

## 2011 Bordeaux

The 2011 Bordeaux described here were tasted in New York in February 2014 at the Union des Grands Crus annual tasting. It is fair to say, based on this narrow range of 2011 reds, that the vintage is not simply hidden in the shadow cast by the two preceding ones, both outstanding albeit different in profile. 2011 seems slight and fragile in comparison with 2009 or 2010; perhaps “elegant” is the more positive label. This is a “restaurant vintage” in trade parlance. For those around the world who drink Bordeaux regularly, it is useful to have a lighter, forward year – if the wines are priced accordingly. The occasional consumer of Bordeaux – and certainly the collector – tends to look for a degree of substance absent from light vintages such as 2011. After many good to excellent vintages in the 2000s, the market is spoiled. Even years such as 2006 and 2008 stand head and shoulders above 2011, which in some ways resembles 2004 or 2007. 2011 calls for careful and selective purchases. There is a larger gap between the top properties and the rest in 2011 compared to top years.

### POMEROL

#### **Ch Gazin**

*Gazin 2011 is just moderately dense dark red with a purple rim. The nose is high toned, displaying red fruits and a leafy aspect. The palate is quite light and one-dimensional. Will evolve quickly. **\*\*(\*)***

#### **Ch La Pointe**

*Moderately dense dark red with a thin purple rim. Aromatically, La Pointe is floral and open without notable depth. In the mouth, this Pomerol has appealing charm and balance though it is light in weight. Will drink well early. **\*\*(\*)***

#### **Ch La Conseillante**

*Moderately dense very dark red with fine purple rim. The nose readily reveals red berries, spice and a floral quality with moderate intensity. The palate is fine and composed with lovely delicacy and finesse. The persistent finish with subtle nuances is a positive sign and implies good mid-term aging potential. **\*\*\*(\*)***

### **Ch Le Bon Pasteur**

*Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. This Pomerol offers a scented aroma displaying red fruits, an undertone of creamy oak, and a leafy-herbal note. The palate is restrained and delivers a sense of balance and underlying fruit, with moderate persistence and textural appeal on the finish. \*\*\*(+)*

## **SAINT-EMILION**

### **Ch Canon La Gaffelière**

*Moderately dense dark red with purple edge. The nose exhibits modestly ripe dark fruits and berries and has a gentle warmth along with oak in the background. In the mouth, the wine is composed and medium weight. The wine possesses an attractive elegance despite lacking noteworthy concentration. There is some bitterness to the tannins which linger in the aftertaste. \*\*\*(+)*

### **Ch Figeac**

*Moderately dense very dark red with purple at rim. The nose is relatively reserved, suggesting attractive dark red fruit and beneficial use of oak, with subtle toasted and smoky notes. The palate shows appealing polish and is medium-bodied. There is lovely integration and equilibrium and superior phenolic maturity. Very elegant. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch La Couspaude**

*Moderately dense very dark red with purple edge. The nose exhibits dark fruits and berries with delicate lift and well-integrated oak. The taste, similarly, offers attractive fruit qualities. The wine is poised but not full or fleshy and has an underlying touch of sweetness. Suggests a modest persistence together with some bitter tannin. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Troplong Mondot**

*Nearly dense very dark red with purple. More saturation than most. To the nose, this 2011 has evident ripe dark cherry and plum fruit with a background of oak spice. Richer aromatics than its peers. In the mouth, the attack is muted. There is masked flesh and a sensual aspect along with ripe dark fruit. Good phenolic maturity. A very successful 2011 Right Bank wine. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Clos Fourtet**

*Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The nose is rather open and a touch weak, with subtle red fruit and a leafy note. The palate is composed, gentle and just medium weight. There is balance and finesse. Will come around quickly. Very faint bitterness at the end. \*\*\*(+)*

### **Ch Trottevieille**

*Moderately dense very dark red with red-purple rim. The aroma, as always with Trotte Vieille, is distinctive, marked by tea leaf and small red fruits. The taste is immediately soft and caressing. Medium-bodied. This has charm and early accessibility. The wine has a soft finale with very fine tannins and a moderate, well-integrated acid spine. A suggestion of smoky oak at the very end. \*\*\*(\*)*

## **HAUT-MÉDOC**

### **Ch La Lagune**

*Moderately dense plus very dark red with purple rim. Clean, attractive nose delivering dark fruit and moderate concentration. The taste is clean, medium weight and balanced. Shows good follow through and a nascent finish. Sweet underlying dark fruit. An enjoyable wine showing this reliable estate has once again handled vintage conditions skillfully. \*\*\*(+)*

### **Ch Cantemerle**

*Moderately dense very dark red with clear purple at rim. The aroma is clean but held back, hinting at an attractive red fruit fragrance. In the mouth, Cantemerle is clean and elegant and shows notable precision and finesse. Will develop early and promises to be enjoyable. \*\*\*(+)*

## MARGAUX

### **Ch Siran**

*Just short of moderate color density. Siran exhibits an open, leafy and rather feeble nose. The taste is dominated by aromatic features and is light and soft. Drink this wine very early. A disappointment after a solid series of vintages from this property. **\*\*(+)***

### **Ch Malescot Saint-Exupéry**

*Moderately dense plus very dark red with clear purple edge. The nose shows above average maturity for 2011, with warm, ripe, lifted dark fruit. The taste as well reveals good dark fruit qualities and is soft and medium-bodied. There is gentle warmth and a soft structure. Shows good phenolic maturity. **\*\*\*(+)***

### **Ch Brane-Cantenac**

*Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. This Margaux boasts a fragrant aroma of red fruit, subtle oak and a leafy undertone. The palate is very light, verging on thin, yet it does possess a heightened aromatic expression and early accessibility. Not for the drinker who wants substance. **\*\*(\*)***

### **Ch du Tertre**

*Moderately dense very dark red with clear purple rim. The nose is rather open and exhibits appealing dark red fruit, well-judged oak, and a leafy accent. The palate is clean and well-knit, and this Margaux is on the light side but balanced. There is a delicate lingering finish. Drink early. **\*\*(\*)***

### **Ch Prieuré-Lichine**

*Moderately dense plus dark red with clear red-purple rim. The nose delivers a warm lift, a restrained scent of moderately ripe red fruit. In the mouth, the wine is soft, supple and medium weight. The wine leaves a persistent textural imprint along with attractive if youthfully muted fruit. **\*\*\*(+)***

### **Ch Giscours**

*Moderately dense very dark red with red-purple edge. Giscours reveals scented, sweet red fruits and berries in a clean, appealing nose. The wine is very clean on the palate, well-balanced, and just medium weight. There is a long, subtle finish. This property has made a successful 2011 offering finesse and early appeal. \*\*\*(+)*

### **Château Rauzan-Ségla**

*Moderately dense very dark red with clear purple rim. Aromatically, this Margaux is fine and focused and has more reserve as well as more purity and class than its peers in the appellation (at least this particular group). There is restraint on the palate and a fine structure which leaves a chalky grip. Muted at this stage, but clearly has sufficient concentration at its core. The finish comes up slowly, again revealing the wine's superiority. An example of how the top properties have distanced themselves from the rest in 2011. \*\*\*(\*)*

## **SAINT-JULIEN**

### **Ch Beychevelle**

*The wine's color is short of moderately dense very dark red with a clear rim. The nose is rather open and offers modest dark fruit, but lacks real concentration. The taste is clean, fresh and balanced in a light motif, without notable flesh or substance. Elegance is Beychevelle's strong suit. \*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Branaire-Ducru**

*Less than moderately dense with clear purple at rim. Non-expressive nose, rather weak, suggesting dark fruit and a leafy note. The palate is on the light side. There is an elegant styling and good persistence, ending with subtly fragrant red fruits. \*\*\*(+)*

### **Ch Gruaud Larose**

*Moderate density, dark red with clear purple rim. Aromatically, Gruaud is open, scented, somewhat smoky and of modest concentration. The palate as well is very accessible, light to medium weight. There is a lack of textural appeal, a thinness. The ending is delicate with lasting aromatics. \*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Lagrange**

*Less density, very dark red with a clear purple rim. The aroma of Lagrange is marked by leafy red fruits. The wine is clean, open and rather weak, although the aftertaste features a persistent fragrance. \*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Léoville Barton**

*Moderately dense very dark red with clear purple rim. The aroma is restrained, offering sweet dark red fruit with a degree of nuance and spice. In the mouth, the wine is clean, soft and medium-bodied. There is attractive lingering warmth together with subtle fruit. Well balanced. \*\*\*(+)*

### **Ch Léoville Poyferré**

*Slightly more than medium density, dark red with purple. There is good maturity evident in the aroma, which is warm and exhibits red fruit and toasted oak. The taste is clean, reserved and medium weight. Rather closed on finish with a fine backbone of acidity and moderate tannin. The finish suggests warm red fruit. Shows well in relation to the other St.-Julien in this range. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Talbot**

*Moderately dense dark red with red-purple at rim. Talbot is rather non-expressive to the nose initially, then reveals dark red fruit and a measure of warm generosity. The palate is soft, muted and offers a persistent textural appeal and warmth. There is a fine, ripe structure, but the finish is masked for now. A successful 2011. \*\*\*(\*)*

## **PAUILLAC**

### **Ch Clerc Milon**

*Less than medium density, red with clear purple rim. Open, scented aroma with attractive oak integration and moderate intensity. Good expression. On the palate, Clerc Milon is clean, fresh and elegant. The wine has poise and length, displaying a prolonged finish marked by red fruit and spice. Well done. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch d'Armailhac**

*Moderately dense dark red with clear red-purple at rim. Aromatically, this Pauillac is expressive, boasting notable complexity and good intensity. There is a mélange of red fruit and wood spice. The palate is clean, medium-bodied and stylish. The wine has charm and nuance. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Grand-Puy-Lacoste**

*Just moderate density of color, dark red with clear purple at rim. The aroma is accessible, delivering scented red fruit and well-judged oak. This 2011 is clean, medium weight, and well-balanced. There is good persistence. Elegant with just enough intensity. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Lynch-Bages**

*Moderate density, very dark red with clear purple at rim. Aromatically, Lynch-Bages exhibits a degree of warmth, muted red fruit, clean oak and a leafy highlight. There is good intensity, more than most. In the mouth, the wine is clean and medium plus in weight. There is more substance than is usual in 2011, characteristic of this growth. The wine has noteworthy presence and balance along with a promising, reticent finish. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Pichon-Longueville Baron**

*Somewhat more than moderate density, very dark red with purple rim. Open nose of attractive dark red fruit and well-integrated oak, a touch smoky. The palate is clean and held back, medium plus in weight. The wine shows above average definition in this vintage, with a firm acid spine and somewhat dry tannic grip. Overall, Pichon Baron has more substance and interest than many other 2011s. \*\*\*(\*)*

### **Ch Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande**

*Moderately dense dark red with clear purple rim. The nose is warm with a focused lift marrying red fruit and smoky oak. Pichon Lalande has precocious complexity and good intensity. The taste is clean and well-balanced, with very good concentration at its center. There is a complementary youthful structure, just a touch dry. The overall impression is of elegance and mid-term development potential. \*\*\*(\*+)*

**SAINT-ESTEPHE**

**Ch Ormes de Pez**

*Just moderately dense, very dark red with clear purple rim. The nose is subdued and shows spicy, sweet red fruits. The palate is clean, well-knit, medium plus in body. There is good generosity and depth, more than most. Ormes de Pez finishes with a firm yet elegant frame. A successful 2011 continuing the excellent work at this château. \*\*\*(\*)*