

discover our passion



Bordeaux 2009 'En Primeur' Clarets.

We can clearly say it is without doubt an excellent vintage. Almost perfect growing conditions and weather during harvest, despite a few hail storms in May but none of the big boys were affected.

It was a vintage without extremes in many cases. It rained at the right times and the temperatures ideal and not extreme like 2003.

It looks like the Cabernet grapes have performed slightly better than the merlot and as a result many Chateaux have put more Cabernet in their final blend and more merlot has gone into the second wines. We personally think that some Chateau have picked too late in their quest for optimum ripeness and concentration in flavour. As a result their wines have become slightly higher in alcohol. This has occurred more on the right bank (St Emilion and Pomerol) rather than on the left bank.

Everyone wants to know how the vintage compares to previous vintages. Bill Blatch in our view provides one of the best analysis. "Overall, of all the great vintages of the last 100 years, '09 seems to have more in common with the silky concentration of '82, '47 or '29, rather than the more robust tannic balance of '05, '00 or '28. Yet it does not seem to have all the warm, exotic softness of the extreme heat-wave vintages '03, '90 and '21, nor the more traditional style of the '45 and '61 (which got their concentration primarily from the tiny yields caused by freak late May frosts). Comparisons to other vintages are proverbially difficult to make, but maybe we can say that '09 is what '82 or '85 would have been if the vineyard and the yields had been managed as today, or what the '47 would have been if the vinification had been controlled as today. All of these historic vintages seem to share the same sweetness of concentrated fruit as the '09, but in those days, 12% for the Cabs and 13% for the Merlots was the absolute maximum. These '09s have, in addition, far higher alcohol levels which make the vintage - so far - unique. Better? We'll see."

At the moment our biggest concern is all the hype and how this will affect prices. We are doing our best to secure allocations when they are released and will put out a weekly review when the campaign starts properly so that you aren't overwhelmed with emails. We will allocate stocks first to those who bought from us last year. We have never seen such demand for the top Chateau, it would be helpful if you could send us your wish list and we will do our best.

Investing in wine? In my opinion, wine is a commodity and like all commodities it's all about supply and demand and simple economics. Demand in great vintages, are often created by the top wine critics. The top critics are Robert Parker and his sidekick Neal Martin, James Suckling, Jancis Robinson and Steven Spurrier. For this reason we have collated their tasting notes and scores.

We are also seeing an increased demand for the following reasons

1. The top investment wine last year (2008 vintage) has increased in value by 250%.
2. No Capital Gain tax on wine investment
 - People are fed up paying high taxes and looking for good alternative investments
3. Money tide up in bank accounts is currently giving a poor return.
4. Wine Investment is now an international market and less affected by Governments or single Country economics.
5. Top Critics are all over the 2009 vintage

Jancis Robinson *"I have never given so many really high scores when tasting en primeur anywhere... The wines were, in general, a huge pleasure to taste, with luscious ripeness but also in more cases quite enough acidity and heavily disguised, often record levels of tannin."*

Robert Parker "2009 may turn out to be the finest vintage I have tasted in 32 years of covering Bordeaux. From top to bottom, 2009 is not as consistent as 2005, but the peaks of quality in 2009 may turn out to be historic"

An analysis of Robert Parker's scores looking at the Top 30 Chateaux his average scores are:

2000 96.2/100 **2005** 95/100 **2009** 96.7/100

Note: Wine Scores in the list with an * are the finest potential of all the offerings he has ever tasted from this estate in nearly 32 years of barrel tasting.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

WINES OF THE VINTAGE

Latour	Cos D'Estournel	Angelus
Lafite	Montrose	Tertre Roteboeuf
Mouton Rothschild	Vieux Chateau Certan	Dom de Chevalier Rouge
Haut Brion	Troplong Mondot	Pavie Macquin
Margaux	Leoville Poyferre	Leoville Lascases
La Mission	Cheval Blanc	Calon Segur
Pontet Canet	L'Evangile	Suduiraut
La Mission Haut Brion	Ausone	

BEST VALUE BUY (PRICE DEPENDENT)

Prieure Lichine	Fombrauge	La Tour Carnet
Grand Puy Ducasse	de Fieuzal Rouge	Saintayme
Haut Batailley	St Pierre (St Julien)	Clos du Marquis
Cantemerle	Lafron Rochet	Gloria
Du Tertre	Ormes de Pez	Labegorce
Armailhac	Clerc Milon	Gruaud Larose
Rouget	Malartic Lagraviere	

CHINESE IMPACT

The Chinese are likely to be the largest consumers of fine wines in the next 10 years. They currently have a thirst for the following wines.

Carraudes de Lafite	Lynch Bages
Lafite	Mouton Rothschild
Duhart Milon	All good value first growth
Beychevelle	



James Goodhart
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29th April 2009

Petit Chateaux

La Bernadotte

Estimate £120 - £150

Under the same ownership as Pichon Lalande (Louis Roederer) and made by the same winemaking team. 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 56% Merlot. Always a good buy in good years.

“This has a slightly disjointed nose at first, blackberry, a touch of smoke, something a little estuarine perhaps. Coalescing nicely with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied: firm tannins, good definition, a slight powdery texture, very fine clarity and sense of joie de vivre towards the symmetrical finish. Conservative but very well focused. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 89-91 points

“From the Pichon Lalande stable. Extremely dark crimson. Just a hint of farmyard on the nose. Very sweet start and really quite round and fleshy. An early maturer but one that should bring a lot of pleasure. Pretty alcoholic on the finish though. Not for purists but could be very useful for restaurants and airlines. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2014-2019.”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Dense red, good spicy, supple rich fruit, good fleshy length, quite seductive and good tannins to keep it going. Drink 2013-18.”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 16+ / 20 points

“The finest La Bernadotte made to date, this 2009 is an undeniable sleeper of the vintage. Composed of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 47% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot, it reveals a dense purple color along with a big, sweet kiss of black cherries, black currants, charcoal, and spice. With layers of fruit, decent acidity, freshness, and precision, and an opulent, fleshy, succulent style, it should drink easily for a decade or more. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2020”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points **

Senejac, Haut Medoc 2009

Estimate £120- £160

Owned by Lorraine Cordier of Chateau Talbot but vinification is now under the control of Alfred Tesseron's wine-making team from Pontet Canet

“Berry and earthy, spicy character. Toasted oak. Medium-bodied, with fine tannins. A little hollow”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 87-90 points

“Mid dark crimson. Well balanced. Savoury and succulent with just a slight polish of 2009 over it. Not sweet at all. Good stuff. Serious wine. GV. Date tasted 28th March 2010. Drink 2013-2018”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16+ / 20 points

“Fine floral yet quite discreet nose, elegant and poised, will be a lovely wine, a bit understated now. Drink 2013-18” *Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 16+ / 20 points*

“Run by the Cordier family, with the vineyard managed by Alfred Tesseron's team at Pontet-Canet, this is the first vintage from their biodynamically farmed estate, and it is certainly the best wine I have ever tasted from Senejac. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, oodles of black currant fruit are intermixed with some licorice, underbrush, and foresty notes. Great fruit, a sumptuous, fleshy texture, and plenty of succulence and length make for a big, rich, nicely textured wine to drink over the next decade. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2020”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 89-91 points

Potensac, Medoc 2009

Estimate £150 - £180

Very popular Cru Bourgeois, owned by Leoville Lascases and a great cellar filler.

“A blend of 48% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc with 7.3% vin de presse, delivering 13.9% alcohol, this has a ripe blackberry nose with raspberry, kirsch, a touch of cassis and cedar, all cloaked in warm alcohol. The palate is full-bodied with ripe, slightly chewy tannins, very good weight, certainly more complexity than recent vintages, well defined towards the finish and coping with that alcohol adeptly. This is a better Potensac than in recent years but still a little "conservative" in style. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

Intense aromas of currant and blackberry, with hints of licorice, follow through to a full body, with a balance of tannins and a spearmint and mineral aftertaste

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 87-90 points

Very deep crimson. Minerals and great ripeness. But very much restrained by a corset of structure. Great lift and pzazz. Not at all a country wine, not too chewy. But very serious. This has a really long term future. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2018-2030

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17/ 20 points

Dense red, fine floral concentration, very good Médoc with depth, length and class. Drink 2014-18
Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **16+ / 20 points**

“A sleeper of the vintage, the 2009 is probably the finest Potensac ever made, eclipsing even the stunning 1982. This blend, dominated by both Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, hit 13.9% alcohol, but the pH is a normal 3.58. Dense, rich, and full-bodied with lots of freshness, the wine reveals abundant red and black currant fruit, a distinctive minerality, and a plush, full-bodied mouthfeel. It should drink well for 10-15+ years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2025” *Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 89-91 points*

Beaumont, Haut Medoc 2009

Released £90

In 1986, it was acquired by the current owners, Société Grands Millésimes de France, who also preside over St Julien's Beychevelle. Very Popular Cru Bourgeois

"Dark crimson. Bright fruit. Very sweet palate entry - all pleasure in a very luscious way. Could be VGV. Hedonistic but may not last all that long? Drink 2015 – 2024”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5/ 20 points

“Fine deep red, good, slightly herbaceous cassis fruit, good elegant flavours and good Médoc grip, classic quite forward Médoc with good pure fruit. Drink 2013-2018”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **15.5 / 20 points**

Tour Saint Bonnet, Medoc 2009

Released £80

One of the best value, quality Cru Bourgeois on the left bank.

“This has been one of the most reliable wines in Bordeaux over the last 30+ years, and I have enjoyed many vintages of it. It sells for a song and the 2009 may turn out to be the best they have ever made. This inky purple-colored wine offers up notes of crème de cassis, spring flowers, and forest floor that have more in common with a classified growth than a Petit Chateau. Medium-bodied, Luscious, and rich, this is a beauty to drink over the next 10 years. (tasted two times)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 88-90 points

“Good plummy cassis Médoc, good succulent fruit, good future. Drink 2012-16”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **15.5 / 20 points**

Poujeaux, Moulis 2009

Estimate £150 - £190

Owned by Monsieur Cuvelier of Clos Fourtet and made under the watchful eye of Stephane Derenoncourt

“Tasted at Vintex. A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 5% Cabernet Franc. A big, deep, confident nose from Poujeaux this year, very pure but actually much more closed than other 2009s. Nice purity and minerality coming through though. The palate has an almost honeyed entry, thick texture but smooth and cohesive, very pure towards the finish with black cherry, boysenberry and blueberry. Long finish. Very fine. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

“Full and very velvety, with round and juicy tannins. Creamy. New ownership here is really making a difference in wine quality; this is the best ever after maybe the 1929”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

“Very dark. Scented and quite plush and rich and fragrant. Lots of pleasure and very ripe but not overripe. Date tasted 28th March 2010. Drink 2013-2018”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16/ 20 points

Black red, very rich and spicy, even exotic berry fruit, good smooth rich flavours backed by firm ripe tannins, lots of depth and good long-term. Drink 2014-22
Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **16.5 / 20 points**

“The Cuvelier family that has done so much to resurrect Clos Fourtet purchased this estate that had long been the pride and joy of the Theil family. A large vineyard, and certainly the finest wine of the somewhat forgotten appellation of Moulis, the yields in 2009 were 40 hectoliters per hectare, and the wine is a blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Soft, fleshy, and opulent, with lots of black currant and black cherry fruit intermixed with hints of cedar and spice box, and an enticing texture result in a wine to drink now and over the next 10-12 years. It is a sleeper of the vintage. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2022”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-93 points

Aiguilhe, Cotes de Castillon 2009

Estimate £180-£240

Owned by Stephan von Neipperg of Canon La Gaffeliere and made under the supervision of Stephane Derenoncourt. 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. This wine is better than a lot of St Emilion Grand Cru.

“Tasted at Canon-la-Gaffeliere, a blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, cropped between 1st and 14th October, this has a ripe rounded bouquet with blackberry, crème de cassis, orange peel and a touch of allspice. Good definition. The palate is medium-bodied with grippy tannins, but there is also a complementary softness to the texture that fits in nicely around the firmness of the structure. This is a well crafted Saint Emilion, unpretentious and fresh on the finish. Very fine. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 89-91 points

“Spearmint, vanilla bean and dried dark fruits on the nose follow through to a full body, with silky tannins and a fruity finish. Still in reserve, but excellent”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Very fresh and lively, rude berries and fresh and dry. Punchy but dry on the finish. Date tasted 28th March 2010. Drink 2014-2024”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 15.5/ 20 points

“Rich and powerful but with a minerally freshness that provides balance. Red fruit aromas. Generous fruit on the palate. Needs a little time. Drink 2014-2020”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 16 / 20 points

“Tiny yields of 20 hectoliters per hectare have produced a wine with terrific fruit intensity, a moderately tannic structure, and hints of chocolate, cedar, spice box, and earth. Although not as big as I expected given the vintage, it is well-made and impressively endowed. Enjoy it over the next 12 years. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2022”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points

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Le Chenade, Lalande de Pomerol

£115 RELEASED

Denis Durantou property and a great buy for drinking. 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc

“Picked between 23rd until 28th September, a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, this has a slightly smudged nose that for me, just lacks the clarity and joie-de-vivre of the Saintayme. Touches of sloe and mulberry inflecting the fruit profile. The palate is full-bodied with rounded tannins, very plump with mulberry and black plum notes, a touch of dried herbs, forward and generous on the finish”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 86-88 points

“Blackberry aromas and flavors, with a minerally, berry and lightly tannic palate. Fresh finish”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 87-90 points

Les Cruzelles, Lalande de Pomerol

£180 RELEASED

A Denis Durantou property bought in 2000. 90% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. Great Value

“Picked between 15th and 28th September, a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, this has a ripe, quite rounded nose with red-berried fruit, a hint of apricot and mulberry with moderate definition. The palate is medium-bodied with firm, sturdy tannins, great depth of flavour with blackberry, cassis, a touch of spice and in the background a hint of something more exotic: yellow plum and apricot. Mouth-filling, quite extroverted towards the finish. Very fine”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

“Blueberry and loads of darks fruit on the nose. Full-bodied, with a solid core of fruit and silky tannins. Juicy finish”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“A brilliant effort from proprietor Denis Durantou, this wine (80% Merlot and the rest Cabernet Franc with a touch of Cabernet Sauvignon) hit 14.5% natural alcohol. Rich mocha and black cherry notes are followed by a powerful, lavishly rich, almost extravagant style of wine that is almost atypical for Lalande de Pomerol, yet the purity, richness, and density are all there. Drink it over the next 10-15 years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2025”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-94 points **

Haut Medoc

Cantemerle

Estimate £180 - £240

One of the best value Cru Classes and often in our best value buy recommendations. Situated just south of Margaux near La Lagune. Always a good buy in good vintages like 2009

“Tasted at a negociant. The Cantemerle '09 has a well defined, quite pure nose that shows more precision and essence of terroir than the Camensac sampled alongside. A very nice marriage between exuberant ripe, rounded fruit and Bordeaux austerity. The palate is medium-bodied, quite smoky and meaty on the entry, just a hint of leafiness that here lends the wine freshness and vitality. Unashamedly classic in style, but I think they pulled off a lovely, traditional Haut-Médoc here. Excellent. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Very pretty and aromatic on the nose, with currant and flowers. Medium-bodied, with fine tannins and a clean finish”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

“Very dark. Polished nose. But then pretty green on the finish. Nice attempt but just not quite ripe enough. Just a bit too austere. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2015-2021”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 15.5/ 20 points

“Deep purple red, very attractive nose of fragrant black fruits with elegant intensity, slightly smoky oak, finely textured, lovely classy southern Médoc. Drink 2014-22”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with the Cabernet dominating, looks to be the best they have ever produced, even eclipsing the 2005. Dense purple in color, with extraordinarily elegant floral notes intermixed with raspberry, black currant, cherry, and spice box, it is medium to full-bodied, not massive, but again, very seamless, with beautiful precision, sweet tannins, and an endearing fleshiness and depth of flavor that are neither heavy nor fatiguing. This wine will be relatively approachable in 3-5 years and drink well for 25-30. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2040”

Robert Parker, *Wine Advocate* (188) **92-94 points** *

La Lagune

Estimate £300 - £450

A real rise in quality over the last few years since the new owners, Swiss financier, Jean-Jacques Frey took control. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25 % Merlot and 15% Petit Verdot.

“Tasted at the Medoc UGC. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot and 15% Petit Verdot, picked from 18th September (young Merlot vines) until 8th October. The La Lagune has a limpid purple/black colour. The nose is very tight at first, unfurling nicely with aeration to reveal succulent blackberry, bilberry, a fleeting scent of estuary mudflats that segues into more vanillary aromas from the oak. The palate hits all the right buttons: superbly balanced with fine but sturdy tannins, great clarity and focus, the minerality and sense of tension brimming over the finish. Good length. This is an assured, confident La Lagune that will be an absolute pleasure after bottling. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, *eRobertParker.com* **93-95 points**

“Floral and precise fruit, with blackberry-skin character and mineral undertones. Full-bodied, with superfine tannins and a fresh, clean finish. Long and tight. Racy. Lovely texture. 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 25 percent Merlot and 15 percent Petit Verdot. This property is really on a roll now, delivering racy and structured reds; it gives much more freshness and character to the wine.”

James Suckling, *WineSpectator.com* **93-96 points**

“It was difficult to taste this as it was not shown in the UGC tastings unfortunately. Very dark. Very ethereal notes on the nose. Thick and sweet and with notes a little more plastic and winemaking than real substance, earthiness and vineyard. SO sweet! There must have been so many decisions involved in making this wine but it is not, in the end, a refreshing drink. Too thick, too sweet, too harsh and drying on the end. Shame. Picked too late? Very ungracious, I'm afraid. Although winemaker Caroline Frey, who takes a great deal of care in winemaking, assures me that her grapes were in fact picked much earlier than at many properties. Perhaps they were just too concentrated? I certainly look forward to tasting this again later in its life. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2015-2020”

Jancis Robinson MW, *JancisRobinson.com* **15/ 20 points**

“Purple red, lovely Cabernet cassis nose, already pure and quite forward, silky texture with savoury, almost lush fruit that really enrobes the tannins, fresh and harmonious and will evolve beautifully. Drink 2014-24”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“I don't think anyone could possibly rate this higher than the 2005, which is certainly the greatest wine made at this estate since 1982. However, this is another blockbuster, gorgeously aromatic, with notes of subtle oak interwoven with perfumed black, blue, and red fruits. Its opaque purple color, the gorgeous elegance allied to compelling intensity of flavor, and its full-bodied opulence make for the quintessential expression of this terroir. This is beauty that will be relatively approachable in 3-4 years and evolve for 20 or more years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2013-2033”

Robert Parker, *Wine Advocate* (188) **94-96 points**

Sociando Mallet 2009

Estimate £250-£350

Superb property that should really be a Cru Classe and produces better wines than many Cru Classe. It's situated in Northern Medoc and is always a good buy in good vintages like 2009

“Tasted at a negociant. The Sociando '09 has an intense blackberry and briary scented nose, touches of black plum and a hint of fruitcake. The palate is immediate enjoyable: very well balanced, finer tannins than I was

expecting, delineated and focused with some lovely black, tar/cedar fruit towards the finish. Good length and precision. This is a great Sociando for the vintage. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Love the nose of currant and mineral, with hints of mint. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a medium finish. Tannic. Maybe too much. But I think it's going to come out excellent”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 89-92 points

“Deep purple. Scented and very well integrated but not as intensely sweet as most St-Estèphes. Hint of yeast extract. Very interesting! Lots of vitality. Lightly drying on the finish but with real character and restraint - just the merest hint of whisky barrels. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5/ 20 points

“Dense colour, floral and quite intense nose, good depth of fruit, elegant and long with character and grip and a very good future. Drink 2014-20”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“Ferocious tannins are not unusual for Sociando Mallet, but I was surprised that in a vintage that produced exceptionally tannic, but ripe wines, the Sociando Mallet tannins were atypically austere. Nevertheless, the wine boasts huge concentration along with an inky/purple color, a full-bodied, powerful palate, and a long finish. Excellent purity, density, and minerality are present in this cuvee, and it is capable of lasting 30-40 years. This estate is situated on some of the finest terroir of the Haut-Medoc, near Calon-Segur in St.-Estèphe. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2050”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92+ points

La Tour Carnet 2009

Estimate £200 - £260

Owned by Bernard Magrez and a wine that use to trade position with Cantemerle as the best value Cru Classe. Tends to be a bit more modern in style but still a good buy.

“Cropped at 43hl/ha, a blend of 53% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, harvested between 29th September and 22nd October, this has a ripe, plum, blueberry and cassis scented nose with good definition, if just a little obvious at the moment. Very ripe and sensuous, more like a Right Bank bouquet. The palate is medium-bodied with good acidity, very fine tannins, a slight metallic edge on the entry, good density and focus here with great delineation towards the linear finish. Tightly wound, nicely controlled for the vintage. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long finish. Solid and balanced, with pretty tannins. A polished young wine”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

Very dark. Very subtle and complex on the nose. Round and easy and pretty relaxed. Seems rather effortless. Lots of pleasure and nice ripeness rather than simple sweetness. Good! Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2028

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5+ / 20 points

“Black red, colour sticks to the glass, concentrated blackcurrant fruit with lifted florality, quite thick texture, tannins to back it up, needs time to open up and has good potential. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 16.5 / 20 points

“The finest wine made here since the 2005, the 2009 (a blend of 53% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) was harvested between September 29 and October 22. Its dense purple color is followed by abundant aromas of camphor, charcoal, barrique, blackberries, and creme de cassis. Dense, structured, and full-bodied with high, but sweet, well-integrated tannins, and tremendous precision as well as freshness, this 2009 should evolve for 20-25 years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2035”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Graves / Pessac Leognan

La Chapelle de La Mission

Estimate £300-£400

This is the second wine of La Mission but it also includes grapes from La Tour Haut Brion. The blend is 44% Merlot, 46% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc.

“A structured young red with blueberry, toasted oak and coffee aromas and flavors. Full and silky, with ripe tannins and beautiful fruit. Long and flavorful. Second wine of La Mission”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Deep purple with good complex savour on the nose. Relatively high volatility and a really firm tannic backbone. But there is polish here too. Deep and rich underneath. Very dry finish. Very firm - just extra depth but no extra obvious sweetness/ripeness until the very end when there is quite a bit of alcohol. Obvious top growth address even in this wine. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2019-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5/ 20 points

“There are approximately 2,000 cases of the 2009 La Chapelle de La Mission, the best one I have ever tasted. A blend of nearly equal parts Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon with 10% Cabernet Franc added in, it achieved 14.2% natural alcohol. The wine is a remarkable effort, with amazing density, extraordinary fruit quality, dense purple color with meaty notes alongside subtle barbecue smoke, camphor, black currant, sweet cherry, and blackberry. It has a lush, opulent texture, loads of glycerin, and admirable purity and length. I could have drunk a bottle or two just tasting it from the barrel! It should evolve for 10-15 or more years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2025.

Harvest started around September 9 at La Mission Haut-Brion, and finished almost a month later, on October 6. To get an idea of just how extraordinary all the wines from the Dillon family are in 2009, just consider how phenomenal the second wines are”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-94 points **

Clarence Haut Brion

Estimate £400 to £500

This is the 2nd wine of Haut Brion. It was formally Bahans Haut Brion but was renamed in 2007 in honour of Clarence Dillon who bought Haut Brion in 1934. It's a personal favourite that I have been buying since 1998. In 2009 it accounts for 41 % of Haut Brions total production and made from 46% Merlot, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot.

“Violets and berries on the nose, with just a whiff of cream and vanilla. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins and gorgeous fruit. Caressing, silky finish. The renamed second wine of Haut-Brion (used to be Bahans).”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“The renamed second wine of Haut-Brion that was once called Bahans. Deeper, less blue colour than the Chapelle de La Mission. Very subtle nose that pulls you in but doesn't broadcast much. Pretty firm tannins. Really quite severe at this point. Very different from the buxom norm of this vintage. Very dense indeed. This will need a long, long time. Pretty ambitious....Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2020-2032”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17+/ 20 points

“Deep velvety purple red, rich satiny-smooth, polished plummy ripe fruits, distinctive flavours combining vigour, finesse and seductive charm. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“The second wine, which used to be called Bahans Haut-Brion, is now Le Clarence Haut-Brion. The 2009 is a 7,000-case cuvee made of 46% Merlot, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Cabernet Franc and a tiny dosage of Petit Verdot. The wine has a fabulous nose of incense, burning embers, forest floor, and black cherry liqueur. Fleshy, rich, full-bodied, but not over the top as the minerality and structure move in, this is a super-duper effort, and the greatest second wine made at Haut-Brion since the 1989 Bahans Haut-Brion. It should drink well for 20-25 years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2035”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-93 points **

Domaine de Chevailier Rouge 2009**Estimates £300 to £400**

One of the best value Pessac's and has been in our 'En Primeur' Star Buy for the last five vintages. Not really well enough known for serious investment but the wine is stunning. Owned by Monsieur Bernard and is made under supervision of Stéphane Derenoncourt (of La Mondotte, Canon la Gaffelière, Pavie Macquin fame).

"Shows a super nose of crushed blueberry and blackberry, with hints of raspberry. Full-bodied, offering a fabulous core of fruit and ripe tannins that caress your palate for minutes. Love the chocolate and blueberry character. Wonderful texture"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

"Strong Cabernet aromas. Unusual! Well balanced and zesty. This seems what Pessac-Léognan should be. Very dry but not drying on the finish. Complete and full of minerality. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2018-2030"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5+/ 20 points

"Black red, fine intensity of fragrant Cabernet fruit, touch of wild roses, concentrated yet already showing potential complexity, beautifully expressed palate with density and fragrance and a taffeta aspect that adds lift to its succulent elegance and class. Drink 2015-30"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

"The finest wine I have tasted from this estate in my 30+ - year career, the 2009 (64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 6% Petit Verdot) from this hallowed vineyard in Leognan was cropped at 45 hectoliters per hectare and came in at 13% alcohol. It reveals an extraordinary, intense, pure, quintessential Domaine de Chevalier style, including silky tannin, dense plum, black currant, black cherry, floral, and graphite notes, terrific acidity, sweet tannin, and a full-bodied mouthfeel with no weight, but admirable precision and freshness. Consultant Stephane Derenoncourt has coaxed out all the elegance and complexity at this great site. A future legend in the making, this could be the best Domaine de Chevalier produced over the last half century. It should drink well for 35-40 years. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2050"

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points **

Domaine de Chevalier Blanc 2009**Estimate £600-£800**

Without doubt one of the best Bordeaux Blanc and has a huge, loyal following.

"This is fabulous, long and superintense, with dried pineapple and sliced apples. Dense and powerful, with a great backbone of acidity and a long, long finish. Wonderful structure in this baby white"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

"Some nerve as well as some fat on the nose here. Firm and mineral on the finish. Real structure to this bone dry wine. Not unlike de Fieuzal but a bit richer. I feel confident that more interest will develop. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2013-2020."

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

"Lemon yellow, quite restrained floral nose, fresh pears, green apples, shows complexity and vineyard depth, great purity and quite succulent length while retaining its restrained and impressive class. Drink 2013-20"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

De Fieuzal Rouge 2009**Estimate £180-£240**

We haven't bought De Fieuzal Rouge since the 2005 and is definitely another step up and could be the best ever De Fieuzal ever. Now made under the watchful eye of Hubert de Bouard of Angelus. Strong contender for best value Pessac.

"Intense blueberry, coffee bean and toasted oak character follows through to a full body, with supervelvety tannins and a long, long finish. This is really excellent. Best Fieuzal in years"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

“Blueish purple. Light rather formless nose. Sweet start - too Napa Valley really! Rather drying tannins on the finish. Over extracted. Hollow. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2017-2025”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 15.5 / 20 points

“Dense black red, powerful, smoky cassis nose, lots of concentration, flesh and grip, good intensity of very ripe fruit, good future. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“The finest I have ever tasted, this is an awesome De Fieuzal, with plenty of lead pencil shavings intermixed with blueberry, black raspberry, and sweet cherries. A touch of smoke also emerges from this opaque purple-colored wine. Full-bodied, with loads of glycerin, one can see the more generous, viscous nature of this vintage well-displayed, but also a terrific freshness and vibrancy. It should turn out to be a superb effort that drinks well for up to 30 years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2040”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93+ points **

Haut Bailly 2009

Estimate £500 - £650

Veronique Sanders's Haut Bailly has become incredibly popular and hard to buy in reasonable quantity which is why we think it might be released at a fairly high price but the quality is unquestionable. Made from 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot.

“Lovely sweet berry and plum aromas, with hints of sandalwood and cedar. Full-bodied, with milk chocolate, berry and vanilla bean character. Thick and dense tannins, but balanced and very pretty. Sneaks up on you. Really powerful in tannins. This could be better than the fab 2005. 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 37 percent Merlot and 3 percent Cabernet Franc”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“Rather pale. Lifted and gentle and a little muted and tart but certainly appetising. Just the merest hint of green? Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2017-2026”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Dense purple red, quite rich cassis fruit with fragrant wild roses concentration, great clarity, depth and precision over succulently ripe vineyard fruit, still quite reserved, a wine of undeniable beauty and class. Drink 2015-30”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“The greatest Haut-Bailly ever made? One can't speak enough of the job Veronique Sanders has done in 2009, allied with the owner, the American banker Robert Wilmers, who has given her carte blanche authority. Tiny yields have resulted in the most concentrated Haut-Bailly I have ever tasted. Eclipsing even the 2005, the 2009 (a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, and 3% Cabernet Franc) possesses 13.9% natural alcohol. Dense purple to the rim, it exhibits a precise, nuanced nose of mulberries, black cherries, black currants, graphite, and a singular floral component. A wine of profound intensity and full-bodied power, yet stunningly elegant, and never heavy or massive, it builds incrementally on the palate, and the finish lasts over 45 seconds. Remarkably, there is not a hard edge to be found in this beauty. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc were harvested between October 7 and 14, which explains their phenolic maturity. The wine's extraordinary freshness, elegance, and precision are nearly surreal. This tour de force should age brilliantly for 40+ years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2050”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-98 points **

Haut Brion 2009

Estimate £3500 - £6000

Jean-Philippe Delmas first growth. Potentially better than the 2005 and considered to be Bordeaux's most consistent first growth. 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc.

“A dark and brooding wine, delivering blackberry, black licorice, mahogany, subtle grilled meat and raspberry jam. Full-bodied, with layers of ripe and chewy tannins. Loads of fruit yet subtle and reserved, and a long, long finish. Super fruit, yet held back. A 2005 in the remaking, but perhaps slightly supercharged”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97- 100 points

“57% of the crop went into this. The alcohol level was 14% in 2005 when there was lots of Merlot, but in 2009 when the assemblage was 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc, it reached 14.3%, the highest ever. What problems did this cause? Jean-Philippe Delmas was asked. 'To find the right yeast.' He smiled, adding, 'and the fermentation was very long: three weeks with a very long malolactic fermentation. This was the first time they had such high alcohols with Cabernet. Dark crimson with a little more blue than La Mission. LOVELY supple exciting nervy nose with a great deal of integrity and complexity already. Reminds me a little of Ch Margaux in its immediate appeal and class, even if the actual aromas are different (though equally terroir-driven). Real knockout stuff with lovely suppleness on the palate and real grace. Not a blockbuster, amazingly; it seems beautifully balanced. It has the same dense tannic charge but with a bit more fruit and less austerity than La Mission. Very long. So it's definitely Haut-Brion, just more concentrated than usual! Lots of pleasure and luxury. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2018-2040”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com **19 / 20 points**

“Black red, satiny smooth expression of pure fruit, rich and velvety texture with firm tannins that show up after the concentrated fragrance of pure vineyard fruit, beautiful structure and almost massive for Haut-Brion, but this robustness will assure a great and fascinating future. Drink 2016-45”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **19.5 / 20 points**

“There are 10,500 cases of the 2009 Haut-Brion, from a blend of 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 14% Cabernet Franc. For technicians, the highest ever natural alcohol, 14.3%, was achieved, with a pH of 3.9, which is about the same as the 1989 and 1990, as well as 1959. This is the kind of wine to send chills even up my spine, and I have been tasting here for nearly 30 years. An extraordinary nose of plum, blueberry, raspberry, crushed rock, and that intriguing floral as well as unsmoked cigar tobacco note (a classic sign of this terroir) is followed by a wine of creamy unctuousness reminiscent of 1989, but there is a freshness, vibrancy and precision that is historic and possibly unprecedented. Some graphite emerges as the wine sits in the glass, but the wine is very thick while at the same time precise and elegant. This is the quintessential expression of one of the greatest wine terroirs of the world. To reiterate, the good news is that there are going to be 10,500 cases of Haut-Brion in 2009, which is about 1,500 more cases than the 9,000 produced in 2005. This wine will probably need 7-8 years of cellaring when released and evolve as well as the 1959 has (which is still a perfect wine today), so we're realistically talking 50-75 years when stored in a cool cellar. (Tasted once.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) **98-100 points**

Malatric Lagraviere 2009

Estimate £200 - £300

Like de Fieuzal it's a strong contender for a value buy and a Chateau that is always worth buying in the best years like 2000 and 2005. Slightly modern in style but won't disappoint.

“Intense aromas of licorice, tar and spices, with plenty of fruit. Full, thick and powerful, with soft, round tannins and a fruity finish. Could use a little more fruit center palate, but this is very good”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com **89-92 points**

“Almost overripe and raisiny on the nose. Round and opulent but a little lacking in real core. Very drying sandpaper finish. One of the more uncomfortable Pessac-Léognans to taste. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2016-2024”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com **15.5 / 20 points**

“Black red, superbly concentrated purity of cassis fruit, then fragrant and slightly smoky lift, freshness runs through the precise intensity of vineyard fruit, a brilliantly expressed and focussed wine that needs time to open up. Drink 2018-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

“Progress has been ongoing at this vineyard, but proprietor Alexandre Bonnie has hit the proverbial home runs in 2009 with both his red and white wines. The best Malartic Lagraviere I have ever tasted, the 2009 is a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. Cropped at a low 32 hectoliters per hectare, with a modest (by the standards of this vintage) 13.5% alcohol, the wine's opaque purple color is accompanied by an unctuous texture, extraordinary elegance, lots of licorice, graphite, blueberry, black raspberry, and cherry characteristics, full body, terrific purity and length, and good acidity. This 2009 should easily evolve for 25-30+ years. Bravo! (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2040”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) **93-95+ points ***

La Mission Haut Brion 2009

Estimate £2000 - £4000

Little sister to Haut Brion that is situated across the road but can in some vintages like 1982 and 2000 out shine it's big brother Haut Brion. The 2009 is made from 47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc.

Bon Coeur Fine Wines Ltd : En Primeur Review 2009

T : 01765 688200 www.bcfw.co.uk

“Shows juicy aromas of ripe Cabernet Sauvignon and currant, with hints of forest fruits and sandalwood. Full-bodied, offering chewy, mouthcoating tannins that are fruit-coated and velvety. Dense and powerful. A little subdued. Could be better than I think”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“50% of the crop went into this. The alcohol level was 14.2% in 2005 with lots of plump Merlot boosting it but in 2009 the blend is 47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc and the alcohol level is a record 14.7%. Dark crimson. Scented, pretty, rather haunting aroma. Very rich and caressing - lovely texture. Still very firm and dry. The house signature of those warm bricks even in the super-ripe, super-imposing vintage of 2009! Lovely glow, and quite a bit alcohol on the end, but definitely no sweetness. SO different from the norm on the right bank... Almost inky finish. Seems very Cabernet to me. Fades just a little fast. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2020-2040.”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Black red, marvellously intense expression of black fruits on the nose, slightly smoky with pure vineyard density and breed, magnificent structure, even slightly lush middle, great definition and length. Drink 2018-40.”
Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **19 / 20 points**

“La Mission Haut-Brion has made so many great wines over the last 100 years, it would be stupid to say the 2009 somehow exceeds this estate's great classics, such as 1929, 1945, 1949, 1953, 1955, 1959, 1961, 1982, 1989, 1990, 1998, 2000, or 2005. Certainly it will take its place in the pantheon of all the great La Mission Haut-Brions ever made. There are 6,000 cases of it, made from a blend of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 47% Merlot, and 6% Cabernet Franc. The natural alcohol hit 14.7%, which far exceeds the perfect wines of 1982, 1989 and 1990. Opaque purple in color, with an extraordinary nose of blueberry liqueur intermixed with camphor, charcoal, hints of burning embers and truffles, and loads of black berry and black currant fruit, the wine has sublime concentration and purity, a finish that goes well past 60 seconds, and not a hard edge to be found in this sumptuous, almost over-the-top, full-bodied wine of enormous power and massive density and richness. An immortal effort, it should drink well for 50-100 years! (Tasted once.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points

Pape Clement Rouge 2009

Estimate £800 - £1200

Flagship Chateau of Bernard Magrez and has been benefiting from serious investment over the last 10 years. The quality here is excellent but very modern and likely to appeal to Robert Parker's palate rather than mine.

“There's lovely density and beauty to this young wine, with tobacco, light vanilla, chocolate and ripe fruit. Full and polished, with velvety tannins. Long and reserved, but very, very serious”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“Pretty dark crimson. Hint of toastiness. Bone dry. Succulent. Real clarity and purity. Everything in the right place - dry but not drying finish. Wonderful balance. A real contrast to the white...! (Both tasted blind.) Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Black red, excellent extraction of beautifully concentrated ripe blackcurrant fruit, great suppleness on attack and a beautiful fragrance, great polish, class and depth. Drink 2017-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot, and 5% Cabernet Franc, the 2009 Pape Clement is not as dense or provocative as the 2005, but it is a worthy competitor. Tighter and more muscular than the 2005, the 2009 reveals an opaque purple color along with notes of graphite, blueberries, and blackberries, stunning richness, a full-bodied mouthfeel, and tremendous length and intensity. Some patience will be required, and I do not believe this effort will achieve the near perfection of the 2005, but it is another winner in this extraordinary vintage. Yields were 43 hectoliters per hectare, and the wine finished around 13.5% alcohol. (Tasted four times.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 95-97+ points

Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge 2009

Estimate £400 - £500

Daniel and Florence Cathiard are the owners here and the quality is brilliant. For me this is what the Graves is all about. It's still slightly modern in style but has that sexy, seductive silkyness. On a selfish note I don't want the wine to become an investment as I want to drink it !!

"Clean. Blackberry and lightly toasted oak with coffee and cedar. Full-bodied and a very, very powerful structure. Blockbuster. Massive and dense, yet remains agile. A triumph for this estate"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

"Moderate and rather cool and intriguing on the nose. Some sweetness at first and then slightly inky. The tannins are far from the most supple but they just about do the trick without being too drying on the finish. Just a little bit gawky, and there's some alcohol on the finish. Date tasted 2nd April 2010. Drink 2016-2026"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16+ / 20 points

"Dense red, fine rich and wonderfully succulent and briary wild fruits nose, rich, robust vineyard fruit with internal spice, energy and depth. Drink 2016-30"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

"One can't say enough about what proprietors Daniel and Florence Cathiard have accomplished at this estate since 1990. Regrettably, I am old enough to remember how horrible the wines were before the Cathiards purchased the property. They have fashioned one of the most consistently outstanding wines, both white and red, over the last two decades, and their 2009 probably eclipses any previous performance. An opaque purple color is followed by an explosive nose of graphite, black currants, licorice, incense, and a hint of black tea. The wine hits the palate with extraordinary density, unctuousity, and richness, yet it never comes across as heavy or overbearing. Deep and full-bodied with sensational concentration as well as remarkable purity and precision, this brilliant wine possesses the high, but sweet tannins that are a hallmark of the vintage, and exceptional delicacy allied to massive power and richness ... a rare combination indeed. This prodigious effort should drink well for 30-40 years. Bravo! (Tasted five times.) Drink 2010-2050

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-98+ points **

Margaux

Alter Ego de Palmer

Estimate £300- £400

Second wine of Chateau Palmer and classic, seductive Margaux. 51% Merlot and 49% Cabernet Sauvignon.

"Tasted at the chateau. A lucid purple colour. A blend of 48% Cabernet Sauvignon and 51% Merlot, I do not even need to approach the glass to nose this wine. Just under 13.7% alcohol. A sense of controlled opulence here, black plum, a touch of cassis and bilberry, the oak just a little dominant at the moment but that will subsume itself into the wine with time. The palate is full-bodied with seamless tannins, a typically plush, approachable Alter Ego with black cherry, a hint of thyme and white fennel, gentle but insistent grip towards the finish. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

Love the gorgeous red fruits in this wine. It seems a little Porty, with prune and blackberry character, but so soft, round and rich. Could use a little more in the center palate, but opulent and generous. A little hot. 50 percent Merlot and 50 percent Cabernet Sauvignon

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

49% Cabernet Sauvignon. 51% Merlot. Very dark crimson. Very sweet and potent with masses of black fruits. Attractive scent but almost soupy! Big and bold and a sort of cross between New World style and Palmer sinewy influence. Very dramatic. Very round and a little bit inky on the end. Quite aggressive. Falls apart a bit on the finish. A little bit green on the finish. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2015-2025

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

Black red, superb, velvety almost exotic nose, rich and polished fruit with lots of ripe tannins, will open up early but has terrific length and concentration. Drink 2013-20

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5/ 20 points

"The delicious 2009 Alter Ego de Palmer (an equal part blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon) could have been drunk when I tasted it. A dense ruby/purple color is accompanied by smoky blackberry and black currant

fruit notes, and a silky smooth, expansive, hedonistic, pleasure-filled wine that should drink well for a decade. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2020”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 89-92 points

Brane Cantenac

Estimate £300- £400

A great improvement since the Lurton Family took charge. Classic styled Margaux. Blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Franc.

“A blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Franc with 11.3% pressed wine, cropped between 22nd September and 9th October at 48.4hl/ha, this has a very precise nose with blackberry, cedar, sandalwood and a touch of mint, but returning after 20 minutes, boy does this open up with some lovely sweet raspberry and coffee aromas developing. The palate is medium-bodied, a little disjointed at first but coalescing beautifully over half an hour. Good acidity cutting through the fruit: soft raspberry and strawberry mixed with a hint of dark chocolate, veering towards a savoury finish. This wine only shows its true colours after some serious aeration. A second sample at the UGC was similar on the nose, but there was some vegetal notes coming through towards the finish that were not previously present. This is difficult to work out this Margaux at this stage, but the way it harmonizes gives me optimism. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Blueberries with a chalky, mineral undertone on the nose. Full-bodied, with fine tannins and a fresh finish. New wood already showing strong. Not giving much”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 89-92 points

“Scented and sweet. Rather a heady perfume. Then sweet and sour on the palate - not especially harmonious or integrated, and there is some greenness about the acidity. Serviceable rather than thrilling. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2015-2027”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Fine purple red, beautifully fragrant Cabernet nose, lovely expression of Margaux fruit, textured and dense, lifted and distinctive, both fleshy and classy, long and harmonious, very good. Drink 2015-30”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

“Only 37% of the production made it in to the 2009 Brane Cantenac (slightly lower than most properties because the fruit was so good). This is a blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and 7% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.87 and finished alcohol of 13.2%. It is another offering that reveals no evidence of wood even though 70% new oak barrels were utilized. A dense plum/purple color is followed by a lovely perfume of flowers, boysenberries, black cherries, and black currants. Seamless in the mouth with stunning concentration, a seductive style, an exquisite Margaux delicacy, and levels of richness and intensity I have never before seen in Brane Cantenac, it should drink effortlessly for 30+ years. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2040”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 93-95 points

Giscours

Estimate £350-£450

Under the same ownership as Du Tertre and we have seen great improvements thanks to Alexander Van Beek. Chateau to watch out for and the 2009 is considered to be better than both the 2000 and 2005. 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Franc

“Tasted at the chateau, at a negociant and at the Margaux UGC. The harvest began on 22nd September with the Merlots and finished on 13th October for some parcels of the Cabernet, a blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc and 40% Merlot using 50% new oak from seven suppliers. This is taut on the nose, very tight, introspective and slightly earthy. The palate is full-bodied with grainy tannins, deep broody dark berried fruits, touches of coca and a hint of cracked black pepper. Quite toasty towards the finish, moderate length, just a little attenuated towards the finish although the sample at the UGC was much more "strident", containing the chutzpah that it was missing before. Like the du Tertre, I think this will show better in a couple of months. The second sample at the negociant was a better sample with some pleasant coffee notes on the aftertaste. Difficult to discern at the moment but I remain optimistic. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-93 points

“Subtle and pretty on the nose, with blueberry, blackberry and hints of flowers. Full and very fine, showing a beautiful texture of polished tannins. Wonderfully long and balanced. 53 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 7 percent Cabernet Franc, and the rest is Merlot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Very dark and lustrous. Odd herbal note. Very sweet start on the palate. Rather drying tannins but some Margaux polish and not too hot until the very end. A little drying and exaggerated on the finish. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2026”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Fine black red, very expressive black fruits with the elegant lift from Cabernet, fine density of fruit, very good natural middle sweetness and lots of depth and vineyard character, a very good wine. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

“This is the finest Giscours I have tasted in my professional career. Succulent and sexy with an inky/purple color, it offers sweet aromas of subtle barbecue smoke, graphite, blackberries, blueberries, and spring flowers. The tannins are remarkably sweet, substantial, and well-integrated, and the wine is full-bodied as well as voluptuously textured. It is a head-turning, exuberant, flashy effort that should drink well for 20-25 years. Bravo! (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2035”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

D’Issan

Estimate £300-£400

Great Chateau and normally on par with Malescot and Giscours but the property was hit by a hail storm in May and although still a very good wine in 2009 I think it probably took a little of the polish off.

“Tasted at the chateau and then at a negociant. The d’Issan '09 is quite austere compared to its neighbours, a little leafy perhaps but well-defined and harmonious, gaining intensity with aeration. The palate is well balanced, quite masculine with sous-bois and tobacco notes inflecting the black fruits, leading to a firm, almost foursquare finish that does not want to party. Moderate length. I think this will fatten out, loosen up through its élevage. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

“Blackberry and mineral aromas follow through to a full body, with silky tannins and a medium finish. Subtle and attractive, but lacks a little concentration”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

“May 11 hail meant yield was just 35 hl/ha. We were shown a sarment with scars like machine-gun fire on one side and satin smooth on the other. Dark, intense nose. Very smooth and satin-like with the tannins extremely ripe underneath. Very similar blend to Blason, 40% Merlot, same as in 2005. Fresh and ripe and easy. With a nice kick on the finish. This should last a lot longer but it's very much in the same style. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2015-2027”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Dense red, rich, plummy black fruits, wonderful middle palate showing great structure over the lissom, fleshy fruit, lovely texture and very good tannins for the future. Drink 2015-28”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“Following the lustrous 2000 and 2005, the 2009 is another terrific effort from proprietor Emmanuel Cruse. Tiny yields of 18 hectoliters per hectare, 13.7% natural alcohol, and a blend of 62% Cabernet Sauvignon and 38% Merlot have resulted in a wine boasting stunning minerality along with notes of flowers, blueberries, and black currants. Full-bodied with silky tannin, a tremendous opulence, and levels of density and richness never before seen at this estate, this brilliant d’Issan should age for three decades or more. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2040”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 93-95 points

Kirwan

Estimate £250-£350

Best Kirwan for a while. We haven't bought it for a few years as there was better buys. Back on song in 2009. It's a blend of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 13.5% Cabernet Franc, 13.5% Petit Verdot.

"Tasted at the Margaux UGC. The Kirwan evinces promise on the nose with sweet black cherry fruit, briary, cedar and a touch of graphite. Quite rounded and with great purity. The palate is full-bodied, more sinewy than other Margaux wines, but it does not compromise on balance, that tannins masculine and a little austere, but counterpoising the exuberant fruit nicely. Good grip on the finish: this is an excellent Kirwan. Tasted March 2010."

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

Wow. A subtle yet fabulous burst of fruit on the nose, with currant, mineral and flowers. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a fruity, beautiful finish. So pretty. Chewy. Big Kirwan

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

Glowing crimson. Very sweet start. Something almost animal about this on the nose. Just a bit awkward in terms of oak - mellow and well seasoned enough? Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2017-2028

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

Dense red, well-extracted Cabernet fruit with intensity and spice, quite broad and spicy on the palate, good structure and acidity, fruit and aging potential. Drink 2015-25. (16.5 points) Dense red, well-extracted Cabernet fruit with intensity and spice, quite broad and spicy on the palate, good structure and acidity, fruit and aging potential. Drink 2015-25

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

"This inky/purple-hued Margaux reveals aromas and flavors of blackberries, cassis, espresso roast, graphite, and new oak. Full-bodied, layered, and rich as well as elegant and precise, it needs 5-6 years of cellaring, and should last for 25-30+ years. It is a very strong effort from Kirwan. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2015-2045"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92+ points

Labegorce

Estimate £180-£240

Contender for our value buy Margaux. Pure styled Margaux with that elegant, silky texture that makes Margaux so popular.

"Mineral and currant, with fresh herbs on the nose. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a pretty balance of wood. A little tight, as it should be, but shows potential already"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

"Dark blackish ruby. Fragrant and natural on the nose. Sweet and mellow. Nicely done. A little tension on the finish. Not pushed to excess. This could be from a terroir that is less favoured usually but one that is benefiting from 2009 overdrive. May not last as long as some. Very, very slightly light. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2026"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

"Deep red, good floral red fruits, good, quite earthy vigour with good lifted acidity, good balance and weight. Drink 2014-2020"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 16 / 20 points

"Things are improving at this estate since it absorbed Labegorce-Zede, but this is not a 2009 that demands attention. It is a solidly made, dark ruby-hued, supple, smooth effort with a touch of greenness. Drink it during its first 8-9 years of life. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2019"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 87-89 points

Lascombes

Estimated £400- £500

Under American ownership and tend to make very modern wines. More for Robert Parker's palate than the Terroir !! The wines are still very popular but not really for me.

"Tasted at a negociant. The Lascombes has a ripe, sweet nose that does not exude the delineation of the Malescot St. Exupery tasted just before. Surprisingly, this sample is a little introverted compared to others, but that might change after bottling of course. The palate is medium-bodied but with very good weight on the palate; the tannins a little brutish at the moment, much more masculine and a little austere, although there is good

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delineation and perhaps less opulent than previous years. This should show its true potential after bottling...so one to watch. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93+ points

“Fascinating aromas of crushed berries and fresh herbs follow through to a full body, with velvety, polished tannins and a long, long finish. Wonderful wine. More reserved than the 2005, but potentially better”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Very dark crimson. Sweet malted milk plus linseed oil. Very sweet start and then lusciously worked tannins. A bit Napa Valley rather than Margaux but there is lots of pleasure here. Just rather awkward tannins on the finish. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Fine black red, very good concentration of vineyard Cabernet fruit, quite dense with a nice spicy richness, good fragrance on the palate, quite broad and structured, will open early and last well. Drink 2014-24”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“Midnight oil? Dense black purple to the rim, the 2009 Lascombes has enormous concentration, with loads of graphite, blackberry, and blueberry notes as well as hints of pen ink and truffle. The wine is super-intense, full-bodied, fleshy, and rich. This is another wine that will compete with the 2005, which is certainly the best Lascombes I have ever tasted. (Tasted three times.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96+ points

Malescot Saint Expurey

Estimate £350 - £500

51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot. Michel Rolland is a consultant. This could possibly be the best Malescot ever. Fingers crossed they don't do anything stupid with the price.

“Tasted at a negociant. A blend of 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot 4%, Merlot 35% and Cabernet Franc 8% picked between 29th September until 16th October. This has a ripe, black cherry, briary, graphite tinged bouquet that exudes purity, feminine charm and unlike some other Margaux wine, does not forget where it was born. The palate is medium-bodied with a lively, slightly peppery entry, very fine but robust tannins, very focused with a sense of "controlled power" on the finish. This is a very classy, sophisticated Margaux demonstrating great persistency and elan. Excellent. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points

“This is absolutely fabulous. I love the complex aromas of ripe fruit and fresh flowers that turn to mineral and raspberry, along with tannins on the finish. This changes all the time. Full-bodied and dense, but so beautiful and long. The layers of ultrafine tannins just turn off the tip of your tongue”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“Lovely sap on the nose here - really appetising. Round and gentle - could do with just a tad more freshness perhaps. But there is so much crammed in here for the future... Persistent and promising. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2017-2032”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Fine dense red, strikingly vibrant cassis nose, very good clear fruit with density and length, quite tight now and will open up well and always be distinctively spicy. Drink 2015-24”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“It's going to take a lot for this wine to equal or eclipse the 2005, but it is a different style of wine. While the 2005 is slightly more structured, with more aggressive tannin, this has more fat, texture, and more tactile magnetism going for it. I suppose the best thing is to own both. Opaque ruby/purple, with a beautiful nose of charcoal, forest floor, and black fruits, the wine hits the palate with great intensity, a sumptuous texture, yet brilliant precision and purity. This is a superb wine that should drink well for 20-25 years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2035”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 95-97 points

Margaux

Estimate £3,000 - £6,000

Margaux's First growth and allocations are likely to be like gold dust. 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. Paul Pontallier compares it to 2005 and 1990 but believes it to be the greatest young Margaux of the last 30 years.

"Tasted at the chateau. Sample taken 22nd March. A blend of 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot and 2% Cabernet Franc, close to the average proportions of the last 10 years. The final alcohol comes in at 13.2-13.3%. An extremely alluring bouquet: blackberry, cassis and violets, your quintessential Margaux really, but cloaked in a sense of sensuality and sumptuousness that is rarely seen. Very fine definition with touches of cold limestone coming through. The palate is brilliantly poised with filigree tannins, breathtaking delineation and focus. There is immense intensity here, the energy of the channel with a crisp, taut finish. Wonderful length. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 96-98 points

"The nose is so intensely fruity, but subtle and reserved at the same time. Fascinating. Full-bodied, yet superrefined, building on the palate. It's like watching a long-distance runner starting off slowly but continuing along his or her path. Fine and dense tannins. A few minutes in the glass and the massive tannins show. Muscular and subdued"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 96-99 points

"The Cabernet was so good, it was easy to decide the blend for the grand vin -including 87% Cabernet Sauvignon. Blended early Feb. 2009 reminds Pontallier of 1990 because of its lushness. The grand vin was 36% of the crop. pH 3.79, TA 3.3 g/l Very dark crimson. Sumptuous nose - just gorgeous. So fine, so ripe but with lovely freshness too. Margaux finesse. Truly a wonderful nose. The nose is really the thing already. Will it ever be difficult to drink? Breadth across the palate. Just wonderfully relaxed and fresh and beautifully balanced. Soft tannins on the finish, very very long. We debate whether the texture is cashmere or silk. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2018-2035"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 19+ / 20 points

"(87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot) Fine black red, quite magical bouquet, pure quality of cashmere silkiness on the palate with a touch of fragrance from Cabernet Franc, blending softness of attack with pure density. A wine of stunning fragrance and purity, the most perfect expression imaginable of the greatest of Margaux vineyards. Drink 2016-40"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 20 / 20 points

"Thirty-five percent of the crop went into the 2009 Chateau Margaux, composed of 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. The alcohol level of 13.3% is high, but not excessively so. A wine such as this is like the quintessence of terroir. A super, uber-concentrated perfume of creme de cassis and flowers cascades across the palate with a lightness of being despite massive concentration, a sumptuous personality, and an unctuous texture. I have never tasted a Chateau Margaux quite like this. It should be relatively drinkable at an early age, yet will last for 50-100 years. Oh my! (Tasted once.)

Paul Pontallier told me they had never had such levels of concentration and tannin as they did in 2009, exceeding anything they ever produced since the Mentzelopoulos family purchased this property in 1978. Pontallier believes 1996 is the closest stylistically, but 2009 is significantly more concentrated than that vintage. I do not disagree because tasting the second wine, Pavillon Rouge du Chateau Margaux, demonstrates that the 2009 is far superior to almost every Chateau Margaux made in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, except for the 1961 and 1953. Drink 2010-2110"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points

Palmer

Estimate £1500 - £2500

Without doubt a super-second but a wine that we haven't bought since 2005, because of it's high price so we might find it hard to get an allocation but no question that the quality is first class. Almost as good as Margaux – Bravo. A Blend of 52% Merlot, 41% Cabernet, 7% Petit Verdot.

"Sample taken on 19th March. A blend of 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 52% Merlot and 7% Petit Verdot, cropped between 23rd September and 14th October, and 13.9% and 3.75pH. IPT is 88, which has never been seen before.

A deep purple hue, the nose very tight at the moment with black cherry, cassis, a touch of oyster shell and liquorice. Blossoming in the glass. The palate is medium to full-bodied with seamless tannins, beautiful balanced and immense purity. The oak is well integrated (50%). Wonderful poise on the finish and superb length. Yes, modern in style, but there it is imbued with irresistible purity. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points

"Loaded with exotic fruit, with masses of crushed blackberry and blueberry. Superclear and fruit forward. Full and velvety, with fresh acidity and a long, long finish. This is almost in your face, but reserved in a way. Superseductive" *James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points*

41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 52% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot. Lustrous dark crimson. Very sweet and opulent on the nose. Very charming and glamorous. Much more of an expression of Merlot than many Médocs in 2009. Big and glamorous - a slightly Italian note. This year obsessed by extraction even more than usual. Prefer to play with press wines later. New from Parsec, a robot that turns though three dimensions. Experimented in 2008 for gentle extraction. Italian elan. Fresh. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2018-2035

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

"Black red, deep velvety richness and wonderful concentration of black, spicy fruits on the nose, firm and powerful, fragrant and lifted, a satiny, seductive texture, great concentration, totally harmonious. Drink 2016-35" Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **19 / 20 points**

"The black/purple-colored 2009 Palmer exhibits a level of tannin that exceeds anything they have previously produced. The final blend is 52% Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 7% Petit Verdot, and the finished alcohol is 13.9%. It is hard to say this 2009 will turn out better than Palmer's extraordinary 2005, but it certainly will be different in style given the alcohol level and power of this vintage. Pure blackberry and black currant fruit notes intermixed with hints of incense, graphite, and wood are followed by an opulent, thick, juicy wine with plenty of structure, and enormous concentration, mass, and length. Four to five years of patience is required, but this beauty should last for three decades or more. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2040"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points

Pavillon Rouge

Estimate £400 - £600

Second wine of Margaux. 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot. Paul Pontallier mentioned that he thinks its better than some vintages of Margaux !!

"Tasted at the chateau. 67% CS, 29M% and 4% PV and includes 13-14% of vin de presse. This has a lucid purple colour. A plush, sensuous nose with black cherry, cassis and violets: very pure, in some ways reminding me of a combination of the 1996 and 2006 but with more panache and vigour. The palate is medium-bodied with very fine tannins, quite edgy on the entry, very good acidity here, a certain symmetry that perhaps has been missing in recent vintages. The finish is very natural, showing very fine minerality and poise. This is superb. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92 - 94 points

"Love the strawberry and ripe raspberry aromas. Full-bodied, with superrefined tannins, berry, flower and rose petal. Fresh finish. Harmonious"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

"41% of the crop. 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot, 29% Merlot. Pontallier says: 'We were tempted to make a Pavillon better than ever. Luscious but light. Stricter selection for Pavillon than usual.' Bright crimson. Very fragrant, like the Issan. Quite low key. Very sweet palate entry and light and just a little herbaceous on the palate. Some chew as though the lots with the least ripe tannins went into this. Deep throat warming finish though. Very pure. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2025"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

"Fine deep colour, great purity of Cabernet on the nose, a really beautiful wine, pure Margaux, perfect balance and unexpected length. Drink 2014-24"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

"The dark ruby/purple-hued 2009 Pavillon Rouge de Chateau Margaux offers a big, sweet kiss of spring flowers intermixed with blueberries and blackberries, a silky texture, and a dense, concentrated, but seamless mouthfeel. This glorious wine should drink well for 20 or more years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2030"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points

Prieure Lichine

Estimate £250 - £350

A brilliant wine making team of Etienne Charrier (Technical Director) and Stephane Derenoncourt (consultant). A Chateau that we haven't bought since 2003 but the quality of the 2009 with small yields is fantastic. Fingers crossed the price doesn't go up too much.

"Tasted at a negociant and UGC. Tight on the nose at first: earthy black fruits: a touch of briary, fruitcake, cedar and damp moss. Good delineation and quite "classic" in style. The palate is medium-bodied with good concentration, the tannins just a little coarse at the moment but that will calm down through its élevage. Good delineation, quite foursquare and not charming at the moment, but will offer its delights after 4-5 years of bottling. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 89-91 points

"Complex aromas of mineral, blueberry and currant follow through to a full body, with superfine tannins and a long, long finish. This is exceptional. Best of all time"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

"Very pale rim. Sweet, heady nose. Very sweet start on the palate and perhaps not quite enough refreshment factor? Tannins slightly rustic but there is lots of pleasure here. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2027"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

"Deep red, fine floral wild roses Margaux nose, very good ripe fruit and harmonious Cabernet-Merlot blend, quite forward, attractive fleshy fruit and will age well. Drink 2014-20"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

"Beautiful floral-infused black fruits jump from the glass of this opaque ruby/purple-colored wine. Possibly richer, denser, and even more complete than the brilliant 2005 (although it is still too early to say that definitively), this is certainly a more opulent, succulent style of wine than even the 2005, which had surprising flesh for a wine from that vintage. The Right Bank consultant Stephane Derenoncourt has performed some magic here, as recent vintages attest, and the wines are often fairly priced as well. This full-bodied Prieure-Lichine should drink well for 20-25 years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2035"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points

Rauzan Segla

Estimate £450 - £700

Owned by Chanel but run by John Kolasa (Previously at Latour). Now considered to be a Super-second and not far off the quality of Ch Palmer at probably half the price. Could be one of the best buys of the vintage. Made from 58% Cabernet Sauvignon and 42% Merlot.

"Tasted at the chateau and UGC. A blend of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon and 42% Merlot, with 10% vin de presse. The Merlot picked from 22nd to 25th September then 28th September until 1st October. The Cabernet picked 3rd October and from 5th until 11th October (no Cabernet Franc and the Petit Verdot, though ripe, just did not blend well), cropped at 41hl/ha. The nose is well defined, very classic in style with blackberry, black olive, graphite and an intriguing note of woodbines. This is a magnificent Rauzan-Segla, easily the best I have tasted at en primeur. Firstly, it is much more harmonious than usual at this nascent stage, the acidity level is just about perfect, there is a vibrancy that is really enthralling and the poise on the finish ranks alongside that of Chateau Margaux, tasted just before. The finish is very strong, slightly creamy in texture, but also superbly defined and with superb length. Very natural and refine, yet powerful. This may be the best Rauzan Segla that John Kolasa has made. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 96-98 points

"Shows a lovely concentration of currant and blackberry. Hints of vanilla follow through to a full body, with layers of ripe fruit and fine, fruit-coated tannins. I love the ripe and pretty fruit to this. Very fruit-forward. The chateau cut back on the new wood, and went for a fruitier style. I like that. Shows a lovely concentration of currant and blackberry. Hints of vanilla follow through to a full body, with layers of ripe fruit and fine, fruit-coated tannins. I love the ripe and pretty fruit to this. Very fruit-forward. The chateau cut back on the new wood, and went for a fruitier style. I like that."

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

“Dark crimson. Light and fragrant. Thick on the palate, almost soupy! Should give lots of pleasure - does not need food. One to drink at the bar... Lots of care in tannin management, I would have thought. A wine with real intensity. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2026”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Fine dense red, beautifully poised, naturally concentrated wild roses Margaux nose, superb fragrance that leads to a finely polished palate with great depth and purity, a great vineyard expression, power and finesse all in balance, very good indeed. Drink 2015-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“Composed of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon and 42% Merlot, this large estate appears to have produced their greatest wine since the 1986. The alcohols came in at 13.9%, and the wine reveals extraordinary density, power, and richness as well as explosive fruit, and terrific acidity, intensity, and power. Yet it tastes like a crisp, delicate Margaux. Yields were 40 hectoliters per hectare. This outstanding 2009 should age nicely for 35-40+ years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2050”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-95 points

Du Tertre

Estimate £240 - £300

A favourite Chateau and a particular favourite a contender for our best value Margaux. We believe it's offered under-estimated. It's classic Margaux. The 2009 is made from 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 8% Petit Verdot.

Tasted at the chateau and UGC. Cropped at 33hl/ha, a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot (the highest ever) and 15% Cabernet Franc, 15% pressed wine. The harvest started 28th September until 13th October. The nose is very tight at the moment, quite masculine with the Cabernet Franc lending quite a leafy accent. Moderate definition. The palate is medium-bodied very taut but nicely balanced, the tannins a little firmer and less supple than others, but it is in synch with the fruit. More introspective than say, Marquis de Terme, with an agreeable tang of dark chocolate towards the dry, slightly obdurate finish. Moderate length. I am sure this will show better in another 1-2 months time. Tasted March 2010.

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 88-90 points

“Floral and perfumed, with blackberry and blueberry. Full and silky, with a lovely finish. Balanced. Lovely chocolaty character and texture. Big improvement. 55 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 22 percent Merlot, 15 percent Cabernet Franc and 8 percent Petit Verdot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

“Lightly treacly nose. Interesting. Very different sort of nose. The fruit is kept in check - not too aggressively sweet. Tamped down to provide much more of a classic Margaux style but with lots of pleasure. Very cool indeed. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2028

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Fine deep red, good briary berry fruit with concentration and elegance, good florality, length, structure and very good potential. Drink 2015-25” Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“A very sexy, seductive style of wine has been produced by Du Tertre in 2009. A dense ruby/purple color is accompanied by ripe notes of red and black fruits intermixed with subtle smoke, ink, and damp earth. The lusciousness continues on the palate with an opulent, layered, rich mouthfeel. Medium to full-bodied with not a hard edge to be found, but plenty of ripe tannins, the overall impression is one of a hedonistic and intellectually pleasing claret that should drink beautifully for 20+ years. This is a sleeper of the vintage among the classified-growths. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2030.”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points

St Julien

Beychevelle

Estimate £300-£400

Chateau that has improved in quality recently and a wine that has started to do well for investment. Normally reasonable priced and a wine that now has a Chinese interest. 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 4% Petit Verdot

“Tasted at the château and at the UGC. A blend of 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 4% Petit Verdot cropped at 45hl/ha. A deep purple/garnet colour. Clear. Immediately, the nose is very pure with a tangible sense of minerality in the aromatics, not a powerful nose, quite contained, but very focused and speaking of its place. Black fruits, cold granite, a touch of cedar. I like the precision here. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins, a little edgy at first, a nice sense of tension, lightness combined with intensity. Perhaps a more feminine 2009, but that is not meant pejoratively. Very smooth with lively small black cherries, cedar and pencil shavings towards the Cabernet dominated cashmere finish. Good persistency. Excellent. Tasted March 2010” *Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points*

Sweet berry and floral aromas, with a creamy undertone. Full-bodied, with a dense and polished palate, fine tannins and a long finish. Best since 2000

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

Pretty dark crimson right out to the rim. Alluring graphite notes on the nose. Fresh and mild. Not dramatic but neat and pretty. Very sweet but with the tannins in check. Though it will take a little while for them to dissipate. Real juice and concentration though. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2027

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Deep purple red, fine crushed blackcurrants, attractive dense fruit and already a touch of complexity, good ripeness and depth, freshness and fine Saint-Julien elegance. Drink 2015-24
Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“This is the finest Beychevelle since the 1982. The opaque purple-hued 2009 displays beautiful floral notes intermixed with notions of black raspberries and creme de cassis. The fruit hits the palate with a medium to full-bodied richness, and the wine possesses sweet, velvety tannins, stunning purity, and a layered mouthfeel that builds incrementally, combining power, concentration, density, and elegance. This 2009 should hit its stride in 5-7 years, and last three decades or more. A beauty! (Tasted three times.) Drink 2015-2045”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-94+ points

Branaire Ducru

Estimate £300-£450

Owned by Patrick Maroteaux with winemaker Jean-Dominique Videau. A step up in quality recently and classic St Julien. Not really a big enough name for investment but an excellent buy for the cellar.

“Tasted at the château and at the UGC. A blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, some of the Merlot (28%) plots reached 14.8%, the overall alcohol is 13.55% and pH 3.53. The Petit Verdot (4%) had very high quality tannins with good finesse, and 3% from old Cabernet Franc. A bright garnet core. The nose is well defined, quite elegant, but perhaps showing a little tighter than other Saint Juliens. Blackberry, a touch of cedar, like at Ducru, just a faint scent of the Gironde estuary and then with time, just a faint hint of griottes. The palate is full-bodied, nice grippy tannins, a little edgier than Ducru, a touch my sharpness and the acidity is racier. Good structure, a touch more rigid at this stage but that will melt by the time of bottling. A saline touch towards the finish interwoven with a citric thread. Good length. This is a Saint Julien standing to attention on parade. Hopefully it will stand at ease by bottling. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

“Aromas of blueberry, dried citrus fruit and currant. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a long, long finish. Structured and tannic, but sweet fruit behind”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

Dark crimson with a pale rim. Very light nose with a rather unwelcome note of coconut. Sweet start and very fondu. Just a little simple but lusciously so. I am perhaps looking a gift horse in the mouth here - though the tannins on the finish are pretty rustic. If this were sold at an attractive price it would please many. Some real succulence. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2027

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5+ / 20 points

“Deep purple red, fragrant and precisely expressed Cabernet cassis, lovely depth of natural ripeness, a finely textured wine, already elegant and will age well. Drink 2015-28”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“Only time will tell whether the 2009, another great effort from Branaire, will eclipse the 2005 and 2003. Certainly at 13.6% alcohol it is the most powerful Branaire ever made, and the final blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot showcases what a great vintage 2009 is for Cabernet Sauvignon. An inky/blue/purple color is followed by raspberry, boysenberry, crushed rock, graphite, and floral notes, and an opaque, broad, dense, substantial, impressively structured wine without any hardness. It requires 4-5 years of cellaring, and should last four decades or more. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2014-2054”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-95 points

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Clos du Marquis

Estimate £250 - £350

Considered by many to be the 2nd wine of Leoville Lascases but actually comes from vines near Leoville Poyferre. It is owned by Leoville Lascases and normally is good value. 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot

Tasted at the château. A blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot with 7.6% vin de presse, delivering 13.75% alcohol and a pH of 3.70. The Clos du Marquis has a sexy, quite opulent and very pure bouquet with lascivious red-berried fruits, vanilla, blueberry and a touch of cedar. The palate has a seamless entry, very focused and beautifully balanced, glides across that palate, filigree tannins, sensuous and silky towards the finish. Very alluring, but perhaps just missing a little delineation and edginess towards the finish. Still, this Clos du Marquis is as impressive as usual. Tasted March 2010

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

Raspberry and wild currant on the nose. Full-bodied, with superfine tannins and a long, pretty finish. Plenty of currant and mineral character. Builds on the finish. Tannic

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 89-92 points

“Black red, smoky nose with deep, rather discreet fruit, great purity, quite reserved, extremely elegant. Drink 2014-20”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“Clos du Marquis is being positioned by Jean-Hubert Delon as a separate single vineyard wine rather than Leoville Las Cases' second wine. The logic is simple. It has come from the same vineyard for over twenty years, and is not a true second wine in the sense that it is not made from Las Cases' discarded cuvees. The 2009 Clos du Marquis (70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) came in at 13.75% alcohol. It exhibits a deep ruby/purple hue along with sweet notes of creme de cassis, great purity, a full-bodied mouthfeel, and terrific texture as well as length. It should evolve for 20-25 years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2035”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points

La Croix de Beaucaillou

Estimate £200-£280

Another wine that is considered to be the 2nd wine of Ducru Beaucaillou but really comes from a separate vineyard. Could be a star value buy for St Julien. More Cru Classe quality than that of a second wine.

“Tasted at the château. A blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot, matured in 60% new oak and the rest, one-year old, coming in with 13.35% alcohol and pH of 3.69, this has a lifted, quite minty nose, blackberry, a touch of cedar, taking its time to unfurl and then later, a touch of black olive tapenade. The palate is full-bodied, quite smooth and sensuous, very pure, quite feminine, small black cherries, a touch of plum and a nice citrus-led finish. Almost understated at first, but growing all the time in the glass. Silky smooth finish. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Rose, mineral, currant and berries on the nose. Full-bodied, with firm and chewy tannins and a long finish. Polished and pretty. Could use a little bit more in the center palate, but very good indeed. Second wine of Ducru”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 89-92 points

“75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot. From the centre of the appellation area and all the young vines too. Deep crimson. Lively and fresh on the nose. Sleek, polished, very sweet and frank - black fruits on the palate. 60% new oak. Dries out a bit on the finish. A little exaggerated. Cool and drying on the finish. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2017-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Black red, really good depth of fruit and totally polished Saint-Julien style with spice and grip due to high proportion of ripe Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink 2014-22”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“Ducru's second wine, the 2009 Croix de Beaucaillou, is a thrill to taste. Made from a single vineyard, it exhibits a dense purple color along with a creamy texture and loads of creme de cassis fruit intertwined with notions of charcoal, incense, and spice. Round, generous, and opulent, it can be drunk now or cellared for 15+ years. (Tasted once.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 88-90 points

Ducru Beaucaillou

Estimate £1,000-£1,400

Owned by Bruno Borie. Since 2003 he has almost halved the total production from 20,000 cases to 11,000 in his drive for total quality. As a result Ducru is now considered to be a 'super-second' wine. Big wine but not over extracted.

"Tasted at the château. A blend of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot, aged in 90% new oak and 10% one-year old for 12 months, cropped at around 42hl/ha coming in with 13.49% alcohol, this has a very deep colour, very lucid. The nose is well defined, very pure, with blackberry, a touch of iodine, something reminiscent of the sea here, perhaps with a touch of seaweed? The palate is medium-bodied with very fine tannins, the new oak very well integrated, quite feminine and sensual, silky towards the long finish. This will need longer to allow the oak to melt into the fabric of the wine but it will be worth the wait. As Bruno Borie said: imagine Beyonce. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points

"This has an impressive powerful and hearty structure, with seductive floral, currant and licorice aromas and flavors, showing powerful tannins at the end. This sneaks up on you at the end. Structured and very, very powerful. The blockbuster tannins are sweet and fruit-coated. This is a classic, powerful style of Ducru. May be best yet. Wow"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 96-99 points

"45 hl/ha, 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot. IPT (total polyphenol index) was 90 (ie high). Very dark crimson. Crimson, purple rim. Dense and peppery and quite mineral. Much more serious on the nose than the Croix de Beaucaillou. Very polished. Lots of energy. Bone dry, spicy finish. Pretty drying tannins. Not really as soft as Bruno Borie maintains, I think. Cool and slightly tarry. Very very youthful. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2019-2030"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

"Black red, very smoky, really concentrated nose, lots of extraction, massively structured, certainly a most impressive wine, one of the blockbusters of the vintage. Drink 2017-30"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

"Can the 2009 Ducru Beaucaillou be better than the brilliant 2000 and extraordinary 2003 and 2005? Purchasers will have to decide for themselves, but this compelling effort is one of the all-time great Ducru Beaucaillous. It is a blend of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot that achieved 13.5% natural alcohol, and, remarkably, despite the fact that 90% new oak was utilized, not a hint of wood can be found in either the aromatics or flavors. This inky/purple-hued, unctuously textured 2009 reveals layers and layers of blue, red, and black fruits, and hints of licorice and spice box. Despite its substantial, massive size, it retains an elegant style, but will need 3-5 years of cellaring. It should last for 40+ years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2013-2053"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-98+ points

Gloria

Estimate £200-£300

Very popular St Julien and a contender of our star value buy from St Julien. The 2009 is a blend of 61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 6% Petit Verdot.

"Tasted at a negociant. To be brutally honest, I prefer the St. Pierre to the Gloria this year, although the latter is still a very impressive '09, more introverted at the moment: broody blackberry, cedar, black plum and a touch of crushed stone, but it does unwind temptingly with aeration. The palate shows its true potential: superb concentration with firm tannins, tarry black fruits; immense concentration without compensating on delineation and freshness. Perhaps even more persistency than St. Pierre towards the finish, this represents one of St. Julien's finest contributions to the vintage. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

"Crushed blackberries and fresh herbs on the nose. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, rich finish. Solid core of everything here. Right up there with the 2005"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

"Full, rich and explosive on the nose. Very subtle and well balanced and gorgeous. Dry not drying finish. The zest of St-Julien with a hint of white pepper and clove. Nice wine! Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2015-2023"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Superb deep colour, seductively floral nose with wild violets, fresh, fleshy fruit with great depth and well-balanced length. Drink 2014-20”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“There have been many great Glorias over the years as this property consistently over-performs. The 2009 may be the finest yet produced. Loaded with notes of Christmas fruitcake intermixed with red and black currants, licorice, spice box, and blackberries, this inky/purple-colored wine is atypically full-bodied with a viscous texture, and loads of tannin, extract, and richness. Deep and layered, it will offer thrilling sipping over the next 25+ years. (Bottles of the 1982 I own are fully mature, but are not close to falling apart.) (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2035”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Gruaud Larose

Estimate £280 - £400

Great to see Gruaud Larose back on top form. Considered to be better than the 2005. This is normally reasonably priced. The 2009 is a blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32 % Merlot.

“Tasted at the château and the UGC. The crop was picked between 23rd September and 29th September for the Merlot and 2nd October to 17th October for the Cabernet Sauvignon. A blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Merlot, this Gruaud has a tightly wound nose of black cherries, a touch of black plum and black truffle, good definition and with time some more exotic aromas: hints of honey and a little espresso. The palate is medium-bodied, very linear on the entry but displaying very good definition, with notes of blackberry, a touch of raspberry, espresso, a little white pepper and a meaty character. It expands very well towards the finish, maintaining excellent definition and clarity, very good poise, a biscuit element inflecting the pure black fruits, an insistent but gentle grip and great persistency. Somehow the 1982 is coming to mind, and that is a great thing. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-95 points

“Beautiful aromas of currant, black licorice and blueberry follow through to a full body, with chewy tannins and a long, juicy finish. Big wine. Could be better than the classic 2000”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“Dark crimson. Interesting leathery, almost Syrah-like notes. Very neat and satisfying. Savoury. Just a little austere on the finish. Drying tannins on the end. Very sweet. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Dense purple red, rich, robust warm autumn fruits, smooth and succulent, a touch of exotic spice, fine balance and length. Drink 2015-30”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“This is the finest Gruaud Larose since the 1990. Without a hint of Brett in the 2009, it exhibits an opaque purple color along with a big, sweet nose of crème de cassis, new saddle leather, spice box, and boysenberries. Made in a rich, broad, savory, juicy style with lots of succulence, but none of the masculinity and ruggedness often found in this offering, this wine is loaded with concentration and extract. The tannins are largely concealed by the remarkable intensity of fruit and density. It should be drinkable in 7-8 years, and last for 30-40. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2017-2057”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-94 + points

Lagrange

Estimate £280 - £380

Japanese owned Chateau that is run by Bruno Eynard. Over the last 10 years Lagrange has become one of our star buys. This is on par with the excellent 2000 vintage and is now making better wine than it's neighbours, Beychevelle, Talbot and Gruaud Larose. The 2009 is 73 % Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Merlot.

“Tasted at the château and the UGC. A blend of 73% Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Merlot (no Petit Verdot). A very deep, almost opaque garnet/purple colour. The nose has beautiful definition with scents of ripe blackberries, small black cherries, blueberry, a touch of mint and cedar. Very focused with the oak completely in synch with

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the fruit. Seamless tannins on the full-bodied palate, lively and animated, very taut, this is not the cashmere wine of Ducru for example, a little firmer in terms of the backbone, very well balanced, perhaps a little more masculine. Tightly coiled towards the espresso/minerally finish, really leaving a tingle of excitement on the tongue. Superb - real finesse in the wine, although that comes through leaving it for five minutes in the glass. The sample at the UGC showed more harmony and cohesion than the one at the château. Tasted March 2010"
Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points

"Intense aromas of blackberry and smoke. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and long finish. Solid and tight. As it should be"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

"Dark crimson. Purple rim. Very sweet indeed on the nose - unusually so for St-Julien. Glamorous and luscious with a hint of ink and freshness. Lots to enjoy! The tannins are very well handled and it's pure pleasure. Maybe lacks just a hint of freshness. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2028"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

"Black red, concentrated and smoky blackcurrant fruit with a little herby lift, very good firm fruit, still quite tight, but concentration and balance assure a good future. Drink 2015-28"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

"A slightly lighter, less powerful style of St.-Julien, but also less oaky than previous vintages have tended to be, the 2009 Lagrange offers attractive, fresh, red and black currant notes, and an elegant as well as corpulent attack and mid-palate. This wine does not have the weight of the "big boys" of St.-Julien, but it displays an endearing finesse, freshness, and purity. It is by no means a wimpish, understated wine, but in the context of the 2009 vintage, it is somewhat overwhelmed by many of its neighbors. Enjoy it over the next two decades. (Tasted two times). Drink 2010-2030

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-93 points

Langoa Barton

Estimate £300 - £400

Sister Chateau to Leoville Barton and now making wine almost as good. Often one of the best value St Juliens but prices have risen in the last few years. The 2009 is a blend of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc and 34% Merlot.

"Tasted at the château and the UGC. Cropped between 23rd September and 3rd October, a blend of 34% Merlot, 54% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12% Cabernet Franc, delivering 13.0% alcohol. A deep purple colour. The bouquet has a great purity and sense of nonchalance to it, light and airy, superb definition with black cherries, a touch of cassis and autumn leaves and then with aeration, hints of oyster shell and cockle shell. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins, a gentle but insistent grip, pure black cherries, touches of cassis and boysenberry towards the focused finish. Good length and breeding. Everything in its right place. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

"Opulent blackberry aromas. Lovely jam, but fresh. Full-bodied and rich. This wine sneaks up on you and follows on the end with lots of chewy tannins. Balanced and round"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-93 points

"Mid crimson with quite a pale rim. Pretty light - early picked? There's a nice freshness and neatness to this but it's overall a bit dry and grainy. 'Classic style'... Rather dry on the end. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2030"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

"Black red, rich, intense black summer fruits, clear and precise with very good natural concentration and depth, expressively elegant, already showing great charm above the firmness. Drink 2015-28"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

"I found the 2009 Langoa Barton to be so painfully extracted, excruciatingly tannic, powerful, and backward that I wrote it "should be forgotten for 15 years, and may have some charm in 30-40." There is no doubting its level of concentration and massiveness, but, wow, proprietor Anthony Barton has sure pushed the extraction, producing a wine for our children's children. (Tasted once.)"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92+ points

Leoville Barton

Estimate £400-£600

One of the most sought after clarets in the UK due to Anthony Barton's dedication of looking after the consumer. Always a good buy.

"Tasted at the château and the UGC. A blend of 22.5% Merlot, 77% Cabernet Sauvignon and 0.5% Cabernet Franc, delivering 13.1% alcohol. 84IPT. A dark garnet/purple colour. The nose is very well defined, taut at first but unwinding with aeration, crisp blackberry leaf, boysenberry, a touch of iodine and subtle hints of shellfish. The palate is medium-bodied with very fine tannins, a sense of tautness here, like a coiled spring, silky smooth, surfeit with freshness, very poised on the sorbet-like, almost Burgundian finish with that sense of transparency that allows the terroir to show through. Superb. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

"Licorice, berry, grape and currant on the nose turns to crushed fruit. Full-bodied, with very fine tannins, pretty fruit, currant and mineral. A balanced and pretty wine. Not quite the intensity and blockbuster style of the 2005, but excellent"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

"An intense nose with some strange oak note? Sweet, light, polished start. Pretty sinewy. A bit austere. Needs a lot of time. Deliberately slimline? But a very good complex undertow. A very slow burner. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2034"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17+ / 20 points

"Dense purple red, finely concentrated blackcurrant Cabernet nose with many layers of complexity, shows freshness above the controlled intensity of pure vineyard fruit, still shut in but a very great expression to come. Drink 2017-40"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 19 / 20 points

"This behemoth possesses massive extraction, an opaque purple color, huge density, extreme tannins, and a nearly endless finish. Everything is there, but the highly extracted style and off the chart tannins ensures that no one over the age of forty will ever see this wine hit full maturity. Nevertheless, there is a lot to admire, and it's good to taste a wine that will not be ready to drink for 30+ years. No compromise! (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2040"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 93-95+ points

Leoville Lascases

Estimate £1200- £1800

Considered by many to be the top 'Super second' wine and on the evidence of their 2009 they could have done it again. With the 2005 now almost being worth £2000 a case it could easily be released at our top estimate. Oozing in quality, price is the big question mark.

"Tasted at the château. A blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc, with 6.4% vin de presse, delivering 13.4% alcohol and a pH of 3.65. The nose has brilliant delineation: this is the first thing that hits you, as if you can peer into the clos of the vineyard itself. Very expressive, almost feminine and wily, crystalline (this is something that I did not expect.) The palate is medium-bodied, saturated and supple on the entry, seamless tannins, a sense of controlled opulence here, very pure, rounded towards the finish, again, gliding across the mouth and caressing, rather than gripping it. The finish is very pure, almost Napa in style, but retaining sufficient structure and prudence of alcohol to allow that Saint Julien terroir to shine through. This is an irresistible Las-Cases, perhaps a modern day '85? Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 96-98 points

"Black color. What a nose. Black licorice, raspberry, currant and dried flowers galore. Full-bodied and superpowerful, with masses of fruit and toasted oak, but a blockbuster finish of fruit, tannins and everything else. I have never tasted such a flashy sample. I am blown away by this. A more fruit-forward style for Las Cases"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

"Very deep crimson. Subtle with great depth of fruit and a hint of tobacco. This seems much sweeter and lusher than Léoville Las Cases usually does even if there is a lot of tannin underneath. Really quite voluptuous - what Bruno Borie claimed in Ducru? - but lots of fancy tannin and a bit of alcohol on the finish. Very firm but a bit of a step change with all that sweetness on the top. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2020-2040"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Deep purple red, naturally concentrated bouquet over really smooth, sophisticated fruit with a taffeta lift, great purity and depth of vineyard fruit, superb elegance and length. Drink 2018-40”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **19 / 20 points**

“The 2009 is one of the greatest Leoville Las Cases I have ever tasted, which is saying something given the many compelling wines that have been made at this estate. A final blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, and 9% Cabernet Franc has resulted in a wine that appears to be a hypothetical blend of the 1982, 1986, and 1996. Its 13.8% alcohol is perhaps the only thing that sets it apart from those vintages, which had nearly a full percentage point less. The high alcohol is barely noticeable in this 2009, which boasts an inky/purple color, monumental concentration, and great clarity and purity of creme de cassis, black cherry, spice box, graphite, and wet rock characteristics. Extremely full-bodied with a boatload of sweet tannin nearly concealed by the wine-s power, glycerin, and awesome fruit concentration, this intense effort never tastes heavy or tiring. This remarkable St.-Julien should be accessible in 3-4 years, and will evolve for 40-50. (Tasted once.) Drink 2013-2063”

Robert Parker, *Wine Advocate* (188) **96-100 points**

Leoville Poyferre

Estimate £350-£550

Situated next door to Leoville Barton, it often out performs its more famous neighbour. The 2009 will not disappoint. Another property that Michel Rolland consults at. Recommended.

“A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot and 5% Cabernet Franc, this has a beautifully defined bouquet, adeptly containing the 13.9% alcohol. The Cabernets were picked between 2nd and the 12th October, dense black fruits, touches of date and fresh fig, certainly more exotic than the Leoville Barton tasted just before. With aeration, there is a hint of Japanese nori. The palate is rounded and voluptuous, very well balanced with smooth, sensuous tannins, the acidity less marked than Barton, caressing towards the lush, but delineated finish. A powerful, quite sexy Poyferre by Didier Cuvelier. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, *eRobertParker.com* **92-94 points**

“Wonderful aromas of currant and blackberry, with black olives. Full-bodied, with a mouth-coating palate of supersoft tannins that go on and on. Solid and polished. Tasted twice, with consistent notes”

James Suckling, *WineSpectator.com* **93-96 points**

“Very dark crimson. Very grown-up and intense. Luscious fruit and top quality savoury oak. Very sweet start - really quite unusually sweet for a St-Julien. Very complete, lip-smacking and satisfying. Glamorous, polished. Long. Quite complex. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2032”

Jancis Robinson MW, *JancisRobinson.com* **17.5 / 20 points**

“Black red, rich and very impressive concentration of Cabernet cassis, robust and vigourous, seductively succulent fruit with superb natural tannin back up, a very exciting wine. Drink 2016-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“One of the stars of the vintage, it will be interesting to see if Poyferre ultimately eclipses Las Cases as the finest of the three Leovilles. The 2009 is even better than the 2000, 2003, and 2005. Its inky/purple color precedes a wine filled with extraordinary opulence, voluptuous texture, and sweet tannin. It offers both intellectual and hedonistic pleasure with layer upon layer of ripe fruit. Yields were 43 hectoliters per hectare, the blend is more than two-thirds Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Merlot, and the natural alcohol is the highest ever measured at this estate, 13.95%. The high alcohol is not the least bit noticeable because of the extraordinary concentration and freshness possessed by most 2009s - a vintage characteristic that will serve these wines for decades to come. This is a wine to purchase by the case-load. It should drink well for 4-5 years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2015”

Robert Parker, *Wine Advocate* (188) **97-100 points ***

Saint Pierre

Estimate £300- £450

A Chateau that is not that well known on the UK market but at it's best produces wines as good as the Leoville's. The 2009 is 81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot.

“Tasted at the UGC. Bright blackberry, boysenberry and minerals on the tightly wound nose. Good definition and lift, quite a classy Saint Julien nose. It has a beautifully balanced palate, ripe tannins, wonderful definition with a sensuality that I have never encountered before in St. Pierre. Plush and assured on the mineral-rich finish. Undoubtedly the finest St. Pierre that I have tasted. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, *eRobertParker.com* **93-95 points**

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“Sultanas and subtle spices on the nose. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and excellent fruit concentration. Long and succulent. Stylish stuff”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

“Very deep dark crimson - glossy colour. Aromatic and lifted. A little bit brutal in its make-up but very ambitious and introvert. Solid and dry on the finish. Very drying finish. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2020-2032”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17+ / 20 points

“Black red, elegantly concentrated blackcurrant fruit, quite leafy and lifted with a touch of licquorice spice, both floral and a little exotic, lovely rich, ripe fruit and good future. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“This has been a fabulous wine over recent vintages, but I do not think many consumers have caught on. Of course, there is far less of this classified-growth St.-Julien than of any of the Leovilles, Beychevelle, Talbot, Gruaud Larose, or Branaire Ducru. Unbelievably powerful, rich, and impressive, this may be the finest St.-Pierre ever made. An inky/purple color is followed by notes of creme de cassis, spring flowers, and forest floor, a layered, full-bodied, powerful mouthfeel, perfect balance, and extraordinary richness, purity, and unctuousity. This great St.-Julien should hit its peak in 7-10 years, and last for 30-50. Bravo! (Tasted two times.) Drink 2017-2067”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-98 points **

Talbot

Estimate £250-£350

Chateau with a huge following and is always one of our top selling wines. Hopefully it will be reasonably priced.

“Tasted at the château and the UGC. A sample taken 22nd March, a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon (a little higher than usual), 31% Merlot and 4% Petit Verdot, picked from 26th September with the Merlot, the Cabernet picked from 2nd October until 14th October. It was the first time they stopped picking to achieve full ripeness. The nose is just a little subdued at the moment, broody blackberry, raspberry, a touch of savoury fruit just in the background, perhaps from the Petit Verdot. The palate is medium-bodied, slightly rustic tannins on the entry, but nice depth on the mid-palate, fanning out nicely towards the supple finish. Notes of blackberry, tobacco, a touch of coca and a touch of pepper. A little rusticity compared to others although it displays admirable delineation. Off-dry finish. Fine, but it needs to pep up a bit by bottling. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-91 points

“A red with a solid core of blueberry and currant aromas, with spices too. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a balanced finish. Very pretty”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Some development at the rim. Light, graphite nose not without its attractions... Very sweet start but lifted and easy and utterly relaxed. Slightly dry tannins on the end. But very solid effort. Nice neat persistence. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Dense purple red, good earthy blackcurrant fruit, quite spicy, broad and open, very smooth texture and enough weight for the future. Drink 2014-22”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“This is the most impressive Talbot since the 1982 and 1986. It reveals an opaque plum/garnet/purple color as well as knock-out aromas of black fruits, cedar, incense, licorice, and a Provencal garrigue-like character. Substantial, sexy, and seductive, it is almost slutty in its exuberance and ostentatiousness. It was a thrill to drink this loaded St.-Julien. It should offer irresistible drinking over the next 20-25 years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2035”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-94 points

Pauillac

Armailhac

Estimate £250-£300

Owned by Mouton Rothschild and made by the same wine making team as Mouton itself. We think the 2009 could be the best ever. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24 % Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.

“Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild and at a negociant. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. This has a fragrant, perfumed nose with a Margaux-like personality. Taut blackberry and bilberry fruit, good definition, coiled up aromatics, becoming stonier with aeration, good minerality coming through, perhaps stricter than recent vintages of d'Armailhac. The palate has a very smooth entry, supple tannins, citric acidity, very pure and generous, lovely sense of refinement towards the tannic, blackberry, stony finish. Perhaps a little more conservative at this stage, the oak is bound to buff it up by time of bottling. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Love the minty, floral and dark berry aromas to this young wine. Full-bodied, with supe fine and polished tannins. Long and racy. Wonderful texture. Perhaps the best d'Armailhac ever. 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 24 percent Merlot, 14 percent Cabernet Franc and 2 percent Petit Verdot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

“60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. Picked 23 Sep - 6 Oct. Very dark crimson. Inky and fragrant with just a hint of farmyard. Black cherries for the first time on the left bank! Less obviously ripe and supple than many 2009s on the nose but then on the palate there's a sweet start and then a pretty chewy, slightly sinewy finish. Sweet and polished - not too much soul but an awful lot of effective artifice! Reasonably complete. More traditional tannin management than some. Fairly chunky. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5+ / 20 points

“Dense purple red, lovely expression of ripe blackcurrant fruit, polished, classy, seductive and impressive, beautiful texture and length, totally charming Pauillac that will age well. Drink 2014-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“This may be the finest d'Armailhac I have ever tasted. Made in a textured, full-bodied, sumptuous style, it is a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, and the balance primarily Cabernet Franc with a tiny dosage of Petit Verdot. It exhibits a deep ruby/purple hue along with floral, red and black currant, cedar, and spice characteristics. Deep, medium to full-bodied, and impressively pure as well as long, it should drink well for 25 years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2035. Robert Parker added an asterisk to this wine score to signify that it is a wine he considers has the finest potential of all the offerings he has ever tasted from this estate in nearly 32 years of barrel tasting samples in Bordeaux”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-93 points **

Batailley

Estimate £200 - £300

Often one of the best value Pauillacs. We haven't bought this since 2005 as we have favoured the Haut Batailley – hoping to get an allocation. 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot

“Tasted at the château and UGC. Picking commenced with the Merlot on the 24th September, for the Cabernet we started on the 29th September, finishing on 11th October and the Petit Verdot the 12th October. A blend of 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, this Batailley has a ripe nose of blackberry, black plum, sandalwood, mint and just a hint of white flowers. Not a huge intense nose, but much more refined, very Pauillac. The palate is medium-bodied, rounded and quite supple tannins, yet good backbone as always on this Batailley. Very harmonious, insistent but gentle grip, a slightly powdery texture towards the finish lending a pleasurable sense of umami. Very focused and elegant towards the finish, classic in style and yet very "2009". This has the potential to be a benchmark Batailley after bottling (just be prudent on the oak please!) Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points

“Currant and blackberry on the nose, with hints of toasted oak. Full-bodied, with big, chewy tannins. This is the biggest Batailley in years. Lots of improvement here”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Bright crimson. Pretty deep. Succulent and sumptuous on the nose. Lots of sweetness. Just a little attenuated but should deliver satisfaction eventually! Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2019-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Dense red, good leafy blackcurrant nose, good broad plummy fruit, smooth texture attractive leathery spice and good length. Drink 2015-24”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **16.5 / 20 points**

“The 2009 Batailley should give the 2005 a run for its money. It is a slightly sweeter, richer, softer wine (somewhat atypical for Batailley as it is generally one of the more structured and backward of the Pauillacs) exhibiting a dense purple color as well as notes of smoke, blackberries, cassis, charcoal, and oak. Deep, full-bodied, rich, and already seductive, it should have 25+ years of evolution ahead of it. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2035”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points

Carruades de Lafite

Estimate £650 - £1200

Very much a Chinese wine and highly sought after due to its investment potential. Hard to find at under £1500 a case. Allocation first to those who bought last year.

“A blend of 50.6% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42.4% Merlot, 2.2% Petit Verdot and 5% Cabernet Franc, the Carruades has a refined, very well delineated bouquet of blackberry, a touch of plum, Mirabelle, cedar and smoke. The palate is medium-bodied, fine tannins, smooth and sensuous, not a powerful Carruades, more approachable than previous vintages, the tannins a little softer and smoother. Good length. Very fine...but it does not exceed expectations. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 89-91 points

“Sweet berry and currant on the nose, with hints of cedar and sandalwood. Full-bodied, with wonderful milk chocolate and berry character. Long and supersilky. Love the balance to this. Slightly green tea aromas and flavors at the finish hold me back a little”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 89-92 points

“55% of the crop. 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot, 5% Cabernet Franc. Very deep crimson with a slightly pale rim. And lots of blue in it - a bit of press wine? Sumptuous nose already. Lightly inky start but then luscious texture and so round and polished. Great freshness and enormous polish, Doesn't taste as though there was lots of press wine in here. Great round stuff. Just a little kick at the end and a very slight hole towards the very end of the palate - otherwise fabissimo. But quite early maturing? Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2015-2025”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Dense red, fine fragrant red/black fruits, firm and elegant structure, restrained, almost serious wine that promises a good future. Drink 2015-22”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“The best Carruades de Lafite I have ever tasted is the 2009. Composed of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc, 55% of the crop was included in this second wine. It is an atypically powerful Carruades with slightly higher alcohol than usual as well as considerable structure. There are plenty of creme de cassis and crushed rock notes as well as a subtle wood component, and super intensity and lushness. It is an amazing effort! For technocrats, Lafite began its harvest on September 23 and finished on October 8. (Tasted once.)”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-94+ points **

Clerc Milon

Estimate £300 - £400

Mouton Rothschild property and like Armailhac is made by Mouton's winemaking team. They have made an exceptional wine. Considered by some to be the best Clerc Milon ever. 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot, 1% Carmenere.

“Tasted at Château Mouton-Rothschild. A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot and 1% Carmenere (the first time since 2005.) 12.5% alcohol, a little higher than usual. This has a very lifted nose, very lively, this is a bouquet that wants to party, although it just lacks the refinement that I

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find in the d'Armailhac. Very minerally, real scents of crushed stones in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied, silky smooth tannins, very good fruit intensity with black cherries, boysenberry, black plum and that minerality stretching long at the finish. Superb persistency. The wine is calming down in the glass. Very tight at the moment, it will hopefully blossom after its élevage. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

"Delivers blackberry galore, with fabulous floral and currant undertones. Complex on the nose. Full-bodied, offering chewy tannins and lots of black licorice and currant character. Chewy, but reserved at the same time. A top Clerc. 50 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 44 percent Merlot, 4 percent Cabernet Franc, 1 percent Petit Verdot and 1 percent Carmenère"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

"50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot, 1% Carmenère. Picked 23 Sep - 6 Oct. Deep moody colour. Pretty sumptuous and polished - super-ripe and flattering. Very sweet and rich although, like the other wines from this stable, some slightly rugged tannins. No obvious alcohol but fairly ripe and plush, plus notable acidity. Fine boned with attractive sweetness but no knock-out ingredient X. Rather drying finish, imprecise. Certainly a defiantly more traditional style than some of its peers - odd, or perhaps predictable? - in view of the fact that it used to be criticised for being too New World! Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2030"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

"Purple red, fine briary blackcurrant fruit, lots of earthy energy and an herbaceous lift to the naturally sweet density of fruit. Drink 2015-30"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

"Despite the fact there is 44% Merlot in this wine (blended with 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Carmenere), this is a tannic, structured, backward Clerc Milon, which is atypical for this estate. Perhaps I just caught it at a time when the structure was dominating. It is a deep ruby/purple-hued, concentrated, impressively endowed effort that requires serious cellar age, 4-5 years minimum. It should last for 20-25 years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2014-2039"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points

Duhart Milon Rothschild

Estimate £400 - £600

Duhart due to it being owned by Lafite is fast becoming an investment wine and likely to be cheaper than Carruades – could easily be a better wine for half the price of Carruades.

"Tasted at Lafite-Rothschild. Picked between 23rd and 30th September and 1st to 8th October, the Duhart is a blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon and 37% Merlot. It has that typically obdurate, almost sulky bouquet, dark berried fruit, cold stones, a touch of black olive and oyster shell. The palate is much more approachable than previous vintages, very fine tannins, a little purer than previous vintages, very harmonious and subtle with an almost feminine (for Duhart) finish. A classic Duhart fashioned in a more modern, pleasing style without losing its gravitas. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

"Intense aromas of currant and blackberry, with hints of toasted oak and flowers. Full-bodied, with thick and powerful tannins that are polished and racy. A persistent young wine"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

"63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot. Dark crimson. Scented and satiny with lots of lush mulberry fruit in the middle. Not at all flashy. Low key. Very dry, Cabernet finish. Polished again and sleek. Fine tannins. Not for the very long term but very beautifully made in a polished Cabernet way. Bone dry finish. More solid than Carruades. Light and lively on the finish. Sprightly - fully fledged status now. Not an also ran - though there is just a little astringency on the finish. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2029"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

"Fine purple red, briary black fruits on the nose, really good but rather restrained on the palate, firm and complex, a classic Pauillac, beautifully structured with purity and length. Drink 2016-30"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

“2009 may turn out to be among the greatest vintages ever in the Medoc. The 2009 appears to be the finest Duhart Milon yet made. The Rothschild family has invested heavily in this estate over the last 20 years in order to upgrade the quality, and their investments have certainly paid off handsomely. A blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon and 37% Merlot, the 2009's opaque purple color is followed by an extraordinary perfume of creme de cassis, violets, graphite, and subtle wood. This full-bodied, intense, voluptuously textured, pure, seductive wine seems more open-knit and opulent than the more structured Carruades de Lafite. Nevertheless, the Duhart requires 3-5 years of cellaring, and should drink well for 30+ years. Bravo! (Tasted once.) Drink 2013-2043”
*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points **

Les Forts de Latour

Estimate £700- £1000

To be honest much better than a Second wine – Almost Super-second quality, A wine we struggle to get an allocation of but always does fairly well.

“Tasted at the château, a blend of 65.1% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32.3% Merlot, 0.6% Cabernet Franc and 1.9% Petit Vedot, this Les Forts de Latour sports a deep garnet core. The nose is very well defined, very graceful, very well defined, not as opulent as previous vintage, but imbued with a sense of natural clarity and pellucidity. The palate is medium-bodied with real intensity and focus of fruit, much more minerality coming through than in previous vintages. Lovely, cedar infused finish with just a hint of tobacco. A much more graceful Les Fort de Latour. Very alluring. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Violet and mineral, with hints of blackberry and blueberry on the nose. Full-bodied, with superreserved and refined tannins, yet dense and very impressive. Long and racy. Lasts for minutes. Second wine of Latour”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Toasty and rich nose. Very plush and velvety - much more so than usual. Rich and velvety - such an amazing texture yet with Les Fort's solidity. Very firm backbone. Explosive. But it will need quite a time to come round. Very fine and deep. Hint of oyster shells. Lifted. Wonderful texture. Very tight and tense. Dry finish. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2020-2035”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Black red, great fragrance and precision on the nose, great depth of fruit and superb vineyard expression, ripeness, energy and grip over perfect tannins, very good indeed. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

“Perhaps the finest example ever made (including the extraordinary 1982) of Les Forts de Latour, the 2009 (61.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32.3% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot) is nearly as potent as the Pauillac at 13.5% alcohol. An opaque purple color is followed by notes of black fruits, crushed rocks, spring flowers, and hints of blackberries and smoke. Prodigiously rich and thick with an amazingly long finish of 50 seconds, this astonishing second wine will undoubtedly put on weight before bottling, and should last for 25-30 years. (Tasted once.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 93-95 points

Grand Puy Ducasse

Estimate £250 - £350

We haven't bought this En Primeur since the 2000 vintage. Considered to be the best ever. Made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. Not for investment but could easily be a star buy for Pauillac.

“Tasted at the UGC. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot, this has a rather subdued nose: blackberry, undergrowth, cigar box...very well defined. The palate is not bad at all: certainly an improvement in recent years with better balance and (hoorah!) no sign of greenness. Not an ambitious GPD, but understated and agreeable on the foursquare, tobacco led finish. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 88-90 points

“A pretty nose of lead pencil and currant follows through to a full body, with well-integrated tannins and a silky, long finish. Stylish”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

“Unusually deep crimson. Very dark crimson. Sweet candy nose. Not very dense but certainly very sweet in a candy way. Then pretty austere tannins. Pretty dry end. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Black red, smoky and concentrated blackcurrant fruit, rich succulent fruit with a thick velvety texture and quite firm tannins. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **16.5 / 20 points**

“Possibly the finest wine yet produced at this estate, the 2009 is even fatter, richer, and more unctuously textured than the 2005 (which I loved). It boasts an opaque purple color, thrilling levels of sweet creme de cassis and blackberries along with hints of underbrush as well as forest floor, silky tannins, full body, and a plush, heady, opulent personality. This stunning wine should drink well for two decades. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2030” *Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-93 points **

Grand Puy Lascoste

Estimate £400- £600

Personal favourite and a property that seems to get better and better. Run by Xavier Borie.

This could be a smart buy – same quality as Lynch Bages and likely to be £100-£200 per case cheaper.

“Tasted at the château. A blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc picked the between the 24th September and 7th October. The nose is introverted and broody at first, hints of seaweed inflecting the pure black fruits. Very minerally - lots of character here. The palate is medium-bodied, the tannins a little firmer and structure than other Pauillacs, which is exactly in keeping with the estate's style. Lovely poise on the finish, wonderful focus and edginess with a savoury note on the finish. Insistent grip. Superb persistency and yet typically conservative in its youth. No doubt it will demand at least ten years cellaring, but it will be worth the wait. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points

“Lovely nose of sweet currant and blueberry that follows through to a full body, with juicy, velvety tannins and a licorice, tar and dark chocolate finish. Like it. The new 1982?”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc. Very dark crimson. Dense and rich and supple - less obviously fresh than its Haut-Batailley stablemate. Very sweet and just a little lacking depth compared with some Grand-Puy Lacoste vintages. Sinewy. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Black red, big, smoky, almost leathery fruit, really great purity and intensity of flavour and great freshness and depth, with the tannins perfectly absorbed. Drink 2016-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

“I was surprised that this wine was not more concentrated given the overall character of the vintage, and I would rate it behind the 2005, 2000, 1990, and 1982. Nevertheless, it boasts this estate's classic creme de cassis character as well as a soft, round, medium to full-bodied mouthfeel, pure fruit, and silky tannins, but not the weight, depth, or profound concentration of the top 2009 Pauillacs. Still, this cuvee will be approachable young, and should evolve easily for two decades. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2030”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points

Haut Bages Liberal

Estimate £250-£350

Our star buy Pauillac in 2008. Owned by Claire Villars-Lurton (Ch. Ferriere). Could be a star buy in 2009 – Not to be mistaken as Lynch Bages 2nd wine (Haut Bages Averous – now called Echo de Lynch Bages) this is a 5th growth Cru Classe.

“Tasted at the UGC. A blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Merlot, this has a ripe, quite floral, feminine nose with bright black fruits, pencil shaving and a touch of cedar. Very Pauillac, refined and understated. The palate has slightly chewy tannins on the entry, giving way to a more succulent texture with a little aeration: blackcurrant wine gums, cedar, a touch of white pepper, foursquare with graphite on the finish. It could do with a little more depth and length, but I appreciate the balance and poise and I think this will round out during élevage. Tasted March 2010” *Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points*

“Currant and mint, with hints of fresh herbs. Lovely complex nose already. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long, racy finish. Solid core of beautiful fruit”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

“Sweet and oddly floral on the nose...? Plus a note of greenness. Rather simple and austere. Did this really ripen properly? Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2026”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 15.5 / 20 points

“Black red, finely concentrated and rather tight black-currant fruit, a certain leafy leanness that is made up for by good middle concentration and length. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“Tasted at the UGC. A blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Merlot, this has a ripe, quite floral, feminine nose with bright black fruits, pencil shaving and a touch of cedar. Very Pauillac, refined and understated. The palate has slightly chewy tannins on the entry, giving way to a more succulent texture with a little aeration: blackcurrant wine gums, cedar, a touch of white pepper, foursquare with graphite on the finish. It could do with a little more depth and length, but I appreciate the balance and poise and I think this will round out during élevage. Tasted March 2010”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points

Haut Batailley

Estimate £240-£300

Under the same ownership as Grand Puy Lacoste and practically as good but is likely to be half the price. Unless they do something stupid with the price I'm sure some will find it's way into my cellar.

“Tasted at Château Grand Puy Lacoste. A blend of 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc, picked between 26th September until 7th October. This Haut-Batailley has a tight, quite elegant nose, pert black fruits, blackberry leaf, a touch of sous-bois, graphite, a hint of undergrowth. It needs time to expand and blossom in the glass. The palate is very fresh with fine tannins, surfeit with coiled energy, the finish very vibrant, slightly Oriental with faint hints of Hoi Sin and even a touch of yellow plum. Very harmonious on the finish. Excellent...it reminds me of the superb '06. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

“Sweet berry, with currant and mint on the nose and palate. Full-bodied, yet reserved and silky. Lovely finish”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc. Very dark crimson. Serious nose. Then splendid breadth. Minerals and bright fruit. Really appetising. Racy. Lots of energy. Lovely stuff. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2029”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Dense red, big smoky cassis Cabernet Sauvignon nose, has seductive charm, great length and firm finish, a lovely wine. Drink 2015-25”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“Even though Haut-Batailley is usually a finesse-styled Pauillac, the 2009 is somewhat light for the vintage. However, it exhibits lovely, round, berry fruit, a hint of loamy soil, medium body, soft tannins, and a pretty, elegant style. It should drink nicely for 15+ years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2025”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 88-90 points

Lafite

Estimate £5000-£8000

Bordeaux hot property due to China's unconquerable thirst for as much as they can get. The reports that we were receiving a month ago was that it's likely to come out at £6000 but as the price of the 2005 has bounced to £9000 from £7000 it could pull up the price of the 2009.

“Tasted at the chateau from a sample taken on 19th March 2009 and the sample left 20-30 minutes before approaching. The Lafite 2009 has a very dark, almost opaque black/purple hue. The nose is very intense with blackberries, griottes, a touch of apricot and an almost sorbet like freshness. Powerful but also, so graceful and

elegant, nothing over-ambitious. The palate is full-bodied with silky smooth tannins, seamless texture, pure blackberry, plum, minerals, crushed stones. I have never tasted a Lafite at this stage so elegant and graceful. The puissance is deceptive, only at the finish are there lapping waves of pure, heavenly black cherries, minerals, a touch of cassis, cedar and graphite. Astounding persistency. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 98-100 points

“Offers currant and wild raspberry, with a lilac and exotic character on the nose, turning to sweet tobacco and cedar. Full-bodied, showing very racy tannins and a balance of pretty fruit. This is powerful yet elegant, almost delicate, with a wonderful polish. But then the tannins take off. Muscular yet agile. A very classic Bordeaux style”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 96-99 points

“43% of the crop. 82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon(!), 17% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot. Deep, lustrous, dark crimson. Mineral, low-key nose, slow to open, but it did with time into something really very refined with great minerality. Very muted and super-restrained. Very fine boned, with a bit more flesh than is usual for Lafite but no flashiness whatsoever. Bravo for making such a good wine in such a buoyant market. Even a hint of milk chocolate! Though no trace of oak. Very vibrant, very fine and a great undertow. Very complex and subtle indeed. Bone dry finish. A little less ethereal than usual. Super refined. Bravo! Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2020-2040”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 19 / 20 points

“Black purple red, elegant concentration of pure Lafite Cabernets, wild violets, succulent yet restrained fruit, both fleshy and firm, superb middle palate, not massively structured but like a Gothic cathedral: austere on the outside and soaring to great heights in the inside. Drink 2018-50”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 19.5 / 20 points

“The 2009 Lafite Rothschild is a candidate for "wine of the vintage." Although the 2003 was powerful (12.9% alcohol), the 2009 came in at 13.4% alcohol. It is a blend of 82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot. Only 45% of the crop went into the grand vin, which may be the most concentrated Lafite I have ever tasted. There is not a hard edge to be found in this inky/purple-colored wine displaying notes of charcoal, incense, black currants, and licorice. In the mouth, it represents a liqueur of black fruits offered in a remarkably full-bodied, incredibly elegant, lush style. Expansive, savory, staggeringly concentrated, and voluptuous as well as wonderfully precise with a hint of minerality, this sensational wine's technical numbers are off the charts. Is this a replay of the 1959? Although it will be surprisingly approachable in its youth, this is a 50-100-year wine. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2110”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points

Latour

Estimate £5000-£8000

With under 10,000 cases produced and probably only half released En Primeur it is going to be very hard indeed to get allocations. We will try but don't hold your breath. Many of the allocations that we got through Negotiants have disappeared over the last 5 years as Frederic Engerer has taken away their allocations.

“Tasted at the château. Very deep purple colour. The nose is very well defined with scents of small blackberry, boysenberry, cold granite and just a hint of pencil lead. Great clarity and expression here. This is a majestic Latour, utterly pure, wonderful minerality showing through, very fine tannins and incredible poise. Blackberry, touches of briary, coiled up energy towards the finish, utterly focused with that tannins leaving an off-dry finish with bewitching persistency. There is paradoxically weight and weightlessness...sorry to be so cryptic, but that is how it is! A monumental Latour that constitutes one of the greatest wines of the vintage. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 98-100 points

“This is incredibly floral on the nose, with violet and lilac as well as dark and ripe raspberry and blueberry. Full-bodied, with a dense and incredibly rich palate yet held back and in reserve. Such precision and beauty. It lasts for minutes on the palate. This reminds me of the 1990, but better made and better raised. It is really the style of Latour, where the tannins grab you at the end. This will most likely be a perfect wine”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“Very deep and glowing crimson. Very rich and sweet ink on the nose. Wonderfully gorgeous and lush on the front palate. Then lots of heat and richness. Amazing power of fruit on the mid palate gives way to extremely pronounced tannins. Transparent, mellifluous, spicy. Violets, says Engerer. Dry Taylors port? Latour backbone. Glossy ripe fruit. Candied violets. Maybe in 03 we went overboard. Enormous energy. Very impressive. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2022-2045”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 19 / 20 points

“(91.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.7% Merlot) Black red, huge concentration of black fruits and great purity, wonderfully fragrant nose with wild violets and lifted freshness, great length and perfect texture, totally Latour and all the fruit and vineyard will come out over the years. Drink 2018-45”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **19.5 / 20 points**

“The 2009 Latour has off the charts concentration in addition to the highest level of tannin ever measured at the estate. The final blend was somewhat unusual in that it consists of 91.3% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8.7% Merlot, and clocked in at 13.7% alcohol (even higher than the 2003). Possibly a 100-year wine, it boasts an inky/black/purple color as well as an extraordinary perfume of super-intense blue and black fruits, graphite, and a liqueur of rocks-like minerality. Enormously full-bodied yet at the same time incredibly fresh, vibrant, and precise, it coats the mouth, and builds incrementally to skyscraper-like texture, and a whopping finish that lasts over a minute. This remarkable wine reveals a certain accessibility already, yet one senses that it will be even richer, more nuanced, and fuller by the time it is bottled in mid-2011. A monumental wine from a monumental vintage in the Medoc, this is our children's children's children's elixir. (Tasted once.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points

Lynch Bages

Estimate £400 - £700

Safe bet for investment as it's a big name with a huge following. They have also made a great wine. The word on the street (or grape vine) is that it could be the best since 89 and 90.

“Tasted at the château and UGC. A blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, raised in 70% new oak. Merlot was cropped from the 28th to 30th September and the Cabernet Sauvignon was picked from the 6th to the 12th October. The nose soars from the glass, pure blackberry, briary, pencil lead and a touch of tobacco. Very fine definition: reminiscent of the 2006 but with a little more horsepower. The palate is full-bodied with very well integrated new oak that really sings with the concentrated black fruit and does not disguise the minerality in this wine. Tons of freshness, that acidity really driving the wine to the finish and then the persistency is superb. Still very linear, with a strictness that is seductive. Tasted March 2010” *Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points*

“The nose shows amazing aromas of mint, spices and currant, with underlying licorice and tar. Full-bodied, with amazing fruit and a long, long finish. Powerful. Blockbuster, but balanced. So structured. Lynch has not made a wine like this since perhaps 1989 or 1982. Better than Wine of the Year 1985 Lynch”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 96-99 points

“Dense crimson. Rich and spicy and lifted. Really rather flirtatious. Not heavy or dense but very nicely balanced without aggressive notes of rough tannin or greenness. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Dense purple red, concentrated Cabernet cassis plus rich spiciness, big volume on the palate, expressive elegance over the natural vigour, lifted and long. Drink 2015-30”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

“The highest levels of polyphenols ever measured at Lynch Bages (20% higher than any prior vintage) are found in the 2009, which achieved 13.4% natural alcohol, and a normal pH of 3.64. Composed of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, it is the greatest Lynch Bages since the outstanding duo of 1989 and 1990. The black/purple-tinged 2009 exhibits a glorious perfume of graphite, black currants, and subtle smoke, powerful, thick, unctuously textured flavors, huge yet sweet tannins, fabulous purity, and a finish that lasts 40-45 seconds. Five to eight years of patience will be required, but this is a 30-40-year wine from this popular estate run by the affable and highly respected Cazes family. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2050”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points

Mouton Rothschild

Estimate £4000 - £8000

Without doubt one of the wines of the vintage. We are going to do our best to get as much as we can. Mouton is definitely on top form. In fact it has almost been the star first growth for the last three vintages.

“Tasted at the château. A blend of 88% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12% Merlot, the highest percentage of Cabernet since 1963. Delivering 13.1% alcohol and an IPT was close to 80. The nose is tight at first and demands so coaxing from the glass, but unfurls to reveal a very pure aromatic profile: quite strict, more like Grand Puy Lacoste, a touch of smoke, very fine mineralité. The palate is medium-bodied very precise, supple tannins, superb Cabernet Sauvignon, taking time to open up but it does towards the finish, touches of tobacco and sous-bois underlying the ripe but not decadent fruit. The tannins are not quite as fine as Latour, but there is a lovely sensuality on the finish. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points

“I am speechless over the nose in this wine. Mint, blackberry, currant and black licorice turn to flowers such as lilacs and roses. Wow. It fills your mouth with the same fruit, but with an intensity of superpolished tannins. It finishes with complex yet reserved coffee, toasted oak and ripe fruit and then in two or three minutes it becomes milk chocolate. Just a joy to taste. Best Mouton since 1982 or 1986; in fact, it's like a blend of the two. A perfect Mouton? 88 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 12 percent Merlot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“48% of the crop, picked 3 days earlier than usual because the grapes were so ripe. Average yield 45 hl/ha. 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Merlot. Very dark indeed. Very Mouton. Very exotic, minerals, spice and old ladies' handbags. Lovely top notes. Real excitement on the nose here. Obviously great density but lots of grace notes. Lovely palate entry and glossy texture. Then again drier and a little more astringent than its peers on the finish. A difficult wine to mark because the nose is SO gorgeous! I think it may require just a bit more patience than some. Just seemed in a slightly low register when I tasted it. All the Mouton wines had ruder tannins than usual in 2009. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2020-2040”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18.5 / 20 points

“Black red, concentrated black fruits, rich satiny/velvety yet firm texture, rich, plummy, spicy, an explosion of aromas and flavours, surrounded and controlled by superb tannins, a sensually expressive wine. Drink 2016-40”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 19 / 20 points

“This is the most backward and unevolved of all the Left Bank (Medoc) first-growths. In 10-20 years, the 2009 Mouton Rothschild should rank alongside the greatest vintages of the last three decades (1986 and 1982). Yields were a small 30 hectoliters per hectare, the final blend is 88% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12% Merlot, and the finished alcohol is 13.2% (not particularly high in this vintage). The pH is 3.81, and the index of tannins, the highest ever measured, a whopping 20% higher than the next highest vintage. The tannins, while present, are silky and well-integrated, one of the hallmarks of the 2009 vintage. An inky/purple color is accompanied by classic aromas of creme de cassis, violets, and hints of graphite and background oak. The overwhelming impression is one of layer upon layer of fruit, full-bodied opulence, and good structure. It tastes as if it were 2-3 months old rather than a post-malolactic, fully assembled barrel sample ... it's that young, but so incredibly promising. A 50- to 100-year wine? Probably. (Tasted once).”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-98+ points

Petit Mouton

Estimate £500- £800

Second wine of Mouton Rothschild. Getting fairly expensive these days as it tries to keep up with its famous cousin – Carruades. Good wine but final judgement reserved when we know the price. It was only 5 years ago that we were selling the Mouton Rothschild 2004 at £880.

“A blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc with around 8% vin de presse. This has a very deep purple/garnet core. The nose is quite rich, well defined, opulent for a Le Petit Mouton (obviously not so Petit this year!) Blackberry, a touch of plum, Mirabelle with just a hint of damon. Good lift. The palate is much more tannic than I expect, a feisty Le Petit Mouton, firm tannins, rigid structure with a touch of savoury fruit towards the spice-tinged finish. Moderate length. Perhaps it needs to calm down a bit...a bit tough on the finish. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 88-90 points

“Impressive aromas of mint, mineral and black fruits follow through to a full body, with velvety tannins and persistent finish. Dense and well-structured. 63 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 22 percent Merlot and 15 percent Cabernet Franc.”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc - one of the highest proportions of Cabernet Franc. Very solid and rather arresting on the nose. Then just a little rustic on the palate. Chewy tannins - not the ultra-suppleness of, say, Carruades and Les Forts. More of an obvious second wine? Rather drying tannins on the finish. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2026

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Fine dark red, beautiful cassis nose, fragrant and plummy, silky/satiny texture, very seductive classy black fruits with good tannin back-up. Drink 2014-20”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“The second wine, the 2009 Le Petit Mouton, is the finest second wine they have ever made. Aromas of black currants, flowers, mocha, and earth jump from the glass of this fleshy, heady, full-bodied wine. The final blend is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc, and the alcohol level is slightly higher than the Mouton's. It should drink well for 15+ years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2025”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points **

Pichon Longueville Baron (Pichon Baron)

Estimate £600 - £1000

The 2009 is an awesome wine. Pichon Baron is definitely a ‘Super-second’. Only 45% of the crop from vineyards near Latour are used to make the first wine – most of the rest goes into Tourelles de Longueville, the second wine. Has been described as a mini Latour. Could be a star buy regardless of price.

“Tasted at the château and at the UGC. A blend of 67% Cabernet Sauvignon and 33% Merlot, picked between 24th September and the 9th October, cropped at around 35hl/ha and bestowed with 13.76% alcohol. This has a very tight nose at first, demanding coaxing from the glass. Very fine definition, a strict linearity at first, opening up a glacial pace, graphite, smoke, small black cherries, a hint of bilberry and crushed stones. The palate is full-bodied with brilliant definition and focus, even finer tannins than the stupendous 2008, very rounded and supple and yet with a firm linear backbone. No frills at the moment, just pure concentration. Wonderful persistency towards the finish. Top class. Tasted March 2010” *Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 95-97 points*

“Loads of currant and blackberry, with mineral and dried flowers. Full-bodied, with ultrafine, very long tannins. Really builds on the palate. A racy style, with excellent length”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“33 hl/ha, older vines. Two thirds Cabernet Sauvignon, one third Merlot - they say Merlot quality in 09 was very Cabernet Sauvignon-like. IPT (total polyphenol index) 88, TA 3.4 g/l. One of the most concentrated vintages ever - from fruit not extraction. Very very dark crimson. Very mineral and grown up. Lovely lift and great, polished tannins. Very fresh and fine tannins with density and lift on the finish. Very sophisticated. Lots of mass. Reminds me a little of their 1990, though the yields were very much lower in 2009. Very glossy and confident. Very sophisticated. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2018-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Black red, big, smoky rich and exotic nose, lots of depth, robust vineyard structure and powerful yet harmonious length, all vigorous potential. Drink 2017-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“An inky/blue/purple color is followed by aromas and flavors of incense, flowery black currants, and subtle smoke and oak. This full-bodied 2009, which exhibits wonderful intensity, purity, and length, is an exceptional effort, but in this vintage, it must take a back seat to some of its peers, such as Pichon Lalande, Pontet-Canet and Lynch-Bages, not to mention all the first-growths. Nevertheless, it is a beautiful wine that should drink well for 30+ years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2040”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 93-95 points

Pichon Comtesse Lalande (Pichon Lalande)

Estimate £600 - £1000

Owned by Louis Roederer and another unquestionable Super Second. Not a block buster like the Baron but full of great class and charm. We think this will be a late developer. Lalande is always full of surprises.

“Tasted at the château and at the UGC. A limpid deep purple colour. This has a very fragrant nose, not quite as well defined as Pichon Baron, but very elegant and graceful with blackberry, raspberry leaf, pencil lead, graphite and wild hedgerow. Very pure and feminine. Second bottle at the UGC is actually better...much more precision here, the high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon (75%) really showing through. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins, very compact, not as expansive as other wines, much more conservative than I was expecting, but very graceful with an unerring sense of symmetry. I cannot help feeling that the wine would benefit from a greater percentage of Merlot, especially on the finish, but over time it does expand in the glass, becoming more and more supple, with a sense of Cabernet invoked authority on the finish. This should coalesce beautifully by time of bottling. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-96 points

“Wow. This has an incredible complexity on the nose of currant, spice, mineral and flowers. Full-bodied, with a great density of fruit and tannins, yet polished and beautiful. This could be the new 1982 from here. Made from 75 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 20 percent Merlot and 5 percent Petit Verdot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“Dark crimson and a little more complex-looking than the Réserve de la Comtesse. Heady and rich and spicy and lightly gamey. Very solid and dark and dense - almost brooding. Sweet, polished and fun. Just lacks a bit of bottom and density on the palate. Very flirtatious. Complete and savoury on the finish with very polished tannins. Appetising and not at all forced. But not the most ambitious 2009. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Black red, wonderfully fragrant nose, rich and spicy and beautifully expressively textured fruit, plenty of extraction but pure harmony, vibrant and polished, seductive length and great future. Drink 2016-35”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

“The blend for the 2009 Pichon Lalande is dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon, somewhat unusual at this estate which usually has more Merlot in the blend. As stated previously, the Cabernet Sauvignon reached levels of ripeness and intensity of flavor in 2009 never seen before in Bordeaux! The final blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, and 5% Petit Verdot and a pH of 3.8 combines the best of a vintage such as 1996, in terms of structure, freshness, and precision, with the best of 1982, in terms of opulence, power, unctuousity, and thickness. The opaque purple-colored 2009 exhibits an intoxicatingly intense nose of red and black fruits, subtle smoke, charcoal, forest floor, and a hint of flowers. Unusually full-bodied for a wine from this estate as well as unctuously textured, voluptuous, and incredibly pure and precise, this dazzling wine should be drinkable at an early age, and evolve for 30+ years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2040.”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-98 points

Pontet Canet

Estimate £600-£800

Alfred Tesseron brilliant wine and a personal favourite. We will do our best to get an allocation in 2009

“Tasted on four separate occasions, including twice at the chateau, though actually showing best at a negociant. Representing 80% of the crop, 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot. The nose is very pure, blackberry, small black cherries, a touch of griottes, a hint of cedar and mint. Quite feminine. Not too powerful. Very fine definition. The palate is full-bodied with firm tannins, insistent grip and good acidity, perhaps one of the most structured, masculine Pauillac 2009s but that does not detract from the finesse and poise. But certainly there is backbone here that segues into a tertiary note towards the finish. Very focused, more mineral elements towards the finish, hints of black truffle and smoke towards the finish. Very good persistency, somehow, an assured Pontet Canet. Superb. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-97 points

“Delivers aromas of blueberry skin, fresh flowers, licorice and raspberry sauce, with something exotic underneath it all. Full-bodied, with wonderful clarity and freshness. It's like looking at a full moon on a crystal-clear night in the country. This keeps coming at you, with tannins and ripe fruit. What balance, yet power to the wine. I love how the wine changes and challenges you with every sip”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“Yields a bit more than in 2008, with more grand vin too. 81 ha total vineyards. This year they are trying for 24 ha by horse. They can't tell us the alcohol but think it's 13-13.5%. Very dark crimson. Firm and broad and very lively with real vibrant elderberry nose - there IS a bit of extra vitality in this wine! Very very nice and satisfying indeed. There is life to this and great breadth and depth. Intense richness that seems to come from the fruit rather than from winemaking. Something of Lafite's complexity and integrity. Plus Mouton's richness. Dry finish. Very well done. But it is not a wine you want to undertake young - still lots to sort out. Much less open than most. Dense - really quite dry on the end but appetising though very long term. Muscular. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2020-35”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Dense colour and pure Cabernet blackcurrant fruit beautifully extracted with great length and perfect harmony, great purity of expression, exuberant yet restrained, great future. Drink 2016-30”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

“It's no surprise that proprietor Alfred Tesseron has produced a possibly perfect 2009. He's been on a roll since 1994, and no other producer has done more work in the vineyard than Tesseron, who has moved to 100% biodynamic farming, reduced yields drastically, and instituted a draconian selection process. This vineyard, which sits on the high plateau of Pauillac adjacent to Mouton Rothschild, has produced a 2009 of extraordinary intensity and purity. It is outrageously concentrated, with silky tannin (the sweetest I have ever tasted in a Pontet-Canet as well as the highest measured), an opaque purple color, and copious notes of graphite, cassis, licorice, and subtle smoke and forest floor. Full-bodied and unctuously textured with striking purity and definition, it is a wine of colossal weight as well as elegance (in itself a poster boy for this paradox in 2009). This brilliant Pauillac requires a decade of cellaring despite its voluptuous texture. It should evolve for 50-75 years. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2020-2095”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 97-100 points

St Estephe

Calon Segur

Estimate £350 - £450

Likely to be one of the star buys. Like Leoville Barton in St Julien, Calon Segur is normally realised at a reasonable price. Owned by Madame Gasqueton. Great to see Calon Segur back on top form. 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot and 3% Petit Verdot.

“Tasted at the château. This has a very strict nose with brambly black fruit, wild hedgerow, a touch of plum and Mirabelle with cold stony aromas developing with further aeration. The palate is medium-bodied, firm tannins, good balance, just a little tough at the moment, briary and blackberry, a very saline finish with moderate length. Very taut, coalescing nicely in the glass, just a little hard on the finish. It will interesting to see whether this softens with age: perhaps a little less oak would have served this redoubtable Calon-Segur better? I will remain prudent with my score for now. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Delivers gorgeous aromas of blackberry, blueberry and licorice, with hints of tobacco and spice. Full-bodied, offering a lovely texture and refinement. Very long and beautiful, with tangy acidity and lively fruit. A rich, yet very balanced, Calon. This is almost all Cabernet Sauvignon instead of the normal blend with 40 percent Merlot. The château is now using 100 percent new wood. Like the changes”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

“Dark crimson. Wonderful electric vitality on the nose. Great vibrancy. Great integrity in the same way as Pontet-Canet is seamless right through the palate - great line. Pure and dense and polished. Really vibrant. Lovely minerality on the finish. Complete. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Dense, very Cabernet (90%) nose of red/black berry fruits, great freshness, purity and length, a beautifully made, truly aristocratic wine. Drink 2016-30”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“Made in a very different style for this estate, the 2009 is composed of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon (the highest I have ever seen here), 7% Merlot, and 3% Petit Verdot, and achieved 13.8% natural alcohol. It is a big, rich, tannic, structured, dense ruby/purple-tinged wine offering a sweet kiss of creme de cassis, loamy soil, and spice box. Remarkably, despite the use of 100% new oak because of the 2009's power and intensity, there is not a hint of wood in either the aromatic or flavor profile. Never that showy from cask, this traditionally made St.-Estephe should be forgotten for 10-15 years, and drunk over the following 40-50 years. My rating is very conservative, and I expect it to rise considerably as this wine comes out of its infancy. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2020-2070
Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 92-94+ points

Cos D'Estournel

Estimate £1000 - £1400

Owned by Michel Reybier but run by Jean-Guillaume Prats since 2001. Now firmly in the super-second league and is without doubt a brilliant wine. 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31 % Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc.

“Tasted twice on separate occasions at the property. Stylistically, the Cos d'Estournel sets itself apart from the entire Left Bank, though I am uncertain whether this is a positive thing. Coming in with an IPT of 99 and tangible 14.5% alcohol, it is endowed with an extremely rich, decadent nose with macerated black cherries, cassis, a touch of crème de menthe, melted chocolate and a hint of fig. This is an extremely powerful nose that bears more relationship with the Douro than the Gironde. It is endowed with Leviathan tannins that form a massive, arching structure, moderate acidity, the power seeming to dominate the finish at the expense of a little finesse. This is a Cos d'Estournel that wants to make a bold impression. Leaving it for 15-20 minutes there is a change in the glass, becoming rounder and more harmonized, certainly some of the heat dissipating and yet one has to question whether stylistically, it has forsaken its identity as quintessential Saint Estephe? Another sample with one hour decanting with a little smoother and yet still showed a little hardness and alcohol on the finish. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 89-91 points

“This smells like Harlan a bit. Supercharged in fruit, with intense aromas of tar, spice, cardamon, clove, blackberry and black pepper. Crazy nose. Full-bodied, with masses of fruit, yet focused and in form. Chewy tannins, with great length. This goes on and on. Incredibly exotic. Could be best ever from here?”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“Very dark indeed. Blackish crimson. Not much scent though obviously very ripe. Firmer than some of the more obvious Napa Valley-style wines in 2009 with the tannins much more obvious. But a coolness on the finish. This may come round eventually. It is much more demanding than most 2009s and will need SO long. A very exaggerated wine with a bit of a hole in the middle. A definite lack of freshness. Does remind me a little bit of Pavie 2003. To be generous I'm assuming that in the far distant future it may resolve itself but I can't quite understand why they let the grapes get so ripe. Harvest dates are pretty similar to Ch Latour but the results are very different. . why they let the grapes get so ripe. Harvest dates are pretty similar to Ch Latour but the results are very different. 14.5%. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2024-2040”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5+ / 20 points

“Superb black red, very full and spicy, very broadly structured, really quite massive (14.5abv) and will take years to pick up finesse, a 'baroque' almost Porty wine, explosively rich and definitely impressive if not a typical Saint-Estèphe. Drink 2018-40” Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“The 2009 Cos d'Estournel is one of the greatest young wines I have ever tasted ... in the world! An extraordinary effort I tasted on two separate occasions, this blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest primarily Merlot with a dollop of Cabernet Franc has a whopping 14.5% alcohol, but a remarkably normal pH of 3.69. Kudos to Jean-Guillaume Prats and owner Michel Reybier for this amazing wine made from yields of 33 hectoliters per hectare. It will be a legendary claret that should last for 50-60 years. A black/purple color is accompanied by aromas of graphite, ink, creme de cassis, blackberries, cedar, and incense. Full-bodied and unctuously textured, with an ethereal personality, tons of nuances, and a burgeoning complexity, it is an enormously well-endowed, fresh, perfectly balanced tour de force in winemaking. As mentioned above, it should drink well for 50-60 years. This wine possesses this vintage's classic characteristics of enormous power, massive

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fruit, and extraordinary freshness and precision - largely unprecedented, particularly for Cabernet-based wines in the Medoc. (Tasted two times). Drink 2010-2070"

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points **

Dame de Montrose

Estimate £180 - £240

Second wine of Montrose and always a good buy. Final blend is likely to be 80% Merlot as a lot of the Cabernet has gone into the first wine.

"Aromas of berries, currant and citrus fruit follow through to a full body, with firm and chewy tannins and a medium finish. A little hollow in the midpalate. Second wine of Montrose"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

"28% of production. 18% Cabernet Sauvignon, 82% Merlot. Light nose, slightly soapy, with obviously a lot of substance underneath. Very rich and full and succulent but not awfully refreshing. Just a tad heavy. Then rather raw tannins on the finish. A bit ungainly. Very much a second wine rather than a wine sculpted in its own right. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2014-2020"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

"The second wine, the 2009 La Dame de Montrose, is an amazing blend of 82% Merlot and 18% Cabernet Sauvignon. Voluptuously textured, super juicy, and sexy with intense blue and black fruits, decent acids, and silky tannin, this 2009 is already irresistible, and should keep for 10-15+ years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2025"

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Lafron Rochet

Estimate £250- £350

Neighbour to Cos D'Estournel and a Chateau very much on the up. Not s big enough name for investment but a great wine to have in the cellar. 64% Cabernet Sauvignon.

"A sample taken on 23rd March tasted at the property. A blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot and 1% vin de presse, a pH of 3.65 and alcohol 13.5% with 50% matured in new oak. This has a tightly wound that unfurls nicely over 15 minutes, a nice minerality here, really exposed at the moment. Blackberry, a touch of raspberry, wild hedgerow, very pure and refined. The palate is medium-bodied, firm tannins, quite tight at the moment, very focused, gentle grip, and racy acidity towards the finish. Very Cabernet dominated finish, more structure than usual thanks to the higher percentage, perhaps just needing to flesh out on the finish, although that should come with extended barrel ageing. (N.B. A second sample at a negociant showed more flesh and suppleness towards the finish). Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

"Currant and spices on the nose follow through to a medium body, with fine tannins and a medium finish. Solid structure"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 89-92 points

"Very dark. A slightly burnt note. Very much taken to the limit. A bit awkward in terms of tannins but with refreshment. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2018-2028"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

"Black red, colour sticks to the glass, big smoky Cabernet cassis nose, excellent natural concentration, intense yet lifted fruit, lots of succulence and lots of grip, a really well-expressed, well-made wine with a very good future. Drink 2015-30"

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

"Perhaps the finest Lafon Rochet ever made, the purity, freshness, and sweet, rich, blueberry and boysenberry fruit and hint of pen ink that are found in this opaque purple-colored wine are impressive. Massive in the mouth, with freshness, delineation, and sweet tannin, it is a major sleeper of the vintage that should last for 25+ years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2035"

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Montrose

Estimate £800 - £1200

Contender with Cos for being the Top St Estephe in 2009. More old school Bordeaux here than the blockbuster Cos. Top Notch. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot

“Representing 72% of production, a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, cropped between 17th September and 5th October, 13.7% alcohol and an IPT of 98 and 3.7 pH. This has a ripe blackberry, boysenberry, oyster shell and briary nose that soars from the glass. Fine definition with a very tangible mineral component. The palate is full-bodied with smooth tannins, very powerful with superb definition, great sense of tension here. There is a great deal of panache in this Montrose, layers of black fruit interwoven with graphite and earthy notes towards the long finish tinged with a touch of cardamom.

Sophisticated and regal. A modern day '89? Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 95-97 points

“Big and structured, delivering wild aromas of Indian spices, crushed berry, sweet tobacco and coffee. Full-bodied, with loads of velvety, chewy tannins and a long spicy finish. The château says this is like the 1990, but I think it could be even better. It's certainly better made”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“72% of total production. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Picked 17 Sep to 5 Oct, much earlier than Cos! Average yield 38 hl/ha. Extremely dark crimson with strong purple notes. Low-key but modestly confident nose - much more married than some recent vintages. Pretty raw and austere and very much St-Estèphe. Very inky finish. Lovely nose and succulence but a little bit tough on the end. Certainly harks back to classical St-Estèphe in a way that Cos very much doesn't. 13.7%. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2029” *Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points*

“Black red, smoky cassis nose with fine Cabernet spice, quite restrained yet full of power, a really precise and true vineyard wine, superb middle sweetness, a grandly classic wine. Drink 2019-45”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 19 / 20 points

“1989 and 1990 déjà vu all over again? If you think the 2003 Montrose (which merited 100 points) was powerful (13.2% alcohol), keep in mind that the 2009 Montrose came in at 13.7% alcohol. There is no sense of hotness, only extraordinary transparency and precision, allied to massive fruit intensity. A blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, this super-concentrated claret possesses a style reminiscent of the sumptuous 1990 combined with the structure of the 1989. The color is an opaque purple, the pH is a relatively normal 3.7, and the finish is endless. The flavor profile bursts with black currant, blackberry, and boysenberry fruit intertwined with hints of spring flowers and crushed rocks. Huge body, sweet tannin, and wonderful freshness make for one of the all-time great wines ever produced at Montrose. I hope to be drinking this wine with great pleasure before the Man comes for me. Kudos to Jean-Bernard Delmas. (Tasted two times.)

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-100 points **

Les Ormes de Pez

Estimate £180 - £250

Owned by Cazes Family (Lynch Bages). Outstanding quality from this up and coming Cru Bourgeois. 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc, 37% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot.

“Tasted at Chateau Lynch Bages, this Ormes de Pez is a blend of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, matured in 40% new oak, this '09 Les Ormes de Pez has a deep, garnet colour. The nose is very pure, very focused, tightly would at first, a certain "strictness" to this Saint Estephe. Not as earthy as other wines, subtle aromas of black cherries, a touch of cassis, cedar and sandalwood. Good definition, but despite coaxing it is relatively closed at the moment. The palate is medium-bodied with firm tannins, quite peppery on the entry, nicely balanced, masculine as usual, a saline note towards the finish that is quite linear at the moment. This is like a tightly coiled spring but it should drink well after 6-8 years year of ageing, which this wine usually needs. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

“Superb concentration, with spice, currant and berry character. Full and velvety. So long. At same quality level as the legendary 1955, or 1959”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Very dark. Lively and dense and complex. Thick and sweet. Pretty dry finish - arguably more typical St-Estèphe than most. Lots there, not least alcohol, but a wine to reckon with! Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17+ / 20 points

“Purple red, good ripe cassis fruit, good balanced richness and good length, a supple, harmonious wine. Drink 2014-20”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

“A sleeper of the vintage and the best Les Ormes de Pez made in decades, this opaque purple-hued 2009 offers up pure creme de cassis fruit intermixed with hints of charcoal, smoke, and crushed rocks. Medium to full-bodied and pure with good freshness as well as a soft, layered mouthfeel, it will offer delicious drinking over the next 10-15 years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2025”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 88-90 points

Les Pagedes de Cos

Estimate £200- £300

Second wine from Cos and as good as many Cru Classe. 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot.

“This is very deep and limpid in colour. The second wine of Cos d'Estournel has an intense nose of blackberry, smoke and tobacco, with a touch of Saint Estèphe tertiary aromatics. A second sample is more lifted and glossier. The palate is full-bodied, a lot of extraction, pure blackberry, bilberry, spice and a touch of liquorices. Huge grip on the finish with just a hint of sweet dates. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 87-89 points

“Wow. Intense aromas of blackberry, toasted nuts and spices follow through to full body, with layers of fruit and wonderful length. Very, very impressive. For a second wine, this is quite the glassful”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Very deep crimson - a real glow. Floral nose - rather exotic but with a few notes of greenness. Thick and sweet on the front end, almost tarry - very drying tannins on the finish after massive sweet hit. A bit overripe. Just too much. Drying tannins on the finish. Apparently the old Marbuzet fruit goes into Pagodes. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2015-2020”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 15.5 / 20 points

“Black red that sticks to the glass, cassis nose, succulent, spicy, lifted fruit, fleshy and rich, velvety texture and tannins to back it up. Drink 2014-20” Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com **17 / 20 points**

The 2009 Les Pagodes de Cos is also a remarkable offering. Composed of 69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 1% Petit Verdot, it tips the scales at 14.5% alcohol, and is better than most Cos d'Estournel vintages produced in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. It is a full-bodied, opulently concentrated wine of amazing richness, density, and intensity. As with the grand vin, the harvest began on September 26 and finished on October 10. This wine possesses this vintage's classic characteristics of enormous power, massive fruit, and extraordinary freshness and precision - largely unprecedented, particularly for Cabernet-based wines in the Medoc. (Tasted once.) *Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-94 points **

Phelan Segur

Estimate £200- £260

Not a Chateau that we normally buy but we have requested an allocation. No promises as we have no history of buy En Primeur but they have made an excellent wine in 2009. 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc.

“Tasted at the château, UGC and negociant. Sweet black plum and briary on the nose with moderate definition, not quite the brilliance of other Saint Estèphe 2009s, but it coalesces nicely in the glass. Very pure, some chalk dust notes developing with time. The palate is medium-bodied, very taut, citric acidity, a little chalky towards the finish. Moderate depth. I like the focus here, the energy, though I think this is a wine that will show much better 4-5 months down the line. Cabernet dominated finish with just a touch of white pepper right on the finish. Certainly much better than the 2008 tasted alongside. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points

“Deep aromas of crushed blackberries and fresh herbs. Full-bodied, with round and soft tannins and a polished texture on the finish. Rich and structured. Could be best ever from here”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Very dark. Sweet palate entry and very round. Maybe picked just a tad too late to be refreshing? Thick and sweet and full. But if you like this sort of New World style, you will enjoy this very much. Just a little bit of heat on the finish. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17- / 20 points

“Black red, big smoky, slightly gamey bacony nose, lots of lifted blackcurrant fruit, good supple, vigorous fruit and good length. Drink 2014-20”

Steven Spurrier, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“Like many of the top 2009s, Phelan-Segur is a huge, full-bodied effort with massive fruit as well as good freshness, precision, and elegance. This is all rather paradoxical given previous great vintages that either lean toward cooler vintage characteristics or hot ones. This 2009 possesses both styles. It exhibits lots of mulberry, boysenberry, and crushed, jammy black fruits, abundant tannin, medium to full body, an opulent mouthfeel, and enough structure to evolve for two decades or more. This is a sleeper of the vintage. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2030”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 90-92 points

St Emilion

Angelus

Estimate - £1200- £1800

One of the star of St Emilion. Made by Huberd de Bouard. Blockbuster, full bodied wine. Allocations are very small. Could be a good investment.

“Tasted at Chateau Angelus. Picked from 21st September until the 14th October, the Angelus '09 is a blend of 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc, the Angelus '09 has a well-defined, creamy bouquet with pure black cherry, cassis and a touch of creme de menthe. Very rounded and sensuous. The palate is full-bodied with firm grip, the tannins robust and structured, lending a masculinity to this Saint Emilion. Grippy on the finish with touches of dried herbs and tobacco although a second sample at a négoce was endowed with a more voluptuous finish. I prefer the finesse shown by Hubert de Bouard's Château Bellevue at present. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

“Concentrated aromas of boysenberry and raspberry jam. Full-bodied and powerful, with beautiful fruit-coated tannins and a long, spicy, rich aftertaste. All there for a top vintage from Angélu”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“Very dark crimson. Rather animal on the nose. Thick and sweet but with generosity. Broad and jewelley. Shame we were not allowed to taste it blind with the other grands crus classées. Awfully sweet and concentrated, not relaxed, lots of dryness on the finish, revitalising. Hint of cocoa. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2016-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18- / 20 points

“The hallmark colour, fruit and extract are present but there's an extra edge of elegance this year. Savoury fruit (crushed raspberry and violet notes), velvety texture and powerful but refined tannins. Angélu at the top of its game. Drink 2018-2035”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

“I tasted this three separate times, and on two occasions I thought it had the potential to be a perfect wine. The home estate of Hubert de Bouard, this 62+ acre vineyard produced a 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc blend in 2009, with yields of 20 hectoliters per hectare, and a whopping alcohol degree of 14.5%. Of course, the latter component is not even noticeable, as that is one of the erroneous myths about high alcohol in some 2009 Bordeaux. It just doesn't show, thanks to the wine's extraordinary concentration. This is a fabulous wine, with that tell-tale, dense, inky blue color that Angelus always seems to achieve. It displays an extraordinary nose of

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acacia flowers (or is it violets?) intermixed with blueberry liqueur, black raspberries, cassis, licorice, incense, and graphite. Full-bodied, viscous, with great intensity, vibrancy, and transparency, this is one of the all-time great wines from Angelus and a 21st century version of their 1989 and 1990. It should drink well for 20+ years - at the very minimum. (Tasted three times). Drink 2010-2030"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-100 points

Ausone

Estimate £10,000 - £16,000

Top of the tree on the right bank with Petrus and LaFleur. With the 2005 broking at £18,000 a case it could easily be released near the top estimate. Awesome Ausone. This could easily be a 100 point wine.

"Tasted at Chateau Ausone. A blend of 55% Cabernet Franc and 45% Merlot, cropped at just 27hl/ha (16,000 bottles) with the first passage of young Merlot vines on the plateau picked on 29th September, the older Merlot vines from the 2nd until the 6th October and then the Cabernet Franc on three days from 8th until 10th October. Leaving the sample for five minutes to open up, the Ausone '09 is bridled with a sensuous bouquet of blackberries, blueberry, violets, a touch of orange zest and a hint of vanilla from the new oak. The palate is medium-bodied with exceptionally fine focus and balance, very fine tannins, a thread of citrus lemon that is interwoven from the start to the finish, a feminine Ausone, perhaps less supple and more linear than other Saint Emilion 2009, but demonstrating much better structure and freshness. There is real vitality and joie-de-vivre that really evolves with aeration. Shimmering finish. Wonderful. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 97-99 points

"Such a dreamy, perfumed aroma to this wine. Full-bodied, but wonderfully polished and integrated. It touches every millimeter of your palate and the texture makes you want to cry. It touches your soul. Goes on for minutes. Another perfect red?"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

"Full and gamey and broad and expressive. Very distinctive wine. Still a bit tough and modern and super-focused. Very drying on the end. Quite demanding for now. Drying on the finish. Really quite painful - as though it had been concentrated, or certainly as though the grapes suffered quite a bit of drought stress. Lots of minerality on the finish. Very ambitious. Shades of Pavie 2003? I'm sure many palates will really, really appreciate this wine, and I look forward very much to following its progression as I have the utmost respect for Alain and now Pauline Vauthier interviewed here about the effect of the hail damage her family's vineyards suffered in May. I see the fiche technique specifies a yield of 27hl/ha and 55% Cabernet Franc and 45% Merlot but no picking date and I seem to have forgotten to ask. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2020-2035"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5+ / 20 points

"Amazingly focused wine. Long, persistent with extremely fine, filigree tannins. Beautiful texture. Incredible density of fruit behind. Freshness on the palate (55% Cabernet Franc). Absolute harmony. Rivals the outstanding 2005. Drink 2018-2050" James Lawther, Decanter.Com **19.5 / 20 points**

"The 2009 Ausone, was produced at probably twice the yields of the absolutely remarkable 2008, but is another profound effort from Vauthier. Dense purple in color, with an almost liqueur of limestone intermixed with acacia flowers, blueberry, raspberry, and boysenberry fruit, the use of 100% new oak is completely concealed by the wealth of fruit and the lavish richness this wine exhibits. Nevertheless, there is a striking precision, minerality, and purity to Ausone. This wine might be far more drinkable in 7-8 years than the 2005 or 2008 will be with the same amount of aging. Nevertheless, any person lucky enough to latch on to one of the 1200 or so cases of this wine should realize it is going to evolve for 20-50 years. (Tasted once.)

Two more brilliant wines from Alain Vauthier, but you might have to forgive me for not giving a potentially perfect score in 2009. Readers (and I) have been spoiled by my reviews of 2008, 2005, 2003, and 2000. Certainly, his 2009 may turn out to be as riveting, but at this stage, I would have to rate all those vintages just a notch or two higher. Drink 2010-2060

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 95-97+ points

Canon

Estimate £400-£600

Owned by Chanel and under the management of John Kolasa (previously at Latour). Excellent wine but it was hit by hail so production is very small – Only 3000 cases. Likely to be fairly expensive due to the small production.

“Tasted at the château and the UGC, the Canon '09 is a blend of 75% Merlot (picked 23rd to 28th September) and 25% Cabernet Franc (picked 2nd until 5th October) cropped at 35hl/ha and matured in 60% new oak, the crop reduced by 20% due to the hail. Delivering 14.5% alcohol and a pH3.7. The nose is fresh and lively, well defined with blackberry, briary, cedar, a touch of vanilla and an almost sorbet-like freshness. The palate is full-bodied with fine tannins, a powerful Canon, very well defined, a slight chalkiness coming towards the finish, a sharpness that lends freshness and vitality. A more masculine, structured Canon than I was expecting, but it will soften by the time of bottling. Excellent. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94+ points

“What a gorgeous nose, with sweet and delicate fruits such as sliced plums that turn to milk chocolate and flowers. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a long, long finish. You want to drink this right away. 75 percent Merlot and 25 percent Cabernet Franc”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“A little paler than some. Lightish cherry red. Glossy, gamey, almost animal nose. Rich and sweet but with a certain dryness on the finish. There is some real life here. Very glamorous. Sumptuous and flattering, very polished, racy and sinewy and like a racehorse. Good enterprising energetic stuff! Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2017-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Brilliant this year - so satisfying and refined. Has to be the best Canon for a number of years. Certainly no block-buster but pure and silky with length and line. Exquisite. Drink 2016-2040”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

“This is the best Canon since 1982, and it is possibly capable of eclipsing that legendary vintage. It has taken a while for the proprietors, the Wertheimer brothers (the owners of Chanel and the Margaux estate Rauzan-Segla) to get Canon back to its former glory. Yields in 2009 were 35 hectoliters per hectare, and the harvest occurred between September 28 and October 5. The blend is 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc, with a natural alcohol level of 14%. Dense ruby/purple and full-bodied, with terrific blueberry and raspberry fruit intermixed with spring flower garden scents, with extraordinary density, purity, and a multi-layered texture, this is a prodigious Canon with sweet tannins and lots of viscosity. It should drink well for 30 or more years. Bravo! (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2040”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 93-95 points

Canon La Gaffeliere

Estimate £450-£550

A Stefan von Neipperg property where Stephane Derenoncourt made his name. Modern in style but very impressive. 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon.

“Tasted at Canon-la-Gaffeliere, cropped between 1st and 10th October at 34hl/ha, this is a blend of 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, matured in 90% new oak, the bouquet takes a great deal of coaxing from the glass, reluctantly offering blackberry, raspberry coulis, a scent of wet clay and mulberry. The palate is full-bodied with firm tannins, off-dry, good weight in the mouth and fine definition, perhaps a little more austere than I anticipated but I like that (the coolness of the sample accentuating the tannins here.) A touch of savoury fruit towards the grainy finish, very good length and harmony, the pH plays a fundamental role in balancing the finish and engendering such freshness. Excellent. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points

“The Cabernet Franc really comes out here, with roasted berry, coffee bean and citrus following through to blackberry. Full-bodied, with fabulous concentration of fruit and supersoft tannins, a long, long finish. This is so juicy and wonderful. No dry tannins here”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“Blackish crimson. Fragrant, even lightly soapy. Well integrated and relaxed. Fine boned. More acidity on the finish than one might expect so not super-stunning but pretty good. Some might find this eviscerated. I think it's quite elegant. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2015-2025”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“As always, beautifully constructed. Perfect pitch of ripeness, fresh, satisfying with a fine tannic frame. Elegant and harmonious. Drink 2016-2030” James Lawther, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“Proprietor Stephan von Neipperg has made so many terrific wines at this estate since the late 1980s, it's hard to say that the 2009 is going to turn out to be the finest, but did it show well on the four separate times I tasted it! A final blend of 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, and a whopping 10% Cabernet Sauvignon (somewhat unusual for this area of St.-Emilion), the natural alcohol was 14%. Stephane Derenoncourt is the long-time wine consultant at all of Stephan von Neipperg's estates. Yields were shockingly low here, 28 hectoliters per hectare, and the wine is a beauty of both elegance and power. Dark ruby/purple, with notes of incense, sweet cedar, black cherry jam, cassis, and blackberry as well as licorice and subtle smoke, this wine has superb texture, a full-bodied mouthfeel, stunning concentration, and not a hard edge to be found. It is one of those remarkable 2009s with amazing power and density, but also tremendous finesse, precision, and freshness, an anomaly in itself. This wine should drink well for 15-20 years, based on the fact that the 1990, a vintage far lower in acidity and not nearly as concentrated, is still at the top of its game. Bravo! (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2030”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points

Cheval Blanc

Estimate £4000 - £5500

St Emilion's first growth and a very consistent property. 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc. We haven't bought this for several years due to some over inflated release prices. We will try and get an allocation if it is released at a fair price.

“Tasted at the château. The Cheval Blanc is a blend of 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc, started picking on 15th September until the 7th October. The bouquet is very pure, tightly coiled at the moment with an almost Margaux-like veil. Very fine delineation and with time: touches of espresso entwined with the black cherry fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with firm but fine tannins, that slight chalkiness to the texture, very good purity with that hint of espresso and minerals interwoven into the pure red fruits. Wonderful sense of symmetry here, the Cabernet Franc taking over towards the finish with just a faint hint of bell pepper and tobacco, more masculine towards the finish. Superb. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points

“I have never smelled a Cheval like this, with red fruit and an undertone of seashell, lilac and sandalwood that makes you dream, turning to chocolate. Full-bodied, but tight and precise with a laser-guided finish of ultrafine tannins. Superlong. 60 percent Merlot and 40 percent Cabernet Franc. This is like the 1990 but superclean”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 96-99 points

“60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc. 85% of the total went into the grand vin - they were so pleased, especially with the Merlot. Very rich and comfortable on the nose. Very juicy. Dry finish. Very serious wine. Lots of layers and a dry finish. Pretty long - opens out on the finish. But it's not a knocker-off-of-socks and has rather more classic Cheval character than some recent vintages. It's really quite subtle - but then there's no over-the-top ripeness, which is a relief. Rather contained and pretty. The challenge on the right bank after all was to keep it all in check... (compared with the left bank, which could wallow more in the extra ripeness). Certainly not that sweet... Almost like a child told to concentrate and do its piano practice. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2019-2034” *Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18.5 / 20 points*

“This is a lovely Cheval Blanc, full of luxurious fruit as well as elegant and refined. Still a little restrained aromatically (Le Petit Cheval was the more expressive at the tasting) but smoothly textured, pure and long. Add to the list of great years at this estate. Drink 2018-2040” James Lawther, Decanter.Com **19 / 20 points**

“The harvest for the 2009 Cheval Blanc began in mid-September and finished on October 8. One of this estate's greatest wines, the 2009 (58% Merlot and 42% Cabernet Franc) came in at 13.5% natural alcohol (some lots were as high as 14.5%). The wine exhibits sumptuous aromatics of subtle menthol intermixed with caramel, black raspberries, mulberries, kirsch, and cassis. With a stupendous opulence and a fleshy mouthfeel, but no heaviness or fatigue, this dense wine is staggeringly concentrated, very full-bodied, powerful, and silky smooth. Irresistible already, it is almost frightening to think how compelling this beauty should be in a few years. (Tasted once.) Anticipated maturity: 2015-2050” *Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points*

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Clos Foutet

Estimate £400-£500

Chateau very much on the up. Slightly modern in style but very impressive. Not really a big enough name for investment but an excellent wine.

“Tasted at the Saint Emilion UGC, this has a surprisingly light, airy but well defined nose that is pinched at the moment, opens nicely but slowly with aeration to reveal black cherries, blackcurrant, briary and minerals, a touch of dried orange peel developing in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with firm tannins, very pure and harmonious, slight chewy texture at first, then building to a spicy, tannic finish with very fine persistency. Though lacking a little cohesion on the finish, I think this will meld together to form a very fine Clos-Fourtet after bottling. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

“Offers blueberry, currant, mineral and violet. Full-bodied, with big, juicy tannins and loads of fruit. Very concentrated and velvety, with a lovely texture”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“Very dark purple. Meaty, interesting nose with hints of treacle and liquorice. Thick and sweet at the start and then some real texture kicks in but it doesn't seem overdone - just ambitious. The alcohol is, just, kept in check. If purple had a taste, this would be it. Quite racy and sinewy. Though you need to wait quite a while for this one... Sweet and juicy and round. Lots of body and fat here. Long. Pretty impressive. Very suave. Lots of glamour. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2015-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Round, caressing. Lovely volume of succulent fruit. Shows the ripeness of the year. Polished and refined. Drink 2016-2035”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“This is a perennial superstar thanks to the efforts of proprietor Philippe Cuvelier and the estate's manager, Tony Ballu. This beautifully-situated, nearly 48-acre vineyard, high on the clay and deep limestone plateau just adjacent to the town walls of St-Emilion, was harvested between September 28 and October 13, with yields of 34 hectoliters per hectare. The natural alcohol turned out to be 14%. A magical wine, it may have a hard time eclipsing the 2005, but it is another prodigious effort in its own right. The dense purple color offers up notes of white chocolate, blueberry, blackberry, crushed rock, and white flowers. Textured, full-bodied, enormously pure, and voluptuously textured, it is nearly too easy to drink because of the exquisite balance and seamless integration of all its component parts. This is a killer Clos Foutet that should drink well young yet evolve for 20+ years. (Tasted five times.) Drink 2010-2030”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 95-98 points

Figeac

Estimate £500-£700

Considered to be one of the best St Emilion's and could also be the best Figeac ever. Has a high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon so slightly left bank in style.

“Really fabulous on the nose, with sweet milk chocolate, flowers, currant and plum. Full-bodied, with incredible length. The tannins are so silky, but they are warm and cuddly. You just want to hug it. Powerful but so attractive. The blend is one third each of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“Paler than most. Luscious, opulent nose - very come-hither. Cool and fresh. Complete. Still a bit simple but there are no excesses here. Just slightly timid on the palate. Real juice though - not exaggerated. Sweet and juicy and friendly even if not the most dramatic. Dry end. Will get there. As discreet and distinctive as usual. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2017-2032.”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17+ / 20 points

“Long, fresh and distinctly Médocain in style. Fragrant, cassis-dark fruit aroma and flavour. Pure and exact, no false notes. Drink 2018-2040”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

Fombrauge

Estimate £300- £400

Another property owned by Bernard Magrez. This could be one of the best Value St Emilion's of the vintage.

"A blend of 77% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 9% Cabernet Sauvignon, cropped between 6th and 22nd October at 27hl/ha, this has a super ripe nose of cassis, creme de menthe and kirsch. Exotic fruit in the background, becoming more intense with time. The palate is full-bodied with dense tannins, real weight here, firm grippy tannins, very polished and a nice edginess coming through towards the finish. A symmetry here that is very appealing. Excellent. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

"Cool and racy, with floral and berry character. Medium-bodied, with a solid core of fruit and a delicate vanilla and berry character. A friendly young wine"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

"Maintains the consistency set in recent years. Attractive red-berry fruit. Round and supple on the palate but with structure and length. Ch Magrez Fombrauge (16.5 points) is richer and has more precision and finesse, the tannins silky and long. Better balanced and less extracted than in the past. Drink 2014-2024"

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 16 / 20 points

"From yields of 27 hectoliters per hectare, the fruit for the uber-concentrated 2009 Fombrauge was harvested between October 6 and 22, very late in 2009, thus the super ripeness, concentration, and density. Notes of truffles, graphite, blackberries, and blueberries jump from the glass of this full-bodied, unctuously textured, thick, juicy St.-Emilion. The abundant tannin is largely concealed by the extravagant fruit and richness. The final blend is approximately 3/4 Merlot and the rest Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. It should drink well in 3-4 years, and last for 15-20. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2013-2033"

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Grand Mayne

Estimate £280 - £380

Chateau that is worth buying in good years. Slightly modern in style.

"Tasted at the Saint Emilion UGC, this has a ripe, black cherry, yellow plum and boysenberry nose with a touch of damson fruit. Moderate definition. The palate is medium-bodied, well balanced with fine tannins. I like the delineation and freshness on this Saint Emilion. Whereas in some years they have flirted with over-extraction, this is much more restrained with finer clarity and precision on the finish. Excellent. Tasted March 2010"

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

"Blueberry and floral aromas follow through to a full body, with silky tannins and a long finish. Stylish and polished. This is a more reserved style and I like it"

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

"Very little nose. Thick and sweet start and then quite painfully concentrated tannins and acid. Drying finish. Really not much fun - a bit too concentrated? Hint of floral scent on the finish. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2017-2030"

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

"Rich, concentrated. Lovely depth of fleshy fruit. Tannins firm but suave. Long, fresh finish. Seductive and refined. Drink 2015-2028" *James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points*

"I enjoy this wine in nearly every vintage (the 1998 was one of my all-time favorites), and while the 2009 may not be better than the 1998, it is an impressive effort. Moreover, it represents a great value in top-notch Bordeaux. Its opaque purple color is followed by plenty of blueberry, boysenberry, and raspberry fruit notes intermixed with subtle hints of graphite and oak. The wine possesses ripe tannin, full-bodied power, admirable purity, and impressive amounts of glycerin and sweetness from its high ripeness (but not over-ripeness) in the finish. Consume it over the next 15+ years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2025"

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-94 points

Larcis Ducasse

Estimate £500-£800

Brilliant wine made by Stephane Derenoncourt and Nicholas Thienpont. Borders Pavie Macquin. Was our star buy in the 2004 but since then the price has been fairly high. Excellent wine, the question is what price.

“Tasted at the Association de Crus Classé tasting at Grand Pontet. A blend of 81% Merlot and 19% Cabernet Franc, this brims with ripe red-berried fruit on the nose with touches of wild hedgerow and wild strawberry. It is not as opulent as previous vintages. The palate is medium-bodied with silky tannins, very harmonious and refined with touches of cooked meats/savoury inflected the red-berried fruit. This is lovely, if just missing a little tension on the finish. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Gorgeous, juicy fruit, with light wood, full and velvety tannins, and loads of Indian spices. Though there's lots going on, I was expecting a little more”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Some development at the rim. Rich and super-ripe black fruits. Sweet and rather fruit-juice like. Polished and made with great élan. Super smooth. I think people would like this. The tannins have been well managed. It's just a little too sweet for my personal taste. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2016-2026”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Seductive aroma of crushed red-berry fruit. Exceptional fruit and flavour. Fine tannins, freshness and length. Real personality. As good as 2005. Drink 2016-2030”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

“This is another 2009 that does not live up to the extraordinary quality of the 2005, but it is a fascinating wine nevertheless. Composed of 81% Merlot and 19% Cabernet Franc, it tips the scales at 14.8% natural alcohol. The wunderkind team of Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt has produced a dense, rich, soft, relatively seamless, elegant example of Larcis Ducasse, without the concentration found in the 2005. The 2009 reveals a generous sweet spot in the middle along with lots of glycerin, and a wonderful round opulence, but I did not see the potential complexity or sheer concentration of their best wine to date, the 2005. Look for the 2009 to age easily for two decades. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2030”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-94 points

Moulin St Georges

Estimate £300-£400

Has been described in the past as a ‘Junior Ausone’ by Robert Parker. Only 7 Hectare and 2500 produced in 2009. 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc.

“Tasted at Chateau Ausone. A blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, cropped at 32hl/ha, the Moulin Saint Georges has a well defined, ripe, supple bouquet with notes of cassis, black plum, maraschino cherry and a touch of orange zest: harmonious and lifted. The palate is medium-bodied with svelte tannins, a slight creaminess to the texture but it is not overdone. Very well balanced with fine tannins, very focused and lithe with pure red-berried fruits laced with a soupçon of vanilla pod towards the finish. Excellent. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Offers blueberry and mineral on the nose. Full-bodied, with a tight tannin structure and juicy fruit. Bright acidity. Very lively”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Bright crimson. Flattering and rich and very very sweet. Taken to the limit of ripeness? Rather hard work on the finish. Not gentle, that's for sure! Really tough and drying on the end. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2018-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“A real explosion of fruit on the nose and palate - raspberry, cherry. Almost fruit liqueur. Smooth, creamy palate with length and freshness on the finish. Drink 2016-2030”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“Consistently a good value pick among shrewd consumers, this wine, from one of the estates Alain Vauthier owns in St.-Emilion beside the famous Ausone, has a dark purple color, a big, sweet kiss of black currants, raspberries, crushed rock, and floral notes. It is medium to full-bodied, displays good, sweet tannin, and comes across as slightly unevolved and may have just finished malolactic fermentation. I am not so sure it is as strong as his 2005, but this wine is very promising nevertheless. (Tasted once.)”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 88-90 points

Pavie Macquin

Estimate £600-£800

Likely to be the best value of the Pavie trio (Pavie and Pavie Decasse) and situated between Pavie and Troplong Mondot. Very hard to get an allocation. Could be a good investment. 2005 currently at £1100.

“Tasted at the Saint Emilion UGC, this has a very ripe, almost porty nose that I think is just a little over-extracted (which is a great surprise.) Macerated black cherries, cassis, apricot jam and a touch of damson. Pretty, but less would have been more. The palate shows much better balance with fine, saturated tannins, fabulous concentration with layers of spicy red fruits on the ebullient finish. Leaving my sample aside for 10 minutes, that nose does calm down as I think it will through its elevelage, after which I am sure this will represent one of the top Saint Emilion wines. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points

“Superfocused and beautiful, like looking at Mont Blanc with a clear sky and a blanket of snow. Full and refined, with gorgeous fruit and wonderful refinement. Silky tannins. Clearly the best ever”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-99 points

“Deep, bright crimson. Very ripe, alcoholic notes on the nose. Very sweet black cherry flavours - kirsch actually - on the palate. Super-modern elixir. Not my favourite style of wine but some will love it and it's well done. Not too painful on the finish - just a little drying. Round and juicy and very suave with carefully chosen dry oak. Sinewy and drying. Very cool. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2015-2025”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Rich, dense and beautifully textured. Combines an opulence of fruit with an amazing freshness and acidity. Long finish. Drink 2018-2040”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18 / 20 points

“Yields here were 30 hectoliters per hectare, and the final blend 85% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, and the rest Cabernet Sauvignon. The dynamic duo of Stephane Derenoncourt and Nicolas Thienpont produced nearly 4,000 cases of wine from this terroir, which has been promoted to a first growth in the St.-Emilion hierarchy. The 15% natural alcohol is rather shocking, because it is not the least bit noticeable. The wine is inky purple-colored, with loads of viscosity, an unctuous texture, and an enormous nose of charcoal, graphite, blackberry liqueur, and forest floor in a full-bodied, seamlessly constructed style. At the same time, the impression is one of a very unevolved, backward wine that has even more weight to put on and more nuances to reveal. I think this is one wine where the "plus" in the numerical rating will be very revealing. Forget it for 5-7 years and drink it over the next 30-40 years. (Tasted five times.) Drink 2015-2055”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96+ points

Petit Cheval

Estimate £500-£700

Second wine of Cheval Blanc. Prices have sorted recently. Excellent wine but likely to be a little expensive

“A blend of 65% Cabernet Franc and 35% Merlot, the bouquet is a little more generous than in previous years, with pure blackberry, blueberry, a touch of damson and limestone. Good definition. The palate is structured on the entry, that Cabernet Franc really defining the wine, very fine tannins though and lovely balance. Very pure and linear at the moment, but it skips along towards the finish without a care in the world. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Delivers plum and spices on the nose, with hints of coffee and black licorice. Full-bodied, offering a wonderful silky texture and a long, long finish. So inviting and delicious already”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“65% Cabernet Franc, 35% Merlot. Mild, low-key, soft nose. A little inky and awkward at the moment. Chewy finish not integrated with the fruit. A bit of alcohol on the end. This does rather taste like offcuts (15% only, apparently) rather than a wine in its own right. Awkward acidity on the end too. Date tasted 30 March 2010. Drink 2015-2025”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Full-bodied (14.2°) but amazingly fresh and balanced (65% Cabernet Franc). Fragrant, focused and satisfying. Fine, filigree tannins. Drink 2015-2025”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17 / 20 points

“The 2009 Le Petit Cheval is the best second wine I have ever tasted from this estate. Composed of two-thirds Merlot and one-third Cabernet Franc, it is better than most vintages of the grand vin from the sixties and seventies. Notes of chocolate, black cherries, herbs, and spice emerge from this full-bodied, thick, juicy wine. Enjoy it over the next 10+ years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2020”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Saintayme

Released £115

Star value buy in 2008. Made by Denis Durantou (L'Eglise Clinet). Likely to be a star buy again in 2009.

“Picked between 5th and 11th, this pure Merlot from Denis Durantou has a very pure, ripe nose with very fine definition, luscious red-berried fruit mixed with a touch of black plum and cassis, a hint of vanilla just in the background. Very smooth on the entry, finely balanced yet powerful, just a hint of white pepper towards the rounded, grainy, yet taut finish with good length. Excellent. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 89-91 points

“I love the dark fruits in this, with loads of black olive and red fruits too. Full-bodied, but so refined and delicious already. Lovely length. 100 percent Merlot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“The dual-named, quite good value offering from the Eglise Clinet stable. Dark and bloody and spicy nose. Rather aggressive acidity and astringency. Hard work on the finish but dramatically ripe fruit. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2015-2023”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

Tertre Roteboeuf

Estimate £1400-£2000

We struggle to get an allocation but never stop trying. 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. Almost Burgundian in style.

“Tasted at the chateau. This finished its alcoholic fermentation 8-10 days ago. This has a supremely pure, delineated bouquet that reminds me of a Grand Cru Burgundy! Blackberry leaf, a touch of raspberry, limestone and just a faint hint of orange-blossom. Very fine definition. There is a little gas on the entry from the fermentation, but the palate is well balanced, nice tension and purity, demonstrating a vibrant sense of minerality. Very linear towards the finish, stricter than the 2008 with a tensile blackcurrant and raspberry finish. Good length. This will surely blossom by the time of bottling, whereupon it may deserve a higher mark. Cerebral (as ever.) Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-95 points

“Rich and burgundian nose. Still quite rich and sweet and generous and very different from most bordeaux 09s. Flattering and floral and fine. So sweet, but lively texture and not dry on the end. Very distinctive. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2015-2039”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5 / 20 points

“Less explosive aromatically than usual (alcoholic fermentation only finished at the beginning of March!) but rich, ripe and opulent with a huge intensity of fruit. Tannins suave and tender. Voluptuous in style. Drink 2016-2030”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

Troplong Mondot

Estimate £800-£1200

80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Blockbuster wine, Modern in style. Could easily be well over the estimate. 2005 vintage is already £2000 per case.

“Tasted at the Saint Emilion UGC. The nose is far more restrained than usual, but well defined with pure blackberry, black plum and a touch of cedar. The lacks if vigour is a little vexing although a second sample at a negociant showed more "intention" and developed nicely in the glass. The palate is full-bodied with sinewy tannins, firm structure, grainy texture with cedar and graphite infused black fruits. Quite assertive, rather unsettled by the high alcohol and lacking its usual harmony, whilst the tannins have an angularity and astringency on the finish. This is a rather perplexing showing on both occasions I tasted this wine. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com **86-88 points**

“Intense aromas of blackberry and blueberry follow through to a full body, with well-integrated tannins and a fruity finish. Offers lots of licorice and spice. There's lovely length to this. Reserved and pretty”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com **94-97 points**

“Very dark blackish purple. Toasty oak on the nose. Too facile? Some savour on the mid palate. Easy and not exaggerated. A middle-of-the-road choice. Really lines the glass! Toasty oak nose. Really rigid on the palate - so drying! Purple fruit flavours. Exorbitant. Then a very fast fade. Super-flashy rather than really satisfying. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2016-2026”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com **16.5 / 20 points**

“The opposite end of the spectrum from Canon but huge personality. Blue-black colour. Rich and concentrated. Spicy, chocolaty, dark fruit aromas. Full-bodied and powerful but not over the top. Tannins quite refined. Drink 2018-2035”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“I tasted this wine four separate times, with three tastings extremely consistent, and one tasting showing slightly more noticeable and astringent tannin. Do I think it is going to be as prodigious as the 2005? No, but it is a compelling Troplong Mondot, and probably more approachable than the 2005 has been in its youth. This is a large vineyard, nearly 80 acres in size, and part of it had hail damage in May. They are late-harvesters, the Merlots were picked through October 10 and the Cabernet finished October 20, with very low yields of 30 hectoliters per hectare, no doubt due at least in part to the hail damage. Alcohols on lots chosen for the grand vin are very high, between 14.5 and 15.5. The wine is inky purple in color, displaying beautiful creme de cassis, licorice, subtle smoke and graphite notes, enormous body, juicy, viscous texture, good vibrancy, a skyscraper-like, multi-dimensional mouthfeel, and a whopping long finish of 40+ seconds. This is a great wine, probably more hedonistic and voluptuous than the 2005, but ultimately a tiny notch below that virtually perfect Troplong Mondot, which still gets my nod as the best ever made. This wine should evolve for at least 30-40 years. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2050”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) **91-93 points**

Pomerol

Clinet

Estimate £500-£700

Small property situated behind Clos L'Eglise. 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc

“Tasted at Chateau Clinet. The harvest commenced on 11th September with the young Merlot with the older vines being picked on 25th September and then 1st-4th September. The Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon was picked on 7th October. The Cabernet Sauvignon is very important in 2009 lending the wine freshness and part of the originality of Clinet. The final blend is 85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Cabernet Franc cropped at 45hl/ha (the highest of the decade) the Clinet '09 has a rounded, supple, fruit-driven nose with cassis,

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black plum and small black cherries. The palate is full-bodied with a lot of fruit concentration supported by some sturdy, grainy tannins, good delineation with a savoury/smoky touch towards the finish. The oak is better integrated than in recent years and there is a lovely spicy touch on the aftertaste from the Cabernets. Clinet is returning to the heights of the late-1980s. Tasted April 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

“Blackberry and mineral aromas, with flowers. Full-bodied, but reserved and supersilky and pretty. This is the bomb. Forget the 1989”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“Thick and sweet and almost a cliché of Pomerol with its great meaty richness and savour. Should calm down and become something quite exciting eventually, but quite tough on the end. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2017-2029”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Superb. Probably the best Clinet since the famous duo 1989-1990. Dense, opulent with beautifully textured tannins. Very gourmand. Loads of charm. With the right élevage could be a 5-star wine. Drink 2017-2035”
James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

“The greatest Clinet since the incredible duo produced by the late Jean-Michel Arcaute in 1989 and 1990, the 2009 (tasted on 4 separate occasions) was off the charts in terms of quality and potential. Yields of 47 hectoliters per hectare were not particularly low, and the fruit used in the final blend (87% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon; 14% natural alcohol) was all harvested between September 21 and October 7. The wine boasts an opaque black/purple color in addition to a gorgeous bouquet of truffles, charcoal, asphalt, blackberries, blueberries, and meaty, smoky notes. This dense, unctuously-textured Pomerol is built like a skyscraper with multiple layers, sweet tannins, and enormous concentration as well as length. The good news is there will be 4,000 cases of this modern day legend in the making. It should drink well for 30-35 years. While it's hard to eclipse a 100-point wine (1989), the 2009 appears to be the finest Clinet has ever made. (Tasted four times.) Drink 2010-2045”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 97-100 points **

Clos L'Eglise

Estimate £700-£1000

Situated between Clinet and Eglise Clinet. 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. Big styled wine in very small quantity – Only 1200 cases made in 2009

“This has a fine, reserved but very well defined nose with pure blackcurrant and raspberry, developing some fine minerally notes with tie in the glass. Very fresh and vital. The palate is medium-bodied, well balanced, just a little hardness on the entry at the moment but that will soften with time. Grippy tannins on the finish, much more backward than either the 2007 and 2008 with a tobacco laced focused finish. Impressive, but definitely a vin de garde Pomerol. Tasted March 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 93-95 points

“Gorgeous blueberry and blackberry aromas, with toasted oak. Complex and pretty. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a long flavorful finish. Very polished”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 93-96 points

“Slightly tired sample but there is real interest here. Broad and layered. A little pruney but not excessively dry on the finish. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2016-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Beautifully seamless wine. Voluptuous fruit. Smooth, silky tannins. Long, fresh finish. Drink 2018-2030”
James Lawther, Decanter.Com **17.5 / 20 points**

“After the brilliant 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2005, I didn't think proprietor Helene Garcin and consulting winemaker Dr. Alain Raynaud could do any better, but the 2009 Clos l'Eglise may turn out to be superior to the aforementioned vintages. An extraordinary wine of compelling intensity, opulence, and breadth of flavor, it possesses a dark purple color as well as copious aromas of sweet mocha, coffee-infused blackberry and black cherry fruit, and no hint of oak. Fleshy and extravagantly rich with terrific purity and precision, it is a very full-bodied, powerful Pomerol that should drink well for 25+ years. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2010-2035.”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-100 points **

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La Conseillante

Estimate £800-£1200

Jean-Michel Laporte is the man in charge. More traditional in style than the mega rich, modern Pomerols. 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc. Could be one of the best La Conseillante ever produced.

“Tasted at La Conseillante, cropped between 17th and 28th September at 39.5hl/ha and coming in with 14.2% alcohol, the '09 La Conseillante has a very refined bouquet, with dark berried fruit, sloe, a touch of dried orange peel and crushed stones. The understated nature of this Conseillante is a joy to behold. The palate is medium-bodied, slightly grainy tannins, very good balance, very natural and handling that alcohol better than many other Right Banks. Nice grip on the finish, just a touch of astringency, but complex with minerals, some smoky notes developing in the glass. This 2009 brims with character and is undoubtedly one of the great Conseillante's of modern times. Just ethereal. Tasted April 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 96-98 points

“Such wonderful clarity to this wine, with violets, black and exotic fruits. Fabulous nose. Full-bodied, with superfine tannins and a silky, silky finish. Such beauty. Really stunning. Class”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“Picked 19-28 Sep. Very dark. Though no darker than the Duo. Not much nose - less expressive than the Duo! Very rich and intense. Super-ripe. Taken to an extreme of ripeness? A bit overripe. Lacks acidity. I think I prefer the Duo. Heavy with a bit of tarriness on the finish. I'd love to taste this again but on this showing I fear there is not enough acid and too obvious tannin. When I subsequently tasted this blind, I wrote ' Sweet and almost Argentine on the nose! None of Bordeaux's subtlety here. I can't really see the point. And awfully drying on the finish.' Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2015-2023”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Remains true to the refined, elegant house style but with added depth and concentration. Lovely fruit. Smooth, velvety tannins. Brilliant wine. Drink 2020-2040”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

“Now that La Conseillante is making a second wine with more severe selection, think of the 2009 as a version of the 2000 on steroids. This is never going to be a blockbuster wine, because the terroir just seems to produce silky, elegant wines, but in this case, the 2009 has an extra kick and level of concentration that is unprecedented. Inky bluish purple, with an extraordinary nose of framboise, black raspberries, spring flowers, spice box, and a hint of truffle, the wine has great depth, full-bodied opulence, silky tannins, enormous power and richness, but again, a vibrancy and uplift that are just freakish in this vintage. That's one of the great hallmarks of 2009 and one that will always stand out over the next 30 years. This wine should be drinkable in 5-7 years and last 40 or more. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2015-2055”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 95-98 points

L'Eglise Clinet

Estimate £1200-£1800

Denis Durantou wine that often stands up to Petrus and Le Pin in blind tastings. Might be very expensive as the 2005 vintage is already trading at £4350 !! Could be a great investment wine.

“Picked between 14th and 28th September, a blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc, from a fresh sample opened half an hour before with the final assemblage, the L'Eglise-Clinet is adorned with a supremely intense bouquet, with ripe black fruits, black plum, black olive tapenade, a hint of liquorice and black truffle. Wonderful definition and sense of controlled power. The palate is full-bodied, voluminous in the mouth, an awesome structure, layers of mineral-rich black fruits counterpoised by a sense of weightless power towards the finish. In its own unique way, a monumental wine. Tasted April 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 98-99 points

“The nose on this already suggests a deep and contemplative wine with blackberry, dried flowers and sweet berries. Evolves to black olive and hints of asphalt. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and tangy, rich fruit. It really grabs hold of you and wants to tell you it's special. Loads of ripe tannins too. Big and structured. Turns to tapenade”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“Scented nose. Very rich and thick and polished. Fresh and expressive - lots of nervy fruit. Very lively and exciting and nervy - not unlike its maker. Still very tight though. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2018-2030” *Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17.5+ / 20 points*

“Rich and dense but equally fresh and poised. Absolutely packed with fruit. Massive tannic frame but tannins smooth, voluptuous and suave. Aromatically reserved but clearly huge potential. Drink 2018-2045”
James Lawther, Decanter.Com **19/ 20 points**

“The 2009 l'Eglise Clinet may eclipse some of the other efforts made by proprietor Denis Durantou over the years. Harvested between September 14 and 28, this blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc is a powerful, almost uber-concentrated wine that tastes like an elixir of Pomerol with an incredibly unctuous feel. This dense purple-colored 2009 (which achieved 14.5% natural alcohol) is extremely powerful, but that power is concealed beneath a mountain of glycerin, fruit, concentration, and body. The purity and richness are off the charts, and the silkiness of the tannins is ethereal. This extraordinary wine possesses extremely high levels of tannin, but according to Durantou, they have almost disappeared because of the wine's amazing depth and richness. It will undoubtedly need a decade of aging after bottling, but it should last for 50+. It is a modern day legend in the making. (Tasted two times.) Drink 2020-2070”
Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 98-100 points

L'Evangile

Estimate £1200-£1800

Chateau Lafite owned property. 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. Very concentrated wine without being over extracted. Serious Stuff.

“Picked between 11th September until 7th October but with only six days of picking. Much of the Cabernet Franc was replanted in 2006 and 2007, so it represents just 5% of the blend. Delivering 14.6% alcohol and a pH of 3.73, the L'Evangile is very tight but delineated on the conservative nose. Blackberry, briary, a touch of cedar and sandalwood, the palate is full-bodied with silky smooth tannins on the entry. Great depth here, a voluminous L'Evangile, well-defined and very minerally and yet I can feel the presence of that alcohol on the heavy back palate. Hopefully it will settle down on the finish by the time of bottling. Let's see how this evolves by the time of bottling...I would like to see it engender more finesse. Tasted April 2010”
Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

I love the aromas of black olive and blueberry, with mineral and light mint. Full-bodied, with supervelvety tannins. Superlong. This is dense and very beautiful, with such a great core of fruit. Silky texture. Not sure it is going to be better than 2005 (100 pointer!) but super *James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 96-99 points*

39 hl/ha. 95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. Just a bit deeper than the Blason. Silky and subtle on the nose. Great richness and intensity. Firm line through it. Really up there. Great structure. Very firm and dry on the finish but not drying, Much more than just ripeness. Great density. Exotic and racy. Very long. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2018-2035
Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

Superior to the very good 2008 and 2005. Deep purple-black hue. Rich, dense and powerful. Oozes dark fruit. Appealing now but has the depth and structure to age. Probably the best of the modern era. 2018-2040
James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

“The prodigious 2009 l'Evangile may be the greatest wine made at this estate during my 30+ years of tasting Bordeaux. Yields were 39 hectoliters per hectare, and the harvest was relatively long, with everything being picked at perfect maturity between September 11 and October 7. The estate is doing malolactic in barrel (a la Burgundy), and the final blend (95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc) achieved 14.5% natural alcohol. Amazingly, this cuvee is aged in 100% new oak barrels, yet no oak is present in the aromas or flavors. Readers should think of it as a better, richer, fuller, more alcoholic version of the 1982 l'Evangile. Dense, full-bodied, and opaque purple-hued, it boasts an extraordinary bouquet of spring flowers, blueberries, blackberries, and boysenberries. A blue and black mountain fruit character suggests coolness, but an intensity and voluptuous texture present the paradox of 2009. The wine has all the characteristics of a hot vintage in terms of power, texture, and richness as well as elements of a cool vintage in its precision, elegance, freshness, and vibrancy. Make no mistake about it, this is an enormous wine that is incredible to taste. Frankly, I could have drunk the entire barrel sample if it hadn't been my first appointment of the day (at 8:15 a.m.)! This wine should drink well for 30-40 years. Bravo! (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2050”
Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-100 points

Bon Coeur Fine Wines Ltd : En Primeur Review 2009

T : 01765 688200 www.bcfw.co.uk

Gazin

Estimate £400-£600

Situated next to Petrus. Quality is a bit up and down but the 2009 is excellent. At about a 5% of the price of it's famous neighbour it might be an excellent buy.

“Tasted at Chateau Clinet. This has a well defined, quite a cerebral bouquet with aromas of blackberry, Morello and a touch of liquorice, becoming more rounded and voluptuous with aeration. The palate is very well balanced with firm tannins, superb definition and minerality coming through on this Gazin, the best that I have tasted at primeur. Very precise towards the finish, very sophisticated. Wonderful. Tasted April 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 94-96 points

“Blackberry and light tar aromas follow through to a full body, with soft and velvety tannins and a fruity finish. Delicate in a rich way”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Luscious and intense with the merest hint of animal fur. Thick and then rather tough and acid. Rather austere on the end. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2017-2027”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Ripe but poised. Aromatic red fruit (crushed raspberry) aromas, smooth tannic frame, attractive mid-palate fruit and a balancing freshness that is marked. Assured value. Drink 2018-2035”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“Ferocious extract, huge tannin, an opaque purple color, and enormous richness all make for a potentially brilliant wine from this vineyard, located on the plateau of Pomerol just adjacent to Petrus. Probably a late finisher of malolactic given its showing on three separate occasions, this wine, which is enormously endowed, very rich, and full-bodied, has a chance to be the best Gazin ever made. However, patience will be a virtue, as the wine will certainly need 5-8 years of cellaring. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2015”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 94-96 points

La Petite Eglise

Estimate £200-£300

Second wine of Eglise Clinet and often our star value buy from Pomerol. Serious wine for a second label – 100% Merlot – Only 800 cases available in 2009

“Picked on 28th September, this pure Merlot has a delightful, beautifully defined nose where the terroir of Pomerol shine through probably better than any other vintage of La Petite Eglise. The palate is well balanced, superb definition, taut and very natural, lovely blackberry, raspberry leaf and a touch of burnt toast towards the linear, but unreservedly elegant finish. Superb. Tasted April 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Medium-bodied, with silky tannins and a fresh finish. There's plenty of sweet fruit in this second wine. 100 percent Merlot”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 88-91 points

“Very smart and flattering and subtle. Very lively. 100% Merlot. Quite sleek and even a bit skinny. Fresh but far from sumptuous. Dances. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2015-2023”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Fine, fragrant with a lively freshness. Remarkably clean and balanced but without the density of the top wines. Drink 2014-2022”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 15.5 / 20 points

Petit Village

Estimate £350-£450

Under the same ownership as Pichon Baron (Axa Millesimes Group). Another property that has produced their best wine for many years

“A blend of 75% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Cabernet Franc, picked between 17th September and finish on the 13th October with the Cabernet, this has a ripe damson, small black cherries and just a hint of marmalade. The palate is medium-bodied, quite tannic, feeling as if there is more Cabernet than the 17%. A more masculine Petit Village, almost foursquare, conservative whilst another sample was smoother and more cohesive. Moderate length. Fine. Tasted April 2010” *Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 90-92 points*

“This is sexy, with beautiful ripe fruit and spices. Full bodied, with focused fruit and a long finish. Racy. So focused. Class. Best ever”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

“Full, fragrant, floral nose. Thick and sweet. A little overbearing. Hard finish - very muscular. Not too alcoholic. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2015-2027”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16.5 / 20 points

“Great effort this year. A sleeper. Dark and intense, the quality of the tannins extremely refined. Cabernet component (26%) evident. Ageing potential. Drink 2018-2035”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“This consistently under-performing estate has made one of its finest wines in many years. The opaque ruby/purple-tinged 2009 offers up hints of toffee, caramelized red and black fruits, and spicy oak. Medium to full-bodied, soft, round, and generous with abundant glycerin, this beauty can be drunk over the next 10-15 years. (Tasted once.) Drink 2010-2025”

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 88-90 + points

Rouget

Estimate £240-£300

Chateau that we have never bought En Primeur but will try to get an allocation. No Promises.

“Tasted at Chateau Clinet. The Rouget '09 has a fresh, well defined bouquet with wild strawberry, cherry and a touch of rose petal...very feminine and fragrant. The palate is medium-bodied with fine, ripe tannins, just a little toasty and spicy, good weight, modern in style but well balanced with good acidity and delineation towards the finish with hints of bay leaf and spice. Cohesive, very good length. Look out for Rouget upping the ante over the next few years...this is just the beginning. Tasted April 2010”

Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 91-93 points

“Blueberry and mineral on the nose. Full-bodied, with well-integrated tannins and a fruity, vanilla and berry finish. Long. Superpolished and pretty”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 91-94 points

“Very thick. Perfumed. Very sweet and opulent and ambitious. A bit of tannin on the end. You could almost stand a spoon up in this. Clinet? Very rich. Pretty alcoholic finish but there is lots of rich fruit, too. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2015-2028”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17 / 20 points

“Another fine wine from this now consistent (and still relatively good value) estate. Aromatic, opulent, the texture of the tannins fine. Long finish. Drink 2016-2030”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com 17.5 / 20 points

“The best Rouget I have ever tasted, the 2009 displays terrific aromas of kirsch liqueur and loamy soil as well as a plump, fat, luscious personality. With sensational concentration and purity, a full-bodied mouthfeel, and an enormous fruit character, this beauty should drink well for 15 or more years. (Tasted three times.) Drink 2010-2025”

*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 91-93 points **

Vieux Chateau Certan (VCC)

Estimate £700-£1000

Very old vines (all over 50 years old), small yield and the expertise of Alexandre Thienpont makes this one of Pomerol's most exciting properties. 84% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. 2009 is first class.

"The VCC '09 is a blend of 84% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, cropped from 21st September until 2nd October, offering 13.7% alcohol and a pH of 3.7. It has a ripe, lifted bouquet of blackberry, black plum, graphite and raspberry, but boy, do I miss that Cabernet Franc that Alexandre felt did not reach full maturity when he made the assemblage (the same happened in 1998.) The palate is medium-bodied, firm tannins, the Merlot doing its utmost to compensate for the Cabernet Franc. Good weight, notes of blackberry, a touch of white pepper and a citric thread of acidity, the finish just a little foursquare but opening and deepening with time. This is a very fine VCC, but not the profound Pomerol it might have been. Tasted April 2010"
Neal Martin, eRobertParker.com 92-94 points

"This has an incredible nose of chocolate and berries that turns to sweet tobacco and China tea leaves. Full-bodied, with a beautiful softness and silkiness that makes you want to keep tasting it. Goes on and on. 84 percent Merlot, 8 percent Cabernet Franc and 8 percent Cabernet Sauvignon"
James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

"84% Merlot (mainly the 1942 plantings), 8% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. Same blend as in 1998, oddly - which was their reference point for Merlot. pH 3.8, 40+ hl/ha compared with the very small vintages of 2008 and 2006. 'Now that we have a better cellar, we can take more risks. In old days we couldn't have taken 09's risks.' Unusually low proportion of Cabernet Franc; these particular old vines just did not deliver in 2009. Very dark - much darker than Le Pin. Very luscious - more like the nose you would expect of Le Pin! Very big and rich and full. Round and chewy and very very ripe but not heavy nor very hot. Splendid nose with great richness and savour but not excessive sweetness. Gouleyant. Date tasted 30th March 2010. Drink 2016-2030"
Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

"Magnificent wine but atypically rich, round and powerful rather than linear and discreet (only 16% Cabernet in the blend). Enormous depth of fruit. Sweet, ripe and persistent. Voluptuous. Owner-winemaker Alexandre Thienpont compares it to the 1950 and 2000. Drink 2020-2045"
James Lawther, Decanter.Com 18.5 / 20 points

"A blend of 84% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2009 exhibits an opaque purple color as well as a glorious bouquet of black currants, subtle smoke, charcoal, Christmas spices, and licorice. Massive, unctuously textured, and rich, but at the same time refreshing and vibrant, this extraordinary effort appears to be the finest Vieux Chateau Certan made in my lifetime. (Tasted once.)

Proprietor Alexandre Thienpont told me he has never seen such weather and perfect grapes, and that one would have to go back as far as his grandfather's time to find another weather scenario that so benefitted Bordeaux. With an off-the-chart index of tannin, with alcohol levels of 13.7 to 14 percent, and normal pH of 3.7, Vieux Chateau Certan has produced a 2009 that is equal to their four greatest vintages - 1945, 1947, 1948, and 1950"
*Robert Parker, Wine Advocate (188) 96-99 points **

Sauternes / Barsac

Coutet

Estimate £350-£450

Normally one of the best buy's and often the Trade's favourite. Customers often go for the biggest names. Star Buy.

"Lemon custard, with honey and apple pie aromas. Full-bodied, with wonderful intensity and a spicy dried lemon and mineral finish. Very powerful, with lots of botrytis. Could be the Sauternes of the year"
James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

"Rather simple, floral, barley-sugar aromas. Sweet? Certainly. Interesting? A bit more debatable. Hot finish. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2016-2023"
Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 16 / 20 points

“Large and rich with the intense and complete character of the vintage, super quality in the finish, perhaps broader than subtle, great future”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

Guiraud

Estimate £350 -£450

Amazing depth and structure. Bill Blatch – Sauternes expert thinks that his could be on par, possibly better than 2001

“This rocks with botrytis, offering spicy almond, peach pie and dried apricot on the nose and palate. Full and very sweet, with a long finish. So much dried fruit. Oily and powerful. Some bitterness. 35 percent Sauvignon Blanc and 65 percent Sémillon”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 95-98 points

“Interesting nose with a bit of an edge - really appetising as well as very sweet. I failed to spit this one - always a good sign. Very long and a good combination of structure, acidity and very ripe fruit. Tightly laced even if not the sweetest. Interesting smokiness on the nose. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2018-2035”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Great pure noble rot aromas (apricot, mango), huge body, huge liquor, monumental but silky and supremely elegant, immense length, a great classic of the vintage in preparation and not at all very far from Yquem level, as are some other first growths too”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18.5 / 20 points**

Lafaurie Peyraguey

Estimate £280- £350

Always a good buy in good years like 2009

“Focused and very clean, with apple pie and crème brûlée aromas. Full-bodied and medium sweet, with a fruity finish. A little one-dimensional”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 90-93 points

“Quite deep gold. Looks very fat. Not very much nose, and sheer weight is its strong point. A bit chewy. This should give pleasure but it's not one of the most subtle. Raw pear juice. Bit of a boxer. Though with good acidity. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2018-2030”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 17+ / 20 points

“Slightly more golden-like colour than others, but keeping green undertones, absolutely glorious from the beginning to the end, great future!”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

Raymond Lafron

Estimate £200-£300

We have never bought this En Primeur but after Jancis's tasting notes we are trying to get an allocation

“Very deep golden, with great tension and excitement and some green streaks, with layers of botrytis over them. Full and deep with intense botrytis. Great stuff! Unspittable, dried apricots (though so much richer than a Tokaji) and great acidity. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2017-2032”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 19 / 20 points

Rieussac

Estimate £400- £550

Chateau Lafite's property and the punter's favourite. One of the biggest names of Sauternes

“Lemon peel and pear tart on the nose. Full-bodied and medium sweet, with good acidity, lemon meringue flavors and a spicy finish”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 92-95 points

Heavy and rich and wonderfully sumptuous. Great richness. Density and breadth. Still very chewy but there is lots here. Very rewarding. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2018-2036

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18 / 20 points

“Massive, with great transformed level of alcohol, useful when the sugar content is so high too, a monument of a wine, but a wait of 10 years at least will be necessary to do justice to its majestic power”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **18 / 20 points**

The nose is fleshed out by ripe fruit, apricots, pears and fleshy yellow peaches. The lushness is balanced by lime and lemon freshness that gives a more elegant, racy feel on the mid palate and helps to bring out the Noble Rot spice that lurks towards the back. Drink 2022-2060”

Derek Smedley MW – **93-97/100**

Suduiraut

Estimate £400 - £500

Another top flight Sauternes, often fairly expensive but worth while. Under the same ownership at Pichon Baron.

“Pear and lemon pie aromas and flavors. Full and powerful, with lots of sweet fruit and a long, spicy finish. Racy, layered and beautiful”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 94-97 points

“Big and rich and bold and overwhelming almost. A bit of spice and so much sugar! This deserves very high points for its combination of sweetness and purity. Great weight. Really very good indeed. Bravo AXA for allowing these decisions. Date tasted 29th March 2010. Drink 2016-2040”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 18.5 / 20 points

“As in 2008, a triumph! Glorious fruit content, nobility of body, balance, taste and aftertaste, perfect precise winemaking, immense future. Is it the best since 1899 or 1928? I say yes, without any doubt”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **19 / 20 points**

D’Yquem

Estimate £2000-£3500

Without doubt the top Sauternes. Simply the best.

“What a fabulous wine. It's an explosion of fruit, yet it's very refined. I absolutely love the nose on this, with apricot tart, apple crumble, caramel and crème brûlée. Full-bodied, superripe and spicy, with mango, papaya, spices and sweet dried lemons. Incredibly long. It really rocks your socks off. Amazing. This could be even better than 2001”

James Suckling, WineSpectator.com 97-100 points

“Lively greenish gold. Very indulgent nose that sends a tingle down the spine. Great tang and life as well as richness. So pure and flirtatious - not one of the sweetest but beautiful balance and refreshment, without being an 'aperitif style Sauternes'. Quite exceptionally persistent. Hints of blossom and real lift. Orange peel and real zest - great energy. Not heavy at all, This takes 2009 Sauternes to a new level. Extremely bright fruit. Long and rich. Not a fat style of Yquem. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2046”

Jancis Robinson MW, JancisRobinson.com 19+ / 20 points

“Perfection again, with the monumental body and flavour of the vintage: but a magical winemaking touch avoids any heaviness and gives a crystalline Riesling-like purity of taste and texture which is thrilling! For me the most formally perfect Sauternes of the vintage and a glorious affirmation of the property's new style: as rich as ever but with more flexibility to express the best and most original aspects of the vintage”

James Lawther, Decanter.Com **19.5 / 20 points**

James Goodhart
Bon Coeur Fine Wines
www.bcfw.co.uk