

# 2013 Bordeaux Vintage Report



*The View of St-Emilion from Château Pavie-Macquin.*

## 2013 BORDEAUX VINTAGE REPORT FEATURES

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## 2013 Bordeaux: More Than Meets the Eye

*By Clyde Beffa Jr.*

**The handwriting was on the wall even before we left California: 2013 would be a terrible vintage for Bordeaux.** People were dismissing the young wines even though no one had tasted them. Extremely poor weather conditions early and late in the growing season had doomed these babies, some said. But Ralph, Trey, Alex and I went to Bordeaux anyway. We'd only be there eight days, we figured, so if worst came to worst we could shake hands and kiss babies.

The 2013 growing season was notably short. Flowering was late and very uneven because of a rainy, cool June. Merlot on the Left Bank suffered a lot. The summer weather was mostly hit and miss, with a hot July. *Veraison* took place later than usual, but harvest started earlier than it normally would for a late flowering because September was rainy and humid and everyone feared botrytis. Usually short seasons like this one tend to lead to wines that are bitter and green. So when we tasted our first 2013 at Château Labégorce upon arriving in Bordeaux we all looked at each other with surprise. The wine was spicy and quite smooth. Where was the greenness that was supposed to be a major characteristic of the vintage?

We didn't taste greenness in the Labégorce that night, nor did we taste it in most of the 2013s we tried the rest of the week. Was it the decent July weather that helped? Was it the vastly improved vineyard practices and winemaking capabilities from the last 40 years? Surely had the weather conditions of 2013 happened in the '70s, '80s or even '90s, the resulting wines would not have been very good. But we found most of

the 2013s were much better than we anticipated—not blockbuster wines like 2009 or 2010—but pleasant wines that were fairly easy to taste (much easier to taste than the 2011s, in fact).

So how did the Bordelais keep this vintage from being a disaster? Severe selection. Harvest was down nearly 50%, and most properties made less *grand vin* than normal, using just 30% in their first wines and instead making more of their second or third wine. Diligent work in the vineyards was another key to the relative success of 2013. And what was the role of the optical sorter in 2013—the fancy, relatively new machine that takes the place of six to eight people at the sorting table picking out and discarding unhealthy berries? I surveyed at least 20 owners/winemakers/managing directors on the subject, and it turned out to be quite controversial. All agreed that sorting was a costly, but necessary process for making great wines, but not whether the expensive machine was necessary. Several very big property owners including Christian Moueix (Pétrus, Trotanoy, etc.), Bruno Borie (Ducru, etc.), Daniel and Florence Cathiard (Smith Haut Lafitte) said the optical sorter was extremely important to their success in 2013. But just as many other big name owners said it was not useful at all. Frédéric Engerer of Latour said his optical sorter was 10 people wearing glasses.

Whether the properties used an optical sorter or not, there are some wines worth buying from this vintage. Our Bordeaux team's notes on 2013 follow. Reviewers are noted by initials. CB: Clyde Beffa. TB: Clyde "Trey" Beffa III and AP: Alex Pross.

# 2013 BORDEAUX *A Charming Vintage*

This was my fifth trip to Bordeaux to taste *En Primeur*, and I came away thinking the 2013s are charming wines that should drink well young. The wines are lower in alcohol (several were in the 12.5-13.5% range) and see less new oak than many recent vintages, making them somewhat reminiscent of clarets made in the '60s, '70s and '80s. Of course, 2013 is not a "great" vintage, and as far as quality goes it does not compare qualitatively with 2009, 2010 or 2012, but the pricing is reduced and there are definitely some wines worth considering. Below are some things to keep in mind when buying your 2013s. My notes throughout this report are marked with my initials, "AP."

1. The weather, particularly the rain, had a huge effect on the 2013 vintage. Many producers had reduced yields naturally because of uneven flowering, and then they had to do several severe passes in the vineyard to further reduce the crops, as well as a strict triage of the harvested grapes.

2. Cabernet Sauvignon on the Left Bank outperformed Merlot. Consequently, many of the classified growths used greater-than-usual amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon in their blends.

3. In my opinion, properties in St-Julien made the best wines of the vintage, followed by Pomerol, then Pessac-Léognan, Pauillac and St-Estèphe, with Margaux and St-Emilion producing my least favorite wines this vintage.

4. The dry white wines and Sauternes are excellent in 2013. The dry whites have great acidity and balance, while the Sauternes have concentration and powerful fruit. If you are a fan of Bordeaux whites or Sauternes, then this is a vintage for you!

5. My scores reflect how successful I think a wine was in relation to the other wines of the vintage, as well as if I believe the producer made the best wine they could for the vintage.

6. My scoring system: \*\*\*\* Great Wine; \*\*\*½ Very Good Wine; \*\*\* Good wine, \*\*½ Average to Good Wine; \*\* Average Wine. Less than \*\* Not Recommended.

I'd love to tell you that 2013 is a great Bordeaux vintage, but it isn't. What is important to take from our tastings is that there are some very good wines that represent good value that should be purchased as futures. There are roughly 25 or so wines from this vintage that, in my opinion, (depending on price) make sense to purchase *En Primeur*: Alter Ego is one for sure, as well as the wines of Domaine de Chevalier. Sauternes futures are also a wise buy in this vintage, especially if you want 375ml bottles, since most producers don't bottle many 375s beyond what is pre-ordered.

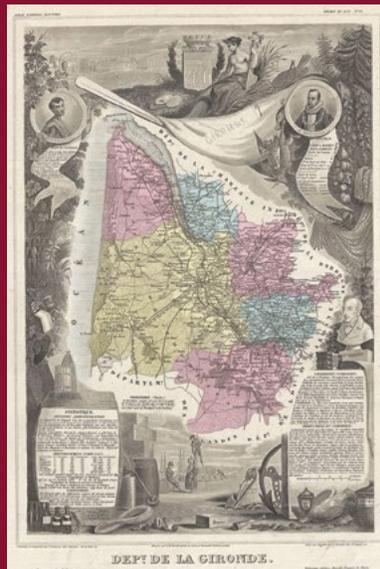
Overall, the 2013 vintage is charming, with wines that should drink well young and please people who want lower alcohol (less than 14%) and less oaky wines. There is an undeniable feel to these wines that harken back to the easy-drinking, charming, old-style clarets loved by the British. These wines should definitely appeal to folks turned off by the large scale of the 2009 and 2010 Bordeaux, as well as their astronomical pricing. I know that I found many wines that I will enjoy drinking in the future.

—Alex Pross

# 2013 BORDEAUX *A Winemaker's Vintage*

We should take our hats off to all fantastic work in the vineyards and cellars in 2013, because the top producers made some pretty good wines and even a few excellent ones. In my opinion, 2013 is a decent vintage, though extremely variable from estate to estate.

All wines at this young stage should have some bright attractive fruit (cherry, cassis, whatever berry) and good color. More important, though, is the quality of the tannins and the overall harmony/balance and finish of the wine. Tannins are an integral part of preservation and longevity in every great wine, especially in Bordeaux, but bitter, harsh, aggressive tannins do not go away. The best wines from this vintage have enough sweet middle fruit to hang in there with the brisk acidity and sometimes sharp tannins. The vintage seems to offer varying styles—even within the same commune—from



classically structured clarets like Calon-Ségur, Montrose and Haut-Bailly to flamboyant, exotic wines like Pontet-Canet, Smith Haut Lafitte, Pape Clément and Troplong Mondot. If you are a fan of Bordeaux and a collector as I am—and not just a trophy collector—I'm sure you'll want to have some wines from this vintage in your cellar. The beauty of Bordeaux is the subtle differences from vintage to vintage.

As for the white wines and the stickies in 2013, there's some sweet news from Sauternes and Barsac. As is often the case, the erratic weather that makes for a difficult red wine vintage can help form botrytis for the producers of sweet wines, making 2013 another fine vintage for stickies! And while the yields for dry whites were also low in 2013, they were of good quality. Most wines are in a clean, elegant and fresh style.

—Ralph Sands



*Frederic Eng  r of Ch  teau Latour Shows Off His Optical Sorter.*

## 2013 Tasting Notes

### **Pauillac**

There are some excellent wines from Pauillac in 2013. Good power and structure. Cabernet Sauvignon did well here, Merlot not so well.

**Latour, Pauillac (NA)** CB: Big boy, but not for sale yet. [Latour stopped selling its wines *En Primeur* starting with the 2012 vintage.] AP: Hints of graphite on the nose. Super-fine tannins, black walnut liqueur, dark cherry fruit and notes of dark chocolate as well. A bit closed. TB: Probably my favorite wine from the vintage. The 2013 Latour shows a solid core of sweet fruit that is balanced by ripe, fine tannins. Unlike some wines from this vintage, this wine is well put together and full in the middle. This should be a good wine for mid-term cellaring. I would expect to see it released some time in the next 10 years. 93-95 points.

**Les Forts de Latour, Pauillac (NA)** TB: I love this. Elegant, lovely and, sadly, not for sale yet. Lots of lead pencil and cedar in the aromas and flavors. spicy and fresh with plenty of acidity to hold up the fruit. Tannins are firm but balanced. Good wine. 91-93 points.

**Pauillac de Latour, Pauillac (NA)** TB: Shows ripe, spicy, upfront fruit with firm, ripe tannins. Much more approachable than the 2008, which we tasted alongside it; it should be released in the next three years. 90-92 points.

**Lafite Rothschild, Pauillac (PA \$479.99)** AP: This is always one of the toughest wines for me to taste *En Primeur* since it typically shows so monolithically. Dark and brooding, with hints of burnt

earth, it slowly reveals black cherry cola, some milk chocolate and good blackberry fruit. Nice length and tannins. Finishes fresh and bright. One of the more accessible Lafites I have tasted *En Primeur*. TB: 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Merlot. A bit closed. Upfront cedar, mineral and lead pencil flavors seem to overshadow all of the wine's fruit. Balanced, but a bit dry on the finish. 91-93 points.

**Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac (PA \$359.99)** CB: One of the best wines of the vintage. They are on a roll here. AP: So sweet and sexy. Loaded with dark berry fruit both on the nose and the palate. Hints of tobacco and spice. This wine is layered and complex. A fine effort. TB: A candidate for wine of the vintage! A blend of 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc, the 2013 Mouton is a sexy, elegant wine that really shows finesse and excellent middle sweetness. Not likely a long-lived wine, but should be delicious in its early years. Only knock: tannins are on the lighter side. 93-95 points.

**D'Armailhac, Pauillac (PA \$36.99)** CB: Lovely wine. Cassis and spice. AP: A very impressive offering from this Mouton-owned property; this wine displays lots of berry fruit, good grip and nice length and complexity. \*\*½ to \*\*\*. TB: This surprised us all. Spicy, ripe black cherry fruit with hints of wet stone, minerals and licorice. Balanced, long and well-structured. A solid effort!

**Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (PA \$99.99)** CB: Spicy boysenberry flavors. Less than half a normal harvest—2013 was a tough year for biodynamic producers. AP: This will be one of the more controversial wines of the vintage. It's super floral and intoxicating on the nose, with plum and spice cake that permeate the wine with a minced-meat pie quality. Lots of boysenberry and blackberry fruit, elegant yet complex and harmonious. TB: A blend of 30% Merlot, 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot. This wine has a crazy nose that reminds me of a young Joseph Swan Zinfandel, that is how ripe it is. It calms down a bit on the palate and shows its Cabernet backbone, freshness and acidity. This is a very interesting wine that should drink very well young. 91-93 points.

**Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac (PA \$99.99)** CB: Fantastic. A bit like their great 1986 (though slightly less concentrated). Masculine style. AP: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon for the first time ever. Hints of graphite, scorched earth and minerals, layers of complex fruit—dark and brooding. Notes of bitter chocolate, blackberry and black cherry as well as spice and pepper. \*\*\*½. TB: Very lush and rich in the mouth. Classic sweet herb, coffee flavors and hints of mocha. Tannins are ripe and sweet, with a lingering finish. Should be an early drinker!

**Grand-Puy-Lacoste, Pauillac (PA \$54.99)** AP: Lots of red fruit, crisp acidity, nice body and good balance. A tad herbal. TB: Really nice nose full of graphite, mineral and juicy black fruits. Integrated firm-but-ripe tannins, lots of grip, masculine in style. 91-93 points.

**Lynch-Bages, Pauillac (PA \$84.99)** AP: 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Tight/closed nose, dark cherry, dark chocolate and espresso. A brooding wine with lots of tannin and hints of graphite/lead pencil. \*\*\*. TB: Classically styled wine with black licorice and currant flavors and aromas. Lots of fruit and tannin, but there is balance. Firm wine, tightly wound with good, silky mid-palate fruit and a tannic finish.



*Château Cos d'Estournel. Photo by Magen Mallen.*

**Pichon-Baron, Pauillac (PA \$89.99)** CB: Boysenberries abound. More feminine in 2013. Very good and somewhat lush. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon and 18% Merlot. AP: Dark cherry liqueur, tobacco, lots of berry fruit concentration, savory herbs and noticeable tannins. \*\*\*. TB: An open-knit, dark, lush wine that coats the palate with fruit and flavors of mocha and black currants. Tannins are integrated and ripe but still firm. A tad alcoholic, but a solid effort bordering on exotic.

**Pedesclaux, Pauillac (PA \$31.99)** AP: This Fifth Growth was a perennial underperformer until it was purchased by Jacky Lorenzetti in 2009; HE pumped a lot of money into the property. It's situated between Pontet-Canet and Mouton Rothschild, so the estate is certainly capable of producing fantastic wine given its natural terroir, and in 2013 it has. Tons of blackberry liqueur, very fruit-driven, lots going on here. Should be a great value for less than \$40. TB: Dark black cherry fruit, chewy tannins, slate, mineral and firm hints of coffee. A good buy! 90-92 points.

### St-Julien

We thought this region produced the best 2013s. There are so few properties and so many of them are classified that the quality is usually quite good in most vintages.

**Léoville-Las Cases, St-Julien (PA \$129.99)** AP: 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Merlot and 14% Cabernet Franc. Located at the northern edge of St-Julien on the border with Pauillac. Léoville-Las Cases is the greatest producer in St-Julien as well as its most expensive. Notes of raspberry liqueur as well as black raspberry fruit, with hints of tobacco. Needs to settle. TB: Solid wine. Shows quite a bit of power. Fruit laced with flavors of graphite, tar, tobacco leaf and minerals. Lots of grip, but with the balance and structure to hold up. May be a longer lived 2013. 91-93 points.

**Clos Du Marquis, St-Julien (PA \$47.99)** CB: A very good value. Very rich on the palate. TB: Good, clean fruit. Seems a bit pinched and short right now. Firm tannins. Closed a bit. May get better with more barrel age, but should be an early drinker.

**Leoville-Poyferré, St-Julien (PA \$64.99)** AP: This is typically one of my favorite producers year-in and year-out, and they did not disappoint in 2013. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot and 3% Cabernet Franc. Spicy, bitter chocolate, plum, some blueberry and tobacco. Layered, with grippy tannins. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½. TB: Lots of lead pencil and minerals, red cherry, currants and spice. Lots of grip and power for the vintage, dense and balanced. One of the best wines we have tasted.

**Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (PA \$74.99)** CB: One of my favorite 2013s—big, but balanced and sweet. AP: The word “classic” gets thrown around way too much when discussing Bordeaux, but in the case of Léoville-Barton it's definitely merited. 83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc. Notes of black cherry cola and hints of raspberry. Layered and complex, with good depth and density. Really well-made. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½. TB: Lots of bittersweet cocoa and cola on the nose. Soft, lush texture. Lots of minerals and red currants.

**Langoa-Barton, St-Julien (PA \$49.99)** CB: Lovely cranberry and cherry aromas and flavors. TB: Pleasant nose, floral, sweet, closed up middle, with graphite, smoke and meaty flavors. A bit hard-edged on the finish. If it plumps out in the middle, which it should with some time, this wine will be delicious upon release.

**Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien (PA \$109.99)** CB: Deep, spicy red fruit flavors. Fine structure. Ripe. AP: Spicy mocha and blackberry notes with a lean, taut body, racy fruit flavors and good acidity. TB: A bit tight now, balanced and long, with good fruit. Firm and dry tannins. Lots of grip and a tannic finish. May come together with some time in the barrel. 89-91 points.

**Gruaud Larose, St-Julien (PA \$57.99)** AP: One of my favorite producers; always a great value. Very traditional in style, with lots of dark black and blue berry fruit, herbal/menthol qualities. The wine displays great length and feel. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½.

**Brancaire-Ducru, St-Julien (PA \$44.99)** AP: Property manager Patrick Maroteaux is one of the nicest men in all of Bordeaux, and he strives to craft the best possible wine from this large estate. The 2013 is a very good wine with a beautiful nose of fresh berries, along with a viscous mouthfeel and hints of red licorice and dark berry fruit. Good length with a full finish. \*\*\*.

**Talbot, St-Julien (Inquire)** AP: These guys have outdone themselves in 2013. Hints of blackberry, spice and racy herbs, with good depth and concentration. Layers of complexity; very well made. \*\*\*.

### St-Estèphe

Less variation here quality-wise, as they received less rain than other regions. Better concentration in general.

**Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (PA \$129.99)** CB: Usually 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, but this year it's 76%, and the wine is quite delicious. Asian spices abound. Only 27 hectoliters per hectare. AP: I was anxious to try the 2013, the first vintage made after the departure of Jean-Guillaume Prats, Cos's long-time director. I was pleased. A fine wine with dark cherry, chocolate and dried herb notes. Lots of depth and layers, displaying good purity and power. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½. TB: A solid effort. On the nose, the wine is toasty and exotic, with hints of cocoa powder and graphite. The fruit is spicy, full and balanced by firm-but-ripe tannins that hold everything together. I think this will be one of the longer lived wines of the vintage. 91-93 points.

**Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe (PA \$64.99)** AP: Elegant red fruit aromas and a sweet palate entry. Intense boysenberry along with hints of menthol and spice; a bit closed. \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*. TB: 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Cabernet Franc, 6% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot. The 2013 Calon-Ségur shows aromas and flavors of coffee, black tea, red cherries and dried tobacco leaf. This is a rustic style of wine in every vintage, but I do find the 2013 to have plenty of fruit that carries through to the finish. Tannins are firm and sturdy.

**Capbern Gasqueton, St-Estèphe (PA \$19.99)** 91% Cabernet Sauvignon. CB: Red licorice flavors. An excellent second wine. AP: We discovered this in 2009 tasting Calon-Ségur En Primeur. This is made by the same people, and the wine rocks! Lots of bright, savory fruit and a nice racy herbal quality that adds to the medium-body. Great value. \*\*\*½. TB: Lots of fresh ripe and sweet middle fruit. Crunchy, lively tannins. Bright. Good value. A sleeper!

**Phélan Ségur, St-Estèphe (PA \$34.99)** TB: Red cherry cola on the nose. Good upfront, though a bit soft and short on finish. Flavors and tannins need time to come together, but a solid wine for the vintage.

**Montrose, St-Estèphe (PA \$89.99)** AP: Perplexing. Not showing well at the winery. Comes off closed with muted fruit. \*\* to \*\*\*½. TB: Shows tight, tannic and closed. The fruit is hard to find. 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot and 3% Petit Verdot. Rustic. Perhaps our sample was off as many tasters during En Primeur loved it.

**Tronquoy-Lalande, St-Estèphe (Inquire)** 52% Merlot. CB: Black fruits abound. Very nice. Lively, spicy wine. AP: Beautiful nose of berry fruit with good tannin structure. Nice value. \*\*\*½. TB: A sleeper! A big wine for the vintage. Concentrated and firm, this shows a good dose of spicy mid-core fruit to carry the firm tannins. Still, this wine is balanced and classic in style. 89-91 points.

### Haut-Médoc, Lustrac and Moulis

**Cambon La Pelouse, Haut-Médoc (Inquire)** TB: Sweet, with lots of oak, more extraction, lots of stuffing, firm tannins. Will need time.

**Fourcas Hosten, Lustrac (Inquire)** TB: A sleeper! Normally a rougher wine, this has more polish than in the past, mostly the result of recent large investments at the property. Upfront ripe fruit, spicy edges and a bright, lively finish. Another wine to buy! 88-90 points.

**Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (PA \$29.99)** AP: I always love this wine. It over-delivers every vintage. Nice layers of berry fruit and impressive complexity. Looks to compete favorably with the last few vintages. TB: Pretty floral fruit, spicy red currants, focused, balanced and fresh. Tannins are integrated and firm. A wine to buy. 89-91 points.

### Margaux

Margaux is a huge region with many properties. The 2013s vary greatly in quality. Palmer wines were stunning.

**Angludet, Margaux (PA \$26.99)** CB: Delicious. Buy it to enjoy over the next 10 years. AP: 52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot and 14% Petit Verdot. A perennial "best value." Bright red cherry fruit with hints of milk chocolate, tons of layers and good depth. Well done. \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Margaux, Margaux (PA \$359.99)** CB: No Merlot in this blend. 94% Cabernet Sauvignon. AP: Bright red, cool fruit. Menthol and rhubarb notes, hints of raspberry sherbet. \*\*\*½. TB: A bit closed; not as opulent as usual. Juicy texture, more forward and soft. Early drinking. Plum, cola, ripe/fine tannins! Not super concentrated. 90-92 points.

**Pavillon Rouge de Margaux, Margaux (PA \$129.99)** TB: Dark cocoa powder and slate flavors. Rich, spicy, juicy texture. Inky. Long finish and fine tannins. An early drinker.

**Palmer, Margaux (PA \$249.99)** CB: Heavenly. AP: 49% Merlot and 51% Cabernet Sauvignon. Black currant, berry liqueur and a sexy sugar plum spice thing going on. Great intensity. Loads of berry fruit along with good energy and cut. \*\*\*½. TB: Lots of clove, cinnamon, spice and cedar flavors followed by red currant/boysenberry pie fruit. Tannins are fine and ripe. Balanced and fresh. Delicious, crunchy fruit! 92-94 points.

**Alter Ego de Château Palmer, Margaux (PA \$59.99)** CB: We love it! AP: My favorite value of the vintage. Beautiful nose with lots of pretty berries, hints of spice and herbs. The palate displays gorgeous, elegant red berry fruit (cranberry, red currant and cherry) with a layered, plush finish. Bright and lively. Feels like a fine Margaux. \*\*\*½. TB: 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 46% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot. Lots of cola, licorice, red currants, smoke and cedar. Good fruit, ripe/fine tannins, medium-bodied, balanced and fresh. Good value! Early drinker. Long, fresh and lingering finish. Sleeper.

**Rauzan-Ségla, Margaux (PA \$56.99)** AP: If not for the two wines from Palmer, this might have been *the* wine of the appellation. Dusty berry notes, subtle spice, great delineation, elegance and impressive length. \*\*\*. TB: Big and chewy. Dark, meaty fruit, smoke, big tannins. A masculine wine.

**Cantenac Brown, Margaux (PA \$39.99)** AP: A pleasant surprise. Lots of deep, rich berry fruit accented by notes of milk chocolate. Big, full wine. \*\*\*. TB: Ripe crushed raspberry and blackberry fruit on the nose. Very soft and juicy. Bright, crisp acidity. Fresh. Really nice fruit!

**Malescot-St-Exupère, Margaux (PA \$47.99)** AP: Smooth, rich and luxurious. Nice, deep berry fruit, mocha notes and fair grip. \*\*\*.

**Du Tertre, Margaux (Inquire)** AP: Very pretty, elegant wine. Nice depth of fruit with red currant, red cherry and cranberry. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Giscours, Margaux (PA \$39.99)** AP: Lots of nice red fruit; spicy and peppery with hints of chocolate. Tasted three times. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Labégorce, Margaux (PA \$25.99)** CB: 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot. Great spice on the nose and palate. Some mocha flavors. Value. AP: A perennial favorite; this producer makes an excellent value-oriented Margaux. Nice red fruit, good concentration and hints of chocolate. \*\*½. TB: A solid effort for the vintage! Plenty of upfront fruit, spice and hints of toasty oak. Plenty of well-integrated structure and tannin.

## Pessac-Léognan

**Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$359.99)** AP: Deep, dark and brooding. Hints of scorched earth and minerality. Lots of depth, with dark fruits and spice. This wine is packed and immense; it feels like you're just scratching the surface. \*\*\*½.

**La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (Inquire)** AP: This rivals the Haut-Brion—really floral on the nose, but more feminine. Loads of berry fruit, minced-meat pie and fine, silky tannins. An impressive La Mission Haut-Brion. \*\*\*½.

**Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$84.99)** AP: Lots of layered, high-toned berry fruit with hints of pomegranate. Good length and silky tannins. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Smith Haut Lafitte, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$64.99)** AP: Nice minerality. Large-scaled. Deep, dark berry fruit along with tell-tale signs of black licorice and tar. Goes back to a style seen in the 2003-2008 vintages. TB: Excellent, sweet core of fruit surrounded by hints of minerals and earth, with a firm, tannic finish. Enough sweet middle fruit to carry the tannins. Good wine! 90-92 points.

**Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$47.99)** AP: Wow. Absolutely packed. Tons of ripe red fruit, great length and hints of spice. Reminiscent of the 2009 in some ways, though I'm not sure how they pulled this off. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½. TB: Big wine, with lots of power, depth of fruit and spice. Silky mid-palate that grabs on the finish.

**Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$64.99)** AP: Lots of red fruit, hints of cinnamon and some subtle spice notes. Some noticeable tannins.

**Haut-Bergey, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$22.99)** A superb value from the beautiful Hélène Garcin-Lévêque. Displays copious amounts of berry fruit along with nice length and body. Nice value. \*\* to \*\*½.

**Latour-Martillac, Pessac-Léognan (\$29.99)** AP: 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot. Very floral, with black cherry. Lots of spice. Good length, layered with some tannin. \*\*½.

## St-Emilion

Many small properties in this commune with all different types of terroir. Stick to our recommendations. The vines grew all season. Christian Moueix had to de-leaf four times.

**Cheval Blanc, St-Emilion (PA \$499.99)** AP: I liked this wine much more than my counterparts. Deep, dark cherry and pomegranate fruit, spicy cinnamon. Very well made. \*\*\*.

**Ausone, St-Emilion (PA \$499.99)** AP: Tobacco, blackberry liqueur, slightly herbal and racy. Lots of depth and purity of fruit. \*\*\*.

**Angelus, St-Emilion (PA \$269.99)** AP: Dark, brooding, spicy plum, black tea, graphite and scorched earth. Very nice length. Not at all overdone. \*\*\*.

**Bellevue, St-Emilion (Inquire)** TB: Ripe and fleshy in the mouth. Doesn't have the huge tannins some of the others have. Exotic and sexy in style. 89-91 points.

**Figeac, St-Emilion (PA \$79.99)** AP: Under new ownership. Many consider Figeac to be one of the greatest terroirs in St-Emilion and point to many legendary Figeac vintages from the past. Sadly, I have not experienced any of these, but the last two vintages have been markedly better. This year's is the best yet: Great, bright berry fruit, layered with good tannins and body. A delicious wine. \*\*\*. TB: A spicy, lively wine; Figeac is never overdone or over-extracted. None of the hollowness I have seen in recent vintages. Slightly herbal, but enough fruit and tannin structure to hold it together.

**Clos Fourtet, St-Emilion (PA \$69.99)** AP: One of my favorites. This always delivers and 2013 is no exception. Lots of red fruit that shines from start to finish, with silky tannins and a clean, elegant feel. \*\*\*.

**Canon-La-Gaffelière, St-Emilion (PA \$59.99)** CB: Another of my favorites for 2013. So pure and elegant. AP: Von Neipperg is firing on all cylinders. This guy just knows how to maximize what nature gives him every year. Pretty wine with loads of pure berry, cranberry and red currant fruit. Good tension and verve. \*\*\*.

**Troplong Mondot, St-Emilion (PA \$89.99)** AP: A magnificent property with a hillside vantage point. The wines are always full-throttle and a joy to taste. Lots of cola, with sexy, exotic spice notes. Big extraction. Made for the California palate. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Pavie, St-Emilion (PA \$269.99)** AP: Gérard Perse is no stranger to an over-the-top style, and the 2013 Pavie pushes the limits. Lots of blackberry liqueur and dark cherry juice concentrate mingle with a lot of new oak. The tannins are evident. Not sure if the vintage properly supports this style of winemaking. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Barde-Haut, St-Emilion (PA \$28.99)** AP: Another value from Hélène Garcin-Lévêque. More structured than the Haut-Bergey. Lots of blackberry with hints of coffee and a mocha-laced finish. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

## Pomerol

Pomerol tied with St-Julien for our favorite region. Of course it is quite a small appellation, and the properties are all of high quality.

**Pétrus, Pomerol (Inquire)** CB: Superb wine, but out of my price range. Pure and sweet. AP: Floral, wild herbs, black cherry and hints of roasted coffee. Rich, ripe and layered. Silky, with lots going on. The finish lasted 30-plus seconds. \*\*\*½.

**Clinet, Pomerol (PA \$67.99)** TB: Loaded with flavors of crushed berries. Sweet, bright, high-toned fruit and ripe, juicy tannins.



*Chateau La Mission Haut-Brion.*

**L'Evangile, Pomerol (PA \$169.99)** AP: From the Lafite family. This winery went through a complete overhaul several years ago. With stricter harvest, it has become one of the top producers in Pomerol every year. Loads of fresh macerated berries, spice and plum notes, with hints of chocolate. Lots going on. A very pretty wine. \*\*\*½. TB: 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc. A candidate for wine of the vintage in my book! Lush and silky in the mouth, with hints of cola, raspberries and vanilla spice. Finesse and purity. This is one of the longest finishing wines we tasted this year. 93-95 points.

**Le Gay, Pomerol (Inquire)** Super impressive, with tons of cola and berry fruit. Really pretty and elegant. Flat-out delicious. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½. TB: Sweet cola, spicy and very high-toned. So sweet it is almost tart. Fresh, light and elegant, with bright fruit.

**Trotanoy, Pomerol (Inquire)** AP: The first in a trio of great wines from Christian Moueix. A sexy wine with concentrated red berry fruit, blackberry liqueur and spice. \*\*\* to \*\*\*½.

**Vieux Château Certan, Pomerol (PA \$149.99)** AP: If it weren't for the price, this may have been my wine of the vintage. The miniscule production in 2013 also makes it hard to overly endorse since we will get very few cases of this wine to sell. Fresh picked berries, lots of floral elements, hints of lavender, then a blast of milk chocolate and cherries. So pretty, so elegant, yet full-bodied. Yum! \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*\*. TB: A blend of 92% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. Showing excellent on the day we visited the property. Delicious even at this young stage, and I imagine it will be a wine that will continue to show well early in its life. Lots of lush, mouthwatering fruit that lingers onto the finish. Tannins are integrated and ripe.

**La Fleur de Boüard, Lalande-de-Pomerol (Inquire)** From Hubert de Boüard, who owns Angelus and consults on a number of projects. A great value. Tasted twice, and each time I came away impressed. Good body and balance. Nice berry fruit, with layers of complexity and hints of black tea and graphite. Very tasty. Good value. \*\*½.

### White Bordeaux

When evaluating a Bordeaux vintage it is important to note that red and white Bordeaux perform differently and therefore their quality can fall to opposite ends of the spectrum. While 2013 was an extremely challenging vintage for red Bordeaux, white Bordeaux

flourished. The vintage has given us some amazing wines that deliver great quality of fruit, drive, concentration, balance and acidity. The most expensive are monumental offerings, but there are quite a few affordable whites as well. Quantities, however, are limited.

### THE TWO BIG GUNS

La Mission Haut-Brion and Haut-Brion's whites are so good, but so expensive only hedge fund managers can afford them. Because of their cost, scarcity and First Growth-like quality, these wines need to be evaluated on their own away from the other white wines of Bordeaux.

**La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$799.99)** AP: Loads of lemon crème, with layers upon layers of fruit that explodes on the palate. Iodine. Its structure is reminiscent of a fine white Burgundy with a price tag to match! \*\*\*½.

**Haut-Brion Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$999.99)** AP: Iodine, lime blossom and hints of lemon crème. Pitted fruit, nut skin and good body. Feels a bit more masculine than the La Mission. \*\*\*½.

### THE BEST OF THE REST

**Domaine de Chevalier Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$89.99)** AP: For those who can't afford the two big guns, we can take solace in the fact that the Domaine de Chevalier Blanc is a tad more affordable. This is one of the greatest aging Bordeaux whites made, and the 2013 looks to be a legend in the making. Loads of iodine, white flowers and buttered nuts. Electric, with notes of wet stone. A fabulous wine. \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*\*.

**Pape Clément Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$149.99)** AP: If the first three wines fall into the more traditional white Bordeaux mold, then the Pape Clément breaks it. Fragrant and exotic, this has a sexy feel, with kumquat, lychee and tropical fruit notes. Stone fruit, wet stone and notes of iodine are prevalent. \*\*\*½.

**Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$89.99)** AP: Full-bodied, This has more oak than most of its counterparts. Tropical fruit and citrus notes dominate, with a slightly saline quality on the finish. \*\*\*.

**Malartic-Lagravière Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$59.99)** AP: Not quite as over the top as the Pape Clément, with notes of lychee and kumquat coupled with more dryness and iodine. A fine wine. \*\*\*.

**Blanc de Lynch-Bages, Pauillac (PA \$39.99)** AP: 54% Sauvignon Blanc, 28% Sémillon and 18% Muscadelle. Hints of iodine, lime blossom and white grapefruit. Bright, crisp and refreshing. They've backed off on the oak the last couple of years here, and it really shows (and helps). TB: Creamy, silky mid-palate, with loads of tropical fruit and bright, fresh acidity. Great backbone and balance. Delicious. 91-93 points.

**Latour-Martillac Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$34.99)** AP: 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Sémillon. Lots of lemon crème with tell-tale notes of white grapefruit, pepper and spice. Well done. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Pavillon Blanc de Margaux, Margaux (PA \$179.99)** TB: Very crisp and bright, with lively lemon, melon and citrus fruit and wet stone. Excellent. 91-93 points.

**Carbonnieux Blanc, Pessac-Léognan (PA \$34.99)** AP: Good crispness, white flowers, nut skin and hints of grapefruit and citrus. An easy-drinking, well made wine. \*\*½.

### Sauternes

It looks like 2013 may be the best vintage of Sauternes since the legendary 2001. The conditions were ideal, and several producers look to have made fantastic wines.

**D'Yquem, Sauternes (NA)** The Château did not release the 2013 for pre-arrival sales. AP: D'Yquem really is in a league of its own when it comes to Sauternes; its price and consistent quality dwarf the rest of Sauternes. The 2013 is a blend of 70% Sémillon and 30% Sauvignon Blanc with only 40% of the harvest making it into the final blend. (The rest is sold off as bulk commercial juice.) Super floral on the nose and very pretty, with hints of dried apricot and fresh pineapple. There's a golden honey note as well. The wine shows a pureness and concentration only found in d'Yquem, with racy dried pineapple on the finish. \*\*\*½ to \*\*\*\*.

**Climens, Barsac (PA 375ml \$33.99; 750ml \$67.99)** CB: Probably the best value in stickies this year. AP: The alternative to the large-scaled, big boy-ness of the d'Yquem. We tasted each of the eight barrel components that will make up the final blend. Climens is always more elegant and restrained than the d'Yquem, focusing on pretty fruit and acidity rather than raw power. The 2013 should be great, and the excitement in the air at the property when we tasted it was quite evident.

**Doisy-Daëne "L'Extravagant," Sauternes (PA 375ml \$199.99)** AP: In a great vintage this can go toe-to-toe with d'Yquem. Powerful and

extracted, Only three barrels made. A 50/50 blend of Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Super floral on the nose, with lots of apricot blossom, fig and buttered nuts. Very elegant for being so powerful. The wine has a silky mouthfeel and a powerful finish. \*\*\*½.

**Rieussec, Sauternes (PA \$79.99)** AP: Another Lafite property that is doing wonderful things. 95.5% Sémillon and 4.5% Sauvignon Blanc. Apricot blossoms and hints of candied lime, with a gorgeous punch of candied ginger and orange peel. \*\*\*.

**Suduiraut, Sauternes (PA 375ml \$34.99; 750ml \$69.99)** AP: Rich, powerful, golden and honeyed, with lots of candied orange and caramel. \*\*\*.

**Doisy-Daëne, Sauternes (PA 375ml \$24.99; 750ml \$49.99)** 90% Sémillon and 10% Sauvignon Blanc. Sweet apricots mingle with notes of honey, dried apricots and hints of candied lemon peel. Very smooth and viscous. \*\*\*.

**Doisy-Védrines, Sauternes (375ml \$17.99; 750ml \$34.99)** AP: Racy, menthol, white chocolate and spirit gum. Always elegant and always a stellar bargain. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Sigalas Rabaud, Sauternes (PA 375ml \$24.99; 750ml \$49.99)** AP: Quality seems to be on the rise here. Floral, with lychee notes and a very nice mouthfeel. Delicious and should get better. \*\*½ to \*\*\*.

**Lafaurie-Peyraguey, Sauternes (PA 375ml \$29.99; 750ml \$59.99)** AP: A fatter style that's quite successful in 2013. Fruit cocktail, with dried pineapple. This has a delicious mid-palate with layers of fruit and a multi-faceted feel. \*\*\*

**Guiraud, Sauternes (PA 375ml \$23.99; 750ml \$46.99)** AP: Strikes a nice balance between power and elegance. Tell-tale notes of caramel, white chocolate and orange peel mingle with candied citrus and ginger notes with a touch of smoke. \*\*\*.



*Soils of Château d'Yquem.*

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