

## Gavin Quinney's 10 recommended 2013s

1. **Calon-Ségur**: £420  
2. **Grand-Puy-Lacoste**: £345

3. **Clerc Milon**: £330  
4. **Feytit-Clinet**: £330  
5. **La Petite Eglise**: £240

6. **La Dominique**: £240  
7. **Domaine de Chevalier**: £300

8. **Climens**: £430  
9. **Coutet**: £265  
10. **La Tour Blanche**: £340



# Bordeaux 2013 – the verdict: *“better than expected”*

Bordeaux chateaux have failed to spark the 2013 en primeur campaign into life with prices to interest the market. So who better to give the definitive verdict on the vintage than Bordeaux winemaker, **Gavin Quinney** of Château Bauduc

It would appear that 2013 is turning out to be the vintage that nobody wanted. Certainly not the growers, who experienced the most difficult growing season in years and the most fraught of harvests. Yields, too, were well down.

The Bordeaux negociants and wine merchants around the world aren't too happy either.

At the bottom end, they're paying 25% more for bulk wine for their brands and own-label lines because of the small crop, and at the top of the pyramid the majority of leading chateaux have failed to breathe life into another subdued en primeur campaign by not reducing prices enough.

Consumers, meanwhile, haven't shown much interest from the day the grapes were picked.

There is, however, some good news.

The dry whites are very good and many sweet whites are excellent. White vines, however, only make up 11% of the vineyard area, so the real money is on red.

There's some good news here too, as most professional tasters discovered during the en primeur barrel tastings in late March and early April. While the wines are relatively light, they're not let down by green, unripe tannins (thanks to good weather in July and August) and a great many will provide attractive drinking over the next decade.

But the question is, at what price? The market has responded to small reductions off the 2012s (which was a better vintage for red) of between 0% and 10% with a big “no thanks”. People need to see some benefit from investing early in these

After so much bad press, it was almost inevitable that the wines were going to taste “better than expected”

QUINNEY'S  
HIGHEST  
RATED  
DRY WHITE  
WINES PER  
APPELLATION

WINE	AOC	SCORE	DRINKING DATES	£ IN BOND EX TAX
Pavillon Blanc de Margaux	Bordeaux	92-94	2015-2021	£1,080
Haut-Brion	Pessac-Léognan	92-94	2018-2023	£6,600
La Mission Haut-Brion	Pessac-Léognan	91-93	2017-2022	£5,300
Cos d'Estournel	Bordeaux	90-92	2015-2019	£480
Aile d'Argent	Bordeaux	90-92	2015-2019	£520
Domaine de Chevalier	Pessac-Léognan	90-92	2016-2023	£600
Malartic-Lagravière	Pessac-Léognan	89-91	2014-2017	£395
Smith Haut-Lafitte	Pessac-Léognan	89-91	2015-2019	£600
Clarté de Haut-Brion	Pessac-Léognan	89-91	2016-2021	£660
Les Champs Libres (Lafleur)	Bordeaux	89-91	2015-2021	TBA
de Fieuzal	Pessac-Léognan	89-91	2015-2020	TBA
Monbousquet	Bordeaux	89-91	2014-2018	TBA
Nardian	Bordeaux	88-90	2015-2018	TBA
Latour-Martillac	Pessac-Léognan	88-90	2016-2020	N/A
Olivier	Pessac-Léognan	88-90	2014-2018	£200
Carbonnieux	Pessac-Léognan	87-89	2015-2019	£215
Pape Clément	Pessac-Léognan	87-89	2016-2020	TBA

QUINNEY'S  
HIGHEST  
RATED  
SAUTERNES  
WINES PER  
APPELLATION

WINE	AOC	SCORE	DRINKING DATES	£ IN BOND EX TAX
d'Yquem	Sauternes	96-98	2016-2030	TBA
Climens	Barsac	93-96	2016-2030	£435
Fargues	Sauternes	93-95	2017-2025	TBA
La Tour Blanche	Sauternes	93-95	2016-2025	£340
Rieussec	Sauternes	93-95	2017-2026	£520
Suduiraut	Sauternes	93-95	2016-2024	£465
Coutet	Barsac	92-95	2016-2025	£265
Lafaurie-Peyraguey	Sauternes	92-94	2017-2024	£400
Rayne Vigneau	Sauternes	92-94	2017-2024	£295
Sigalas-Rabaud	Sauternes	92-94	2017-2023	£330
Doisy-Daëne	Barsac	92-93	2017-2024	£295
Guiraud	Sauternes	91-93	2017-2024	£310
Clos Haut Peyraguey	Sauternes	91-93	2017-2024	TBA
Myrat	Barsac	91-92	2016-2022	£215
Doisy-Védrines	Barsac	90-92	2016-2023	£225
Nairac	Barsac	90-92	2017-2023	£370
Bastor Lamontagne	Sauternes	89-91	2015-2022	£160
de Malle	Sauternes	89-91	2016-2022	£246
Raymond-Lafon	Sauternes	89-91	2017-2022	TBA

wines and recent vintages have shown that buying en primeur isn't what it used to be. And, of course, there's no sign of Parker yet to guide us on our way.

#### PROBLEM 1: THE GROWING SEASON

What set 2013 apart, and made life in the vineyard so awkward, was a cold first half of the year and the unusually horrible months of May and June. By the time we got to the late flowering at the end of June, the vines had been on a go-slow from a lack of sunshine, too much rain, and the (often overlooked) cold soils and sub-soils.

Bordeaux has had rain during flowering before, but in 2013 the vines – especially old Merlot – really struggled with putting energy into growth and the floraison simultaneously.

With poor fruit set, especially on the Merlot, yields were well down. Bad weather during flowering would also have an adverse effect on the development of botrytis and this would become critical later on during the harvest. (There's much argument among growers about the effectiveness of anti-rot treatments during flowering but I'll spare you that one.)

July was hot and dry, thankfully, and August was par for the course. The trouble came with some summer storms, the most damaging of which was on August 2 when around 10,000ha of the Entre Deux Mers, the source of much AC Bordeaux, were hit by hail. We lost 50% of the crop at Château Bauduc in under 10 minutes. Parts of the Côtes de Castillon were also damaged but it should be pointed out that none of the famous chateaux of Bordeaux saw any significant hail damage.

#### PROBLEM 2: THE HARVEST

With late, difficult flowering and then a protracted veraison in late August, when the grapes change colour, we needed exceptionally fine weather in September and October for the vintage to be turned around.

After a drizzly, cool mid-September, hopes were raised in the last week of the month as the dry whites and the first selection of sweet whites were picked during a week of sunshine.

Then came a triple-whammy. Rain over the last weekend of September, then a warm and sticky few days, followed by heavy rain around October 4,

caused everyone to bring forward their harvest plans as botrytis spread rapidly.

Merlots – not only vulnerable to the poor flowering but also more sensitive to rot – were rushed in, while some chateaux could hold out for their Cabernets. Many Médoc estates alongside the Gironde, with its beneficial breezes, picked in the second week of October. The date of picking each parcel at the right moment has never been so crucial.

#### “BETTER THAN EXPECTED”

After so much bad press about the vintage (but we should be grateful that so many people are interested) it was almost inevitable that the wines were going to taste “better than expected” this Spring during the en primeur circus in Bordeaux.

At the top end, Bordeaux doesn't do bad years like the poorer vintages of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. There's too much money at stake, and points make prizes. The huge investment, not just in impressive new wineries but in people, knowledge and better viticulture, means Bordeaux can turn out good wine in even the most challenging of conditions.





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HIGHEST  
RATED  
RED WINES  
PER  
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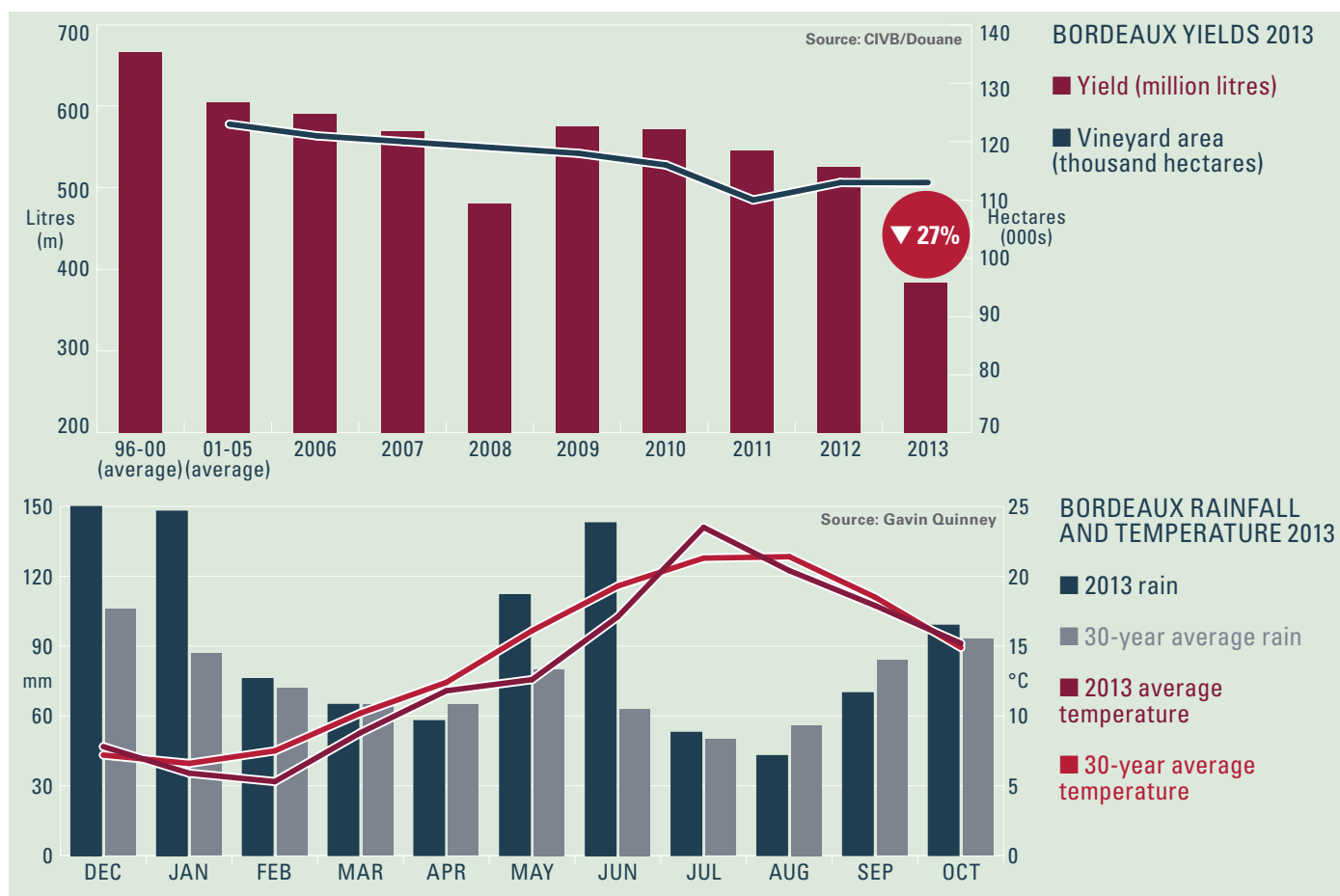
\* Estimated price

WINE	AOC	SCORE	DRINKING DATES	£ IN BOND EX TAX
Palmer	Margaux	90-93	2018-2026	£1,650
Margaux	Margaux	89-91	2020-2030	£2,400
Boyd-Cantenac	Margaux	88-90	2018-2026	£295
d'Issan	Margaux	88-90	2018-2026	£295
Malescot St-Exupéry	Margaux	88-90	2018-2024	TBA
Rauzan-Ségla	Margaux	88-90	2017-2022	£370
Alter Ego de Palmer	Margaux	88-89	2017-2023	£410
Giscours	Margaux	88-89	2016-2022	£275
Kirwan	Margaux	88-89	2017-2023	£240
Cantenac Brown	Margaux	87-89	2017-2022	£270
Labégorce	Margaux	87-89	2017-2023	£156
Marquis d'Alesme Becker	Margaux	87-89	2019-2028	£219
Brane-Cantenac	Margaux	87-88	2016-2022	£275
du Tertre	Margaux	87-88	2017-2022	£210
Ferrière	Margaux	87-88	2017-2024	£190
Latour	Pauillac	91-93	2018-2028	N/A
Mouton Rothschild	Pauillac	91-93	2018-2026	£2,400
Lafite Rothschild	Pauillac	90-92	2018-2028	£3,250
Clerc Milon	Pauillac	89-91	2017-2026	£330
Grand-Puy-Lacoste	Pauillac	89-91	2017-2027	£345
Pichon Lalande	Pauillac	89-91	2018-2028	TBA
Pichon-Longueville Baron	Pauillac	89-91	2018-2026	£600
Pontet-Canet	Pauillac	89-91	2018-2028	£675
Batailley	Pauillac	88-90	2017-2021	£240
Duhart-Milon	Pauillac	88-90	2017-2026	£520
Forts de Latour	Pauillac	88-90	2018-2025	N/A
Petit Mouton	Pauillac	88-90	2018-2024	£750
d'Armailhac	Pauillac	87-89	2017-2022	£250
Grand-Puy-Ducasse	Pauillac	87-89	2017-2024	£230
Haut-Batailley	Pauillac	87-89	2017-2026	£230
Lynch-Bages	Pauillac	87-89	2017-2025	£550
Haut-Brion	Pessac-Léognan	91-93	2018-2030	£2,470
La Mission Haut-Brion	Pessac-Léognan	90-92	2018-2027	£1,320
Haut-Bailly	Pessac-Léognan	89-91	2017-2024	£440
Smith Haut Lafitte	Pessac-Léognan	89-91	2017-2024	£425
Pape Clément	Pessac-Léognan	89-90	2017-2022	£540
Domaine de Chevalier	Pessac-Léognan	88-91	2017-2024	£300
Latour-Martillac	Pessac-Léognan	88-90	2016-2021	£175
Malartic-Lagravière	Pessac-Léognan	88-89	2016-2023	£240
L'Eglise-Clinet	Pomerol	92-94	2017-2027	£1,250
Pétrus	Pomerol	91-93	2016-2028	£14,000*
Trotanoy	Pomerol	91-93	2017-2024	£1,000
L'Évangile	Pomerol	90-92	2017-2026	£1,080
Le Gay	Pomerol	90-91	2017-2024	£525

WINE	AOC	SCORE	DRINKING DATES	£ IN BOND EX TAX
Feytit-Clinet	Pomerol	89-91	2017-2023	£330
La Conseillante	Pomerol	89-91	2016-2023	£630
La Fleur-Pétrus	Pomerol	89-91	2017-2025	£850
Lafleur	Pomerol	89-91	2017-2024	£3,200*
Petit-Village	Pomerol	89-91	2016-2023	£400
Petite Eglise	Pomerol	89-91	2017-2025	£240
Clinet	Pomerol	88-90	2018-2026	£420
Clos l'Eglise	Pomerol	88-90	2019-2025	£400*
Fleur de Gay	Pomerol	88-90	2017-2024	£530
Rouget	Pomerol	88-90	2017-2024	£260*
Vieux Château Certan	Pomerol	88-90	2016-2023	£1,000
Ausone	St-Emilion	91-93	2017-2025	£3,250
Troplong Mondot	St-Emilion	91-93	2018-2026	£570
Canon-la-Gaffelière	St-Emilion	90-92	2017-2024	£420
Mondotte	St-Emilion	90-92	2018-2026	£1,100
Pavie-Macquin	St-Emilion	90-92	2018-2026	£370*
Vieux Chateau Mazerat	St-Emilion	90-92	2017-2024	£600*
Clos St Martin	St-Emilion	90-91	2016-2023	£290
Le Dome	St-Emilion	90-91	2018-2024	£800*
Angélus	St-Emilion	89-92	2017-2024	£1,800
Beau-Séjour Bécot	St-Emilion	89-91	2017-2024	£300
Chapelle d'Ausone	St-Emilion	89-91	2016-2023	£990
Clos Fourtet	St-Emilion	89-91	2017-2025	£485
La Dominique	St-Emilion	89-91	2017-2023	£240
Larcis Ducasse	St-Emilion	89-91	2017-2024	£350*
Pavie	St-Emilion	89-91	2018-2025	£1,800
Le Carré	St-Emilion	88-90	2017-2023	£400*
Bélaire-Monange	St-Emilion	88-90	2017-2024	£650
Bellevue	St-Emilion	88-90	2017-2022	£255
Canon	St-Emilion	88-90	2016-2024	£370
Cheval Blanc	St-Emilion	88-90	2018-2026	£3,250
Figeac	St-Emilion	88-90	2017-2027	£530
Calon-Ségur	St-Estèphe	90-92	2019-2029	£420
Cos d'Estournel	St-Estèphe	90-92	2017-2025	£900
Montrose	St-Estèphe	89-91	2019-2028	£630
Pagodes de Cos	St-Estèphe	88-90	2016-2023	£290
Lafon-Rochet	St-Estèphe	88-89	2017-2023	£230
Phélan-Ségur	St-Estèphe	88-89	2016-2023	£228
Capbern Gasqueton	St-Estèphe	87-89	2017-2024	£120
Ducru Beaucaillou	St-Julien	90-92	2017-2027	TBA
Léoville-Las Cases	St-Julien	90-92	2018-2028	£860
Léoville-Barton	St-Julien	89-91	2018-2027	£470
Léoville Poyferré	St-Julien	89-91	2018-2026	£425
Clos du Marquis	St-Julien	89-90	2017-2025	TBA
Langoa Barton	St-Julien	88-89	2018-2024	£315
Branaire-Ducru	St-Julien	87-89	2018-2025	£275
Croix de Beaucaillou	St-Julien	87-89	2018-2024	TBA
Gloria	St-Julien	87-89	2017-2023	£220
Gruaud-Larose	St-Julien	87-89	2018-2024	£365
Lagrange	St-Julien	87-89	2018-2025	£255
Talbot	St-Julien	87-89	2017-2023	£290

Many of my notes include the line “a good effort for the vintage”, but with a score below 90.

I suspect that’s how Robert Parker might see it



Great terroir and sufficient resources to sort the grapes, and blend just the right plots, are key in vintages like 2011, 2012 and especially 2013.

## THE WINES

I tasted around 500 of the top wines over 10 days in late March and early April. The only ones I missed, of potential interest en primeur, were a few smaller-production St-Emilions.

For me, the most successful wines of the vintage are the best sweet whites of Sauternes and Barsac. The mid-harvest rains also had an impact here, so selection, in every sense of the word, is important. It's noble rot you want, not the grey stuff.

The 2013 vintage is also a very good one for dry whites, but again, selection is important.

For the reds, chateaux at so many levels and in so many appellations should be congratulated on producing such good quality wines in 2013, given how tricky the various stages of the growing season and the harvest were. But let's not get carried away.

There are no truly exceptional wines. The best were made in the spirit of the vintage and will surprise a few people in years to come, not least in blind tastings.

Many of the best wines, from Pauillac to Pomerol, are attractive, lighter-bodied clarets in the old-fashioned sense. Some are really enjoyable and merit a 90-point score – which used to mean “outstanding” – or 17/20.

The majority, however, lack depth, concentration, intensity and, most of all, joy. Many of my notes include the line “a good effort for the vintage” but with a score below 90. I suspect that's how Robert Parker might see it.

## BUYING STRATEGY

We're seeing a quick en primeur campaign, especially on the Left Bank. Are the wines worth buying at this stage?

Recent track record is against them, investment-wise, so there has to be a compelling reason to purchase with another 12 months to go in barrel. The élevage, or barrel ageing, will be crucial for some of these gentle and fragile wines. Many of my notes, far more than usual, say “reassess in bottle”.

Some chateaux are making sure that their 2013 is the cheapest vintage available on the market. That's a good start.

## WHAT TO BUY

### SAUTERNES AND BARSAC

If you're a fan of sweet white wines, there are some great wines here. I'd pick out Climens and Coutet in Barsac for star quality at a terrific price. The only downside, if you can call it that, is that 2013 is the fifth top vintage for sweet whites in just seven years: 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013. Compare prices, style and quality with 2007 and 2011 (I slightly prefer 2011 to 2013).

### DRY WHITES

You don't have to be one of the few that can afford the Pessac-Léognan dry whites from La Mission and Haut-Brion (500 cases produced of each, for the world). Try Malartic-Lagravière, Latour-Martillac, de Fieuzal and Olivier.

### SMALL-PRODUCTION REDS

Many chateaux made much less wine in 2013 – through low yields and draconian selection – and this could be the reason for adding the better, small production wines to a collection. Several Pomerols that fit into this category are l'Eglise-Clinet (830 cases), La Petite Eglise (540 cases) and Trotanoy (1,500 cases instead of 2,500). I didn't go for Vieux Château Certan 2013 as much as recent vintages but, with only 1,000 cases of 2013 instead of 4,000, there's not much to go around of this popular wine. Clinet made 3,750 cases.