

2021 BORDEAUX REPORT

VINTAGE REPORT

BY NICHOLAS JACKSON, MW

Introduction

Three years after our last en primeur tasting trip to Bordeaux, it was a pleasure to be back in the region this spring to taste the new vintage. It is remarkable how much seems to have changed: new wineries, scarcely a thought a couple of years ago, are now finished and functioning beautifully; properties have been bought and sold; winemakers, brand ambassadors and other château staff have played the usual game of musical chairs as they swap positions; Bordeaux personalities have been given and taken in marriage, in birth and in death. So goes the circle of life, and so too the cycle of nature; a more challenging cycle in 2021, it must be said, than in the prior two years, but one which nonetheless has produced wines worthy of serious consideration for Bordeaux lovers.

Weather

The Bordelais are consummate salespeople, but even they could scarcely conceal the intense difficulty of the 2021 growing season and the stress it caused. After relatively benign years in 2019 and 2020, 2021 seemed to offer every plague and pestilence nature affords. First was frost in April, as in so many other parts of France; this seriously affected yields in less well-sited vineyards. Mildew first appeared during the wet and cold month of May. This perennial bugbear of the damp Bordeaux climate necessitated extensive treatments in the vineyard, especially in June and the first part of July. Organic and biodynamic vineyards were, as usual, worst affected; unable to rely on chemical treatments, many suffered extensive yield losses during this time (up to 60%). July to September was dry, if not especially warm. Approaching the already late harvest, there was a heavy spell of rain in late September, but luckily the following two weeks were dry, ensuring good conditions for the harvest which finished late, in mid-October.

The Wines

The results of the turbulent weather could be summed up in two overall trends: small yields and uneven ripeness levels. The question of yields is scarcely one that needs worry the drinker, other than potentially putting pressure on prices. The more significant factor is the ripeness of the wines, which is clearly no where near the level of the previous three vintages. 2021 Bordeaux is a return to the fresh, moderate alcohol wines so typical of the region, but which we had almost forgotten about amid the deluge of warm or hot years recently (2015, 2016, 2021, 2019, 2020).

On the Left Bank, Merlot in the Médoc suffered heavily from mildew. The result is an at times shocking reliance on Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend (98% in one example) which challenges the highest proportion ever for many châteaux. Merlot usually supplies the flesh to Cabernet's bones, so most 2021 Médoc reds are slender, linear and direct, with moderate levels of grainy tannins and a pleasant, refreshing finish. They show pure, bright fruit, but lack the concentration of fruit that characterise the best years.

In Pessac-Léognan, the Merlot fared much better, and as usual makes up a large percentage of the blend, but stylistically, Pessac's wines resemble the rest of the Left Bank.

On the right bank, while the wines again have a similar profile, they do have a little more flesh, weight and volume. The producers who waited to harvest when the Cabernet Franc achieved perfect maturity have made some lovely wines with smooth, ripe tannins, showing good concentration and a silky texture. Pomerol was more consistent, with a touch more depth, than St Emilion.

Wine Style

Terms that occur again and again in my notes include sapid, saline, savoury, dry; all testifying to the freshness of the year - a sharp and enjoyable contrast to the at times opulent fruitiness of recent vintages. As always happens in more difficult vintages, the best terroirs produced the best wines; the most obvious example being the First Growth properties on the Left Bank which were noticeably superior to the rest, a contrast that does not always exist in easier vintages. Finally, many wines showed extremely classical, authentic versions of themselves, as if the exigencies of the year had returned them to their true selves. Lafite is the definition of finesse; Leoville Las Cases, dry and savoury; Lynch Bages powerful and structured: every wine's heart is plainly visible in this vintage.

Across Bordeaux, then, the absence of very concentrated fruit or heavy tannins, combined with fresh acidity, mean that these wines will be early drinking, offering pleasure when delivered in 2024, and many reaching their peaks as soon as 10 years after the vintage. After a few blockbuster, long ageing vintages, this should be read as a decided positive. The vintage will also offer considerable pleasure to those who prefer a quieter, more classical style of Bordeaux than has been readily available in recent years.

The dry white wines, when based on Sauvignon Blanc, show spectacular, bright aromas, great freshness and zest, although a warmer vintage would have given them more body. They will satisfy immediately and for the next five years. The white wines of Haut Brion and La Mission Haut Brion, with their higher Semillon content, stood some way ahead of their competitors.

Little sweet wine was made in 2021 thanks to the difficulties of achieving widespread botrytis, but what exists is of a very high quality: concentrated, complex and ageworthy.

Context of the Campaign

The Bordelais may struggle to price this vintage successfully due to a number of conflicting realities. On the one hand, the wine market has never been stronger, with considerable cash flowing into fine wine. On the other, the vintage is not at the same level as the previous three, and must be priced accordingly. Moreover, China is now essentially out of the market for Bordeaux futures, following their enthusiastic participation a decade ago, while the US tends to respond only to top vintages.

Another piece of the puzzle is the exchange rate, which is significantly more advantageous for American buyers now than it was a year ago (roughly \$1.10 to the Euro as opposed to \$1.20 last year). The same is true in HKD (roughly HKD 8.50 today as opposed to HKD 9.50 a year ago). A 10% price reduction from the châteaux would represent an almost 20% price decrease year on year.

All this means that giving buyers an attractive price without leaving money on the table (a mistake the Bordelais made when selling the 2019 vintage and for which they have not forgiven themselves) may be a difficult balancing act. But for the buyer, price decreases on last year of 10% should prompt genuine consideration.

In Summary

While unlikely ever to be considered an historic vintage, 2021 offers attractive, fresh, classical Bordeaux which will yield easy and early pleasure to drinkers. If priced well, it could represent a good opportunity for buyers. In this kind of vintage, it is important to stick to the top châteaux; those that can afford to work their vineyards meticulously and utilise the highest quality grapes in the final blend. These are the wines we have chosen to offer in this vintage, all of which we have tasted: buy with confidence.



Château Haut-Bailly



Château Lynch-Bages

2021 FUTURES / EN PRIMEUR WISHLIST

INSTRUCTIONS: Thank you for your interest in our 2021 Futures campaign. Please complete and return this form indicating below how you would like to participate in the 2021 campaign by choosing the Buy List, Wish List or General List, and by marking the wines you are interested in buying.

This form does not guarantee that you will receive any or all of the wines that you request.

☐ **Buy List - First Priority:**

This is our highest priority list and the first list we use when allocating Futures that are limited in supply. This list gives you the opportunity to ask us to automatically purchase certain wines up to a maximum price. Clients who choose this option receive their allocations ahead of the Wish List and General List clients. Please be sure to indicate on the form the quantities you are interested in, as well as the price per bottle you are willing to pay for each wine (in either US\$ or HK\$).

☐ **Wish List - Second Priority:**

This is our second highest priority list and allows clients to indicate the number of cases of each wine they are interested in buying without making any commitment to buy. Once we have allocated the wines to clients who submitted a Buy List, we send emails to clients who have provided us with their Wish List indicating any quantities of wine that we can allocate for them.

☐ **General List - Third Priority:**

By signing up for this list, clients will receive our Futures offers for all wines that remain available after those have been offered first to the Buy List and then to the Wish List. You are only required to provide your contact information below.

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2021 FUTURES / EN PRIMEUR WISHLIST

								US\$ PER BT	HK\$ PER BT	US\$ PER BT	HK\$ PER BT
	Wine	Desired Quantity	Sotheby's	Nicholas Jackson MW	William Kelley for Wine Advocate	Antonio Galloni for Vinous	Neal Martin for Vinous	2020 Opening Price	2020 Opening Price	Your Top Purchase Price	Your Top Purchase Price
1	Angelus		92-94	93-95	94-96+	94-96	93-95	\$375	\$2,950		
2	Armailhac		89-91	88-90	91-93	88-90	90-92	\$50	\$400		
3	Aromes de Pavie		90-92	N/A	NA	91-93	90-92	\$90	\$700		
4	Ausone		94-96	N/A	97-100	93-95	93-95	\$730	\$5,600		
5	Beausejour Duffau Lagarosse		N/A	N/A	93-95+	92-95	92-94	N/A	N/A		
6	Belair Monange		92-94	N/A	93-95	93-95	90-92	\$205	N/A		
7	Beychevelle		91-93	91-93	91-94	92-94	91-93	\$88	\$700		
8	Branais-Ducru		90-92	N/A	93-94+	93-95	91-93	\$48	\$400		
9	Brane Cantenac		90-92	91-93	93-95	93-96	92-94	\$75	\$550		
10	Calon Segur		91-93	91-93.	95-96+	94-96	95-97	\$120	\$900		
11	Canon		92-94	91-93	94-96	95-97	92-94	\$139	\$1,090		

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12	Canon La Gaffeliere		N/A	N/A	93-95	94-96	91-93	N/A	N/A		
13	Carillon d'Angelus		90-92	87-89	90-92+	90-92	91-93	\$98	\$770		
14	Carruades de Lafite		91-93	91-93	90-92	91-93	89-91	\$250	\$1,900		
15	Chapelle d'Ausone		91-93	N/A	91-93	90-92	88-90	\$180	\$1,380		
16	Chapelle de la Mission Haut Brion		90-92	88-90	90-92	89-91	89-91	N/A	N/A		
17	Cheval Blanc		94-96	N/A	95-97	96-98	95-97	\$567	\$4,250		
18	Clarence de Haut Brion		91-93	89-91	91-93	90-92	90-92	N/A	N/A		
19	Clarte de Haut Brion		91-93	92-94	91-93	91-93	90-92	N/A	N/A		
20	Clerc Milon		90-92	92-94	92-94	92-94	90-92	\$86	\$650		
21	Clinet		91-93	N/A	93-95	92-94	92-94	\$99	\$730		
22	Conseillante		92-94	N/A	95-96	95-97	95-97	N/A	N/A		
23	Cos d'Estournel		92-94	92-94	94-95	94-96	93-95	\$222	\$1,700		
24	Domaine de Chevalier Blanc		93-95	92-94	94-96	91-93	95-97	\$100	\$820		
25	Domaine de Chevalier Rouge		92-94	90-92	93-95	94-96	93-95	\$72	\$580		
26	Ducru Beaucaillou		92-94	91-93	94-96	93-95	91-93	\$239	\$1,760		
27	Duhart Milon		90-92	89-91	91-93+	90-92	90-92	\$80	\$680		
28	Eglise Clinet		92-94	N/A	93-96+	94-96	94-96	\$345	\$2,600		
29	Figeac		93-95	92-94	94-97	93-95	95-97	\$225	\$1,680		
30	Fleur Petrus		91-93	N/A	91-94	93-95	90-92	N/A	N/A		
31	Forts de Latour		90-92	89-91	92-93+	92-94	N/A	N/A	N/A		
32	Giscours		91-93	90-92	93-95	94-96	91-93	\$63	\$470		
33	Grand Puy Lacoste		90-92	91-93	92-94+	94-96	92-94	\$77	\$620		
34	Gruaud Larose		91-93	91-93	94-95+	N/A	90-92	\$88	\$700		
35	Haut Bailly		92-94	91-93	94-95+	94-96	93-95	\$139	\$1,039		
36	Haut Brion		94-96	93-95	96-98	95-97	95-97	\$620	\$4,660		
37	Haut Brion Blanc		96-98	96-98	94-96+	96-98	96-98	\$865	\$6,500		
38	Hosanna		92-94	N/A	91-94	92-94	93-95	\$155	N/A		
39	Issan		90-92	90-92	90-93	90-92	90-92	N/A	N/A		
40	Lafite Rothschild		94-96	93-95	95-97	95-97	95-97	\$695	\$5,450		

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41	Lafleur		94-96	N/A	96-98	95-97	96-98	\$800	N/A		
42	Langoa Barton		90-92	89-91	92-94	90-92	91-93	\$46	\$380		
43	Larcis Ducasse		91-93	N/A	92-94	91-93	91-93	\$68	N/A		
44	Latour		92-94	N/A	95-97	93-96	N/A	N/A	N/A		
45	Leoville Barton		90-92	91-92	93-95	92-94	93-95	\$90	\$720		
46	Leoville Las Cases		92-94	92-94	95-97	92-94	93-95	\$310	\$2,300		
47	L'if		92-94	N/A	92-94+	94-96	93-95	N/A	N/A		
48	Lynch Bages		92-94	92-94	93-95	92-94	94-96	\$135	\$1,045		
49	Malartic Lagraviere Blanc		89-91	90-92	90-93	90-92	92-94	N/A	N/A		
50	Malartic Lagraviere Rouge		89-91	89-91	90-92	90-92	90-92	N/A	N/A		
51	Malescot St Exupery		89-91	N/A	92-94	93-95	90-92	N/A	N/A		
52	Margaux		94-96	93-95	95-97+	95-97	94-96	\$620	\$4,660		
53	Mission Haut Brion		93-95	91-93	94-96	92-94	93-95	\$360	\$2,720		
54	Mission Haut Brion Blanc		95-97	95-97	93-95	94-96	95-97	\$695	\$5,200		
55	Montrose		92-94	92-94	94-96	94-96	93-95	\$190	\$1,400		
56	Mouton Rothschild		94-96	93-95	95-96	94-96	93-95	\$620	\$4,660		
57	Palmer		93-95	92-94	95-97	94-97	94-96	\$333	\$2,600		
58	Pavie		91-93	N/A	NA	95-97	93-95	\$350	\$2,750		
59	Pavie Macquin		92-94	N/A	93-95	92-94	92-94	\$90	\$680		
60	Pavillon Blanc du Chateau Margaux		92-94	93-95	94-96	94-96	91-93	\$260	\$1,950		
61	Pavillon Rouge du Chateau Margaux		91-93	91-93	91-93	91-93	90-92	\$225	\$1,490		
62	Pensees de Lafleur		91-93	N/A	94-96	91-93	N/A	\$175	N/A		
63	Perrieres de Lafleur		91-93	N/A	94-95+	N/A	N/A	\$69	N/A		
64	Petit Cheval		90-92	N/A	89-91	92-94	90-92	\$176	\$1,325		
65	Petit Mouton		91-93	90-92	89-91	91-93	90-92	\$252	\$1,840		

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66	Petrus		93-95	N/A	93-96	93-95	95-97	N/A	N/A		
67	Pichon Baron		92-94	93-94	94-96+	95-97	93-95	\$160	\$1,280		
68	Pichon Lalande		93-95	92-94	94-95+	96-98	93-95	\$195	\$1,500		
69	Pontet Canet		92-94	92-94	91-93	93-95	91-93	\$110	\$850		
70	Quintus		90-92	89-91	92-94	92-94	N/A	\$110	\$835		
71	Rauzan Segla		93-95	92-94	93-95	94-97	94-96	\$100	\$800		
72	Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc		91-93	91-93	93-95	95-97	92-94	\$139	\$1,100		
73	Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge		92-94	92-94	94-96	96-98	94-96	\$139	\$1,100		
74	Talbot		91-93	91-93	91-92+	91-93	90-92	\$60	N/A		
75	Troplong Mondot		92-94	N/A	93-96	95-97	93-95	\$107	\$798		
76	Trotanoy		93-95	N/A	93-95	92-94	94-96	\$335	\$1,600		
77	Vieux Chateau Certan		94-96	N/A	94-96	96-98	95-97	\$358	N/A		

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Aile d'Argent S 91-93, NJ 90-92, WK 89-91, NM 91-93

A medium bodied wine with citrusy and grapefruit notes with long and precise length. A delectable and well balanced Aile d'Argent which will provide pleasure on release and for many years. Victor Rabot

Alter Ego S 91-93, NJ 90-92, WK 91-93, AG 92-94, NM 90-92

A very "Margaux" Alter Ego. A dark core of Merlot fruit at the center of the predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon structure. On the palate, well-delineated, generous black fruits, coffee, and chocolate. A stylish finish with good length and tannins. Paul Tortora

60% CS, 32% M, 8% PV. Ripe, dark fruited and relatively rich on the nose. On the palate, lots of acid and impressive concentration. Dark and heady; the dark fruit is quite noticeable here, where red fruit predominates elsewhere in this vintage. The fruit is chiselled by the acidity and by the firm, grainy tannins. Nick Jackson MW

Angelus S 92-94, NJ 93-95, WK 94-96+, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

Despite the very limited quantity produced, Stephanie and her team has made a remarkably medium to full bodied wine with attractive aromas of black fruits and toasted nose with a long and delicate finish. Victor Rabot

60% CF, 40% M. The unusually high proportion of Cabernet Franc (the most since 2003) is very marked by the unusual, dark, spicy nose, and very detailed fruit on the palate. This is full of energy and concentration, with juicy dark fruits on the velvety finish. A distinctive, characterful Angelus, atypical but quite compelling, and very successful in the context of the vintage. Nick Jackson MW

Armailhac S 89-91, NJ 88-90, WK 91-93, AG 88-90, NM 90-92

Lively fruity aromas with fresh blackcurrants and blackberries, along with purity and transparency. Juicy blackcurrant, spices and lead pencil finish. Supple and seamless. Jamie Ritchie

63% CS, 22% M, 13% CF, 2% PV. Juicy, pleasant and easy; harmonious and elegant if a little light and fresh. Red fruited with a nice cedary quality. Early drinking, pleasant Armailhac. Nick Jackson MW

Aromes de Pavie S 90-92, WK , AG 91-93, NM 90-92

The wood feels reasonably scaled back and balanced here compared to at some points in the past, the nose is lifted and fresh with wild strawberries and red cherries. This is mirrored on the palate, where the oak is well-balanced and the fresh red fruits are pretty, pleasant, and rounded. There is good balance here, a successful effort. George Lacey

Ausone S 94-96, WK 97-100, AG 93-95, NM 93-95

65% Cabernet France and 35% Merlot. If further evidence was required that one should take the early reports of 2021 being a "Cabernet vintage" with more than a little pinch of salt, then this is it. One of the great successes of the vintage, 2021 Ausone begins with a bright and floral nose, dominated by very pretty wild red fruit. There is a real sense of purity on the palate too, excellent freshness and lift but without the acidity feeling overbearing, and a glossy ripe sheen over the fresh red fruits. The finish is vibrant with impressive persistence, and the tannins are fine; extraction was evidently gentle and very carefully handled. George Lacey

Belair Monange S 92-94, WK 93-95, AG 93-95, NM 90-92

Fragrant, fresh, aromatic the nose is charming and opens on floral notes, violets and roses. The medium-bodied palate delivers firm grip on the entry to then bring bright ripe cherry, black currants and raspberry. Balanced and structured wine with a refreshing acidity, it impresses by its purity and freshness. Amayès Aouli

Beychevelle S 91-93, NJ 91-93, WK 91-94, AG 92-94, NM 91-93

Medium-dark garnet in color, the wine has a bouquet of vibrant blackberry, black currants, strawberry and rose petals. Full-bodied, fresh, elegant, it's refined, juicy, well-structured and balanced. The finish is all about silky tannins and supple notes of licorice, tobacco leaf, cedar and spices. Seductive and powerful. Amayès Aouli

57% CS, 38% M, 3% PV, 2% CF. Very concentrated, dark fruited nose followed by a rich, focused mid palate of brambly fruits. A milk chocolate finish. Quite firmly structured and one of the few wines tasted that is obviously a vin de garde. Not ultimate complexity but a very solid, well-made wine in this vintage, showing fruit, concentration, freshness and length. Nick Jackson MW

Branais-Ducru S 90-92, WK 93-94+, AG 93-95, NM 91-93

Perfumed high-toned nose of savoury red fruits: cherries, redcurrants. Well balanced and harmonious with fruit that follows through to the finish. Well made. Jamie Ritchie

Brane Cantenac S 90-92, NJ 91-93, WK 93-95, AG 93-96, NM 92-94

A refined and elegant wine with a good concentration and long length with notes of black fruits with an elegant finish. Henri Lurton has produced a great Brane Cantenac. Victor Rabot

22% M, 2% CF, 74% CS, 1% PV, 1% Car. A surprisingly rich, concentrated wine with a plush texture, with some nice woody, cedary notes so typical of this property. The tannins are modest, and all fruit-wrapped. Tons of finesse here, and a really enjoyable wine even today. Lots of pleasure! Nick Jackson MW

Calon Segur S 91-93, NJ 91-93., WK 95-96+, AG 94-96, NM 95-97

Light on its feet, with a medium-bodied, open-knit texture without any heaviness. A Bordeaux for Volnay drinkers? There is pure, vibrant fruit, with a velvety texture and fine finish. Charming. Paul Tortora

81% CS, 11% CF, 7% M, 1% PV. A leafy, tobacco-scented nose: what a pure expression of Cabernet! Just a hint of chocolate and a little cognac taste from the oak (100% new). Quite unforced and easy wine; ripe, fruit-wrapped tannins and a long, juicy, milk chocolate finish. Only mid weight with plenty of freshness. A wine of pleasure that will only take 10 years to hit its peak. Nick Jackson MW

Canon S 92-94, NJ 91-93, WK 94-96, AG 95-97, NM 92-94

Canon offers precise and detailed nose built on complex aromas of blackberry, raspberry, plum and subtle touches of spice, chocolate, and rose petals. A true fragrance. On the palate, it displays an impressive volume, freshness and a lively energy. The wine is full bodied, depth with a succulent long and saline finish. It has an impressive tannin structure where everything is about this precision between grip and finesse. One of greatest right bank wines of the vintage and a superb achievement for Nicolas Audebert and his team. Amayès Aouli

70% M, 30% CF. Gorgeous aromas of succulent Merlot. On the palate, lots of pleasure already, with a sapid finish. It lacks the velvety fullness of the warm vintages but is very seamless and enjoyable. Simply a fresh, early drinking expression of this wine, with firm tannins. A classical style, and all the better for it! Nick Jackson MW

Carillon d'Angelus S 90-92, NJ 87-89, WK 90-92+, AG 90-92, NM 91-93

80% M, 20% CF. Bright, light and sapid, with lots of energy. Dry and fresh on the finish. An elegant, restrained style. Nick Jackson MW

Carmes Haut Brion S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 94-97, AG 96-98, NM 93-95

First time for Sotheby's team to taste at the Chateau. An impressive wine with great energy a perfect balance between ripe tannins and fresh black fruits. A lot concentration and joy here. This will age gracefully. Victor Rabot

40% CF, 35% CS, 25% M. Tight and concentrated, savoury and dry, with greater concentration than most. Serious, brooding wine, with a powerful tannin structure and undoubted gravitas. This may not be showy, but makes for very convincing, serious drinking. Nick Jackson MW

Carruades de Lafite S 91-93, NJ 91-93, WK 90-92, AG 91-93, NM 89-91

The signature Lafite finesse, class and elegance. A medium-bodied Carruades with beautiful red and black fruit, with a finely textured, seamless and sleek finish. Paul Tortora

55% CS, 36% M, 5% CF, 4% PV. Such a classical Carruades! Tight and slender with excellent structure and purity of expression. Lifted and subtly aromatic. A little strict today, but there is plenty of sinewy mid palate concentration, and a gorgeous red-fruited quality. Nick Jackson MW

Champs Libres S 92-94,

From the Lafleur stable. Omri Ram explains that the whites have a new cellar this year, stored at a slightly lower temperature of 12 degrees, and consequently are currently still on the lees as the fermentation and élevage has all been slowed down as a result. So, whilst recognizing that this is not yet the finished product, it is nonetheless clear that 2021 is a success for Champs Libres. This is a lovely Bordeaux Blanc, with abundant aromas of pear drops, green apple skin, ripe white peach and melon. The palate has a lovely texture and even a hint of richness, and there is good energy, concentration and tension through the finish, which is certainly not true of all of the region's whites this year. George Lacey

Chapelle d'Ausone S 91-93, WK 91-93, AG 90-92, NM 88-90

Chapelle d'Ausone exhibits attractive aromas of blackberries and black cherries, violets, spices, rose petals. Medium to full-bodied, velvety and precise, it's elegant and refined, with a deep core of fruit and impeccable balance. Density and layers to the nose with great energy. Bright and complex. Amayès Aouli

Chapelle de la Mission Haut Brion S 90-92, NJ 88-90, WK 90-92, AG 89-91, NM 89-91

Bright healthy nose of blackberry, blackcurrant and black cherries. Fresh, juicy and bright with both elegance and structure. Continuous fruit from beginning to end. Elegant, supple, pure and refined. On the lighter side, but very successful. Jamie Ritchie

A pretty, bright, grainy, red fruited nose; some nice tobacco notes too. Slightly light but very true to type and authentic. Nick Jackson MW

Cheval Blanc S 94-96, WK 95-97, AG 96-98, NM 95-97

Interestingly, a large proportion of the Cabernet Franc this year comes from young vines (25% of it from less than 8 year-old vines, 33% from less than 15 year-old vines). This is significant because the young vines produced very good fruit in this vintage; their shallower root systems were less well supplied by the high water table, and the vines were therefore still under hydric stress during August and September which resulted in more concentration and better phenolic ripeness. 52% of the blend is Cabernet Franc this year, and the success of these young Cabernet vines is immediately apparent. This is one of the most complete wines to be found in 2021, extremely classical and with fresh, but crucially balanced, acidity. This is complex with bright, ripe red fruits, sappy blood orange flesh and a saline, mineral character, lovely structure and balance with very fine tannins. The ABV was naturally 13-13.25% with no chaptalization. A truly classic Cheval Blanc. George Lacey

Clarence de Haut Brion S 91-93, NJ 89-91, WK 91-93, AG 90-92, NM 90-92

Violets with red and black fruits. A lighter concentration here, but has clarity, elegance and transparency, with a brightness and freshness. Red and black cherries/berries on the finish, with a cedar, tobacco finish. A good Clarence. Jamie Ritchie

There is plenty of elegance and finesse here, and it already displays that lovely Haut Brion velvety texture. Mid weight, suave, fresh, with richness. Nick Jackson MW

Clarte de Haut Brion S 91-93, NJ 92-94, WK 91-93, AG 91-93, NM 90-92

Pure class and impeccably balanced. An enticing core of multi-layered citrus and orchard fruits along with white and yellow flowers. An excellent, lingering finish invites a second glass. Paul Tortora

A smoky, greengage nose with some grapefruit saltiness. Very vibrant and salty, with really excellent concentration and a chewy finish. This is proper white Bordeaux with real substance! Guava on the finish. Very convincing and will drink well for 10+ years. Nick Jackson MW

Clerc Milon S 90-92, NJ 92-94, WK 92-94, AG 92-94, NM 90-92

Perfumed, deep, rich nose of red and black cherries and blackcurrant, with concentration. Juicy and opulent with a generosity. An abundance of cassis fruit, combined with acidity and tannin, with everything in equilibrium. Has a liveliness and joy. Finish of blackcurrant, cedar, and tobacco with minerality. A very good Clerc Milon. Jamie Ritchie

59% CS, 28% M, 10% CF, 1.5% Car, 1.5% PV. Real breed on the nose here, with an excellent cedary quality. The fruit concentration is generous, with an ample mid palate that is plush and richly textured. Powerful and classically rich, structured Pauillac. A notably successful Clerc, with a lovely texture and depth that belies the vintage. Nick Jackson MW

Clinet S 91-93, WK 93-95, AG 92-94, NM 92-94

Harvest here was between 27th and 30th September for the Merlot (75%) and on 12th October for the Cabernet Franc (25%). This has one of the more opulent noses on the Right Bank in 2021, with some exotic darker black fruits as well as sweet five spice and vanilla. On the palate the fruit is rich, round and glossy, but without seeming overly mature. The more opulent black fruits of the nose are supported by a core of fresher red fruit on the palate, particularly red plums, damsons and mulberries. The tannins are impressively ripe, with good concentration of fruit and a nice spine of fresh acidity supporting the finish. This is well-balanced and successful. George Lacey

Conseillante S 92-94, WK 95-96, AG 95-97, NM 95-97

A lovely fresh nose of wild strawberry, black currants and fresh violets. Already displaying a great structure on the palate jointly with freshness and energy. Succulent, sleek and voluminous, with a lovely texture and weight, finishes with intensity and great length. Amayès Aouli

Cos d'Estournel S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 94-95, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

The immediately identifiable, exotically spiced "Cos" nose. Modern in style. Mid-weight black fruit framed by a significant structure. Paul Tortora

64% CS, 30% M, CF 4%, PV 2%. Wow! A very dry, serious Cos of old here! Lots of savoury, stony impact on the nose. Unapologetically throwback, albeit with a dark fruitiness on the finish to prevent austerity. Very stony on the finish: couldn't be more authentically St. Estèphe. Excellent concentration. This is a remarkably classic Cos that lovers of the property will understand instinctively. Nick Jackson MW

Domaine de Chevalier Blanc S 93-95, NJ 92-94, WK 94-96, AG 91-93, NM 95-97

A vibrant interplay of flinty minerality with multi-layered citrus and, to a lesser extent, tropical fruit. Seductive length of flavour on the intense finish. Excellent. Paul Tortora

75% SB, 25% Sem. An incredibly perfumed, vibrant, fruity nose: very charismatic. A fresh, exuberant wine with a lovely Sauvignon Blanc expression, in the typical Chevalier mode. A touch of creaminess on the finish balancing the high acidity. Delicious immediate drinking. Nick Jackson MW

Domaine de Chevalier Rouge S 92-94, NJ 90-92, WK 93-95, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

Blackcurrants and black cherries. Fine, expressive and pure. Has consistent fruit, good texture and weight. Good mid palate with a smoky, tobacco finish. Medium weight with good body. Stylish and elegant. A top, classic Domaine de Chevalier.

80% CS, 10% M, 5% each PV/CF. A much brighter, more lively style than usual here. Silky, mid weight, fresh and concentrated with pleasantly grainy tannins. Some richness of fruit on the dry finish. A well made, compact, elegant expression of Chevalier. Nick Jackson MW

Ducru Beaucaillou S 92-94, NJ 91-93, WK 94-96, AG 93-95, NM 91-93

Stylish and classic mid-weight palate. A polished core of mostly dark black fruit. A freshness on the finish framed by fine tannins. Très chic! Paul Tortora

98% CS, 2% M. 101 IPT! 12.5% alc. Lots of glossy, intense fruit on the nose. Ample freshness, from acidity, but also from the lighter mid palate thanks to the Cabernet Sauvignon dominance (an amazing 98% of the blend!). A powerfully structured wine, with considerable dark fruit that coats the palate. It finishes dry and stony: very authentic Ducru! Nick Jackson MW

Duhart Milon S 90-92, NJ 89-91, WK 91-93+, AG 90-92, NM 90-92

Black fruit with a chiseled very Cabernet Sauvignon nose. Sleek, harmonious and well balanced, with good fruit, structure, healthy tannins and acidity. Salty, mineral finish. Classy. Jamie Ritchie

13%, 3.8pH, IPT 62. 81% CS, 19% M. There is nice concentration here in the svelte, elegant, supple Duhart style; very classic. A taste of salt and roses: sapid freshness. Nicely done in an understated, finessed profile. Nick Jackson MW

Eglise Clinet S 92-94, WK 93-96+, AG 94-96, NM 94-96

Denis Durantou's daughters, Noémie and Constance, are doing an admirable job here having had to take over so unexpectedly and in such sad circumstances in 2020. Their 2021 is a testament to their ongoing excellent work in the vineyard, and they ably continue to fly the flag for the family philosophy of producing terroir-driven, expressive and elegant Bordeaux of which their father was so proud. 2021 L'Eglise Clinet is a lovely Pomerol. The harvest was completed in a short window at the end of September this year for both the Merlot (85%) and Cabernet France (15%), in order to beat the October rains. The bouquet is expressive with wonderful candied red fruits, some spiced plums and vanilla (though the oak feels well-balanced and relatively restrained). In fact, restrained elegance would be a good way to sum up this wine as a whole. It is nuanced and finessed, with fleshy bright red fruits, fresh orange zest and mandarin sorbet on the medium-bodied palate, and an elegant, fine and precise finish. George Lacey

Figeac S 93-95, NJ 92-94, WK 94-97, AG 93-95, NM 95-97

First vintage in the beautiful new facility. One of the wines of the vintage, a bright and deep colored wine with beautiful notes of violet, blueberries, fresh and elegant with a very long persistence. Rounded tannins are perfectly well integrated. Victor Rabot

29% M, 31% CF, 40% CS. A very cool, controlled Figeac: fresh and linear. There is a lovely, sapid and graphite mineral quality to the particularly pure fruit. The tannins are very fine, and the finish fragrant. This is Figeac in its most elegant style, mid weight only, with excellent freshness. All harmony and finesse here. Nick Jackson MW

Fleur Petrus S 91-93, WK 91-94, AG 93-95, NM 90-92

Deep purple in color, the 2021 la Fleur-Petrus has vibrant notes of black cherries, plums and kirsch with scents of oriental spices and white pepper. Full-bodied, rich and enveloping with precise tannins. The multilayered palette of ripped fruits is complemented by dark chocolate, cedar, spices aromas and a distinctive (and impressive) long finish with savory mineral and saline notes. Well-structured and balanced, the wine is fresh, juicy...and joyful. Amayès Aouli

Forts de Latour S 90-92, NJ 89-91, WK 92-93+, AG 92-94, NM

61% CS, 33% M, 6.4% PV, 13% alc, 70 IPT. At this young age, quite reserved aromatically. Nice concentration and freshness, with an attractive velvety texture. Some juicy fruit, but this remains a strict style in keeping with the grand traditions of this chateau! Nick Jackson MW

Giscours S 91-93, NJ 90-92, WK 93-95, AG 94-96, NM 91-93

65% Cabernet Sauvignon. 32% Merlot. 3% Petit Verdot. There's a real harmony with the fruit and tannins, with a compelling interplay between the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, followed by fine tannins and a nuanced finish. This will require some bottle age to show its full potential. Paul Tortora

65% CS, 32% M, 3% PV. Well structured; quite powerful for the vintage, with typically grainy Cabernet tannins. Excellent concentration, without heaviness; ripe, supple fruit with a pleasant dryness on the finish. Quite a classical, formal, upstanding Giscours; authentic Margaux with its soft fruit and suppleness, but with good structure for ageing. Well done. Nick Jackson MW

Grand Puy Lacoste S 90-92, NJ 91-93, WK 92-94+, AG 94-96, NM 92-94

Spicy blackcurrant and black cherry. Quite tart and savory, with fruit and tannin that follow, but should knit together. Savory, lead pencil, mineral finish. Pleasurable Pauillac. Jamie Ritchie

85% CS, 15% M. Gentle red fruits and tobacco on the nose. Lots of elegance and focus on the palate; this is the essence of Pauillac Cabernet linearity and precision. Gravelly, graceful, easy to drink, with a subtle complexity. Classic and will be early maturing GPL; try 6-8 years after the vintage, and for the following 10 years. Nick Jackson MW

Gruaud Larose S 91-93, NJ 91-93, WK 94-95+, AG , NM 90-92

Powerful concentrated wine with multiple layers of flavors. Lavish black fruits and ripe tannins. A well-structured Gruaud Larose that will provide plenty of joy on release and for years to come. Victor Rabot

61% CS, 29% M, 7% CF, 3% PV. Quite a rich, generous wine, with powerful, well sculpted tannins, and a typical St. Julien cookie dough finish. A structured, serious style with ageing potential, while also showcasing accessible, generous fruit. Delicious wine and a great success, showing the recent improvements at this estate. Nick Jackson MW

Haut Bailly S 92-94, NJ 91-93, WK 94-95+, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

Charming, alluring, healthy vibrant blackcurrant and black cherry nose. Good weight and concentration from the miniscule 19 hl/ha which provides its density. Blackcurrant and black cherry on the palate, with salinity and minerality and slightly grainy tannins. Has poise and presence, with transparency and purity. Good structure with blackcurrant, cedar and coffee finish. An excellent wine. Jamie Ritchie

65% CS, 22% M, 10% PV, 3% CF. This is a rich, chocolatey and concentrated wine, with plenty of structure, typical of the site. Very giving and welcoming fruit, offering lots of supple, easy pleasure, well worked tannins with a nice inner mouth perfume. Nick Jackson MW

Haut Brion S 94-96, NJ 93-95, WK 96-98, AG 95-97, NM 95-97

Brambles, blackcurrant, black cherry nose with a touch of liquorice and tobacco. Juicy and vibrant. Red fruits come through on the palate with cedar, lead pencil and tobacco. Elegant, pure and transparent, while being multi-layered and complex. Very well balanced with fruit acidity and tannin in equilibrium. A complete wine with detail and definition. Definitely, for me, one of the red wines of the vintage.

A tight knit, precise Haut Brion, as if carved from stone; very seamless and texturally finessed. Cool, chiselled, refined. Not very aromatically expressive at present but the technical components are all immaculate. A very undemonstrative, classy wine of enormous pedigree. Quite intellectual in its restraint; a style more Bach-like than Beethoven. This is a style of Haut Brion we have not seen for several years, but no less impressive, and quite fascinating. Nick Jackson MW

Haut Brion Blanc S 96-98, NJ 96-98, WK 94-96+, AG 96-98, NM 96-98

Nose is more open and intense than La Mission Blanc. Full, complex aroma of citric fruits from limes to grapefruit, with a saltiness and minerality. Structured and full flavored, yet fresh. Multi-dimensional on the palate with limes, greengages, grapefruit, pineapple, melon, peaches. Extremely refined, with great poise and balance. Everything in harmony. Great length and evolution. Complex and refined. A great Haut Brion Blanc.

This has great richness of fruit, coating the structure flamboyantly. If La Mission Haut Brion Blanc has a lot of skeleton showing through the skin, here the lusciousness of the fruit contributes more flesh. Succulent, deep, peer-into-the-depths white; with an underlying mineral core of stoniness and smokiness. Impressive and statuesque. Limpid. Nick Jackson M

Hosanna S 92-94, WK 91-94, AG 92-94, NM 93-95

Deep garnet-purple color, Hosanna greets you by flamboyant notes of berry fruit, plums, spices, vanilla and creamy new oak. This delightful nose is here to introduce you a medium-bodied, fresh and juicy wine. Well-structured and enveloping, full-bodied, it has the exact doses of ripe, generously extracted fruit like raspberry and red cherry. Long finish where black chocolate, oriental spices and toasty oak. Amayès Aouli

Issan S 90-92, NJ 90-92, WK 90-93, AG 90-92, NM 90-92

65% CS, 30% M, 2% CF, 2% Malbec, 1% PV. Issan shows concentrated fruit, with a rich, velvety texture - very Margaux. At most mid weight, with a lifted, floral note in the mid palate, so quite elegant and lifted rather than heavy. Nicely done in a modest, understated way. Nick Jackson MW

Lafite Rothschild S 94-96, NJ 93-95, WK 95-97, AG 95-97, NM 95-97

A purist's Lafite. Understated but confident elegance and class. Delightfully red fruited and a seamless texture with effortless power and intensity, even if, today, quite reticent. Paul Tortora

96% CS, 3% M, 1% PV. A gorgeous perfume of roses, delicate red fruits and salt. Elegant and supple; sweet and irresistible. Really subtle but gorgeous, coy, flattering Lafite; so much finesse without any density. Will even pass some by with its subtleness and gentility, but don't be deceived: this is the princess in the corner. Nick Jackson MW

Lafleur S 94-96, WK 96-98, AG 95-97, NM 96-98

Cellar Master Omri Ram explained that this year's frost was different to the usual "inversion frosts" that Bordeaux has usually experienced in the past. The cold was far more extreme and dramatic, but 10 long nights of hard work with the team meant that they didn't suffer any significant damage. The mildew in June presented another challenge, but Lafleur's Cabernet Franc was relatively resistant and they managed to preserve the vast majority of the Merlot too. Famously on gravel rather than Pomerol clay, they are lots of violets and fresh cut flowers on the nose here. The palate has great texture, with lovely fine and bright raspberry and red cherry flavours. Fine tannins and the finish is long, elegant and balanced. Coming back to the wine after 5 minutes in the glass, the fruit feels more silky and expressive. This is one of the great successes of the 2021 vintage. George Lacey

Langoa Barton S 90-92, NJ 89-91, WK 92-94, AG 90-92, NM 91-93

A medium-bodied framework and succulent, almost savoury, gravelly palate of red and black fruits. Finishes with fine tannins and good length. Paul Tortora

61% CS, 36% M, 3% CF. Lots of nice brambly fruit; plenty of substance. Juicy and fresh. Just a little austere and restrained for now, but will blossom with 3-5 years in bottle. Nick Jackson MW

Larcis Ducasse S 91-93, WK 92-94, AG 91-93, NM 91-93

An impressive effort in 2021, for a wine that is sometimes overshadowed by its recently very popular stablemate Pavie Macquin. This is very charming, the nose showing quite a lot of spice alongside ripe red plums and cherries. The palate has lots of fresh but ripe fruit, blackberries and blueberries with an element of a more savoury, wild bramble character. The tannins feel relatively present right now but are ripe and well-supported by a good core of fruit through the persistent finish. George Lacey

Latour S 92-94, WK 95-97, AG 93-96,

An expressive wine with beautiful notes of dark fruits with smooth and silky tannins. This multi layered full bodied wine offer a great depth and complexity. Victor Rabot

Leoville Barton S 90-92, NJ 91-92, WK 93-95, AG 92-94, NM 93-95

A classic Léoville Barton. Intensely black fruited with a beautiful, perfumed nose, and everything in its place. Finishes elegantly with fine tannins and good length. Paul Tortora

84% CS, 11% M, 3% CF. 13.1% alc. Leoville shows particularly pure, svelte, linear Cabernet: really the essence of Cabernet and of St Julien. Stony and cassis flavours. The tannins are pure and fruit-wrapped. In old wine books, English wine writers occasionally said a wine was 'fine', meaning refined or effortlessly sophisticated. This is just that. Nick Jackson MW

Leoville Las Cases S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 95-97, AG 92-94, NM 93-95

Vibrant freshness frames the pure, multi-layered but balanced red and black fruits, which figure prominently. Finishes clean and classy. Paul Tortora

80% CS, 15% CF, 5% M. Deep, rich, dark fruits on the palate; serious, brooding and chewy. Dry but not austere, thanks to the ample fruit. This is a classical Las Cases of authority and power with an extended ageing potential in the context of the vintage. A bright, fresh finish. An impressive wine of excellent stature, and rewarding for lovers of the chateau, who will recognise the style immediately. Nick Jackson MW

L'if S 92-94, WK 92-94+, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

Luscious tannins with aromas of dark fruits, juicy and full bodied. The 2021 show a great concentration and energy. L'If has performed very well and I believe will age beautifully. Victor Rabot

Lynch Bages S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 93-95, AG 92-94, NM 94-96

Good intensity of blackcurrants and black cherries. Fresh, bright fruit. Very Cabernet. Medium weight with good intensity, concentration and dimension. Finishes with a mineral, cedar and lead pencil. Harmonious and balanced with plenty of tannin, covered by the fruit. Refreshing acidity and modest alcohol. The LB team used their new winery to good effect and have crafted an excellent expression of the Lynch Bages terroir and a very successful 2021. Jamie Ritchie

67% CS, 25% M, 3% CF, 5% PV. There is considerable concentration here, with lots of blackberry, chocolatey depth. Powerful and focused, this is a pure expression of Cabernet, with its tight, grainy tannins. A very classical Lynch Bages with a great structure and more than sufficient fruit to cover it. This convinces absolutely. Excellent wine with admirable concentration for the vintage. Dry. Nick Jackson MW

Malartic Lagraviere Blanc S 89-91, NJ 90-92, WK 90-93, AG 90-92, NM 92-94

89% Sauvignon Blanc. 11% Semillon. A noticeable step up from "Le Conte" in terms of concentration. Bright acidity, citrus fruited, a perfume of white and yellow flowers, and a very "Sancerre" nose, with Sauvignon Blanc the star of the show. A real crowd-pleaser. Paul Tortora

89% SB, 11% Sem. Good concentration, with a nice creamy texture and freshness. Quite a relaxed, easy, early drinking style; very authentic and enjoyable. Nick Jackson MW

Malartic Lagraviere Rouge S 89-91, NJ 89-91, WK 90-92, AG 90-92, NM 90-92

An elegant example of Malartic showing blackcurrants with a bright acidity and a good concentration. This balanced wine offers a savory finish. Victor Rabot

67% CS, 32% M, 1% CF. This is a bright, high acid style; but nonetheless quite powerful, with firm Bordeaux tannins and generous, velvety Merlot fruit in the middle. Traditional and satisfying. Nick Jackson MW

Malescot St Exupery S 89-91, WK 92-94, AG 93-95, NM 90-92

Well-defined bouquet and a great aromatic in the mouth of ripe blueberries and spices. The palate is medium bodied where elegant blackfruits are nicely complemented by a floral silky texture, flavors of cedar and chocolate. A very interesting mid-palate, all about juiciness and freshness. Amayès Aouli

Margaux S 94-96, NJ 93-95, WK 95-97+, AG 95-97, NM 94-96

Fragrant red and black berries and currants. Subtle, elegant, pure, transparent - refined and restrained – and complete from end to end. Has a silky texture, harmony and balance with finesse. Smoky, toasty, cedar finish. Jamie Ritchie

87% CS, 8% M, 3% CF, 2% PV. A very fragrant, even orangey nose; and then, surprising for the vintage, quite a thick, rich texture on the palate. The palate is quite compact and restrained at this point but shows admirable concentration and depth. A finish of milk chocolate and red fruits precedes a delicate red fruit retronasal perfume. Quite a firm tannic frame that is almost imperceptible, so velvety is the fruit, but it is certainly there. Plenty of acid too. This is difficult vintage Margaux in the contemporary era perfectly expressed: supple, elegant, fine, just lacking the layers of concentration of riper years. Nick Jackson MW

Mission Haut Brion S 93-95, NJ 91-93, WK 94-96, AG 92-94, NM 93-95

Fragrant red and black berries and currants. Subtle, elegant, pure, transparent - refined and restrained – and complete from end to end. Has a silky texture, harmony and balance with finesse. Smoky, toasty, cedar finish. Jamie Ritchie

A ripe, rich, polished wine of great pedigree. Lots of texture and firm structure, all coated with supple fruit. Smoky. This should make a classically styled La Mission with a characteristic, dry, stony, smoky finish. Finely done. Nick Jackson MW

Mission Haut Brion Blanc S 95-97, NJ 95-97, WK 93-95, AG 94-96, NM 95-97

Notes of pear, white flowers, grapefruit, lemon; perfectly balanced with a long length, a beautiful mineral finish. A triumphant Mission Haut Brion Blanc. Victor Rabot

A very expansive, flavour-packed wine. Fantastic concentration and intensity of flavour; almost severe in its focus today. A huge structure. Immense power and authority if a little tight - monastic! - now. This is one of the greats which should not be touched for 10 years. Nick Jackson MW

Montrose S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 94-96, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

A mid-weight structure frames enticing red and black fruits, with the signature Montrose slight 'iodé', finishing with fine, even if slightly dry, tannins and good length. Paul Tortora

62% CS, 31% M, 6% CF, 1% PV. What a suave, sophisticated, complex wine! Lots of finesse and subtle flavour complexity. Authentic, linear, pure and balanced. A textbook Montrose of great stature, with a dry, salty finish, balanced by plenty of fruit. A gloriously classical Montrose. Nick Jackson MW

Mouton Rothschild S 94-96, NJ 93-95, WK 95-96, AG 94-96, NM 93-95

Layers of silky tannins, black fruits, spices and touch of smokiness; a very harmonious wine with a very good density. Everything is in the wine, concentration, balance, freshness. Victor Rabot

89% CS, 10% M, 1% CF. A broad, expansive, classic Mouton in its relaxed density and velvety richness. A self-confident, regal style, not trying too hard; pure Mouton in its expansive dimensions and self-assured ambitions. Beautifully made wine with huge structure but all so enrobed in fruit you almost don't notice it. But this is one of the few wines where you must wait at least 12 years before drinking. Nick Jackson MW

Palmer S 93-95, NJ 92-94, WK 95-97, AG 94-97, NM 94-96

Blackberries, and blackcurrants. Vibrant with crunchy fruit and good weight, particularly in the mid palate, with a roundness, weight and richness that is missing in many wines. Good concentration, multi-layered, with a rich, creamy texture and a real cassis flavor with a long blackcurrant finish. Great depth and dimension for this vintage. A very good Palmer and quite unique. Jamie Ritchie

56% M, 3% PV, 31% CS. A high toned, aromatic nose. On the palate, a serious, grainy wine with a powerful structure; only mid-weight. Dry, fresh, linear and bright. Quite aristocratic and haughty at this stage, but with indisputable gravitas and class. The Merlot here (unusually, a majority in this vintage) really tastes like Cabernet by its raciness and energy. A beautifully made wine of distinct character and sophistication. Nick Jackson M

Pavie S 91-93, WK , AG 95-97, NM 93-95

An exuberant nose of sweet blue and black fruits, lots of blueberry, plum, damson and mulberry. The palate is nicely ripe, with dense and glossy fruit, and more freshness than recent vintages although there is still no mistaking the characteristic Pavie blueberry compote flavor. Fans of Pavie will really enjoy this effort. The wood tannins are currently quite present on the finish but there is a nice line of fresher red fruit that runs through the end and has enough concentration to suggest that it should come to the fore as the oak integrates. George Lace

Pavie Macquin S 92-94, WK 93-95, AG 92-94, NM 92-94

Welcomed by scents of fresh blueberry, currants and kirsch, the nose develops delicate zest of orange, vanilla and oriental spices after aeration. Medium-bodied and multilayered, the palate is all about depth and complexity. Bright, fresh, vibrant, with creamy notes, Pavie Macquin is long and ends by delicate and well-integrated oaky notes. Amayès Aouli

Pavillon Blanc du Chateau Margaux S 92-94, NJ 93-95, WK 94-96, AG 94-96, NM 91-93

A full-bodied wine, with citrusy and white flowers aromas. This is a great example of Pavillon Blanc delivering a long-lasting wine with a great energy and focus. Victor Rabot

100% SB. A gorgeous, expressive, grapefruit nose. A very fresh expression of Pavillon Blanc: extremely lively, with good pithy substance contributing structure. Full of personality and energy, with really zesty acidity. A nice, fragrant, citrus finish. Nick Jackson M

Pavillon Rouge du Chateau Margaux S 91-93, NJ 91-93, WK 91-93, AG 91-93, NM 90-92

A beautiful, classically styled Pavillon Rouge. A lively and vibrant acidity frames a rich core of pure red berries and black fruits leading to a seamless and stylish finish. Paul Tortora

73% CS, 18% M, 4% CF, 5% PV. A lovely floral nose here: classic Margaux. Rich, supple dark fruits; lots of glycerol and moderate richness. There is a nice milk chocolate edge to the flavours. Mid weight, pure, elegant Pavillon; all so easy to drink; supple and unforced. Some tobacco, leafy quality in there too - a bit like a Margaux grand vin of old. Classy wine. Nick Jackson MW

Pensees de Lafleur S 91-93, WK 94-96, AG 91-93, NM

A concentrated nose of violet and red berries. Tannins are perfectly ripe with a medium to full bodied. A wine with great finesse and complexity with a very long perfumed length. A cru that first saw life in 1987, things evolved with the 2000 vintage the Guinaudeau family started to select parcels with a majority of clay for Les Pensees. Victor Rabot

Perrieres de Lafleur S 91-93, WK 94-95+,

The lineup at Chateau Lafleur from Grand Village to the Grand Vin was spectacular. Here the parcels are located on a limestone soil in Fronsac. Nose of violet, with a touch of smokiness, the wine shows a distinguished balance between black fruits, ripe tannins and acidity. A wine with an impressive density complexity. Victor Rabot

Petit Cheval S 90-92, WK 89-91, AG 92-94, NM 90-92

Petit Cheval represents 13% of the total production at Cheval Blanc this year (18% was sold to bulk, and 69% went into the Grand Vin). This contains more Cabernet Sauvignon than usual (33%), thanks to the presence of a parcel of Cabernet vines that in recent years has gone into the Grand Vin. This lends a core of dark fruit to the bouquet alongside the more typical floral, cocoa and smokey aromas. Relatively strict on the palate, with impressive structure and tight, impenetrable tannins, this will take some time to come around and will perhaps not be as approachable as recent vintages of Petit Cheval. With some bottle age, however, it should be impressive. George Lace

Petit Eglise S 90-92, WK 89-91, AG 90-92, NM 90-92

This comes from a separate plot, close to the main L'Eglise Clinet vineyard. As ever, this should be one of the great value buys of the vintage. Very pretty and floral nose, with fresh, tart wild strawberries and a hint of cherry blossom. The palate feels well rounded, medium bodied and elegant with tart red cherries, raspberries and some sweet spices. This has lovely definition and fine structure, with an energetic and bright finish. George Lacey

Petit Mouton S 91-93, NJ 90-92, WK 89-91, AG 91-93, NM 90-92

Aromatic nose of black cherries with spices and cinnamon. Juicy and concentrated fruit with tannins, along with balancing acidity. Lead pencil, cedar, blackcurrant, coffee finish. Has power, depth and structure. A very good Petit Mouton. Jamie Ritchie

77% CS, 19.5% M, 3% CF, 0.5% PV. Petit Mouton is a powerful, compact wine with considerable density if lacking a little charm at this stage. A tight knit, focused tannin structure. Dry and serious, and really quite ageworthy. No corners cut here - this is the authentic spicy Mouton style, just lacking the flair of warmer years. The texture is wonderfully rich. Nick Jackson MW

Petrus S 93-95, WK 93-96, AG 93-95, NM 95-97

The nose here is expressive, though where one might expect the opulence and richness that has marked recent modern vintages, we find instead classicism and a cool, refined character. For me, this is one of the great benefits of the admittedly mixed 2021 vintage, especially at properties that are lucky to occupy prime terroir and who experienced fewer problems with achieving phenolic ripeness than less fortunately-situated estates. The harvest here was between 30th September and 9th October, crucially before the mid-October rains. Aromatically this is bright and lifted, with lots of floral character. On the palate there is lots of bright red fruit, cranberries, redcurrants and fresh strawberries; with more time in the glass it opens up to show a little cocoa and spice, and finishes with sappy red fruit, and fine, well-managed tannins. George Lacey

Pichon Baron S 92-94, NJ 93-94, WK 94-96+, AG 95-97, NM 93-95

Harmonious wine with a good level of ripe tannins and concentration. This is a fine Pichon Baron with a great density and structure with a long and persistent finish with notes of blackcurrants. Victor Rabot

88% CS, 12% M. Not very expressive on the nose, but this is pure Pichon Baron on the palate: broad, majestic, generous. A cedary flavour with fine blackberry and blackcurrant fruit, unusual in this vintage where red fruit usually wins out. Very strict and controlled; classically structured and powerful, all very tight knit and focused. This will need 15 years' ageing, but then should be a superbly classic Pichon Baron. Nick Jackson MW

Pichon Lalande S 93-95, NJ 92-94, WK 94-95+, AG 96-98, NM 93-95

A highlight of the campaign, a classic, mid-weight Pauillac structure frames the well-defined, beautifully scented black fruits, with an impactful, energetic and silky finish. Paul Tortora

88% CS, 2% M, 10% CF. A glorious, tobacco, spicy, Pichon nose; so charismatic! Fabulously rich, velvety texture with some dark chocolate and coffee notes beneath. Wonderfully grainy tannin. Really so much character here, albeit without the superstructure or density of the best years. Succulent and supple already, it will not make old bones, but a compelling Pichon with a great terroir expression. A really excellent mid palate texture in a difficult year, but as Nicolas says, the Cabernet was ripe, and they extracted carefully. Nick Jackson MW

Pontet Canet S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 91-93, AG 93-95, NM 91-93

Very expressive, vibrant, juicy, fresh nose of ripe blackberries, blackcurrants and black cherries, with mocha and chocolate. Sleek and refined, with a creamy black cherry fruit, integrated tannins and good persistence and length. Medium weight and concentration, with both elegance and intensity. Chocolate, coffee finish. Stylish and elegant with good structure, balance and finesse. A wine that combines purity with a classical structure and texture. Jamie Ritchie

58% CS, 32% M, 4% CF, 6% PV. Considerable freshness on the nose, with just a little herbal quality. Lovely suave fruit on the palate; very silky and seamless, pure and directional. Certainly not a blockbuster wine, more on elegance than power; only mid weight. Lots of finesse. Very fine and elegant; Cabernet in all its elemental purity and grace, with the merest hint of fine grained tannin. Classical Pontet. Nick Jackson MW

Quintus S 90-92, NJ 89-91, WK 92-94, AG 92-94, NM

A lovely nose with notes of cassis and dark fruits with a good complexity, this is an elegant wine with a lovely silky texture that will please many wine lovers. Victor Rabot

68% M, 31.5% CF, 0.5% Mal. Gentle, fragrant red fruits and spice on the nose. Very typical St. Emilion expression of mid palate Merlot fruit, firm tannins and an elegant, dry finish. Very unforced, with tannins very well handled; no bitterness or lightness of fruit. Suave and supple. An early drinker in an elegant, classic mould. Nick Jackson MW

Rauzan Segla S 93-95, NJ 92-94, WK 93-95, AG 94-97, NM 94-96

The nose is impressive, full and complex. On the palate, notes of ripped blueberry, currants, cherry and warm spice notes delivered with silky and creamy tannins. A stunning structure and impact. The wine has opulence and precision, with a rich and elegant velvety finish. Amayès Aouli

75% CS, 25% M. Rauzan offers a lovely expression of Cabernet in a Margaux style: all velvety suaveness with powerful but ripe, fruit-wrapped tannins, lots of juicy dark fruits, and an appetising, dry finish. Quite a powerful wine given the vintage, showing excellent breed, with some gentle complexity of flavour. A very attractive Rauzan which will yield early and extended drinking pleasure. Nick Jackson MW

Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc S 91-93, NJ 91-93, WK 93-95, AG 95-97, NM 92-94

Notes of blackberry with a good tension and finesse. A medium bodied wine with a great energy, already showing well and will last for years to come. Victor Rabot

13.5% alc, 63% CS, 33% M, 3% CF, 1% PV. Aromatically, this is very Pessac with its warm bricks and sweet tobacco flavours and its fine Cabernet intensity. Fresh and balanced in an elegant rather than a blockbuster style. Authentic, and offering lots of immediate pleasure here; eminently drinkable and enjoyable. Nick Jackson M

Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge S 92-94, NJ 92-94, WK 94-96, AG 96-98, NM 94-96

A classic, well-delineated nose of expressive citrus and, to a lesser extent, tropical fruit, complimented by white flowers that linger on the scintillating finish. Paul Tortora

90% SB, 5% Sem, 5% SG. On the nose, the premium quality of the Sauvignon Blanc is obvious, with its tight and focused aromas. Good mid palate concentration and density, and an appetising salinity and sapidity on the finish. This is not flashy, but has a brooding intensity that is impressive. Drink up to 10 years after the vintage. Nick Jackson MW

Talbot S 91-93, NJ 91-93, WK 91-92+, AG 91-93, NM 90-92

Appealing nose of black cherries, blackcurrant and liquorice. Bright, fresh, juicy fruit. Gentle extraction - nothing forced here. Has fruit all the way through and finishes with black cherry, liquorice and lead pencil. A very attractive Talbot - elegant, fresh, balanced, harmonious. Jamie Ritchie

71% CS, 24% M, 5% PV. A generous wine, with rich dark fruits and plenty of cashmere texture. Good concentration for the year, with a balanced, fruity finish. Very St. Julien in its ability to transcend the weaknesses of the year and make a solid, convincing, highly enjoyable wine. Nick Jackson MW

Tropelong Mondot S 92-94, WK 93-96, AG 95-97, NM 93-95

Rich and generous wine. On the nose you will find charming notes of black fruits with a magnificent persistence on the palette. A savory wine with supple tannins and a lovely balance. This magnificent 2021 will provide great pleasure for people who can hold to it. Victor Rabot

Trotanoy S 93-95, WK 93-95, AG 92-94, NM 94-96

Great nose showing ample aromas of blueberry, red and black currants, black plum, lavender, violet, and chocolate. Medium bodied with fine tannins, ripe fruit, giving this complex, perfumed character. Finishes with delicate spice, chocolate and coffee notes. Long, juicy, rich and powerful. Amayès Aouli

Vieux Chateau Certan S 94-96, WK 94-96, AG 96-98, NM 95-97

77% Merlot, 20% Cabernet France, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tasting with Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont at Vieux Chateau Certan is always one of the highlights of any En Primeur trip, and they are consistently producing one of the best wines in Bordeaux. Yields this year were 38 hl/ha, indicating that they were relatively unscathed by the frost and mildew that blighted some of their neighbours. The nose is high-toned and floral, with an amazing perfume lent by the Cabernet Franc (and tiny proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon). There is a cherry-like perfume supported by a beautiful streak of blood orange and orange blossom. Given the freshness on the nose, the palate is impressively soft and supple, showing bright red raspberries, cherries and wild strawberries, with lovely fine tannins and a long, fresh and elegant finish. This is sappy, precise and finessed, one of the great wines of the vintage. George Lacey

FAVOURITES FROM OUR 2021 BORDEAUX TASTING TEAM

In alphabetical order

JAMIE RITCHIE

WHITE

Aile d'Argent
Domaine de Chevalier Blanc
Haut Brion Blanc
La Mission Blanc
Pavillon Blanc

RED

Ausone
Berliquet
Cheval Blanc
Figeac
Haut Bailly
Haut Brion
Lafite
Lafleur
Lynch Bages
Margaux
Mouton
Palmer
Pichon Lalande
Rauzan Sela
Vieux Chateau Certan

VICTOR RABOT

RED

Ausone
Cheval Blanc
Figeac
Haut Brion
Lafite
Lafleur
Margaux
Mission Haut Brion
Mouton
Palmer
Perrieres de Lafleur
Pichon Lalande
Troplong Mondot
Trotanoy
Vieux Chateau Certan

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