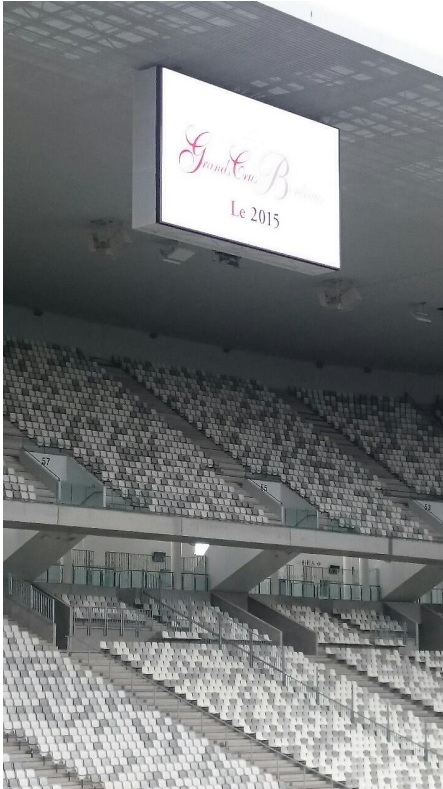




C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Bordeaux 2015 Vintage Report

A vintage for grandstanding?



In one of the many packed restaurants in downtown Bordeaux I persuaded my friend and Bordeaux host Jean-Luc Veyret to try a wine from the Rhone Valley. "Ah, un vin étranger!" he retorts, with a knowing smile. Any wine not from Bordeaux is foreign to the Bordelais, and in jest he highlighted that at the centre of the wine world there is a greater sense of insularity than I have witnessed before.

I spent six days in Bordeaux last week, travelling and tasting extensively and listening to winemakers, property owners and brokers. I can honestly report that the vintage is very good, and in some communes outstanding. Conditions were at times challenging but still allowed for those with skill and a little good fortune to fashion excellent wines with an exciting balance of power and finesse.

I should and will concentrate on the best wines and makers of this vintage, but I was surprised to hear time and again that 'Bordeaux Bashing' had reached fever pitch, that wine writers should learn some humility, and that 2015 will be seen to be a great vintage in 10 years time. The oenologue Michel Rolland, whose wines speak with more refinement, suggested that too many 'arseholes' won't notice how great the vintage is. While his comments were directed towards French journalists, it seems clear that the producers are already circling the wagons and quite prepared to make this a hostile campaign.

I don't know why such grandstanding is necessary. Bordeaux is still the dominant market in fine wine and many producers have the financial strength to employ the latest technology and skilled winemakers to make exciting wine when the conditions allow. By and large conditions did allow many regions to make very good wines in 2015. It is a market though, and merchants react badly to being bullied. Every broker I spoke to was keen to complain about high prices of certain wines in recent vintages, which left them unsellable, yet they dare not stop buying for fear of losing relationships with chateaux entirely. For my part, I was very happy to see all the brokers I have been working with for many years, and a new one, and taste, taste, taste. Worsening exchange rates during the week (Brexit and Panama loomed over the UK governing class) certainly focussed the mind on trying to unearth value, a commodity more scarce than ever in Bordeaux. I won't be bullied into buying wines I can't sell and I won't offer wines that I don't believe are worth the asking price.

Vintage conditions

While the 2014 vintage was saved by some late summer sunshine, in 2015 it was rain that vines desperately needed as a drought that had delivered half the normal rainfall ended in mid-August. A uniform flowering had led to a good fruit set and healthy bunches, but as temperatures soared in June and July the grapes stopped growing and skins thickened prematurely, leading to widespread anxiety.

Significant rainfall then fell in August which helped to reinvigorate the vines and the sun returned until 12th September. That was the day that 'shuffled the pack' as Bill Blatch put it, as there was torrential rain in certain places that affected the potential of the harvest quality for those that received it. The rain fell heaviest in the Northern Medoc, the area that has more clay soils planted with Merlot than in the gravelly southern Medoc which Cabernet Sauvignon prefers. Margaux and Saint-Julien, Graves and most of the Right Bank escaped excessive rainfall.



C A M B R I D G E W I N E M E R C H A N T S

The rain came at a tricky moment for the earlier ripening Merlot, with humidity threatening botrytis rot. Some chateaux had to pick early as a result, while those unaffected went on to enjoy sunny days and cool nights for most days until the harvest was completed in mid-October. Those cooler temperatures helped to retain acidity as the vines reached full maturity.

High alcohol and Longevity?

The erratic nature of the September rain certainly resulted in 2015 being less homogeneous than the preceding months of drought suggested it might be. Those regions that escaped the torrents harvested very ripe grapes with supple tannins. The high diurnal temperature variations during harvest also certainly helped the grapes to retain the acidity, making the best wines feel alive, fresh and exhilarating. The side effect of 'optimal' ripeness is elevated sugar levels, which combined with lack of water has resulted in most Merlot dominated wines from Pomerol and Saint-Emilion reaching in excess of 14.5%.

Does high alcohol matter? The allure and high value that Bordeaux wines enjoy are as a result of their longevity, so winemakers must be careful not to jeopardise that. Does the fact that virtually all mature red Bordeaux (say from 2001 or earlier) is 13% or less suggest that alcohol is the enemy of longevity? Many Bordeaux wines have put on 2% ABV in the last 15 years, a consequence of progressively warmer, longer seasons and a mantra that ripeness is the ultimate goal of vineyard management. That Bordeaux standard of 12.5% is definitely gone so we know that wines will age differently. Winemakers sincerely believe they will express a new kind of balance. Modern Bordeaux has lower acids, higher pH levels and higher phenolic content, which makes them feel more powerful but also accessible at a younger age. No harm in that surely, particularly for impatient consumers who want to enjoy drinking our primeur-purchased wine a little sooner. While higher alcohol per se may not be the enemy of longevity it certainly heralds a new dynamic, and in 2015 the levels seem to have reached new peaks. pH levels are irregularly offered by chateaux, but Ch Carbonnieux reported a pH of 3.68 for its red. My notes suggested that Carbonnieux was one of the crunchier of the Pessac reds, suggesting even higher pHs in many other wines.

Michel Rolland said 'For me, 2015 is a great vintage. We'll see in ten years, as always.' It will be fascinating.

Right Bank power and Margaux Majesty

'A Right-Bank Vintage' used to be code for a failed Cabernet harvest, but that is certainly not the case in 2015. Both Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc ripened well, and for the Cabernet Sauvignon nowhere better than around Margaux. The extra polish that a good Margaux vintage delivers to its Cabernets was really evident, and there were some spectacular efforts. There are also a good number of Haut Medoc properties in the Margaux region, as well as Listrac and Moulis nearby, so if you are a Left-Banker (and many of us in the UK are) then I heartily recommend wines from the Margaux region.

The wines of Pomerol, Saint-Emilion and its satellites, Fronsac and Castillon are exciting, powerful and alcoholic. The wines with higher levels of Cabernet Franc seem to have an extra dimension in many cases, and vineyards grown on limestone exhibit good freshness and minerality. There really are some exquisite wines made on the Right Bank, and I will recommend many more than in recent years.

Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon grapes destined for dry wines were harvested between the August and September rain bouts, in warm conditions. The Pessac Leognans whites are intense for sure but at this stage seem tart and mean rather than flamboyant. Winemakers in Sauternes making sweet wines enjoyed excellent conditions with showers when they needed them, making four 'tries' or sweeps of the vineyards to pick grapes affected by botrytis, or noble rot.





C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

The case for and against buying En Primeur 2015

You should buy En Primeur because:

- 2015 is the best vintage since 2010, and there is richness, ripeness and power. The best wines are exceptional and there are many mid-tier wines that will offer delicious mid-term drinking.
- In some cases it remains the guaranteed best price at which to buy wines, especially if global demand returns. Chateaux will sell a good proportion of harvest as yields were low, meaning they will be in the secondary market sooner.
- You can taste a broad range of wines at the same level of maturity, gain a clear view of the characteristics of a vintage and choose the wines that are showing the greatest potential. The opportunity to taste 'horizontally' is rarer when the wines are bottled.
- Mature wines are becoming rarer and more expensive, so dipping back into the market is less easy and prices are higher because of worsening exchange rates.
- Exchange rates. After 23rd June exchange rates will almost certainly change from the current level, by which time much of the campaign will be concluded. Either wines will become more expensive or cheaper. If they become cheaper for us to buy we will pass on the relative saving to customers.

Factors that dictate against buying en primeur include:

- Exchange rates. The pound has currently dropped to below 2015 levels and will remain depressed until the direction of the Brexit vote becomes clearer. That makes wines 10% dearer than last year, before an expected increase. If the vote goes in favour of staying in the EU, exchange rates may recover.
- Wines may be offered at unrealistic prices, dampening demand and meaning they may be available to purchase at the same price when bottled.
- Tasting barrel samples gives you an impression of what a wine will become once bottled, but certainly not the full picture. Too often a critic's review of a wine will differ markedly from a barrel sample to a bottle sample.

Wines to buy

I will try to confine my recommendations to wines which deliver on quality and would be worth buying en primeur. I will rank wines below by my assessment of their quality in each appellation, starting with those that are outstanding and exceptional. From over 500 wines tasted my Wines to Buy list is a severe selection of fewer than 150 wines.

Favourite wines under £200 per dozen IBD

Value Wines (should be under £100 IBD)

Medoc

Ch. Sénéjac, Ch. Dasvin-Bel-Air, Ch. Hourtin-Ducasse, Ch. Charmail, Ch. Paloumey, Ch. Agassac (d'), Ch. Arnould, Ch. Maucamps, Ch. Moulin Rouge (du), Ch. Aurilhac (d'), Ch. Peyredon Lagravette, Ch. Saint-Paul, Ch. Monteil d'Arsac (Le) Ch. Mayne Lalande, Ch. Fonréaud, Ch. Fourcas-Borie, Ch. Vieux Robin, Ch. Escurac (d')

Graves

Ch. Haura, Ch. Rahoul,

Right Bank

Ch. Carignan, Ch. Reynon, Ch. Cap de Faugères, Ch. Côte Montpezat St. Jacques Cuvée Compostelle, Ch. Le Doyenné Ch. Pey la Tour, Ch. De Francs 'Les Cerisiers' Ch. De la Riviere, Ch. Haut-Chaigneau,

Seriously good and affordable wines (should be under £200 IBD)

Medoc

Ch. Duthil, Ch. Cambon La Pelouse, Ch. Citran, Ch. Charmail, Ch. Camensac, Ch. Cantemerle, Ch. Labergorce, Ch. Angludet, Ch. Siran, Ch. D'Arsac, Ch. La Gurgue, Ch. Gressier Grand Poujeaux, Ch. Maucaillou, Lacoste Borie 2nd wine of GRAND PUY LACOSTE, Ch. Fonbadet, Ch. Serilhan, Ch. Lilian Ladouys, Ch. Le Crock



C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Graves

Clos Floridene Rouge, Ch. Haut-Bergey, Ch. Lespault-Martillac,
Right Bank

Ch. La Sergue, Ch. De Chambrun, Ch. Faizeau, Ch. Bonalque, Ch. Montviel, Ch. Haut Maillet,
Ch. Pierre 1er, Ch. Teyssier, Ch. Barde-Haut, Ch. Cote de Baleau

PART 1 - THE RIGHT BANK

The Right Bank is twice the area of the Medoc and Graves/Sauternes regions combined with twice as many appellations, more geological variation and much more wine made. The region as a whole enjoyed a pretty smooth ride through 2015. There many affordable wines to be found here and my recommendations include wines I would urge you to buy and enjoy in the medium term. Appellations such as Fronsac, Francs and Castillon that aren't particularly well followed made very good wines. Producers in Saint-Emilion and Pomerol made the best wines of the vintage.



The style of 2015 Right Bank red wines can be generalised as:
Rich and seductive, with deep colours, high levels of extraction yet supple tannins.

More alcoholic than in previous recent vintages (14.5% is the norm)

Acidity is a concern. The best wines exhibit minerality and freshness, others have high pH levels.

Full bodied

I use a 100 point scoring system and regard any wine over 85 as worthy.

The more revered the appellation, the higher the score needs to be to be recommended, as the prices will be higher.

Barrel samples are not finished wines so I offer some score banding , e.g. 90-92.

Scoring bands: Outstanding 95+ points, Highly Recommended 90-94, Recommended 86-89

Recommended Wines

Bordeaux Superieurs, Cadillac, Cotes de Bordeaux

Cotes de Bordeaux	Ch. Le Doyenné	89-90	Release price £72 IBD 12x75cl
Bordeaux Superieur	Ch. Pey La Tour Reserve	87-88	Release price £65 IBD 12x75cl
Cadillac Cts de Bordeaux	Ch. Carignan	87-88	
Cadillac Cts de Bordeaux	Ch. Reynon	87-88	
Bordeaux Superieur	Ch. Croix Mouton	86-87	

Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux , Francs Cotes de Bordeaux

Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux	Ch. De Laussac	90-92
Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux	Ch. Veyry	90-91
Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux	Ch. Cap de Faugères	88-89
Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux	Ch. Côte Montpezat St. Jacques Cuvée	88-89
Compostelle		88-89
Francs Cotes de Bordeaux	Ch. De Francs 'Les Cerisiers'	87-88





C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Francs Cotes de Bordeaux

Ch. Puygueraud

86-88

POMEROL

It is no surprise that the best wines of Pomerol will come from the water-retaining clay and limestone soils that are to be found on the north and eastern flanks.

I love to drink Pomerol and believe the estates below made great wines to enjoy in the medium, and hopefully long term.

Potential Value Pomerol

Ch. la Pointe	94-96
Ch. Montviel	93-94
Ch. Bourgneuf	92-93
Ch. Haut Maillet	92-93
Ch. Mazeyres	92-93
Clos René	92-93
Ch. Beau Soleil	91-92
Ch. Bonalque	91-92
Ch. la Cabanne	91-92
Ch. Beauregard	90-92
Clos de la Vieille Eglise	90-92

Higher priced Pomerol

Ch. La Fleur-Pétrus	98-99
Ch. Clinet	94-96
Ch. le Bon Pasteur	94-95
Ch. Gazin	92-93
Ch. Plince	92-93
Ch. Certan de May	91-92
Ch. Petit-Village	91-92
Ch. La Cabanne	91-92
Ch. La Croix-de-Gay	90-92
Clos du Clocher	89-90

SAINT-EMILION

The deep limestone around Saint-Emilion helped to preserve water during the months of drought as well as add texture and freshness to the wines. Saint-Emilion produced dark, rich, extracted wines with high alcohol and supple tannins. The top A rated Premier Grand Cru Classé wines that I tasted were sensational.

Saint-Emilion Grands Crus

Outstanding

Ch. Le Dome 98-99

Highly recommended

Ch. Pierre 1er	93-94	Previously known as Ch. Croix Figeac
Ch. Croix Cardinale	92-93	
Ch. Rol Valentin	92-93	
Ch. Fombrauge	91-92	
Ch. Puy Blanquet	90-92	
Ch. Teyssier	90-91	



Saint-Emilion Grands Crus Classés:

Outstanding

Ch. Canon	98-100
Ch. Beauséjour Duffau-Lagarosse	98-99
Ch. Les Grandes Murailles	95-97



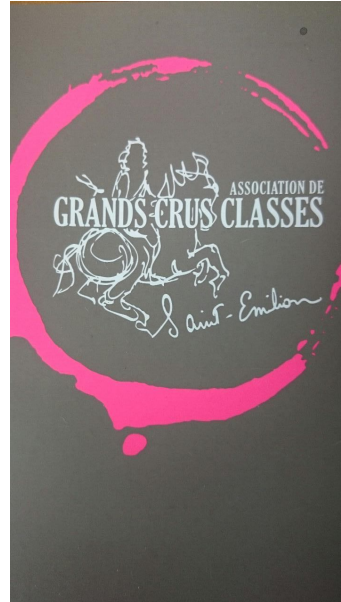


C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Ch. Péby-Faugères	95-97
Ch. Troplong-Mondot	95-97
Ch. Pavie-Macquin	94-96

Highly Recommended

Ch. Beauséjour Becot	93-94
Ch. Balestard-La-Tonnelle	92-93
Ch. Barde-Haut	92-93
Ch. Bellefont-Belcier	92-93
Ch. Cap de Mourlin	92-93
Ch. Chauvin	92-93
Ch. De Pressac	92-93
Ch. Fleur-Cardinale	92-93
Ch. Grand-Mayne	92-93
Ch. La Serre	92-93
Ch. Cote de Baleau	91-92
Ch. Fonplégade	91-92
Ch. Villemaurine	90-92
Ch. Faugères	90-91



Part 2 – The Left Bank

THE LEFT BANK -MEDOC

2015 was a year for the Cabernets, and for Margaux, which dodged the September rains and enjoyed good weather throughout the harvest.. Cool September nights helped to retain the acidity in the vines by slowing the production of sugars and it is the freshness in many of the Medoc wines that saves them from tasting too extracted and alcoholic.

THE CLASSIFIED GROWTHS OF THE MEDOC IN 1855

Of the 60 Chateaux that still exist from the 1855 classification I tasted all but twelve and can easily recommend thirty of them on quality grounds. Price is a different matter. I did not taste the following wines, primarily because the estates do not show their wines outside the chateaux and I do not find time to make personal visits, much as the experience is a fascinating one. I give James Suckling's scores for reference: Château Latour (96-97), Château Lafite Rothschild (97-98), Château Cos d'Estournel (97-98), Château Margaux (100), Château Haut Brion (97-98), Château Leoville Las Cases (96-97), Château Mouton Rothschild (96-97), Château Palmer (99-100), Château Pontet-Canet (97-98), Château Ducru-Beaucaillou (95-96), Château Duhart-Milon (91-92). I sort the wines by appellation, including the Crus Bourgeois.



THE CRUS BOURGEOIS OF THE MEDOC

While I was in Bordeaux I was delighted to meet with Frederic de Luze and Francois Nony who preside over the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois. Not only have they made very good wines at their properties Ch Pavil de Luze in Margaux and Chateau Caronne Ste Gemme in Saint-Laurent. They were also open to new ideas to introduce Crus Bourgeois to the UK



C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

consumer. As a glass-half-full kind of guy I think it is great that there are so many emerging properties in the Medoc making excellent wine. I think quality remains high in 2015, particularly in the South. It is a pity of course that the established Crus Classés of the Medoc are becoming less and less affordable but it is my job to find wines that people want to buy and drink and the Crus Bourgeois of the Medoc provide a rich seam to mine for lesser known jewels. I like the challenge.

As the Medoc's second division of wines it is also a pity that the 'Cru Bourgeois' classification itself faces an identity crisis, with many famous members leaving the club and the 2003 reclassification being annulled in 2007. The term 'Cru Bourgeois' now exists as a label of quality that is issued on an annual basis to wines that satisfy an independent body. Any property in the Medoc may submit its wine and there is just one level. Does the classification mean anything any more if famous properties like Chateau Sociando Mallet do not wish to apply for it? Probably not if you know exactly what you are looking for. For those looking for new properties to discover the Cru Bourgeois status is now more than membership of a club – it is a mark of quality. Members of the Alliance are once again being asked to vote about a reintroduction of different classification levels (such as Superieur and Exceptionel) this coming September, and if the motion is carried it could tempt some Chateaux back into the fold. Certainly there are no moves to allow new members to the Grand Cru Classé classification.

Tasting the 2015 barrel samples reminded me that Merlot is not just the most widely planted grape variety of the Right Bank. It is also now the favoured grape of the majority of Cru Bourgeois. It ripens and matures earlier than Cabernet Sauvignon and is better suited to the clay soils in the northern Medoc. As explained above, I strongly feel 2015 was a vintage for Cabernet Sauvignon. I came to this conclusion during the tasting of some 200 Cru Bourgeois, where wines with a majority of Cabernet Sauvignon tended to taste more vibrant, balanced and interesting than the Merlot-dominated wines.

Margaux

The wines from the southern Medoc are among the most consistently successful in 2015 and that includes the Haut Medoc 'new wave' wines from just south of Margaux (see below). In a vintage where the taster's palate was beset with chalky tannins and fresh acidity, the relatively restrained and elegant nature of wines from Margaux were a blessed relief. There was a lovely combination of ripeness and freshness without a tendency to over-extract. I am hoping that the lesser known Crus Bourgeois will offer good value.

Cru Classés

Outstanding

Ch. Giscours	94-96
Ch. Rauzan Segla	94-96

Highly recommended

Ch. Cantenac-Brown	93-94
Ch. Malescot Saint-Exupéry	93-95
Ch. Marquis de Terme	92-93
Ch. Dauzac	91-92
Ch. Du Tertre	91-92
Ch. Prieuré-Lichine	91-92
Ch. Durfort Vivens	90-92
Ch. Marquis d'Alesme Becker	89-90

Non Cru Classés

Ch. Labergorce	92-93
Ch. Angludet	91-92





C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Ch. Siran	91-92
Ch. Haut Breton Larigaudière	90-92
Ch. D'Arsac	90-91
Ch. Tour de Bessan (La)	89-90
Ch. Tour de Mons (La)	89-90
Chevalier de Lascombes	89-90
Ch. La Gurgue	89-90

Pauillac

Clearly a successful vintage for the Cabernet Sauvignon dominated wines in Pauillac, many wines I tasted were full-bodied but avoided the drying tannins and slight hollowness of other areas.

Crus Classés

Highly Recommended

Ch. Pichon-Longueville Baron	93-94
Ch. Pichon Longueville Lalande	93-94
Ch. Batailley	92-93
Ch. Lynch-Moussas	92-93
Ch. Haut-Batailley	91-92
Ch. Grand-Puy-Lacoste	91-92
Ch. Lynch-Bages	90-92
Ch. Clerc Milon	89-90

Recommended

Ch. Haut-Bages Libéral	88-89
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Non Crus Classés

Highly Recommended

Reserve de la Comtesse 2nd wine of Ch. Pichon Lalande	92-93
Lacoste Borie 2nd wine of Ch. Grand-Puy-Lacoste	90-92

Recommended

Ch. Fonbadet	88-89
Ch. la Fleur Peyrabon	88-89

St-Estèphe

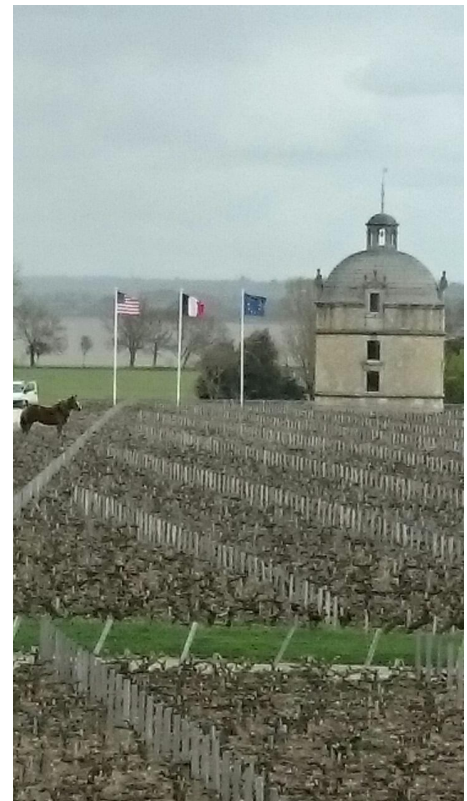
Caught in the heavy rains of September 12th, I heard that some St Estèphe property owners sought permission to chaptalise (add sugar), a strange thing indeed in a drought year but indicative that grapes were not ripe enough at the time of the rains and there was fear of rot setting in if grapes were not harvested. Other properties waited and have made very good wines, but lacking in the depth of other top Medoc wines.

Crus Classés

Highly Recommended

Ch. Calon-Ségur	91-92
Ch. Montrose (cases of 6)	90-92
Ch. Cos-Labory	89-90

Non Crus Classé





CAMBRIDGE
WINE MERCHANTS

Highly Recommended

Ch. Phélan-Ségur 91-92
Ch. Serilhan 89-90

Recommended

Ch. Lilian Ladouys 87-88
Ch. Le Crock 86-88

Saint-Julien

Like Pauillac a little further north, the wines of Saint Julien are Cabernet dominated and wine makers revelled in the great conditions for this grape variety to make very good claret for medium to long-term cellaring. There just don't seem to be enough properties in this modestly sized 920ha appellation (Pauillac has 1200ha, Margaux 1350ha). There are only 30 properties and this keeps prices high and rising.

Crus Classés

Outstanding

Ch. Léoville Poyferré 94-96

Highly Recommended

Ch. Léoville Barton 92-93

Ch. St.-Pierre 92-93

Ch. Gruaud-Larose 91-92

Ch. Branaire-Ducru 90-92

Ch. Beychevelle 90-92

Ch. Langoa Barton 89-91

CH. Talbot 89-91

Non Crus Classés

Highly Recommended

Ch. Gloria 91-92

Clos du Marquis 90-92

Recommended

Ch. Du Glana 88-89



Part 3 - Haut Medoc, Moulis, Listrac and Medoc

Haut-Médoc

The Haut Médoc appellation includes fifteen communes stretched out over 60km of the Medoc peninsular, so it is unsurprising that there is as much difference between the styles of Haut Medoc AC wines from Macau in the south and Vertheuil in the North, as there is between Margaux and St Estephe. I feel it is helpful to separate the estates geographically into Southern, Middle and Northern communes, as these communes will have more in common with their neighbours than those further a field. See map.

To the South lie Macau, Ludon, Le Pian-Médoc, Parempuyre, Blanquefort and Le Taillan. I have also included the appellations of Moulis and Listrac in the middle Medoc section below.





C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

In the middle Medoc lie Arcins, Avensan, Lamarque, Cussac and Saint-Laurent-Médoc. Saint-Sauveur, Cissac, Vertheuil and Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne lie to the North.

There are only five Crus Classés found in Haut Medoc AOC communes: Belgrave, Camensac and Tour Carnet are in the Middle Medoc, while La Lagune and Cantemerle are in the South.

Southern Haut-Medoc communes include Macau, Ludon, Le Pian-Médoc, Labarde, Blanquefort and Parempuyre. Most of the best Crus Bourgeois are found in the Macau and Ludon communes. The best Southern Haut Medoc wines expressed suave ripeness, Margaux-like finesse and forward drinkability. Moulis and Listrac



Commune	Château	
Highly Recommended		
Ludon-Médoc	Ch. La Lagune Cru Classé	93-94
Le Pian-Médoc	Ch. Duthil	92-93
Macau	Ch. Cambon La Pelouse	91-92
Le Pian-Médoc	Ch. Sénéjac	90-92
Macau	Ch. Dasvin-Bel-Air	90-92
Ludon-Médoc	Ch. Paloumey	90-91
Macau	Ch. Cantemerle Cru Classé	90-91
Ludon-Médoc	Ch. Agassac (d')	89-90
Macau	Ch. Maucamps	89-90
Macau	Ch. Trois Moulins	89-90
Blanquefort	Ch. Dillon	89-90
Le Pian-Médoc	Ch. Malleret (de)	89-90
Arsac	Ch. Monteil d'Arsac (Le)	88-90
Recommended		
Blanquefort	Ch. Saint Ahon	88-89
Macau	Ch. Belle-Vue	88-89
Macau	Ch. Gironville (de)	87-88

Middle Haut-Medoc – Moulis, Listrac, Arcins, Avensan, Lamarque, Cussac and Saint-Laurent-Médoc

Many of the vineyards are planted with equal quantities of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot making up a balance of plantings. I imagine winemakers put as much Cabernet Sauvignon as they could into the blend in this vintage and that really is why Bordeaux adopt a multi cepage vineyard strategy.

My recommendations are:

Commune	Château	
Highly recommended		
Avensan	Ch. Citran	90-92
Moulis-en-Médoc	Ch. Gressier Grand Poujeaux	90-92
Listrac	Ch. Fonréaud	90-92
Moulis-en-Médoc	Ch. Maucaillou	90-92
Arcins	Ch. Arnould	90-91
Listrac	Ch. Mayne Lalande	90-91
Cussac Fort Médoc	Ch. Moulin Rouge (du)	89-90
Saint-Laurent-Médoc	Ch. Camensac	89-90
Lamarque	Ch. Malescasse	89-90



C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Listrac	Ch. Fourcas-Borie	89-90
Moulis-en-Médoc	Ch. Poujeaux	89-90
Moulis-en-Médoc	Ch. Chasse-Spleen	89-90

Recommended

Listrac-Médoc	Ch. Peyredon Lagravette	88-89
Cussac Fort Médoc	Ch. Tour du Haut Moulin	88-89
Saint-Laurent-Médoc	Ch. Caronne Sainte-Gemme	88-89
Saint-Laurent-Médoc	Ch. Belgrave	88-89
Cussac Fort Médoc	Ch. Lanessan	88-89
Arcins	Ch. Arcins (d')	87-88
Lamarque	Ch. Lamarque(de)	87-88
Listrac	Ch. Fourcas Dupré	87-88
Listrac	Ch. Fourcas Hostens	87-88
Cussac Fort Médoc	Ch. Retout (du)	86-88
Arcins	Ch. Barreyres	86-88

Northern Haut-Medoc – Saint-Sauveur, Cissac, Vertheuil and Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne

Where these communes excelled in 2014 they had more difficulty dealing with the conditions in 2015, leaving some wines a little out of balance and missing some weight. Still a good source of well priced wines.

Commune	Château	
Highly recommended		
Saint-Sauveur	Ch. Hourtin-Ducasse	90-92
Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne	Ch. Charmail	90-91
Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne	Ch. Sociando-Mallet	90-91
Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne	Ch. Aurilhac (d')	88-90
Cissac-Médoc	Ch. Hanteillan	88-90
Recommended		
Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne	Ch. Saint-Paul	88-89
Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne	Ch. Lestage Simon	88-89
Cissac-Médoc	Ch. Larrivaux	87-88
Saint-Sauveur	Ch. Peyrabon	87-88
Cissac-Médoc	Ch. Lamothe-Cissac	86-88
Saint-Sauveur	Ch. Liversan	86-88
Saint-Seurin-de-Cadourne	Ch. Maurac	86-88
Cissac-Médoc	Ch. Villambis (de)	86-88
Cissac-Médoc	Ch. Cissac	86-88



Medoc Appellation

The appellation Medoc comprises sixteen communes and 4700 hectares to the north of St Estephe. The best known communes for quality are Begadan, Ordonnac and St Cristoly. The terroir is different from the Haut Medoc further south, comprising richer, moisture retaining soils more suited to the Merlot grape. The style of the wines therefore changes. The properties are well known for offering value for money, producing sturdy wines if sometimes lacking finesse. Because of the majority of Merlot planted in these communes there are fewer stand out excellent wines. Many tasted tough and dry and lacking finesse although the best had ripe fruit, well handled tannin and solid structure.



C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Commune	Château	
Recommended		
Bégadan	Ch. Vieux Robin	88-89
Civrac	Ch. Escurac (d')	87-88
Bégadan	Ch. Tour Seran	87-88
Gaillan en Médoc	Ch. Chantemerle	86-88
Saint-Yzans-de-Médoc	Ch. Loudenne	86-88
Bégadan	Ch. Patache d'Aux	86-88
Jau-Dignac-Loirac	Ch. Poitevin	86-88
Ordonnac	Ch. Potensac	86-88
Lesparre	Ch. Haut-Couloumey C Prestige	86-87

Part 4 - PESSAC-LEOGNAN / GRAVES

These regions, to the South-West of Bordeaux and some of which is actually grown in its suburbs, received consistently good marks from me. In general I was impressed with the performance from the wines, with successes in both reds and whites. For the reds, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are planted in roughly equal proportions and were usefully employed to add texture, fruit and acidity. The whites were wonderfully fresh but some lacked concentration and could be quite sour.

The wines of Pessac-Leognan and Graves to its south seem to be out of favour but I urge people to have a look at the wines from this vintage.

Pessac-Leognan, Graves and Dry Whites from Sauternes:

Outstanding		
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. Smith-Haut-Lafitte	94-96
Highly recommended		
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. Haut-Bergey	92-93
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. Carbonnieux	89-90
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. La Garde	89-90
Pessac leognan Blanc	Ch. Larrivet-Haut-Brion	89-90
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. De Fieuzal	89-90
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. Latour Martillac	89-90
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. Bouscaut	89-90
Recommended		
Bordeaux Blanc	Ch. Doisy Daene Blanc Sec	87-88
Bordeaux Blanc	Lune d'Argent, Clos les Lunes	87-88
Graves Blanc	Ch. Rahoul Blanc	87-88
Graves Blanc	Clos Floridene Blanc	87-88
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. le Thil Comte Clary	87-88
Pessac Leognan Blanc	Ch. Picque Caillou	86-87



C A M B R I D G E
W I N E M E R C H A N T S

Pessac-Leognan and Graves Reds:

Outstanding

Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Haut-Bailly	95-96
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Smith-Haut-Lafitte	94-96

Highly recommended

Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Haut-Bergey	92-93
Graves Rouge	Clos Floridene Rouge	91-92
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Dom. De Chevalier	91-92
Graves Rouge	Ch. Haura	90-92
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Latour Martillac	90-92
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Lespault-Martillac	90-92
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Les Carmes-Haut-Brion	91-92
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Malartic-Lagravière	91-92
Graves Rouge	Ch. Rahoul	88-90
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Bouscaut	88-90
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Brown	88-90
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Carbonnieux	88-90
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. La Garde	88-90
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. Olivier	88-90
Pessac Leognan Rouge	Ch. De Fieuzal	88-90

Part 5 - Sauternes / Barsac

The conditions were ideal for a great Sauternes vintage, with rain coming in August, September and October but with sufficient sunshine in between to ward off rots other than botrytis.

Many of the wines I tasted were very sweet (around 130gr/l residual) with good levels of acidity, plenty of power and varietal character as well. The wines I think stand out are:

Outstanding

Ch. Lafaurie-Peyraguey 94-96

Highly recommended

Ch. Sigalas-Rabaud 93-94

Ch. Coutet 93-94

Ch. Suduiraut 93-94

Ch. La Tour Blanche 91-92

Clos Haut Peyraguey 89-90

Ch. Filhot 89-90

Ch. Liot 89-90

Ch. Nairac 89-90

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The views in this report are those of the author.