

# 2011 VINTAGE

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LAST UPDATED 30/04/2013



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## VINTAGE OVERVIEW

Coming hard on the heels of 2009 and 2010, this vintage was never going to have it easy - not least because most of the trade are almost willing it to be of 'early-drinking' quality, in the hopes that the chateaux will finally start to bring their prices back down.

They have in some ways got their wish - clearly the wines lack the depth of exuberant fruit and balanced acidity/tannic structure that we have seen over the past two years - but now the main week of tastings is finished, it is also clear that there are some excellent white wines, and some very good reds, as long as winemakers have been alert to the many many curve balls that the weather threw at them over the growing season. These are not early-drinking wines in many cases - they should go for a good 8 to 15 years without much effort. But that should mean they can fill a gap before the 2010s are ready to drink, as long as you select carefully.

When looking at the statistics, I have used mainly Professor Dubourdieu's report for the ISVV, as well as data from Meteo France, and reports from Bill Blatch and John Salvi - and numerous conversations with owners. And I remember well the very miserable July and August that we had here, as I spent much of it freezing at the beach!

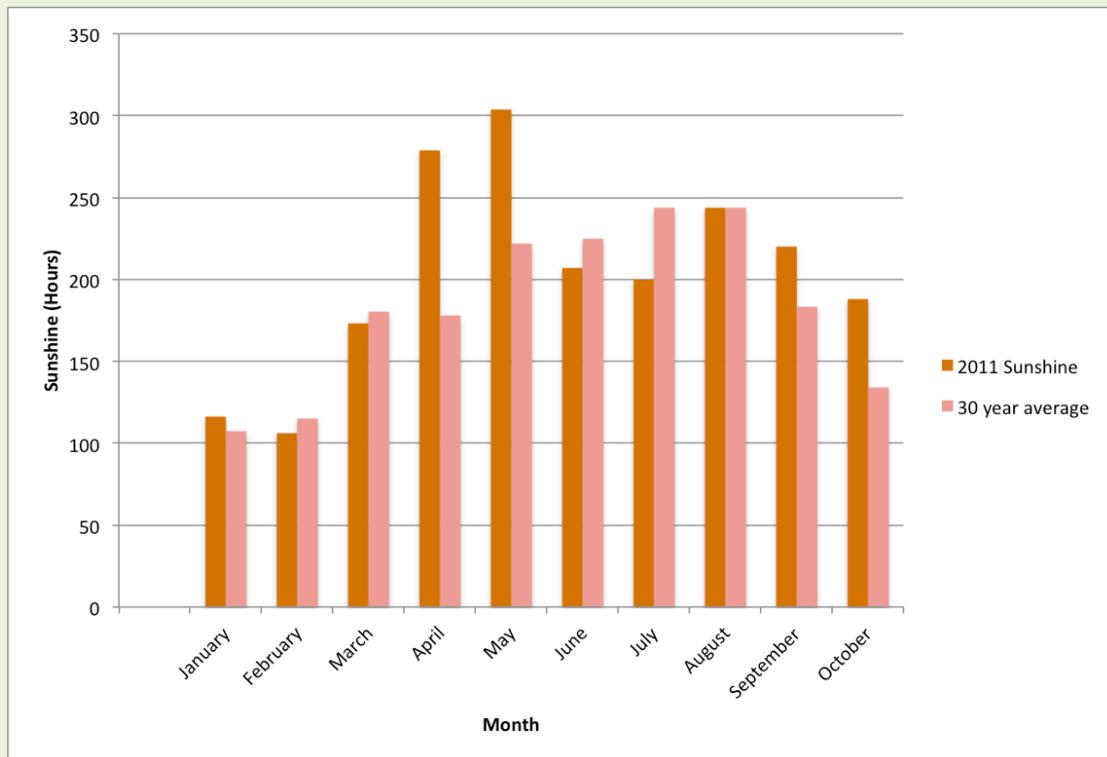
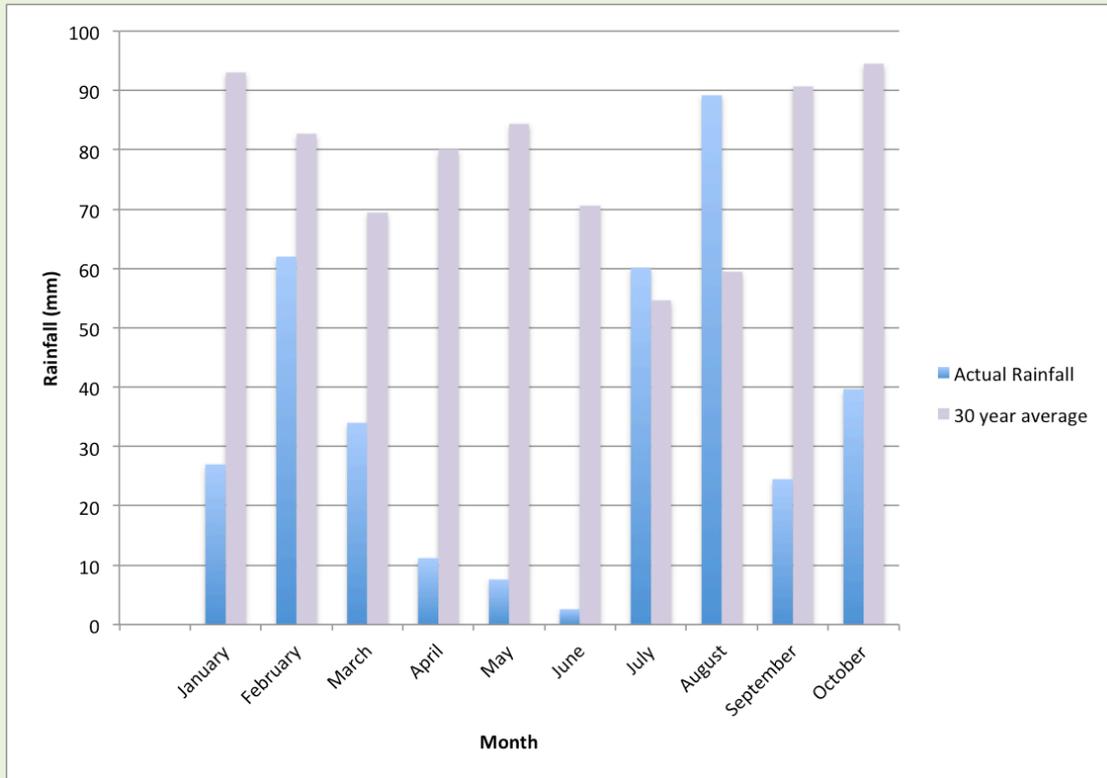
Overall, and you will hear this a lot, 2011 was 'summer in spring, autumn in summer and summer in autumn': Winter with low rainfall and low temperatures Important temperature rise in February causing early bud break Hot spring - drought conditions and very high temperatures Cool summer with a lot of rainfall - welcome in some ways but bringing the threat of rot Then finally - but really finally, not til the second half of September - an Indian summer. Many estates were not able to wait to enjoy this though, having already had to bring their grapes in early to avoid rot. Couple all that with an intense burst of heat at the end of June, which grilled many grapes, and a burst of hail in September which affected several estates - most famously some in Saint Estephe - and you have a vintage which needed serious TLC.

To break this down further:

April was second warmest on record since 1900, with more sunshine than is typical in July! But there was hail in Sauternes, and a bit in Entre deux Mers and Blaye, causing some early reduction in crop.

May driest since 1945. Early bud break, early flowering, good fruit set.

## Figures



Extreme drought early in the year. Pessac, Graves and Sauternes received more rain than St Emilion and the Medoc. Vine growth however halted on many good terroirs because of water stress. Merlot on gravel and sand suffered too much stress, as did young vines, but other terroirs coped well, as a certain amount of water stress is key for a good vintage.

Grapes colour change spread out between mid July and 10 August. Colour change in bunches that were scorched at the end of June had trouble changing evenly, and needed careful sorting, or removal on the vine. Then this was followed by slow uneven ripening of the red grapes through an autumnal month of August. Rain in August close to that of 2008. August rain swelled particularly merlot berries and diluted their flavours.

A hail storm on September 1st damaged parts of St estephe, mainly on Cos plateau, and 80mm of rain fell in one day (swiftly named Black Tuesday). Worst hit areas (merlot) had harvest brought forward (eg parts of Cos, Lafite, Cos Labory). The weather remained generally unsettled until 21st september, when fine weather returned. This meant, unless picked already, cabernet sauvignon benefitted from this late season, attaining high levels of anthocyanins.

Generally the white wines for dry wine were picked between Aug 17th and early September, so a week or two earlier than usual, because of early flowering (which had been even) and early colour change. Grey rot had threatened across red and white grapes from the damp August, so careful sorting was necessary.

Generally 2011 whites had lower sugar, greater acidity, lower pH than 09 or 2010. Well integrated acidity is unusual for an early picking year, but it happened in 2011, because the early ripening came from a hot spring, not a hot summer. Relatively cool ripening period meant good acidity and bright aromatics in sauv and semillon (limestone and clay).

Merlot harvest started September 5, cabernet sauvignon 12th September with some worries about rot, but by the following week that receded substantially. Most picking was done by the end of September, with some estates continuing into early October.

Overall, most berries were small, with high anthocyanins, weight (sugar) higher than 10, still lower than 9, in best examples. Sugar in merlot more moderate than 9 and 10, cabernet sauvignon a little higher. Acidity higher than 09, comparable to 10.

Very few green pepper aromas, bit still this was not an easy vintage. Early water deficit, summer storms, vegetative growth at veraison, slow ripening even though harvest was early - generally uneven quality potential and needed close observation, green harvesting and careful sorting.

Good late September weather favoured cabernet sauvignon. Cabernets picked at end of September had some of Bdx's longest ever hang time.

Sauternes was harvested in two waves, second one particularly vigorous development of noble rot with rapid concentration, only seen twice in 40 years, 2009 and 2011.

Merlot wines from limestone and clay deeply coloured, profound and fresh. Left Bank offered good structure, great cabernet quality, but production very low.

## RELEASE PRICES

CHATEAUX 2011	EX-BORDEAUX PRICE	% UP/DOWN 2010 price
<b>Week beginning May 28</b>		
<b>Chateau Duhart Milon</b>	57 euros	-13.60% (66 euros)
Carruades de Lafite	108 euros	(unchanged)
<b>Chateau Lafite (2nd tranche)</b>		
<b>Week beginning May 21</b>		
<b>Ch Cheval Blanc</b>	465 euros	-48.30%
<b>Chateau Latour</b>	450 euros	
Chateau Bellevue Mondotte	108 euros	-52% (225 euros)
Les Forts de Latour		
Ch La Louviere (red)	15.60 euros	-14.29%
Ch Couhins Lurton (white)	16.20 euros	-7.30%
<b>Ch Braiaire Ducru</b>	31.20 euros	-35% (48 euros)

<b>Ch Canon</b>	62.50 euros	-30.56%
<b>Ch La Conseillante</b>	72 euros	
<b>Ch Pichon Baron</b>	72 euros	
<b>Ch Troplong Mondot</b>	57.60 euros	-41.46%
<b>Ch Figeac</b>	72 euros	-57.14% (168 euros)
<b>Ch Mouton Rothschild</b>	360 euros	-40% (600 euros)
<b>Ch Clerc Milon</b>	36 euros	-25% (48 euros)
Ch Latour Martillac red	17.50 euros	-7.89%
<b>Chateau Pape Clement white</b>	97.20 euros	(unchanged)
Petit Mouton	72 euros	-33.33%
<b>Pichon Comtesse</b>	72 euros	-47.83% (138 euros)
<b>Chateau Rauzan Segla</b>	57.60 euros	-31.43% (84 euros)
Reserve de la Comtesse	22.80 euros	-24% (30 euros)
<b>Chateau Saint Pierre</b>	33.60 euros	-34.88% (51.60 euros)

### Week beginning May 14

Domaine de Chevalier white	48 euros	-7.20%
Domaine de Chevalier red	30 euros	-37.50% (48 euros)
Ch La Pointe	19.80 euros	-17.50 euros (24 euros)
Ch Malartic Lagraviere white	42 euros	-5.40%
Ch Malartic Lagraviere red	27 euros	-22.41%
Ch Lafon Rochet	24.50 euros	-17.51% (29.70 euros)
Chateau Montrose	72 euros	-45.45% (132 euros)
Ch Soutard	21.90 euros	-19.69% (27.27 euros)
<b>Chateau d'Armailhac</b>	30 euros	-7.41% (32.40 euros)
Echo de Lynch Bages	22.80 euros	-8.8% (25 euros)
<b>Haut Bages Liberal</b>	22.80 euros	-17.09% (27.50 euros)
<b>Chateau La Tour Figeac</b>	18 euros	-18.18% (25.30 euros)
<b>Chateau Villemaurine</b>	22.50 euros	-18.18% (27.50 euros)
<b>Chateau La Dominique</b>	22.50 euros	-25% (20 euros)
<b>Chateau Corbin Michotte</b>	17 euros	-10.53% (19 euros)
Blanc de Lynch Bages	21.60 euros	(unchanged)
<b>Ch Balestard La Tonnelle</b>	24 euros	-3.23%

### Week beginning May 7

Chateau Meyney	21.90 euros	-1.59%
Chateau Serilhan	11.40 euros	-5%
<b>Chateau Pape Clement</b>	57.60 euros	-39.24% (94.80 euros)
<b>Chateau Giscours</b>	29.10 euros	-33.3% (43.50 euros)
<b>Chateau Pontet Canet</b>	66 euros	-34% (100 euros)
<b>Chateau Dassault</b>	19.20 euros	-3.52% (19.90 euros)
<b>Chateau Malescot St Exupery</b>	33.60 euros	-44% (60 euros)
<b>Chateau Batailley</b>	22 euros	-8.3% (24 euros)

### Week beginning April 30

Chateau de la Vielle Cure	10.50 euros	-19.23% (13 euros)
Chateau Les Grands Chenes	9.60 euros	-11.76% (10.88 euros)
Chateau de Pressac	13.70 euros	unchanged
<b>Chateau Desmirail</b>	18 euros	-5.26% (19 euros)
La Fleur de Bouard	16.90 euros	-13.33% (19.50 euros)
<b>Chateau La Croix Figeac</b>	10.85 euros	-3.12% (11.20 euros)
Chateau La Cabanne	18 euros	-8.63% (19.70 euros)
Chateau Fayat	16.50 euros	-15.38% (19.50 euros)
Chateau Olivier (red)	17 euros	unchanged
Chateau Olivier (white)	17.80 euros	-4.49%
Chateau Mazeyres	13.70 euros	-4.80%
<b>Chateau Fonroque</b>	15.90 euros	-11.6% (18 euros)
<b>Chateau Desmirail</b>	18 euros	-5.20%
<b>Chateau Beychevelle</b>	45.50 euros	-15.74% (54 euros)
Chateau Fonbadet	17.80 euros	-1.11% (18 euros)
<b>Chateau Fonplegade</b>	21.60 euros	-2.7% (22.20 euros)
Chateau Fonreaud	7.90 euros	+2.6% (7.70 euros)
<b>Chateau Grand Pontet</b>	17.40 euros	-17.14% (21 euros)
Chateau Haut Condissas	24 euros	unchanged
Chateau Labegorce	14.10 euros	-4.41% (14.75%)
Chateau Rollan de By	10.98 euros	unchanged
Chateau la Tour Seran	13.20 euros	unchanged

Chateau Monbrison	17.50 euros	-7.89% (19 euros)
<b>Chateau du Tertre</b>	20.90 euros	-approx 15% (23.75%)

**Week beginning April 23**

Chateau Citran	9 euros	-12% (10.24 euros)
<b>Chateau d'Arche</b>	17.40 euros	-2.79% (17.90 euros)
Chateau Bernadotte	10.70 euros	-14.06% (12.45 euros)
<b>Chateau Coutet</b>	42 euros	-7.89% (45.60 euros)
Chateau Rol Valentin	21 euros	-7.89% (22.80 euros)
Chateau Chantegrive (red)	8.30 euros	-4.6% (8.70 euros)
Ch Siran	16.50 euros	-5.17% (17.40 euros)
Chateau Brillette	11.30 euros	-5.04% (11.90 euros)
Clos Floridene (white)	11.90 euros	+10.19% (10.80 euros)
Clos Floridene (red)	9.6 euros	unchanged
<b>Doisy Daene</b>	26.40 euros	unchanged
Chevalier de Lascombes	15 euros	-11.76% (17 euros)
Clos du Jaugeyron (Haut Medoc)	9 euros	-6.25% (9.6 euros)
Clos du Jaugeyron (Margaux)	28.8 euros	-7.1% (31 euros)
Ch Ormes de Pez	18.50 euros	-7.5% (20 euros)
<b>Ch Rieussec</b>	48 euros	unchanged
Ch Les Trois Croix	10.30 euros	-6.36% (11 euros)
Ch Haut Marbuzet	21.60 euros	-18%
Ch Sociando Mallet	20.40 euros	-8.11% (22.20 euros)
<b>Ch Suidiraut</b>	45 euros	-7.22% (48.50 euros)
Ch Moulin a Vent	7.25 euros	-4.61% (7.6 euros)

**Week beginning April 16**

Marquis de Calon	13.50 euros	-3.57% (14 euros)
Chateau Capbern Gasqueton	11.30 euros	-1.74% (11.50 euros)
Chateau de la Dauphine	9.90 euros	-11.61% (11.20 euros)
Chateau Lilian Ladouys	10.50 euros	-3.67% (10.90 euros)
Chateau d'Agassac	9.95 euros	-6.13% (10.60 euros)

Chateau Charmail	10 euros	-10.31% (11.15 euros)
<b>Chateau Cos d'Estournel</b>	108 euros	-45% (198 euros)
Pagodes de Cos	30 euros	-25% (40)
Chateau Gazin	42 euros	-12.5% (48 euros)
Demoiselle de Sociando Mallet	10.20 euros	-15% (12 euros)
<b>Chateau Lafite Rothschild</b>	420 euros (1st tranche)	-30% (600 euros)
Chateau Paloumey	8.30 euros	-12.63% (9.50 euros)
Chateau le Doyenne (Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux)	5.70 euros	-5% (6 euros)

### **Week beginning April 9**

Chateau Fourcas Hosten	8.15 euros	-9.44% (9 euros)
Chateau Angludet	16 euros	-15.8% (19 euros)

## BORDEAUX WHITES, ROSES AND CLAIRETS

### **Overview**

Coming on the heels of 2009 and 2010, the latest Bordeaux vintage was always going to have a tough time making an impact, but it has proved of exceptional quality for white Bordeaux. Where I know approximate prices, they are noted (many are already on the market, as they are unoaked whites, designed for drinking young and fresh).

### **S de Suidiraut, AOC Sauternes 2011**

48% semillon 52% sauvignon, keep upping the semillon, aim is to make it more and more, really like what it does. Used to be 70/30 sauv/semillon, Aged in Burgundy barrels. 500 cases. Very good. 93+

### **G de Guiraud, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

The 2011 dry white from Chateau Guiraud is highly successful, with a bright citrus nose, and a kick of confidence right from the start. The oak, with its vanilla edge, gives a touch too much sweetness, but it is well offset by exotic fruits, with juicy apricots, lemons and pineapple. The blend is 80% sauvignon blanc and 20% semillon, and fermentation takes place half in barrel, half in stainless steel, before spending nine months in oak, with lees stirring. Organic. 13.5% ABV, £13 (approx). 92.

### **Chateau du Cros Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Rich yellow, with pale rim and a classic sauvignon blanc cut grass nose, and clear varietal characteristics on the palate. Evident freshness, with a lovely kick of citrus. A good example of a white Bordeaux. 90% sauvignon blanc, 10% semillon. Unoaked, aged in stainless steel vats. £9. 90.

### **Chateau Talbot Caillou Bordeaux Blanc 2010**

Good mix of sweet rich fruit and tart lime and lemon in the mid palate. Seriously enjoyable, from 75% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Semillon. £16, 91.

### **Chateau Minvielle Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Deep in colour and aromatics. Pleasing mix of lemon peel and grass, good intensity with no drop in mid palate, and an attractive long finish. Good example of why semillon adds something to Bordeaux whites, offering a fatness of flavour and ensuring a medium-bodied wine. 70% sauvignon blanc, 30% semillon. 89.

### **Clarendelle Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

This is a good example of judicious use of oak, good juicy fruit flavours, just subtly rounded out by the oak. The blend for this wine is an almost even mix of sauvignon blanc and semillon, lifted up by a touch of muscadelle, 12.5% abv £14.50, 90

### **Chateau Mont Perat Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Star bright, lovely fresh yellow colour. The fruit character on this is excellent, with real persistency, and a good retro-nasal hit of box hedge sauvignon. On the palate, a touch of oak roundness. 13.5% abv. 90.

### **Chateau de Bonhoste Bordeaux Blanc 2011 (Cuvee Prestige)**

Strong sauvignon nose, it is all about the cut grass here. On the palate the oak comes through, giving power and impact, and adding depth to the fruit flavours. 90% sauvignon gris, 10% sauvignon blanc, vinified in oak barrels and aged on the lees for six months. £15, 90.

### **Magrez Fombrauge Blanc 2011**

Again, full pretty sauvignon nose, with good character, clear lees stirring and judicious use of oak, lots to enjoy, good persistency. The blend is 40% sauvignon blanc, 40% semillon and 20% sauvignon gris, from five year old vines, vinified in new oak barrels. approx £40. 90-92.

### **Ginestet Prestige Blanc 2011**

Enjoyably round but citrusy nose, from blend of 77% sauvignon blanc, 20% semillon and 3% muscadelle. Quite soft on the palate, with good persistency. Clever use of oak has really worked in this vintage, adding notes of soft almonds and gently toasted vanilla, without being cloying. 90.

### **Dourthe Grande Cuvée Sauvignon Blanc, Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Deep gold in colour, taking on some depth from skin contact during a cold soak before fermentation, and lees stirring to further add richness. On the nose there are soft citrus sauvignon aromatics, making this is a pretty wine, with a fresh attack, although no great persistency. 100% sauvignon blanc. £8, 88

### **Chateau la Rose du Pin, Bordeaux Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Pale gold, with the attractive green reflections of a young Bordeaux. High aromatics on the nose, some pretty white flowers, with ripe pear notes behind. Good freshness, and the flavours are simple but clean. Unoaked, from a blend of 85% sauvignon blanc, 15% semillon. £8.50 88.

### **Chateau de Lugagnac Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Soft apricot in colour, fairly low aromatics, with hints of roses followed up by rich stone fruits on the attack. The wine is 40% sauvignon blanc, but an equal 40% of sauvignon gris, finished off with a touch of semillon, have rounded out the flavours and brought the acidity down. [www.chateaudelugagnac.com](http://www.chateaudelugagnac.com) 87-88

**Chateau Timbleray Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Cheerful corn yellow colour. On the nose, the aromatics are full and frank, with cut grass and box hedge rather than citrus. Touch of reduction, but this is a good expression of sauvignon, rounded out by Semillon. Enjoyable, 87

**Chateau Roquefort Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

A reliable estate, owned by Laurent Maire, this is pale green-gold in colour, with an expressive sauvignon nose. Good balance, and some attractive sweet capsicum hints that give freshness without being tart. 85% sauvignon blanc, 15% semillon. Unoaked. 88.

**Chateau de la Riviere, Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

The first vintage of white wine for this traditionally red Fronsac estate was in 2010, and even though the one hectare of vines is inevitably still very young, this is looking good. Pale spun yellow, with green highlights. There is reduction at first, but it clears to reveal good firm fruits, with touches of kiwis and apricots. Soft and well-balanced, from a blend of sauvignon blanc and sauvignon gris, aged in concrete vats on lees for three months. Just 6,000 bottles though. £11 88-89

**Chateau La Freynelle, Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Good rich colour, and pleasantly round citrus-filled nose. Acidity in check, good lemon flavours on the palate, some persistency. Blend of the three main Bordeaux white grape varieties of sauvignon blanc, semillon and muscadelle, from Vignobles Barthe. £9.50. 87-88

**Chateau Loudenne Bordeaux Blanc 2010**

Oak is well stained onto the flavours here, which makes it sit a little heavier than many of the 2011s, but this is still a very appealing wine. Aged on the fine lees put regularly into suspension, with 60% sauvignon blanc and 40% Semillon. 13%abv. £16, 88

**Chateau Lestrille Capmartin Bordeaux Blanc 2010**

Again, can feel the oak and the ripeness of the grapes compared to 2011, but on the palate this is luxurious and pretty delicious. 33% Sauvignon Gris, 37% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon, £15, 87-88

**Chateau Pierrail Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

A herbaceous sauvignon nose, that is perky and bright. On the palate, it has sauvignon attributes in spades, with the dried grass given a lift by white blossom and apricot. Aged in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks, this is a blend of 70% sauvignon blanc, 30% sauvignon gris. £9.99 . 85-86.

#### **Chateau Clos Chaumont Bordeaux Blanc 2010**

Nose very seductive, with clear exotic fruits, pineapple and mango. Oak is a touch too strong, but it does give rich and round flavours – one for food. 83% semillon, 17% Sauvignon Gris, only 4,000 bottles made. Approx £15, 85-86

#### **Grand Classique de Chateau de l'Orangerie Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

A slight departure from a typical white Bordeaux, offering fresh, clean flavours with a grapey edge, picked up by an attractive mix of sweet mango fruit and tangy lime blossom. There is a bite to this that is very attractive. The blend is a fairly unusual 40% sauvignon blanc, 40% muscadelle and 20% colombard. 86

#### **Chateau Gantonnet Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

This is pleasant. The vanilla kick of the oak is again pretty evident, but it is rounding out the fruits. Giving a sly sweetness to the citrus fruit that is pretty seductive, to be honest. Good persistency. 85

#### **Mascaron par Ginestet Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Rose-white colour, from a blend of 50/50 sauvignon blanc and semillon. This has a touch of dryness on the finish, perhaps oak not used as judiciously as it might have been. But there is plenty of freshness, pulling things together, and some attractive citrus flavours. 87.

#### **Ginestet Sauvignon Semillon Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

Gentle blush, with semillon giving a rounded, almost pale pink colour. Good aromatics on the nose, some roundness, acidity not too high. 86.

#### **Chateau Penin Bordeaux Rosé 2011**

Like the nose here, delicate, with a savoury edge, a touch of herbs, and fresh summer fruits.. 85% cabernet sauvignon, 15% merlot, pressed after four hours skin contact.. £8. 90.

#### **Chateau Beauregard-Ducourt Bordeaux Rosé 2011**

Deft and light-footed with wild strawberries and mouth watering freshness. £8.50. 90.

#### **Chateau de Seuil Bordeaux Rosé 2011**

Cheerful cherry colour, with good fruit extraction, and firm raspberry flavours from a blend of cabernet sauvignon and merlot vines. Champagne yeasts to

kick start fermentation. 89

**Clarendelle Bordeaux Rosé 2011**

Firm cherry pink colour, with redcurrant and raspberry leaf on the palate. Good backbone – well delineated. £14.50, 88-89

**Chateau Pey le Tour Bordeaux Rosé 2011**

There is freshness and a lightness of touch here, with pretty floral flavours, and a touch of Earl Grey tea. 30% cabernet franc, 20% cabernet sauvignon, 50% merlot. Made by lightly pressing the skins then fermenting at low temperature, as with a white wine. 88-89

**Chateau Thieuley Bordeaux Clairet 2011**

Deft and fresh, with enough colour extraction to justify its being called a clairet. Crisp red fruit flavours. Fairly short but otherwise very good, made with low temperature fermentation to keep things fresh and light, and fermentation in stainless steel. £10, 88

**Chateau de Claribes Bordeaux Rose 2011**

Raspberry pink, with grenadine and sherberr on the palate and touches of lime blossom. 100% hand picked merlot, vinified like a white wine, and picked early enough to maintain a lovely freshness. £6.99 87-88

## POMEROL

**Overview**

Perhaps the most consistent appellation this year.

**L'Evangile, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Now 22ha, as last year bought 6ha of La Croix de Gay. There is 94% merlot in the 2001 blend (just 90% in the vineyard but have lots of young vines of cabernet franc, and so far they are in Blason de l'Evangile). Biggest difficulty was the dry weather, so only 32 hl/h. Technical director arrived in 2001 (from Chateau Le Boscq), and the vat room dates back to 2004, when the famous black concrete vats were installed! On the palate, this has that lovely juicy ripe fruit of the successful Pomerols in this vintage, croquant. Really fresh, if not exactly luscious. Overall, production saw 73% in the first wine, 27% Blason, 100% new oak barrels, light toasting, made at tonnellerie at Lafite. Malo in barrel. All fruit in by September 21. Make the blend after alcoholic fermentation. Lovely pure fruit, very fresh with a gentle persistency. Ph 3.7, so good acidity (4g total), 13.8 alcohol (2010 were up to 15%). 92

### **Chateau Petrus, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Right off the bat, winemaker Olivier Berrouet admitted Petrus 2011 was a tough vintage. Harvest was 12 September to 22 September, among the last in the area to pick. There will be new cellar for the 2012 vintage, but it's not yet ready.

Very tough spring, drought, early flowering, then July and August were pretty rainy, but it was the overall lack of sun that was the most worrying, lacking maybe 120 hours of sun over the summer, which meant they postponed harvest for almost two weeks, to ensure ripeness. Between 10-15% more tannic than 2010, but less alcohol at around 13.5% and a touch more acidity. Berrouet feels it has better structure than the 08, but for me the wine tastes a notch below the 08. It does have good freshness, but it seems strangely difficult to hold on to. As ever, even at this stage, the oak is apparent but in no way overwhelming. They soak their barrels for two weeks and steam clean them to get rid of that first impact of oak. Use 50% new oak. This is a wine that requires time and thought. On the immediate approach, there is a beautiful deep rich colour, but on the immediate attack there is less exuberance of fruit than usually comes through in a Petrus en primeur sample. Berrouet says, 'we tried to guard the charm of the wine. We weren't able to push the tannins as we can in better vintages'.

As you would expect, they were careful not to push anything, only pumping over gently, around twice per day, and were careful with oxidation so as not to hurt the aromas. Still 100% merlot, as ever. It takes a long time to budge this wine, only beginning to open up after a good ten minutes. Without doubt one to retaste. 92-94

### **Fleur de Clinet AOC Pomerol 2012**

This is made with plots from Clinet but now also six other producers in Pomerol. Started in 2008, now making 50,000 bottles annually. 95% merlot, 5% cabernet franc. This is already in bottle. 100% one vintage oak barrels, but some plots stay in stainless steel, overall ageing 12 months. 89-90

### **Chateau Clinet**

There is a replanting programme underway at Clinet, covering around 30% of the vineyard, with the aim of increasing cabernet sauvignon. Owner Ronan says he is very aware that they are at the limit of alcohol in the merlot, and that they need to take steps to address it, not only by the replanting of other varieties, but by changing the rootstock of the merlot also. Cabernet franc just 3% at the moment, really looking at cabernet sauvignon instead. Have good clones, as some cab sauv was planted just after world war 2. Their oldest

vines in the vineyard are 76 year old merlot, and he plans to keep them for as long as possible.

Overall, the 2011 blend is 85% merlot, 12% cabernet sauvignon, 3% cabernet franc. You immediately get the smoky aspect in this wine, from the 55% new oak barrels, 45% one year. Until 2004 Clinet was at 100% new oak, but reduced it ever since, because looking for more fruit. This has some real depth of flavour, there is evident oak, but it is gourmet, and adds interest. Very good. 93

### **Chateau Lafleur**

Jacques Guinadeau's youngest son just joined a year ago from working in Napa and at Haut Brion.

### **Pensees de Lafleur AOC Pomerol 2011**

This is a very different wine to everything I have tasted today. Full rich matiere, some real liquorice flavours, mint freshness, really interesting layers of flavour. 54% merlot, 46% cabernet franc. A big cabernet franc year. Really lip smacking. Really great tannins, love the finish on this wine. 89-91

### **Chateau Lafleur AOC Pomerol 2011**

I have just tasted this, and sat with it for a good 3 minutes without wanting to write anything, just wanting to enjoy that flavour. The persistency is hard to argue with. Blend in 2011 is 47% merlot, 53% cabernet franc. Have locals who harvest, often only for a day at a time, because harvest usually lasts around 5 weeks. So they start with the AOC Bordeaux white, that's their school for understanding what Guinadeau wants. For every two rows of vines, they have a full time member of staff watching over them, ensuring the sorting is of high enough quality. All is done by hand, but are looking at how they take off the stalks to perhaps improve that. Press pneumatic, very slowly, at first for 24 hours. If there are excellent press wines in this first lot, they will immediately blend it back in with the vin de gout, and end up normally with two or three small containers of press for each vat, do their malo apart, then decide where it should go. This is one of my top 2011 wines - full of liquorice and juicy, but subtly grownup fruits, nothing explosive or over-ripe. 96+

### **Vieux Chateau Certan AOC Pomerol 2011**

Really back to a more classic Bordeaux year, and a wonderful cabernet franc year for Alexandre Thienpont. The final blend here is 29% cab franc, 1% cab sauv, 70% merlot. Recent changes include replanting two plots of cabernet sauvignon to replant with different rootstock - not relevant yet of course, as it will be a good 18-20 years before it is first wine quality. The cab sauvignon in this is planted among the other rows of grapes. The aroma is open, with some oak marking the nose. Wonderful texture, cashmere and silk. This has an

energy to it that comes through immediately. Alexandre is aware that the last two years too hot for his cab franc, they were planted in 1958, so the drought of 2011 didn't bother them like the heat of 09 and 10, when they get stuck. 13.6%Abv, 70% new oak, blended around three weeks ago. 2nd wine this year has young vines and vigorous vines. The length is impressive. Vinoux, seveux, means it has length, gout, all good thing w a slight restraint. This has overall a lot of potential. Can see it needs time. Really a classic, enjoyable vintage, but one you need to look for, and take your time over. 93-95.

#### **Chateau Montviel, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Slightly less luscious fruit here, enjoy the slightly restrained dryness on the palate. 80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc. Slightly drying on the finish, but this is very classic Right Bank, although less exuberant than many years here. 30% new oak. 13.5% 87-88.

#### **Manoir de Gay, aoc Pomerol 2011**

Lovely freshness. I really like this wine. Not heavy, not particular persistency, but it is fresh and enjoyable. 89.

#### **Chateau le Gay, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Here the power comes through, with an attractive minty freshness on the finish. 100% new oak. 90% merlot, 10% cabernet franc. 60hl wooden vats. This is dense, good structure, not too drying (although you do have to slightly wade to the finish at the end). 90-92.

#### **UGC Pomerol**

As widely noted, Pomerol was easily one of the most consistent and successful appellations in 2011.

#### **Chateau Croix de Gay AOC Pomerol 2011**

Reduction on this bottle on the first tasting. When returned to it later, the rich dark fruits came through, although it still felt a little bit tough on the finish, the tannins a little raw. 88-89

#### **Chateau Clinet AOC Pomerol 2011**

Like this rich, deep, slightly exotic nose, just about carries it through. This is deep, a little brittle, but can see depth, power, concentration, a real sterling effort. Pleasure on after taste also, but a wine intended to create an impact - the big finish is just waiting for applause. 92+

#### **Chateau la Pointe AOC Pomerol 2011**

Nice, light touch here, starts with a big attack, then takes the foot off the

pedal, but makes it seem deliberate rather than mid-palate panic. Gentle plum fruit on the finish, this has real promise. 91-92.

**Chateau Gazin AOC Pomerol 2011**

This is a little underpowered for Gazin. Still firm fruit flavours, blackberry with a touch of rose on the nose. Charming, but not up to its 2010 wine. 88-89

**Chateau La Cabanne AOC Pomerol 2011**

Some great interest here, some good layers, drying finish but seems an overenthusiastic whack of oak, which should integrate easily over the next year or so. There is some blue sky here. 91-92

**Chateau Beauregard AOC Pomerol 2011**

Like the mocha, coffee nose, quite pretty, some restrained well worked fruit. Extraction controlled, there is depth to this, really quite like it. Freshness and deep spiciness. 93

**Chateau la Conseillante AOC Pomerol 2011**

Plum, rich and succulent on the nose and the attack. This has fruit, fruit!!! Really elegant, very well worked, totally sophisticated, good persistency, black autumn fruits, some clear cassis. Just overall a classy experience. 94+

**Chateau Petit Village AOC Pomerol 2011**

The attack here punches a little too abruptly, but it does smooth out along the way. The flavours elongate in your mouth, and you can feel the structure develop. But again the ending is abrupt. I tasted this again at Pichon Baron later in the week, and it was much better. This is typical of the 2011 en primeur - tasting samples were irregular, and many wines that I retasted did not come out the same. Truly buyer beware this year - these wines need to be retasted in bottle. 19% cab franc, 19% cab sauvignon, the rest of merlot. 88-90. (90 when tasted at Pichon).

**At Leoville Las Cases**

**Fugue de Nenin AOC Pomerol 2011**

Feel the elderflower that for me is the mark of this estate. It is a little light in the mid palate. Harvest 5 to 15 September. 88

**Chateau Nenin AOC Pomerol 2011**

Bright bright fruit, real violet rim. 25 year old vines, just bouncing along. Lovely, succulent fruit. 92-93.

**Ets JP Moueix tasting**

No press wine yet in any of these. Will be integrated later (so bear in mind these scores may not be entirely representative of the finished wines). They

used a laser optic sorting machine, taking on average 7% of the crop out. And very careful approach to extraction, as you would expect from such an expert team. Sometimes only remontage every day or other day. And all pumping over at the start of the fermentation, stopped once hit 25/26 degrees.

**Chateau Plince, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Bitter coffee beans on the attack, this takes a minute to settle down. Not as successful for me as the past few years. 88.

**Chateau Lafleur Gazin AOC Pomerol 2011**

Lovely and fresh, really enjoyable. Beautiful tannins here, soft and pliable, and caressing the palate. 92.

**Chateau Bourgneuf AOC Pomerol 2011**

Tight big tannins, technical director Eric says they feel firm at first, but will open beautifully, and certainly you can feel the restraint on the close of play. Coffee aftertaste. 93.

**Chateau Certan de May AOC Pomerol 2011**

Again, rich deep tannins, with firm extraction. 92.

**Providence AOC Pomerol 2011**

Again, coffee quite prevalent here, but a slightly softer mocha feel, while Bourgneuf was an espresso. The IPT is in the 60s, because no press wine so far?? 92

**Chateau La Fleur Petrus AOC Pomerol 2011**

This is wonderful, violet and blackberry, pretty and yet with a hidden punch. Very successful wine. 94+

**Chateau Trotanoy AOC Pomerol 2011**

Big punch of tannins, hard to really get at right now (and this is without any press wine!). One that has taken the vintage on, and run with it. 94.

**(at Cercle Rive Droite Tasting)**

**Chateau Beau Soleil, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Thierry Rustman, 4ha, 95% merlot, 5% cabernet franc. Not particularly enamoured of this, seems pretty green and short. 84

**Chateau Bellegrave, AOC Pomerol 2011**

The tannins are tight here, but there is good power, some real grip. Alcohol high. 75% merlot, 25% cabernet franc. Good acidity. 90

**Chateau Bonalque, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Expressive, gourmet nose. Quite strong vanilla oak. 95% merlot, 5% cabernet franc. Pretty successful, the extraction is full but in control. Finish is brambly fruits with a touch of menthol. Good potential, and some charm. 91-92

**Chateau Le Bon Pasteur, AOC Pomerol 2011**

The Rolland family estate. 80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc. 7 hectares. Pretty hefty. Some pretty charcoal characteristics coming through, and even though Rolland told me that his advice this year was to hold off on the extraction, it's fair to say he has gone as far as he dared. Good second wave of flavour.

**Chateau Bourgneuf AOC Pomerol 2011**

Like the nose on this one. Cigar box and firm black fruits. On the palate also, this is one of the successes, can see the long haul potential, and here get those three dimensional expansion in your mouth. It's big, but not drying. Some anis. 93

**Clos de L'Eglise, AOC Pomerol**

An Alain Raynaud consultancy. 80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc. 6ha. This has quite mouth puckering tannins, clearly a long hauler, although maybe lacks a little mid palate weight to hold up to those tannins. Certainly ambitious. 91.

**Chateau La Clemence AOC Pomerol 2011**

Dauriac family, 85% merlot, 15% cabernet franc, good modern winery, all very small scale. Again, this is a pretty impressive showing in terms of tannic structure, power of fruit, and acidity. Touch drying on the finish, a little hammer blow with the final impact, but generally I like this. 92

**Clos de Clocher AOC Pomerol 2011**

70% merlot, 30% cabernet franc. Not my favourite Clos de Clocher at this early stage, but still some excellent fruit here, even though the oak needs to settle in against the fruit. 89-90

**Chateau du Domaine de l'Eglise AOC Pomerol 2011**

Here there is some interest. Slightly chalky tannins that give a little lift. 95% merlot, 5% cabernet franc. Good grip, you really get held by this, if lacking a little in exuberance, it makes up for it in seriousness. 91

**Chateau Fayat AOC Pomerol 2011**

The alcohol hits me on this, quite unusual this vintage. 80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc. I get some well extracted tannins that hold your interest, and a reasonable fruit hit, although not quite enough to support the extraction. Not

as good for me as last year's excellent wine. A good example of vintage effect. 90

**Chateau Feytit Clinet, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Fairly young owner, took it over from a Moueix fermage around five years ago. Jerome Chasseuil. 90% merlot, 10% cabernet franc. Some freshness here, and a lightness of touch. Might be fairly early drinking, but there are crushed violets and rose petals on the nose here, this is a very pretty Pomerol. 92-93

**Chateau Lecuyer, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Emeric Petit. 85% merlot, 15% cabernet franc merlot, and you feel the kick of luscious fruit right on the nose. Perfumed and quite heady, touch over extracted on the palate though, to the point that the finish is bitter. 86

**Chateau Mazeyres AOC Pomerol 2011**

Alain Moueix. Heavy extraction, but still bright fruit. This is a big wine but one of the more successful on display. Good persistency, touch out of balance in terms of alcohol, but the clean fruit saves it. 91

**Chateau Montviel, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Tasted last night also, and again it's got good potential, clear modern style. This shows pretty well, certainly roasted coffee beans and rich fruit. The problem comes on the drying finish. 90+

**Chateau Le Moulin AOC Pomerol 2011**

80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc. This 2.4 ha estate is an Alain Raynaud consultancy. Some grip, but the fruit doesn't track the acidity in mid palate. 89

**Chateau Rouget, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Again, marked flaky croissant, toasty oak, oak is really making itself felt this year, perhaps to mask disappearing fruit in the mid-palate. But tis has charm. 85% merlot, 15% cabernet franc. 17ha. 91-92

**Chateau Vray Croix de Gay, AOC Pomerol 2011**

Winemaker Yannick (ex-Petrus) is still making this wine, although from the 2012 vintage he will have left the property. Alain Raynaud consultant here. It has lovely mocha and coffee on the nose, very expressive, but is pushed again a little hard. Not quite up to their last few years in terms of quality. 89-90

**Chateau Vieux Maillet, AOC Pomerol 2011**

They seem to have gone for some extraction here, there is some pretty rich fruit on the nose. think it has been pushed a touch too far on the palate, it's not quite drying on the finish, but it's just a little much for the balance. Herve

Laviale. 73% merlot, 19% cabernet franc, 8% cabernet sauvignon. 89-90

**Chateau Taillefer, AOC Pomerol 2011**

12ha 75% merlot, 25% cabernet franc. Know they use a tribaie machine here, which will have come in handy this year. There is a touch of green on the finish, but this has really good firm fruit, lovely definition. Good mocha on the nose. 89-91

**Chateau La Croix Taillefer, AOC Pomerol 2011**

This is a little lighter in structure, and we have just a touch of sourness on the finish, isotherapy used in the vines, which means homeopathic solutions on the vines. It was dry for them in 2011, so an easy organic year. Good crop, 49 hl/h, he says still concentrated, for me a little under concentrated. 95% merlot, 5% cab franc, and will be adding a little more. 88

Non-Pomerols at the tasting:

**Clos de Puy Arnaud Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux 2011**

Thierry Vallette, biodynamic. Consultant Anne Calderoni. 65% merlot, 30% cabernet franc, 5% cabernet sauvignon. Certified organic and biodynamic. There is a coiled energy here, as I often get with this estate, a real respect of the fruit. 10ha. Touch hot, but a good mentol finish that brings it together. 91-92.

**Chateau de Viaud, AOC Lalande de Pomerol**

New Chinese owners now of course, this is the first vintage with COFCO at the helm. A little heavy on the new oak for me, strong vanilla is a little overpowering, although of course that will settle. 86

**Chateau Siaurac, AOC Lalande de Pomerol**

It is fairly pretty, some easy fruit, a little brittle. 87-88.

## ST EMILION

**2011 St Emilion and Pomerol**

The final weekend of June, where temperatures hit 40 degrees on June 26th and 27th. Grape bunches exposed to the sun were scorched. Cabernet sauvignon on the driest soils were the worst affected, sometimes up to 20% loss. If they survived, they usually suffered from uneven veraison (colour change), and had to be removed during green harvesting. Merlot, normally more sensitive to heat, was less damaged, either because it was further along the growth cycle, or because its wide leaves protected the berries. Those who had not practised leaf thinning were of course better protected. Yield much higher than last year on the Right Bank generally.

**Tasted at Haut Brion, their new wine Chateau Quintus (formerly Tetre Daugay).**

**Le Dragon de Quintus, 2011 St Emilion**

54.3% merlot, 45.7% cabernet franc. clay limestone and clay, and some sand, so this had less water stress, but still had the heat which grilled the cabernet franc. They use a Mistral machine at Quintus for sorting, not the optical sorter used at Haut Brion. Quite enjoying the firm fruits here, there is good merlot red fruits, and some enjoyable soft tannins. 88.

**Chateau Quintus, 2011**

50/50 merlot cab franc in first wine. The flavours are deeper, richer, and the tannins more present. The length is not enormous, but at the same time, it is really elegant, plenty to enjoy. Will do some replanting, some changes of root stock, all long term work. 90.

**At Ausone:**

**Chateau Simard, AOC St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc, very attractive cherry colour, and a crab apple nose, but this lacks a little depth of fruit, and the tannins are a touch dry on the finish. However, there is an attractive after taste, with the fruit much perkier in remembrance than in actuality. The acidity is pretty good, 3.75pH, not too high. No new oak. 88.

**Chateau de Fonbel, AOC St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Consultant Gilles Paquet, 63% merlot, 20% cabernet franc, 10% petit verdot, 7% carmanere. 30% new oak. Here also, slightly underripe tannins, but again it is saved by a freshness, and really beautiful pure fruits, less extraction this year (3 rack and returns compared to 5 in 2011), these vineyards are partly in the plains, partly closer to Libourne. Have had carmanere since 2004, first vintage used 2007, adds a rich spicy note, and colour. Gentle, fruit filled experience. 89-90.

**Chateau Haut Simard AOC St Emilion grand Cru 2011**

70% merlot, 30% cabernet franc. Vinified in same cellar as Simard, but not the same vines. Here 8ha between la Gaffeliere and Canon la Gaffeliere, on clay limestone soil. More full bodied, from the nose onwards, here a richer fruit. 13% alcohol, for all these wines so far. Start to get more impact from the oak and tannins here, can feel that there is some real interest and structure. 90.

**Chateau Moulin St Georges AOC St Emilion grand Cru 2011**

They use a Tribaie machine for grape sorting here, which they believe is better than a tri-optique, and were thrilled in 2011. Here we have the bright, fresh, croquant fruit of a great en primeur sample. 80% merlot, 20% cabernet franc. Unfortunately made in same cellar as Chateau Fonbel, so cannot be classified - a shame, as the quality is brilliant. Clay limestone. 91-92+

**Chapelle d'Ausone AOC St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Have 10% cabernet sauvignon in this wine for the past two years. Not in

Ausone yet! 5 year old cabernet vines. Beautiful violet colour. 70% young vines in Chapelle. 2006 did extensive replanting. The cabernet is really marked, really adds a feeling of depth and a whoosh of tannins. I worry it loses the family resemblance to what is clearly one of the best wines in Bordeaux, so not sure if it is entirely desirable. The goal is to reduce the merlot and bring cab franc up to around 65% of the main wine, hope by 2016/2017, and maybe cab sauv in the main wine. 91-93

**Chateau Ausone AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe A**

55% cabernet franc, 45% merlot. Michel Rolland consultant. No delestage (rack and return) or pumping over, just pigeage, punching down. Maceration fairly normal, just two or three days less than last year. So fragrant from the first nose. Tanks changed to tronconic in 2010. Here there is this sense of restraint that Ausone does so well, that beautiful mix of rich, firm blueberry fruit, with delicate violet and lilac aromas. Gravity only in the cellar. But it does not quite reach the heights of the past few vintages. 100% new oak. 15%ABV. 95+

**Chateau Val de Roc, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011**

Chef de culture, vineyard manager at Ausone. The vines are west of Fronsac. Planted to 6000 vines per hectare. 70% merlot, 10% cab franc, 20% cabernet sauvignon. Back to a fairly normal nose, 1/3 aged in barrels. But a little underripe overall. 86

**Clos des Baies, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

70% merlot, 30% cabernet franc. New plot by Tertre Roteboeuf, just half a hectare. Owned by Philippe Baillarguet. 2,100 bottles, not only size of property but also old vines. That is a great wine, just bursting with fresh fruit. He had been wanting to buy and add cabernet franc for a few years, before rented 100% merlot vines. No pumps, all by gravity. Even transferring berries to tanks done by gravity. He feels even a gentle peristaltic pump will damage the berries, only gravity truly protects the berries. Really a good find. 91

**Thienpont tasting, Larcis Ducasse**

The wines are organic, but not certified, because believe in ensuring the fight against rot can be more flexible. Pavie Maquin was certified, but not any more. Nicolas was at the tasting, interesting to talk with him about the vintage. He lives in Libourne and has five children, with his son Cyril now working at Chateau Berliquet. The main problem this year was this coup de chaleur in June.

Used a laser sorter at Pavie Maquin, but found it made too many mistakes, so went back to traditional methods this year. Often Pavie Macquin three weeks later than his cousin Alexandre at Vieux Chateau Certan in Pomerol to begin picking, because it is quite a late-ripening terroir. So this year could really benefit from the late season good weather. Today Thienpont has 70% of his own or family vines.

### **Chateau Puygueraud, Francs Cotes de Bordeaux 2011**

Smooth tannins, fresh fruit, this is a good value wine that is working well within the vintage. One of the largest estates in Francs, owned by Nicolas, his brother and sister, 75% merlot, 20% cab franc, 5% malbec. 88-89.

### **Chateau La Prade, Francs Cotes de Bordeaux 2011**

90% merlot, 10% cab franc, like the quality of the tanjins, quite firm and strong, w good acidity. Bought in 2000 from Patrick Vallette (who now lives in Chile). A 4.5 hectare estate. 88.

### **Chateau Alcree, Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux 2011**

bought july 2011, 3 has of vines. This is a little lighter than the others. 88

### **Chateau Trimoulet, St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

65% merlot, 35% cabernet franc. Quite different taste profile, get some soft Turkish delight, some almonds here. Less limestone in the terroir, a clay heart 70%, then around 30% sand, so a little more severe, a little more powerful. 89+.

### **Pavie Tasting**

All harvests for the Pavie estates took place in September, from beginning to end - last time this happened was 2003. And maceration for Pavie and Pavie Decesse was between 3 and 7 days shorter than last year, depending on vat. Michel Rolland was there and said that on clay limestone in St Emilion, you had to be really careful about maceration times, not too extract too much. In vintages where the grapes are not fully super ripe, you have to be aware they can't be pushed in the same way.

### **Chateau Lusseau, St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

This is the wine of Pavie cellar master. Not too bad, a little unexceptional. Not great length, but same time there is some attractive fruit. It's fresh. 87.

### **Chateau Monbusquet, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

I like the quality of tannins here, and it's not over extracted, which for me is often the case with Monbusquet (I usually feel Pavie has the quality of the fruit to tuck the extraction within its overall structure). All picking within September, that is rare for Perse. Good impact, fruit and tannin filled attack, but it fades somewhat. 60% merlot, 30% cabernet franc, 10% cabernet sauvignon. 89-90

### **Clos des Lunelle, Cotes de Castillon 2009**

The fruit steps up to the plate here, much perkier. 80% merlot, 10% cabernet franc, 10% cabernet sauvignon. Good depth, some interesting minerality. Again not huge persistency, but good. 90

### **Chateau Pavie Decesse, Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Often a wine I love, and here again excellent liquorice, menthol, touch medicinal, but full of power. Good freshness. 90% merlot, 10% cabernet franc. 80% new oak, 20% one year oak. Enjoying the persistency here, really a firm grip, and keep waiting to get clobbered by drying tannins, but they fade out

nicely. 93+

**Chateau Bellevue Mondotte, St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

90% merlot, 5% cabernet franc, 5% cabernet sauvignon. 48 year old vines, 100% new oak. This is less successful for me. A massive clobbering wine, making no concessions to the vintage. 34 days maceration. 88.

**Chateau Pavie, Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe B 2011**

The colour is all over the glass here, staining happily away, not something we have seen a lot of this year. Like this, all coiled restraint, the acidity cuts a real line through the fruit, can feel it stretching away in front of you. 14.3%ABV. You have to admire Perse's consistency - he has managed to squeeze all he can out of this vintage. This will not be to everyone's taste - but then when has Perse ever made wines for everyone? 70% merlot, 20% cabernet franc, 10% cabernet sauvignon. 93-94

**Monbusquet Blanc, AOC Bordeaux 2011**

Standout gorgeous. You could sharpen pencils with this (comment care of Miguel Lecuona, and he's right). Thrillingly fresh and pure, wonderful minerality. Love it. 95+

**Jonathan Maltus tasting**

Biggest vintage ever for tTyssier, largely because they hadn't defoliated by the end of June, so were not grilled by the grapes.

**Chateau Pezat, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011**

85% merlot, 15% cabernet franc. New label, silver on black. The harvest was extremely late for the vintage, with merlot beginning to be brought in on 3 october, and cabernet franc 6 october. Maltus assures that this is because they had no rot, and were on a cooler terroir so were very slow to ripen once the summer weather cooled. 87.

**Chateau Teyssier, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

70% merlot, cab franc 30%, once again a great quality wine for the price. The vines cover 5 hectares by the chateau itself (sandy terroir), but a full 25 hectares by Monbusquet, most of which goes into this wine. This has lovely freshness, well defined fruits. Cold soak, 28 degree fermentation. 48 hl/h. 88-89.

**Chateau la Forge, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Changing style from Teyssier, mainly because lower yields. Here low 30s. 92% merlot, 8% cab franc, 13.65ph, 3.44TA. Things are tightening here. The fruits are darkening, five different parcels. Clay on limestone did best for Jonathan this year. Lovely grip on the finish. 91

**Chateau Le Carre, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

350 cases. 85% merlot, 15% cab franc, what a lovely wine. Next to Clos Fourtet vines, bought from Chateau Canon. Again, well defined fruit with a great tunnel of acidity on the finish. Excellent. 93

### **Les Asteries, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

83% merlot, 17% cabernet franc, 13.7%ABV. This is pumped up, for me I feel the heat on this one, the extraction doesn't feel as controlled. For me, le carre is a clear winner this year (although in most years Le Carre is a style that I prefer, so not an enormous surprise to me). 92

### **Vieux Chateau Mazerat, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Matlus says at this point in the tasting, 'We are strong on colour, we like colour', and it clearly shows here! 12 day soaks at under 6 degrees centrifuge, for colour and fruit without tannins. Two rack and returns, four small pump overs. They also have a turbo pigeage machine that is like a rack and return, but everything takes place internally to retain freshness. Rich, dark, deep, coffee, he's just run right over the constraints of the 2011s. Beep beep! Clay over limestone. 1200 cases. It works, but for different reasons than Le Carre. 93.

### **Le Dome, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Plots by Canon, Angelus, sand over crasse de fer, next to three premiers. 80 %cab franc, 20% merlot, the percentage of franc has been this high since 2007. Gorgeous colour, glass staining, rich. This is seriously good. Beautifully fresh, and with serious persistency. 13.10%ABV. 1000 cases. 30 hl/h. 95.

### **Clos Nardian AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

10 barrels. 40% semillon, 40 sauvignon, 20% muscadelle. 14 degrees ABV. There is clear apricot, and pretty white flowers, but it lacks the freshness of the best white wines of this vintage, which is a shame in a year which offered such thrilling freshness. 50% new oak. 88.

### **Moueix tasting**

No press wine yet in any of these. Will be integrated later (so bear in mind these scores may not be entirely representative of the finished wines). They used a laser optic sorting machine, taking on average 7% of the crop out. And very careful approach to extraction, as you would expect from such an expert team. Sometimes only remontage every day or other day. And all pumping over at the start of the fermentation, stopped once hit 25/26 degrees.

### **Chateau Puy Blanquet, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Fairly green tannins, although well worked and extraction carefully managed so as to minimise impact. But still. 87.

### **Chateau La Serre, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

As I often find with this, a really successful wine, great acidity, and firm tannins. The plushness of a good Right Bank classified. 93+

### **Chateau Magdeleine AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Things seem to have settled here following a few stylistically different years following Berrouet's retirement. This has really beautiful extraction, back to some elegance of Magdeleine of old, but with plump fruit. Good. 91-92

**Chateau Belair Monange, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Powerful rich tannins. Good dense fruit. These are good so far, some of the best Saint Emilions that I have tried. 92-93.

**CHEVAL BLANC Tasting**

**Chateau Le Tour du Pin, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Organic certification for the 2013 vintage. Feel this is a touch underpowered, but there is some good soft fruit, some real elegant tannins and good blueberries, floral edge to the wine. But short. 89

**Chateau Quinault l'Enclos AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

This wine is really successful, has an excellent tannic hold, and has persistency without being harsh, held up by a lovely fresh central core. Receiving organoc certification for 2012 vintage. 93

**Chateau Petit Cheval AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

Quite closed on the nose. But opens up very prettily, really lovely elegant wine, like this enormously. 91-93.

**Chateau Cheval Blanc AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe A 2011**

Here the tannins are richer and firmer, can almost feel the fruit and acidity being squeezed through them, a very physical wine in your mouth. Good persistency. Light feeling at the end of play. Like this a lot. Definitely high achiever this year. 95-96+

**UGC Saint Emilion**

**Chateau Larcis Ducasse, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Good depth of extraction. Quite floral, strong elderberries, some gentle coffee. Really does start well, and has plenty of strands to hang on to, and to add complexity, but it needs time to see if the final wine will be well integrated. 89-91

**Chateau Canon la Gaffeliere AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Really lots to enjoy here, smooth silky tannins, good weight in the mid palate, and an overall slickness. As with everything good this year, they have not overextracted, so there is a lack of punch, but it is pretty. Like the merlot richness. 92

**Chateau Soutard AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Some good dark fruit on the nose. Curiously short though, even though I like the structure, and like the thought behind the construction. Seems a careful blend, well balanced, just a touch austere, lacking generosity which is so key to a right bank stunner. 91-92

**Chateau Franc Mayne AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Dark black fruits, rich, good attack, underpowered mid palate, sense of resistant, but also sense of faded dowager aunt. A little disappointing. 89

**Chateau Dassault AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Subdued on the nose, pretty strong percolated coffee on the palate, a little drying, but overall this is elegant, pure, pretty successful, touch brittle on the last few yards. 91

**Chateau Cap de Mourlin AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Ambitious, very silky, careful long and slow extraction, but with purpose. Fresh elements to this, inky black fruits, this is subdued but powerful. Great interest. Not on the pretty side of the vintage, but one with plans for sticking around. 92

**Chateau Grand Mayne AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Slightly more modern on the nose, get some alcohol coming off here, quite heavy extraction. Can see where they are going, but have not covered up that hollow mid palate, even though you get full alcohol and full dark fruits jumping in. There is some interest here, but not quite working. 89

**Chateau la Dominique AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Like this, fruit seems firmer and brighter, a little perkier, less of that faded mid palate. Still dry on the finish, but good black fruits, and some liquorice. 91

**Chateau Larmande AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Like the restrained extraction, with gentle coffee beans on the finish, not pumping over too much, clear strategy of working with the vintage. But even drying oak is evident, just a little puckering. 89

**Chateau La Couspaude AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Mocha chocolate nose, a heavy toasted barrel, that is also the dominant flavour on the palate, a nespresso shot that stays with you right through the entire experience. This will have fans, I can see what they are doing, espresso turns into one of those coffee creme caramels. Just a little overly manipulated. 90

**Chateau Balestard la Tonnelle AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Under-ripe on the nose. Again coffee (are they using toast to hide mid palate?) is a dominant flavour. Here there is fruit, and I like the understated extraction, which never veers into ferocity, although clear attempt to build tannins. Just a tight wine, a little bitter on the finish. 89-92

**Chateau La Tour Figeac AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Subdued, tight nose. But do like this one, feel there is successful use of tannic structure. It's pretty fierce, but the fruits are behind it, tightly pressed in an Argentine tango. Attitude. Blackberry and white flowers. High alcohol though. 92

**Chateau Villemaurine AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Rhubarb on the nose, tight black fruits on the palate, with a tight, closed tannic structure. A shire horse, with huge flanks. Impact yes, will it unfurl? Over extraction signs from the tight slightly bitter finish. But some gum aching tannin and acidity. 91-92

**Chateau la Gaffeliere AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Like this, there is clearly something to hang on to here, an intelligent extraction of good ripe fruits and restrained working. Lost a bit on the sharp finish, but promising. 91+

**Chateau Figeac AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Smooth, silky, just feel so many of these are pretty dilute, lacking in mid palate, not overly impressed. I was expecting to love these Saint Emilions, but Pomerol so far doing better. Light tannins, they clearly didnt overextract - but feel perhaps the fruit wasn't quite there. A shame, as absolutely loved this estate last year. 89.

**Chateau Trottevielle AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Oh like this, pretty fresh fruits, not exactly underpowered as not trying too hard, floral, tannins do kick in half way through, still not real depth of mid palate, but this has charm, and gets away with it. coffee finish. 92

**Chateau Beau Sejour Becot AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Good open nose. High alcohol but rich and perfumed. Better nose than palate. Bitter. 87

**Chateau Canon AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Coffee, mocha, again oak is really dominant, but here not unpleasant with it. Pretty, lacks some mid-palate, but this has good fruit, and a lightness to it. 90

**Chateau Troplong Mondot AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Immediately impressed with the nose. This vintage is face or figure... Nose or palate... Such a good start, but oh my goodness this is tough on the body. A whack of tanins, full voluptuous effort. They went for figure not face!! 88

**Chateau Clos Fourtet AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Sweet charred black cherry on the nose, careful extraction, slightly sour. Still good persistancy, this works itself out and has real promise. 91-92

**Chateau Pavie Maquin AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Intensely perfumed nose, rich black fruits, squeezed mocha and caramel. Good, ambitious, too high in alcohol, but tasting pretty impressive right now. 90-91.

**Chateau la Gaffeliere AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classe 2011**

That same strange diluted flavour. These are underpowered, and some of them don't pull off pretty instead of powerful. Sorry, but for me this is not working. 85.

**St Emilions from Cercle Rive Droite**

**Chateau de Parc, AOC Saint Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

This has been enlarged this year, doubled in size with a good quality new plot on different higher quality terroir, and had cabernet franc added. Now 5 hectares. Good nose, expressive, touch smoky, a speakeasy nose. Really

enjoyable, with a light touch that shows he knows where to pull back on the extraction. Very pretty finish, some gentle violet notes wafting in to lift the palate. 89-91.

### **Chateau de Pressac, St Emilion Grand Cru 2011**

As of this year, this is consulted by both Hubert de Bouard and Alain Raynaud. Quenin said there were great differences depending on terroir, and Raynaud told me the terraces are proving a little more complicated than first thought. It's successful, good range of flavours, more complex than many, and love the soft almond oak. Good deep colour. 72% merlot, 13% cabernet franc, 12% cabernet sauvignon, 1% pressac, 2% carnanere. 92.

## SAUTERNES

### **Overview**

Generally speaking, a real success in 2011, lifted by the acidity we find in so many of the whites, but also benefitting from excellent botrytis development, that allowed many estates to harvest fairly swiftly (once it finally got going).

### **Chateau d'Yquem, AOC Sauternes 2011**

6 september to 5 october, with four passes through the vines. Once it started, was quick, in two waves, first end of aug, then 18 september had more rain, which started the second wave, then with subnppn very intense and concentrated. 144 g residual sugar, last year was 140. 4 total acidity, 13.8 on alcohol. What a wonderful experience, quite sharp orange and lime blossom flavours, but just tinkling along the fine acidic central core. Like the triangle tinkling in peter and the wolf, striking tiny notes along the way, the percussion section is in full swing. Wonderful persistency. 2 years in new oak from now. 96-98+++

### **Chateau Suiduiraud 2011, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Real focus and precision, utterly delicious, difficult, first tri, then second tri was wonderful. 2001 sees the same idea of harmony, balance, 5000 cases, finishing on wonderful dried fruits and figs. 150g/l. 95

### **Chateau d'Arche, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Quite syrupy for the vintage, but lovely texture, and good clean flavours. Good structure. 90

### **Chateau Bastor Lamontagne, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Slightly sour on the attack, then an apricot cream kicks in. This has promise. 87-88

### **Chateau Caillou, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Really like this, has the sweet sour balance, the freshness and the sense of luxury that a good Sauternes should offer. 92++

**Chateau Coutet, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Gorgeous! Fresh, defined, piercing lime blossom and citrus, but a lovely whoosh of sweetness to remind you exactly where you are. 93-94

**Chateau Guiraud, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Quite a luxurious feel here, real satiny texture, good density of fruit, feel semillon wins out, although fresh backbone of sauvignon. Great persistency. 93

**Chateau Doisy Daene, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Great wine, maximising rich succulent sweet flavours, not as much bite as some of the examples here, but a sense of drama that is very appealing. 91-92.

**Chateau Raymond Lafon, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Good success, from an estate that consistently produces an exotically perfumed, perfectly paced Sauternes (by which I mean sweet start, acidic kick and lift of freshness in the mid-palate, and sweet-sour finish). 91

**Chateau Myrat, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Good, bit too sweet on the opening chords, although here too is the lime kicker that gets things racing. 90

**Chateau Sigalas Rabaud, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Love the truly exotic fruits here, this is dried apricots, quince, all those wonderful Sauternes flavours, with a livener of freshly squeezed lime. 93-94

**Chateau La Tour Blanche, AOC Sauternes 2011**

Good, tiny bit lacking in mid palate. 88.

PAUILLAC, ST JULIEN, ST ESTEPHE

**Overview - Northern Medoc**

The big news in this part of Bordeaux was of course the hail storm on September 1st which damaged parts of St Estephe, mainly on Cos plateau. The same week, 80mm of rain fell in one day (swiftly named Black Tuesday). Worst hit areas (and merlot was more affected than cabernet) had harvest brought forward (eg parts of Cos, Lafite in their St Estephe plot, Cos Labory). The weather remained generally unsettled until 21st september, when fine weather returned. This meant, unless picked already, cabernet sauvignon benefitted from this late season, attaining high levels of anthocyanins. And it's important not to overexaggerate the rain - in Pauillac, by the end of August, there had been only 326mm of rain since January 1, compared to an average

of 519mm. The main problem in July and August was the lack of sunshine, not the rain. Saint Julien was consistently impressive.

**At Pichon Comtesse:** Harvested from September 13th to 28th. 40% of production went into the first wine.

**Chateau Bernadotte, 2011 aoc Haut Medoc 2011**

Vines in St Sauveur, this is a slightly tight wine, but good expression of brambly Medoc fruits. 87

**Reserve de la Comtesse, 2011 AOC Pauillac 2011**

There are now 3 acres of biodynamic and 3 acres of organic vines here at Comtesse, and they are studying the differences between them on the grape quality (no conclusions yet reached). This is a lovely wine, from 43% cabernet sauvignon, 49% merlot and 8% petit verdot. 13%ABV. 90

**Chateau Pichon Comtesse de Lalande AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Very successful, full of good rich fruit and pretty clean firm tannins. This is not shouting for attention, but has managed to get the extraction levels right. 13% ABV. IPT 75. pH 3.76. Retasted blind at UGC, below. 93-94

**Chateau de Pez, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Not too affected by the hail at this estate, like the menthol side. But it does fall a little short. However, good early-drinking pleasure potential. 86-88

(I also tasted Haut Beausejour, which was more seriously affected by the hail, and I'm not sure I could recommend it this year).

**At Pichon Baron:** Harvesting from 12 to 28 September. 35% of production goes every year into Les Tourelles, and 65% into Baron, with a margin of maybe 10% that could go either way. **Chateau Pibran, AOC Pauillac 2011**

Not a cru bourgeois any more, they have decided to take it out of the system after worries over its relevance for consumers. Vinification takes place at Pichon, but it is of course kept in separate parts of the cellar to comply with the regulations. Blend is 55% merlot, 45% cabernet sauvignon. Director Christian Seely says this was not really a cabernet or merlot year, and whether you were affected by the heat wave at the end of June was more about when you pruned than which grape. Bright fruit, enjoyable. 88

**Les Tourelles de Pichon Baron, AOC Pauillac 2011**

Can get this wine incidentally in either screw cap or cork, depending on what you want. Seely is a fan of screwcaps, enjoys the freshness. Terroir-based selection for the split between first and second wine, which means the split remains fairly constant. This is 60% merlot, 28% cabernet sauvignon, 10% cabernet franc, 2% petit verdot. Really want restaurant distribution, to be an ambassador for Pichon, 3.73ph 89-90

**Chateau Pichon Baron de Longueville, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe**

**2011**

The heart of this wine is old vine cabernet sauvignon, on a high ground just opposite Latour. 72ha, 35ha on the very best terroir. 82% cabernet sauvignon, 18% merlot. Very fine tannins, well worn, excellent 3.77pH, 3.43 total acidity for pichon. 93+

**Chateau Pontet Canet, AOC Pauillac 2011**

Yet another incredible success from this estate, which continues to go from strength to strength, even in tough years. The selection practised at most estates was infamous this year, with most technical directors talking about losing up to 10% of the crop through the laser optic sorters. Jean Louis Comme at Pontet Canet shrugs rather modestly when hearing this. Somehow, over 90% of the grapes made it into the first wine - with zero discernable dip as a result. Storming, rich, layered and supple wine. 96-97.

**Montrose:** Harvesting September 2nd to 27th. And remember this is the estate set to benefit from the wisdom of Herve Berland now that he has retired from Mouton.

**Chateau Tronquoy de Sainte Anne**

61% merlot, 39% cabernet sauvignon, 44% of production. Bit pinched feel some clear underripe fruit here. 85

**Chateau Tronquoy Lalande, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Here on north east part of the appellation, so had less bad hail affected than Cos, but still some. Have managed some freshness, some elegance of fruit, but overall this is a touch disappointing for a wine that has done such sterling work over recent vintages. 88

**La Dame de Montrose AOC, Saint Estephe 2011**

28% cabernet sauvignon, 72% merlot. About 50/50 first and second wine, and overall 30% less production, 35 hl/h, not really because of hail but because of the extreme dryness earlier in the season, with small cabernet sauvignon berries that had concentration. Not lifting this up for me. 89

**Chateau Montrose, AOC Saint Estephe Grand Cru Classe 2011**

They clearly worked very hard and selected drastically to keep the quality up here, and have succeeded. 63% cabernet sauvignon 22% merlot 12% cab franc 3% petit verdot. This has fantastic length and grip, depth of fruit. Huge difference between first and second wine, a real success here. 12.8 alcohol. 94+

**Cos d'Estournel:** Harvest from September 5 to 16. The earliest harvest since 1893. Affected by hail, meaning that in 2011 the first wine was only 30% of the overall production.

**Goulee, AOC Medoc 2011**

70% cabernet sauvignon 30% merlo, pretty cheerful, good tannic hold, if not exactly a grip, and bright fruit. This is enjoyable, and seems like it will be early

drinking and not trying too hard. 89.

#### **Pagodes de Cos, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

65% cabernet sauvignon, 33% merlot, 2% petit verdot. Far lighter than many years of Pagodes, this still has a gentle dusting of spice, some cinammon and cardamon flavours, really pleasant. 89-90.

#### **Cos d'Estournel, AOC Saint Estephe Grand Cru Classe 2011**

They were inevitably ruthless with selection, and even with the precision offered by their new cellar, only 30% of the grapes made it into Cos. This was not just because of the September hail but because of the dryness that affected them throughout the season. This of course lacks some of the exuberance and punch of fruit that the last two vintages have managed, and it is a different style, more classic perhaps. There is plenty to enjoy here, and rich fruit flavours have been teased out of the 65% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot and 5% cabernet franc. 92-93.

#### **Cos d'Estournel Blanc AOC Bordeaux 2011**

Just love this. Nose explodes, so pretty full of fragrance, great acidity. 94.

#### **Leoville Las Cases**

##### **Chapelle de Podensac AOC Medoc 2011**

Fourth year of the tri optique here. 30% cabernet sauvignon 56% merlot 7% cab franc 5% carmanere 1% petit verdot. Good, fresh, tingly fruit, like it, even if have a little trouble on the finish. 87

##### **Chateau Potensac AOC Medoc 2011**

34% cab sauv, 52% merlot, 14% cab franc, lovely fresh purple rim, really rather attractive colour, some grip on the palate, and good acidity. Lacks persistency, but a good choice for early drinking. 89+

##### **Le Petit Lion AOC Saint Julien 2011**

Third time showing en primeur. Feel the step up to Leoville terroir here, there is lovely power in this wine, fine, pure tannins, an impressive second wine. Couple of younger vines from Marquis. But young vines here mean 5 to 25 years old. This is not a throwaway young wine. 13.6 ABV. 92+.

##### **Clos de marquis, AOC Saint Julien 2011**

Rich, deep colour, really powerful extractuion, without being too much. Vinification started at 16 degrees, slowly raised temperature, stayed at around 24/25 for the heart of vinification, then up to 27-28 degrees to finish off. 13.6%ABV. This was the most marked by the weather conditions. For me, a little less successful than the Petit Lion. 90.

##### **Chateau Leoville Las Cases, AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

13.4 alcohol. Here we are, violet rim, proper en primeur blush, crimson blush. Certainly this has impact, it holds you tight, reveals itself slowly, stunningly good tannins, rich black fruits, this is a delicate but heavyweight wine, here is the velvet glove. Gorgeous. And they battled against things, as did many

estates - yield was only 27 hl, because had slight hail in May, then drought in the early summer, then sun grilling in June, then butterflies affecting the grapes later in the summer. Well, whatever they did to get overall that, I am grateful. For me a contender for wine of the vintage. 96-97.

## **UGC Northern Medoc, tasted blind at Phelan Segur**

### **Haut Medoc**

#### **Chateau Belgrave, AOC Haut Medoc Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Colours looking pretty consistent, rich deep colours, but not the turbo charged violet that they can be in some years. On the nose, I enjoyed this, but the palate takes a while to get going, some fairly chalky tannins that rub along a little. Has elegance. 88-89

#### **Chateau La Tour Carnet AOC Haut Medoc Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Can see they have tried to hold off on the extraction, and it is not being swamped by oak, but the finish is just a little green. They have tried to use oak judiciously, but the fruit hasn't allowed it. 85

#### **Chateau Beaumont AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Good purple rim, and here a wonderfully deep nose, assume petit verdot giving this rich spicy/slightly sour plum, like an spring day in Ome-shi, Tokyo. Good rich tannins, like the acidity and freshness levels, a sense that the wine is going somewhere. Only downside is lack of real depth of fruit, assume it was a touch underripe, but they have made it work. 89-90.

#### **Chateau Lamarque, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

The stately velvet, midnight purple colour, not exuberant but well controlled. Some juicy fruit flavours here, get some mouthwatering freshness without too much dryness. This is a little lighter in the spectrum of primeur samples, but they seem to be working with the vintage, not against it. On the attack, you can feel it chasing after itself, looking for the edges of the experience, and it takes a full minute for the definition to really come into focus, but it gets there. 89-90

#### **Chateau Coufran, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Far deeper in colour, we are going almost foreboding here. Real vibrant core, evident new oak on the nose, but certainly adding some interest, sweet vanilla plum. Almost holds it together, but then you are whacked by this crazy oak, jarring the end of the palate. Not judicious use. Assume trying to fill out that mid palate gap. 87-88

#### **Chateau Malescasse, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Fairly restrained on the nose, attractive at first, but curiously dilute. Happy that they haven't tried to cover it up with too much oak, and this may offer some early drinking pleasure. But a slightly atypical sample, not real persistency, just feels like you are tasting a reproduction photocopy of the real thing. 85.

#### **Chateau Camensac, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

This has some real fruit extraction, without being too heavy, again seems to be working with what they were given. Again tough indication of sour plum, suggesting slightly underripe fruit. 88-89

**Chateau Citran, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Like this one, good chocolate and mocha, some seriously attractive black cherry flavours, tannins that are persistent and just slightly insisting, even if not in the manner of 2010. Good clean flavours, and good levels of concentration. Success, just on the lighter more elegant scale of success. 93-94

**Chateau Cantermerle, AOC Haut Medoc Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Some puckering tannins, a sense of direction and backbone, slightly lacking in fruit to hang off it, not sure it has the weight to develop all the way to glory, but it has ambition, and clearly a sense of direction in the cellar and blending. 91+

**St Estephe**

**Chateau de Pez, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Feel elegance building here, we again are cursed by some underripe tannins, but there is clear elegance, and a restrained use of oak. Nose subdued, some gentle black fruits, some good tannic hold that tried to enrobe the experience. It's one you have to come back to, and give time to, but may be a good classic St Estephe, fairly early drinking. Again worth saying that I got sample variation here, with this one tasting better than the same wine at Pichon Comettes itself (see above). 88.

**Chateau Lafon Rochet, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Attractive nose, they have worked these noses very well, the majority are really smelling pretty good. Very different flavour profile. This is full on extraction, but somehow they seem to have meaty fruit behind. Chocolate and mocha coffee evident, yes, but also some rhubarb, some cassis, some blackberries. It's a good en primeur sample, which seems to be out of step with the vintage. Very good, if drying on the finish from the oak, would like to retaste in bottle. 92.

**Chateau Ormes de Pez, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Good glass-staining vibrancy. The tannins are full and pretty strong. The fruit is a little lacking in the mid palate, after a strong attack. This is doing the best it can, has not overstepped on the gas, just has the limitations of the vintage, and my guess is hail, because we are back to slight sourness. But good effort, clear good winemaking. 90

**Chateau Cos Labory, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Rich violet black, viscous in texture, high alcohol, despite having to early pick a few plots due to hail? Vanilla and sweet cassis on the nose, crushed blackberries with some caramelised toffee. Was waiting for the clobber, but this very nearly holds it together. Apart from the mid palate dip, this has a good level of acidity, and a good three dimensional feel, with some fine tanins. With more fruit, this would be a great en primeur sample. 90-91

**Chateau Phelan Sugur, AOC Saint Estephe 2011**

Again, inky colour, open black-fruited nose, some evident oak. Powerful tannins, not too drying, it's the mid palate again where the experience dips down, but it has definite potential here, and good acidity giving it space to breathe. 90

**Pauillac**

**Chateau Croizet Bages, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Firm fleshy purple, some vibrancy on the rim, some serious depth to the colour here. On the nose, good full fruitfulness, a touch of toasted oak, some charring going on, but nothing jarring. This is good in fact, we are in liquorice and firmly closed black fruits territory here. Some good tannins that insist, and restrained on the finish. This estate delivered in 2009, dipped down for me in 2010, but has put in a good showing in 2011. 91-92.

**Chateau Lynch Bages, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

The winning combination of black fruits and charred oak. Deeply fleshed, richly fruited in colour and on the nose. A lovely smudged charcoal sweetness, and tobacco very clear on the finish. Like where it ends up, and the persistency bodes very well for the future of this wine. The tannic package is perhaps a little too tight for the levels of fruit in the mid-palate, making it for me not as successful as the past two vintages. 93.

**Chateau Batailley, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

One of the rare examples where the alcohol seems evident. Underripe fruit here? Does seem a touch green on the finish, those tannins come to an abrupt Grand Canyon finish. Can see the feet moving under the surface as they try to smooth this out, and there is a sense of elegance and freshness, with some attractive menthol in the last half. 89-90

**Chateau Haut Bages Liberales, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Good rich colours. Attractive nose, some gentle black pepper and cinnamon spice. I like this, they have gone for fairly understated, casual approach where nothing is shrieking at you. It's an early drinker, probable 10-15 years, but it has confidence and pleasure. Good blackberry crumble. 91

**Chateau d'Armailhac AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

There is a freshness and a good weight of tannins that I enjoy enormously. This is elegant, full of freshness, and embodies how pretty 2011 can be if extraction is well measured. Leaving it in the glass allows the nose to really unfurl; it is subtly seductive. 57% cabernet sauvignon, 28% merlot, 13% cabernet franc, 2% petit verdot. (also tasted at Mouton, same score) 92.

**Chateau Clerc Milon AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

More density and power, and yes can see higher acidity than the Armailhac. This is a little more of a big cahuna wine, there is a steelier side to it, and its built to last. Very good quality, well chiseled, less feminine than the Armailhac. Made in the new cellar also. 54% cabernet sauvignon, 37% merlot, 7% cabernet franc, 1% petit verdot, 1% carmanere. (also tasted at Mouton, where

it got 93-94) 93.

**Chateau Pichon Comtesse AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Rich full colour. Good reflections. Black cherry pie on the nose, like a Martin Scorcese 50s diner. And even with that slightly drying finish, you can feel the effort that has gone into this, and the lovely layers of flavour. Elegant, rich, with impact, not trying to hard. Very good indeed. 93-94 (same score as at Pichon itself)

**Chateau Grand Puy Ducasse AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Enjoyable nose, exuberant if a little brassy on the new oak. Aromatically we are in black fruit territory, and on the palate, although pretty closed, with teeth hurting acidity and tannins combined for the first time, there is still a good burst of fruit. This has ambition, and must have ruthlessly employed selection on the cellar. Aiming above the vintage, getting close. 92.

**Chateau Grand Puy Lacoste, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Touch hot, unusual. Can feel the rich texture on the palate, and enjoying the chalky tannins that actually turn out to have quite a bite. Textured, just not quite up to recent vintages. 89-90.

**St Julien**

**Chateau Saint Pierre AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Soft, open, cherry and black plum, with white pepper. Elegance, with a gentle working of the tannins, feel this is low temperature, gentle remontage, really trying to do the best with the vintage. Not a blockbuster, not aiming for it. Friendly, like Casper. Feel affection for this wine. 92

**Chateau Gruaud Larose AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Again fairly unforced, not trying too hard to shout out above the rest. Bright fruit, pretty sure phenolic ripeness not at its optimum, but they have managed to make this so damn suave you almost forget. 91

**Chateau Langoa Barton AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Bright rich staining purple and more vanilla, mocha toast on the nose. On the palate also, we are in oak filled territory here. They hold things together, I have no complaints with the skill, but it lacks the joy that this estate manages in many vintages. 91

**Chateau Beychevelle AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Like the pleasure on the nose here, blackberry picking along English country hedgerows. Let down a little by a big finale drum roll, the tannic package thrusting its way in, but clear quality. 92.

**Chateau Leoville Poyferre AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Like this enormously, really good whoosing tannins, lovely freshness, tons of character, a real joy, with loads of potential. Such good weight of fruit, and clever use of oak. Yummy. 94.

**Chateau Gloria AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Again, totally happy with the nose. Not so exuberant on the palate. Did someone order oak?? Makes the finish abrupt, which is a shame, as discernible fruit in mid palate. Let's assume this is just taking on a lot of oak from the barrels at this stage of evolution, one to rescore in bottle. 89-91

**Chateau Talbot AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Wow, some good mentol but this is over extracted, making things bitter. The first one in this flight to show classic bitter over extracted flavours. 86

**Chateau Leoville Barton AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Good smoky plum nose, makes me nervous now. Like the freshness intact, and love it this year when they manage to deliver on nose and palate, has seemed to be one or other. Elegant, fresh, not a massive keeper perhaps, but plenty to love here. 91

**Chateau Lagrange AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

A big hitter, full extraction. Good firm hand on the winemaking, but a touch underripe. 88-89.

**Chateau Branaire Ducru AOC Saint Julien Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Rich, vibrant, silky smooth, Hugh Hefner. Sour plum on the nose. Liquorice and full on blackcurrant puree, pretty good actually, good freshness, but just pulled up short on the finish. Still, 91-92.

## PESSAC LEOGNAN

**UGC Pessac Leognan blind tasting (at Smith Haut Lafitte)**

**AOC Graves 2011**

**Chateau Ferrande, AOC Graves 2011**

Touch under-ripe on the nose, and this lacks a little depth of fruit also. Nothing particularly wrong with this wine, it should offer some classic early drinking pleasure, but it certainly doesn't stand out. 87

**Chateau Chantegrive, AOC Graves 2011**

Some darker, richer fruit here, good liquorice extraction, some fairly tight tannins that suggest there is ageing potential. It's the mid palate that falls down, and the length is underwhelming. But not bad. 88-89

**Chateau Rahoul, AOC Grave 2011**

Again, quite a pretty wine, a little subdued, no great persistency, but equally no great faults, and they have done a good controlled extraction. 87-88

**Chateau Haut Bergey, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Instantly a more smoky, elegant nose, some good extraction where the tanins are firm and well laid out, not quite a tunnel, but certainly a funnel where the wine can pour itself through. A little under powered, tiny trace of green, but good. 89-90

#### **Chateau Larrivet Haut Brion AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Caramel wafers, carembar, black cherries, all in all an attractive nose, and this really works. Good persistency, well worked tannins, fruit fairly crunchy, on the darker spectrum of flavours, nothing too jarring. Again doesn't quite take off into the heights, but I like it a lot. 92-93

#### **Chateau Malartic Lagravere, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

All very elegant, smooth, understated, controlled. It's a quiet wine, not shouting for attention. Perhaps needs a little more acidity in terms of long ageing potential, but this has a quiet confidence, which builds up successfully in the mouth. Like the slightly chalky finish, indicating a lightness of tannin. 91-92.

#### **Chateau Pique Caillou AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Violet stain, very contemporary nose with clear vanilla bean and a gingerbread latte. On the palate this is not bad, has some well controlled extraction again, overall working with not against the vintage. But it is leaving them curiously faded. On second taste, this does have good depth of fruit, good weight of tannins, just not soaring. 92

#### **Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Classic velvet red, the bishop's robes. Chocolate and coffee on the nose, they are going for their oak toasting in Pessac. Fairly high on the extraction here, highest so far, definitely ambition here, you actually chew through the tannins, which is unusual this year, there is a good three dimensional effect going on in your mouth. Not drying either. Fruit could be more exuberant, but this is doing its best. 93++

#### **Chateau La Louviere, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Fairly subdued on the nose, but it's all there if you give it time. This has coffee beans on the palate, and soft blueberry fruits, overall a quiet, fairly gentle experience. Pleasant. Touch sharp on the finish, but you have to be paying attention. 91

#### **Chateau Fieuzal, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

The nose here is fairly open, but I detect a slightly sour note, well hidden by some richness of fruit. I think it could be alcohol. Not bad, rich coffee beans, high extraction, well worked tannins, all a bit of an experience, not quite the structure and core of the best years, but this has attitude. 90.

#### **Domaine de Chevalier, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Grilled almonds and roasted cherries on the nose. Touch drying, this is a little disappointing on the finish. Not my favourite ever from this usually brilliant property. 87

**Chateau Carmes Haut Brion, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

A sweet shot of pureed cherries on the nose. Promising attack, chewy tannins, lightness of touch, well delineated fruits, good potential here. 92+

**Chateau Olivier, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Good open nose, seems like it will be ready to drink within a few years - good, pretty, not hugely complex. 87

**Chateau Haut Bailly, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Contemporary, cedarwood nose, like the foyer of a Sukothai hotel, or a Mandarin spa. Definite ambition, high extraction, could turn dry but just pulls itself back. Good weight of fruit, and some clear definition. Slightly tooth hurting acidity. Good ageing potential. Touch sour on the finish. 92-93+

**Chateau Latour Martillac, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Subdued nose, then very high extraction on the palate, bit overdone here because it's not giving the other elements a real chance to speak. Just have to sit with this for a really long time, allowing the punch to subside. Can see what they are trying to do, and it does settle, feels like you are a cartoon character with the stars whizzing around your head. But the persistency is good, and dark black fruits come in. Interesting. 91-92

**Chateau Pape Clement AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Open, contemporary, slightly overly sweet nose. The individual elements are here. Rich fruits, check, acidity check, tannins check. Needs time. Exotic finish, there is slick production going on, and it works well. 92.

**Chateau Bouscalt, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Different nose, more sour plum. Very different flavour profile, think problem with maturity here, giving rise to the sourness. Shame, as they have not tried to over-extract, and there are some summery fruit flavours trying their best. 88.

**Chateau Carbonnieux, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Good crisp fruit on the nose. Some whooshing acidity, some green touches, not performing at the top of its game. Oak with very attractive toasting going some way to filling out the gaps, but you feel essentially the holes in the mid palate. 88-90

**Chateau de France, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

Oh dear. Just a brick of tannins. Very difficult to get through. All impact, no follow through. All mouth, no trousers. Sorry, not for me! Perhaps it's the bottle. 85.

**Whites**

**Chateau Ferrande, AOC Graves Blanc 2011**

Pretty nose, very floral, clear white flowers that are followed through onto a

floral palate. This is delicate. Somehow not quite reaching the heights of some 2011 whites, but plenty to enjoy. 89

**Chateau de Chantegrive, AOC Graves Blanc 2011**

Like this better, good sauvignon varietal characteristics, some semillon aswell I'm sure as good roundness and citrus, and some lovely lees stirring fatness. Not soaring acidity, but really enjoyable, 89-91

**Chateau Rahoul, AOC Graves Blanc 2011**

Subdued nose (but these are cold), really not giving its best today. Generally underpowered. 87

**Chateau Haut Bergey, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Elderflower, fairly sharply fragrant nose. On the palate, things are broadened out a little, not necessarily good in a wine style that should keep a thrilling central core. Assume lees stirring. Good, but could perhaps have clearer definition. 89-90

**Chateau Larrivet Haut Brion AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Love the nose here. Great varietal characteristic, a shot of lemon sherbert sweetness, some good sour twist at the end, a margerita tequila and lime twist. Fun. 91

**Chateau Malartic Lagraviere, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Fragrant citrus nose, and love what is coming through on the palate. A sharpness, with again that lemon sherbet sweetness cutting through. Some cut grass, some good persistency, slight tang of barrels. Good 93

**Chateau Pique Caillou, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Some oak on the nose here, starts off sour but kindof works itself out. Hmmm, even pink grapefruit, which is not necessarily a full success. Interesting. Not my favourite. 89

**Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Like the varietal characteristic on this, cut grass and bright citrus. I like the generous apricots that cut through in the mid palate. Not quite as good for me as their red this year, but this still has the seduction and ageing potential of a good SHL white. 91-92

**Chateau la Louviere, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Lacks some easy pleasure, but has a good sharp central core, no doubt. A perky wine, without doubt, one for the salty tang of oysters. 89

**Chateau de Fieuzal, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Here there is a richer, rounder flavour, some good depth of citrus fruit, enjoyable, with good peristency. A great example of a Pessac Leognan white. 93+

**Domaine de Chevalier, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

The shape of this wine is clear to see, and this is a gorgeous example of the

vintage - where the best whites should be all about the tunnel, the hand holding thrill of a slightly tense ride though citrus and biting acidity, with a gentle caress of semillon richness. 93.

**Chateau Olivier, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Definite sourness on the first attack, in a way that works. I do like the layers of flavour here, feel it's a big name doing grown up stuff. Growing on me through the tasting, not trying too hard, but seriously classily. Very good. 93

**Chateau Latour Martillac, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Less rich on the nose than some, but good definition, and again some very pleasant grapefruit and lemongrass on the palate. Bit sharp though, this doesn't quite get the balance right. 89-90+

**Chateau Pape Clement, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

The reduction on this bottle made it tough to judge. Need to retaste.

**Chateau Bousacaut, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Great varietal nose, this is full and frank and really quite joyous. A walk through a dew filled meadow, love it. 94

**Chateau Carbonnieux, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Bit underpowered, really quite disappointing, this is faded wet gardens, not cut grass. Very surprised when I saw the chateau, but you have to stick with what the blind tasting reaction tells you! Would like to retaste. 87

**Chateau de France, AOC Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Good varietals again, if a little more clinical, with very rigid shape. But this is good, well layered, real potential. Good persistency. Overall strong 91+

MARGAUX, MOULIS, LISTRAC

**Southern Medoc**

**Palmer overview:** Smallest harvest since 1961, mainly because even at start of season had dry start, then hail in early June, losing between 5 and 10 hl per hectare, then the heatwave at the end of June meant whole bunches dried out completely. After that, Thomas Duroux wrote to his shareholders saying it might be difficult to produce Palmer at all this year. But luckily temperatures cooled down, eventually got small berries, thick skins, great phenolic potential, so challenge was to take advantage of concentration while keep the precision and elegance of Palmer. So, less pumping over than usual, starting at around 25-26 degrees, then let it go up to 28/29 and keep it for maceration, so to play with infusion rather than physical pumping over. Hoping that would

allow a gentle building of precise tannins. Then pressed several times, because they had not drained the berries by pumping over, and instead controlled the extraction by pressing, when they could taste it first. IPT was 90 this year, so huge potential, but just very important

Breakdown of production: 55% palmer, 45% alter ego, 5% rejected at sorting, another 5% at the blending point.

### **Alter Ego de Palmer, AOC Margaux 2011**

15% of petit verdot in the blend, 37% cab sauv, 48% merlot. Lovely peppery spice coming through in the palate here, and a burst of fragrance on the nose. A little short honestly. But you feel you are in the hands of professionals. There is an unquestionable elegance, and 3.6 ph 13.1%. 91.

### **Chateau Palmer, AOC Margaux 2011**

13.2%, 3.7ph, 55% merlot, cabernet sauvignon 45%. Big difference on the nose aromatically, Palmer more closed, tannins really looking tingly and they hold you at the close of play. Here you have the layers of flavour, the menthol and precision of tannin. Harvested from September 7 to September 29. An early harvest, but with huge tannic potential, so not a typical early harvest year. Really holds on this wine, love it. Really feel there is a mid palate that keeps things interesting, in a year where there are not many mid palates to enjoy. 'Grand classicism'. 95+

## **Margaux UGC**

### **Chateau Clarke, AOC Lustrac Medoc 2011**

Good firm colour, really like this in fact, pretty well managed extraction, firm fruits, touch drying on finish, but pretty harmonious. 91-92

### **Chateau Fonreaud, AOC Lustrac Medoc 2011**

Slightly darker and deeper in colour, assume higher cab sauv, possibly some petit verdot because really good spice. Slightly boxy tannins, even a touch green. It hangs in there by providing these flattering spicy fruits. 90

### **Chateau Fourcas Dupre, AOC Lustrac Medoc 2011**

Rich colour, this is pretty insipid though. They clearly tried to step back on the extraction, and have avoided over dry tannins, but the mid palate is missing. 86-87

### **Chateau Fouracs Hosten, AOC Lustrac Medoc 2011**

Like the lovely rich purple here, doing its glass staining thing with aplomb. Good spicy nose, although vanilla oak a touch too obvious right now. This has ambition, the first one with a really good balance of the triumvirate of tannins, fruit and acidity. None of the three are turbo charged, its not last year quality, but it's a very good effort 90-92

### **Chateau Chasse Spleen, AOC Moulis en Medec 2011**

A slightly more stately red. Again, this is trying hard to do something

interesting. Good firm tannins that are well extracted, the potential dryness keeps getting cut off by some really good tingly minerality and fruit. Clean flavours. 92+

**Chateau Maucaillou AOC Moulis en Medec 2011**

Deep fleshy purple, getting refreshers on the arriere gout from the last one by the way. Good, a run of interesting wines here. 90

**Chateau Poujeaux AOC Moulis en Medec 2011**

The aromatics are off here, it is not a successful example of what is usually one of my favourite wines. Shall give it the benefit of the doubt, and retaste - as a few weeks earlier at the chateau, this had real potential. (86)

**Chateau Greysac, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Firm ambitious strands of flavour, pretty good. This has good grip, it holds on tight, well structured, good fruit. Lacks some brightness perhaps, but overall successful, good attack, reasonable persistence. Punches above its weight, and should be good value. 92

**Chateau le Tour de By, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Here over extraction has been too ambitious. This has the wad of tannins that cram into your mouth, the wooden box with no fruit inside. I shouldn't be harsh, as on the nose the fruit is pretty bright, good blueberry, but falls down on the palate. 88.

**Chateau Angludet, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Quite strong menthol flavour here, definition on the finish. Petit verdot I imagine. Quite a different flavour profile, certainly. I like this, it holds you and has something to say. Again, excellent value wine. 93

**Chateau Brane Cantenac, AOC Margaux 2011**

Fairly classic Margaux, good definition and getting some chocolate and caramel wafer flavour from a gentle toast. They eliminated up to 10% of some plots with the optical laser sorter. a touch (0.5% of carmanere in this wine). I tasted it as a single lot carmanere before the primeurs, and loved its spiciness, but at this stage the impact is minimal. Lost some vines to hail, plus the heat in june, plus the tri, but proportionally not bad, 42% first wine this year, just a lot less second and third wine. 92.

**Chateau Cantenac Brown, AOC Margaux 2011**

Good puckering fruit and acidity. In fact after a slow start, this begins to build. Bumps along the floor for a while, trying to spread its wings, and although it just about manages to take off. I feel affection for its efforts. 91-92.

**Chateau Dauzac, AOC Margaux 2011**

Good plum fruits on the nose, new oak vanillin. some fine tannins on the finish, that stand up and be counted. Mid palate just lacking some weight, but overall there is a strategy for this wine. 91-92

**Chateau Desmirail, AOC Margaux 2011**

Overall, quite elegant this one, there is a sense of this being restrained and withheld. Like the plum and loganberry fruits, like quite a lot here, but there is no point of impact. 90

**Chateau du Tertre, AOC Margaux 2011**

Sweet new oak, good extraction, and alcohol is not an overriding factor. This has the wedge of tannins that suggests ambition, and here they have managed to flesh out the mid palate. 90+

**Chateau Ferriere, AOC Margaux 2011**

Not too successful, here we have a slightly medicinal menthol edge, but it isn't tempered by ripe fruit, just a little aggressive. 87

**Chateau Giscours, AOC Margaux 2011**

Like this nose, full and confident but not shouting. What a shame that the finish whacks you a little too hard on the oak. Still, things regain their balance, this is just a wine that needs a little time, and is taking a lot of new oak characteristics at this stage in its evolution 89-91

**Chateau Kirwan, AOC Margaux 2011**

Again quite a promising nose (that has been the case a lot this year) but it doesn't quite follow through on the palate, there is a disconnect. Very turned up extraction. 88

**Chateau Labergorce, AOC Margaux 2011**

Here we are with the medicinal menthol thing going on, this is extracted to full effect, but here there is some sense of holding on, of ensuring that the fruit gets its fair share of screen time. Has promise, although the finish is still quite brutal. 89-90

**Chateau Lascombes, AOC Margaux 2011**

Like this nose, and lovely sweet fruit on the attack, but it quickly comes up short with fairly brutal tannins that don't deliver the fruit enough in the mid palate. There is gloss to this wine, and it has ambition and thought behind it. 90

**Chateau Malescot Saint Exupery, AOC Margaux 2011**

Good extraction here, some velvet tannins, some firm black fruits, and quite clear coffee and almond toasting, good 92+

**Chateau Marquis du Terme, AOC Margaux 2011**

Over extracted, and underripe, not a success. 85

**Chateau Monbrison, AOC Margaux 2011**

A good rich, really inviting nose, hints of hyacinth, a laden boyer of goodies, fingers crossed. Pretty good on the palate also, not soaring because acidity seems a little low, but there is good fruit extraction and integrated tannins. Enjoyable, not for long ageing, but good for pleasure. This is more on brief for the 2011s, this owner should send a memo. 91-92

**Chateau Prieure Lichine, AOC Margaux 2011**

Successful, firm tannins, very good central core, some bright cassis fruits, not too heavy on the oak, and gentle black spicing. Again. It is the overall harmony lack that stops it from reaching the heights on the past two years, but this is good. 92-93

**Chateau Rauzan Segla, AOC Margaux 2011**

Happy with the nose here. Darkly fruited, ambitious, vaulting a little too high for the vintage perhaps, but it gets very close to taking flight. Issues with reining in the tannins, but this is an expert production. 93+.

**Chateau Siran, AOC Margaux 2011**

A pleasantly contemporary vanilla bean nose, slightly toasted, some mocha extract. A little in your face, which expectedly delivers some brassy flavours on the finish. Nearly there. 89.

## FIRST GROWTHS

**The First Growths, all tasted direct at the chateaux. Mouton and Lafite tasted on two separate occasions.**

I have followed all five of these chateaux through their growing season, for my upcoming book on the estates (out on October 18, Editions de la Martiniere in both English and French editions) so found it particularly interesting to taste the finished result.

**Mouton:** Picking 12th September through to 28th September.

**Petit Mouton, AOC Pauillac 2011**

Good tannic extraction, this has a flamboyant edge which I love, and is a clever reminder of its parentage. I tasted this a few times during the week, and each time found a wonderfully ripe, rich aroma. There is certainly some evident oak, but it just manages to match with the fruit. A real little brother of Mouton, with a mocha chocolate edge. Good length. 70% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot, pH a little higher than the Mouton, not quite the same backbone. 92.

**Chateau d'Armailhac AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

There is a freshness and a good weight of tannins that I enjoy enormously. This is elegant, full of freshness, and embodies how pretty 2011 can be if extraction is well measured. Leaving it in the glass allows the nose to really unfurl; it is subtly seductive. 57% cabernet sauvignon, 28% merlot, 13% cabernet franc, 2% petit verdot. (also tasted blind at UGC, same score) 92.

**Chateau Clerc Milon AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

More density and power, and yes can see higher acidity than the Armailhac.

This is a little more of a big cahuna wine, there is a steelier side to it, and its built to last. Very good quality, well chiselled, less feminine than the Armailhac. Made in the new cellar also. 54% cabernet sauvignon, 37% merlot, 7% cabernet franc, 1% petit verdot, 1% carmanere. (also tasted blind at UGC, where it got 93) 93-94.

#### **Chateau Mouton Rothschild, AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

20% less production than last year, but no major problems with hail. Touched 6% of the vines. Inky black, rich in colour. See those weight of tannins, that are kneaded together, quite strong coffee beans, and the fleshy blueberries and blackcurants, with a touch of generosity, that marks out Mouton so often from its peers. This has quite a strong coffee on the finish, but the length is clear. Keeps giving out. Many vats were pumped over only one time a day. Definitely no overdoing, again it's clear we are in professional hands. 90% cabernet sauvignon, 7% merlot, 3% cabernet franc. 96-97

#### **Aile d'Argent, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

The white wine is gorgeous, but not as jumping out of the glass aromatically as at Margaux. For Herve Berland, the best white ever at the estate (and of course his last as managing director), and certainly on the palate there is a deftness of touch, and a beautiful mix of citrus and honeysuckle. 94.

**Latour:** Of course we didn't know at the time that we were making history by tasting the last vintage of Latour en primeur (and we still don't know if the chateau will be open to tasters at this time next year), but it was certainly a pleasure to be here, and as ever the wines were consistently impressive. Harvest started on September 12th for the merlot, then cabernet from September 19th, through to September 26th.

#### **Pauillac (de Latour) AOC Pauillac 2011**

They managed to keep the purity of fruit here very clearly. 37.5% cabernet sauvignon, 62.5% merlot. The biodynamic vines are not in this wine, they produce grapes for the first wine. Good freshness, and the rich black fruits of Latour, but with a warmth from the merlot. 23% of production. IPT 78. 13.07%ABV. 89-90

#### **Forts de Latour AOC Pauillac 2011**

Very powerful extraction, and good blueberry fruit. 61.5% cabernet sauvignon, 35% merlot, 0.5% cabernet franc, 3% petit verdot, gorgeous, power and elegance, and none of the oak (or, on the other hand, exuberance) of the Petit Mouton. 43% of production, 13.08%ABV. IPT 84. 93

#### **Chateau Latour AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Incredible power right from the first attack, the tannins whoosh, something that I haven't found so much in the other wines this year. PH 3.7, IPT 87, 84.5% cabernet sauvignon, 15% merlot, 0.5% petit verdot, and the first wine made up 34% of overall production. Rich, dark black fruits that tug you through the tunnel of acidity. It's hard to taste a vintage of this wine where the word precision doesn't make an appearance in the tasting notes. 13.1%ABV. 96

**Lafite:** Tasted twice, one week apart. Harvest September 3 to 21st. Overall production was 38% Lafite, 50% Carruades, the rest to the branded wines of DBR (Lafite).

**Carruades de Lafite, AOC Pauillac 2011**

Cabernet sauvignon 55%, merlot 39%, cabernet franc 3.5%, petit verdot 2.5%. Good whoosh of power, with attractive aromatic complexity, having this year taken all the cabernet franc that is usually in the first wine of Lafite. 12.8%ABV. Clearly continuing the severe selection and careful winemaking of recent years. 92-93

**Chateau Duhart Milon AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

75% cabernet sauvignon, 25% merlot, 12.8%ABV. Great precision in this wine, really enjoyable, well delineated, rich dark fruits, great length, clearly a long keeper, but not one that needs 15 years, more like 10 perhaps. Very successful. 94+

**Chateau Lafite Rothschild AOC Pauillac Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Cabernet sauvignon 80%, merlot 20%. No cabernet franc was considered up to First Wine quality this year (Chevallier wanted it in, but the rest of the tasting team decided against it. 'We run a democracy here and it didnt get past the final blending stage', says Chevallier.) 12.8%ABV. In temperament, the vintage was similar to the 1986. The colour is positively inky, and on the palate this has a very silky texture, fine tannins, not huge imoact on the attack, but it builds, with great confidence as it goes, hanging in there through the backbone of acidity as the fruit unfurls. This is classy rather than powerful, which is a classic Lafite characteristic. Wonderful, persistent, unhurried, seriously confident. 97.

**Margaux:** The key challenges were the dry early season, and the heatwave of June 26th ad 27th, which affected cabernet sauvignon especially. Harvest began on 25th August for the white, and 5th September for the reds. Earliest harvest since 1893, even earlier than 2003.

Overall, the production was divided into 38% 1st wine (same as 2010, which they ascribe to the excellent terroir that the grapes for their first wine is grown on), 28% 2nd wine (the smallest amount since 1991), 34% into third and fourth wine (but the fourth wine is not one they bottle).

**Pavillon Rouge, AOC Margaux 2011**

Firm ripe fruits, and beautifully fragranced nose. The yield was just 29 hl/ h, 30% less than last year (and the same as for the white this year). Most of the sorting was done in the vines, meaning twice as few grapes were brought in as last year. Thibault Pontallier quite fairly says at this point, 'with the price rises, we just can't disappoint.' They have managed to keep a rather fabulous elegance overall. 65% cabernet sauvignon, 25% merlort, 8% petit verdot, 2% cabernet franc. 13% ABV. ph 3.6. The level of tannins in the highest ever for this wine, but they are certainly not getting in the way of the experience. 92-

93.

### **Chateau Margaux, AOC Margaux Grand Cru Classe 2011**

Also 30% less yield than last year, but same percentage of the global harvest went into the First Wine, just very small berries, so the production was lower. This is even more tannic than the 2010 wine if you look at the figures, and if you compare it over the longer term, you find 50% more tannins in the 2011 than in the 1982. But they have worked very carefully on ensuring everything is smooth and stately. Overall 13.1% abv, Margaux is the most expressive of the firsts on the nose, and here it has elegance and a haunting violet flower quality that really unfurls as you stand with the glass. 86% cabernet sauvignon, 10% merlot, 2% petit verdot, 2% cabernet franc. 95.

### **Pavillon Blanc, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2011**

70% 'discarded' (ie sold off), just 30% kept to make up the Pavillon Blanc this year. Wonderful concentration of flavours, density of fruit and acidic backbone, and startling aromatics, that fly out of the glass. 13.4% abv. 100% sauvignon blanc, as ever. Wonderful. 95.

### **Haut Brion**

As at many estates, the laser-optic sorter really came into use, and between 5-10% of cabernet sauvignon was lost during the sorting (that was the most affected by the late June heat). Overall, they made 43% first wine Haut Brion, and 46% second wine this year (the rest goes into Clarendelle, or is sold off). (Last year was 42% grand vin, 39% second wine, last year Mission 47% grand vin, 42% Chapelle, this year Mission 44%, Chapelle 47%). For the whites, the production breaks down into 42% Haut Brion Blanc, 46% Mission Blanc, 46% Clarete (made up from the grapes that weren't used by either of the first wines) - the remainder again was either in Clarendelle, or sold off.

### **La Chapelle de La Mission Haut Brion, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

68.7% merlot, 11.7% cabernet franc, 19.6% cabernet sauvignon. This has a beautiful level of freshness, just a touch short compared to the past few years. But terribly pretty, with some rich red fruit flavours, and great definition. 92.

### **Le Clarence de Haut Brion, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

71.5% merlot, 4.5% cabernet franc, 22.8% cabernet sauvignon, 1.2% petit verdot. Again, wonderfully fresh, they have really teased a beautiful amount of fruit and precise, careful tannic structure out of the vintage. Less cabernets than usual in the second wine, because it was affected by the June heat, and so the best ones were reserved for the first wine, but there was less overall. 90-91.

### **Chateau La Mission Haut Brion, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

The merlot was more advanced, and so was less affected by the June heat, this is utterly gorgeous. Wonderdully croquant fruit, dense and with good chalky tannins at the end that give you pause for thought. 33.7% merlot, 11.3% cabernet franc, 55% cabernet sauvignon. So all the good cabernet

sauvignon they put into here. This has a fabulous length, it's utterly convincing. 94.

**Chateau Haut Brion, AOC Pessac Leognan 2011**

The length of this wine is striking. I love how often Haut Brion rises above its appellation (Pessac Leognan reds were generally more up and down in 2011) and here it is really flexing its muscles.

They tried 40 or 50 different blends this year to find the right one, Masclef says the hard thing this year was to find the mid palate. Some people have over extracted to attempt to deepen the experience, so some wines feel like you are trying to fit a wooden box into your mouth, an empty box... here they tried the other thing, to shorten the extraction to around 15 days (2010 around 19 days), and the result is soft tannins that hold up the rich black cherry and blueberries fruits without smothering them. The toast, as ever with Haut-Brion, is gentle but evident. 95+.

**La Clarte de Haut Brion, Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Here we have wonderful rich flavours, even the second wine for the whites is singing here. The blend is 22% sauvignon, 78% semillon, this uses for the first time a hectare that was grubbed up of semillon and replaced with sauvignon blanc (will eventually be used for the first wine). 91-92.

**Chateau La Mission Haut Brion Blanc, Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Wow. The incredible soaring acidity of this wine, with dense, toe-tapping citrus and exotic fruits flavours, and tingly minerality. 27.1% sauvignon, 72.9% semillon Harvest was 18 august til 30 aug at Haut Brion Blanc and Sept 1 for Mission. 96.

**Chateau Haut Brion Blanc, Pessac Leognan Blanc 2011**

Again, a wonderful success, soaring acidity, incredible minerality. Real richness in the mouth, 42.1% sauvignon, 57.9% semillon. Croquant fruit, crab apples, sharp citrus, apricots and white flowers. This is totally fabulous, exciting wine. Both are aged on the lees. 97.

## SCMP 2011 ROUNDUP

### **Bordeaux 2011 Review and Wine Selections**

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(first published April 2012 in the South China Morning Post)

*The 2011 Bordeaux vintage is patchy owing to an intemperate growing season, but some wines have tremendous potential*

A bright blue sky warmed the thousands of wine tasters who converged on

Bordeaux at the start of this month's wine futures week, as temperatures reached the low 30s. But by the end of the week, just a few hours after the last glasses were cleared away, the temperature had fallen by 20 degrees Celsius as a hailstorm lashed the city.

The changing weather pattern largely sums up the fortunes of the 2011 vintage, which is of varied quality, and serves as an apt metaphor for how the market views the wines, with opinions running equally hot and cold.

"This is a complicated vintage to call," says Corinne Conroy of Chateau Brane-Cantenac in Margaux, whose 2009 release was one of Parker's Magical 20 at last year's wine futures in Hong Kong.

For those of us watching the wines and deciding whether to buy them at this early stage - 18 months before they are put in bottles - there are a few key things to bear in mind. Most importantly, the wines are not as universally impressive as either the 2009 or 2010 vintages - mainly due to the fact that the Bordelais had things a little tougher in terms of weather conditions during the year. Leading wine academic Professor Denis Dubourdieu described it as, "Summer in spring, autumn in summer, spring in autumn."

He means there was a very dry start to 2011, with April the second warmest since 1900 and May the driest since 1945. Vine flowering occurred early and evenly - two key factors for a quality vintage - but things started going awry by the end of June, with record heat during the last weekend. The sun grilled whole bunches of grapes, some of which withered on the vine. Coupled with the extreme drought conditions, winemakers were preparing for another 2003, and many vines were shutting down their growth cycle owing to water stress.

In July and August it turned cooler. Fine weather didn't return until mid-September. Ripening slowed to a crawl, and grapes reached maturity in uneven stages. There were a few hailstorms in May and early September. In one day, baptised by the locals as Black Tuesday, 80mm of rain fell.

Add this up, and what you get is not a Left Bank or Right Bank vintage, it's a vintage where terroir, age of vines, experience of winemakers and careful attention in the vineyard all come into play. In some ways, these are the vintages that Bordeaux does best - when experience of a maritime climate and careful decision making are key. Many estates lost up to 10 per cent of their crop in the sorting stage, after harvest, by meticulously separating damaged grapes from healthy ones.

"The terroir, the date of harvesting, and the care taken during sorting - this is what made the difference in 2011," says Pauline Vauthier of Chateau Ausone, one of Saint-Émilion's leading properties.

There were some clear highlights. The dry white wines, for example, benefited from the warm start to the year, and maintained wonderful acidity from the cooler summer, producing aromatically complex wines. The sweet wines of Sauternes also had a stellar vintage.

For the reds, by and large, normal alcohol levels of about 13.5 per cent, rarely going above 14 per cent, means the best examples have a purity of fruit and an elegant structure that shines through. But this is not a vintage for a blank cheque.

"Quality-wise, the Bordelais dodged a bullet with the 2011 vintage," says Guy Stout of American distributors Glazer's. "I think we all arrived here expecting a mediocre vintage with plenty of early-drinking wines, but instead we have a few low points, but many serious highs.

"There are some excellent bottles and the majority of chateaux have made good quality wine."

The event had the highest ever number of attendees, at 6,400, according to the official figures, with 68 different nationalities making 3,400 chateaux visits each day and using 25,000 Riedel glasses, proving the continuing allure of Bordeaux.

The locals certainly put on a show for those who came. There were art exhibitions alongside the tasting sessions - with contemporary Chinese artists including Shen Yuan and Yan Pei Ming at Bernard Magrez's cultural institute, photographs from renowned wine consultant Eric Boissenot at Chateau Brane-Cantenac, and a piano recital at Chateau Palmer.

Michelin-star chefs served up elaborate delicacies at lunches and dinners. Highlights included two-Michelin-star Philippe Etchebest at Chateau Marquis de Terme and at Chateau Pavie in Saint-Emilion, and 26-star Joel Robuchon at Chateau Pape Clément.

Simon Tam, of Christie's Hong Kong, found several reasons to be positive. "The reds have a very different personality from 2009 and 2010, making them a real proposition for buyers, and most don't have to be put away for 15 years, which gives them clear value. Some estates were overambitious with oak, but those are the minority.

"This is a year when great terroirs have sung loud and proud - and it's reasonable to assume the prices will be lower than last year."

With this Tam echoes the major feeling that the prices of the past two years would need to be readjusted downwards - not least because several major Chinese buyers have loudly proclaimed their dismay at the high prices, and lack of subsequent rises, of the 2010 wines.

There were plenty of Hong Kong buyers in Bordeaux - including teams from Altaya, Watson's, Berry Bros and Bordeaux Index - but not as many as last year.

"Prices need to be sensible, but I'm not worried about saturation in the Hong Kong market," says Tam. "Every year brings new consumers and a new personality to the wine. Bordeaux has been around for centuries and will be

for centuries more."

Sylvie Cazes, president of the Union des Grands Crus (the body which organises the tastings), and director of Chateau Pichon Comtesse, also sees recent price weakening as no cause for alarm.

"The Hong Kong market needed to settle and regulate itself. So many wine companies have set up in the territory over the past three years, and not all were going to survive - that is a necessary function of a maturing market," she says. The feeling of uncertainty has meant an early start to price announcements, certainly compared to last year, when we were still waiting for things to get going in mid-May.

A handful of chateaux have already made their appearance, including La Tour de Bessan, Caronne Ste Gemme and d'Angludet, all coming out with a small decrease on last year. Rumours suggest that the first growers also plan an early campaign, with significant discounts on 2010.

Early releases at good prices is exactly what most people want to hear. But when it comes to selecting what to buy, bear in mind that balance in 2011 is all about elegance and freshness - the best producers worked with the vintage, not against it, and produced fruit-filled, lip-smacking wines.

The drought meant small grapes with good concentration. Tannin levels are in many cases higher than 2010, with good acidity, meaning the best wines will age.

But they should be perfect within eight years, unlike the 15 years that most of the 2010s will need.

### **Premier crew: the best of Bordeaux's 2011 vintage**

#### **Sauternes An excellent vintage for sweet white wines.**

**Star performer: Chateau d'Yquem** 144 grams of residual sugar, compared to 140 grams last year, sharp orange and lime blossom flavours, with a fine acidic core. 13.8 per cent alcohol. 96.

**Alternative: Chateau Coutet** Fresh, defined, piercing lime blossom and citrus, married to a rush of sweetness. 91-92.

#### **Saint-Julien Late September sun benefited cabernet sauvignon; consistent.**

**Star performer: Chateau Léoville Las Cases** This holds you tight, reveals itself slowly, stunningly good tannins, rich black fruits. A delicate but heavyweight wine, one for the long haul. 13.4 per cent alcohol. 95.

**Alternative: Chateau Branaire-Ducru** Rich, vibrant, silky smooth. Sour plum on the nose. Licorice and blackcurrant on the palate, good freshness. 91.

#### **Pauillac Some uneven ripeness, but generally strong.**

**Star performer: Chateau Pontet-Canet** The selection practised at most estates was severe, but more than 90 per cent of the grapes made it into the first wine - with no discernable dip as a result. Storming, rich, layered and supple. 95.

**Alternative: Chateau d'Armailhac** It is elegant, and embodies how 2011 can be charming if extraction is well-measured. 92.

**Saint-Estèphe** The key story here is the hail. Some estates needed to pick early, reducing yields.

**Star performer: Chateau Montrose** Drastic selection kept up the quality here. Cabernet sauvignon 63 per cent, merlot 22 per cent, cabernet franc 12 per cent, petit verdot 3 per cent. This has length and grip. 12.8 per cent alcohol. 94.

**Alternative: Chateau de Pez** Gentle black fruits, tannic hold to wrap the experience. A classic Saint-Estèphe; fairly early drinking. 90.

**Pomerol** Perhaps the most consistent of all appellations.

**Star performer: Chateau la Conseillante** Plum, rich, succulent fruit. Seriously elegant, expertly made with just the right extraction ensuring black autumn fruits, and luscious cassis. 94.

**Alternative: Chateau Beauregard** Mocha, coffee, restrained oak toasting. There is depth to this, with freshness and deep spicy fruit. 92.

**Pessac Léognan** Mixed quality reds, fantastic whites.

**Star performer: Chateau Haut-Brion Blanc** Soaring acidity and minerality, but rich and round. 42.1 per cent sauvignon, 57.9 per cent semillon. Crab apples, sharp citrus, apricots and white flowers. 96.

**Alternative: Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte (red)** Chocolate and coffee on the nose. Definite ambition, a good three-dimensional wine. Successful and confident. 92.

**Margaux** Not uniform, but some excellent quality.

**Star performer: Chateau Palmer** High tannins, but wonderfully precise, with gentle extraction ensuring a building of flavour, from crushed blackberries to rose petals, liquorice and menthol. 94.

**Alternative: Chateau Malescot St-Exupéry** Velvet tannins, firm black fruits, clear coffee extract, with almond toasting. Enjoyable. 91.

CRU BOURGEOIS, OTHER

**LesTrois Moulins, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Lovely en primeur purple, has good grip, some interesting bright fruits, but lacking in tannic structure, and the finish shoots up a little high, 3.50 pH, slightly hollow in the mid palate, but there is some cheerful fruit, I can see this could be a good early drinker. 84-85.

### **Chateau Cambon la Pelouse, AOC Haut Medoc 2011**

Again a very pretty colour, the rich purple stains the glass, the tears have taken on the colour. There is plenty of raw material to work with here, there is good fruit, there is perhaps not the depth, 55% merlot this year, no hail here, but small berries, low yields for the cab sauv, good potential. 87-88.

### **L'Aura de Cambon, AOC Margaux 2011**

8000 pieds per hectare, just behind cantenac brown, this has bright en primeur fruits, lovely tannins that are fine and insistent. 3000-3200 bottles of Aua, so much smaller than the others. Really feel the difference of the terroir, this has a grip that the other two wines in the stable do not. 89-90.

### **Ch Grand Village, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011**

The AOC Bordeaux made by the Guinaudeau family of Chateau Lafleur in Pomerol, vines within Fronsac but not a Fronsac. Been in the family since 17th century. 83% merlot, 17% cabernet franc. 20 hectares, 15ha in production. This has some good tannins, well worked, not drying, 5500 vines per hectare. 84-85.

### **GActe 3, AOC Bordeaux Superieur**

First vintage was 2009, the idea was to find great clay-limestone, and to plant v careful marsal selection cabernets, and to make a new grand cru. To really record how the wine progresses each year. Didn't want to be limited to the fronsac appellation. Quite austere, 56% merlot, 44% cabernet franc. There will be new plots, but they have bought great terroir, but had to pull up the vines that were there before. I really like the firm fruit here, and the fact that it holds itself rather primly right now. Clear potential. 89+.