Graves and Pessac-Léognan

These two appellations make up the southern end of the left bank vineyards. The vineyards of the northern part of Pessac-Léognan have, in large part, been swallowed up by the growth of the city of Bordeaux – a few historic, highly valued estates such as Haut-Brion have resisted urbanisation but are now surrounded by housing. As in the Médoc, the land is distinguished by layers of gravels (hence the "Graves" name).

2010 Château Beauregard Ducasse, Graves, Cuvée Albert Duran, 13.5%

Bottle £14.95 Case £170.43 Code BDU610

Jacques Perromat's sixth generation family estate lies at Mazères near Langon at the southern end of the Graves, with about 50 hectares of gravelly vineyards on limestone sub-soils hacked out of the surrounding forest from 1850. This is his top red, named after the ancestor who first planted the vineyards in 1850, based on parcels of his oldest vines of 50% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. Perhaps a touch more restrained and classic than the 2009 vintage, this has a velvet texture and such smooth dark cherry and cassis fruit that one hardly notices the well integrated structure. Already inviting yet clearly there is more to come. Now-2019



2010 Château Le Bruilleau, Pessac-Léognan, 14.5%

Bottle £18.95 Case £216.03 Code BRU110

The red wine here is from almost equal parts of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, aged 12 months in 25% new oak barrels. Such an expansive nose of hedgerow fruits and vanilla, then the oak influence is apparent on entry but yields to an elegant mouthful of ripe black fruit checked by a textbook gravelly note. At once both structured and showy. Now-2019

2006 Les Haldes de Luchey, Pessac-Léognan, 12.5%

Bottle £18.95 Case £216.03 Code HDL106

This enclave of vineyard at Mérignac, in the western outskirts of the city of Bordeaux, has a fascinating history: given over to the French Army for a military camp in 1917, it was not until 2002 that winemaking restarted here. The blend for this second wine of Château Luchey-Halde is about 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, with about 5% each of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, aged in barrels, about 1/3 new. Gentle ruby tone. Scent of soft red fruits, still showing some youthful charm, with cigar-box. Showing melting red and black fruits, this is supple, elegant and drinking so prettily. Limited stock. Now-2015

Sweet wines

Sauternes and Barsac, the great sweet wines of Bordeaux, used to be a bargain, but prices have risen sharply over recent years. One looks to outlying appellations such as Sainte-Croix du Mont, which lies just across the Garonne from Sauternes, and Monbazillac, far to the east, for value.

2009 Château Mestrepeyrot, Sainte-Croix du Mont. 12%

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code MSP109

Thierry Chasagnol makes this 100% Semillon at Mourlane not far from the Garonne. Pale gold. Scents of seville oranges and marzipan. Honeyed - showing the widespread botrytis characteristic of the 2009 vintage - rather than fully sweet, with a fresh palate showing orange blossom, fresh apricot and toffee. Perhaps not a true dessert wine, but lovely with cheese or perfect with foie gras. Now-2015

2010 La Haute Borie, Monbazillac, 13.5%

Bottle £12.50 Case £142.50 Code HBO110

This would be double the price if it had Sauternes on the label! A blend of 60% Semillon, 30% Muscadelle and 10% Sauvignon Blanc, all from old vines, and 1/3 in barrel. Mid gold. A lovely nose of rich liqueur oranges and apricots, indicating botrytis. Generous marmalade heart, and really fat and viscous. A winner. Now-2016

2010 Mascaron, Sauternes, 13% [50cl.]

Bottle [50cl.] £13.75 Case [12 x 50cl.] £156.75 Code MPG210

90% Sémillon, 6% Sauvignon Blanc, 4% Muscadelle skillfully sourced from a well known Cru Classé property by the negociant house of Ginestet. Attractive pale gold. Aromas of honey and peaches with a more tropical hint. Well balanced sweetness and ripe stone fruit with gingerbread and honey. Good value pudding wine. Now-2020

2009 Les Carmes de Rieussec, Sauternes, 13.5%

Bottle £24.95 Case £284.43 Code CMR109

The second wine of Château Rieussec, named after the Carmes de Langon monks who owned the estate in the 18th century. This is the second vintage we have bought of this blend of 85% Semillon, 10% Sauvignon Blanc 10% and a little Muscadelle: we like its moderate oak, splendid richness and general approachability. Scent of preserved lemons and barley sugar. Very sweet, very concentrated, all oranges and caramel. Very luscious, smooth and fat. Limited stock. Now-2018

2007 Château Bastor-Lamontagne, Sauternes, 14% [37.5cl.]

Half bottle £15.95 Case [12 x 37.5cl.] £181.83 Code BLM107

A well-sited estate near Suduiraut, Bastor-Lamontagne tends to a fresh, citrussy style of Sauternes, from about 80% Semillon, 17% Sauvignon Blanc and 3% Muscadelle. Splendid nose – oranges, pineapple and stone fruit. The palate is both fresh and creamy, with a lemon-curd and vanilla character. Smooth, harmonious and with plenty of potential too. Limited stock. Now-2018

2010 Château Les Mingets, Sauternes, 14% [37.5cl.]

Half bottle £16.50 Case [12 x 37.5cl.] £188.10 Code MIN110

Located in Bommes in the heart of the Sauternes appellation, Les Minguets has been in Pierre Guinabert's familly for many generations. 100% Semillon, this is a hedonistic wine not for the faint hearted. With golden colour and a fat nose of overripe passion fruit the palate is reigned in just a little by a touch of citrus zest amongst the generous honey, apricot and waxy flavours. Put aside the French suggestion of serving as an aperitif and enjoy with cheese or dessert. Now-2022



The Médoc

We are looking now at the thin strip of vineyards, some 70 kms long and 8 kms wide, stretching from near the Atlantic mouth of the Gironde, southwards along the left, west, bank via the Haut Médoc and the grand communes of St-Estèphe, Pauillac, St Julien and Margaux, to the northern suburbs of the city of Bordeaux itself. This is an unusual landscape, basically flat, with gentle rises signifying a greater depth of the gravel deposits which lie between the encroaching sands of Les Landes and the estuary. Our less expensive wines come from the north of the region, where the wines have true character but lack the finesse and breed of the Haut Médoc. Barring a few tiny spots of Burgundy, the central sector, very near the river, includes the grandest and most expensive vineyard land on the planet. Trying to find value here (which is what, after all, we do) is not always easy, but there are, for the moment at least, little family-owned enclaves like Deyrem-Valentin and Grand Tayac in Margaux which offer authenticity without the need to take out a second mortgage: buy their wines and celebrate their independence or their vineyards will simply be subsumed into the land of some more famous neighbour.

2010 Château Pierre de Montignac, Médoc, 14%

Bottle £14.75 Case £168.15 Code PDM110

This is a classic left bank blend of 52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. At the moment it's showing generous coffee oak and black fruit on the nose; and then delivers a rich, attractively dense but smooth mouthful of blackcurrants and blackberries, really ripe, and spiced with vanilla and cinnamon. You could happily enjoy this now but it will certainly keep for another 5-7 years. The wine earned a silver medal in the 2012 Paris Concours, was deemed worthy of the Cru Bourgeois classification in August, and was rated 16+/20 on www.jancisrobinson.com in October. Robert Parker's English reviewer, Neil Martin, scored it 90/100 in his Wine Journal on www.erobertparker.com and described it thus: "The Pierre de Montignac has a nice healthy deep garnet colour. The nose is open and generous with plenty of dark plum and blackberry fruit with hints of brine emerging with time in the glass. The palate is mediumbodied with juicy ripe black fruit with cedar and graphite. This has good structure, plenty of fresh acidity and a crisp lively finish. This is the kind of wine that gives the Cru Bourgeois a good name. Tasted November 2012". Now-2017

2006 Château Fourcas Hosten, Listrac-Médoc, 13%

Bottle £19.95 Case £227.43 Code FOH106

This large (47 hectare) property, generally considered the finest in Listrac, was bought in 2006 by Renaud Mommeja of the Hermès fashion family. Recently released direct from the Château, here is a fully mature bottle from an ageworthy vintage. Expressive, developed aromas of black fruit with warm leather and seasoned wood. Mellow tannins and well defined fruit maintain a lively balance in the mouth. Old school, elegant and persistent. Now-2016

2009 Château Charmail, Haut-Médoc, 14%

Bottle £20.95 Case £238.83 Code CHM109

Charmail has very well-sited vines next to Saint Estèphe. This is Merlot dominated; and aged in barrels renewed every three years. All fine oak, ripe black fruit and coffee, but Mr Parker puts it so much better. "This is another over-achieving estate that tends to produce wines with lots of intensity and structure. This wine certainly has the formidable intensity one expects from Charmail, but the tannins are silky smooth and the result is the sexiest Charmail to date. An opulent, even voluptuously textured wine, full-bodied and dense purple in color, it is a seductive blend of 47% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. It was bottled unfined and unfiltered and came in with natural alcohols of 14%. The low acidity, plush fruit and silky tannins all suggest drinking this over the next decade. Drink: 2012 – 2022. 90/100", Robert Parker, Wine Advocate, February 2012. Now-2020

2010 Château Grand Tayac, Margaux, 13.5%

Bottle £23.50 Case £267.90 Code GTA110

70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot and 3% Petit Verdot from a small Cru Bourgeois property of just 5 hectares, all planted in 1962, in the north of the commune at Soussans. Corinne and Alain Roses bought the property in 2004, and they employ top oenologue Eric Boissenot to make the wine here. Aromas encompass rich, liqueur-like black fruit, graphite and cedar. Classy, silky, cool red and black fruit. This appears light and fine - typical Margaux in its grace. Now-2020

2010 La Chapelle de Bages, Pauillac, 13%

Bottle £25.50 Case £293.55 Code HBL310

The second wine of Château Haut Bages Libéral, a fifth growth property neighbouring Latour, and owned by Claire Villars-Lurton. Very much in the classic assertive powerful style of Pauillac with a generous depth of complex cassis fruit cloaking a currently austere structure. Can be enjoyed now with a rare steak, but will reward patience. Now-2020

2009 Château Gaudin, Pauillac, 13%

Bottle £25.75 Case £293.55 Code GAW109

70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot, from 10 hectares in the south of the commune, close to Latour and Beychevelle, bought by the Capdevieille family in 1901. Deep purple. Classic cassis/blackcurrant perfume. Sharp blackcurrant core, with appealingly fresh acidity. Irony. Quite pure right now, and would benefit from time in bottle. Now-2019

2009 Château Deyrem-Valentin, Margaux, 14.5%

Bottle £25.95 Case £295.83 Code DYM109

Cru Bourgeois Deyrem-Valentin, an estate in the north of the commune run by Jean Sorge with his two daughters, isn't well-known: an annual production of just 6,000 cases is very modest indeed by Bordeaux standards. 50% Merlot, 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, plus 1% each of Petit Verdot and Carmenère, into barrels renewed every three years. Deep and opaque. Scents of cassis and crushed red fruit. Open, ripe, rounded and supple. Coulis of black fruits, textured but not heavy at all, with notes of graphite and liquorice. Perfumed finish. "Ripe, sweet fruit with as yet unintegrated oak. Very tight, youthful and juicy - lovely balance and depth already evident though, and oozes style. 17+/20", Richard Hemming, www.jancisrobinson.com, 26th January 2011. Now-2020

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Bordeaux

Recent Vintages for Reds

- 2006 A good rather than great year, but often excellent on the left bank. Most wines drinking well now.
- Oh dear. Heavily rain-affected year. Don't believe merchants who tell you the 2007s are "supple", "plump", "forward" or "charming": these are wine trade euphemisms for flabby, spineless, and lacking any sort of real heart. Avoid (like 1977, 1987, and 1997 a weird cycle!).
- Again a good year but the wines tend to be classic, stern and well-structured, so don't appear in this offer, though we may well feature them in the future.
- A really great year again; and as the wines have wonderfully open and lush fruit they can be enjoyed young (though a warning some wines appear to be closing up). The only possible downside is the level of alcohol, as the perfect weather pushed up ripeness.
- There will be arguments for decades as to whether the 2009 or 2010 is a greater vintage. The 2010s tend to be more classically structured for the long haul than the previous year, but it was another hot summer so they are equally ripe and powerful, and some are also amazingly approachable now.
- A complicated growing season with drought followed by deluge did not bode well. An Indian summer meant that quality was rather better than had been anticipated. The resultant wines are fresh and classically structured.
- 2012 Many wines are still embryonic, but another year of erratic weather means that wines based on Merlot are generally a better bet than those based on the later ripening Cabernet Sauvignon.



There was a distinct sense of disinterest amongst the UK winetrade and journalists as they headed to Bordeaux this spring for an early taste of the wines of 2013. Following a year of truly challenging weather in the region it was clear before a drop was tasted that only those Château owners with the finest *terroirs* allied to limitless funds were likely to have produced a wine worth buying *en primeur*. What was also clear, despite the increased expense and reduced production, was that without a huge cut in the opening prices demand from consumers would be minimal.

Fortunately we do not inhabit that world, so here is a list full of wines from much more attractive earlier vintages, notably the great years of 2009 and 2010, at prices which won't break the bank. Whites from 2013 appear to be rather more successful and we list an early arrival below, along with a couple of rosés. Don't forget the often overlooked but smashing value sweet wines that round off this selection.

Gordon Coates - June 2014

Mixed Cases

All offered with a discount of at least 10% on the individual bottle prices.

Bordeaux Value Case £91.35

(two bottles of each of two whites, a rosé and three reds)

Code RD114

2012 Château Ballan-Larquette, Bordeaux Blanc (p.2)

2013 Château Le Faure, Bordeaux Blanc (p.2)

2013 Château Le Faure, Bordeaux Rosé (p.3)

2010 Château de Lauriole, Bordeaux (p.3)

2012 Château Le Faure, Bordeaux (p.3)

2012 Château Moulin de la Marzelle, Côtes de Bourg (p.3)

Daily Red £97.00

(two bottles of each of six reds)

Code BD214

2010 Château de Lauriole, Bordeaux (p.3)

2009 Château La Plaige, Bordeaux Supérieur (p.3)

2010 Château Les Gravières de la Brandille, Bordeaux (p.3)

2012 Château Moulin de la Marzelle, Côtes de Bourg (p.3)

2010 Château Les Petits Moines, Blaye, Côtes de Bordeaux (p.3) 2009 Château Beausejour, Fronsac (p.4)

Bordeaux Terroirs £146.95

(two bottles of each of two whites and four reds)

Code BD314

2012 Château Les Combes, Bordeaux Blanc (p.2)

2011 Château Beauregard Ducasse, Graves,

Cuvée Albertine Peyri (p.2)

2010 Château Les Combes, Lussac-Saint-Emilion (p.4)

2010 Château Rocher Gardat, Montagne Saint-Emilion (p.4)

2010 Château Beauregard Ducasse, Graves, Cuvée Albert Duran (p.5)

2010 Château Pierre de Montignac, Médoc (p.6)

Best of Left and Right Case £267.45

(two bottles of each of six reds)

Code BD414

2010 Château Gouprie, Pomerol (p.4)

2010 Haut Faugères, St-Emilion Grand Cru (p.4)

2010 Château Le Bruilleau, Pessac-Léognan (p.5)

2006 Château Fourcas Hosten, Listrac-Médoc (p.6)

2009 Château Gaudin, Pauillac (p.6) 2009 Château Deyrem-Valentin, Margaux (p.6)

Dry White

Dry white Bordeaux is so enjoyable and under-valued: the unoaked examples with plenty of Sauvignon Blanc taste riper and weightier than wines from the Loire at the same price; and the oaked wines based more on Semillon with a little Sauvignon likewise offer a really fascinating alternative to white Burgundy.

2012 Château Ballan-Larquette, Bordeaux Blanc, 12.5%

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code BAN112

From an estate owned by the Chaigne family, 45kms south-east of Bordeaux in Entre-Deux-Mers, and blended from halves of Sauvignon and Semillon, this is a typically bright but soft style of Bordeaux Blanc. Attractive scents of gooseberries and ripe pears; and a ripe appley character follows on to the palate. Refreshing, but with a little creaminess from the Sémillon too. Charming. Drink this year

2013 Château Le Faure, Bordeaux Blanc, 12.5%

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code FAU613

Following the success of Eric Guérin's red, this year we introduce the equally good value white and rosé. With Semillon dominating the blend this has a delightfully rounded palate showing bright ripe orchard fruits. Well balanced, with a focussed finish. Now-2015

2012 Château Les Combes, Bordeaux Blanc, 12.5%

Bottle £9.75 Case £111.15 Code GRC612

This is ridiculously good value for a wine of such vigour and class, a winner of a gold medal at the prestigious 2013 Paris Concours. From about 90% Sauvignon and 10% Semillon, this is deliciously open; with a gooseberry and elderflower perfume, followed by an exotic palate, showing guava and lime. Exciting, and really quite complex. The 2013 vintage follows. Now-2015

2011 Château Beauregard Ducasse, Graves, Cuvée Albertine Pevri, 12.5%

Bottle £14.95 Case £170.43 Code BDU111

M. Perromat at Beauregard Ducasse only bottles 1,000 cases of this top white, named after the former owner of the vineyard, from about 60% Semillon and 40% Sauvignon, all in new oak. The oak is so well integrated, supporting generous stone fruit, orange and a hint of marzipan. Complex and impressively long. Now-2017

2011 Château Le Bruilleau, Pessac-Léognan, Blanc. 13%

Bottle £17.75 Case £202.35 Code BRU611

The Bedicheau family own a little over 10 hectares south of the city of Bordeaux in Pessac-Léognan, an appellation created in 1987 to cover the best properties of the heterogeneous Graves region. 75% Semillon and 25% Sauvignon. The fruit from vines averaging over 40 years of age is fermented in oak barrels and aged on the lees for 9 months to give a powerful rich white with ripe peach, toast and spice notes, and a density that suggests potential for further development. Now-2018

2011 Château Lagrange, Les Arums de Lagrange, Bordeaux Blanc, 13%

Bottle £24.50 Case £279.30 Code LGR611

A rather wonderful curiosity: since the 1996 vintage Lagrange, a Grand Cru Classé in Saint-Julien, has produced a tiny quantity of a white wine, Les Arums, from about 60% Sauvignon, 33% Semillon and 7% Muscadelle, barrel fermented and aged in oak, largely new. On the nose intense perfume of creamy oak, plus white flowers and greengage. This shows green fruit, laced with floral accents and marked by a stony minerality. Great perfume and length. So stylish. Already terrific but will keep a few years too, becoming more honeyed. Now-2017

Rosé

2013 Château Le Faure, Bordeaux Rosé, 12.5%

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code FAU513

A quaffable blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon; *saigné*, i.e. drawn off the vat in the early stages of maceration. Pale electric pink with a lively cherry scent. Attractively full flavoured with ripe red fruits and a subtle lactic note. Clean and properly dry on the finish. Now-2015

2013 Château Les Combes, Bordeaux Rosé, 12.5%

Bottle £9.25 Case £105.45 Code GRC513

This is a harmonious, dry rosé, perfect for picnics and *al fresco* dining, made from 50% each of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, rapidly pressed to preserve the fresh fruit flavours. Generous cherry aromas and flavours with an almond back note and refreshing grip. Now-2015

Bordeaux & Bordeaux Supérieur

2010 Château de Lauriole, Bordeaux, 13%

Bottle £7.50 Case £85.50 Code LAU110

Unoaked, from 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, grown just south of the city of Bordeaux by Jean Michel Laplagne, it's a perfectly correct, light and fine example. Gentle red fruit and lead pencil hints on the nose. Redcurranty, mildly leafy, this is fresh, clean and silky, in a classic claret idiom. Perfect lunch-time drinking, equally at home with simple roasts or cold cuts. Now-2016

2012 Château Le Faure, Bordeaux, 12.5%

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code FAU112

Made by Eric Guérin, a fourth generation grower at Ladaux in the heart of Entre-Deux-Mers. From about 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc, basically unoaked (just a few staves in the tank) it's got decent body, in part because of the high average age of the vines here, with some parcels 50 years old. Slightly stony nose, creamy and dark fruited. Medium bodied, with pretty red cherry and cassis fruit. Savoury with a hint of supple tannins. Now-2018



2009 Château La Plaige, Bordeaux Supérieur, 14%

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code PLA109

This is a classy, much applauded wine (in the Concours, a gold medal in Paris and a silver in Bordeaux), from Frédéric Naud, a fifth generation *vigneron*. 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Scents of really ripe red berries, with hints of vanilla, clove and even chocolate. Surprisingly fat and rich for a wine at this price. Raspberry and ripe redcurrant palate backed by soft but present tannins. Mildly spicy finish. "...surprisingly rich blackcurrant fruit and a chunky, mouth-filling texture freshened with green, leafy acidity and softened by earthy cream. If you open this a few hours before it is required, or decant it, it will become softer still, and you'll think you are drinking a delightful, traditional St-Émilion at a great deal less money", Oz Clarke, My Top Wines for 2013. Now-2016

2010 Château Les Gravières de la Brandille, Bordeaux, 14%

Bottle £9.75 Case £111.15 Code GRC110

Frédéric Borderie's principal wine, 2/3 Merlot with about equal portions of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, unoaked. Deep hue but clear. So open on the nose, with pure cherry and blackcurrant aromas. Red fruits on the entry, then the polished mid palate develops darker fruit flavours. Deliciously classy and elegant, with integrated tannins and a long finish. Now-2016

2009 Château Les Gravières de la Brandille, Cuvée Prestige, Bordeaux Supérieur, 14.5%

Bottle £13.50 Case £153.90 GRC309

From 88% Merlot and 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, and a selection of older vines on prime gravel and clay soils, this has spent 12 months in oak barrels, about 25% new. It's won a Gold medal in the major Paris Concours in 2011, and been named one of the five best Bordeaux Supérieurs of the vintage. Very ripe black cherries and blackberries with nutmeg on the nose. Overall impression is of a very powerful but silky and aromatic wine, with menthol, liquorice and spice notes around the core of red and black fruit. Lots of mass, and solid, ripe tannins, promising keeping potential. The 2010 vintage follows. Now-2019

The Right Bank

We are particularly struck by the quality coming out of what are known at the Saint-Emilion satellites: in particular Lussac, and especially Montagne Saint-Emilion. The latter has many vineyards on the same *calcaires à astéries*, limestone marked by starfish fossils, as the famed plateau of Saint-Emilion itself. The hillside vineyards here represent a much finer *terroir* than the boringly flat, sandy-soiled plain on which much basic St-Emilion is produced.

2012 Château Moulin de la Marzelle, Côtes de Bourg, 12.5%

Bottle £8.25 Case £94.05 Code MLM112

Despite its low price, this blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon from the right bank, directly across the river from Margaux, was a stand out during our recent visit. A nose bursting with summer fruit aromas. On the palate lively ripe strawberry and blackberry flavours, with discreet structure. Charming and versatile. Now-2017

2010 Château Les Petits Moines, Blaye, Côtes de Bordeaux, 14%

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code LPM110

Frederic Heraud's youthful and vigorous Bordeaux is a touch more classically styled than the previous vintage, yet still so impressive. Very deep purple hue. Attractive cassis and oak aromas. Weighty and textured, delivering powerful red and black fruit with accents of menthol and chocolate. This has the intensity, and correct tannic structure, of a more expensive Bordeaux. Now-2017

2009 Château Galot La Chapelle, Castillon, Côtes de Bordeaux, 14.5%

Bottle £9.95 Case £113.43 Code GLC109

A wine made at Château Brisson, from 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, given 6 months ageing in old barrels. Pretty, red-fruited nose. Fleshy palate of raspberries, enlivened by hints of smoky, chocolatey oak. Although this is ready now, and indeed quite showy, a tannic spine gives this potential to develop too. Now-2017

2009 Château Beausejour, Fronsac, 13%

Bottle £10.50 Case £119.70 Code BEA109

The return of an old favourite. 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. Mid ruby colour. Complex red fruit nose with a touch of oak (40% of the blend spent 10 months in barrel). Deep, juicy red fruit flavours and an aniseed spice. This is at a really attractive stage of development. Now-2016

2010 Château Franc Baudron, Montagne Saint-Emilion, 14%

Bottle £11.50 Case £131.10 Code FRB110

Michel Guimberteau, whose vines are on *argilo-calcaire* soils, is very much a vineyard man - now his land is in conversion to organic viticulture. From 60% Merlot, 20% each of Cabernets Franc and Sauvignon, this is crafted in a modern fruit-forward style, very open and fleshy. Lovers of Rioja will enjoy the coconut oak accents on the nose, and the generous mildly cooked red and black fruit core enhanced by vanilla and bittersweet black chocolate notes. Some grip ensures a good future too. Limited stock. Now-2017

2009 Château Puy Fombrauge, Saint-Emilion, 13.5%

Bottle £12.25 Case £139.65 Code PFM109

Bottle £12.75 Case £145.35 Code GRC410

This estate, owned by the Rufat family since the 16th century, is very well situated on top of the line of hills in Saint-Christophe-des-Bardes just east of Saint Emilion, near Bernard Magrez's Saint Emilion Grand Cru, Château Fombrauge. There are 11 hectares of vines, 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Franc. Deep tone. Rather distinguished perfume of black fruit and toast. Bountiful blackcurrants and blackberries, with a liquorice note. Perfectly supple. Refined finish. Now-2018

2010 Château Les Combes, Lussac-Saint-Emilion, 14.5%

Magnum £26.95 Case (6 x 150cl.) £153.62 Code GRC710

From vineyards on limestone soils on the slopes. Unoaked. Clear raspberry tone. Lifted perfume of raspberries and dark cherries, with the same intense fruit character following on the palate. This is juicy and aromatic, yet very textured and with a discreet tannin structure. It

just shows what a skilled Bordelais winemaker can do with the perfect

2011 Château Rocher-Figeac, Saint-Emilion, 12.5%

Bottle £13.25 Case £151.05 ROF111

fruit of a fine summer. Now-2018

From 4 hectares owned by the Tournier family, who also own neighbouring Rocher Bonregard across the appellation boundary in Pomerol. This 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc wine is hand harvested and traditionally vinified, and matured in 25% new oak for 6 months. An attractively even deep ruby hue and an inviting nose of black fruits backed by tobacco notes. Such a rounded and generously fleshy palate of ripe, soft cassis and dark cherries. Long and refined finsih Now-2019

2010 Château Rocher Gardat, Montagne Saint-Emilion, 14%

Bottle £14.50 Case £165.30 Code ROG110

Mickael Moze-Berthon's family have been *vignerons* since 1820. This Montagne Saint-Emilion comes almost exclusively from the best hillside sites near their cellar in Bertin, where there's only a light covering of soil over the limestone-based bedrock. Charming fresh raspberry scent with a hint of vanilla. Wonderful fruit: not sweet, but offering a perfectly ripe, smooth and polished vein of raspberries and cherries. Suave and graceful, the purity of the red fruit nicely offset by mocha accents. Finishes well too. A winner. Now-2018

2010 Château Fortin, Saint-Emilion Grand Cru, 14%

Bottle £15.50 Case £176.70 Code FOT110

90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Youthful ruby. Scents of red fruit and coffee oak. This is light and fresh, all juicy red fruits. It very much leans towards the aromatic and approachable, with gentle tannins and a pleasing elegance. Now-2017

2011 Clos l'Hermitage, Lalande de Pomerol, 14%

Bottle £17.50 Case £199.50 Code CLH111

The Bertin family have been involved with winemaking in the Bordeaux region since 1742 and currently steward this estate of 3.1 hectares, planted to 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. This displays an attractive perfume of lifted fruit and floral notes which follows through on a smooth, curvaceous palate. Well focussed, well integrated and long on the finish. Now-2019

2011 Château Louvie, Saint-Emilion Grand Cru, 15%

Bottle £17.50 Case £199.50 Code LOV111

A small production wine - just a thousand cases made - 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc from 40 year old vines grown on sandy soils near Saint Laurent des Combes. Bright, even ruby robe. Lifted, baked blackcurrant nose. Really ripe cassis fruit with mocha, smooth and lush. So well balanced and stylish. Now-2018

2010 Château Rocher Bonregard, Pomerol, 14%

Bottle £19.50 Case £222.30 Code ROB110

From a tiny holding of just 2.6 hectares, 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Attractive, deep hue. Fleshy, plum and blackcurrant attack. Appealing richness, but a restrained lead pencil note gives it some real interest and class, and there are good tannins for keeping too. Now-2018

2010 Vieux Château Palon, Montagne Saint-Emilion, 14.5%

Bottle £21.95 Case £250.23 Code VCP110

Gregory Naulet, a viticulturalist by training, bought a 5 hectare estate, built a tiny, spotless, air-conditioned cellar and began bottling his own wine with the 2000 vintage. Soils on his hillside vineyards are a mix of clay, limestone and sand, and his vines have a high average age of about 40 years. The single wine he makes, from 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc, goes into 4/5 new oak barrels and 1/5 second fill. The 2010 vintage here has huge potential, with "plus de densité tannique". Gregory was aware that he needed to be careful not to over-extract to retain balance. Aromas of classy oak and fresh blackberry and strawberry, with a floral lift. Huge depth, mass and concentration. Fine black fruit, fresh and not at all jammy. Lovely finegrained tannins. Powerful. Now-2020

2010 Château Gouprie, Pomerol, 14%

Bottle £28.50 Case £324.90 Code GOU110

This Pomerol is from the Moze-Berthon's holdings on one gentle, east-facing plot where the clay and gravelly soils also contain iron oxide. 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc, half in new barrels, half second fill. Lifted aromas of very ripe fruit with a liqueur character: and that same sense of liqueur richness is evident in the wine. Velvety, luxuriant wine, immediately accessible and impressive. Now-2020

2010 Haut Faugères, St-Emilion Grand Cru, 14.5%

Bottle £29.50 Case £336.30 Code HAF110

Haut Faugères is the second wine - beautifully presented - of Château Faugères, which has benefited from major investment (the new cellar, designed by Mario Botta, is breathtaking) from parfumier Silvio Denz. In 2012 Château Faugères was promoted from Grand Cru to Grand Cru Classé, a subtle but important change, particularly for the setting of prices. From 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is in a modern idiom, showing very ripe cassis on the nose, alongside savoury notes and smart oak. There's splendid volume and richness, with a core of ripe black fruit enlivened by exotic spice, coffee and earthy depths. Now-2020

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