



# BORDEAUX 2022

## En Primeur Report

© Linden Wilkie, May 2023

## 2022 BORDEAUX – THE VINTAGE AND THE WINES

Virtually every château I visited during my week in Bordeaux led with a defense against the obvious objection to 2022: “Of course by now you know that 2022 was a very hot year, with drought conditions, but...”, and a big focus on the ‘but’. That ‘but’ seems to be a very positive one however – many 2022s offer an almost perplexing, paradoxical level of freshness. The best wines of the vintage offer high-wire act level balance, combining super intensity of fruit, enticingly exotic-edged fragrance, and surprisingly reasonable PH levels, and expressions of freshness. When I met with Christian Moueix in Libourne, he was unequivocal – this is a great vintage, “even greater than 1982, because of the low yield”. Did the tough, dry conditions favour some terroirs over others?, I wondered. He paused, and considered my question before answering - “In theory in these conditions clay or limestone are favoured, but in practice no”, he said, followed by a broad smile.

Alcohol levels are on the high side in 2022. We are talking above 14% alcohol by volume (ABV) in most cases, and there were some *grands vins* made in 2022 at 15%. Take a pause now and let that number sink in. Fifteen. (Where possible I have included the alcohol levels with my tasting notes). The second element in the 2022 style is that due to a lack of water, and intense heat, berries were small, and the ratio between skins (aromas, flavours, tannins) and juice was low. In other words it was easy to extract a lot from less, and easy to achieve concentration. 2022 has the potential for intense aroma and fruit, but also formidable levels of tannin. Nonetheless, many château seemed to get extractions right. The pendulum has been moving in this ‘easy-does-it’ direction style-wise for some years now, and I was really pleased to see elegance in wines like Pape

Clément and Angelus for instance. Others made wine with a ‘classical’ sort of extraction. Wines like Ducru-Beaucaillou and Léoville Las Cases seem almost brutal in their structure, and left me scratching my head a little. Both feel like they have a chance of turning out brilliantly, but it is difficult to tell beneath the sheer cloak of tannin. In any case they will require long cellaring, and this is worth noting. Indeed, Léoville Las Cases write in their primeurs booklet – ‘This 2022 vintage reminds us of the 1870’. I have not tasted Las Cases 1870, but over the years I have tried 1870 Lafite, 1870 Gruaud Larose and 1870 Mouton amongst others – all are still rich and structured in the 21st century! They would have been a challenge to taste from cask!! These days however, as customers, we are used to drinking windows that begin earlier. So, read references to tannin and structure in tasting notes (mine and others’) carefully if this is not for you, even if the wines will amaze your great grandchildren.

In some cases these two factors - alcoholic heat exacerbated by rich tannins – dominate in the wines. There is a real feeling of intensity, density, but not the lushness of real fruit, especially mid-palate, to balance. Not much fun.

But where all this was managed well, and the secret to 2022 was there – freshness – some real Bordeaux magic is on offer in 2022. This is not a relentlessly *ripe* and sweet baked vintage. There’s real vivacity. Think of it more as a supercharged year.

Why in a year of heat and drought is there such freshness? I heard many different explanations, some contradictory between châteaux, but here are some key points. At Château Lafleur, Omri Ram pointed to three factors that distinguish 2022 from other hot years. Firstly, there was good rainfall in November and December 2021, ensuring some

moisture reserves for 2022. This was followed by a ‘real winter’, giving the vines a break. Then, when the vines woke up in the Spring, 2022 was already into drought conditions, an important signal for the vines which put energy into root systems. Leaf production was not excessive, and bunches were smaller. There were ten nights of frost in March/April, but there was little damage, there was one incident of hail (at a small part of Grand Village), but after that the vintage was quite linear, with very little disease pressure, and fruit at harvest was in very good health.

Thomas Burke, at Château Margaux echoed Ram’s comments that this was a “relatively easy vintage, with no frost, no hail, no disease pressure.” There was very little rain – 340mm. The heat and drought delivered incredibly small berries (the lowest weight berries in 20 years), and consequently the yields were low – 25hl/ha. The wine was dense and ripe, with lots of concentration and tannin (highest tannins level ever), but the surprise at the estate was how round and soft the tannins were. “Something unique happened – the freshness. When we look at the PH level of 2022, it’s even lower than in 2021. It’s a paradox.” “Why?” – someone asked during our visit. Burke replied “We

don’t know. Everyone has ideas why it is this way, and we love to talk about those ideas, but in truth it is probably a number of factors, but we don’t know. But taste the wines and see for yourself.” To my palate, Château Margaux is something close to the archetype 2022, in the best sense – it is straight and structured in a way that reminds me of their 1986, but with finer, softer tannins, even more freshness (in a more 1996 direction), and the sort of precision we have only really seen in the past decade or less.

Were there district winners and losers? I missed too many châteaux to be more definitive in answering this question. It doesn’t seem like a bank vs bank, Cabernet vs Merlot sort of year. Rather it seems like a year in which *terroir* was important, and the quality of work and decisions were critical. I had hoped for more from Graves than I saw, but I couldn’t tell you why that is. Otherwise I saw exceptional examples everywhere (and disappointments). Perhaps it is not a memorable year for whites, though there were some very good ones (Pape Clement, Chevalier, and Pavillon Blanc), and I think generally the style of the (well-made) Sauternes is in the fuller style we actually go for less these days (bolder, heavier).



←An envious collection at the offices of J-P Moueix

## MY USUAL CAVEATS

In an ideal world I would taste from a wider range of châteaux, re-taste key wines on different days, and spend 3-4 weeks at this. My notes were made over a single week, brilliantly choreographed and hosted by my friend and négociant, Manu, and this report is the result of that very intense week. (Unfortunately, I had to miss some appointments this year).

I have been tasting *en primeur* for a number of years, and that affords a sort of ‘tasting calibration’ that can take into account the tender age of the wines. Wines that are only a few months old can be very tricky to judge, and score ranges and impressions – from anyone – should be treated as a rough guide to what we might expect in bottle. Some are almost opaque – if not in colour, in what they reveal about themselves at this embryonic stage. If I find a wine hard to judge I try to express that in the note, and give a wider score range too.

Wines also ‘move around’ a lot at this stage of their life. A week or two can make a big difference, but also tasting a cool sample on a wet cool morning at a UGC (or other group) tasting on one day, and a fairly warm sample, on a hot stuffy afternoon in a warm château salon on another can make a big difference (note, unfortunately, Châteaux d’Issan and Brane-Cantenac, suffered the latter – those wines may prove *far better* than the impressions they gave on the day, but I cannot write a note based on something imagined).

But I would therefore read more into a really positive tasting note and score than a negative one.

Style is as important a consideration as score. A high score doesn’t mean you will like the wine, and a moderate score might be given to a very good one that is *right in the groove* of what you actually

enjoy. Read the descriptions carefully, and read from a variety of sources. (This is general advice when reading other people’s tasting notes anyway).

Consider *prices* carefully when the offers come out. Most fine Bordeaux is nonetheless made in plentiful quantities, so it is not rare wine. We are fortunate to be living in a time when châteaux are making the best quality wines they have ever made, and we have had a number of recent successful vintages. When 2022s are released, look at other recent vintages for the same wines – read reviews, look at prices for those wines. Because you are buying 2022s as futures, they should look like a good deal today, compared to recent comparable quality vintages that are physically available for immediate delivery.

That said, it is my personal view that in today’s market top quality Bordeaux offers very good value for money. Price is a question of market sentiment, but for quality in the bottle, I think there is amazing value available, especially in the tier right behind all the first growths (see my top values list for 2022 below).

I do think though that 2022 deserves a place in all Bordeaux enthusiasts’ cellars. The natural sense of concentration and the freshness combine to offer a real vintage signature, one that Bordeaux enthusiasts will want to revisit. Amongst them are undoubtedly some future classics, and for value seekers there will be some exceptional gems to find too. Some ’22s will find a place in my own cellar, for sure.

## MY TOP TEN WINES TASTED\*

**Château Palmer**, 98-100

**Château Lafite**, 98-100

**Château La Conseillante**, 97-99

**Château Margaux**, 96-98+

**Château Figeac**, 96-98

**Château Latour**, 96-98

**Château Pichon Baron**, 96-98

**Château Cheval Blanc**, 95-97+

**Château Trotanoy**, 95-97+

**Château Carmes Haut-Brion**, 95-97

My top wines were all in the groove of the vintage – deeply-coloured, intense in fruit and aroma, but offering both freshness, and an elegant level of extraction that nonetheless feels like plenty. For Palmer (and Alter Ego), Lafite, La Conseillante, and Figeac, 2022 is amongst the best I have ever tasted from these properties – I would have no hesitation targeting these wines. Cheval Blanc reminds me of their seductive 1964 in 2022. To my palate, Angelus (95-97) (and Carillon) are at last matching the quality of work invested here with a style that is lighter in touch, more elegant, while losing nothing in expression. Canon (95-97) confirms once more that it is knocking on the door of a slot at 1er Grand Cru Classé ‘A’, whatever that means anymore (Cheval Blanc and Ausone were once the only two leading at IGCCA level, and both have quit, along with Angelus, who had only just ‘arrived’ there in 2012). Canon is not IGCCA in price, so it’s one to consider in ’22. Figeac’s superb, appellation-topping 2022 confirms it deserves its rank in this premier league level. Graves proved more of a mixed bag than I imagined, with good wines, but few that rose to the vintage highlights level. Les Carmes Haut-Brion – with a freshening proportion of whole bunch fruit used during fermentation – seemed to be the vintage winner in Graves – it’s a really great

Carmes, and their “C” (92-94), made the same sort of way, was also a real success. Pape-Clément (94-96), who also seem to be taking their foot off the accelerator pedal lately, made one of the best Magrez-era wines I can recall in 2022. Pichon Baron rivals Latour in Pauillac in 2022. I missed the chance to taste it at the château, only sampling it at the UGC tasting, so perhaps its better still – but given it’s price position, it’s an easy choice in 2022. VCC, Trotanoy, Latour and Margaux all made my top ten, are all top class, but these properties have achieved *even more stellar results* in some recent vintages, so back-buying is an alternative strategy to consider here once we have seen prices (except Latour, who won’t release theirs for several years anyway!).

Don’t read too much into omissions in my report – especially this year. There are some key properties I missed visiting, unfortunately. On the primeurs circuit bumping into wine colleagues, I heard very good things about Montrose, Troplong-Mondot, and Rauzan-Ségla, amongst others.

Also note that because we are ‘ambassadors’ for the Guinaudeau family wines (including Lafleur), as well as Calicem/Couvent des Jacobins, I have withheld my ratings for this wines.\*

## MY TOP TEN VALUE PICKS\*

**Château Canon, 95-97**

**Château Grand Puy Lacoste, 94-96**

**Château Pavie Macquin, 94-96**

**Château Clerc Milon, 93-96**

**Château Bourgneuf, 93-95**

**Château Lafleur-Gazin, 93-95**

**Château Peymouton, 93-95**

**Alter Ego de Palmer, 92-95**

**“C” des Carmes Haut-Brion, 92-94**

**Château Fieuzal, 92-94**

If value is what you seek in 2022, I would read critics' reports widely to 'triangulate' reviews and look for value, because I tasted a number of wines that outperformed château rank and reputation in 2022. But, because the vintage had the potential to deliver excess – too much tannin, too much alcohol, yielding dry, hot hard wines – this isn't a year in which we can buy blindly. Canon tops my list this year because while it is not exactly inexpensive, I think it is now knocking on the door or 1GCCA status, and its price is well below that tier. I missed the chance to taste Grand Puy Lacoste at the château, yet even at the UGC tasting it seems it may be one of the best wines

they have ever made. An easy pick. I really liked Clerc Milon, Pavie Macquin, and at a number of estates where the *grand vin* had been made right, the 'second wine' seemed especially good, particularly in cases where they have their own dedicated plots, (rather than being a label for every form of demotion) – Alter Ego de Palmer and C de Carmes Haut-Brion spring to mind. But it was at the J-P Moueix stable tasting in Libourne that I really got the sense that 2022 will be a good vintage to treasure hunt. Bourgneuf may prove even better than my rating, it's a super Pomerol in 2022, yet it is one that is often overlooked. And Peymouton anyone? I imagine there a lot of examples in 2022 that punch well above their status weight. That said, again, 2022 is not a universal vintage, and there are some estates that delivered the year's worst traits – hard, hot, unbalanced wines. So, if you are value-seeking, read widely on the vintage, and you will find things that show the best side of the vintage at modest prices.

## THE RATINGS

### The Dry Whites

Aile d'Argent	90-92	P.10
Château Carbonnieux Blanc	90-92	P.10
Champs Libres	--	P.10
Domaine de Chevalier Blanc	86-88	P.10
Domaine de Chevalier Blanc	93-96	P.10
Château Couhins Lurton Blanc	86-89	P.10
Château Fieuzal Blanc	90-92	P.11
Château Grand Village Blanc	--	P.11
Château Haut-Brion Blanc	90-92?	P.11
La Clarté	86-88	P.11
Château Latour Martillac Blanc	90-92	P.11
Château La Louvière Blanc	90-92	P.11
Château La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc	89-91?	P.12
Château Olivier Blanc	87-89	P.12
Château Pape Clement Blanc	93-95 92-93?	P.12
Pavillon Blanc	94-96	P.12
Château Puygueraud Blanc	85-86	P.12
Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc	93-95	P.13
Les Hauts de Smith Blanc	91-93	P.13

### Right Bank Satellites

Château Alcée	86-88	P.13
Château de Bel-Air	90-92	P.13
Château Grand Village Rouge	--	P.14
Les Perrières	--	P.14
Château La Prade	89-91	P.14
Château Puygueraud	89-92	P.14

### Pomerol

Château Bourgneuf	93-95	P.15
Château Certan de May	93-95	P.15
Château Chantalouette	89-91	P.15
Château La Conseillante	97-99	P.15
Château L'Evangile	95-97	P.15
Blason de L'Evangile	91-93	P.16
Château La Fleur-Pétrus	94-96	P.16
Château Le Gay	91-93	P.16
Manoir de Gay	86-89	P.16
Château La Grave	91-93	P.16
Château Hosanna	93-95	P.16
Château Lafleur	--	P.17
Les Pensées	--	P.17
Château Lafleur-Gazin	93-95	P.17
Château Lagrange	89-91	P.17
Château Lagravière	89-91	P.17
Château Latour à Pomerol	93-96	P.18
Château Montviel	91-93	P.18
Château Nenin	90-92	P.18
Le Pin	95-97	P.18
Château Plince	88-90	P.19
Château Saint-Pierre	92-94	P.19
"II" de Ch Saint-Pierre	89-91	P.19
Château Trotanoy	95-97+	P.19
Vieux Chateau Certan	95-97	P.19
Château La Violette	92-94	P.19

**St.-Émilion**

Château Angelus	95-97	P.21
Carillon d'Angelus	92-94	P.21
Château Ausone	92-94	P.21
La Chapelle d'Ausone	91-92	P.22
Château Bélair-Monange	91-94?	P.22
Château Bellevue	91-93	P.22
Château Berliquet	92-94	P.22
Calicem	--	P.22
Château Canon	95-97	P.23
Château Cheval Blanc	95-97+	P.23
Château La Clotte	89-91	P.23
Couvent des Jacobins	--	P.24
Château Figeac	96-98	P.24
Château Fonbel	88-91	P.24
Château Haut Simard	90-91	P.25
L'If	92-93	P.25
Château Larcis Ducasse	90-94+	P.25
Château Moulin Saint-Georges	90-92	P.25
Château Pavie Macquin	94-96	P.25
Château Pymouton	93-95	P.26
Château Pindefleurs	91-93	P.26
Château Quinault L'Enclos	90-92	P.26
Château La Serre	91-93	P.26
Château Simard	91-93	P.26

**Graves / Pesseac-Léognan**

Château Carbonnieux Rouge	87-89	P.27
Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion	95-97	P.27
"C" des Carmes Haut-Brion	92-94	P.27
Domaine de Chevalier Rouge	91-93 90-92	P.28
Château Couhins-Lurton Rouge	85-87?	P.28
Château de Fieuzal Rouge	92-94	P.28
Château Haut Bailly	92-94+	P.29
Haut Bailly II	87-89	P.29
Château Haut-Brion	92-94+?	P.30
Le Clarence de Haut-Brion	89-91	P.30
Château Latour Martillac	86-88	P.30
Château La Louvière Rouge	89-91 89-91	P.30
Château Malartic Lagravière Rouge	91-93	P.30
Château La Mission Haut-Brion	93-95	P.31
La Chapelle de la Mission Haut-Brion	91-93	P.31
Château Olivier Rouge	90-92	P.32
Château Pape Clement	94-96	P.32
Château Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge	94-96	P.32
Château Thil Rouge	90-92	P.32

**Médoc / Haut-Médoc / Listrac-Médoc**

Château Potensac	90-92	P.32
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**Margaux**

Château Brane Cantenac	87-89?	P.33
Baron de Brane	85-87	P.33
Blason de d'Issan	87-89?	P.33
Château d'Issan	87-88?	P.33
Château Margaux	96-98+	P.33
Pavillon Rouge	92-94	P.34
Château Palmer	98-100	P.34
Alter Ego de Palmer	92-95	P.34



**St.-Julien**

Clos du Marquis	91-93	P.34
Château Ducru-Beaucaillou	91-96	P.34
La Croix Ducru-Beaucaillou	89-91	P.35
Le Petit Ducru	87-90	P.35
Madame de Beaucaillou	86-88	P.35
Château Langoa-Barton	91-93	P.35
Château Léoville Barton	94-96	P.35
Château Léoville Las Cases	92-98	P.35
Château Mauvesin Barton	91-93	P.35

**Pauillac**

Château d'Armailhac	91-93	P.36
Château Clerc Milon	93-96	P.36
Pastourelle de Clerc Milon	89-91	P.36
Château Duhart-Milon	89-92	P.36
Château Grand Puy Lacoste	94-96	P.36
Château Haut Batailley	92-94	P.36
Verso de Haut Batailley	90-92	P.37
Moulin de Duhart	87-89	P.37
Château Lafite-Rothschild	98-100	P.37
Carruades de Lafite	90-93	P.37
Château Latour	96-98	P.38
Les Forts de Latour	93-95	P.38
Pauillac de Château Latour	90-93	P.38
Château Lynch Bages	91-95?	P.38
Echo de Lynch Bages	90-92	P.39
Château Mouton-Rothschild	94-96+	P.39
Le Petit Mouton	86-88	P.39
Château Pedesclaux	86-89?	P.39
Château Pichon Longueville Baron	96-98	P.39
Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande	93-95	P.40

**St.-Éstephe**

Château Lafon-Rochet	83-86?	P.40
Château Phélan Ségur	90-92	P.40
Frank Phélan	85-87	P.40
Château Les Ormes de Pez	92-94	P.40

**Sauternes**

Château Broustet	91-93	P.41
Château Climens	91-93	P.41
Château Coutet	92-94	P.41
Château Doisy Daëne	86-88	P.41
Château Doisy Vedrines	89-91	P.41
Château de Fargues	93-95	P.41
Château Guiraud	92-94	P.41
Clos Haut Peyraguey	93-95	P.42
Château Lafaurie Peyraguey	90-92	P.42
Château Rieussec	89-91	P.42
Château Suduiraut	93-95	P.42
Château La Tour Blanche	91-93	P.42

## THE DRY WHITES (All Districts)

### 2022 Aile d'Argent (a white of Château Mouton-Rothschild, Pauillac)

80-92

At Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Light straw; sweet tropical fruit aroma, some freshness, oak spice; sweet round attack, rich, spicy, then tropical fruit flavour, some zestiness, classic Aile d'Argent style, round, gourmand, with good juiciness.

### 2022 Château Carbonnieux Blanc (Pessac-Léognan)

90-92

At the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Pale straw; ripe musk melon and a touch of banana on the nose; juicy, ripe, yellow banana, good juicy acidity, round, with some green melon, some zest, a round mouthfeel, then there's an appetizing tangy twist on the finish. Good.

### 2022 Champs Libres (Mouillac)

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Mouillac. 1.2ha on clay-limestone. 75% new oak. 100% Sauvignon Blanc, 24 Aug.

Tasted at Château Lafleur, 28 April 2023

Bright light green gold; fresh, a more floral and lifted fragrance than the Grand Village Blanc; creamy and concentrated on the palate, intense fruit, fine spicy oak notes, a nice lip-smacking tanginess at the end with a little patisserie feel at the end from the barrel and lees. A gourmand Champs Libres.

**(Score withheld, The Fine Wine Experience is an 'ambassador' for Château Lafleur).**

### Château Les Charmes-Godard Blanc (Francs-Côtes de Bordeaux)

86-88

Primarily limestone-clay soils with some loamy soils over marl subsoil. 60% Semillon, 26-30 Aug; 27% Sauvignon Blanc, 29 Aug, 13% Sauvignon Gris, 1 Sept.

Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Pale gold; fresh grapey fruit, pip fruit, and a light touch of fresh cut pineapple; juicy, a little more creamy, and naturally ripe, some honeyed notes – barley sugar perhaps, speak of the drought and summer, but stays quite fresh. Nice.

### 2022 Domaine de Chevalier Blanc (Pessac-Léognan)

93-96

Tasted at Domaine de Chevalier, 26 April 2023

Bright light gold; really fresh, exuberant ripe aroma, full of fragrance, musk, fresh passionfruit, Alphonse mango, as well as a grassy coolness; the palate is lush, super energetic and zippy, it bounces along the palate depositing rich oozing fruit along the way, the acids are very present yet very ripe too, there is real phenolic complexity, the oak influencing only the texture which feels well buffed, polished, but there is no sense of oak flavour sitting outside of that. This is a really promising edition of Domaine de Chevalier Blanc in a gourmand groove.

### 2022 Château Couhins Lurton Blanc

86-89

Tasted at Château Couhins-Lurton, 26 April 2023

Light straw; fresh, grassy, cheesy nose; a round lush feel on the plate, with melon, gooseberry, lemon drop, grasses on the palate, this is both rounded and sharp, with a note of capsicum, but it is not aggressive in that Marlborough high-crop sort of way, there is some concentration. This has a nice chalky texture, there some lactic tone. Good.

**2022 Château de Fieuzal Blanc** (Pessac-Léognan)**90-92**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Pale green gold; musk, grasses, and soft candy – marshmallow – on the nose; good concentration and admirable focus, the acidity and fine phenolics pull this ripe white in fairly tight, juicy musky fruit. This works well. Harmonious.

**2022 Château Grand Village Blanc** (Mouillac)

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1.8ha of clay-limestone soil, 50% new barrels, 50% single use. 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 23, 24, 25 Aug.; 30% Sémillon, 23 Aug. Tasted at Château Lafleur, 28 April 2023

Pale and bright; lovely nose of green melon, zest, and a touch of spice, a little yellow banana in cream too; the palate is reassuringly juicy, creamy, rounded by the mid-palate, this has impressive intensity and fine phenolics. A Grand Village of intensity, generosity and roundness – the key to its intensity being the tiny berries: yields were lower than in 2021 even.

**(Score withheld, The Fine Wine Experience is an ‘ambassador’ for Château Lafleur).**

**2022 Château Haut-Brion Blanc** (Pessac-Léognan)**90-92?**

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Light gold; both sweet fruit and a savoury musky tone on the nose, a bit sullen for HBB; juicy and bright, there is more energy here than in the LMHBB, but also a hard edge to the acidity. It doesn't feel green, but it doesn't feel especially ripe either – it is a blocky hard acidity I don't normally find in HBB. There is not the complexity or aroma on the nose or palate for HBB at *grand vin* level, it tastes ordinary. Perhaps I have caught it at a poor moment?

**2022 La Clarté**

(Graves. 2nd white wine of Châteaux Haut-Brion and La Mission Haut-Brion)

**86-88**

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Bright pale straw; pungent. A ripe, grassy, musky nose, some savoury lactic tone and some SO<sub>2</sub>; quite a full and ponderous feel on the palate, both some tropical fruit flavours and some juicy almost green notes that don't yet quite feel knit. It may need a year or two to come together, but it feels like a shorter-lived Clarté in any case.

**2022 Château Latour Martillac Blanc** (Pessac-Léognan)**90-92**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Pale green gold; low key nose; full and juicy-creamy, real zestiness, grassy notes, and a juicy-intense melting finish. Good energy and harmony here.

**2022 Château La Louvière Blanc** (Pessac-Léognan)**90-92**

Tasted at Château Couhins-Lurton, 26 April 2023

Bright pale gold; blackcurrant spectrum sauvignon, with some kumquat; palate-coating, with fine grip, this has fruit reserve, and energy, it is juicy, blackcurrant, musk, and cool leaf notes in a rich package. Works well. Will need a couple of years to come into drinking, and then should keep well. Harmonious.

**2022 Château La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc** (Pessac-Léognan)**89-91?**

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Pale green gold; a fine, apple, and melon aroma; a bold, rich feel, juicy gooseberry, and grasses, there is an incongruous feeling of both full fat glycerin and alcohol-laden fruit and also a juicy slightly tart acidity round the sides of the palate that denote a hint of greenness. There's attractive fragrance on the nose and palate, but the wine feels distinctly awkward and weighty today. Well made, but it feels like it was plucked from within difficult conditions. Perhaps it is a poor moment to taste this this morning?

**2022 Château Olivier Blanc** (Pessac-Léognan)**87-89**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright green tone; fresh and grassy nose; tight and juicy, there is a prickle and an edge to the acidity, a little crunchy-capsicumy, this will possibly settle down well but it lacks the flow and harmony of some neighbours' wines.

**2022 Clementin de Pape Clément Blanc** (the 2<sup>nd</sup> white wine of Château Pape-Clement)**93-95**Tasted at Château Pape-Clement, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Bright pale gold; lovely aroma of orange zest, tropical; flowers, and a little note of musk, its an appealing clear fresh aroma; full on the palate, well-shaped, with beautiful zesty fleshy fruit, a ripe piquancy and energy that flow through to a fairly long fragrant finish. Whatever oak is there buffing the edges and adding to a sense of mid-palate creaminess is well integrated and disappears on the finish. A wine of precision and class. A real success.

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

**92-93?**

Fresh and grassy, not as aromatic as at the chateau; ripe and full on the palate, citrus, more closed though than the chateau sample, and a bit harder in the phenolics than it tasted earlier at the chateau.

**2022 Pavillon Blanc** (a white of Château Margaux)**94-96**

*100% Sauvignon Blanc, harvest began 18 Aug. Just 14hl/ha – only 8000 bottles this year. 50% of the white grape harvest used in this label in 2022. Indeed, we were told that there will from this vintage on be a second tier label wine declassified from the white grand vin Pavillon Blanc. There will be no bought fruit for that, and they anticipate a 50/50 split between the two labels. The second wine won't be offered through the primeur system.*

Tasted at Château Margaux, 27 April 2023

Pale green gold; fine, fragrant, fresh, almost cool and verdant surprisingly, it has an inviting refreshing aroma; juicy, lush and vibrant, zingy and energetic, there is also a fine creamy base to the texture. Really sapid and juicy and morish, great harmony and integration to this. Long finish. Really balanced.

**2022 Château Puygueraud Blanc** (Francs – Côtes de Bordeaux)**85-86**

*Limestone-clay on clay, with mark and asteriated rock subsoil. 86% Sauvignon Blanc, 24-26 Aug; 14% Sauvignon Gris, 31 Aug*  
Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Bright pale green gold; vibrant, grassy, with a lactic note; fresh, tight, a bit juicy/abrupt, it stops short on the finish. Clean, ok.

## 2022 Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc (Pessac-Léognan)

**93-95**

90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 18 Aug – 2 Sept. 24hl/ha.

Tasted at Château Smith Haut Lafitte, 26 April 2023

Bright light gold; a lovely fresh nose, more subdued than the second wine, with musk green melon, a touch of cream and spice; grand vin feel here on the palate – there is more density and intensity in the attack, it melts through the middle juicily, with zest, pear, and melon notes. There is some heft and it is felt as the finish rounds out smoothly. Indeed smooth is the key word here – it comes in with a big attack and then smooths out to a creamy quieter finish, like a sea plane landing. It's a grander wine than, say '17, and though it lacks the extreme multidimensionality or real snap of that wine, it nonetheless is a superb interpretation of the 2022 vintage and a grand SHL, well made.

## 2022 Les Hauts de Smith Blanc

(the 2<sup>nd</sup> wine of Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc)

**91-93**

100% Sauvignon Blanc, 18 Aug – 2 Sept. 24hl/ha.

Tasted at Château Smith Haut Lafitte, 26 April 2023

Bright pale gold; a really floral-fresh bouquet, that burst from the glass, really joyous sort of aroma like walking into a room full of cut flowers, some fresh apple, pear and tropical fruit too, but nothing that feels heavy about it; the palate is juicy and round, sumptuous, there is something a little exotic, something a little luxurious, but principally this is fresh and expressive. A delicious wine. There is also a lip-smacking gently phenolic grip to it, lovely acidity. A really good wine. Alcohol is there, but in balance.

# RIGHT BANK SATELLITES

## 2022 Château Alcée (Castillon – Côtes de Bordeaux)

**86-88**

Limestone-clay soils on an asteriated limestone plateau. 100% Merlot, 14-22 Sept.

Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Full opaque appearance; high-toned strawberry jam nose; rich, dense, sweet fruit, confit red and dark fruit, spices, dark cherry, lightly toasted almond, finishes warm, medicinal. Bold wine.

## 2022 Château de Bel-Air (Lalande de Pomerol)

**90-92**

Quaternary gravel on clay, iron-rich subsoil. 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Full, deep ruby; very fresh, perfumed, floral aroma, airy and attractive; cool and fresh on the palate, a touch green even, in the fruit, tight, then a lovely floral freshness emerges, mineral notes, and an airy inner mouth fragrance. There's a small question in my mind over that little green note and where it might go in bottle, but right now it feels like it works.

## 2022 Château Grand Village Rouge (Mouillac) --

10ha on clay-limestone. 30% new oak. 80% Merlot, 9, 10, 15, 16 Sept.; 20% Bouchet, 22, 23 Sept.

Tasted at Château Lafleur, 28 April 2023

Deep crimson glass-staining ruby; a lush, ripe dark fruit nose, reserved and brooding; a lush, sweet rich palate, juicy-creamy, seamless, melting like dark berry sherbet on the palate, ripe velvety tannins. This is a ripe, opulent, juicy-fresh Grand Village.

**(Score withheld, The Fine Wine Experience is an 'ambassador' for Château Lafleur).**

## 2022 Les Perrières (Mouillac) --

Mouillac. 3.6ha on a clay-limestone plateau. 33% new oak. 57% Merlot, 7 Sept; 43% Bouchet, 17 Sept.

Tasted at Château Lafleur, 28 April 2023

Clear deep ruby; fine airy fresh dark fruit nose, with mineral notes, spices and detail; the palate is rich and creamy, with fine, almost chalky minerality buffered by creamy extract, there is beautiful purity to this, real intensity of fruit, very fine.

**(Score withheld, The Fine Wine Experience is an 'ambassador' for Château Lafleur).**

## 2022 Château La Prade (Francs – Côtes de Bordeaux) 89-91

Partly limestone clay on limestone rock subsoil, partly limestone clay hillsides. 85% Merlot, 14, 22 Sept; 15% Cabernet Franc, 29 Sept.

Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Semi-opaque full ruby; some volatile aromatic lift and a slight resin-like tone, sweet dark cherry fruit; sweet fruit, lush, ripe, the right side of the line with nice freshness, in spite of the obvious richness and weight, it stays buoyant.

## 2022 Château Puygueraud (Francs – Côtes de Bordeaux) 89-92

Limestone on clay, with marl and asteriated limestone subsoil. 88% Merlot, 7-26 Sept; 12% Cabernet Franc, 29 Sept.

Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Semi-clear full ruby; sweet, red-dark fruit, some lift and freshness, a touch of resin too; lush fruit, very rich, sumptuous in texture, some alcohol, but it feels well balanced, ripe, velvety and long. This works, and should settle in well with time.

# POMEROL

## 2022 Château Bourgneuf

**93-95**

*Gravel and clay, iron-rich subsoil. 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 5-9, & 15 Sept.*  
Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; ripe, fresh and sweet, and spicy in aroma, a cool fresh breezy note like seaside air really lifts it; really lovely on the palate, concentrated yet effortless in feel, palate-coating, sweet and fresh with a salty note that adds to its morishness, this cuddles the palate generously and gently, with a long very fruity extension that follows the finish. This is a super Bourgneuf!

## 2022 Château Certan de May

**93-95**

*Clay and deep gravel. 60% Merlot, 7 Sept; 30% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20 Sept.*  
Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

A deeper shade of ruby-crimson, semi-opaque; very sweet, kirsch-like aroma, super intense and potent, yet bursting and energetic, and very pure at the same time; sweet essency fruit on the palate, very intense, with some fine crème de cassis, fresh ripe black cherry juice, the profile here is dark, brooding, sunny and vibrant, alive and energetic. It is a bold wine, liqueur-rich almost, yet it stays moderate in its alcohol-feel, the tannins are velvety, with a mineral edge. It is very ripe, it skirts the edge of overripeness without going over. An exotic twist to the finish.

## 2022 Château Chantalouette (2nd wine of Château de Sales)

**89-91**

*Small gravels and iron-rich loess. 72% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 13% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7-21 Sept.*  
Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear ruby; a sweet fresh-fruited and spicy nose, more cooked fruits spectrum; sweet, fresh, moderate in weight on the palate, juicy, very digestible, lively, with lovely fruit, a cool leafy note in the mix. Delicious.

## 2022 Château La Conseillante

**97-99**

*87% Merlot, 5-13 Sept; 13% Cabernet Franc, 13 & 20 Sept. 14% ABV. 3.65PH.*  
Tasted at Château La Conseillante, 25 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; a gorgeous, scented nose, ripe fruit, perfume, florals; fleshy, yet well-trimmed, well-shaped, there is a sense of fine delicate yet distinct structure from the melting tannins. A lovely bittersweet quality, freshness, intensity, and balance. There's also a super mid-palate intensity, and really long finish. The alcohol is present, but not distracting, it remains balanced, and with a real sense of harmony and integration. Very impressive wine – one of the great La Conseillante *grand vins* I feel, and I immediately feel to want to buy this '22! It could be a candidate for wine of the vintage in time.

## 2022 Château L'Évangile

**95-97**

*82% Merlot, 17.5% Cabernet Franc, 0.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29 Aug – 14 Sept.*  
Tasted at Château L'Évangile, 25 April 2023

Deep ruby; fresh, spicy, brooding nose; ripe, lush, concentrated, melting, this has a fine proper structure for a *grand vin*, a seductive taste, melting and sucrée, with good freshness in the fruit expression, the alcohol is there – it's a big wine, but it works really really well.

## 2022 Blason de L'Evangile

**91-93**

Tasted at Château L'Evangile, 25 April 2023

Clear deep ruby; lovely fresh fruit on the nose; supple, fruity, delicious, melting and quite pure, this is a really lovely wine, fruity, melting, with good concentration for second wine, a touch dark chocolate at the end.

## 2022 Château La Fleur-Pétrus

**94-96**

*Deep gravel and clay on iron-rich subsoil. 96.5% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 0.5% Petit-Verdot, 1-19 Sept.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear ruby; for such a Merlot-rich wine, unusually the aroma reminds me of blackcurrant, it is also spicy, wild, exotic, with a blackcurrant leaf note; on the palate it is sweet, potent, very centred in the palate, with real presence, with a palate-coating fine structure that melts away into the dark spicy fruit. It is seductive and grand, there is a touch of alcoholic warmth but it is offset by essency concentration. Very good.

## 2022 Château Le Gay

**91-93**

*90% Merlot; 10% Cabernet Franc, 5-19 Sept. 14.5% ABV. 24.8hl/ha.*

Tasted at Château Le Gay, 25 April 2023

Clear deep ruby; lovely fresh floral aroma, lifted, fine oak notes; rich, dark fruit, in the style of the Manoir, but this is much more complete, with the mid-palate fruit more evident. It's a bold style, sweet, with some complexity, and a melting finish.

## 2022 Manoir de Gay

**86-89**

*100% Merlot, 5-19 Sept. 14.5% ABV. 24.8hl/ha.*

Tasted at Château Le Gay, 25 April 2023

Semi-clear ruby; floral, spicy, with some oak glossiness – the nose is a bit charred; rich, spicy, a little donut-like in its palate feel – lovely rich melting spiciness in ring around the palate, with something a little missing in the mid-palate. This is altogether a more exotic, glossy style compared to the Montviel, which has a more classic Pomerol character. Nice enough.

## 2022 Château La Grave

**91-93**

*Gravel and fine clay. 89% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, 5-19 Sept.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Fine semi-clear ruby, pink rim; a sweet icing sugar dusted cooked plum aroma, exotic yet fresh and enticing, quite an exuberant aroma; really plump, charming, pretty wine, lovely plummy fruit, cherry flavour, quite scented, a really round shape, sweet and succulent, with moderate alcohol impression, the tannins are silky smooth, with a long, scented finish. Delicious.

## 2022 Château Hosanna

**93-95**

*Blue clay on red gravel, iron-rich subsoil. 74% Merlot, 26% Cabernet Franc, 5-19 Sept.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Full semi-clear ruby; fresh, slightly exotic fruit, flowers and a musk note on the nose, it is concentrated and intense in aroma; a lush, melting fruit attack, very ripe, with a touch of salted caramel, this is up front and voluptuous, silky, transparent, it stays the right side of the alcohol-feel and fruit maturity line, but pushes on it. This is classic Hosanna, extrovert, heart-on-its-sleeve that would cheer any sullen mood.



## 2022 Château Lafleur

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3.75ha of the Lafleur estate, in 3 parcels – 1.35ha sandy-clay gravel; 1.45ha clay gravel; 0.95ha gravelly sand. 25% new oak. 51% Bouchet, 12 & 17 Sept; 49% Merlot, 3 & 5 Sept.

Tasted Château Lafleur, 28 April 2023

Semi-opaque ruby; wow!, this is really complex yet shy, like a grand master painting on view with a ten watt bulb, there is so much detail, yet the detail peeps out in fleeting moments while swirling the glass – it is floral, spicy, exotic, and ever changing; the palate is fine, fleshy, well-shaped, silky and palate-coating with lovely flesh, it is so finely structured, it is bold in weight – the alcohol is felt, but it is also so opulently fruited, heady and multi-layered, very complex and satisfying. This will be a grand, melting, low acid, expansive Lafleur.

**(Score withheld, The Fine Wine Experience is an ‘ambassador’ for Château Lafleur).**

## 2022 Les Pensées

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0.7ha of the Château Lafleur vineyard on sandy-clay gravel. 25% new oak. 57% Merlot, 7 Sept; 43% Bouchet, 17 Sept.

Tasted Château Lafleur, 28 April 2023

Clear bright deep ruby; fresh, brooding, spicy, violet-led floral fragrance; lush, rounded in mouthfeel with a really seductive, unctuous luxurious fruit expression, a silky fine structure. There is impressive reserve here, just a hint of alcohol warmth pokes out, but it is lush, ripe and opulent and the feeling is seductive.

**(Score withheld, The Fine Wine Experience is an ‘ambassador’ for Château Lafleur).**

## Château Lafleur-Gazin

93-95

Gravel, clay on silt. 100% Merlot, 5-13 Sept.

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear deep crimson ruby; a lovely nose, exotic tone to the fruit plus beautiful floral exuberance of freshness, spices too; sweet on the palate, buoyant, fleshy, there's a really great mid-palate plumpness, great balance, moderate alcohol, and it is bursting with fresh fruit and energy. A seamless, joyous wine. The best Lafleur-Gazin I can recall tasting.

## 2022 Château Lagrange

89-91

Gravel on clay and old, deep, blue clay. 100% Merlot, 6-13 Sept.

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-opaque full ruby; fresh, ripe, a hint of leafiness; a more brooding style here, good flesh and concentration, depth, a cool herbal streak running through it, it is fleshy and lush, with fine tannin, the little green note returning at the finish.

## 2022 Château Lagravière

89-91

Château Le Gay, 25 April 2023

Semi-clear ruby, pink rim; fresh, sweet nose, plummy with floral notes; lush, but relatively elegant in the context of '22, supple, silky-textured, delicious, easy-drinking, with good concentration.

## 2022 Château Latour à Pomerol

93-96

*Two thirds deep gravel and clay, one third clay and loam. 100% Merlot, 1-8 Sept.*  
Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear ruby, crimson rim; wild fruit on the nose, spicy, exotic aroma, fresh; sweet and palate coating, dark cherry, this has a silky sumptuous feel, fairly detailed, it coats the palate in velvety fruit – the tannins are there if you go looking for them, but they are so absorbed in the fruit and the impression is so melting and very creamy. A great Latour à Pomerol, I feel confident.

## 2022 Château Montviel

91-93

*80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 6-15 Sept. 14.5% ABV. 17.5hl/ha.*  
Tasted at Château Le Gay, 25 April 2023

Semi-clear crimson, narrow pink rim; red and dark berry fruit, with a dusting of cocoa; fine, melting, dark fruit, some cherry scent, melting chocolate, powdery fine tannins, there is some lift, some airiness in spite of the sweet richness. Some milk chocolate at the end. Very nice Montviel.

## 2022 Château Nenin

90-92

*64% Merlot, 36% Cabernet Franc*  
Tasted at Château Nenin, 25 April 2023

Deep bright ruby, semi-clear; fresh summer pudding forest berries; rich, fleshy, a bit hot, but soft and fleshy. Good clean fruit, and some fresh expression in with the warm feel. Nice wine.

## 2022 Le Pin

95-97

*100% Merlot, 6-17 Sept, 14.4% ABV. 3.77PH.*  
Tasted at Le Pin, 25 April 2023

Fine ruby, ruby rim; a pretty nose, that Le Pin seduction is there, that complex spicy dimension; the palate is supple, seductive in taste and feel, with sweet cherry, and a certain sumptuous creaminess. Le Pin fans won't be disappointed. Spicy, delicious wine.



→ Jacques Thienpont at Le Pin

## 2022 Château Pince

**88-90**

*Dark soil on iron pan. 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 19-23 Sept.*  
Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Deep, fairly opaque ruby; a sweet somewhat glossy-solid nose, not yielding much nuance; sweet, ripe, melting, glossy-toned fruit, good concentration, and ripeness, the acidity is lowish. Good fleshy wine.

## 2022 Château Saint-Pierre

**92-94**

Tasted at Château Bellevue, 25 April 2023

Clear ruby, deep; really lovely forest berry fruit, fresh juicy, summer pudding; lush, thicker-textured, really beautiful extract, the tannins here are silky-fine, there is real freshness and lift, aromatically complexity, natural density, and buoyancy in spite of this. Impressive wine.

## 2022 “II” de Ch Saint-Pierre

**89-91**

*Sandy gravel.*

Tasted at Château Bellevue, 25 April 2023

Semi-opaque ruby; fresh, lifted, really fragrant, floral spicy and fresh; fleshy, supple though the shape of the tannins is a touch rustic, super flavour and there is enough acidity here, it is quite juicy-creamy rich.

## 2022 Château Trotanoy

**95-97+**

*Pomerol. Gravel on clay and black clay on iron pan. 96% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1-19 Sept.*  
Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; a fine, nuanced ripe aroma, expressive, perfumed, a little exotic, a really complex aroma that keeps changing in the glass; very fine on the palate, the Trotanoy sense of reserve and layering is there, but it is in tension with a more exuberant, playful 2022 personality, it is lush, ripe, a little warm though there is no burn, the tannins are supremely fine. It's a grand wine. While it may close in on itself after bottling, my impression today is of a more open-style Trotanoy, that might have something to show earlier too.

## 2022 Vieux Chateau Certan

**95-97**

*75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6-21 Sept. 14.4% ABV. 3.78PH.*  
Tasted at Vieux Château Certan, 25 April 2023

Deep ruby-crimson, semi-opaque; a ripe fresh nose, succulent fruit and floral notes, detailed aroma; sweet on the palate, really melting feel, soft, with moderate acidity, this has a more slow-moving feel, liquoriously rich and essency feel for VCC, yet with gentle edges, and the alcohol (14.4%) doesn't burn at all, there is such easy feeling extract here. This is undoubtedly superb, but does it join the pantheon of recent greats from VCC? Perhaps I will be proven conservative with this one.

## 2022 Château La Violette

**92-94**

*100% Merlot, 5-6 Sept. 14.5% ABV. 23.8hl/ha.*  
At Château Le Gay, 25 April 2023

Semi-clear ruby; a glossy sweet nose of liqueur of cherries; this has La Violette's signature luscious very creamy barrel-ferment feel, powdery soft texture, sweet, liquorious richness, intense pure flavour, it is palate-enveloping, palate coating, and pillowy in feel, with no hard edges anywhere, and the alcohol feels in balance with the sweet richness of the wine.



↑ Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont at Vieux Chateau Certan, makers of a brilliant recent run of vintages

# ST.-ÉMILION

## 2022 Château Angelus

95-97

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru. 60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc.*

Tasted at Château Angelus, 25 April 2023

Fine ruby, pink rim; fresh, quite spicy, lively aroma; lush and vibrant, buoyant, supple, lovely fruit, a really expansive aromatic profile, sweet, but not sickly so, there's a nice freshness, and a powdery soft finish. This is very fine, and more elegant than I recall Angelus being in a past bold vintage. Bodes well for Angelus' direction, and a success in 2022.

## 2022 Carillon d'Angelus

92-94

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru. 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. 14.5% ABV*

Tasted at Château Angelus, 25 April 2023

Fine ruby, fresh rim; lovely open, spicy, floral aroma, enticing; fine, silky, red and dark fruit, elegant wine, mid-conc, there is an appetizing scale and freshness to this, it invites another sip. This has the most délicatesse so far on the Right Bank. Really lovely, morish – in spite of the high alcohol level.



↑ Left: 'Le Majesteux' of the 2022 at Angelus. Right: The majesteux barrel room at Angelus.

## 2022 Château Ausone

92-94

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru (quit the 1er Grand Cru Classification). Asteria limestone plateau and calcareous clay slope. 50% Cabernet Franc, 21 & 27 Sept; 50% Merlot, 5 & 9 Sept. 15% ABV.*

Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023.

Deep, semi-opaque; rich but fresh nose, detailed aroma, a lot going on; rich on the palate, dense fruit, a bit hot, but melting, fine dark chocolate and dark fruit, very rich and with plenty of density and fine structure, it flows well. Hot finish diminishes its full potential I feel.

## 2022 La Chapelle d'Ausone

91-92

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru. Second wine of Château Ausone, from the same terroir – asteria limestone plateau and calcereous clay slope. 60% Cabernet Franc, 21 & 27 Sept; 35% Merlot, 5 & 9 Sept; 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30 Sept. 15% ABV.*

Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023.

Semi-opaque crimson; a really lovely nose, floral, and fresh and expressive; rich, flowing, some heat, but there is also freshness and there is a fluidity to this which gives it some charm. Powdery-fine tannin. Finishes hot.

## 2022 Château Bélair-Monange

91-94?

*St.-Emilion 1er Grand Cru Classé. Asteriated limestone on the plateau, blue clay on limestone on the slopes. 98% Merlot, 2% Cabernet France, 8-20 Sept.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; a fine nose, a touch exotic, fresh, quite mineral, detailed; fine on the palate, ripe with a clear, firm structure, melting fruit, some alcohol evident – there is a little heat here, some brûlée tone to the ripe fruit, initially I felt it lacked a little lift or sparkle, but, thinking I might have palate fatigue, I had a glass of water, a rest, and came back to it... this is melting, finely structured, with its minerality evident, melting fruit. But my question mark for Bélair-Monange this year is whether the more typically chiseled and airy feel I usually really love in these terroirs will come through and 'lift' it a little more in bottle. It feels like it may be too much in the direction of heaviness in 2022, but let's see in bottle.

## 2022 Château Bellevue

91-93

Tasted at Château Bellevue, 25 April 2023

Semi-clear full crimson ruby; spicy brooding nose; lush, fleshy, spicy, some alcohol warmth, but a nice freshness too, ripe and full, but very supple and melting. Very good. Freshness and lift on the finish.

## 2022 Château Berliquet

92-94

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru Classé. 65% Merlot, 29 Aug – 5 Sept; 35% Cabernet Franc, 14 Sept. 45hl/ha. 14.5% ABV.*

Tasted at Château Canon, 25 April 2023

Full ruby; sweet spicy exuberant fruit, more bass notes to Canon's more fresh/mineral treble; ripe, lush, a very friendly style, with lovely purity of fruit, spices, balance, this is a delicious wine. A super Berliquet in a big-scale expression, but it is well composed. The 2022 says "pay attention to Berliquet, it's not only risen, it's arrived."

## 2022 Calicem

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*100% Merlot. 14.7% ABV.*

Tasted at Calicem, 25 April 2023

Semi-opaque deep ruby; reserved nose at first; sweet, warm, supple, bold, opulent at first, with air a fresh creaminess emerges, bright raspberry fruit expression, juicy and lush, supple, melting with a bittersweet twist at the end, it is fresh-ripe, luscious, creamy and long.

**(Score withheld – The Fine Wine Experience represents Calicem and Couvent des Jacobins in Hong Kong).**

## 2022 Château Canon

95-97

*St.-Emilion 1er Grand Cru Classé. 75% Merlot, 30 Aug – 12 Sept; 25% Cabernet Franc, 15-22 Sept. 45hl/ha. 14.5% ABV.*  
Tasted at Château Canon, 25 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; fresh, ripe, subtle in its details of spice and florals; fleshy, ripe, succulent, lots of fine extract, good energy, enough acidity and freshness, the minerality of Canon coming through on this also. Very fine, finely structured wine. There is a boldness to this but it is offset by freshness and that mineral feel. A superb Canon, one to note.



↑ Left: Bleu de Chanel, Chateau Canon edition. Right: Primeur tasting at Chateau Canon.

## 2022 Château Cheval Blanc

95-97+

*53% Merlot, 46% Cabernet Franc, 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29 Aug – 20 Sept. 13.9% ABV. 100% grand vin.*  
Tasted at Château Cheval Blanc, 25 April 2023

Opaque crimson; dark fruit, dark chocolate, spices, a really attractive fragrant nose; ripe, fresh, dense but melting, like very fine dark chocolate melting in the mouth, combined with a lovely freshness to the fruit, there's spice and perfume. This is classic ripe vintage Cheval Blanc, reminding me of the glorious 1964, with its combination of exotic charm and lovely equilibrium. Really very fine. Long melting chocolate and dark fruit finish. Superb.

## 2022 Château La Clotte

89-91

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru Classé. Clay and limestone soil. 85% Merlot, 8 & 20 Sept; 15% Cabernet Franc, 27 Sept. 15% ABV.*  
Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023

Semi-opaque mid deep colour; spicy, leathery dense nose, some freshness in the expression; dark fruit, some licorice and dark chocolate, a bit hot, sweet, some dark spices – this is more brooding in style. Hot finish, which dominates somewhat.

## 2022 Couvent des Jacobins

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80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. 14.4% ABV.

Tasted at Calicem, 25 April 2023

Full crimson-garnet; ripe fruit with nice freshness; fleshy, sweet, bold, opulent, some licorice, some fresh notes too, melting fruit, warm, lowish acidity, supple texture. With plenty of air this opened up with attractive freshness, fruitiness, and an attractive bittersweet twist at the end. It works very well.

**(Score withheld – The Fine Wine Experience represents Calicem and Couvent des Jacobins in Hong Kong).**

## 2022 Château Figeac

96-98

St.-Emilion 1er Grand Cru Classé 'A': 35% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1-26 Sept. 14% ABV. 3.7PH.

Tasted at Château Figeac, 25 April 2023

Fine full garnet, with a narrow crimson rim; fresh and aromatic nose, with floral aromas yielding after some time in the glass opening up; lush, ripe, fleshy, flowing feel, spicy, detailed and layered. Exuberant and ripe, but buoyant too, with lovely red and dark fruit. There's a palate coating luxuriant feeling of fruit and melting chocolate, velvety tannin, and great length. Superb wine. There's real precision to the feel and taste detail here too. It's a really impressive wine, and undoubtedly a great edition of Figeac.



↑ Blandine de Brier Manoncourt shares a joke at Chateau Figeac

## 2022 Château Fonbel

88-91

St.-Emilion Grand Cru. Clay with sand and gravel. 85% Merlot, 15-21 Sept; 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28 Sept; 5% Carmenère, 26 Sept. 14% ABV

Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023.

Deeper, semi-opaque appearance; spicy fruitcake richness on the nose; fairly dense, chewy-style fruitcake rich taste, elevated alcohol, clean as a whistle, but candied in expression.



## 2022 Château Haut Simard

**90-91**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru. Clay with sand and gravel. 70% Cabernet Franc, 23 & 29 Sept; 30% Merlot, 7 Sept. 14.5% ABV*  
Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023.

Mid-full colour; spicy chocolate mole aroma; juicy rich red and dark fruit, some liveliness, elevated alcohol giving quite some warmth to the finish. Plummy, there is some freshness offsetting the warmth. Ripe, with soft tannins.

## 2022 L'If

**92-93**

*St.-Emilion. 80% Merlot, 14-21 Sept; 20% Cabernet Franc, 26 Sept. 14.3% ABV. 3.52PH.*  
Tasted at Le Pin, 25 April 2023

Semi-opaque deep ruby, crimson rim; spicy, fresh and stylish aroma, pure and expressive; supple, rich, good energy and acidity here, some dark chocolate, dark fruit, good minerality here too, there is a feeling of dimension – some inner-mouth fragrance. For sure it is in the mould of '22 exuberance – but it is fragrant, supple, mineral and fine.

## 2022 Château Larcis Ducasse

**90-94+**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru Classé. Limestone-clay plateau on asteriated limestone, south-facing terraces. 86% Merlot, 13-21 Sept; 14% Cabernet Franc, 21-23 Sept.*

Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Mid+ semi-opaque; lifted nose, some a whiff of volatile acidity, attractive berries otherwise lead the aroma; intense, focused, attractive dark fruit confit on the palate, elevated alcohol, some juiciness, it seems to work, like a dark fruit cocktail! Delicious and flowing, in its big opulent way. Heady. Let's see how it settles down with bottling as there is a high-wire element here, but it really appeals at this barrel sample stage.

## 2022 Château Moulin Saint-Georges

**90-92**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru. 80% Merlot, 19-20 Sept; 20% Cabernet Franc, 26 Sept. 14.5% ABV*  
Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023.

Mid+ depth, semi-opaque; ripe and spicy, low key nose, some florals; sweet, candied, supple, some floral notes within a candied-sweet fruit expression. Supple tannin. Clean. Big wine, but there is a degree of freshness.

## 2022 Château Pavie Macquin

**94-96**

*St.-Emilion 1er Grand Cru Classé. Limestone-clay plateau over asteriated limestone. 80% Merlot, 14-27 Sept; 19% Cabernet Franc, 20-26 Sept; 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27 Sept*

Tasted at Château Larcis-Ducasse, 25 April 2023 (Collection here in 14.5~14.7% ABV range)

Opaque mid colour; a great aroma, lovely freshness and energy to this, aromatic, and enticing; delicious wild berry fruit, sweet, melting and energetic, it's a big ripe sweet wine, but it flows and has some juiciness, with good extension. Well-balanced. Delicious.

## 2022 Château Peymouton

**93-95**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru, thin layer of rich clay over limestone; deep red clay. 89% Merlot, 19-20 Sept; 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5 Oct; 1% Cabernet Franc, 5 Oct.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Full opaque crimson; sweet and fresh on the nose, succulent and perfumed in aroma, floral, and the fruit expresses fresh-ripe with an exotic note; fleshy and fresh on the palate, ripe, really juicy and concentrated, with a flowing texture and fruit, this is elegant, pure, a beautiful wine.

## 2022 Château Pindefleurs

**91-93**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru, gravel and clay-limestone. 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 6-20 Sept.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Full, deep, semi-opaque crimson; fresh and fruity on the nose; ripe with fine and present tannin, good fruit, good length and concentration. Very good

## 2022 Château Quinault L'Enclos

**90-92**

*63% Merlot, 20% Cabernet, 17% Cabernet Franc, 30 Aug – 16 Sept. 14.2%.*

Tasted at Château Cheval Blanc, 25 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; fresh summer pudding freshness and juiciness; sumptuous, sweet, rich, real sucrosity, intensity, but also good balance, some freshness, some brûlée-like overripe notes, long finish. Delicious

## 2022 Château La Serre

**91-93**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru Classé, clay on limestone plateau. 75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc, 7-26 Sept.*

Tasted at Ets. Jean-Pierre Moueix, Libourne, 28 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; aromatic fresh fruit on the nose; tightly wound on the palate with red fruit, some perfume, a fine mineral tone, long and perfumed finish.

## 2022 Château Simard

**91-93**

*St.-Emilion Grand Cru. Clay with sand and gravel. 65% Merlot, 6-26 Sept; 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29-30 Sept; 10% Cabernet Franc, 23-28 Sept; 5% Petit Verdot, 22 Sept. 14% ABV*

Tasted at Château Ausone, 25 April 2023.

Mid-full ruby; sweet cooked plums and spices on the nose, a little touch of sweet herb freshness; rich, plummy, confit fruit, full alcohol, some sweet herbs, nice acidity, yet full, and with some alcohol. Yummy.

# GRAVES / PESSEAC-LÉOGNAN

## 2022 Château Carbonnieux Rouge

87-89

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Semi-clear crimson; some volatile acidity-lift and glossiness to the nose here, ripe plummy fruit, some dark chocolate; a bold, slightly chewy wine, a bit hot, candied plummy fruit, a little spirity, gentle good concentration of fruit, but slightly chewy tannins, this is gourmand, but lacking nuance and freshness.



↑ The beautiful and individual Carmes Haut-Brion

## 2022 Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion

95-97

40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot. 70% whole bunches at fermentation. 13.5% ABV. 3.64PH.

Tasted at Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Fine deep ruby semi-opaque; fresh, more reserved aroma, fine perfume, elegant aroma, some perfume; juicy and compact, there is a real silky woomph of fruit in the attack, it is sumptuous, then a really attractive zing that stands out in the vintage – there is freshness, concentration, fine ripe phenolics, a certain juiciness and flow, emphasized by the moderate – 13.5% - alcohol. There is a salty sort of mineral feel to the fine tannins. Clarity of fruit expression. The structure is there, very fine like a delicate fine exoskeleton, it flows across the palate with the juicy ripe fruit without clogging the finish. Indeed it takes several sips to perceive the tannins building on the palate. A fine wine of real harmony and class.

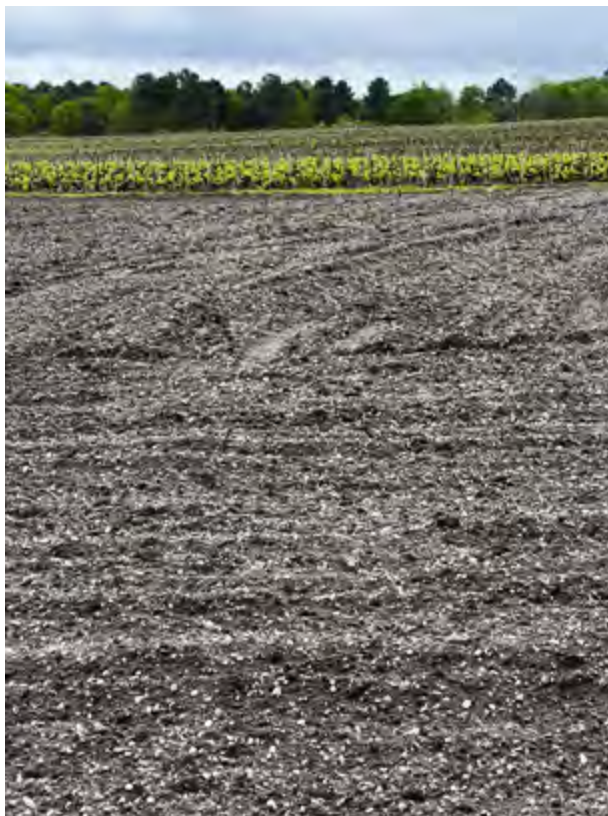
## 2022 “C” des Carmes Haut-Brion

92-94

Made by Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion from vineyards in Martillac between Smith Haut-Lafitte and Haut-Bailly. 15km south of Les Carmes. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot. 13.5% ABV. 3.60PH.

Tasted at Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Deep semi-opaque garnet, pink rim; sweet fragrant cooked black plums, a floral edge, nice freshness; really sweet on the palate, but also quite tangy, with notes of licorice, dark plum, there is some lift and verve in this. Velvety tannin. Real freshness, some salinity, it feels really balanced (and is ‘just’ 13.5% ABV), long and fragrant. A standout success. Opulent for sure, but balanced. Floral finish. Its actually quite an unusual, unique tasting wine, one worth trying.



← Fallow gravels at Domaine de Chevalier.

## 2022 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge

Tasted at Domaine de Chevalier, 26 April 2023

**91-93**

Deep semi-opaque dark ruby, a narrow crimson rim; ripe, spicy, herbal and fresh, with a dark fruit almost fudge-like element in the background, and some leather notes; the palate is juicy, intense with a lot of concentration, a velvetiness and ease of flow on the palate, the fruit seems cooked in tone, there is a little brûlée element, but it expresses itself as opulence rather than hardness or candy, the fruit flavours are clear, and the acidity and sense of freshness is there in counterbalance. Hefty but not hot, this is a solid, fruit-laden Chevalier Rouge. Good.

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

**90-92**

Fresh, some new oak, fairly reserved on the nose; juicy, compact, some new oak sits out a little within the taste, like coconut, egg and cream, fine full tannins, good succulence and length, hefty, slightly burly but satisfying wine.

## 2022 Château Couhins-Lurton Rouge

**85-87?**

Tasted at Château Couhins-Lurton, 26 April 2023

Deep ruby, crimson edge to the rim; a high-tone to the nose, volatile acidity-lift ; better on the palate, very intense dark fruit, hotter too though than the Louviere, some baked quality to the very ripe fruit, but also some acidity pulling it through. There is a little acetone-like hint here too I feel, and if not at least something volatile.

## 2022 Château de Fieuzal Rouge

**92-94**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Semi-clear deep crimson ruby; quite floral, more red than dark fruited in the aroma here, a pretty nose; lovely scented plum, and fresh flowers on the palate too, some violets, it's a really charming Fieuzal red, the juicy, silky fruit is buoyant and the fine tannins hardly felt in spite of good shape and concentration. Lovely wine.



↑ Left: Gabriel Vialard and Manu Coiffe in the garden on the roof of the winery at Haut Bailly.  
Right: Old and new at Haut-Bailly.

## 2022 Château Haut Bailly

92-94+

56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 7-27 Sept.

Tasted at Château Haut Bailly, 26 April 2023

Fresh deep ruby, semi-clear; fresh, with a more blue flowers dimension, fine ripe dark fruit, pure in expression; sumptuous in feel, warm in tone, generous and sunny, formidable yet fine ripe tannins settle forward in the palate, masking the length, there lacks a kick of freshness at the finish to return the florals from the aroma, but there is some succulence still. It is liquorously rich, with dense 2005-like tannins, though more precise, yet sweeter, larger than that. Despite an opulence of fruit, it feels like a real vin de garde – somewhere between 2009 and 2005. It is hard to judge the trajectory of this vintage.

## 2022 Haut Bailly II

87-89

65% Merlot 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot, 7-27 Sept.

Tasted at Château Haut Bailly, 26 April 2023

Fresh deep ruby, semi-clear; a fresh and floral-led ripe fruit aroma, red and dark fruit; supple, plump, sweet dark cherry and plum fruit, meltingly sweet and rich, yet with nice acidity, it is pure, like a dark cherry liqueur with dark chocolate melting in the mouth. Cherry cake. Succulent, with a warm finish, it is a very sweet though not 'burnt' wine.

## 2022 Château Haut-Brion

**92-94+?**

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Deep semi-opaque ruby; there's an exquisite sweetness of fruit and floral perfume emanating from this in a quiet, reserved way, a really very fine nose; supple, elegant, there is fine structure, and ripe opulent fruit, the richness of fruit is aligned to some alcohol weight in feel, there is a slight burn on the finish that is not there with the Mission. Dry extract levels feel really high, on the right side of the line between ripeness and overripeness, but still there is a pull in that direction that leaves me feeling grounded, rather than elevated, it doesn't give that elegant feeling of lift off, or sublime elegance. The tannins too have a very slight edge, though that is perhaps exacerbated by their concentration, and the note of alcohol. Though the aroma and palate fragrance are really appealing, the tannins are quite formidable, and there is some burn from the alcohol. It will take long cellaring to sort this out I think. It will come out of dormancy earlier than LMHB. Will it be pretty? There is quite some feeling of alcohol here, so I have a question mark over it for now.

## 2022 Le Clarence de Haut-Brion

**89-91**

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Semi-clear full ruby; a fresh fruit aroma with a real sweetness of beautifully ripe fruit, some florals, and detail, sweet cherry; succulent fruit, there is a lovely scented dark cherry tone to the fruit, there is more structure evident to this than the Chapelle, quite some substance and weight, but it is still elegant and fresh, with a long finish. There is quite some tannin, and I feel this Clarence will need more cellaring than some, to find its window. It is also a bit hot on the finish, a little spicity. Well made, but I feel the hot-dryness of the vintage clearly here.

## 2022 Château Latour Martillac

**86-88**

Tasted at UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Semi-clear crimson; sweet fruit, spice, leather on the nose; a juicy attack, plummy, some freshness, chocolate, slightly edgy tannins, a little dryness in the tannins. Warm finish.

## 2022 Château La Louvière Rouge

Tasted at Château Couhins-Lurton, 26 April 2023

**89-91**

Fresh ruby colour; bright ripe dark cherry, a little on-the-cusp to over-ripe; a sweet, ripe, juicy fruit, very intense, wound-up, and with very good acidity. Really distinct black cherry taste. Potent, some alcohol, but loads of very good fruit, fairly velvety texture.

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

**89-91**

Clear deep ruby; low key ripe nose, some leather notes; attractive summer pudding fruit, melting and full on the palate, some vanilla tone from oak (also on the nose), nice, mid-weight, with good depth.

## 2022 Château Malartic Lagravière Rouge

**91-93**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; ripe fresh plummy fruit, a nice fresh lift, and some spicy complexity to the expression; elegant, fine, juicy, beautifully focused and poised, it is rich, palate-coating, has silky fine tannins, and some fine spicy detail in the mix. The little pucker from the fine tannins at the end is gentle, suggesting good balance, and a broader drinking window than some. Very nicely made.



↑ Primeur tasting at Chateau La Mission Haut Brion.

## 2022 Château La Mission Haut-Brion

93-95

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Deep ruby, semi-opaque; reserved, but perfumed and detailed on prompting, there is something quite alluringly exotic to the nose in this; wow! This is very fine, full, fresh, chiseled in shape, with a velvet cloak of fine tannin enveloping it. It feels very complete on the palate, and despite quite some richness feels neither too hot, nor too solid, it flows, coating the palate along the way. This feels like it will be a vintage sleeper. After 30 minutes in the glass - this is a formidable LMHB, the alcohol and extract levels feel high, but there is harmony within it. A big strapping LMHB.

## 2022 La Chapelle de la Mission Haut-Brion

91-93

Tasted at Château La Mission Haut-Brion, 26 April 2023

Clear mid ruby; beautiful, sweet fresh fruit, floral and attractive nose; really lovely fruit, melting extract, supple tannins, this is rich but fresh, lively and well balanced. One of the best if not the best LCMHB I can recall. Real purity and clarity of fresh expression. Really lovely wine. Ripe, a touch of fudge in the second tasting of this, but there is sufficient energy. I think it works well. For me this is the most interesting wine in the Clarence Dillon flight for 2022, as quality and price should align well.

## 2022 Château Olivier Rouge

**90-92**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Deep ruby-crimson, crimson rim; an attractively fresh aroma, fine ripe fresh plummy fruit, some fine herb notes, this is an attractive inviting aroma; juicy-ripe, palate coating, with lots of delicious fruity extract, supple fairly light tannins, it feels sumptuous and flowing, with good energy. There is a little warmth on the finish, but there is also nice fruitiness.

## 2022 Château Pape Clement

**94-96**

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 26 April 2023

Full, semi-opaque ruby; ripe fresh dark fruit aroma; ripe succulent fruit, immaculate quality, full, balanced with plenty of zing, powdery fine tannin, it fills the mouth with fragrance. This is superb. The alcohol presence is there but fully in check, this feels both concentrated and moderate in expression, very fine quality.

## 2022 Château Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge

**94-96**

64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot, 5-30 Sept, 29hl/ha.

Tasted at Château Smith Haut Lafitte, 26 April 2023

Deep semi-opaque dark ruby; fresh ripe nose, new leather notes, it seems very dense from the aroma; ripe, intense, very thick in the palate, a lot of extract and what feels like a very low skins/solids to juice ratio, it is positively pulpy-thick, but juicy, and the tannins are very rounded and velvety. Iron first in a velvet glove, this is very long term, but it feels like it has the equilibrium required – there is oodles of fruit, and adequate freshness and the alcohol feels balanced too.

## 2022 Château Thil Rouge

**90-92**

Tasted at Château Smith Haut Lafitte, 26 April 2023

Fairly opaque deep ruby; sweet fragrant macerated forest berries nose, dusted with icing sugar; lush and ripe, juicy and bright, oozing with intense essence fruit, a little heady, but not hot, with sweet soft tannin and an easy intensely fruity finish. Delicious.

# MÉDOC / HAUT-MÉDOC / LISTRAC-MÉDOC

## 2022 Château Potensac

**90-92**

43% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36.5% Merlot, 19.5% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot.

Tasted at Château Nenin, 25 April 2023

Full fresh deep ruby, semi-opaque; ripe Cabernet to the fore, with some floral notes; nicely balanced rich ripe dark fruit, a sumptuous concentrated feel, flows well, quite dense, but no hardness here, some heat though, a hint of coffee bean on the finish. Solid, very good Potensac, immaculately clean. At its price-point this has delivered very well.



# MARGAUX

## 2022 Château Brane Cantenac

87-89??

*(I imagine it's better.)*

Margaux 2ème Cru Classé. 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8-29 Sept; 23% Merlot, 7-16 Sept; 1% Cabernet Franc, 26 Sept, 4 Oct; 1% Petit Verdot, 22-29 Sept; 1% Carmenère, 10 Oct. 14.3% ABV. 15.8% press wine. 3.61PH. Proprietor Henri Lurton believes "this is my greatest vintage". It was his 30th vintage, and he feels it is 'legendary, like 1945 and 1961', and he dedicates his 2022 to his late father, Lucien Lurton (1925-2023). Speaking with Henri at the château, he noted that in 2022 he used the highest proportion of press wine (15.8%) ever used in the grand vin because every time there was more of it in the blind tastings of assembled components it offered more to the wines. I mention all of this in part as a note of caution over my tasting note and score – I didn't feel the wine showed so well. It was late on a very warm afternoon, and both the château, and the sample were also a little warm. It is therefore one of the 2022s I most wish to re-taste in bottle, to see why Henri's confidence and my experience on the day were this far apart.

Tasted at Château Brane-Cantenac, 27 April 2023

Ful ruby, semi-clear; ripe fragrant fruit and coffee-bean vanilla oak; good flesh, sweet fruit, a little chewy, not over-extracted, it's just a little candied in the style. Still, there is some elegance to this, but it feels a little dried, a little sec. Candied finish. This 2022 Brane-Cantenac sample is fleshy, it flows, but there is less of the freshness on show here than I anticipated, and there is an almost bitter (though not unripe) note to the tannin, and a candied note to the fruit. A truly perplexing sample.

## 2022 Baron de Brane

85-87

2nd wine of Château Brane-Cantenac. 65% Merlot, 7-16 Sept; 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8-29 Sept; 4% Cabernet Franc, 26 Sept, 4 Oct; 1% Petit Verdot, 22-29 Sept. 14% ABV. 13.4% press wine. 3.57 PH.

Tasted at Château Brane-Cantenac, 27 April 2023

Full deep ruby; some freshness, a spicy and slightly exotic fruit nose; sweet and lush, candied fruit, gently chewy, light tannins. Like a dark fruit hard candy, the finish blocks up with soft tannin and a lack of freshness or acidity. Will probably tire a bit early based on this sample. Unexpected.

## 2022 Blason de d'Issan

87-89?

Tasted at Château d'Issan, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; fresh fruit on the nose, low key; attractive juicy dark fruit, nice flow, more elegant, plenty of extract, rich, there's some alcohol but it not too hot, it is tannic, but it has some flow. A firm warm wine. Is it just that the tasting sample is warm, and this château salon we are tasting in this afternoon is also? Hard to judge this.

## 2022 Château d'Issan

87-88?

Tasted at Château d'Issan, 27 April 2023

Opaque crimson; a fairly closed and leathery nose, some spices and florals; rich, concentrated, dense, quite warm in alcohol, oozing, essency, there is a lot of thick extract here, a lot of tannin to shed, this seems a big ungainly d'Issan, the freshness kick is not there to deal with it I fear. Is it just that the tasting sample is warm, and this château salon too? I envisaged something fresher than this.

## 2022 Château Margaux

96-98+

92% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc. 8-27 Sept. 40% of the Château Margaux harvest.

Tasted at Château Margaux, 27 April 2023

Fairly opaque crimson; beautifully fine, fresh violetty Cabernet nose, low key but perfumed; exquisite fruit, really essency level concentration, and laden with tannin, though they are super silky in quality and the wine has an effortless feel to it. Perfume retained on the palate. It's intense, but it has a relaxed feel, belying what must be one of the most packed Margaux ever, it feels really gently made. This feels like an even purer, finer re-edition of the '86, yet more floral, it has the '86's intense statuesque feel. Outstanding wine.

## 2022 Pavillon Rouge

92-94

Second wine of Château Margaux. 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, 5% Cabernet Franc. 8-27 Sept. 32% of the Château Margaux harvest.

Tasted at Château Margaux, 27 April 2023

Fine fairly opaque ruby ; fresh summer pudding nose; intense, dense, luscious fruit, mouth-coating, *grand vin* feel, there is a slight edge to the tannins, but there is enormous extract, freshness, juiciness, it feels very dense. Very pure and fine expression. This is vin de garde. Good length. Very good.

## 2022 Château Palmer

98-100

Tasted at Château Palmer, 27 April 2023

Clear deep crimson ruby; beautiful aroma, a little exotic, very expressive, and fine, spicy, also really beguiling and alluring, floral, with an exotic edge to the fruit, and freshness; beautiful fruit, this rings like a bell, it is so harmonious, intense, there is amplitude yet density too, freshness, ripeness, concentration, and superb harmony. This is a joyous wine, lush, there is density for sure, vin de garde, but it is expressive, not locked down, and it is complex in its aromatic expression on the palate, it gives such confidence. Fabulous Palmer. Wine of the vintage?

## 2022 Alter Ego de Palmer

92-95

Tasted at Château Palmer, 27 April 2023

Deep ruby crimson; lush fresh berries, juicy squishy and fresh; beautiful lush juicy fruit, intense freshness and vibrancy, almost crunchy, yet ripe and rich, lovely harmony and intensity. This is a gorgeous Alter Ego. Long, with density of fruity, super fine silky tannins, flowing and delicious. A superb Alter Ego. My rating may prove conservative.

# ST.-JULIEN

## 2022 Clos du Marquis

91-93

45.5% Merlot, 44.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc.

Tasted at Château Nenin, 25 April 2023

Fresh dense crimson with bright narrow crimson rim; a really fresh clear aroma, juicy, floral and vibrant in expression; ripe, rich, lush, with a melting texture, bold, the boldness offset by a sense of floral freshness, melting palate-coating extract that melts away (holding plenty of ripe tannin). The alcohol note will remain noticeable, but there is not much else to say against this for quality or expression.

## 2022 Château Ducru-Beaucaillou

91-96

Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 27 April 2023

Deep crimson, semi-opaque; fresh, a little closed, some new leather, brooding nose, some vanilla, touch coffee; really formidable, its is packed with fruit and extract, but it is almost completely totally shut today. Swingly tannic. It is hard to judge . It's an absolutely formidable Ducru. A monster Ducru! But not in alcohol – which is not that high relatively (14%). This is an implosion, a black hole. You will disappear and not come out! Let's see what it does in the cellar. I'll rate it when its in bottle. It could be amazing. Or it may leave no witnesses. We shall have to see.

## 2022 La Croix Ducru-Beaucaillou

89-91

66% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Petit Verdot  
Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 27 April 2023

Deep crimson; ripe, opulent and fresh aroma; sweet fruit, juicy, lush and flowing, this is laden with sweet juicy fruit, nice balance to this. Touch of espresso in the finish. It is quite structured, there is classic extraction, it's not over the top but you really feel the tannin.

## 2022 Le Petit Ducru

87-90

Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 27 April 2023

Full crimson, semi-clear; fresh, ripe, some florals; lush, ripe, then quite tannic, the grip is quite firm, there is some alcohol, some opulence, it dries out a bit. A lot of tannin to shed.

## 2022 Madame de Beaucaillou

86-88

Tasted at Château Ducru Beaucaillou, 27 April 2023

Fine deep ruby garnet; fresh, sweet nose; bright juicy, quite tight, sweet, melting, chunky. Quite concentrated and tannic though sweetly so. Opulent, with structure.

## 2022 Château Langoa-Barton

91-93

Tasted at Château Langoa-Barton, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; fresh berry compote, some oak-vanilla tone overlaying this like a gentle veil; concentrated Langoa, dark fruit, quite a bit of classic oak-vanilla creaminess, it feels like it will harmonise well. Well balanced with nice acidity, Solid.

## 2022 Château Léoville Barton

94-96

Tasted at Château Langoa-Barton, 27 April 2023

Opaque, crimson; fresh, a little more floral and detailed than the Langoa, less cloaked; rich in extract and fruit, with a slightly furry old school frame of very ripe sweet tannins, it stays juicy and lively and fresh. Very very good.

## 2022 Château Léoville Las Cases

92-98

83.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10.5% Cabernet Franc, 6% Merlot.  
Tasted at Château Nenin, 25 April 2023

Opaque crimson, narrow crimson rim; a reserved nose, floral, fresh, with licorice-edged fruit; dense, compact, unyielding really, though the texture is powdery, and glycerin-rich and melting. A real *vin de garde* – boof! My goodness, this is a formidable wine. Essence in its intensity. Feels like it is in balance, it's just that it is very wrapped up tight. Embryonic in fact. Where to rate this? It's very tricky because it's so tightly wound today, but it feels like it could become one of the greats – it has that much within it. It may turn out like the '45 or the '86, though possibly more supple than either of those. Be warned however, I imagine the likely drinking window beginning after 20 years, with an easy half century of life, and possibly a whole one. It will be interesting to track. The brave and the young should give it a go.

## 2022 Château Mauvesin Barton

91-93

Tasted at Château Langoa-Barton, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson ruby; fresh sweet, vanilla and icing sugar dusted berries; really fine fruit, freshness, fine texture, mid-weight, digestibly scaled wine, low key and stylish. Very nice.

# PAUILLAC

## 2022 Château d'Armailhac

**91-93**

Tasted at Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; a brooding ripe dark fruit aroma, low key; dark fruit, good juicy freshness, some density, it is a little more hunkered and weighty in feel compared to Clerc Milon, but there is a lot of fruit, juiciness, and ripe tannins. There's quite some depth and structure here. A keeper d'Armailhac. Very good.

## 2022 Château Clerc Milon

**93-96**

Tasted at Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; ripe, pure aroma, fresh, very clean and precise blackcurrant and fresh forest berry aroma; luscious, melting intensity, lovely fresh vibrancy, silky-fine fine tannins, an almost dark berry sherbet-like melting quality there is such alignment between intense berry, sorbet juicy sweetness, and fine powdery tannin. Very good length. Great Clerc Milon.

## 2022 Pastourelle de Clerc Milon

**89-91**

Tasted at Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Full crimson, semi-opaque; sweet fresh fruit, classic, touch blackcurrant leaf; attractive juicy blackcurranty fruit, soft tannin, fruity, and with a really attractive classic blackcurrant and blackcurrant leaf aromatic taste, fine powdery tannins, and good length. Very good quality for second wine.

## 2022 Château Duhart-Milon

**89-92**

Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 27 April 2023

Deep semi-opaque ruby; a fairly closed nose, some leather; delicious fleshy dark berry fruit, there's nice freshness here, a bit of dryness in the tannin – a seedy note that feels a bit dry, but doesn't stop the flow of fruit. And the fruit is lovely – aromatic, fresh, and bursting with vitality. I just wonder if the tannins will retain a dry note. Good.

## 2022 Château Grand Puy Lacoste

**94-96**

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac Tasting, Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Fairly opaque deep crimson ruby; lovely sweet ripe fruit, good freshness; lush, thick, perfumed, sweet, and lovely in expression, a little oak gloss, but it marries well and the texture is good, thick, and flowing. Really very good. Superb GPL. A clear success in 2022.

## 2022 Château Haut Batailley

**92-94**

Tasted at Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Deep semi-opaque ruby crimson; a sweeter nose than the Verso, forest berries and fresh apple; succulent, super concentrated, so juicy, vibrant, with super velvet tannins, this is very intense, well-balanced, *vin de garde*, but there is nothing 'blocked' about it, there's very good flow and balance

90-92

**2022 Verso de Haut Batailley***(though there is something of a 100-point summer joy factor here)*

Tasted at Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Full deep ruby; a really particularly nose of baked rhubarb and sweet red fruits, its really quite a nose, appetizing but unexpected, atypical; absolutely delicious melting succulence, just gorgeous fruit, the texture and elegant closer to lush Pinot Noir the feeling is so tender, the extract is really something it is so fruity and vibrant and fresh. This is so yummy! Gosh, I hope this retains all this excitement after bottling. You can tuck into this early as one hell of a picnic wine! I have nothing bad to say for it.

**2022 Moulin de Duhart**

87-89

Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 27 April 2023

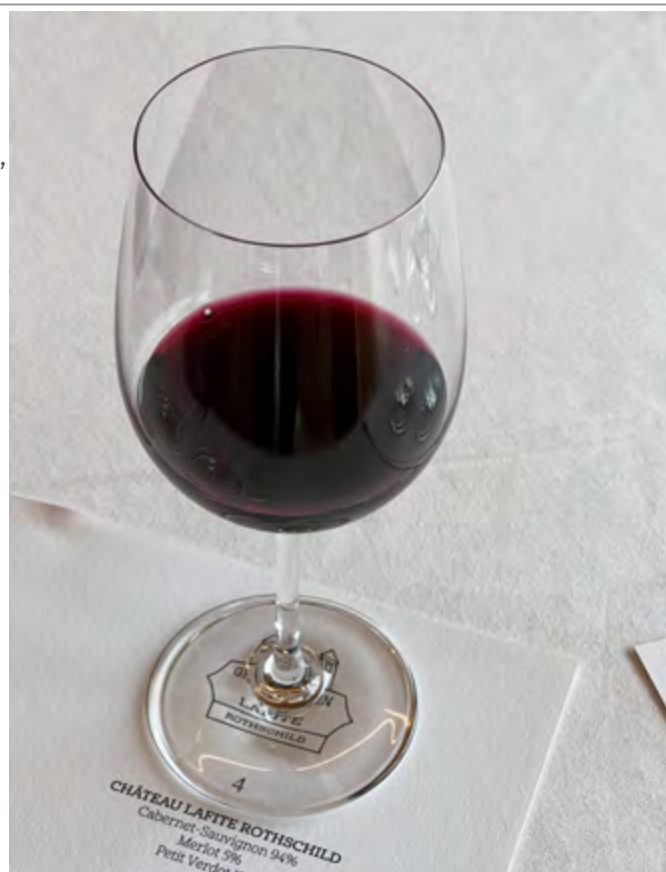
Semi-clear deep ruby; sweet berry fruit and a touch of milk coffee; lush, fresh, nice full juicy fruit in the attack, there is a lactic note – vanilla-toned, following the nose, tannic extraction is light although there is a hint of dryness in the texture, but it is slight. There's good length. Nice wine.

**2022 Château Lafite-Rothschild**

98-100

Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque deep crimson ruby; a fine, detailed, aromatically reserved but complex nose very Lafite, fresh, elegant; gorgeous fruit, juicy, lush yet lively, fresh, and there is layering here, a fine tannic structure that doesn't show any of the dryness evident in the other three wines. It is so juicy and lively, yet really concentrated and intense. This gives a real sense of confidence – the equilibrium is there, that little vibration when everything is in an effortless feeling of harmony. Super long. Superb. There's lots of minerality, and a salty edge. It's all here – this is the complete Lafite, no question.



→  
Star of vintage 2022, Chateau  
Lafite-Rothschild.

**2022 Carruades de Lafite**

90-93

Tasted at Château Lafite-Rothschild, 27 April 2023

Deep crimson, semi-opaque; fresh, floral edged inviting aroma; lovely juicy fruit, lots of extract, balanced, quite tannic, finely structured, there's quite some grip, but it stays aromatic and there is some fresh lift through to the finish. The tannins may tip this just out of balance – a hint of dryness – but the fruit and freshness are lovely, and I think this will come good. It will need some cellaring. High quality Carruades.



↑ Rufus Beazley preparing samples at Chateau Latour.

## 2022 Château Latour

96-98

92.45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7.4% Merlot, 0.15% Petit Verdot. 14.19% ABV. 75 IPT. 7.6% press wine. 38.8% of the production.  
Tasted at Château Latour, 27 April 2023

Deep opaque crimson; ripe, fresh, bold for Latour but there is freshness here, florals and mineral notes; fleshy, intense, so juicy and concentrated, essency, fine formidable tannins that are perfectly rounded and sweet. It's a clearly very long term wine, beautifully made, well balanced. Superb. Turns floral and deliciously sweet and a touch exotic than when first poured.

## 2022 Les Forts de Latour

93-95

58.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37.9% Merlot, 3.4% Petit Verdot. 14.47% ABV. 80 IPT. 4.2% press wine. 40.8% of the production.  
Tasted at Château Latour, 27 April 2023

Deep crimson, glass-staining; fresh fruit, some florals, touch leather; sweet fresh fruit, really compact feel, like a 2001 Space Odyssey 'monolith' mid-palate shape, the lush fruit running either side of this monolithic textural shape, and to the front and back of the palate, its so juicy, yet there is quite some extract and tannin to shed. I'm confident – its ripe, but it will need time.

## 2022 Pauillac de Château Latour

90-93

48.8% Cabernet Sauvignon, 46.2% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. 14.19% ABV. 74 IPT. 5.5% press wine. 20.4% of the production.  
Tasted at Château Latour, 27 April 2023

Full crimson, narrow rim; lovely fresh, floral-led aroma; juicy, ripe, concentrated, balanced, supple tannins. This will need some cellaring despite its 3rd tier "Pauillac" designation. It will be interesting to see how this tastes when released, and would be interesting to offer blind.

## 2022 Château Lynch Bages

91-95?

Tasted at Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Opaque crimson, narrow rim, glass-staining; quite closed, clean, but not expressing much; formidable Lynch Bages, dense, thick, quite oaky – there's both the texture and a vanilla tone given off by the oak here that sits out today. This is a dense Lynch Bages, full of ripe extract, there's good balanced acidity and freshness, and the intense level of tannin stays supple, but this is for sure dense, and the oak component is a forceful element. It's in the classic LB style, so will probably work out with cellaring, but I just wonder if it is over-marked by the oak. Lynch Bages often pulls it off with cellaring so let's see.

## 2022 Echo de Lynch Bages

**90-92**

Tasted at Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Fairly opaque crimson; sweet fruit, some spice, licorice; dense, ripe, juicy, intense extract of juicy dark fruit, some oak-furriness here, it turns a little solid on the finish, but it is packed with fruit, and a bit more cellaring than usual should take care of it.

## 2022 Château Mouton-Rothschild

**94-96+**

Tasted at Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Deep fairly opaque crimson; rich, ripe, spicy and brooding aroma, very *grand vin* Mouton, exuberant; ripe, grand, concentrated, fleshy, this feels like a really built Mouton, a Mouton with a solid formidable chassis, and loads of fruit to unpack on top of it. The fruit feels perfectly ripe, concentrated, and it all melts away by the finish leaving fragrant length. It's a dense year Mouton, it doesn't bounce along, nor does it leave a multi-layered 'extra' something in the fragrance, but there is very good quality fruit, a low solids-juice feel, the tannins are sweet, and there is some Dutch salted licorice at the finish. The fruit does not feel overmature – and there is no obtrusive alcohol or other imbalance issues evident. It is a sullen, moody Mouton that wants to be left alone, leaving me describing more what it isn't than what it is. I'm confident it will be very good, possibly great, but it doesn't sing that extra Mouton greatness to me in a way I can go ah-hah!

## 2022 Le Petit Mouton

**86-88**

*2nd wine of Château Mouton-Rothschild*

Tasted at Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque deep ruby; sweet berry fruit and a savoury tone to the nose, leather, there is a touch of rubber, or even brunt rubber in the mix, but it is slight – nonetheless a nose that is not expressing so well today; much better on the palate, though the tannins are quite formidable, there's some dryness. The finish trails off leaving the impression of tannins – the palate beached somewhat on them. There's plenty in this wine, and perhaps it's just a bit awkward and angular. But I feel confident that Pastourelle de Clerc Milon – a really delightful surprise – is a more pleasurable second wine Pauillac in the offing than this Petit Mouton, which really feels like the cutting room floor after the *grand vin* edit. I tasted it twice to check I wasn't just being mean, and while I found some energy here, it's also hot and a bit scratchy. Rustic, burly, well-stuffed, but the label will signal more than this delivers in 2022.

## 2022 Château Pedesclaux

**86-89?**

Tasted at Château d'Issan, 27 April 2023

Deep crimson ruby; some aromatic detail but fairly closed on the nose, new leather; firm, tannic, but there is a juicy core, there is a lot of tannin to shed here however, it is swingingly mouth-dryingly tannic. Is it just that the tasting sample is warm, and so too this château salon we are tasting in this afternoon?

## 2022 Château Pichon Longueville Baron

**96-98**

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac Tasting, Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Fairly opaque dense crimson; lovely aromatic nose, really fresh, effortless ripe and quite floral, lifted freshness; extraordinary fruit extract, this zings along in spite of a richness with airy grace, rides like a Bentley Continental Turbo. It is so well-defined, so lively and pretty that you forget the sheer bulk in behind. This is a Pichon for the ages, yet the silky harmony makes it delicious even as a sample.

## 2022 Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande

**93-95**

Tasted at the UGC Pauillac Tasting, Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Opaque crimson; a spicy and exotic brooding nose; lush, sweet, dense, melting, this feels built, it doesn't have the soaring fresh energy of Baron, but there is rich full fruit, and a voluptuousness to it. Melting tannins like fine chocolate. Slows down a bit sweet and ponderous at the end.

# ST.-ÉSTEPHE

## 2022 Château Lafon-Rochet

**83-86?**

Tasted at Château d'Issan, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque crimson; leathery, a touch peppery on the nose; tight and tannic, a hard frame, not showing much fruit, a touch peppery, stops hard and short. Swingly tannic. A touch of warmth on the finish. Is it just that the tasting sample is warm, and so too this château salon we are tasting in this afternoon?

## 2022 Château Phélan Ségur

**90-92**

*56% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. 14-26 Sept. 14.2% ABV. 3.8PH. 96 IPT.*

Tasted at Château Phélan Ségur, 27 April 2023

Dense, opaque, crimson; ripe, spicy, reserved nose; lush, rich, intense, macerated berries and plums, some vanilla oak, warm, opulent, tannins are fairly silky, the finish has alcohol evident and some vanilla toasted oak aroma within the fruit. This is packed with fruit, but it lacks the freshness we just saw in Pauillac and south. Nonetheless, it works, its full of fruit, the tannins are very supple.

## 2022 Frank Phélan

**85-87**

*80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14-26 Sept. 14% ABV. 3.9PH. 85 IPT.*

Tasted at Château Phélan Ségur, 27 April 2023

Semi-opaque full ruby; sweet macerated berries, good freshness; lush, creamy, spicy fruit, a touch of heat and baked fruit. The tannins have some edge to them, and there is a hint of green – like 'blockage'. But there is some nice fruit.

## 2022 Château Les Ormes de Pez

**92-94**

Tasted at Château Lynch Bages, 27 April 2023

Semi-clear deep ruby; fresh, fragrant; juicy, lush and concentrated, a melting feel, vibrant, some spices, fine tannin, there is good energy to this. Lots of juicy fruity extract, its quite intense, a salty edge. Very good.



# SAUTERNES

## 2022 Château Broustet

**91-93**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Light gold; vibrant and delicious aroma of fresh cut fruit salad; candied orange peel, pineapple, zest, and cream, fresh, balanced and long. Delicious.

## 2022 Château Climens

**91-93**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright light gold; a fine fresh complex nose; thick, warm, creamy, melting, phenolic texture at the base, this feels closed in, primordial, but there is an ample Climens shape. Hard to judge on this sample, but seems in the Climens groove. Just doesn't quite have the lift of some years.

## 2022 Château Coutet

**92-94**

Château Clerc Milon, 27 April 2023

Pale gold; fresh fruit salad with pineapple, vibrant fruit, wax, and spice – a good nose; sweet, lush, vibrant waxy fruit, candied pear, pineapple, juicy acidity, though it feels soft, luxuriant and refreshing in its liquorous way. Delicious

## 2022 Château Doisy Daëne

**86-88**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright gold; some volatile acidity, and a masked aroma of spicy fruit; very rich, unctuous, ponderous, sweet, plenty of banana and pineapple fruit, a little heavy and soft in its feel and taste.

## 2022 Château Doisy Vedrines

**89-91**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright pale gold; bright, some VA, some botrytis leading the nose, there is brightness and freshness here too in the tone; sweet and melting, with an elegant line of Barsac elegance, it finish quite sweet, like a barely sugar, but with a satisfying level of complexity.

## 2022 Château de Fargues

**93-95**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright gold; spicy, waxy complex fruit, rich with candied pear and pineapple; sweet, unctuous, really concentrated, this is grand Sauternes, mouth-filling, opulent, creamy and packed with melting candied fruits and spices. A wine to finish a Roman banquet adequately with.

## 2022 Château Guiraud

**92-94**

Tasted at Domaine de Chevalier, 26 April 2023

Bright yellow gold; ripe, spicy, tropical fruit and cooked ripe pears and apples, an enticing aroma; succulent, sweet, liquorous yet buoyant with a nice core of freshness, honeyed pears and nougat, lovely spicy elements, and soft unctuous finish.

## 2022 Clos Haut Peyraguey

**93-95**

Tasted at Château Pape Clément, 26 April 2023

Bright light gold; lovely pineapple pudding nose, pastry laden with butter, but it seems to be emanating from the fruit – the oak is so well integrated. This is soaring, spicy and exuberant on the nose; sweet, melting, coconut cream and pineapple, and if that combination sounds appealing, you'll love this – it's like a fresh Thai dessert in Thailand where it tastes exactly right. Long and creamy, and there is sufficient acidity to match the richness. Alcohol feels moderate, indeed this is all very harmonious, well controlled (no VA).

## 2022 Château Lafaurie Peyraguey

**90-92**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Quite a full gold, almost old gold; a full nose, some VA lift, botrytis; oozingly rich, it oozes along the palate ponderously, seemingly continuing to melt through to its soft caramel and toffee fruit taste well after the finish. It feels north of 200g/l but that may be due to any lack of lift, or brightness in the picture. A nice choice when you want a sort of luxuriant melting toffee-caramel type of experience, it works well in that way, though some will find this same effect cloying.

## 2022 Château Rieussec

**89-91**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright green gold; bright fresh candied vibrant fruit, nice aromatic clarity; unctuous, really sweet, there is also a spritiness here – some heat, which is unusual given the richness of extract and residual sugar. Hefty. The effect on the palate is not as good as on the nose.

## 2022 Château Suduiraut

**93-95**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright gold; some VA lift, a big nose, crème pâtissière and the crust, grilled white peach; unctuous and concentrated, real depth and dimension, this is lusciously sweet large-scaled, but it is balanced and it flows well, with a long, spicy tail. Really satisfying in a more hedonistic guise of Suduiraut.

## 2022 Château La Tour Blanche

**91-93**

Tasted at the UGC Graves Tasting, Château Fieuzal, 26 April 2023

Bright light gold; a fresh, but still full of fermentation aromas, like a beer; sweet, candied pineapple, pear, quince, spices, full, classic, full but contained style Sauternes.



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