



BORDEAUX 2016

En Primeur report

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THE 100 WORD LOW DOWN

It is worth paying attention to 2016 for two reasons – first the quality is very high, in some cases on par with 2015, 2010, 2009 and 2005; second, because *stylistically* it is the most classical vintage in a decade – high freshness of fruit and acidity, and lower than normal alcohol. This style delivers something only Bordeaux really can. While 8 of my top 10 wines are perennially very expensive, 2 of them are not. I would be delighted to have any of my top ten *value* list wines as *en primeur* buys. Provided release prices are sensible, these make sense.

TOP TEN

- 1. Château Lafleur, 96-99
- 2. Château Latour, 96-98+
(will not be available *en primeur*)
- 3. Château Lafite-Rothschild, 96-98
- 4. Château Margaux, 96-98
- 5. Château Haut Bailly, 96-98
- 6. Château Cheval Blanc, 95-97
- 7. Château Ausone, 95-97
- 8. Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 96-98/94-95+
- 9. Château Mouton-Rothschild, 95-97
- 10. Château Haut-Brion, 95-97

A fairly predictable list of first growths in my top ten, but note the inclusion of Château Haut Bailly and Château Pichon Longueville Baron.

MY TOP TEN FOR RELATIVE VALUE

A Hong Kong-oriented list of suggestions –

- 1. Château Haut Bailly, 96-98
- 2. Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 96-98/94-95+
- 3. Château L’Evangile, 94-96
- 4. Château Grand Puy Lacoste, 94-95/93-95+
- 5. Clos du Marquis, 93-95
- 6. Château Clerc-Milon, 93-95
- 7. Château Cos d’Estournel, 94-96+
- 8. Château Léoville Barton, 94-96
- 9. Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 94-96
- 10. Château Montrose, 94-96

There are quite a wide range of wines I tasted that I think offer (based on past pricing) great value for money, but they may not make sense for Hong Kong enthusiasts to buy *en primeur*. Unless any of the above step out of line in pricing, these are ten I would watch. The list is led by the two moderately priced estates that also made the absolute top ten. As I re-read the list and think back to the wines, L’Evangile, Grand Puy Lacoste, Clos du Marquis, and Clerc-Milon stand out as grabbing my attention for their quality.



Château Margaux

THE 2016 VINTAGE

As always, for the best full report I recommend reading Bill Blatch’s extensive coverage. Jancis Robinson very kindly publishes it in her ‘free for all’ section [here \(https://goo.gl/8YoQRY\)](https://goo.gl/8YoQRY). To be as brief as possible here, and to borrow mostly from Blatch, I think the following seem to be the most salient details –

- The cycle began wet which saved the vines from a too-early bud break – its cooling effect mitigating warmer than usual temperatures.
- Bud break and shoot development was successful, and despite erratic weather, most flowering was successful too. (Some late flowering sites fared less well due to rain). There was disease pressure to deal with in this first phase. Generally though at this stage potential crop size looked generous.

- Summer heat began in earnest from 20th June, and began a long drought period. Access to retained water reserves in the sub-soil was now key. Also those who de-leafed too much paid a price for it. July was not excessively hot but there were two long heatwaves in August. Small isolated showers were beneficial in avoiding serious problems, but lack of water was still a major concern.
- The ‘miracle’ of 2016 is rain that arrived on 13th September – a date that becomes pivotal. Many whites did not benefit from it. Parched soils easily absorbed the rain, and the vines were able to continue their work.
- The next key development was a significant drop in temperature in October. Fine weather allowed for late picking of Cabernet at full ripeness (and good acidity retention).
- Gentle extraction was a key factor to success for two reasons – 1. Some skins offered bitterness from blocked

maturity during the drought, 2. An unusually high proportion of pips would also delivery bitter harsh tannins if extracted too hard. Overall though there is velvety charm and fragrance to 2016 reds, and bunches were mostly healthy and free of rot at harvest. Little sorting was required.

- Alcohol levels are lower than in 2015 due to the summer drought slowing photosynthesis, while acidity levels are high due to retained nitrogen accumulation.

For me, the thrilling end of the 2016 vintage is this combination of moderate alcohol, fresh acidity, fresh aromatics and velvety tannins in the reds. I think the vintage especially favoured those estates who favour a gentler, less aggressive approach to vinification. The best reds have both intensity and charm, fragrance and length, and that moderate weight combined with complexity and phenolic maturity that is difficult to replicate in other successful Cabernet and Merlot regions of the world. While 2015 seems to have been a year in which even the fruit bomb

styles could really succeed, I don’t think that is true of 2016.

Overall, there is much to be excited about in 2016.

WHY BUY EN PRIMEUR

The most obvious traditional answer was price. The basic deal was that the best price would be the *en primeur* or ‘futures’ price – the consumer rewarding the merchant, the merchant rewarding the negociant, the negociant rewarding the châteaux with cash up front, long before anyone would see the finished wine in bottle. This system broke (as it does every few decades or so) with the 2009 and 2010 vintages, where the price of the final delivered wine fell significantly below what customers paid *en primeur*. Price for the 2016s will be something to watch, though fortunately it doesn’t look this year (so far!) like aggressive pricing will be the order of the day.

Of course you are not buying an entire vintage, you are picking out individual wines, so over-performers who nonetheless price ‘normally’ may well prove to make financial sense.

But there are some other reasons to buy *en primeur*

- Provenance is assured. You will be the first to take delivery of the wine and you will have control over its handling and storage from day one, with all the assurance for preserving condition that that brings. Years down the line that will mean either drinking the wine in its optimal condition, or being able to offer it for re-sale with complete assurance to the next buyer. Everyone benefits from assured provenance.
- Access. This isn’t Burugndy, but it is true that some of these wines appear later in the secondary market in much lower quantities. This is the best chance to ensure you can own what you want.
- Sunk cost. It’s not an obvious one, but taking the pain of the expense now is something akin to savings. The wine will feel like a bonus when it comes to drinking it!
- Choice of bottle formats. If you like to own your favourite wines in a nice mix of halves, magnums and imperials, this is your best – often only – chance to have the wine bottled in formats you want. (Subject to availability and advance ordering).
- If you had a child born in 2016, or got married, this is a very nice way to mark the occasion from the outset – investing in future anniversaries and birthdays.

SOME CAVEATS AND SOME ADVICE ABOUT CHOOSING WINES

It’s important understand that tasting and evaluating barrel samples is not as assured as tasting finished wine from bottle. The first point here is that we are not tasting finished wines. They are just a few months in to their barrel ageing and will change more in the next year in barrel than any subsequent year in bottle. Faults like aggressive tannins or greenness aren’t going to go away with bottle age, but sometimes other issues might be hidden at this stage, or a wine might improve considerably in barrel. Samples can also vary – in my experience – a great deal from day to day, and location to location. I taste a sample, I write down what I experience. For the sake of transparency, and to show just how much variance is possible, where I tasted a 2016 more than once I have given both notes here. You will see for yourself how much variance is possible.

Secondly, for some châteaux what you taste is the final blend. They have already assembled the young wine and re-distributed it back to barrel for further ageing. At other châteaux the final blend will be made many months later after they see how the components develop in barrel. In this latter case an ‘approximate blend’ is made from the components to represent the envisaged final blend. Can you see where there might be an issue here? I couldn’t possibly comment.

Finally, these are *my* experiences tasting a range of samples over a week in Bordeaux in April 2017. To this I would make two points: firstly, though I tasted many of the higher ranked wines (which are the ones of most relevance to Hong Kongers considered buying *en primeur*), there are in fact thousands of wines possible to taste. My preliminary views are therefore based on less complete observations than many others – especially the critics – who tasted for weeks and compiled extensive reports. My second point relates to the first – do not rely on any single opinion. My best advice to you is to pass on advice I received many years ago: pick two or three 2016 Bordeaux vintage reports – especially where you know how the author’s taste relates to your own – and compare the notes from each. This will give you a more reliable sense for how a particular château performed. From there, *trust your own taste*. There is no such thing as a ‘100-point wine’, or a ‘90-point wine’. They don’t exist. What exists is a 100-point *experience* one person had with a wine on *an* occasion. *Your* mileage may vary.

THE 2016 WINES

This year I didn’t taste so many whites, missing the chance to attend the UGC Graves tasting unfortunately. Speaking with Pascal Baratié – vineyard manager at Château Haut-Brion – he was less happy about the sémillon crop in 2016. He found it a bit dilute and as a result quite a lot of it went into their 3rd tier white (Clarendelle), and 2nd tier white – La Clarté de Haut-Brion. Both Haut-Brion Blanc and La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc are very good, but atypically Sauvignon-centric – a first in his career Baratié noted to me – and to me it feels like something missing. The problem, he noted, was the intense heat and drought in August and early September. (The welcome showers that helped the reds came too late for the whites which had already been picked). In contrast, for Sauternes, which of course is picked much later, the cooler and intermittently showery September and October allowed for extended hang time, acidity preservation for freshness, and good bursts of botrytis toward the end. Alas, I only tasted two – Guiraud and Yquem – but both were superb.

I adored Pavillon Blanc again this year. Recent vintages have showed increased intensity, power and length. The ‘16 feels like a step off the accelerator to something more moderate, tangy, a bit lower in alcohol. Not the fireworks of recent vintages, but a supremely elegant, refreshing yet complex white. Again, I recommend seeking it out.

Aside from another astonishingly great Château Margaux, for the Médoc it felt like the sweet spot was further north in St.-Julien (especially), Pauillac and (to an extent) St.-Estephe. The proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend of my top Médoc wines this year is notable – Latour (93%), Lafite (92%), Margaux (94%), Pichon Baron (85%) and Mouton (83%). Deep roots in deep gravelley soils that allowed access to moisture during the drought period was key to final quality. It’s not a level playing field that can be capitalized upon by hard work and good management alone. Note too that these top wines today often constitute a much smaller proportion of the final production than they used to. The challenge of the year can be felt in some of the 2nd wines. At Lafite and Mouton for example, the step down to Carruades and Le Petit Mouton is stark.

Other Médoc ‘16s that impressed and that have stayed in my memory include – Brane-Cantenac (this property stays on its recent high form), Pavillon Rouge (far superior today than the Château Margaux *grand vin* was 40 years ago, and consistently too), Beychevelle (you won’t be disappointed if you buy this), Clos du Marquis (perhaps the best ever wine under this label – remember it is a separate vineyard from Las Cases, and now has its own 2nd label to declassify into. This is serious stuff – a target for smart buying), Ducru-Beaucaillou (you really feel the sunshine again – the most seductive of the St.-Juliens), Langoa-Barton and Léoville-Barton (both struck me as exactly right this year – the former will be a steal I’m sure), Léoville Poyferré (rich as usual, but better flow this year. I liked it), Saint-Pierre (very fine wine, an undoubted bargain), Talbot (you see what I mean about St.-Julien!), Batailley (I’ve always thought this château good, but quality has taken a recent upturn), Clerc-Milon (could turn out

to be a particularly sexy example), Grand Puy Lacoste (the star of the 5èmes Crus Classés in my view), Lafite (quintessential fragrance and elegance – the classic reason to buy this estate), Latour (another monumental wine, but we shall have to wait years to see it), Mouton (somehow this year delivered some of its exotic personality without the attendant weight), Pichon Baron (their best yet? – I thought perhaps, the first time I tasted it, but it showed quite trickily the next morning. Personally I would buy some *en primeur*), Capbern (the Calons-Ségur stable’s screaming bargain), Cos (I love the direction this estate has taken. This is gorgeous), and Montrose (a fine suit and tie example – reminded me somewhat of the excellent ‘89).

I did not have the chance to taste widely in Graves, but I was pretty much blown away by Haut-Bailly. I will not be surprised if in a few years time this comes to be regarded as a perfect example of this estate. It is a must-buy ‘16 in any case. Both Haut-Brion and La Mission Haut-Brion are very solid, and seem more classically cut than last year’s.

The Right Bank was a bit more mixed. I felt greenness in some wines, and bitterness amongst those who extracted more heavily, and I would be weary of those who made wines in the latter style in 2016. I particularly liked this year’s Certan de May, I thought La Conseillante very good, L’Evangile was a knockout (personally I’d rather have this than their ‘15), Trotanoy was very fine, classic – for the patient! It was interesting discussing VCC with the Thienponts. Key plots of Cabernet Franc did not succeed and so were left out of what became a very Merlot-centric blend. It’s a great wine nonetheless, but it lacks VCC’s ‘secret sauce’ – the incredible fragrance of the Franc which mesmerized me in ‘14 and ‘15. I don’t know Lafleur’s final blend, but its own secret sauce is there in spades. This is the 2016 to beg, steal or borrow for! Cheval Blanc offers a just slightly more svelte version, clearly cut from the same cloth. This is certainly a year for those who recall, and love, those wonderfully elegant yet intense and super aromatic Cheval Blancs of old. I was impressed too at Figeac. Ausone is brilliant, and if I was to pick one more from the Vauthier collection it would be La Clotte.



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St.-Estephe

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The whites from everywhere

2016 Aile d'Argent de Château Mouton-Rothschild88-91 Points

53% Sauvignon Blanc, 46% Sémillon, 1% Muscadelle.
Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Green tint to the fresh colour ; gorgeous fresh white peaches and a touch of musk on the nose ; juicy, taut, creamy-textured, a long herbal-edged ripe lemony finish. Moderate weight. A bit less creamy and exotic than some vintages of this label. Real Sauvignon bite on the finish. Good solid Aile d'Argent, but not a star example.

2016 Château Cos d'Estournel Blanc89-91 Points

75% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Sémillon. 12th Sept – 10th Oct. Barriques 7% new. 12.75% abv. 3.11PH.
Tasted at Château Cos d'Estournel, 4th April 2017

Pale, green flecked; still a yeasty-fresh nose, melon fruit; crisp, juicy, lively, racy-styled with piquant acidity. A touch lean but phenolically ripe. Good.

2016 Château Guiraud94-96 Points

Tasted at Château Canon-la-Gaffelière, 5th April 2017

Pale; wonderful nose, marmalade and spicy intense botrytis, great freshness and clarity; intense on the palate, but still elegant, lovely harmony and balance, detailed components, pineapple and satsuma, gently creamy, a touch of nut and nougat, sweet apricots, gentle acidity, very ‘moelleux’, a hint of pear and vanilla at the end. Really lovely.

2016 Château Haut-Brion Blanc93-95 Points

70.5% Sauvignon Blanc, 29.5% Sémillon, picked 1st to 13th September.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Pale, yellow tint; low key nose, melony, touch of white peach, a faint hint of passionfruit, but the overall impression is low key; fresh, well-defined attack, lovely perfectly ripe fresh, drippingly juicy fruit, mid-palate showing nice extract. It's superb, but it is missing something.

2016 Château La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc93-95 Points

62.7% Sauvignon Blanc, 37.3% Sémillon, picked 5th to 13th September.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Green tint; a very fine clear well-defined nose, grassy, melon, heather, floral and fresh; bright, juicy and compact on the attack, lovely tightly wound concentration, good length, and stays tight on the finish. Very fine. There is a hint of alcohol and I think that it may lead it to evolve a little quicker than the tautness might otherwise suggest. Nonetheless, very good.

2016 Le Clarté de Haut-Brion89-91 Points

2nd white wine of Chx. Haut-Brion and La Mission Haut-Brion
76.3% Sémillon, 23.7% Sauvignon Blanc, picked 1st to 13th September.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Pale gold; a lemon curd on toast nose, bright and fragrant, melon and musk notes, lovely freshness, a hint of cut pineapple; lovely snap and suppleness on the palate. Juicy fruit and nice creamy concentration. Toasty oak note and a hint of heat on the finish. I think this will come ready within 2 years or so and evolve fairly quickly. Nice, gourmand Clarté.

2016 Château Monbousquet Blanc90-91 Points

60% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Sémillon, 5% Muscadelle. 36hl/ha. 2nd – 9th Sept.
Barriques 50% new. 12.27% abv. 3.40PH.
Tasted at Château Pavie, 5th April 2017

Sweet melon and pineapple nose; fleshy, soft, open-textured, appley cool-ferment taste, steely acidity. Soft pip fruit taste on top.

2016 Château Pape Clément Blanc92-94 Points

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 3rd April 2017

Bright, green inflected fresh appearance; still quite yeasty on the nose; grand, ripe on the nose with lots of fresh gooseberry, lovely ripeness, green musk melon, creamy and bold. Moderate depth / concentration. A long musky-edged finish with a touch of passionfruit and citrus. Very good.

2016 Pavillon Blanc de Château Margaux93-97 Points

Tasted at Château Margaux, 4th April 2017

Pale with a green tint; very fine nose, melon, creamy, a touch of white pepper; outstanding texture, precision, and real tension through a full creamy mouthfeel. Super fine natural acidity. The alcohol feels much lower than in recent years. Seamless, long, full of energy and length. Brilliant wine. It has all the refreshing quality of fine homemade lemonade, but with extra dimension and complexity. Hard to resist, and hard to imagine a better expression of variety and vineyard for Pavillon Blanc.

2016 Blanc Sec de Suduiraut88-89 Points

2nd tier dry white from Château Suduiraut

A yellow tint to the pale appearance; a fresh pretty nose with a touch of melon; fresh, light intensity on the palate, hint of melon. Fairly simple, though perfectly pleasant.

2016 'S' de Suduiraut91-93 Points

1st dry white wine from Château Suduiraut

Fine nose, fresh, low key; fine concentration, melon, musk, nice details and complexity, persistent length. Very good.

The whites from everywhere (cont')

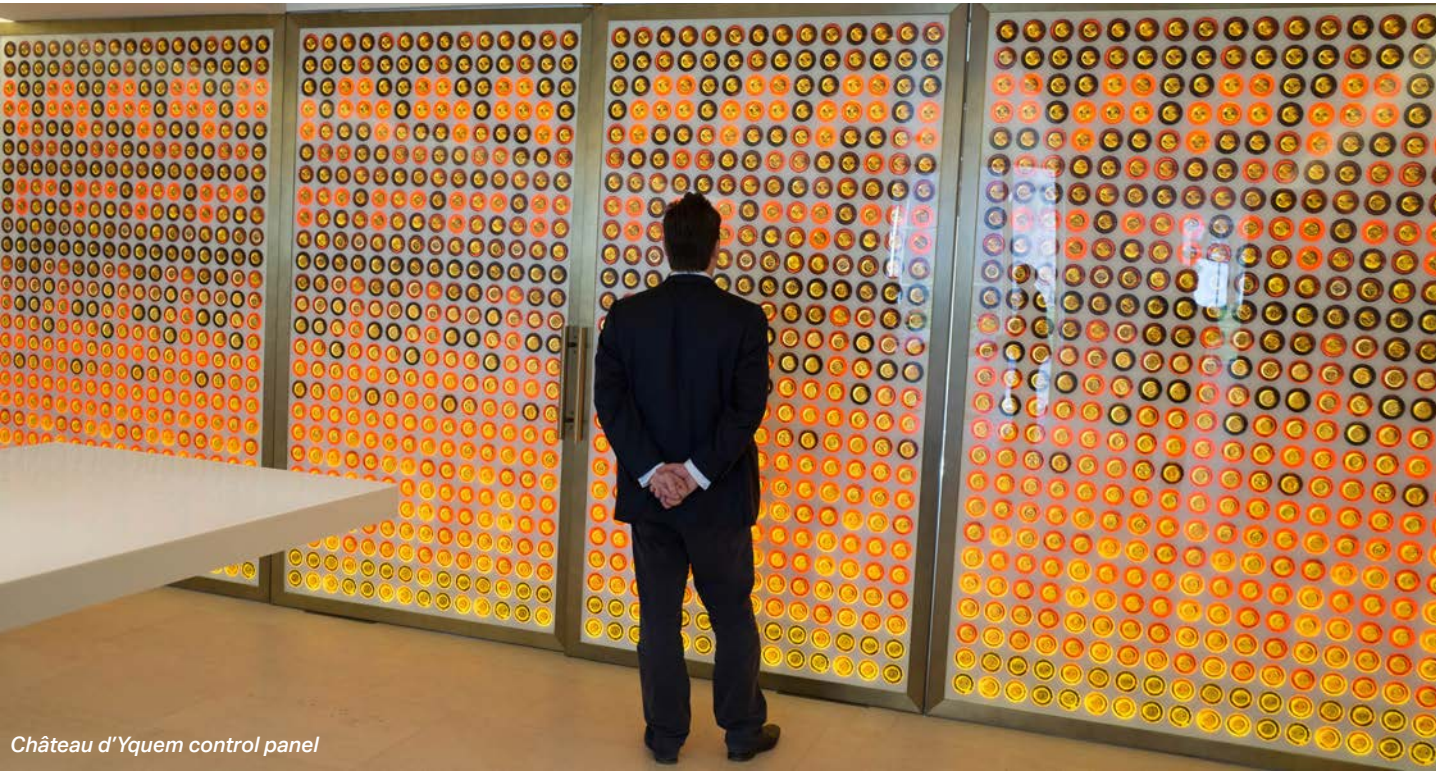
2016 Château d'Yquem 94-96 Points

Tasted at Château d'Yquem, 3rd April 2017

Still yeasty and young on the nose, peach, quince, spice; elegance the creaminess on the palate attack, yet the acidity is bright and the wine juicy, long. A touch of alcohol intrudes at the finish, yet overall the balance feels right because the acidity is fresh and the fruit juicy enough – but the alcohol can be felt. A good, not profound Yquem.

Tasted at Château Cheval Blanc, 5th April 2017

Freshness on the nose, with notes of sweet ripe pineapple, floral notes, and botrytis. Gives an appetizing sense of moderate-scale to follow on the palate; lovely melting texture on entry, layers of fruit, candied pineapple, spice, creamy and sweet, but with fine acidity, only at the end is the toasty vanillin oak note revealed. Like a very fine pineapple vanilla cream tart. Today it seems so much more expressive and coherent than 2 days ago at the Château.



Right Bank Satellites

2016 Château Bel-Air 89-91 Points

(Lalande de Pomerol)
73% Merlot, 19% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Fine ruby; a hint of reduction right now, sweet fresh fruit with a herbal note; a light, airy, juicy feel here, easy texture, attractive, simple but pure and positive berry fruit flavor. There is a herbal touch to the flavor but the texture is light, sweet and without bitterness. Very nice.

2016 Château La Graviere 89-90Points

(Lalande-de-Pomerol)
Tasted at Château Le Gay, 5th April 2017

Clear crimson; fragrant and fresh; sweet confit fruit, fresh acidity, fruity, straight, nice.

2016 Château d'Aiguilhe 91-93 Points

(Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux)
85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 30th Sept – 18th Oct. Barriques 30% new.
Tasted at Château Canon-la-Gaffelière, 5th April 2017

Clear deep crimson; bright lifted aromas of sweet plums – lovely; mouthfillingly fruity, sweet and fresh, juicy, summer pudding flavor. Delicious.

2016 Clos Lunelles 90-91 Points

(Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux)
80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 14th-15th Oct. Barriques 80% new. 14.75% abv, 3.54PH.

Opaque; liqueur of cherry and plum and mocha on the nose; super concentrated, rich and essency fruit. Ripe, intense and dense in style.

Pomerol

2016 Château Beauregard

91-93 Points

70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc.
Tasted at the Pomerol Séduction Tasting, 5th April 2017

Deep colour; ripe, sweet, fresh yet subdued aroma; lush, creamy-textured, juicy and ripe, moderate weight and intensity. Very good.

2016 Château Bourgneuf

91-93 Points

85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Deep ruby; a fresh aroma; quite lush on the palate, very attractively juicy, fine tannins – a more nobly fine tannic structure. Mid weight and mid depth here. A good mid-term cellar prospect offering classically styled Pomerol at the elegant end of the spectrum. Stylish Pomerol.

2016 Château Certan de May

93-95 Points

65% Merlot, 31% Cabernet Franc, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Ruby; a real gear change here at the Moueix tasting – fresh, but more opulently sweet, a nice contrasting sweet wet plant note lifts an almost confiture-level of fruit sweetness; generous yet succulent on the palate with real melting glycerin on the ample mid-palate. Decadent. Quite floral, fresh and perfumed. Layers and waves. Very good.

2016 Château Clinet

92-94 Points

90% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Cabernet Franc.
Tasted at the Pomerol Séduction Tasting, 5th April 2017

A deep shade, clear; lovely freshness, aromatic; intense, quite muscular frame, fruit-laden, intense dark fruit flavor with a very dark bittersweet fine chocolate note running through it. Long finish. Very good.

2016 Clos du Clocher

89-92 Points

70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc.
Tasted at the Pomerol Séduction Tasting, 5th April 2017

Deep colour; dark fruit on the nose, a touch of coffee; rich dark fruit on the palate, plump style. Plum pudding flavor. Lovely.

2016 Château La Conseillante

92-94 Points

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. 22nd Sept – 13th Oct. Barriques 70% new. 14% abv. 3.65PH.
Tasted at the Pomerol Séduction Tasting, 5th April 2017

Deep, semi-opaque; floral-edged, perfumed, lovely fruit on the nose; ripe, full of dark fruit, a touch of mocha, moderate plus concentration, finely structured – more supple than in the past – a long persistant finish. Just a touch warm. For the long term.

Tasted at Château La Conseillante, 5th April 2017

93-95 Points

Fine deep ruby with a pink rim; fresh mélange of forest berries on the nose, and a touch of new oak aroma (70% new oak used); fine fruit an finely structured on the palate, lovely melting supple tannins, mouthcoating fruit. Well balanced. This is very fine, very high quality.

2016 Château L’Evangile

94-96 Points

92% Merlot (26th Sept – 5th Oct), 8% Cabernet Franc (4th – 10th Oct).
Tasted at Château L’Evangile, 5th April 2017

Deep colour; a fabulous nose – exotic and perfumed; rich on the palate, silky-textured, quite a more generous texture than many, some glycerin, though everything stays transparent, buoyant. Plenty of fragrance, flows very well. You can tell the alcohol is higher (14.8% abv), but it is well balanced, and does not feel ‘hot’. Supple long finish. Just delicious, immaculate. Superb. Clearly a Right Bank star in 2016.

2016 Château La Fleur-Pétrus

92-94 Points

91% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Deep ruby; sweet, intense, focused dark berry and cherry nose with a touch of dark chocolate; concentrated on the palate, juicy dark fruit, all dark cherry, dark bittersweet chocolate flavoured, glycerin, expansive and ample, typically generous La Fleur-Petrus.

2016 Château Le Gay

92-94 Points

Tasted at Château Le Gay, 5th April 2017

Bright semi-clear crimson; bright fresh sweet fruit, oak aromas prominent right now; very good texture on the palate, silky-creamy, good concentration of ripe cherry and plum fruit, a touch mineral, sweet oak, fine tannin. Well balanced. Great grip. Concentrated flavor. An intense modern style.

2016 Manoir de Gay

91-92 Points

2nd wine of Château Le Gay
Tasted at Château Le Gay, 5th April 2017

Semi-clear crimson; sweet plummy nose, notes of cherry stones; good intensity on the palate, lovely cherry and plum, good fragrance at the end.

Pomerol (cont')

2016 Château Gazin 91-92 Points

90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc.
Tasted at the Pomerol Séduction Tasting, 5th April 2017

Bright plummy nose; rich, sapid and juicy, a touch of coffee. Quite lush fruit. Good.

2016 Château La Grave 88-89 Points

96% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Mid ruby; a floral nose, but also a cool wet garden aroma, a whiff of stem-like greenness; an attractive plump mouthful of dark berry and cherry fruit on attack, but there is a little green streak in it that won't leave it. Mostly attractive though. A hint of milk coffee at the end.

2016 Château Hosanna 93-95 Points

85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Deep ruby; a deep, brooding more reserved yet also a darker spectrum of fruit on the nose; sweet, exuberant, rich, very ripe yet lively fruit, good extract, succulent, glycerin-laden, supple. The oak here is well absorbed. A really seductive Hosanna, and the alcohol feels more moderate than usual.

2016 Château Lafleur 96-99 Points

Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Deep, clear, fine appearance; wonderful nose, open, very fragrant, that special floral-spice combination, so pure in expression, and nothing extraneous, you could just sit and smell this wine, enthralled as I am; unctuous in texture, almost sticky in its rich texture, melting, with bright fruit, lokhum, spices – this is quite exotic, beautifully shaped, and despite the depth, fully transluscent. This is real head-turner Lafleur. Very special.

2016 Château Lafleur-Gazin 91-93 Points

94% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Deep ruby; fresh raspberry nose, bright, floral, fresh – cool fool for Burgundy on the nose actually; really succulent, fine and fruity, sleek, bright palate feel, a nice little dollop of glycerin keeps it buoyant, good concentration. An open, fragrant, succulently fresh style. Delicious and long.

2016 Château Lagrange 91-93 Points

95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Fine ruby; a fine elegant nose, fresh, floral, berryish, with a hint of spice. A refined nose; quite focused on the palate, bright with good nervosite, very good phenolic ripeness, an open aromatic transparent style. Elegant, airy and nice.

2016 Château Latour à Pomerol 92-94 Points

96% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Pure ruby; lifted, fresh and complex nose, cool, lilies and cherries, a juicy and appealing nose; good concentration of cherry compote, cream and even a hint of white chocolate. Juicy, yet some decadence. A wild note of fruit and flowers. A very faint trace of cool herbal sweetness, but essentially rich-styled, well flowing Latour à Pomerol.

2016 Château Montviel 90-91 Points

Tasted at Château Le Gay, 5th April 2017

Clear bright crimson; bright confit fruit; taut, elegant, mouthfilling fruit, velvet tannin, some oak gloss. Good.

2016 Château Nenin 89-91 Points

77% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon
Tasted at the Pomerol Séduction Tasting, 5th April 2017

Glossy vanilla nose; tight on the palate, a little firm on the extraction, but stays transparent. Glossy but bright. Good.

2016 Château Petit-Village 92-94 Points

77% Merlot (23rd Sept-5th Oct), 14% Cabernet Franc (11th-12th Oct), 9% Cabernet Sauvignon (11th-12th Oct). Barriques 60% new.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 5th April 2017

Deep glossy appearance; vibrant, fresh, super fruity damson nose; fine, ripe juicy damsons on the palate, fine texture, lovely long fresh finish. A hint of mocha at the end. Lovely exuberant freshness to this. An elegant Pomerol of good intensity.

2016 Château Plince 91-93+ Points

79.6% Merlot, 20.4% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

A deep shade; berry sherbet nose, bright and zingy; effortless and energetic sherberty bittersweet berry freshness on the palate, a touch of glycerin, the high energy pishes it to the long fruity finish. Lovely, very refreshingly-styled Pomerol. Quite a special Château Plince this year.

2016 Château Trotanoy 94-96 Points

95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. 24th Sept – 12th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Deep; fine, typically reserved nose, a touch floral on prompting, ripe and fresh; very fine, tightly wound, layered in texture, plenty of energy and depth in reserve, well balanced. Plenty of dark fruit reserve, but everything is under wraps – all wound up. Flows well. This will be a lovely expressive, I would say beguiling Trotanoy in due time. Patience – as always here – required.



Pomerol (cont')

2016 Vieux Château Certan

93-95 Points

85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. 3rd – 18th Oct. 14.5% abv. 3.77PH.
Tasted at Vieux Château Certan, 5th April 2017

Clear deep garnet; fine, fresh aromatic nose, discrete and elegant; fine, ripe, some opulence this year, a touch of spice, flowing – almost gushing, with glycerin in the texture and a touch of alcohol on the finish. A bold rich yet flowing VCC. More “L’Evangile-like” this year than is typical. Concentration feels natural, super long finish with good freshness.

2016 Château La Violette

93-95 Points

Tasted at Château Le Gay, 5th April 2017

Vibrant crimson; sweet cherry, plum, oak nose; intense on the palate, the initial attack has a block of oak flavor and texture, followed by intense, pure, rich bright fruit that really pushes through. Super fine tannins at the end. Essency and grand in style. Immaculate.

St.-Emilion

2016 Château Angelus

91-93+ Points

60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc. 4th – 21st October.
Tasted at Château Angelus, 5th April 2017

Deep, with legs; sweet oak leads the aromatics, fresh ripe and plummy fruit follow, a full aroma; ripe juicy and lively on the palate, full-fruited, creamy, glossy and polished in style, vanilla-toned plum, mineral notes. Oaky phenolics in with the very fine fruit tannins, but the oak dries the finish a touch, and overall knocks this wine back from its full potential. The fruit is fresh and very attractive though.

2016 Le Carillon d’Angelus

88-89 Points

2nd wine of Château Angelus
75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc. 4th – 21st October.
Tasted at Château Angelus, 5th April 2017

Clear magenta; ripe with a little spicy/okay tone; moderate weight, a touch of dryness. Bold, modern and sleek in style. Some concentration and warmth. A bit solid. Okay.

2016 Château Ausone

95-97 Points

50% Cabernet Franc (14th-19th Oct), 50% Merlot (10th-14th Oct). 40hl/ha. Barriques 80% new.
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

Clear, deep, fresh; a little bit of reduction initially, but fine and fresh on the nose; deep, concentrated, super fresh, bright, intense wine, racy but with concentration. Immaculate in every detail, finely balanced, long, airy yet concentrated, beguiling through to the long finish. Very special.

2016 La Chapelle d’Ausone

93-95 Points

2nd wine of Château Ausone
56% Cabernet Franc (14th-19th Oct), 22% Merlot (10th-14th Oct), 22% Cabernet Sauvignon (19th Oct). Barriques 80% new.
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

Deep, semi-opaque; deep-set nose, a bit shy, some oak; lovely fruit on the palate, quite concentrated, fine fruit and tannin, very natural and expressive and bright. Lovely wine. Super fine, super long. The best 2nd wine of 2016?

2016 Château Bélair-Monange

92-94+? Points

92% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc. 5th – 11th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Fine deep ruby; low key reserved nose – hard to assess; sweet, taut, quite firm on the palate, very good fruit, but very shy right now. Good concentration and balance. Mocha note in the finish. It all feels here, but hard to coax anything much out.



Château Ausone

St.-Emilion (cont')

2016 Château Bellevue Mondotte

92-94 Points

90% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 12th Oct. Barriques 100% new. 14.84% abv, 3.40PH.
Tasted at Château Pavie, 5th April 2017

Deep crimson opaque; fragrant and intense nose, dark fruit, some complex notes of sweet wild herbs; rich, concentrated with intense immaculate fruit, immense concentration and power. Bright acidity keeps the energy high and the feeling sleek. In spite of the immense concentration the wine flows through the finish and the new oak is buried deep within. A powerful yet balanced Bellevue Mondotte – my top wine from this year’s Perse collection tasting.

2016 Château Canon-la-Gaffelière

92-94 Points

55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26th Sept – 15th Oct. Barriques 60% new.
Tasted at Château Canon-la-Gaffelière, 5th April 2017

Clear deep crimson ruby; fine, perfumed fruit, touch of oak; finely balanced, ripe, good energy, good harmony, good concentration and length. Fine tannins. Quite complete.

2016 Château Cheval Blanc

95-97 Points

59.5% Merlot, 37.2% Cabernet Franc, 3.3% Cabernet Sauvignon. 20th Sept – 12th Oct
Tasted at Château Cheval Blanc, 5th April 2017

Fine, semi-clear deep ruby; fragrant and detailed on the nose, showing a nice tension between savoury and sweet, herbal notes, floral notes and fruit. The Cabernet France really shows prominently on the nose; on the palate bright plum, beautiful texture, elegant yet with good intensity, lush, some glycerin yet no sign of the alcohol (14.2%). It is all very harmonious, opulent, with great aromatics following a well-defined Cabernet Franc-led texture and feel, great succulence, glycerin and grip at the finish. Well-structure and filled. Lovely, and on today’s tasting feels destined to be a classic.

2016 Petit Cheval

91-93 Points

2nd wine of Château Cheval Blanc
62% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Franc. 20th Sept – 12th Oct
Tasted at Château Cheval Blanc, 5th April 2017

Clear deep ruby; fine, aromatic, lovely fruit, a herbal note that is more pronounced here – just a hint of capsicum; lush, transparent, elegant on the palate, lovely plummy fruit, soft-textured, bright, nicely defined, then lovely extension on the finish with fine herbal details that feel phenolically ripe. Lovely Petit Cheval.

2016 Clos de l’Oratoire

90-92 Points

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 10th-17th Oct. Barriques 45% new.
Tasted at Château Canon-la-Gaffelière, 5th April 2017

Bright crimson; ripe fruit, some perfume, mineral note; lush fruit, juicy concentration, a really fruity centre, fine sapid tannic structure. Nudging the limit of still fresh ripeness.

St.-Emilion (cont’)

2016 Château La Clotte

92-95 Points

85% Merlot (12th Oct), 10% Cabernet Sauvignon (17th Oct), 5% Cabernet Franc (17th Oct). Barriques 85% new.
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

Fine, clear; fresh, berryish nose, touch of vanilla; very fine on the palate, lovely fruit, expressive, floral, mouth-filling, long and fragrant, beguiling finish. Superb. Recommended.

2016 Château Couvent des Jacobins

92-94 Points

Tasted at Château Couvent des Jacobins, 6th April 2017

Deep; fine, fragrant, floral with complex fruit on the aroma; unctuous, generous, mouthcoating fruit, dark berries, fine, ripe, tannic, juicy. Real grip. Good energy. Tannins are firm, but fruit-driven and ripe. Special. Quite a classic St.-Emilion style, well made.

2016 Château Figeac

93-95 Points

38% Cabernet Sauvignon (11th – 20th Oct), 36% Merlot (23rd Sept – 10th Oct), 26% Cabernet Franc (12th – 20th Oct). 49hl/ha. 14% abv. 3.67PH.
Tasted at Château Figeac, 5th April 2017

Deep and clear; bright fresh mélange of forest berries, a touch of spice, coffee bean, but very fresh, bright clear and detailed; lovely fruit, lush, but bright, naturally lively, good buoyancy, moderate weight but great intensity. Fine grained and expressive. Superb.

2016 Château Fombrauge

91-93 Points

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 3rd April 2017

Deep; sweet toasty nose; good depth of velvet-textured plummy fruit with a fragrant finish. Good.

2016 Château Fonbel

90-92? Points

70% Merlot (29th Sept-11th Oct), 16% Cabernet Sauvignon (18th Oct), 7% Petit Verdot (11th Oct) and Carmenere (15th Oct).
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

A bit of reduction on the nose; supple, delicious, fresh and lively. Elegant wine. Delicuous. 90-92? – let’s see if the reduction blows off.

2016 Château Haut-Simard

91-93 Points

65% Merlot (27th Sept – 5th Oct), 35% Cabernet Franc (17th – 19th Oct).
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

A little bit of reduction, but some nice florals come through; super lovely blackberry fruit, intense like black winegum candy, moderate weight, flows well, bright and transparent style. Very nice.

2016 Château Magrez-Fombrauge

88-89 Points

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 3rd April 2017

Dark, brooding nose; rich, sweet, a bit overextracted. Boysenberry fruit. Overdone.

2016 Château Monbousquet

MAY 2017
90-92 Points

60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 6th – 11th Oct. Barriques 70% new. 14.45% abv, 3.65PH.
Tasted at Château Pavie, 5th April 2017

Dark; candied cherry and mocha nose; rich, thick dark fruit, good acidity. Potent in style. Roast coffee bean on the finish. Bold.

2016 La Mondotte

92-94 Points

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 29th Sept – 15th Oct. Barriques 70% new.
Tasted at Château Canon-la-Gaffelière, 5th April 2017

Bright semi-clear crimson; sweet ripe berry fruit, a touch of spice on the nose; lush, concentrated, layered, superb fruit, finely textured, sapid, fine ample tannin. Oak present in the finish. Very good.

2016 Château Moulin Saint-Georges

90-92 Points

80% Merlot (11th – 15th Oct), 20% Cabernet Franc (11th Oct). Barriques 85% new.
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

Quite pretty on the nose, sweet; lovely, elegant, fine fruit – great mid-palate fruit and juiciness, a touch of creaminess. Delicious.

2016 Château Pavie

91-93+ Points

60% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Franc, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon. 10th – 20th Oct. Barriques 80% new. 14.55% abv, 3.49PH.
Tasted at Château Pavie, 5th April 2017

Opaque; dark cherry, dark chocolate and vanilla spice – the aroma of a very fine fruit and chocolate dessert creation; powerful, concentrated, very intense on the palate attack, dark cherry, fine acidity, a thick texture, toasted coconut comes in as a prominent flavor, oak spice on the immense oak-textured finish. The texture feels drier and less flowing than the very good Bellevue Mondotte.

2016 Arômes de Pavie

90-91 Points

2nd wine of Château Pavie
66% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc, 13% Cabernet Sauvignon. 6th – 20th Oct. Barriques 50% new. 14.15% abv, 3.78PH.
Tasted at Château Pavie, 5th April 2017

Opaque; the sweet creaminess of boysenberry ice cream on the nose; concentrated, super ripe, rich, dark liqueur fruit, rich furry tannins, delivering an intense dark espresso flavor and vanilla ice cream note on the aftertaste. Very firm texture on the drying finish.

2016 Château Pavie-Decesse

91-93 Points

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. 12th Oct. Barriques 100% new. 14.63% abv, 3.43PH.
Tasted at Château Pavie, 5th April 2017

Opaque; sweet plum tart, very spicy wood – like sandalwood – on the nose, exotic; explosively intense super essency currant, plum and cherry on the fragrant palate, pushed along by bright acidity that keeps the finish bright, despite formidable ripe supple tannin. Bold and sleek.

2016 Château Pindefleurs

90-93 Points

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. 5th – 11th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Velvet ruby; an attractively perfumed nose, dark flowers, dark cherry; tightly-wound fruit, bright juicy and fresh berry-flavoured, a touch of perfume on the finish. Moderate grip on the just slightly dry tannins. No obvious greenness. Refreshing bitter-sweet finish. Elegant pure style.

St.-Emilion (cont’)

2016 Château Puy Blanquet 90-91 Points

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. 5th – 11th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Dark rose ruby; Plummy nose, fresh berry compote, lifted, open and pure; succulent mouthfilling fruit, bright acidity, a slight chewiness to the ripe tannins, pure-fruited style, long, extended berry-fruited finish.

2016 Château Quinault L’Enclos 93-95 Points

68% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc. 20th Sept – 12th Oct
Tasted at Château Cheval Blanc, 5th April 2017

Semi-clear; fresh, open, aromatic and expressive aroma, a sweet herb note, complex; elegant, flowing, lovely fruit showing detail, sweetness, succulence, transparency and complexity on the long refreshing finish. Lovely, sophisticated, stylish St.-Emilion.

2016 Château Quintus 92-94 Points

Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017
70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc. Picked 3rd to 20th October.

Deep crimson with a crimson rim; spicy nose, vibrant and fresh; fleshy on the palate, very well balanced, exuberant fruit with a flash of the exotic in the mid-palate, fine structure, there is some firmness to the finish, but this is not ‘dry’. Compact feel. Good potential.

2016 Le Dragon de Quintus 90-91 Points

2nd wine of Château Quintus
90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, picked 3rd to 20th October.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Full ruby with a pink edge; a ripe licorice-tinged nose of ripe plums, fresh and fruity; a juicy, fruity attack, plump, round, sumptuous mid-palate and a fresh fruity finish. Fruit-forward style. Delicious.

2016 Château La Serre 91-93 Points

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. 5th – 11th Oct.
Tasted at Ets. J-P Moueix, 6th April 2017

Mid depth, pink edge; elegant and lightly aromatic sweet nose, quite floral in style; elegant, juicy, seductively creamy with a sublte mocha note at the supple finish. Very good.

2016 Château Simard 90-92? Points

75% Merlot (27th Sept – 10th Oct), 25% Cabernet Franc (15th – 18th Oct).
Tasted at Château Ausone, 5th April 2017

A bit of reduction; palate fresh, juicy, ripe, with fine grip, good substance, lovely fresh plummy fruit, good finish. 90-92? – let’s see if the redu0ction blows off.

Graves / Pessac-Leognan

2016 Clos Marsalette 92-93 Points

53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 4th – 18th Oct. Barriques 35% new.
Tasted at Château Canon-la-Gaffelière, 5th April 2017

A discrete fresh fruit nose, lightly herbal, but just a touch, enhancing the sense of freshness; supple, juicy, bright and clear, really buoyant and attractive on the palate, with a herb/spice note that builds on the finish. Superb.

2016 Château Haut-Bailly 96-98 Points

Tasted at Château Haut Bailly, 3rd April 2017

A deep fresh colour; lovely nose, fragrant, a touch spicy, detailed and fine; super fine-textured on the palate, elegant, mouthfillingly fruity, fresh, floral, mineral, more airy than La Parde, long fruity finish. An absolutely superb wine, so complex and elegantly proportioned.

2016 La Parde de Château Haut-Bailly 91-92 Points

Tasted at Château Haut Bailly, 3rd April 2017
47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 47% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc
2nd wine of Château Haut-Bailly

Fresh colour with a crimson rim; blackcurrant fragrance on the nose, a touch of cool pepperiness, but then the overall fragrance is lush and fruity; fresh squished blackcurrants on the palate, the Cabernet leads the flavor but the Merlot gives the round plump mouthfeel. Rich, lush, fresh fruitiness.

2016 Château Haut-Brion 95-97 Points

56% Merlot, 37.5% Cabernet Sauvignon , 6.5% Cabernet Franc, picked 19th Sept – 13th Oct.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Full colour, crimson rim; a discrete nose, a note of roses on prompting, higher register aromatics than the LMHB, fresh; lovely on the palate, quite a special flavor, Haut-Brion’s elegant style, lokhum note – like a hint of rose water slipped into the vat. There is a very powdery-fine tannic frame. The elegane and stylishness really comes through. Beautiful.

2016 Le Clarence de Haut-Brion 88-90 Points

2nd with of Château Haut-Brion
51.3% Merlot, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13.1% Cabernet Franc, 2.5% Petit Verdot.
Picked 19th Sept – 13th Oct.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Full crimson-rimmed; low key nose, floral, pretty, fresh. Needs prompting; taut yet elegant, fine tannins and fresh raspberry seed acidity, lovely fresh fruit, more tannin. This will require longer ageing in bottle than usual. A touch of dryness at the finish. Lacks a bit of length too. La Chapelle (2nd wine of La Mission Haut-Brion) clearly on top in 2016.



Veronique Sanders, Château Haut Bailly

Graves / Pessac-Leognan (cont')

2016 Château La Mission Haut-Brion

94-96 Points

57.5% Merlot, 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Picked 19th Sept to 14th October.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Deep colour, crimson rim; lovely nose, so fragrant, flora, fresh, detailed – wonderful nose; quite firm on the palate, closed, dark fruit expression and a distinct coffee bean ad mocha vanilla note from the mid-palate that builds on the finish. Tannins are grainy but ripe and disappear on the finish. There is sufficient concentration for the structure, but patience will be needed.

2016 La Chapelle de La Mission Haut-Brion

91-92 Points

2nd wine of Château La Mission Haut-Brion
42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36.5% Merlot, 21.5% Cabernet Franc. Picked 19th Sept – 14th Oct.
Tasted at Château Haut-Brion, 3rd April 2017

Deep semi-clear ruby with a crimson rim; a fresh, quite floral nose; lovely fruit and expression; stylish, floral, elegantly styled with moderate weight, fresh-fruited, moderate in length. Quite a charming La Chapelle.

2016 Château Le Pape

92-93 Points

Tasted at Château Haut Bailly, 3rd April 2017
80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. 13% abv.

Deep, with a magenta edge; glorious sweet ripe plums, floral notes, taut raspberry freshness on the nose too; lovely, sumptuous fruit, ripe and luscious, the finish turns floral with a long fresh fruity aftertaste. Supple. Delicious.

2016 Château Pape Clément

91-93+ Points

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 3rd April 2017

Deep, semi-opaque; fine, dark floral edged nose; ripe, plump, fruity, complex and long. A bit heavy in style, but this is supple, ripe with very good fruit and health. Promising.

Médoc / Haut-Médoc / Listrac-Médoc

2016 Château Caronne Ste Gemme

90-92 Points

Tasted at Château Caronne St Gemme, 4th April 2017

St-Julien-like, fine with nice energy and depth, and a seamless long fruity finish that delivers a touch of ginger. Lovely.

2016 Château Fourcas-Borie

89-91 Points

Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 4th April 2017

Floral on the nose; supple, juicy, ripe, bold in style, with soft tannins. There’s enough to it to keep it interesting.

2016 Goulée by Cos d’Estournel

88-90 Points

77% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc. 28th Sept – 15th Oct. Barriques 30% new. 12.92% abv. 3.65PH.

Tasted at Château Cos d’Estournel, 4th April 2017

Clear, deep appearance; fresh, ‘crunchy’ fruit on the nose, a hint of red capsicum, otherwise curranty nose; fresh, elegant, crisp, but rounded acidity, juicy style, moderate weight. Could be nice young with some charcouterie.

2016 Château Potensac

89-91 Points

Tasted at Château Loeville Las Cases, 4th April 2017

Fresh, reserved aromas, a touch of oak; good lush fruit and a juicy finish. Good, honest straight Médoc, with a somewhat chewy finish. Touch of dryness. Good.

2016 Chapelle de Potensac

87-89 Points

2nd wine of Château Potensac

Tasted at Château Loeville Las Cases, 4th April 2017

Fresh, straightforward fruity nose; supple, juicy fruit, not very long on the palate. Nice though.

2016 Château La Tour Carnet

89-91 Points

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 3rd April 2017

Ripe sweet vanilla-edged fruit on the nose; sweet, glossy, straight, supple, well-made. A touch dull, but very solid quality.

Margaux

2016 Château Angludet

90-92 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Nice fruit on the nose; good, solid, but with the nice natural juicy extension to the finish. Good.

2016 Château Brane-Cantenac

93-95 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Lovely lifted fragrance, cool, herbal with sweet spice, a hint of stem ginger, and fine fruit; fine fruit on the palate, lovely shape and focus, sweet ‘crunchy’ fruit with fine freshness, elegance, and moderate+ length. Very good.

2016 Château Cantenac-Brown

91-93 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fragrant and fresh on the nose; juicy, elegant and seamless on the palate. Very nice.

2016 Château Dauzac

92-93 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fine fruity nose; fleshy, fruity, flows well, succulent and delicious. Very good.

2016 Château Ferriere

92-94 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fresh discrete nose; fine, elegant, persistent on the palate, fine fruit and good energy. Classic Margaux. Lovely.

2016 Château Giscours

89-91 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fresh, cool nose; moderate concentration, classic, nice fresh fruit, though the tannins are a bit coarse.

2016 Château d’Issan

92-93 Points

64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 29th Sept – 19th Oct. Barriques 50% new. 13.34% abv, 3.71PH.

Tasted at Château d’Issan, 4th April 2017

Deep, full; fine and fragrant on the nose, cool with wet garden aromas; fine, elegant on the palate, a refined expression, some grip on the finish. Nothing ‘grand’ here, this is simply very good, understated Margaux. Good length, and the florals pick up again on the finish. This is of a really classic ‘just ripe’ style and expression, charming and sophisticated. A fine d’Issan, and this property is in fine form these days. 2015 may be a more interesting choice to buy early, but I would be happy to own this 2016.

Margaux (cont')

2016 Blason de Château d'Issan88-89 Points

60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29th Sept – 19th Oct. Barriques 35% new. 13.28% abv, 3.58PH.
Tasted at Château d'Issan, 4th April 2017

Fine clear appearance; fresh, cool expression on the nose, with a herbal note, 'crunchy' expression of fruit; elegant and fine on the palate, good mid-palate juicy fruit, nice fresh fragrance. Moderate depth. Pleasant enough.

2016 Château Kirwan88-90 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Nose seems unknit – a bit soupy, though there are attractive florals; the palate is subdued, quite compact in the texture, firm on the finish. May turn out better, but awkward today.

2016 Château Labegorce87-89 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Toasty oak on the nose; compact on the palate, a bit dry and glossy. Okay.

2016 Château Lascombes85-87 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan

Dark, opaque appearance; ripe on the nose with a glossy note, curranty; dense, over-extracted palate feel. There is undoubted concentration of ripe healthy fruit here, but there is no buoyancy. Dry finish.

2016 Château Malescot St. Exupery91-93 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fresh, clear floral nose; nice focus on the palate, ripe, juicy, with good concentration of fruit, nice energy and flow on the palate. Very good.

2016 Château Margaux96-98 Points

94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot. Grand Vin is 28% of the harvest.
Tasted at Château Margaux, 4th April 2017

A fine colour; very fine perfumed nose, floral and fresh, fruity; elegant and pure on the palate, with fine tannin, seductive, real finesse, evident depth and concentration, but it is elegant in style, lively and long on the finish. Very fine, perfectly ripe tannins. Real expansion on the finish. Superb. Not far behind the astonishingly good 2015.

2016 Château Monbrison87-89 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Quite fresh and floral; attractive flavor, moderate weight of nice fruit, lovely freshness. There's a slight pinch in the tannins and acidity at the end that detract a little. Good, though not Monbrison's year.

2016 Château Marquis de Terme87-89 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fresh, fragrant, a touch oaky on the nose, but there is a nice fruit expression; oak tannins on the attack – quite overtly woody, then some nice fruit. There is very decent material here, but the oak handling is disappointing.

2016 Pavillon Rouge de Château Margaux92-94 Points

Tasted at Château Margaux, 4th April 2017

Fine, fresh mid-colour; lovely nose, aromatic and floral; elegant and refined on the palate, a very pure expression with good concentration, a bit of leaf, real freshness of fruit in expression. Long. Very good.

2016 Château Palmer92-95? Points

47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot. 29hl/ha. 3rd – 18th Oct.
Tasted at Château Palmer, 4th April 2017

Deep colour; a fine, more classic nose than the Alter Ego, fresh and ripe; ripe on the palate, with one of the lushest mouthfeels of the Médoc in '16 – real palate-filling fruit, floral notes, silky fine tannins, real presence in the mouth. A complex, long finish. The alcohol is only moderate, and while there is hallmark vintage freshness and acidity, the style feels particularly ripe. My only question mark is a slight note of overripeness that pops up in the aftertaste. It may all turn out to work brilliantly, but at this point I'm not sure.



Margaux (cont')

2016 Alter Ego de Château Palmer

91-93? Points

48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 12% Petit Verdot. 29hl/ha. 3rd – 18th Oct.
Tasted at Château Palmer, 4th April 2017

A deep colour; dark and spicy nose, with the usual dark berry fruit notes but also an intriguing oyster-like mineral note; a real intensity of taste on the attack, this is lush in style, yet the alcohol feels moderate. The ripeness spectrum is right at the upper end, despite this moderate weight – plum, blueberry, and combined with juicy acidity, it puts me more in mind of Northern Rhone syrah, than Margaux. Doesn't feel yet fully knit. It's an intriguing wine and this sample threw me somewhat. I'd love to taste it again as a finished wine to see where it went.

2016 Château Rauzan-Gassies

89-90 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

Fresh, classic, fragrant aroma; elegant, pure, supple, flows well, with fine fruit flavours. Just a whiff of the unripe in the finish, but overall this is a vey decent Rausan-Gassies.

2016 Château Rauzan-Ségla

90-92 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

A lovely perfumed fruity nose; fine, elegant, some concentration, nice fruit, judiscious extraction, retaining elegance and finesse. Lacks a little liveliness. Nicely made and a good wine, but in the context of this label, a bit ordinary.

2016 Château du Tertre

85-86 Points

Tasted 4th April at the UGC Margaux Event, Château Kirwan.

An unusually high octave of expression; nice easy, fleshy feel on the palate, but it is on the green side, especially the finish.

St.-Julien

2016 Château Beychevelle

93-95 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Deep colour; bright, sweet lifted nose, floral, some spiciness; lush, fleshy palate, fresh, a real caress of a texture, immaculate, detailed, good flow. Delicious with a touch of wild fruit and spice. An impressive Château Beychevelle.

2016 Château Branaire-Ducru

88-89 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Deep appearance; bright, slightly candied fruit on the nose; some nice fruit on the palate, a bit of greenness in it, but it is supple. Moderate length.

2016 Clos du Marquis

93-95 Points

Tasted at Château Loeville Las Cases, 4th April 2017

Nice fragrance, a little floral; good fruit here on the attack, and a nice silkiness in the tannins at the end. Ripe, good, solid, well structured but fine. Indeed, one of the best Clos du Marquis I can recall.

2016 La Petite Marquise du Clos du Marquis

87-88 Points

2nd wine of Clos du Marquis
Tasted at Château Léoville Las Cases, 4th April 2017

A bit of reduction on the nose; good intensity, not especially distinguished, solid, blackcurranty, very decent.

2016 Château Ducru-Beaucaillou

94-96 Points

85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot. Barriques 100% new. 13.63% abv, 3.71PH.
Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 4th April 2017

Fine, dark fruit, fresh with a hint of spice; bold, juicy, perfectly ripe fruit expressed on the palate, concentrated, yet with good flow, melting on the finish. So fruity and fresh. Moderate alcohol. Super delicious Ducru.

2016 Croix de Beaucaillou

90-92 Points

2nd wine of Château Ducru Beaucaillou
64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot. Barriques 60% new. 13.44% abv, 3.65PH
Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 4th April 2017

Fresh on the nose, a bit more gloss than the Lalande-Borie – an oak note; bold and fleshy on the palate, like squished juicy blackcurrants, and also a blueberry note. Very fruity and ripe in style.

2016 Château Gloria

91-92 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Very deep colour; fresh ripe classic nose, open with a cool leaf note, and a touch of ginger; juicy on the palate with curranty fruit, quite lush, fresh, good moderate+ intensity, super curranty finish. A very good Gloria.



Château Ducru Beaucaillou

St.-Julien (cont')

2016 Château Gruaud Larose 91-92 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Deep colour; quite a toasty oak note leading the aromatics, ripe fresh fruit, a touch floral; elegant on the palate, good fruit, juicy, nice moderate concentration, good freshness, toasty oak at the end where there is also just a hint of bitterness. Overall a good Gruaud Larose.

2016 Château Lagrange N / R

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Both samples poured for me showed what seemed to me to be some oxidation-like issues on the mid-palate, and I considered them – or possibly the wine – faulty. I met others during the UGC who had positive experiences tasting at the Château. I therefore offer no comment on the 2016 Château Lagrange, hope it was an aberration, and hope to taste the 2016 at the Château some time in the future.

2016 Château Lalande-Borie 90-92 Points

55% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon. Barriques 30% new. 13.55% abv, 3.67PH
Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 4th April 2017

Lovely fresh fruitiness on the nose; juicy and ripe on the palate, good freshness and energy. This is good.

2016 Château Langoa-Barton 93-95 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Opaque; fresh ripe classic curranty nose; good concentration, very blackcurranty, good intensity and depth with a long fruity finish. Well made, with very good fruit. Delicious Langoa-Barton.

2016 Château Léoville-Barton 94-96 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

A fresh, fragrant berry nose, lively and aromatically open, a cool spicy-herbal note – a refreshing and inviting aroma; superb palate, very fine fruit, focus and intensity, with sufficient airiness to keep it very lively and buoyant. That provides quite some foil to the depth of dark fruit ('deeper than the dark side of the moon' I noted in my notebook in the car immediately afterwards). Long finish with very fine tannins. Destined to be a great classic Léoville-Barton I'm sure.

2016 Château Léoville Las Cases 94-95+ Points

Tasted at Château Léoville Las Cases, 4th April 2017

A fresh but shy nose; silky, rich with a lot of mid-palate concentration, a little touch of sur maturite pokes in to the flavor, but overall an abundant super-ripe, fine textured yet mouth-puckering Las Cases. Statuesque in style, with clear long term ageing potential. A hint of coffee bean in the finish. If anything I wonder if it is lacking a little lift, it feels so solid, and perhaps some small details are not there (or are hidden). But for sure this is a classic, solid Léoville Las Cases that will reward the young and patient.

2016 Le Petit Lion du Marquis de Las Cases 90-92 Points

2nd wine of Château Léoville Las Cases
Tasted at Château Léoville Las Cases, 4th April 2017

Deep appearance; open and fragrant on the nose, a fresh aroma; elegant and fine on the palate, good fruit, good texture, solid yet quite fine.

2016 Château Léoville Poyferré 94-95 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Deep appearance; bright sweet and intense curranty fruit on the nose; focused, coherent, very intense and rich fruit, essency Léoville Poyferré, long fruity finish. It works.

2016 Château Saint-Pierre 92-93 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Deep appearance; fine, ripe reserved nose, currants with a touch of coffee; really lovely on the palate, harmonious, fleshy, lots of lush fruit, good intensity, good flow too, and judicious use of oak. Really impressive Saint Pierre.

St.-Julien (cont')

2016 Château Talbot

92-94 Points

Tasted at UGC St.-Julien Tasting (at Château Talbot), 6th April 2017

Deepar colour; lovely nose, stylish, fine fruit and florals, a touch of boysenberry and vanilla; lovely moderate+ weight, succulent, refined, flowing, moderate weight, appetizing, gentle texture but good depth. A charming Talbot. Lovely.



Château Talbot



Cellar Room in Château Talbot

Pauillac

2016 Château d'Armailhac

91-93 Points

62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. 27th Sept – 14th Oct.
Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Deep; lovely nose, fresh, slightly exotically fragrant; ripe, slightly spicy, there's a sweet herbal note through this. Bright acidity. Very solid and fresh. A nice d'Armailhac.

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Batailley), 6th April 2017

92-93 Points

Clear deep appearance; cool fresh and reserved on the nose; succulent with good energy on the palate, focused, long, quite reserved. Good potential.

2016 Château Batailley

92-93+ Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Batailley), 6th April 2017

Deep appearance; a really intriguing nose this year, fragrant, a bit wild, spicy, with sweet herbs, very fruity; lovely fruit on the palate and a generous buoyant texture. Some spice in the finish. Really satisfying, fruit-laden, generous yet fresh Batailley

2016 Château Clerc-Milon

93-95 Points

55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot, 1% Carmenere. 26th Sept – 15th Oct.
Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Deep; blackcurrant and leaf on the nose; fine-textured, juicily expressed Cabernet, more sleek and focused than d'Armailhac. Very good fruit. Some layering and sophistication here. Superb Clerc-Milon – a real performer.

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Batailley), 6th April 2017

Semi-clear deep; today's sample showing a bit reduced on the nose – sweet, but quite masked; palate is delicious however, authorively fine fruit, full and expressive, fresh yet generous, the tannins are succulent, super fine, the finish is very long, fruity, fresh, lively, refreshing and very satisfying. Another star.

2016 Château Croizet-Bages

87-89 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Batailley), 6th April 2017

Fresh attractive fruit, but quite masked by toasty oak; nice juicy dark fruit, a bit extracted and oaky/mocha on the finish. Good black wine-gummy flavor though and extract stays sweet at the end. Overall quite good.

2016 Château Duhart-Milon

91-93 Points

67% Cabernet Sauvignon (3rd – 12th Oct), 33% Merlot (26th – 29th Sept)
Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Deep; fresh, curranty and attractive nose; ripe on the papalte, moderate concentration, four square feel, with a solid firmness in the texture. Good fruit and detail. Classic, stolid Duhart offering neither sparks nor disappointment.

2016 Château Grand Puy Ducasse

88-90 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Clear deep ruby crimson; ripe fruity nose; nice fruit, moderate depth, trails off a bit on the finish. A lack of depth and concentration, but nicely made, and with nice fresh ripe fruit

2016 Grand Puy Lacoste

94-95 Points

79% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot. 28th Sept – 13th Oct. 45hl/ha. Barriques 75% new.
Tasted at Château Grand Puy Lacoste, 4th April 2017

Fine deep colour; lovely lovely nose – very complete, Cabernet Sauvignon sweet, very fresh fruit, no greenness; super fine on the palate, elegant and seamless, gorgeously expressive Cabernet fruit, fine-textured tannins, well balanced, long finish. A touch of coffe bean mocha on the finish. Seductive Pauillac.

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

93-95+ Points

Clear, deep appearance; fine fruit, freshness, a touch of vanilla oak; beautiful fruit depth on the palate, layered, very fine fruit-led tannins. Succulent yet also plush. Delicious all the way through. Boysenberry and a hint of vanilla at the end. A superb Grand Puy Lacoste, and a star this year (again!).

2016 Château Lacoste-Borie

90-91 Points

2nd wine of Château Grand Puy Lacoste
61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc.
Tasted at Château Grand Puy Lacoste, 4th April 2017

Fine appearance; floral, fresh summer pudding berries on the nose; elegant on the palate, quite fresh-fruited, elegant and delicious. An excellent Lacoste-Borie

2016 Château Haut Bages Libéral

91-92 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Deep clear appearance; a fresh berry nose, some perfume, attractive, open and bright; moderate weight on the palate, crisp, fresh ripe flavor, good aromatics, a touch of sub-ripe bitterness at the end, but this is lightly extracted and stays open and aromatic. A nice, lighter, elegant Haut Bages Liberal.

2016 Château Lafite-Rothschild

96-98 Points

92% Cabernet Sauvignon (29th Sept – 12th Oct), 8% Merlot (23rd – 28th Sept).
Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Fine crimson; lovely plummy nose, summer pudding fresh aromatic intensity; very fine-textured, ripe, grippy, lovely flesh. This is terrestrial rather than celestial Lafite. Some inner mouth florals – violets. Quite classic, concentrated, but ultimately elegant, effortless Lafite. Real freshness.



En primeur tasters at Château Lafite-Rothschild

2016 Carruades de Château Lafite-Rothschild

89-91 Points

49% Merlot (23rd – 28th Sept), 44% Cabernet Sauvignon (23rd – 28th Sept), 5% Cabernet Franc (4th Oct), 2% Petit Verdot (12th Oct).
2nd wine of Château Lafite-Rothschild
Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

A high-pitched pinched nose; fairly supple on the palate, open-knit, attractive fruit. There is a slight green streak and tartness on the finish marring what is otherwise quite stylish and elegant Pauillac.

2016 Château Latour

96-98+Points

92.9% Cabernet Sauvignon (7th – 19th Oct), 7.1% Merlot (22nd – 30th Sept). 36% of production. 13.5% abv.
Tasted at Château Latour, 4th April 2017

Very deep appearance ; lovely nose, dark curranty fruit with freshness and an exotic note, spice, mineral notes ; impressive in its precise balance, deep concentration, fresh lively fruity acidity, grand-scaled with a fortress of tannin that is nonetheless supple all the way through the palate and containing great reserves of fruit. Long and delicious finish. Super serious grand Latour. Clearly very great.

Pauillac (cont’)

2016 Les Forts de Latour

92-94 Points

2nd wine of Château Latour
64.3% Cabernet Sauvignon (7th – 19th Oct), 35.3% Merlot (22nd – 30th Sept), 0.4% Cabernet Franc (10th Oct). 13.5% abv. 37.5% of production.
Tasted at Château Latour, 4th April 2017

Deep colour with a narrow rim ; fine, fresh, detailed nose, a touch of vanilla, nice florals ; lush, vibrant fruit, superb health of fruit here, juicy yet generous, concentrated with fine velvety tannins. Very finely balanced, very good quality.

2016 Pauillac

90-91 Points

3rd Wine of Château Latour
54.6% Cabernet Sauvignon (7th – 19th Oct), 38.9% Merlot (22nd – 30th Sept), 6.5% Petit Verdot (11th – 19th Oct). 13.2% abv. 26.5% of production.
Tasted at Château Latour, 4th April 2017

Deep fresh appearancel lovely fresh berry and floral nose ; supple, nice dark fruit, good freshness, generous.

2016 Château Lynch Bages

92-94 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Deep colour ; sweet berryish nose, blackcurrant and dark berries, a touch of coffee ; firm extraction and a touch of dryness, but good reserves of fruit and good length. Impressive intensity.

2016 Château Lynch-Moussas

86-88 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Sweet oakly nose; simple, candied fruit, oak.

2016 Château Mouton-Rothschild

95-97 Points

83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. 26th Sept – 14th Oct.
Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Deep; lovely, harmonious nose, floral, spicy, exotic notes, fragrant and fine on the nose; elegant, ripe – but not over-ripeness on the palate, lush, lively and long. Superb quality of fruit went into this, and it is beautifully balanced. Fine tannins. There is a coolness to it which is really morish, appetizing. Superb Mouton that has read the elegance of the vintage very well.

2016 Le Petit Mouton de Château Mouton-Rothschild

86-89 Points

62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc. 26th Sept – 14th Oct.
Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild, 4th April 2017

Deep and clear; sweet, quite herbal on the nose; distinctly leafy/herbal on the palate, but also a coffee bean / mocha note which feels mismatched. Some decent fleshiness. Perfectly decent, but a little odd. It doesn't knit together well. I don't feel harmony in this. Tastes very much like a 'second wine' in the old sense.

2016 Château Pibran

89-91 Points

55% Merlot (4th-10th Oc), 45% Cabernet Sauvignon (17th-18th Oct). Barriques 50% new.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 5th April 2017

Deep; sweet berry nose, a cool, herb fresh note, touch of coffee; fruity attack, ripe tannins, some concentration of flavor, good texture, but lacking a little plumpness, firm on the finish, a touch leafy.

2016 Château Pichon Longueville Baron

96-98 Points

85% Cabernet Sauvignon (10th-18th Oct), 15% Merlot (3rd-5th Oct). Barriques 80% new.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 5th April 2017

Deep; lovely fragrance, fresh, pure, expressive; lush on the palate, super fine and elegant in style, with good intensity and vigour, good flow and supple texture. A cool, fresh, distinctly Médocain classic aroma and flavor runs through it. Wonderfully elegant and understated. Delicious. A wonderful, seamless, exquisite Pichon – may possibly prove to be the finest yet.

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

94-95+ Points

Fresh ripe cool expression on the nose; supple on the palate, fine fruit, a firm grip – tasting much more difficult this morning than last night. Elegant, fine, long extended finish. Just a hint of greenness today and firmer on the finish.

2016 Les Griffons de Pichon Baron

91-92+ Points

One of two 2nd wines of Château Pichon Longueville Baron
52% Cabernet Sauvignon (15th-18th Oct), 48% Merlot (26th Sept – 10th Oct). Barriques 60% new.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 5th April 2017

Deep crimson, opaque; reserved nose, a touch curranty, subdued; ripe, fresh, ample on the palate, good succulence, good shape, a touch of firmness, the tannins are ripe and succulent. Reserved right now. Good.

2016 Les Tourelles de Longueville

90-92 Points

One of two 2nd wines of Château Pichon Longueville Baron
58% Merlot (26th-28th Sept), 25% Cabernet Sauvignon (17th-18th Oct), 12% Cabernet Franc (6th Oct), 5% Petit Verdot (19th Oct). Barriques 70% new.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Baron, 5th April 2017

Deep colour; lovely fragrant fruit, a hint of fresh celery, lovely damson on the fresh nose; juicy, fleshy, open and appealing on the palate, clean bright and fresh. Fine. Very good.

Pauillac (cont')

2016 Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande

75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, 4th April 2017

90-92 Points

Deep; lovely aromas, sweet, ripe, fresh and aromatic fruitiness; very good solid fruit, good concentration, a hint of coarseness in the texture – shouldn't be there in a grand vin. This is nonetheless a good solid Pauillac, but one lacking the spark of the great vintages (like the spectacular '15). Hopefully after bottling this less than stellar showing of the '16 will be seen by me as a blip in its trajectory.

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

92-93 Points

Fine, deep appearance; sweet, expressive fresh-fruited nose, a touch perfumed; firm structure, good depth of fruit, touch of spice, aromatic, touch of dryness on the finish. Berryish extended aftertaste, detailed flavours. Very good – much better this morning than 2 days ago.

2016 Reserve de la Comtesse

2nd wine of Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande
54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot.
Tasted at Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, 4th April 2017

89-90 Points

Super fragrant nose, floral and a touch exotic; juicy, with good concentration and fruitiness, good length, though there is a touch of dryness in the tannins.

2016 Château Pontet Canet

Tasted at Château Pontet Canet, 4th April 2017

N / R

Deep shade, clear appearance; bright and fresh on the nose, dark fruit, with an odd note that I can't put my finger on; bright on the palate, very ripe fruit, even a little hint of *sur maturite* I felt. Mostly superb fruit expression however. Juicy and vibrant, with fine tannins. Good length. Probably very good, but there's something I'm just not sure about, so I will reserve my opinion until this 2016 is in bottle.



Château Pontet Canet

St.-Estephe

2016 Château Calon-Ségur91-93 Points

60% Cabernet Sauvignon (5th – 15th Oct), 20% Merlot (29th Sept – 4th Oct), 18% Cabernet Franc (5th – 15th Oct), 2% Petit Verdot (15th Oct). Barriques 100% new. 14% abv. 3.60PH.
Tasted at Château Calon-Ségur, 4th April 2017

A ripe opulent aroma; very fine, powerful (in the context of this vintage), juicy, there is a touch of sur maturite, very ripe tannins, very good, but not quite as clear ad coherent as some other *grands vins* of the Médoc.

2016 Le Marquis de Calon-Ségur89-91 Points

2nd wine of Château Calon-Ségur
55% Merlot (29th Sept – 4th Oct), 45% Cabernet Sauvignon (5th – 15th Oct). Barriques 30% new. 14.2% abv. 3.60PH.
Tasted at Château Calon-Ségur, 4th April 2017

Bright and fragrant; soft, fruity, and quite plump. Nice details for a 2nd wine. Elegant. A surprising touch of alcohol – one of the very few ’16 Médocs to show it.

2016 Château Capbern90-92 Points

52% Cabernet Sauvignon (5th – 15th Oct), 46% Merlot (29th Sept – 4th Oct), 2% Petit Verdot (15th Oct). Barriques 60% new. 14% abv. 3.70PH.
Tasted at Château Calon-Ségur, 4th April 2017

Fresh fragrant fruit on the nose; delicious fruit on the palate, super supple, aromatic, with a juicy-creamy middle. Lovely delicious wine.

2016 Château Clos Labory87-89 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

An attractive fruity nose, a touch of oak, but clear and detailed; good fruit, mouthfilling, but it then turns a bit lean and astringent at the end.

2016 Château Cos d’Estournel94-96+ Points

76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. 26th Sept – 15th Oct. Barriques 60% new. 13.07% abv, 3.66PH.
Tasted at Château Cos d’Estournel, 4th April 2017

A really lovely nose, fresh crushed berries, flowers, a hint of vanilla – but it is subtle. Mineral notes – a super inviting fragrance; superb, fine and juicy, but lush, flowing fruit, good energy and richness balance, immaculately made, detailed and stylish Cos of great harmony. Supple, ripe juicy tannins, and a floral note on the finish. A very good, elegantly-styled Cos d’Estournel.

2016 Pagodes de Cos91-93 Points

2nd wine of Château Cos d’Estournel
50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 46.5% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot, 0.5% Cabernet Franc. 26th Sept – 15th Oct. Barriques 30% new. 13.02% abv, 3.61PH.
Tasted at Château Cos d’Estournel, 4th April 2017

Fresh, more fruity nose, nice complexity; delicious on the palate, really lovely berryish fruit, stayd well defined yet supple. A very good Pagodes indeed.

2016 Château Lafon-Rochet86-88 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Clear crimson; quite reserved and a touch leafy on the nose; good fleshy attack, the acidity and moderately extracted tannins are a touch taut and green-edged.

2016 Château Montrose94-96 Points

Tasted at Château Montrose, 4th April 2017

A detailed, aromatic very fine gently fragrant nose; very fine and focused on the palate, layered, bright and fresh, fine concentration of fruit, dark fruit expression, touch of dark chocolate, good freshness and energy, long, sleek and very fine.

2016 La Dame de Montrose91-93 Points

2nd wine of Château Montrose
Tasted at Château Montrose, 4th April 2017

A lovely fresh fine fruity nose, aromatic and attractive; lovely delicious fruit, fine and refreshing. A gorgeous La Dame.

2016 Château Les Ormes de Pez85-88 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Deep in appearance; sweet fresh fruit on the nose, vanilla-edged; some ripeness here on the palate, but the wine feels heavily extracted with some aggressive tannins, good vanilla-buffered fruit.

2016 Château de Pez88-89 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Clear, deep; fresh low key nose; nice succulence on the palate, good fruit in the core, a little over-extracted and dry. But the fruit is appealing. Okay.

2016 Château Phelan-Segur88-89 Points

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac & St.-Estephe tasting (Château Bataillay), 6th April 2017

Deep in appearance fresh cool nose with a herbal note, bright tone; elegant weight, a touch light even, nice flavor, cool, a touch leafy but supple and with attractive aromatics. Decent.

2016 Château Tronquoy-Lalande90-92 Points

Tasted at Château Montrose, 4th April 2017

Deep appearance; fruity nose; lush and juicy on the palate, lovely freshness and vivacity to this. Thick, straight, bright, good.



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