



GRAND
WINE
WINE MERCHANTS



2018 BORDEAUX: A SUPERB VINTAGE

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2018 Bordeaux: An Introduction

Early this Spring we assembled the sales teams from the UK and USA to assess the new Bordeaux 2018 vintage. This being my 34th En Primeur tasting, we know by now to start early, which we did on Sunday Morning March 31st. We spent most of the week visiting the chateaux and discussing the wines with the winemakers and managers. Additionally we tasted most wines 2-4 times each in order for us to have a good understanding of the wines and the vintage.

I am sure you will have read by now about the wet spring and very hot summer which certainly gave the growers plenty to do in the vineyard. One thing is for sure: climate change is having its affect throughout the wine regions of the world, Bordeaux included, due to the increasingly erratic weather.

The good news is 2018 is a superb vintage for the red wines of Bordeaux. There is an intensity of pure ripe fruit aligned with sweet ripe tannins and balance that make these wines very special. Alcohol levels are high with most wines—14% or a little higher. However you do not feel the alcohol due to the seamless and intensively balanced fruit.

Many of these wines will certainly become modern day legends. For those fans of great Bordeaux this is certainly a vintage to stock up on. As long as the pricing does not exceed 2016 prices, then these wines are worth buying. There are some absolute stunners, especially on the Left Bank, and to quote wine writer James Suckling “it could turn out to be an all-time great, similar to 2010, 2009 and 1989 or even such classics as 1982 or 1959.”

THE TOP WINES BY COMMUNE

SAINT ESTEPHE

This is the most northerly commune in the Medoc and there are some jaw-droppers. **Calon Segur has probably produced its best since some of the great old vintages of the '40s.** This is followed by outstanding wines from Montrose & Cos D'Estournel. But the big surprise is Chateau Capbern, made by the talented team of Calon Segur. This was a real gem and has always been a great value. Also, good performances by Les Ormes De Pez and Tronquoy Lalande.

PAUILLAC

This commune is vying along with Saint Julien for the most consistent commune. **I have to say this was the greatest young Lafite Rothschild I have ever tasted. This is certainly going to be a legend.** Naturally Mouton Rothschild and Latour were also of exceptional quality. This is a large commune of which many wines were exceptional. Pichon Lalande was superb with most of the trade talking about how special it was. Indeed from top to bottom the wines are tremendous— Armailhac, Clerc Milon, Grand Puy Lacoste, Lynch Bages, Pichon Baron, Pontet Canet to name a few.



SAINT JULIEN

Home of the three Leovilles, who have all made fabulous wines this year. They are really at the top of their game and at the top of the commune, along with the ever-consistent Ducru Beaucaillou. There are so many great wines this year: Gruaud Larose, Branaire Ducru, Beychevelle, Talbot, St Pierre, and Gloria. Look for some of the second wines like Croix Ducru Beaucaillou, Pavillon De Leoville Poyferre and Reserve De Leoville Barton. This commune along with Pauillac is among the most consistent.

MARGAUX

This commune is also very consistent with a bevy of superb wines. **Vying for top spot are Châteaux Margaux and Palmer**, followed very closely by Rauzan Segla. Other great wines are Brane Cantenac, D'Issan, Malescot St Exupery, and **especially Labegorce which represents one of the best quality/price ratio wines.**

PESSAC LEOGNAN

Another great commune with some of the best wines of the vintage. **The two top wines are Haut Brion and La Mission Haut Brion**, both made by the talented Jean Philippe Delmas. A very consistent region with excellent wines from Les Carmes, Haut Brion, Domaine De Chevalier, Haut Bailly, Pape Clement, and Smith Haut Lafitte.

PESSAC LEOGNAN BLANC

Some of the whites had their earliest harvest dates on record. **The top wines are very good but select wisely.** Leading the pack are Haut Brion Blanc, La Mission Haut Brion Blanc, Domaine De Chevalier, Pape Clement and Smith Haut Lafitte. Also a real bargain is Couhins.

POMEROL

This commune was at its best in the top properties. **Top wines: Lafleur and Vieux Chateau Certan**, always one of our favorites and arguably as good as the 2016. L'Evangile, and La Conseillante not far behind. Clinet, Rouget and Gazin also all made great wines. I can say for the first time we were a little disappointed in some of the lesser expensive wines due to their being a little over extracted, but certainly the top wines are monumental.

SAINT EMILION

One of the largest communes with such a vast array of properties. Plenty of wines to highly recommend but **one wine that left us all stunned was Canon.** This property is really on the upswing due to the huge investment being made by the owners, Chanel. Other superb wines and every bit as good as their recent successes were Cheval Blanc, Ausone and Figeac. Following were the impeccable wines made by Nicolas Thienpont: Beausejour Duffau, Pavie Macquin and Larcis Ducasse. Beausejour Becot made an impressive performance this year, and **watch out for an upcoming star, Berliquet**, recently purchased by Chanel. There are many other noteworthy wines, however it always amazes us that too many of the properties in Saint Emilion over extract instead of working with the great fruit harvested.

SAUTERNES

Given the uneven weather throughout the year and especially leading up to harvest time it seems the Sauternes were the one region that suffered. We tasted most of the top wines and while pleasant, they lacked botrytis which gives them length, richness and body.



Wines of the Vintage:

- Calon-Segur
- Canon
- Cheval Blanc
- Cos d'Estournel
- Figeac
- Lafite Rothschild
- Latour
- Le Pin
- Leoville Las Cases
- Mouton Rothschild
- Vieux Chateau Certan

Standout Mid-Range Wines:

- Beausejour Duffau
- Grand Puy Lacoste
- Gruaud Larose
- Larcis Ducasse
- Les Carmes Haut Brion
- Leoville Barton
- Leoville Poyferre
- Montrose
- Pavie Macquin
- Pichon Lalande
- Pontet Canet
- Rauzan-Ségla

Over-Achievers

- Brane Cantenac
- Capbern
- Calon Segur
- Labegorce
- Laroque
- Les Carmes Haut Brion
- Pavie Macquin
- Vieux Chateau Certan

Value Drinkers

- Capbern
- Carignan Prima
- Corbin
- Feytit Clinet
- Labegorce
- Lacoste Borie
- Laroque
- Montviel
- Puygueraud
- Tour St Christophe



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- **Perfect provenance direct from Bordeaux** to ensure you are the first owner of Original Wooden Cases!
- **Your opportunity to choose the size you require** from 375ml, 750ml, 1.5L, 3.0L, 5.0L, 6.0L, 9.0L, 12.0L, 15.0L, 18.0L
- **An opportunity to buy at the lowest release price** from the First Tranche offerings from the châteaux.
- **To secure that highly-allocated top property or the small property that sells out immediately.** We can provide all the top wines and are heavily-allocated in hard-to-find wines.
- **If buying futures for investment, we have a unique service to offer our customers: storage in our own temperature-controlled warehouse in Bordeaux** thus ensuring that if you decide to sell your wine it will have perfect provenance—having never left Bordeaux, which will increase the resale value. (£12/case/year to store in Bordeaux. See your fine wine consultant for details.)

Please visit our 2018 Bordeaux EP landing page for our full list of 2018 Bordeaux updated daily as wines are released: grandvinwinemERCHANTS.co.uk/en-primeur

Thank you for your interest in 2018 Futures, and we look forward to supporting your pursuit of the world's finest wines with this stunning vintage of Bordeaux!

Santé

The GVWM Team