

BORDEAUX FRANCE, LAST BUT NOT LEAST

THE REGION'S INFLUENCE KNOWS NO LIMITS, AND ITS CHATEAUX ARE THE ENVY OF THE WINE WORLD

We conclude our Tour of France with Bordeaux, a region and style of wines perfect for winter weather, big feasts, and curling up by the fire or under your favorite blanket. Capturing the history and importance of Bordeaux on this page is impossible, but I will summarize my opinion about two significant events:

Bordeaux benefited tremendously from a list of wine rankings now called the Classification of 1855, which was commissioned by Napoleon III prior to the Exposition Universelle de Paris. Although Bordeaux wine quality had been known for centuries, putting it on paper for the whole world changed everything.

The timing was perfect. As the world was 'shrinking' rapidly in the late 1880s, new wine regions from US to Australia needed a benchmark to follow and winemaking techniques to borrow.

Then in post-prohibition Napa Valley, Beaulieu Vineyard owner Georges de Latour hired a new winemaker from France name André Tchelistcheff. André quickly decided that Cabernet was the region's best suited grape, and the rest is history for Napa Valley, André's superstar influence in America, and Napa's friendly 'competition' with Bordeaux.

In this box you'll discover three distinct wines from different regions within Bordeaux, all estate grown by small-ish family owned Chateaux. Just how we like it! Thanks for being along for the discovery this year. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to you and yours.



*Even a 'modest' Chateau is a wine lover's dream.
Canon Chaigneau*



GRAND ENCLOS

GRAVES BLANC



Giorgio Cavanna, Xavier Dauba and Bertrand Léon

“
**WINES THAT NEVER
DISAPPOINT OVER TIME
DUE TO THE COMMON
DENOMINATOR OF
GREAT TERROIR AND
THE GENES OF VERY
GOOD AGING
POTENTIAL.**
”

This quote exemplifies the importance of understanding time in bottle, or *elevage*, when drinking Bordeaux. When you experience the depth of these wines, you'll understand why even its white and dessert wines made of Sauvignon Blanc, and Semillon are truly extraordinary.

Winery The property dates back to the 18th century under Marquis de Calvimont, but was split in the 1970's into the 'Grand Enclos' and larger 'Chateau du Cerons'. Grand Enclos' rebirth came when Italian winery owner Giovanni Cavanna wanted to move west from Tuscany and restore a Chateaux to new glory. He hired renowned winemaker Patrick Leon (d. 2018) and his son and partner Bertrand. Patrick's resumé is a who's who of world class wineries, including Château Mouton-Rothschild, Château Lascombes, Château d'Esclans in Provence, Almaviva in Chile and Opus One in Napa.

Region Bordeaux's selection of great whites and sweet wines are grown in Graves "grahv" in the south, where the Garonne River and its rich alluvial and flinty soils sit atop a gravelly pebble subsoil. The wines are known for their full bodied character and long aging ability, easily 10+ years. Shining examples include Smith Haut Lafitte's Blanc and Chateau d'Yquem Sauternes (both \$100s of dollars per bottle). Grand Enclos is nearly equidistant between the famed wineries, and those who understand the wines from this region will see the resemblance immediately in the richness, character, and longevity of this 2016 Graves Blanc.

Wine This is an extraordinary example of Sauvignon Blanc and its pal Semillon, a white grape known for adding weight and density to white wines. To enhance the complexity Semillon is fermented and aged in oak barrels, 50% of which are new. The result is a deep yellow color with flecks of green. Aromas of pome fruits, beeswax, quince paste, lemon, apricot melon, and honey. The mouthful is round, smooth and lush, without being sweet. The toast of oak barrel persists long into the finish.

Pairing This wine can take almost anything! Cooking for a crowd? An ideal match would be pan fried chicken thighs in a tarragon cream sauce. Don't be shy with a big wedge of stinky blue cheese on top of an arugula salad (to keep the doctor away).

Retail price \$32.00 | Member price: \$25.60

CANON CHAIGNEAU

LALANDE-DE-POMEROL



Master of Merlot, Thierry Garnaud, at work.

”
**REPRESENTATIVE OF
BOTH TERROIR AND
VINTAGE, OUR WINES
ARE SINGULAR,
ORIGINAL &
UNMISTAKEABLE**
”

Below is a story that resonates with every wine shop owner – a dream, if you will – of one day buying leaving it all behind and buying a vineyard. So if you ever read the headline ‘Davis wine shop owner announces early retirement, moves to France’, my inspiration comes from France, where many former wine shop owners can be found :-)

Winery British-born Parisian fine wine trader Romik Arconian sold his stake in the wine business, then as luck would have it (plus some skill and investor money) he and wife Marine were able to purchase a Chateau in Lalande-de-Pomerol. Together they run the business, but the deal came with perks. Canon Chaigneau’s maitre du chai was and still is Thierry Garnaud, who for two decades was winemaker at Cheval Blanc and during his tenure earned ten 100 point scores! Then, after years of work by their viticulturist, Canon Chaigneau was awarded HVE, the highest level of sustainability.

Region Lalande-de-Pomerol forms the northeastern border with Pomerol which famous for many Chateaux including Petrus and Cheval Blanc, and their incredible Merlot based wines. Lalande is a great place to find comparable values if you know where to look. More specifically with Canon Chaigneau, their winery and vineyards sit on the Néac plateau, where the elevation creates an ideal environment due to slightly drier climate and well draining soils that keeps the water table high. The area has been regarded since the Romans were making wine in Néac 2000 years ago.

Wine With great vineyard work, comes the fun part of blending. The 2019 is mostly Merlot with 5% Cabernet Franc and 2% Malbec. I care deeply about that splash of Malbec! The Merlot comes through with ripe plums and floral aromas of violets, while sweet earthy truffles join the party. The palate is full of dark, almost chocolatey berries and is very smooth, while still showing classic Bordeaux layers of long, dry tannins. Referred to as ‘baby Pomerol’ a fine wine from Lalande gives wine lovers a reason to be hopeful for Bordeaux. The future is bright at Canon Chaigneau.

Pairing This is an honorary recipe from our neighbors at Mustard Seed restaurant. We recommend seared duck breast with huckleberry sauce and sweet potato puree. Have truffles on hand (who doesn’t!?) a shaving on the potatoes is *chef’s kiss.*

Retail price \$33.00 | Member price: \$26.40

CHATEAU DUTRUCH GRAND POUJEAUX



Sebastien and Francois Cordonnier at Dutruch

”

OUR CABERNET SAUVIGNON ON DEEP GARONNE GRAVEL GIVES US WINES OF GREAT FRESHNESS, GREAT FINESSE AND VERY ELEGANT.

”

The discovery and sharing of new wines in the wine club often includes a bit of self discovery. Before this release, I can't recall ever having a Moulis-en-Medoc, and this is certainly a region and winery worth knowing! Now anytime the need for a knockout Cab blend arises, I know what to pick. It will be served at our holiday feasts!

Winery Dating back to the early 1800's and cementing the status of its wine in the 1930s as Cru Bourgeois Superior, it was in 1967 that the modern fate of Chateau Dutruch was set. Francois Cordonnier purchased the property and the wines have since earned Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnel status. Don't worry, there will be no quiz on Bordeaux classifications. Today it is run by Francois' nephew, also Francois, and their focus on making classic, elegant and lively wines make this a real stand out.

Region Moulis-en-Medoc sits along the eastern part of the 'Left bank' of the Gironde River and is between the famed regions of St-Julien and Margaux, home to many classified-growth Chateau. While wines of Moulis and neighboring Listrac are not famous, the vineyards planted in Grand Poujeaux represent the best terroir in the Moulis. This raised plateau is known for deep gravelly soils with less clay (like Néac and Canon Chaigneau) and results in characteristics that are similar to St-Estephe and St-Julien to the north. Hearty and long-lived while fragrant and finessed. This distinction of quality from these specific vineyards means that Chateau here can append "Grand Poujeaux" to their name on the label. I'll admit, it's a bit confusing.

Wine Like many producers in the Medoc, Dutruch makes just two wines, a top cuvée and a 'second' wine. This is their top cuvée. Immediately you'll notice a gorgeous ruby color and aromas of dark cherries, cassis, white pepper and a gentle whiff of smoke rise from the glass. The midpalate stretches into a long finish, where dark fruit and big tannins are well integrated. The balance and finesse is textbook 'ready to drink' Left Bank thanks to time in the bottle that has served this wine well. I really hope you enjoy this wine because I am very pleased to offer it!

Pairing At Christmas our family serves a prime rib roast, and I look forward to it every year. We recommend this wine with an herb crusted rib roast with cognac sauce, and a heap of scalloped potatoes. Vegetarians can pair an herb-crusted seitan 'roast'.

Retail price: \$37.00 | Member price: \$29.60