

Bordeaux 2005: a truly great vintage

Our man in Bordeaux, **Gavin Quinney**, has a knack of predicting Parker points, and hence prices. He reveals the top 100 wines from more than 700 tasted and their likely price tag

Unarguably, 2005 is the greatest vintage in Bordeaux in living memory. No other year has given producers from across the entire region the opportunity to produce such high quality wine in reasonable quantities. And it's not just the reds, with dry whites and Sauternes performing memorably as well.

For the reds, 2005 is rather like a modern-day equivalent of 1982 but the number of chateaux making better wine today than 20 years ago is countless. Improved vineyard management, stricter selection, substantial investment in know-how and equipment and smarter wine-making have changed the face of the region.

In the coming months we will see the en primeur market for Bordeaux 2005 go completely mad. Prices for the First Growths and other top wines will spiral to unprecedented levels as demand for the very best cannot be met. The good news is that, just below the level of some of the most famous names, there are some truly outstanding wines from estates that have made

probably their best wine to date. It's a tiny percentage of chateaux in Bordeaux that sell their wines en primeur, and the good ones are worth hunting down in a year like 2005.

The vintage

It was an extraordinary year of almost perfect weather – one of the driest vintages on record, with half the normal amount of rainfall. It was also very sunny and warm but not excessively hot, as in 2003. A little rain fell at crucial times and the older vines in the best vineyard sites adapted to the near-drought conditions as their roots were able to source just enough moisture.

A feature of the vintage was the cool night air that accompanied the warm days in August and September. Crucially, the fine weather held throughout the harvest which began in late August for some dry whites and ended in October. The Merlots were mostly picked in the second half of September and the Cabernets came in during the last week of September and into October.

Most of the Cabernet Sauvignon in the Médoc was picked in the first ten days of October. One winemaker there described the harvest as à la carte: he could pick and choose which parcels to bring in at leisure. In Sauternes they worked through late September and October.

The crop size in the best vineyards was about right as well, even taking into account any copping in July. It was not too small (as in 2002 and 2003), and not too big (2004). A typical example is Château Montrose, which produced 44 hectolitres per hectare in 2005, compared to 57hl/ha in 2004 and just 33hl/ha in 2002 and 2003.

The wines

Long before the grapes were picked, chateau owners across the region knew that they were on to something special. Merlot grapes were brought in at high degrees of potential alcohol with the Cabernets also registering near record levels. The colours were impressive and the tannins high, but the difference with this vintage compared to other ripe years was the high levels of acidity and amazing freshness of the fruit. Meanwhile, the level of investment in the wineries at some of the top chateaux – to get the best from the fruit – is quite staggering.

Tasting the wines six months on in April, showed that the optimism was well-founded and that numerous chateaux have produced their best wine to date. The reds have a fabulous core of ripe fruit and great structure, supple tannins, lovely weight and balance – but above all they are wonderfully fresh. The sweet and dry whites are fantastic too.

All the major appellations enjoyed a successful vintage. The Left Bank produced scores of outstanding wines, with St-Julien, Pauillac and St-Estèphe excelling and Margaux a great success. Pessac-Léognan did well and over on the Right Bank both St-Emilion and Pomerol have come up with a plethora of brilliant wines of varying styles.

The less famous appellations in the Médoc, Graves, Fronsac and the Côtes of the Right Bank – such as Castillon – all produced some brilliant efforts that will give great drinking for a fair price.

More next month

For 100 Best Values, plus a review of the dry whites and sweets, see next month's Wine & Spirit.

The en primeur tastings circus

Every year in late March and early April, the world's wine writers and trade buyers of fine wine descend on Bordeaux to taste barrel samples from the previous vintage. The owners of leading chateaux then digest what people say and take into account the all-important scores from influential critics. They will then release their prices over the following months for merchants to sell their wine en primeur. Chateaux and merchants will be paid long before the wines are bottled (these 2005s will mostly be bottled in mid-2007) and the buyer at the end of the chain hopefully secures an allocation of the wine at the best price – at least that's the theory.

This campaign will see some outstanding reviews, extraordinarily high demand and unbelievably high prices – putting even the en primeur sales campaign for the 2000s and many of the top 2003s in the shade. Other recent vintages such as 2001, 2002 and 2004 did not have the same 'must have' reputation and prices for many good wines from these vintages haven't moved. As a result there are some superb wines available for a great deal less than their 2005 counterparts will cost.





ALL HANDS ON DECK: SORTING GRAPES AT ANGELUS

Prices - mind the gap

Chateaux that sell en primeur will publish their offer prices during May and June (after a game of follow-my-leader). The First Growths and a few super seconds come out with an initial offer, followed by further tranches at increased prices.

Until now, no wine magazine has provided estimates as to how much these wines will cost en primeur. As there is so much variation in the prices of the wines, we wanted you to have an idea of what they might cost.

My price estimates for the Top 100 are based on the early tranche prices for those top chateaux and for the others I quote an estimate initial price as offered by UK merchants - not the inflated price after speculators have cashed in.

Experience shows that with some great wines there will be rapid increases in value. Château Léoville-Barton opened at under £300 for its 2000 vintage before jumping to more than £750 within days as early buyers sold on their allocation. However, the wine is still £750 five years on, so caveat emptor - many wines hit the top of the market soon after the release price is announced.

Some wines will be released at very high prices when compared with other top vintages of late. I expect Cos d'Estournel, for example, to be priced way over the cost of a great mature vintage - but in terms of quality its wine in 2005 is up there with the best. Check www.wine-searcher.com for prices of previous vintages of the particular wines.

The haves and the have-nots

Ten years ago, a wine merchant would have paid the same sum of money for two bottles of a First Growth as they would for enough AC Bordeaux - in bulk - to fill 60 bottles (5 cases). This year, a merchant may well have to pay the same sum for two bottles of a First Growth as they will for enough AC Bordeaux to fill 1,200 bottles (100 cases).

Our man in Bordeaux: Gavin Quinney moved to Bordeaux in 1999 when he bought Château Bauduc, where for the past six years he's been making the house white wine for Gordon Ramsay and Rick Stein. He's also the Bordeaux consultant for the wine lists for the Ramsay restaurants, judges for the Guide Hachette and has written up the en primeurs for the Bauduc newsletter since 2000. He no longer buys or sells wines from other châteaux.



Where to buy

With payment being made for wine in advance of delivery, it is essential to buy from a reputable merchant. Here are some UK merchants offering Bordeaux en primeur:

Farr Vintners	farr-vintners.com	020 7821 2000
Berry Bros and Rudd	bbr.com	0870 900 3400
The Wine Society	thewinesociety.com	01438 741 177
Corney and Barrow	corneyandbarrow.com	020 7265 2400
Bordeaux Index	bordeauxindex.com	020 7253 2110
Bibendum	bibendum-wine.co.uk	020 7449 4120
John Armit	armit.co.uk	020 7908 0600
Justerini and Brooks	justerinis.co.uk	020 7484 6400
Seckford Wines	seckfordwines.co.uk	01394 446 622
Lay and Wheeler	laywheeler.com	01473 313 233
Nickolls and Perks	nickollsandperks.co.uk	01384 394 518
Fine and Rare Wines	frw.co.uk	020 8960 1995
Majestic	majestic.co.uk	0845 605 6767
Goedhuis	goedhuis.co.uk	020 7793 7900
Magnum	magnum.co.uk	020 7839 5732
H & H Bancroft	bancroftwine.co.uk	020 7232 5440
Albany Vintners	albanyvintners.co.uk	0845 330 8858
Laithwaites	laithwaites.co.uk	0870 442 1147

Bordeaux 2005 – the top 100 reds

I tasted over 700 wines in more than 40 separate locations around the Bordeaux region in late March and early April, and re-tasted 200 of them, to arrive at the Top 100. I have selected just the red wines for the list and have left out a few high scoring garage wines that are made in miniscule quantities and rarely seen in the UK.

In next month's issue we'll be covering the 100 Best Values from 2005 – and the dry whites and Sauternes.

Gavin Quinney
www.bordeauxreport.com

Guide to Scores

I use the 100-point rating system. With an unfinished wine – a year or so before bottling – a narrow spread of 3-4 points is as precise as I can be in giving an indication of quality. Any wine scoring 90+ points is outstanding – and truly exceptional if 95 or more. All the top 100 wines have scored 90 or more points, which is not surprising given the quality of the vintage.

Maturity dates

The estimated maturity dates, eg 2010-2020, show when the wine

should be at its best for drinking.

Pricing estimates

Prices are released by the chateaux, via a network of brokers and merchants in May and June 2006. All prices given are estimates for a case, based on the opening prices from UK merchants of the wine in bond, ie, they exclude duty (currently £15.50 a case) and VAT. Duty and VAT will be payable later, if the wines are delivered to you, although you may choose to store the wine in bonded storage when it arrives in the UK in 2008.

Guide to blends of grape varieties

The percentage of each grape variety refers to the final blend for each chateau's 2005 (not the mix in the vineyard). Most great reds from the Médoc have more Cabernet Sauvignon than Merlot, whereas wines from the Right Bank – St-Emilion and Pomerol – are dominated by Merlot, followed by Cabernet Franc.

CS = Cabernet Sauvignon
M = Merlot
CF = Cabernet Franc
PV = Petit Verdot

1 Ch Margaux, Margaux 98-100 £2,500-3,500

The wine of the vintage? Time will tell but this is a legend in the making. It is one of the most exciting wines I have ever tasted and it will undoubtedly evolve into something quite spectacular. Comparable to the 1982, the 1990 and the 2000 in quality, it is a beautiful expression of C Sauvignon. **2015-2035; 85% CS 8%M 5% PV 2% CF.**



5 Pétrus, Pomerol 96-100 £7,500-15,000

2005 reminded Christian Moueix of the 1982 vintage, only now they are better equipped to handle the vines to achieve 'perfect ripeness'. This phenomenal wine will only be available to those who already have a prior reservation. **2015-2040 99% M 1% CF.**



2 Lafite Rothschild, Pauillac 97-100 £2,500-3,500

For many, the wine of the vintage. A beautifully crafted Lafite with a core of ripe Cabernet running through it. Layer upon layer of complexity, with sweet black fruits and superfine tannins. Sensational balance and length. **2017-2035 89% CS 11% M.**



6 La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan 96-100 £1,200-1,800

A wonderful La Mission. Spellbinding aromas, beautiful weight and balance, and persistent tannins. Gorgeous all the way through. Long, long finish. **2015-2035 69% M 30% CS 1% CF.**



3 Ausone, St-Emilion 97-100 £3,200-4,500

Purple black, dense and exotic. This enormous yet delicious tour de force is at the same prodigious level as the 2000 and the 2003. Just 1,500 (ultra expensive) cases made. **2025-2045 55% CF 45% M.**



7 Latour, Pauillac 96-100 £2,500-3,500

The 2005 Latour might not show the usual opulence but it has a backbone of 'amazingly ripe' Cabernet Sauvignon. Frédéric Engerer describes his extraordinary wine as "elegant and racy in a year of power. It's not a Martin Johnson". Patience is required. **2025-2045 87% CS 12% M.**



4 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe 97-100 £900-1,300

For me, the best Cos ever. Certainly this stunning effort is a rival to the great 1982, 1990, 1995 and 2003. It will be expensive, so forget the school fees and buy this instead. **2015-2030 78% CS 19% M 3% CF.**



8 Montrose, St-Estèphe 96-99 £500-800

A beautiful wine. Fabulous texture, wonderful weight, sumptuous flavours and seamless tannins. The new owner would be well advised to retain the services of his young winemakers. **2012 - 2030 65% CS 31% M 3.5% CF.**



9 Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan 96-99
£2,500-3,500

Jean-Philippe Delmas's second year in charge and he could hardly have hoped for more. "Almost everything was special," he said. His father reckons the wine is on a par with the 1961, which was his first vintage. Magical stuff. **2015-2035**
56% M 39% CS 5% CF.



10 Cheval Blanc, St-Emilion 96-99
£2,500-3,500

Pierre Lurton has fashioned a sensational wine with tremendous purity and balance, a silky texture and a cloak of cashmere tannins. Divine. There is a vast difference in style between this and Ausone, even though the proportions of Cab Franc and Merlot are the same. **2012-2030**
55% CF 45% M.



11 Pavie, St-Emilion 96-98
£1,100-1,500

Super ripe, super concentrated and super sleek, this is much loved by US critics and loathed by most British writers. A question of personal taste: it is rich, long and steeped in firm tannins, but is remarkably fresh for a wine of 14.5% alcohol. **2018-2035**
70% M 20% CF 10% CS.



12 Palmer, Margaux 96-98
£750-1,000

A spectacular effort from Palmer, this is even better than the 2000 - perhaps. Rich, fleshy and delicious, like so many of the great wines of 2005 it has remarkable freshness. Made from low yields of 32hl/ha. **2012-2028**
53% CS 40% M 7% PV.



13 Angélus, St-Emilion 96-98
£750-1,000

One of the stars of the Right Bank. "No, I'm not happy," said the winemaker during the harvest, "I'm very, very happy." The 2005 Angélus is a beautifully crafted wine and possibly their best yet. Lovely blackberry fruit, sweet tobacco and a long, lingering finish. **2015-2030**
62% M 38% CF.



14 Léoville Las Cases, St-Julien 95-98
£1,000-1,400

A classic Las Cases with the power of the 86 and the elegance of 96. Wonderful balance, gorgeous Cabernet Sauvignon fruit (the highest percentage yet here) and a finish that lasts for ever. Keep. **2018-2040**
88% CS 7% M 5% PV.



15 Le Pin, Pomerol 95-98
£5,000-7,000

Wonderful, ethereal Merlot, tasted from different barrels. All 600 cases of this mythical wine will be sold en primeur to a loyal band of customers in 30 minutes flat, according to proprietor Jacques Thienpont. "I never expected this when I started out," he said. **2012-2025**



16 Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac 95-97
£2,500-3,000

A gorgeous Mouton but perhaps just a little off the pace of the other First Growths. Outstanding, cassis-like Cabernet Sauvignon makes up most of the blend. Supple tannins. **2013-2030**
85% CS 14% M 1% PV.



17 Pichon-Longueville Baron, Pauillac 94-97
£450-600

A spectacular effort from Christian Seely's team. My favourite Pichon Baron to date, this is a beautifully delineated Pauillac with an extraordinary freshness, and should be relatively good value. **2015-2030**
65% CS 30% M 5% CF.



18 Pichon Lalande, Pauillac 94-97
£500-750

The 2005 Pichon Lalande is true to form after a run of successful vintages and this is the best since 2000. Dreamy texture, crème de cassis-like fruit and a cloak of soft tannins. **2012-2030**
64% CS 29% M 6% CF.



19 Léoville Barton, St-Julien 94-97
£300-400

One of the best values every year. The 2005 is a sensational dark, brooding wine and is steeped in blackcurrant richness, with a hint of cigar box character. The persistent tannins promise for a long life ahead. **2018-2035**
70% CS 25% M 5% CF.



20 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac 94-96+
£350-500

An outstanding Pontet-Canet that should be on every wish list. Bursting with rich Cabernet fruit, it is cloaked in firm tannins but remains fresh. Alfred Tesseron's new winery with back-to-the-future concrete and oak fermentation tanks has helped fashion what is surely the best P-C yet. **2015-2035**
70% CS 25% M 4% CF 1%PV.



21 Léoville Poyferré, St-Julien 94-96

£350-500

Consistently outstanding wines in the last five years here and the 2005 might even top the lot. A brilliant Poyferré that is not unlike a modern remake of the 82. Release prices so far have remained reasonable. **2012-2032**
66% CS 24% M 10% PV.



22 La Conseillante, Pomerol 94-96

£700-900

Massively ripe and dense, the 2005 La Conseillante is aged in 100% new French oak. Velvety and delicious with a gentle cloak of tannins. **2012-2025**
85% M 15% CF.



23 L'Église Clinet, Pomerol 94-96

£800-1,000

Denis Durantou has made an outstanding, classically styled Pomerol from his four hectare plot, aged in 70% new oak. Powerful but fresh, and very long with supple tannins. **2015-2025**
85% M 15% CF.



24 Ducru Beaucaillou, St-Julien 94-96

£450-600

Since taking over from his brother, Bruno Borie has produced three consecutive Ducrus of superb quality. A different style too – uncommonly flattering and sexy for a St-J. The 2005, aged in a high percentage of new oak (87%), is creamy and delicious. **2012-2028; 67% CS 33% M.**



25 Clos Fourtet, St-Emilion 94-96

£300-400

Patrick Cuvelier bought this property in 2001 and his team have made steady progress since, culminating in this marvelous, seductive effort. Ripe, lush and sexy, this is probably the finest Clos Fourtet ever. **2012-2025**
76% M 12% CF 12% CS.



26 Le Dôme, St-Emilion 93-96

£900-1300

Englishman Jonathan Maltus makes this delicious, Cabernet Franc dominated beauty from old vines near Angelus. The best Le Dôme yet and the star turn in a super line-up of Maltus wines – just ahead of the 250 case Les Astéries. **2012-2025; 75% CF 25% M.**



27 Lafleur, Pomerol 93-96

£2,500-3,500

The Guinaudeau's have produced a stunning wine from their gem of a vineyard near Pétrus. Multi-layered, fresh and complex with firm tannins. It will sell for a high price to the lucky few. **2012-2025**
61% M 31% CF



28 La Mondotte, St-Emilion 93-96

£1,500-2500

La Mondotte is not for everyone and not just because it is so expensive. Made from tiny yields of 20hl/ha and aged in 100% new oak, it is very concentrated, powerful and dense. **2020-2040**
80% M 20% CF.



29 Pavie Decesse, St-Emilion 93-96

£500-700

From Gérard Perse's Pavie stable, another concentrated, soft and hedonistic Merlot. Delicious - if you like this sort of thing. **2010-2020**
90% M 10% CF.



30 Vieux Château Certan, Pomerol 93-95

£650-800

Alexandre Theinpont describes his wine as "classique Merlot-styled Pomerol" because the Merlot is so explosive. The vintage was "saved by the rain" at the the end of July and August. Very long and delicious. **2013-2025**
80% M 20% CF



31 Valandraud, St-Emilion 93-95

£1,000-1,400

Jean-Luc Thunevin is a master craftsman. Valandraud is a delicious, decadent offering with a long finish. **2013-2025**
65% M 30% CF 5% CS.



32 Troplong Mondot, St-Emilion 93-95

£300-450

Christine Valette has fashioned a gorgeous wine here. Boatloads of ripe, luscious Merlot fruit but firm tannins hold it in shape. **2012-2025**
80% M 10% CF 10% CS.



33 Tertre Rôteboeuf, St-Emilion 93-95

£750-900

Francois Mitjavile makes a classic wine that is the antithesis of the super-rich garage wines. The 2005 is a stunning effort that has the feel of a great Burgundy. Wonderful aromas and deep, rich and earthy. **2017-2032; 85% M 15% CF.**



34 Pavie-Macquin, St-Emilion 93-95

£350-450

Hadn't finished it's malolactic fermentation so was quite difficult to judge on three occasions. Nicolas Thienpont makes wines of class and complexity here and this is no exception. Ripe, lush and long, this late-picked, super-ripe beauty will be terrific. **2013-2028; 80% M 20% CF.**



35 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan 93-95 £450-650

An old estate making modern-style wines under the ownership of Bernard Magrez. Rich, powerful and aged in 100% new oak, this finely-tuned effort is the equal of great recent vintages like the 2000 and the 2001. **2010-2025; 55% CS 45% M.**



36 Malescot St-Exupery, Margaux 93-95 £220-300

A consistently brilliant Margaux over the past decade, the 2005 is the best yet. If reasonably priced it should be snapped up. Round and soft but with great structure. **2012-2025; 60% CS 35% M 5% PV.**



37 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac 93-95 £380-550

Hurrah! A superb, rich and opulent Lynch-Bages after a string of rather unexciting vintages since the fabulous 2000. Aged in a whopping 80% of new oak, this may turn out like the lovely 1990. **2012-2030; 72% CS 15% M 12% CF.**



38 L'Evangile, Pomerol 93-95 £900-1,200

A new chai has been built by the Rothschilds of Lafite and the wine's now made in small cement tanks. Malolactic fermentation in 100% new oak, gives the wine a sumptuous texture. Up there with the 1998 in quality. **2010-2025; 85% M 15% CF**



39 Lascombes, Margaux 93-95 £220-320

Since a change of ownership in 2000 the wines have improved hugely. Modern vinification techniques help make this rich, supple and opulent. Beautifully done. **2012-2022 50% CS 45% M 5% PV.**



40 Larcis Ducasse, St-Emilion 93-95 £250-350

Thienpont and Derenoncourt took over the running of this well-situated site near Pavie in 2002. The 2004 was a success, the 2005 even better - and hopefully good value. Stunningly rich, opulent and really well made. **2012-2025; 75% M 20% CF 5%CS.**



41 Hosanna, Pomerol 93-95 £350-450

For those who enjoy mid-weight classic Pomerol, this is a wonderful offering from the same stable as Pétrus. Delicious Merlot fruit with well-knit tannins. **2010-2020; 85% M 15% CF.**



42 Calon Ségur, St-Estèphe 93-95 £350-450

Great Calon Ségur that is both powerful and fresh at the same time - quality enhanced by the cool August and September nights. Just behind Cos and Montrose in the St-Estèphe pecking order - and good value. **2015-2030; 60% CS 30% M 10% CF**



43 Branaire-Ducru, St-Julien 93-95 £240-320

The best Branaire-Ducru I have tasted and one of the buys of the vintage if prices stay reasonable. Patrick Maroteaux's team are rightly proud of this delicious, velvety but classic St Julien. **2015-2030; 66% CS 30% M 4% PV.**



44 Péby Faugères, St-Emilion 93-94 £400-550

Made from a parcel of 40-year-old Merlot vines, there are 1,600 cases of this sleek and delicious cuvée from Faugères, which is under new ownership. **2010-2020 100% M**



45 Trotanoy, Pomerol 92-95 £750-1000

A more restrained but no less enticing Pomerol. Lovely weight, balance and freshness. **2012-2025 90% M 10% CF.**



46 La Fleur-Pétrus, Pomerol 92-95 £500-600

Beautifully made wine from the same team as its neighbour Pétrus. It is no blockbuster but anyone who has had the good fortune to drink the 98 knows how well this wine can evolve in a great Pomerol vintage. **2012-2022; 80% M 20% CF.**



47 Talbot, St-Julien 92-94 £230-330

A great Talbot. Richly flavoured but still with wonderful St-Julien character of cassis, cedar and pencil shavings, this comes from a big property and should be good value. **2013-2025; 56% CS 40% M 4% PV.**



48 Smith Haut Lafitte, Pessac-Léognan 93-95 £250-350

Another outstanding, richly flavoured yet earthy Smith Haut Lafitte from the Cathiards who have transformed this estate since acquiring it in 1990. Their best red yet from low yields of 30hl/ha. **2008 - 2018; 64% CS 30% M 5% CF**



49 Rauzan-Ségla, Margaux 92-94 £350-450

Best young Rauzan-Ségla I've tasted and the greatest from the estate for some time. Wonderful balance, lovely invigorating fruit and gentle tannins. 'Un millésime merveilleux' says Henri de Buffay, who makes it. **2014-2028; 55% CS 40% M 4% PV 1% CF.**



50 Gruaud Larose, St-Julien 92-94 £300-400.

A big-framed wine that is easily the best from the estate since 2000. Full-bodied, plenty of fruit and an earthy, long finish. **2015-2030; 60% CS 32% M 4% CF 3%PV**



51 Pavillon Rouge, Margaux 92-94
£350-500

A stupendous second wine. Some of the Merlot that normally goes into the Grand Vin has gone into the Pavillon Rouge. Big, fleshy but fresh Margaux. **2015-2030; 48% CS 48% M.**

52 Marojallia, Margaux 92-94
£400-600

A superb garage wine from Murielle and Jean-Luc Thunevin of Valandraud. Great cassis-like fruit and velvety tannins. **2012-2025 60% CS 40% M.**

53 La Tour Figeac, St-Emilion 92-94
£200-250

A biodynamically run vineyard next to Cheval Blanc on the Pomerol border. Rich, opulent and sexy, it is usually keenly priced. Could be one of the best buys. **2010-2020**

54 Grand-Puy-Lacoste, Pauillac 92-94
£280-38

François-Xavier Borie's winery investment has been rewarded with a super 2005. Top notch with lovely weight and balance - best since 2000. Usually good value. **2013-2028; 74% CS 26% M.**

55 Clos l'Eglise, Pomerol 92-94
£600-800

Less beguiling than most vintages since the Garcin-Cathiards took over in 97, the 2005 is rich but steeped in tannin. Nevertheless, a super wine for the long haul. **2015-2030; 80% M 20% CF**

56 Canon La Gaffelière, St-Emilion 92-94
£350-500

Amazingly fresh for such an opulent style, Stephan von Neipperg's 2005 is super ripe and concentrated from yields of 30hl/ha. Swathed in toasty new oak. **2012-2025; 55% M 35% CF 10% CS.**

57 Beau-Séjour Bécot, St-Emilion 92-94
£300-400

A full-bodied, rich and sumptuous effort that has had all the modern trimmings, like malolactic fermentation in new oak, but it is not overdone. **2012-2022; 70% M 22% CF 6% CS.**

58 Carruades de Lafite, Pauillac 92-93+
£300-400

Irresistible cassis nose, lovely weight and caressing texture. Already soft and approachable, which is deceptive - a lovely second wine. **2012-2025; 48.5% CS 45.5% M 4.5% CF**

59 Lucia, St Emilion 92-93
£200-250

A super little wine from Derenoncourt from a parcel near Angélus and another near Vignonet. Little in volume, not in stature - rich, full-bodied and delicious. **2010-2020; 90% M 10% CF.**

60 Les Forts de Latour, Pauillac 92-93
£350-450

One wouldn't expect any less of the Latour team - not exactly a second wine, hailing from specific parcels. Fabulous blackcurrant fruit and a very long finish. **2014-2028; 76% CS 24% M.**

61 Le Bon Pasteur, Pomerol 92-93
£400-500

Home estate of oenologist Michel Rolland is usually the source of trademark, well-rounded Pomerol with hedonistic appeal. Excellent, sumptuous fruit in 2005. **2010-2018; 75% M 25% CF.**

62 Issan, Margaux 92-93
£220-300

Hopefully one of the best buys from Margaux in 2005, Issan has been quietly producing excellent wines in the last decade and the 2005 should be the best yet. **2012-2028; 60% CS 40% M.**

63 Brane-Cantenac, Margaux 92-93
£280-350

Plush and elegant, this is the best Brane-Cantenac since the 2000. Lovely fruit, velvety texture and seamless tannins. **2012-2022; 51% CS 43% M 6% CF.**

64 Grand Mayne, St-Emilion 91-94
£200-250

The Nonys have made very good, big-framed St-E for a decade. Like 1998 and 2000, the 2005 is spectacular. Boatloads of ripe fruit, yet fresh and balanced. **2012-2025; 75% M 15% CF 10% CS.**

65 Clerc Milon, Pauillac 91-94
£200-300

A seriously good Clerc Milon with lovely, ripe blackcurrant fruit and fine tannins. Fleshy but fresh. From the same stable as Mouton. **2012-2025; 48% CS 40% M 10% CF 1% Carmère.**

66 Rol Valentin, St-Emilion 91-93
£300-400

A trendy reputation and a modern, sexy wine made by Stéphane Derenoncourt. Silky, ripe, velvety and delicious Merlot. **2006 - 2015**

67 Roc des Cambes, Côtes de Bourg 91-93
£220-270

Francois Mitjavile of Tertre Rôteboeuf is equally committed to this estate. A delicious, earthy, traditionally styled wine that will benefit from cellaring. **2015-2028; 75% M 20% CS 5% Malbec.**

68 Quinault l'Enclos, St-Emilion 91-93
£200-280

The quality of Alain Raynaud's wine has been more consistent than the pricing: 2003 was half that of 01. This is fleshy, delicious and hopefully good value. **2010-2020; 75% M 12% CF 13% CS/Malbec.**

69 Monbousquet, St Emilion 91-93
£300-400

Gérard Perse's 2005 is low yields of 30hl/ha and aged for two years in new oak. Characteristically rich and opulent but surprisingly fresh for a wine of 14.5%. **2012-2025; 60% M 30% CF 10% CS.**

70 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan 91-93 £200-300

The Bonnie family has invested a fortune here and the quality of the reds and whites have been excellent since the late 90s. This is their best pairing yet. **2013-2026; 45% M 45% CS 8% CF.**

71 Langoa Barton, St-Julien 91-93
£240-320

Stablemate of Léoville, this is a lovely wine. The 2004 was excellent and the 2005 is a step up - ripe and rounded but still classic. **2012-2025 70% CS 25% M 5%CF.**

72 Lagrange, St-Julien 91-93
£200-280

A large production keeps the price reasonable for this classic, cedary St-Julien. Medium weight, super blackcurrant fruit and a long finish. **2012-2028; 66% CS 30% M 4% PV.**

73 Lafon-Rochet, St-Estèphe 91-93
£170-250

A really lovely, ripe but refined Lafon-Rochet and surely the best wine they have made. Aged in 50% new oak. Deep, rich but fresh. **2013-2025; 49% M 44% CS 4% CF 3% PV.**

74 La Lagune, Haut-Médoc 91-93
£220-300

After substantial investments here, the 2005 is a welcome return to the quality level of the lovely 1990 and 1982. Delicious, long, silky and very classy. **2012-2028; 55% CS 35% M 10% PV.**

75 La Gomerie, St-Emilion 91-93 £500-600

Owned by the Bécot family of Beau-Séjour, La Gomerie is a small production that's ripe, juicy and delicious but not cheap. **2011-2022; 100% M**

76 Kirwan, Margaux 91-93 £200-280

Fairly big-framed, juicy Margaux. Sumptuous fruit, great weight and not at all forced. **2013-2025; 56% 30% M 4% CF 10% PV.**

77 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan 91-93 £250-350 S

A satisfying mix of traditional and modern in style. Lovely ripe, warm fruit and fine, well-knit tannins. A good bet. **2010-2020; 56% CS 38% M 6% CF.**

78 Giscours, Margaux 91-93 £220-300

Silky smooth Margaux of outstanding poise and elegance. Thrilling, fairly affordable wines. **2012-2025; 62% CS 38% M.**

79 Gazin, Pomerol 91-93 £300-450

Sited next to Pétrus, Gazin is often relatively good value for a stylish Pomerol. Good structure, lovely flavours. **2013-2025; 85% M 10% CS 5% CF**

80 Clinet, Pomerol 91-93 £400-500

A new micro-winery at Clinet and young Ronan Laborde has crafted a voluptuously styled wine - crowd pleaser. **2010-2020; 85% M 10% CF 5% CS**

81 Chapelle d'Ausone, St-Emilion 91-93 £400-500

Sensational second wine of Ausone. Made with precision; crunchy bright fruit, a backbone of firm tannins. **2013-2025; 70% M 20% CF 5% PV 5% CS.**

82 Canon, St-Emilion 91-93 £300-400

A return to the quality of the 82. Delicious, ripe and balanced, with personality. Suit both modernists and classicists. **2012-2025; 80% M 20% CF**

83 Bahans Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan 91-93 £240-350

A very impressive second wine from Haut-Brion. Deep, fruity and unusual degree of sex appeal. Very attractive. **2010-2020; 45% M 25% CS 30% CF.**

84 Laforge, St-Emilion 91-92 £350-450

Jonathan Maltus uses several parcels with different terroirs. Hedonistic, sumptuous Merlot aged in new oak. **2011-2020; 91% M 9% CF**

85 La Tour Carnet, Haut-Médoc 91-92 £150-220

Reliable performer since 2000 under Bernard Magrez. 100% new oak; it is rich, concentrated, plush. **2013-2023; 49% M 41% CS 7% CF 3% PV.**

86 Haut-Bages Libéral, Pauillac 91-92 £160-220

Claire Villars makes what could be one of best buys of the vintage. A very pretty wine with lovely blackcurrant fruit. **2012-2025; 72% CS 28% M**

87 Prieuré Lichine, Margaux 91-92 £180-250

Stephane Derenoncourt advises here and his signature is on this wine. Plump, round and juicy. Very appealing. **2010-2020; 55% CS 40% M 5% PV.**

88 Figeac, St-Emilion 90-92 £350-450

Personality of its own, with less than a third Merlot. For traditionalists looking for earthy, truffley flavours. **2015-2028; 30% M 35% CF 35% CS**

89 Trottevielle, St-Emilion 90-92 £250-350

Famous old estate on the up and the 2005 is certainly the best I have tasted. Lovely ripe fruit, gently done. **2010-2020; 75% M 25% CF.**

90 Le Gay, Pomerol 90-92 £300-400

Catherine Péré-Vergé is determined to improve quality. This shows bright fruit, a good structure and a long finish. **2012-2028; 70% M 30% CF.**

91 La Fleur de Bouïard, Lalande de Pomerol 90-92 £180-280

Hubert de Bouïard bought this in 1998 and has made it a leading light. Sexy, lush, polished with fine tannins. **2010-2018; 80% M 15% CF 5% CS.**

92 Haut-Batailley, Pauillac 90-92 £180-250

The best H-B to date; the same stable as Grand-Puy-Lacoste, a lovely, ripe but gently tannic Pauillac. Great value. **2015-2030; 78% CS 22% M.**



93 Fleur Cardinale, St-Emilion 90-92 £180-280

Real progress since the Decosters took over in 2001. Big, meaty wine, with late-harvested grapes. Relative bargain. **2011-2022; 70% M 20% CF 10% CS.**

94 Durfort-Vivens, Margaux £180-250 S 90-92

Best D-V I've tasted. Bright crunchy fruit, elegant weight, supple tannins. Charming, not usually expensive. **2013-2025; 66% CS 26% M 8% CF.**

95 du Tertre, Margaux 90-92 £160-240

Same owners as Giscours. Punching above its weight since 2000. Delicious, supple, with good structure. **2013-2025; 40% CS 30% M 25% CF 5% PV.**

96 Domaine de Chevalier, Pessac-Léognan 90-92 £200-300

The white has a greater reputation than the red here but in 2005 this is a lovely, suave, elegant DdC. **2013-2025; 65% CS 30% M 5% PV.**

97 d'Angludet, Margaux 90-92 £150-200

A reliable performer, the Sichel's wine shows class, lovely ripe fruit, soft tannins and a good structure. Good value. **2010-2020; 47% M 48% CS 5% PV.**

98 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien 90-92 £180-260

Quality Merlot gives extra flesh and weight. Steeped in black fruits, a great texture and supple tannins. **2012-2022; 49% CS 37% M 11% CF**

99 Certan de May, Pomerol 90-92 £400-600

A fine Certan de May and a return to form for this superbly sited vineyard. Classically styled Pomerol. **2012-2022; 85% M 15% CF**

100 Rouget, Pomerol 90-92 £250-350

Affordable, delicious Pomerol that sits close to Clos l'Eglise. Often overlooked but great fruit, lovely and fresh. **2010-2020; 85% M 15% CF.**