling 2001 of all time and the most classically elegant

and “old school” of the bunch. This classic claret is ruby/brick in color and has subtle aromas of earth and leather to complement the cherry fruit. Anyone looking for a classy and dry dinner wine that won’t break the bank can stop right here.

2001 Tertre Daugay, St-Emilion (\$24.99) This screaming value is a dark plum color with aromas of ripe cherry, savory herb and potting soil. The wine has lively acidity and, as it opens up, very fresh flavors and aromas of blackberry and dark cherry become even more evident. The smooth, creamy middle is substantial and is supported by dry, fine tannins on the intense mineral finish. Decant one hour.

1999 Labegorce, Margaux (\$29.99) OK, not a 2001, but a very aromatic and silky textured wine with a plump, rich mid-palate and touches of well-integrated tannin on the finish. This is well-proportioned, with dusty cherry and soft blackberry fruit, hints of leather and earth, and a big mineral splash to finish. Decanting suggested.



High Noon for the 2012 Vintage

By Ralph Sands

I had just returned from Bordeaux for the second time in three months tasting the 2012s and walked into the boss’s office (Clyde) and proclaimed that I was absolutely sure now that 2012 is the vintage we take a position on! With the 2009 and 2010 vintages well behind us and the 2011 vintage being released at prices too high for the quality, the ’12s are much better and cost less. Now that they are arriving, the proof is in the bottle, and our recent tastings firmly confirmed this.

*Please see our **2012 vintage report** on our home page for details and weather conditions that formed this vintage.*



2012 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (\$49.99) is a classic Langoa: effusive aromas of perfectly ripe raspberries and cranberry jump out of the glass, and it’s zesty and fresh on the palate while being elegant and firm. This will be delicious to drink with a couple years of age to mellow it out. It reminds me of their lovely 2001.

2012 Leoville Barton- St-Julien (750ml \$79.99 PA; 1.5L \$159.99) remains a big wine, with loads of grapey, blue/purple fruits, but is rounder and more forward, and will drink well relatively young after 7-10 years. It reminds me of the delicious 1999.

2012 Ormes de Pez, St-Estèphe (\$29.99) Possesses really nice, rounded fruit and is very attractive, with gentle tannins. This will drink nicely young.

2012 Lynch Bages, Pauillac (750ml \$109.99 PA; 1.5L \$209.99 PA) For the big brother of Ormes, it is a different story. Very bright and strong, direct and firm Cabernet Sauvignon with crunchy fruit and sparkling acidity. A powerful 2012 for the cellar.

2012 Poujeaux, Moulis (750ml \$26.99; 1.5L \$55.99) Poujeaux has become a superstar here at K&L, constantly making great wine even in the most difficult vintages and eclipsing many classified wines in the great vintages. It’s by far the most requested “may I please have another small taste” at my tastings as well as the top-selling wine afterwards. A serious, dark wine made of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and Cab Franc, with good, rich middle fruit and length. I have many vintages in my collection, and for me Poujeaux, along with Cantemerle, are the greatest values from the Left Bank of the Gironde estuary.

2012 Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (\$28.99) Hélène Garcin-Lévêque has transformed this beautiful estate’s winemaking facility to state of the art, and the wines clearly reflect this. This wine features flashy, beautiful Merlot fruit with some toasty oak—hard not to love now and a tremendous value from the Right Bank that excelled in 2012.

Toujours Bordeaux!

Bordeaux Values, Old and New

Values of 2010, 2009 and 2004

Bordeaux is unique among the world's fine wine regions in that there are so many great older vintages readily available via our *négociant* partners in France. You don't have to have a cellar of your own to enjoy perfectly aged wines at the peak of maturity, and at very reasonable prices, too. While our Bordeaux team has been carefully navigating their way through the more challenging recent releases from 2011 and 2012, we have continued to bring in wonderful bottles from the exceptional vintages of 2009 and 2010.

The **2010 Maison Blanche, Médoc (\$14.99)** is a worthy successor to the wildly popular 2009. Plenty of bright, sweet red fruits here with an almost candied, red cherry note. Richly textured, full-bodied, with fine tannins. Also from the Médoc, the **2009 d'Escurac, Médoc (\$19.99)** is a seductive pleasure. A superb example of the best of what this vintage has produced, it's super rich, with a positively silky texture, and loads of sweet, dark fruit seasoned with oak spice. Youthful, yes, but eminently drinkable.

And, speaking of '09, the **2009 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** is now back in stock. Bordeaux veterans will recall this Haut-Médoc bargain is happily situated on the border with Pauillac near Château Bernadotte. The strength of the vintage shines through here as well. The wine is remarkably fresh, with textbook blackberry and cassis notes and fine tannins. While it may be difficult to resist drinking this wine immediately, if you want a glimpse of what it might be like in four or five years, we still have a few bottles of the **2004 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc**, also at **(\$19.99)**. While not as fine as the '09 vintage, this '04 absolutely excels. The oak is now beautifully integrated, lending an intriguing spiciness that perfectly complements the ripe fruit. Admirable weight here, and if the tannins are not quite so fine as the '09, well then, it would be churlish to complain. The delightful **2010 Peyrabon (\$19.99)** is due in March.



Another '04 of note is the exquisite **2004 Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99)**, just off the boat from France. More weight and richness here, and a beguiling green tobacco note that I went back to again and again. Plenty of sweet red and black fruits, cherry and plum. A solid effort here and a terrific value. Also now back in stock is the **1998 Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (\$27.99)**. Sylviane Garcin-Cathiard, in partnership with her daughter Hélène Garcin-Lévêque, acquired Château Haut-Bergey in 1991 and the 1998 vintage was one of their first true successes. By the standards of the '04, of course, the wine is almost embarrassingly rustic, but with surprising weight and texture, generous red and black fruits and perfect ripeness.



—Jeff Garneau

A Glass of Bordeaux For Everyone

One of the most fascinating facts about Bordeaux wines is that they are far from being a monolithic block. Different terroirs, winemaking, cépages, and perhaps above all, vintages, all come together to offer us an array of choices. And that, perhaps, is the main engine of this historic wine region. We all love the First Growths, they are the mythic Holy Grail of the wine world, for consumers and winemakers alike. But for most of us mere mortals in need of a good glass of wine tonight, or perhaps for that special occasion some years from now, we need these choices, and Bordeaux is more than happy to offer us just that. Keep on reading:

2007 La Prade, Côtes de Francs (\$14.99) Hailing from the smallest appellation in Bordeaux, this property, with Nicolas Thienpont at the helm, produced a beautiful wine. It's from a cool vintage, which offered wines with more delicacy. This La Prade has had some years in the bottle and everything has come together rather nicely. The color is just showing some development. Being a Merlot-dominated blend, it has the classic plums and juiciness one expects, along with cocoa powder and woody forest floor. It is an easy-drinking wine, but definitely not one lacking in complexity, and it is ready to be enjoyed now.

2009 La Cardonne, Médoc (\$19.99) Here, perhaps, the terroir rather than the vintage is in the driver's seat. Being five miles north of the appellation of Saint-Estèphe in the northern Médoc, this wine is not about the fruit, but spice! It does have the classic cassis, but it is tobacco and forest floor, along with spicy oak, that make this wine a perfect candidate for pairing with a more robust dinner or for cellaring.

2009 Tronquoy de St-Anne, St-Estèphe (\$16.99) Now the vintage sings. This second wine of Tronquoy-Lalande is a beauty. Softer than their first wine, it offers palate-enticing brown sugar and sweet fruit on the nose. However, on the palate, the spicy pepper, cocoa and tannins come into play to frame its delicacy. This is a no-brainer for tonight! We have a few bottles now, and there's more to come in April.

2011 Capbern Gasqueton, St-Estèphe (\$24.99) Again, the vintage was at the helm on this one. With the Merlots suffering from rain in late August and early September, it was Cabernet Sauvignon (a late ripening grape) that was mostly used in the final assemblage, thus the wine's beautiful cassis and touch of eucalyptus on the nose. The palate is all about that Saint-Estèphe spice, with tobacco, cedar and forest floor, along with vanilla. Beautiful wine indeed. Drink now or put in the cellar for some years.

2012 Bois-Martin, Pessac-Léognan (\$18.99) From a classic, cooler vintage, this wine is in a more restrained style, and for those who like their classic clarets. Black cherries, currants and olives framed by dried leaves and spices. A juicy acidity and tannins assure us of its potential for aging some years. A perfect pairing with charcuterie and cheeses.



— Jacques Moreira

ARRIVING SOON *Bordeaux Values under \$50, and Some Superb Stickies*

Unless otherwise noted, these wines are due to arrive in late February.

2009 Plaisance “Cuvée Alix” Bordeaux Supérieur (\$14.99) This Bernard Magrez wine is a great value, with plenty of structure and grip on the palate. Decant one hour and it evolves nicely. Quite spicy, it has strength but is finely balanced—the perfect party wine, and a great crossover for California Cabernet lovers.

2009 de Chantegrive Rouge, Graves (\$19.99) We have sold over 150 cases of this beauty. Why? Because it tastes great, is smooth as glass, and has a lingering finish with some mineral notes. It goes well with fish or meat, but is perfect with roast chicken. 92 points JS.

2001 d’Ecurac, Médoc (\$19.99) Another great 2001 discovery by our team. We have the 2009, and now, the older version with a bit more old-school styling. A good amount of Merlot softens the wine. Why wait—drink it up. Due in March.

2009 Lalande Borie, St-Julien (\$29.99) 91-93 points *WE*: “Rich and smooth, with tannins that are ripe, some spice and also intense acidity. The blackcurrant character is dominant.” This wine is getting better and better—tons of ripe, red fruit flavors. Due in March.

2010 La Tour de Mons, Haut-Médoc (\$24.99) 90 points JS: “Raspberry and flowers with hints of citrus rind. Full body, with velvety tannins and a juicy finish. Clean and well-crafted.” One of my favorites for value from the 2010 vintage.

2009 de Fonbel, St-Emilion (\$26.99) I love the sweet blackberry fruit flavors in this elegant wine. According to Robert Parker: “Made by Ausone’s proprietor, Alain Vauthier, this attractive, round, pretty wine is soft and generous, with loads of blueberry and raspberry fruit as well as hints of incense and crushed rock.”

2005 Balestard La Tonnelle, St-Emilion (\$29.99) Wow! This wine has really come around in the last few years. It still will cellar well for a few years. Black fruit aromas and flavors. Decant and enjoy with a rack of veal.

1996 du Tertre, Margaux (\$49.99) and 2009 du Tertre, Margaux (\$49.99) The old and the new of this fine property. The 1996 is more in the old school camp, while the 2009 is a bit more modern. Both have fine texture and great balance. The 1996 is ready now and for a few more years; the 2009 should be cellared five more years. Decant both one hour. 92 points RP: “A seductive, opulent, textured Margaux with notes of licorice, black fruits, asphalt, pen ink and truffle, this is one of the finest du Tertres ever made.”

2009 Les Allées de Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) 90 points JS: “Blueberry and fresh mushrooms, with hints of earth. Medium-to-full body, with medium chewy tannins. Second wine of Cantermerle, which made a super 2009. Best in 2015.” This is due in March.

2000 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$149.99 PA) Pontet-Canet has gone from a very good Fifth Growth in the '90s to a super Second and, in some years, First Growth quality in the last 15 years. One of the few wines to receive 100 points on two consecutive vintages (2009 and 2010) from Robert Parker! This wine received 94 points from Mr. Parker: “...Full-bodied, powerful, still very tannic, and shockingly backward, this is a big, rich wine that has put on weight and seems to need more time than I originally predicted.” And it is half the price of the 2009 or 2010.

2009 Pedesclaux, Pauillac (\$44.99) 93 points JS: “This is full-bodied, with super polished tannins and light smoky, chocolaty and plum character. Long and polished. Very fine indeed. Drink after 2016.” This is a great classified growth at a very fair price. The new owners have turned this property around. Definitely the best ever produced here.

2009 Dufort Vivens, Margaux (\$49.99) This property is on a roll of late. We think the 2009 is the best they have ever made. Ralph and I fell in love with it at the UGC tasting in Bordeaux in 2010. The elegance of Margaux with violets and some cassis and toasted oak notes. Perfect acid balance. Decant one hour and serve with New York steak.

Stickies for 2015

I want to mention a few Sauternes that just arrived and a couple that we are running out of. The latter wines include the absolutely stunning **2010 Raymond Lafon, Sauternes (375ml \$19.99; 750ml \$39.99)**, which are the best prices in the nation. Also, the mind-blowing **2009 Nairac, Sauternes (\$39.99)** is in stock now.



Due to arrive in late February and sure to sell out quickly, the **2005 Guiraud, Sauternes (\$49.99)**. We have sold over 7,000 bottles of this wine—that is a lot of Sauternes, I would say. A million points, etc. Only 30 cases available. The **2001 Guiraud, Sauternes (\$54.99)**, **2011 Sigalas-Rabaud, Sauternes (\$49.99)**, **2011 Suduiraut, Sauternes (750ml \$84.99; 375ml \$42.99)**, and **2011 Guiraud, Sauternes (750ml \$66.99; 375ml \$34.99)** are all stunning wines and they all scored tons of points.

—Clyde Beffa Jr.

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