



We Arrived in Bordeaux and It Was Closed

Bordeaux was closed. Not just because the ATMs were closed when we needed euros, not just because the restaurants were closed when we were hungry, and not just because the gas stations were closed when our cars were running low. Because most of the red wines of 2007 lacked a mid palate and a memorable finish; because the prices will be too high after two strong vintages and a weak US dollar; we declare the 2007 vintage officially CLOSED. Yes, closed before it even opened.

One scene sums up the vintage. We were tasting at Chateau Mouton Rothschild and the Baronesse Philippine de Rothschild HERSELF was there – we have never seen her before mingling and tasting with the trade. She must have known 2007 would require all salesmanship she could muster.

While the Baronesse was holding a glass of 07 Clerc Milon, I distinctly recall her telling Philippe Dhalluin, the Director of all of the Rothschild Estates, “ça c’est très fermès?!”, which translates to “It’s very closed?!”. She had it right! [Click here to watch this on video.](#)

As it turned out, we found what the Baronesse said to be true and a recurring theme through our tasting of the 07 vintage – not so much that the wines were ‘closed’, as that implies that they are merely in a stage where they are shut down and difficult to taste and one day will open up, but instead that many wines lacked much of the mid palate, texture and finish that may never come around. Indeed, many wines were closed and we mean closed, bolted, shut, out of business.

From Mar 24 to April 4, the JJ Buckley team was in Bordeaux to taste the 2007 vintage out of barrel. We sent 6 people - including our buying and sales staff. It was surprising how few other U.S. retailers were there this year. Even though the 2007 is expected to be a lesser vintage – to understand Bordeaux, you have to taste year in and out.

JJ Buckley is one of the largest buyers of Bordeaux in the United States, so we were greeted with open arms, tasted hundreds of wines, and visited with many Chateau owners and directors, negociants and other suppliers. It was a great trip for our whole team. Overall the 2007 vintage is exceptional for whites but weak for reds. In fact, what we tasted in many of the 2007 reds made us want to buy more of the 2005s and 2006s.

Of course, there were the exceptions:

- some real value wines (under \$30),
- a handful of reds from Pomerol, Pessac Leognan, St Emilion, and St Julien,
- the whites of Pessac and Sauternes that showed beautifully and certainly as good as or better than their 06 and 05 counterparts.

In general, we found four important highlights of the 2007 vintage:

1. Less is More
2. Tannins
3. The Whites and Stickies
4. Stéphane Derenoncourt

A quick note on the weather

The growing season can be wrapped up in a couple of sentences: After a relatively mild January-March caused early budding, the flowering came early and somewhat irregular. Then, the summer months were terrible and rainy and by the end of August many were ready to completely write off the vintage. Then, September came and 'saved' the vintage with consistent sunshine and dry cool breezes through October and the harvest. This definitely explains the lack of mid palate that we found in so many of the 2007 reds. The grapes may have had good color and sugar levels but they did not have phenolic maturity needed for making great wine.

Less is More

We found that the estates who focused on *the fruit* and produced a wine without too much oak, and especially new oak, made very nice and delicious wines that will be accessible early, albeit with a fairly short lifespan. Wineries that spent their efforts after the harvest didn't get any value. Wines in the **sub \$30 category**, where the focus is on producing great, ripe fruit and less on spending extra dollars after the grapes are picked, were the real winners. In other words, the estates that took what the land and sun gave them, properly managed the vineyard throughout the growing season, picked physiologically mature grapes (not just based on sugar levels and color, but phenolic ripeness), and then made a wine without the intention of over-extracting, over-oaking, or over-manipulating in some way, came out ahead and produced very nice wines. These wines were balanced, had nice fruit, not too much oak, integrated tannins, and showed an inviting approachability.

On a side note, as dramatic as this may sound, I believe this sub \$30 category continues to be the most overlooked and underappreciated category in Bordeaux – in fact, these may well be the best wine values you can find anywhere in the world. Even more amazing is that this category continues produce great values even with a worthless dollar – these estates aren't making much (if any) money and the beneficiary of their hard work and passion continues to be the consumer.

Indeed, 2007 was not a year to try to do something with fruit that really couldn't handle it to begin with. If the contact between the (under ripe) seeds and the juice was too long or

the press was not smooth, the wines turned out slightly bitter, tannic, and/or acidic. Far too many wines that are made in the 'low-yield fashion' and sell in the \$50+ range, turned out terrible in 2007. It's difficult to extract fruit that's not really 'there'.

Tannins

On the whole, many of the reds of 2007 lacked the phenolic maturity of the grapes and core structure to handle too much tannin. Time and time again we found ourselves tasting wines saying "too tannic, too little fruit". Tannins come mostly from grape skins, stems, and seeds, but can also come from oak barrels, especially new ones. Those estates that did not add tannins through excessive new oak and properly managed the skin and seed contact with the juice, had a better chance of making a good wine in 2007. A good wine doesn't necessarily mean a wine you will age but at least it's enjoyable in the near term. The better 2007's are a softer, friendlier effort accompanied by nice fruit. They may not turn out to be a blockbuster, but will be enjoyable soon after bottling. In contrast, 2005s could easily handle the new oak, extraction, etc as there was simply much more fruit to work with.

The Whites and Stickies

2007 is a great year for the dry white wines of Pessac Leognan and the sweet wines of Sauternes.

Sweet wines are very difficult wines to taste this early in their development, but it is quite obvious that the 2007's possess great acidity, richness and complexity. In Sauternes, fall is by far the most important season of the year, and in 2007 September was dry but October and November were fairly warm and damp which was great for the botrytis. It was also a long harvest which is great for these wines, as it adds to their complexity. There is plenty of sweetness without the high alcohol of 03s and 05s and great, crisp acidity.

We believe these 07s are on par with the 01s - they are that good!

The dry white wines of Pessac Leognon also turned out fantastic. They are pure with beautiful complexity, balance, and fresh acidity. This may be the year that the American consumer takes notice of the white wines of Bordeaux, in particular Pessac Leognan. These wines are just so balanced, versatile, and age worthy. Pessac Leognon is producing not just great white wines but also beautifully balanced reds – in fact some of the best reds of the 07 vintage come from this region. This may very well be the start of a trend in overall quality of the appellation.

Stéphane Derenoncourt

Why in the world would I want to talk about Stéphane you may ask? We have been fans of Stéphane's work for some time, and have admired his ability to make great wines from different terroir and different vintages. Mr. Derenoncourt is a wine maker who consults for 70 different estates in Bordeaux and around the world (including Syria!). It really wasn't until our last day in Bordeaux this year, with tastings of several hundred 07 barrel samples behind us, however, that we realized exactly how good this guy and his passionate young team really are. It was clear that Stéphane's natural wine making inclinations would complement the 2007 vintage perfectly – his focus was on the fruit, not using post crush techniques to change the wine into something that it was not meant to be.

On April 3, we attended a tasting at Chateau La Gaffeliere that included all 2007 wines that Stéphane is responsible for making – about 70 different properties! Stéphane has told us time and time again, that he likes to adapt the winemaking to express the terroir of any one particular vineyard. His philosophy is based upon a profound respect of nature and the singular identity of each wine that he crafts. He works with the vineyard's ecosystem, looking to plant trees, bushes, or cover crops that will attract the insects that will be beneficial to vine growing with a minimum of pesticides. The ultimate goal is to achieve a natural balance without the human and/or chemical intervention. Stéphane says "When faced by the terroir, **the more discrete a man's work, the better the wine.**"

Needless to say, the most impressive wines of 2007, tasted as a group in one setting, were the wines of Stéphane Derenoncourt. I almost thought we tasted a different vintage! Unlike so many other 07s we had previously tasted, many of Stéphane's wines were complete - seamless tannins, less 'manipulated' and simply delicious fruit. Obviously, these aren't first growths but they are very inexpensive - for the value that they deliver, they are very impressive. Some of the most impressive were: Pavie Macquin, Bellevue, Tertre Daugay, La Gaffeliere, Lucia, Domaine de l'A, Villemaurine, La Bienfaisance, des Fougères La Folie, Beausejour, and Beausejour 1901.

In a difficult year like 2007, much comes down to the vineyard management and winemaking and it is years like this that a winemaking guru like Stéphane Derenoncourt and his wines really shine.

Our recommended buying strategy for the 2007 Campaign:

- Seek out the whites of Pessac and Sauternes – these are great
- Keep 'collectible' buys to a focused group of wines – no reason to buy broadly
- Try the \$10-\$30 category of reds for early drinkers – great values here, but you can wait to buy these once they land in the US.
- Think about value and why you're buying the wines – if the wine seems too expensive, move on. There is no reason you should pay more just because the dollar is weak and the prices ex-Chateau are higher. Plenty of older stock in the marketplace that are great drinkers now (1999, 2001, 2002, 2004).
- In general, if you're debating between 06 and 07, go with 06.

- If you can afford to pay a bit more, absolutely buy 05s – they are simply great – night and day compared to the 07s or any other vintage for that matter, without a doubt.
- Keep in mind that Bordeaux (in general) remains one of the best values in the world of fine wine – especially under \$30 but even up to \$100.
- The appellations of Pomerol, Pessac, Sauternes, and parts of St Emilion and St Julien excelled for the vintage
- Many red wines, especially from Margaux, had very nice aromatics, but lacked stuffing and finish
- Stay away from the wineries that have a history of pushing the limits and over extracting, as the fruit simply was not ripe enough in 07. Instead these wines turned out austere and hollow.
- Don't shy away from the vintage as a whole – many of these wines will be early drinkers while you wait for the 05s to mature. That said, stick to the value wines under \$30. No reason to spend more than you have to.
- Biggest disappointment of 2007 – Chateau Margaux
- Biggest surprise of 2007 – Chateau le Gay

Below are our tasting notes on (almost) all of the wines we had the privilege to taste in Bordeaux. They are categorized by region and then alphabetically, so it shouldn't be too difficult to reference a specific note or score.

Bordeaux:

Bad Boy

Bright, vibrant ruby in the glass. Dark fresh berry aromas. Ripe fruits almost reminiscent of new world Merlot, edged by a touch of smoke and earth. Smooth and easy on the palate. Ripe and round with a good tannic backbone. Another one for early enjoyment. 100% Merlot. 86-88 – Mike Supple

Bordeaux Superieur:

Beaulieu Comtes de Taste

60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Super concentrate dark purple color. Hand Harvested. Black cherry chocolate, and some mineral complexity (tar, gravel, and pavement.) There is more here than the price exhibits. The concentration is twice the price and the cherry fruits are also present as in higher priced wines. Made by Derenoncourt. 90-92 – Andy Frieden

Bolaire

45% Petit Verdot, 30% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Fifth vintage for this over-achiever. 45 year old vines. Super concentrated dark inky purple color. A nose of wild game and sweet oak wraps around cherry fruit with savory truffles. Savory juicy ripe and delicious – with plus concentration and great texture. Very nice! 87-89 - Andy Frieden

Domaine du Bouscat

60% Merlot, 20% Malbec, 18% Cabernet Franc, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon. Average age of the vines is 33 years. Red Garnet color with subdued nose of dark cherries and some mineral. On the palate, there is a moderate intensity of black cherry fruit, savory pain grill, and meaty buy clean fruit. Good texture and length. Great value! 87-89 – Andy Frieden

Bouscat Les Portes de l'Ame

50% Merlot, 25% Malbec, and 25% Cabernet franc. Only 180 cases! Average age of vines is 32 years. Southfacing hillside, clay/limestone soil just west of Fronsac. Hand harvested, sorted 3 times! Plus intensity of dark purple color. Nice sweet black cherry and perfume blossom. New well managed oak with a secondary gravelly mineral purity wit tarry phenols. Killer black raspberry peak of fruit in the mid-palate. Nice attack that builds to a big rich expansive mid-palate with full mouth-coating tannins that are plentiful - 20 second finish. Claude Gros consults. Great find! Medium to full bodied. 88-90 – Andy Frieden

Gree Laroque

85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tiny vineyard. Average age of vines is 45 years. Only 750 cases produced. Medium ruby and purple with a touch of fuchsia in the rim. Ripe floral aromas with blackberry and candied cherry fruit. Ripe fruit on the entry. A bit thin on the midpalate. Plenty of tannins. Dark charcoal, blackberry, and a spicy cherry finish. Derenoncourt consults. 84-86pts. – Mike Supple

Jean Faux

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. High density plantings of 25 year old vines in clay and limestone soil. 2003 was the first vintage under new owner, Pascal Collette. Hand harvested. This wine is loaded with fruit and very well balanced all the way through. Truly a gem – don't know the price, but guessing this is one of the value wines of the vintage. 90-92 – David Derby

Marjosse

Dark plum color throughout. Subtle dark fruit aromas followed by some ripe currant notes. Light- medium body with dusty tannins and a rather hard / bitter finish. May come around but out of balance at the moment. 81-83 – Alex Lallo

Petrus Gaia

75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc. What a name – but supposedly legal! Average age of the vines is 35 years. Shallow clay atop limestone. Hand harvested. Less than 1700 cases produced. Fairly dark purple with a fuchsia rim. A bit woody on the nose with charcoal notes and black raspberry fruit. Green pepper on the front palate. A lot going on and one to taste again. Derenoncourt consults. Nice surprise! 87-89 – David Derby

Canon-Fronsac:

Vrai Canon Bouche

100% Merlot. Siliceous, limestone soil atop the Canon plateau. Medium ruby and purple core with a fuchsia rim. Very aromatic; bright floral notes around blackberry, raspberry and sweet oak. Good entry in the mouth. Mid-weight building towards the finish. Plum, blackberry and bakers chocolate. Bold yet refined tannins. The finish is a touch short. 86-88. – Mike Supple

Cotes de Bergerac:

Tour de Monestier

Medium ruby and purple core with a bright purple rim. Spicy red cherries, plum, nutmeg and a hint of cinnamon aromas. Smooth entry on the palate. Medium fruit with soft tannins building on the back. Good length with lingering toasted coffee. 87-89pts. – Mike Supple

Tour de Monestier Blanc

50% Semillon, 30% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Muscadelle du Bordelais. Average age of the vines is 35 years. Soils are clay and limestone. Only 2500 cases produced. Pale lemon yellow. Fragrant ripe lemon and a touch of pineapple. Decent fruit on the front palate, but simple on the back. Nice ripe yellow pear flavors. Derenoncourt consults. 86-88pts. – Mike Supple

1er Cotes de Bordeaux:

Mont Perat

70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc. Bright / brilliant color. Lots of cherry and powdered chocolate. Chalky with good fruit throughout the mid-palate. Elegant and should be ready to go once it hits the bottle. Easy drinking, no frills, but nice... 86-88 - Alex Lallos

Cotes de Castillon:

Cap de Faugeres

85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 30 year old vines. Southeast facing slopes in clay and limestone soils. Yields only 30hls/ha. 6250 cs produced. Purple color with medium intensity. There is a sweet nose of black morel cherries wrapped in a plus concentration with lots of tannins in a powdery matrix. Michel Rolland consults. 83-85 - Andy Frieden

D'Aiguilhe

80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. Average age of the vines is 28 years. Planted on limestone and clay plateau. Hand harvested. Yields of 35hls/ha. Beautiful nose full of ripe red fruits and cherry cola. A touch of graphite, bacon and tar as well. This is a complete wine with nice balance and an earthy finish. Classic! 87-89 – Alex Lallos

Joanin Becot

75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc. Caly and limestone soils like those on St Emilion plateau. Average age of vines is 35 years. Hand harvested. Yields were a miniscule 29hls/ha. Production is only 3750 cases. Medium bodied red showing sweet tart, cherry, and cola on the nose. A bit restrained and shut down at the moment, but very promising. Nice mouthfeel, nice mid-palate, with well integrated tannins. Very well done! Jean-Philippe Fort consults. 90-92 – Alex Lallo

Domaine de L'A

70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Bio-dynamic! Old vines and fermented in wooden vats. Attractive nose of plum, cassis, and lightly candied cherry. A slight undertone of herbs with some floral notes as well. This is great stuff. Stephane Dernoncourt's Estate. Delicious and one of the winner's of the vintage! 91-93 – Alex Lallo

Saint Colombe

65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Dark core color with extremely vibrant rim. Forward nose of plum and raspberry complimented by some subtle chocolate and light spices. A bit tannic on the back end but with good fruit throughout. Nothing wrong with this effort. 86-88 – Alex Lallo

Clos L'Eglise

70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Delicious aromas of candied fruits on the nose with some cedar / oak as well. Interesting wine with a nice finish despite the fact that it is a tad green. Again, not trying to be something it's not. 87-89– Alex Lallo

Clos les Lunelles

80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Bright purple color. Nice character here... Vanilla and cherry are prominent on the nose with some salt water and coffee bean as well. The mid-palate is a bit light, but the wine finishes nicely. Subtle wine, which should be a beauty early in its life. 90-92 - Alex Lallo

Clos Puy Arnaud

65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Carmenere. 12 hectare biodynamic vineyard on limestone. 26 year old vines. Hand harvested and sorted. Very low yields of 20 hls/ha. Subtle and sweet aromas of cherry and strawberry on the nose. Minerals and dark fruits on the palate. Great texture and mouth feel. Only 1660 cases made. Anne Calderoni consults. This stands out among the rest. 87-89 – Alex Lallo

Cote de Francs:

de Francs les Cerisiers

80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Dark yet vibrant purple color all the way to the rim. Nice classic Bordeaux nose replete with black olive, graphite, and underbrush. More on the earthy side. Nice wine - not trying to be something

its not. Should drink well young but age nicely for a few years once it hits bottle. Owned by Hubert de Bouard (Angelus). 85-87 – Alex Lallos

Puygueraud (3rd Taste)

80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 35 ha vineyard. Clay and limestone with chalky subsoil on rolling hills. 25 year old vines. Hand harvested and sorted. Light ruby color with even lighter red rim. This is mineral driven with bright red fruits on the nose. A little plum and red cherry complimented by a hint of anise. Plenty of tannins and acidity that hopefully will become more pleasant with time. I see a future in this one...Stephane Derenoncourt consults. 84-86 – Alex Lallos

Fronsac:

Haut-Carles

90% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec. Inky and dark in the glass. Spicy cinnamon, plum and rich black cherry on the nose. Lush, sweet fruit in the mouth. Round and full through the finish. Blackberry, cassis and spicy anise. 88-90pts. – Mike Supple

Graves:

Fougeres “La Folie” Blanc

80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Semillon. Lime green color. Spicy aromas with herbal lemon and lime. Sweet and tropical in the mouth with strong lemon zest. Good depth with nice acid and a long finish. 90-92pts. – Mike Supple

Mejean

76% Merlot; 24% Cabernet Sauvignon. 6.7 hectares in gravel soil. Yields of 36 hls/ha. Hand harvested. Purple core with medium plus intensity. Perfume is medium plus with black cherry and some gravel. Nice concentration with surprisingly pretty fruit and a peak of black raspberry. Good structure and coarse tannins – nicely integrated fruit. Great length. 2,660 cases. Serge Charritte consults. Winner! 87-89 - Andy Frieden

Haut Medoc:

D’Aurilhac

Dark red core all the way to the rim, which seems substantially lighter. Earthy nose with a touch of cinnamon and spice. Dark fruits up front and some cherry and spice on the finish. Nice texture and great length. 86-88 - Alex Lallos

Belle-Vue

50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot. 10 hectare vineyard on deep, gravelly soils planted with 30 year old vines. Next to Chateau Giscours. Yields are 45 hls/ha. Hand harvested. 40% new oak. Plus intensity of purple color. A big wine with plus concentration. Dark, sweet cherry fruit with a peak of blackberry framed in a nice palate with plenty of tannin structure. Short finish. 85-87 - Andy Frieden

Cambon la Pelouse

Light color throughout. Slightly vegetal nose up front compliments a backbone of good red fruits and light vanilla. Pleasant and fresh. Tight tannins and a bit woody. 83-85 – Alex Lallos

Cantemerle

Hard to judge right now. Shows a little SO2 on the nose, but this taster can find some blackberry and licorice in there as well. Needs time to come together. Real hard to judge at this stage, but I suspect it will be pretty good in the end. 85-87 – Alex Lallos

Clos du Jauqueyron

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 5% Cabernet Franc. Small 5 hectare vineyard planted on well drained gravelly soil atop gravelly/clay subsoil. 35 year old vines. Hand harvested and sorted. One third new oak. Plus color of purple intensity. Herbaceous character with high-toned red fruits. Nice flavors but simple structure. 84-86 - Andy Frieden

Fourcas Dupre

Light ruby red color. Showing a ripe nose of strawberry and some licorice. A bit hollow and simple, but should provide nice early drinking. 84-86 – Alex Lallos

Gironville

45% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon. Dark Color. 10 hectare vineyard planted to 30 year old vines in deep, gravelly soils. Yields of 47 hls/ha. One third new oak. Bell pepper and black fruits - simple wine, but lots of tannins. 83-85 – Andy Frieden

La Tour Carnet

Owned by Bernard Magrez (Chateau Pape Clement). About two thirds Merlot and one third Cabernet Sauvignon with a touch of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Nice brilliant color with a lot going on in the nose. Fruit forward with good minerality. Medium bodied in the mid palate with good fruit and nicely integrated tannins. Fruit flavors follow through the shorter but desirable finish. I like it... 89-91 – David Derby

Lanessan

Earthy and mineral driven. Light up front, but fleshes out nicely in the mid-palate. Well integrated oak. Very complete wine. Should be nice early on in its life. 87-89 – Alex Lallos

Les Grands Chenes

Owned by Bernard Magrez (Chateau Papae Clement). Lots of ripe cherry and figs on the nose with a little chocolate and floral notes as well. Really pleasant wine. Medium body. Black cherries and currants. Overall a nice wine - I like the prospects here. 87-89 – Alex Lallos

Paloumey

This is my first experience with this wine. Certainly a different kind of wine – stands out in a blind tasting. Some nice earthy aromas complimented by anise and mint. Medium bodied with a rather tight finish, but very good length on the finish. 85-87 – Alex Lallo

Lalande de Pomerol:

Domaine Fayat-Thunevin

Bright ruby core. Herbal aromas up front backed by dark charcoal and rich raspberry. The raspberry continues on the palate and is joined by slate, earth and white truffle. Nice acidity with soft, balanced tannins. 86-88pts. – Mike Supple

La Graviere

100% Merlot. Color is dark purple with full intensity. Black cherry nose hits first with black berry and some gravel tarry phenols. The weight is full-bodied with surprisingly softer tannins in an evolved palate-showing full intensity of perfume, black fruit and a rich lush creamy richness, ripe tannins with purity and precise tannic structure. Nice wine! 88-90 – Andy Frieden

Lustrac:

Ducluzeau

50% Merlot and 50% Cabernet Sauvignon. 10 hectare estate of light gravel and clay-siliceous vineyard planted to 45 year old vines. Hand harvested. 10-20% new oak. This wine is produced by Bruno Borie (Ducru Beaucaillou) and his meticulous nature shines brightly in this little star of the Lustrac appellation. Lovely feminine nose of ripe cherry, cola, and cool blackberry. Slightly floral as well. Nice acidity. Shows finesse and great length. Beautiful, open, and interesting. 85-87 – Alex Lallo

Margaux:

Bellevue de Tayac

Purple and ruby in the glass. Smoky with rich toasted black fruit aromas. Graphite and roasted black fruits on the palate. Somewhat acidic on the mid-palate, but bold and spicy with an anise kick on the finish. 85-87pts. – Mike Supple

Brane Cantenac

53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc. Only 25% of total harvest made it into the Grand Vin. The dark fruit and earthiness dance nicely together. Very nice complexity and overall effort. Early drinking for this estate, but that is a good thing! 90-92 – Alex Lallo

Cantenac Brown

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot. Giving off a nice perfume, followed by a sweet new leather aroma. A bit disjointed in the medium weight mid-palate, with a fair amount of tannins. 85-87 – David Derby

D'Issan

Mild and elegant, this light colored claret shows nice red fruits on the nose with a bit of cedar. Medium mid-palate, but finishes with some nice tobacco notes and good length. Easy drinking... 85-87 – Alex Lallos

Desmirail

A combination of chalk mixed with pine needles, cut pine and pine cones. The flavor comes through with tobacco and herbs. Lots of tannins that are carried by the fruit until the finish which ends a bit short. 85-87 – David Derby

du Tertre

59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc, 23% Merlot. 50% new oak. Bright strawberry color in the glass. This is really classy! Shows nice minty character with some tart strawberry. Soft and round in the mid-palate with great texture. Medium finish - Elegant. 89-91 – Alex Lallos

Ferriere

63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc. Ruby red color with a bright red rim. A little candied fruit on the nose with some herbal character as well. Elegant, but not much oomph. Vegetal upon first sip this seems a bit under-ripe. Should need a little bottle age before drinking. Nice texture. 84-86 - Alex Lallos

Giscours

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot. Dark fruits with some herbaceous notes as well. Not too much going on here. Simple yet slightly tannic but long finish. 85-87 – Alex Lallos

Lascombes (2nd taste)

54% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot. Dark purple core with a slightly lighter red rim. Nice nose of sour cherry and blackberry supported by fine herbs and a little oak. Great effort for the vintage – probably the best in all of Margaux. Soft / round in the mid-palate. Continues to display fruit throughout and the finish is very long. Should be a nice Lascombes to drink early while your 04s and 05s are fast asleep. 91-93 – Alex Lallos

Margaux

87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot. Harvested Oct 1-15. Medium purple, brilliant with full intensity. Very much Pinot Noir like on the nose, with lovely perfume of mostly red fruits with a touch of flowers and spice. Cherry fruit to the core. Gentle, medium acid and graceful structure balancing well integrated tannins. Definitely a wine of finesse and elegance, not power. 86-88 - Andy Frieden

Marquise d'Alesme Becker

Dried rose petal and a certain dusty component. Comes on strong with assertive tannins, plenty of grip, but no stuffing. Maybe time will balance things out, but the short, yet astringent finish gives me great concern. 81-83 – David Derby

Monbrison

62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc. Plummy with mint and menthol. A bit lighter color in the glass, the same is revealed upon first sip - Light and austere. A bit tart on the finish 82-84 – Alex Lallo

Palmer

49% Merlot, 44% cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Petite Verdot. Small yields of only 34 hls/ha. The color is a dark purple and red garnet with full intensity. On the nose, there are black fruits followed by subtle cedar spice. The wine is not over oaked, but balanced in every way - acid to tannin and fruit carries a nice graceful demeanor with a seamless structure and soft tannins. Great texture. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Palmer Alter Ego

60% Merlot, 40% cabernet Sauvignon. The color is dark garnet red/ and purple with full intensity. Perfume of black cherry and warm cocoa with complementary mineral and tarry phenols. There is sophistication and breed present that is very refined and balanced. The wine is medium to high acid with well integrated tannins and plus concentration. 86-88. Great value! - Andy Frieden

Pavillon Blanc de Margaux

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Very low yields of only 26 hls/ha. Light straw color. Classic Sauvignon Blanc nose from Bordeaux – herbaceous with light spice and antique wood integrated nicely with lemon custard fruit. Very intense, complex and deep. Nice balance of acid, wood and fruit. There is plus concentration of fruit balanced with a surprisingly long finish. 92-94 - Andy Frieden

Pavillon Rouge de Margaux

58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. This year, the crop was only 48% of total crop (20% sold off in bulk and 32% went into Grand Vin). Floral notes, violets and tulips. Light, entry, red fruit flavors. Going for grace, not power. 85-87 – David Derby

Prieure Lichine

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 5% Petit Verdot. 50% new oak. Some dried roses and mineral aspects on the nose. Medium to full body, going for balance. Nice length. 87-89 – David Derby

Rauzan-Gassies

70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot. 45% new oak. Pretty floral nose, very enticing. Rather light in color and body, but maintains its balance throughout. Graceful, if uninspiring. 83-86 – David Derby

Rauzan Segla

59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 1% Cabernet Franc. This is a serious wine. Lots of fruit character with less herbal / green notes than a lot of the

Margaux estates I've tasted so far. Delicate yet has some power towards the back. This is actually a wine that might benefit from some age once it hits bottle. Great effort – 89-91 - Alex Lallos

Medoc:

Rollan de By

Black core with a purple rim. Fresh baking spices, licorice and black cherry on the nose. Soft, velvety entry. Full on the mid-palate, but a bit short and tannic on the finish. 85-87 – Mike Supple

Moulis:

Chasse Spleen

Always underrated, this Chateau seems to be better than many of its neighbors year in and year out. Shows some tart cherry on the nose with graphite and some tobacco. Nice quality. Shows decent concentration yet remains elegant. Good length, but not over the top. Nicely done for the vintage. 85-87 - Alex Lallos

Pauillac:

Carruades de Lafite

44.5 % Merlot, 49.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4.5% Cabernet Franc, 1.7% Petite Verdot. Dark purple core opaque with full intensity. Classic Cabernet Sauvignon's warm black berry spice and some brown sugar and roasted coffee within a medium to high acid wine with plus concentration. Attack of red fruits and black berry tempered with mineral purity, the wine is balanced mid-palate of plus concentration and finishes with refined tannins. 89-91 - Andy Frieden

Clerc Milon

48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot, 1% Carmenere. Medium ruby core with a pink rim. Vanilla, cocoa powder, oak, red cherry and a touch of flowers on the nose. New oak on the front of the palate. Notes of clay under raspberry and cherry with a dark toast and bitter chocolate finish. Tasted twice with consistent notes. 84-86pts. – Mike Supple

D'Armailhac

54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Beautiful Medium ruby core with a fuchsia rim. Red currant, blackberry, black cherry and a touch of flint surrounded by toasted brown sugar aromas. Soft entry on the palate. A touch green up front with a bit of dry tannic edge. Orange zest with spicy blackberry and cassis lead to a vanilla finish. Tasted twice with consistent notes. 86-88pts. – Mike Supple

Duhart-Milon

73.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26.5% Merlot. Dancing berries and fresh jam on the nose. Mid weight body lets the tannins dominate and gives astringency to the surprisingly short finish. 84-86 – David Derby

Grand Puy Ducasse

Dark core with a fuchsia rim. The nose is tight and dominated by oak, but there is a touch of sweet blackberry. Simply entry with a nice mid-palate. Red and black cherry fruits with a fairly bold tannic finish. 85-87 – Mike Supple

Lafite

84% Cabernet sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 1% Petite Verdot. Opaque Purple core with full intensity. Complex Pungent and Perfumed wine with a spicy bramble nose of Blackberries and cassis with savory olive tapenade. Full-bodied with mouthcoating tannins completely wrap around the medium perfumed red fruits. The wine has medium to high acids with red and black berry fruit, with some bramble spice. A focused with with purity of fruit and mineral perfume of crushed pavement and riverbed gravels. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Latour

91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot. New wine aroma of fresh barrels mixed with black olive, sea water, paine grille,. Stuffed to the brim with dark fruit, blueberry, blackberry, herbs and Asian spice. Full, round, and well textured with an astonishing mega-long finish when the succulent ripe tannins appear from nowhere and proceed to carry the wine over the goal line. Very well done! May require some patience but it's a beauty. Left Bank Wine of the Vintage. 96-98 – David Derby

Les Forts de Latour

59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot. Purple with full intensity – Opaque. Black berry getting back to the left bank purity of the Cabernet Sauvignon fruit, mineral structure with pavement and dusty tannins that are fine grained. The mineral structure carries the wines balance with plus concentration of black berry fruit and fine grained tannins. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Lynch Bages

Thick in the glass with a dark purple core and fuchsia rim. Coffee aromas up front backed by dark cherry and blackberry fruits with lighter violet and floral notes. Roasted coffee palate entry as well. Fairly chewy tannins although pretty refined. Tight flavors, but black fruits lead to a chalky finish. 87-89 – Mike Supple

Mouton-Rothschild

81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot. Dark purple color with full intensity to the rim. Expressive perfume. Very tight and closed; black cherry and black berry fruit with shale and slate mineral structure and power. Definitely not as good as the 2006. 89-91 - Andy Frieden

Le Petite Mouton

76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc. Red Garnet color with perfume of olive, tar and smoke. Palate is full of power and grip with plenty of oak. A young wine with medium to medium high acidity, and grippy tannins. 84-86 - Andy Frieden

Pauillac (Chateau Latour)

62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot. Purple Garnet Full Intensity and not too opaque, but not brilliant either. Perfume and Pungent – Complex. Perfume of Black fruits with pungent terroir complexity of scorched earth, pain grille and saddle leather. Powerful Red Cherries with plus concentration density mineral - must be the limestone. 88-90- Andy Frieden

Pichon Longueville Baron

Medium ruby core with a fuchsia rim. Bold plum and blackberry aromas. A bit closed up front, but fantastic mouthfeel. Very nice acid and soft ripe tannins. 88-90 – Mike Supple

2007 Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande

58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, and 4% Petit Verdot. 46% of production made into the Grand Vin. 50% new oak. Mocha, chocolate and coca on the nose. Showing some weight and extract with minimum bite. Flavors of licorice mint and spice. Very different than the Pichons of yester year, but an improvement over the last couple of years. 90-92 – David Derby

Pontet Canet

Deep red color with a light ruby rim. Expressive aromas of chocolate, coffee, and mocha with some dark fruits in there as well. Ripe blackberry and blueberry attribute to a luscious and delightful mid-palate. Showing good concentration and complexity, this is perhaps the best Pauillac I tasted so far. Nice long finish. 92-94 - Alex Lалlos

2007 Reserve de La Comtesse

46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc. 40% new barrels. 41 hl/ha. Wet stone, mineral notes on the nose. Upfront tannin, pushing hard. Looking for fruit to balance, not quite there. 84-86 – David Derby

Pessac-Leognan:

Branon

50% Merlot, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon. Dark Inky Purple, opaque with full intensity. Perfume of black fruit and crushed gravel. Black fruit - young wine, tannic with grip and promising structure. 90-92 - Andy Frieden

Carbonnieux Blanc

Extremely light golden color with brilliant clarity for such a young wine. Beautiful nose of walnuts, under-ripe nectarine, and guava. Has some grassy characteristics as well. Brilliant acidity in the mid-palate carries through to a lengthy and focused finish.

Beautiful example of the complexity and focused nature of the 2007 whites. 91-93 – Alex Lallo

Carbonnieux Rouge

It isn't the blanc but it's a good effort for the vintage. Loads of strawberry, ripe currants, and violets rise from the glass. Lots of character despite the fact it is lighter in body. This is a perfect example of a wine that will drink well young. Don't be afraid to order this in a restaurant upon release in 2010. 87-89 – Alex Lallo

Domaine de Chevalier Blanc

80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Semillon. 30 year old, 5.75 hectare block of the Chevalier vineyard. Vines planted in gravel atop a clay and gravel subsoil. Yields were 40 hls/ha. Harvest started on Sep 4. Perhaps one of the best of the 2007 whites, the Domaine de Chevalier boasts beautiful citrus notes complimented by guava, peach, and honeysuckle. Great complexity and concentration with a long long finish that seems to just keep on going. Denis Dubourdieu consults. 91-93 - Alex Lallo

Chateau Haut Bailly

Deep vibrant purple color. Grapy on the nose with lots of blackberry, licorice, kirsch, and cassis. Wow this smells beautiful. The palate is just as nice as the nose, boasting notes of black currant, fig, blueberry, and white chocolate. Lovely wine... This is one of the best wines of the vintage for this taster. Really well done. 90-92 – Alex Lallo

Haut Bergey

40 Ha Yield. Assemblage: 70% Cabernet; 30% Merlot. Dark inky purple with fuchsia rim – Full Intensity. Definitely a stand out! Perfume with black cherry and black berry with extra note of blueberry concentration. Blackberry attack building to a powerful mid-palate grows to a crescendo for a 30 second finish. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Haut-Bergey Blanc

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon. Light Straw color in this expressive Bordeaux white. First nose of Tropical fruit; second nose lemon furniture polish; third nose of fat and butter round out this delightfully refreshing wine. Tree fruit and lemon curd with a fat rich mid-palate and nice concentration. Fruit is complex spicy peach tree fruit with tropical mango with great refreshing acidity. 92-94 - Andy Frieden

Haut-Brion

43% Merlot, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc. The color is dark inky purple, almost opaque. The fruit is black berry and plum framed in mocha and caramelized toffee nougat. The palate is medium to full bodied with a beautiful attack of bright red and black fruits with purity; a second background of mocha chocolate framed in by well integrated tannins. I put this one at the top of my list for the vintage of First Growths along with Chateau Latour. Fat mid-palate and richness with plus, plus concentration that everyone would want in a world class wine. Power and grace. 92-94 - Andy Frieden

Haut-Brion Blanc

45% new oak barrique. The color is slightly cloudy (un-finished wine-barrel sample drawn that day) light straw color. The nose has perfume of grassy components leads to confection sugar and sweet vanillin and crushed flowers and lemon curd. Complex. The palate shows huge concentration and a 45 second finish – medium to full bodied and great acidity. Wow. 95-97 - Andy Frieden

La Chapelle de la Mission Haut-Brion

64% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc. One third new oak. The color is a dark inky purple with full intensity. A perfume of pungent black forest and tarry gravelly pavement lifts out of the glass with plus intensity –persistent. Black fruits and black spicy peppercorns and classic tobacco. On the palate, there are savory olive and crushed cherries and violets – very expressive. The wine is balanced with medium high acid and ripe tannins. 87-89 - Andy Frieden

La Clarence de Haut Brion

51% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Cabernet Franc. 70% new oak. The color is dark inky purple with full intensity – opaque. Sweet ripe fruit of Black berry and plum persist in a medium-bodied and medium to high acid wine with ripe tannins and plus concentration. Pretty, perfumed nice and a long finish makes this a classic. 86-88 - Andy Frieden

La Mission Haut-Brion

43% Merlot, 48% cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Cabernet Franc. 30% new oak. The color is dark opaque purple with a perfumed blackberry and caramelized roasted mocha coffee and a secondary nose of pavement and gravel phenols. The wine is medium-bodied and is balances the fruit with fine ripe tannins. Ripe black cherry and black berry fruit with savory olives in an attractive polished mid-palate that expands with ripe fine grained tannins on the finish. 90-92 - Andy Frieden

La Tour Martillac Rouge

Dark purple core ruby color to the rim. Black berry fruit with sea salt minerality in a medium to high acidity and medium tannins with plus concentration. 90-92 - Andy Frieden

La Tour Martillac Blanc

Cloudy lite straw from the thief out of the barrel. Somewhat racy nose very sauvage. Juicy acidity of spicy persimmons, quince, and white peach tree fruit with kiwi, passion fruit tropical fruit – complex. Long finish 35 seconds plus. Not too oaky. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Laville Haut-Brion Blanc

83% Semillon, 17% Sauvignon Blanc. Heavy toast aroma; easy entry revealing a very fat middle. Pulled it together and showed fine structure with great length. Amazing finish. 92-94 – David Derby

Le Thil Comte de Clary Blanc

80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Semillon. Medium lemon yellow with a clear rim. Bright citrus aromas and honeydew cantaloupe. Round and full bodied. Great rich melon flavors with a hint of honey. Great acid and long, lingering flavors. 89-91pts. – Mike Supple

Le Thil Comte de Clary Rouge

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Sits between Carbonnieux and Smith Haut Lafitte. Average age of the vines is 17 years. Mix of clay and limestone sits beneath the gravelly top soil. Dark purple ruby color with a soft perfume of black cherry fruit. There is a peak of black raspberry and sweet oak tannins (albeit new oak is present) with savory truffles. A good wine with medium-plus concentrations and well integrated ripe tannins. Stephane Derenoncourt consults. 90-92 – Andy Frieden

Luchey-Halde

61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 13% Petit Verdot. 50% new oak. Hand harvested. Tiny yields of 20 hls/ha. Medium plus intensity of red/purple color. Cherry fruit and sweet hay. Peak of Bing cherry and red fruits. A light to medium bodied wine. Nice easy drinking structure with soft medium acidity and soft tannins. Serge Charritte consults. 86-88 – Andy Frieden

Pape Clement Blanc

45% Sauvignon Blanc, 45% Semillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Muscadelle. Planted in Pyrenean gravel. Yields of 48 hls/ha. 100% new oak. Pale golden / yellow color almost bordering on a tropical green. Lovely aromas of honeydew melon, lemon, and grapefruit. Lean and focused on the mid-palate with a beautiful finish replete with citrus fruits and subtle vanilla. This is a show stopper. Michel Rolland consults. 95-97 – Alex Lallo

Pape Clement Rouge

55% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon. 31 year old vines planted on different geological gravel formations (Pliocene and Quaternary). Yields of 38 hls/ha. Hand harvested. 18 months in 100% new oak. Exceptional dark red core with a vibrant bright red rim. The nose is extremely inviting. Aromas of dark chocolate and dark fruits including plum, blackberry, and under-ripe blueberry surround a core of earthy / herbal characteristics. The nose is very intriguing with the fruit and earth notes balancing each other out nicely. Flavors begin to build towards the back and the finish is long and earthy with fine tannins and a nice follow-through. 92-94 – Alex Lallo

Smith Haut Lafite Blanc

Brilliant pale golden color. Excellent nose of tropical fruits mixed with light citrus aromas. The mid-palate has some great lemon-curd and coconut flavors. Wow this is some stunning stuff, which should turn out to be very long lived. 92-94 – Alex Lallo

Smith Haut Lafite Rouge

Dark purple color gives the illusion that this is going to be a heavily extracted wine, but it's actually very elegant on the whole. Nice nose of blueberry, tar, graphite, and

espresso. This is soft and supple going in. The fruit flavors quickly turn to earth driven flavors towards the back. The finish is rather long and expressive. Again, very well done!
91-93 – Mike Supple

Pomerol:

Beauregard

This is rather dense for a 2007. More spicy character with some candied fruits as well. Good concentration and a nice overall effort despite the fact it is kind of thin. Finish is short, but appealing nevertheless. 85-87 - Alex Lallos

Belair

Closed nose, a little vanilla. Not much softness here, tannins are up front and angular. A bit disjointed. Not a favorite. 84-87 – David Derby

2007 Certan de May, Pomerol

Very dark purple core with a fuchsia rim. Plum and black raspberry with a gardenia note and darker crushed charcoal. Raspberries start out the palate followed by toasty vanilla and dark berries. Medium to full bodied with nicely integrated tannins. 91-93 – Mike Supple

DUO

The inaugural release of the second label from La Conseillante. The wine has big fruit and employs 50% new oak and 12 months in barrique. The attack is fresh bing cherry fruit with a secondary nose of spicy Cabernet Franc's spiciness. There already is tobacco and cigar-box in the nose. The wine has plus concentration with pretty focused fruit. This should be a great value. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Feytit-Clinet

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. Only 6.34 hectare vineyard situated between Trotanoy and Latour a Pomerol. 32 year old vines planted on gravel rich and sandy-gravelly soil. The owners have managed the property since 2000. Yields were 38 hls/ha. 80% new oak. Dark purple -Full intensity. Pretty clean perfume of Cherry and black fruits. Medium plus concentration clean well made wine with some tarry phenols of pavement. Only 1,415 cases produced. 92-94 Drink 2009 – 2021 – Andy Frieden

Gazin

Deep dark violet color shows excellent concentration. Gorgeous aromas of dried fruits with candied cherry, and boysenberry. Nice texture throughout and not quite as thin as some other examples. The finish is defined by some sweet oak and chocolate. 91-93 – Alex Lallos

2007 Hosanna

Medium purple core with a bright ruby rim. Fairly intense black cherry fruit with lighter floral and vanilla notes. Herbal on the front palate leading to dark rich fruit on the mid-palate. Somewhat extracted, the tannins get rather dry on the finish. 90-92 – Mike Supple.

La Commanderie de Mazeyeres

Medium ruby core. Light aromas, but very floral and perfumed. Sweet on the front palate, but a little thin on the mid. Fairly bold tannic finish. 84-86pts. – Mike Supple

La Conseillante

85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc . Four acres touching Cheval Blanc). The wine is purple with full intensity and opaque. The nose is very complex and dynamic showing berry compote; secondary nose of mocha chocolate; a third nose with forest under brush and brambly spice. The wine is very precise with plus concentrated and focused black fruit with silky and delicious tannins. (Jean-Michel, the director of wine, says he treats his wine gracefully with a non-evasive approach to his pump-overs – only spraying wine over the cap and not aggressively breaking the cap as is still a common practice prevalent today. This winery is on a roll following the 2005 and 2006 vintage). 91-93 - Andy Frieden

La Croix St Georges

Blueberry and blackberry on the nose plus some sweet oak aromas. Nice layers of tobacco, spice, and fruit on the mid-palate with some extra concentration. Shows soft tannins and great length. Everything is in balance. Really good! 91-93 – Alex Lallos

Lafleur-Gazin

Some licorice and chocolate. A bit rough on the entry, tannins come on strong, but still lacking in weight. 87-89 – David Derby

2007 La Fleur Petrus, Pomerol

Bright purple core and a vibrant fuchsia rim. Bold, fresh aromas of plum, blackberry and raspberry with a nice touch of gravelly clay. Sweet red fruits on the front palate building to a nice lush mid-palate. Round and full with a sweet lingering finish. Impressive! 90-92 – Mike Supple

La Violette

100% Merlot. The color is full intensity dark purple to the edge. Blueberry ultra-ripe concentration with mineral purity. We have something here! The palate has an attack of black fruits and builds to a mid-palate of plus concentration with a powerful presence of crushed rocks and gravel. 91-93 – Andy Frieden

Latour a Pomerol

One of the darker wines of Pomerol for this vintage. More Graves like with a mineral, stone component on the nose. Well rounded with an acceptable weight, falls short on flavor. Pleasant if rather mono dimensional. 86-88 – David Derby

Le Gay

This wine is a serious winner in this difficult vintage. Lovely mineral driven aromas of crushed fruit, raspberry, blackberry, and mocha. Nice and round going in and remains soft and plush all the way through its expressive and delightful finish. Well balanced, everything is in place, with nothing out of place. Pure velvet and beautifully textured. Winner, winner, chicken dinner. 93-95 - Alex Lallos

Montviel

90% Merlot; 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Dark black purple color to the edge. The nose has an oily ripe black fruit – Blueberry – ultra ripe. Power and full intensity with plus, plus concentration. Full intensity through out. A powerful wine structure evolved already exquisite with pavement and ripe phenols. 86-88 - Andy Frieden

Petit-Village

Medium/dark ruby core with a ruby rim. Red currant, sweet plum and spicy anise aromas. Lush entry with a fair amount of new oak. Somewhat thin on the mid palate with slightly astringent tannins. 84-86 – Mike Supple

2007 Petrus

Medium purple core with a fuchsia rim. Although the nose is somewhat tight and closed, juicy hints of raspberry and blackberry come through around an undercurrent of light vanilla cream and slate. Enters the palate fairly softly and builds in tannins on the mid-palate. Round and ripe tannins give a nice mouthfeel to the wine as flavors of red and black raspberries, cassis and baker's chocolate lead to a cinnamon spice finish. Great! 93-95 – Mike Supple

Plince

Showing a nice ruby robe. Some chocolate and mixed crushed nuts on the nose. Light body is followed by a light flavor. Not overwhelming. 83-86 – David Derby

2007 Providence

Medium purple core with a fuchsia rim. Clay and chalky minerality dominate the nose over ripe black cherry. Black cherry and plums on the front palate with fairly well integrated tannins in the mid. Orange and chocolate linger on the finish. Really excellent! 91-93 – Mike Supple

Rouget

Extremely earthy on the nose with some good underlying fruit deep down in there. Has some nice strawberry and mineral flavors on the mid-palate, but finishes with that earthy/under-ripe profile that dominated the nose. 86-88 – Alex Lалlos

2007 Trotanoy

Black and ruby in the core with a bright ruby rim. Full rich aromas of raspberry, blueberry and blackberry paired with lighter wet slate and vanilla. Sweet entry on the palate of dark plums and blackberry. Fairly bold tannins build on the mid-palate and into the finish. Very spicy nutmeg and anise with a chocolate hint on the finish. 91-93 – Mike Supple.

Vieux Chateau Certan

72% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Franc. The purity of fruit here is amazing. There is spicy brambly expression of the terroir is impressive and helps frame the black cherry and black berry fruit. There is a peak of black cassis in the mid-palate. The wine is wonderfully balanced with medium acid and a fine matrix of ripe tannins. There is a core of focused cherry fruit. A long 45 second finish has me putting this wine in the top echelon of the vintage. 92-94 - Andy Frieden

Sauternes:

Coutet

This massively structured yet focused Sauternes shows a pale golden color with absolutely brilliant clarity. Lovely tropical nose complete with guava, pineapple, and golden raisin. Fat and rich in the mid-palate yet remains subtle and well focused throughout. Lively apricot laden finish. This is delicious stuff. 92-94 – Alex Lallos

de Fargues

Beautiful light apricot color. The nose boasts lots of stone fruits including peach, nectarine, and apricot. A little pear is present as well. More fruit driven and less spicy than other examples. This has great acidity and terrific length. Highly recommended. 93-95 – Alex Lallos

de Myrat

This is my first experience with this Chateau and I like what I am tasting. Lots of botrytis here with aromas of orange, nectarine, and sweet apricot. The flavor reminds me of lemon meringue pie. This is a rich / plump Sauternes that will likely benefit from a few years in your cellar once bottled. 91-93 – Alex Lallos

Doisy Daene

24k gold in color. This lovely Sauternes has beautiful apricot, pear, and peach aromas with a hint of clove as well. The mid-palate has some nice baking spices and vanilla, which carry through to a rich finish defined by quince and marmalade. Well done. 92-94 – Alex Lallos

Filhot

Light and oily yellow gold color. This has some thickness to it... Lots of marshmallow, pear, and nectarine in the middle with a serious load of botrytis at the end. Long finish that keeps my tongue tingling. Well done! 90-92 – Alex Lallos

Guiraud

Cloudy golden color with great viscosity. This is a real beauty as well. Nice aromas of peach, ripe golden apple, marshmallow, and honey. The mid-palate is fat and rich with an almost oily character. Has some spice towards the end as well (clove mostly) This 2007 Sauternes has a lot going on and is certainly one of the stars this vintage has to offer. 92-94 - Alex Lallos

La Tour Blanche

Rich golden color. Lots of clove, cinnamon, and orange on the nose. This delightful and delicate Sauternes has gobs of fruit on the front end complimented by laser like acidity through the mid-palate. Very enjoyable effort even as a barrel sample. 92-94 – Alex Lallos

Lafaruie Peyraguey

Deep golden yellow in color. Tons of botrytis with notes of peach, apple, and pear. Lots of lemon on the mid-palate this beauty fleshes out substantially towards the finish. Good acidity, but not as much as other samples. 91-93 – Alex Lallos

Raymond Lafon

Pale 24k golden color. A bit oaky on the nose with some nice vanilla and baking spices. This stuff is buzzing with botrytis, but has nice acid to keep everything in balance. Quite a rock-star here. I suspect it will need at least a few years in bottle before one should start consuming it. 90-92 – Alex Lалlos

Rieussec

Deep yellow/ golden color. Exciting aromas of fresh peach, vanilla, and cinnamon replete with some sweet oak. Nice touch of citrus on the mid-palate followed by crisp apple and yellow pear towards the finish. Spectacular acidity carries through the long fat finish. 93-95 – Alex Lалlos

Suduiraut

This elegant Sauternes has a beautiful golden tint to it. Loads of stone fruits to start with a distinct floral note. This is so well defined with absolutely nothing out of place. The sugar is there but not too dominant. The acidity is high. It is not too heavy yet not too lean. The finish is fresh and remains crisp with lots of citrus. Bravo! This is well done. Simply exquisite. 93-96 – Alex Lалlos

St. Estephe:

Calon Segur

Good concentration / dark color. Lacks complexity on the nose in fact it is a bit weedy. Becomes rather interesting once it hits the front of the tongue with some nice fruit character to balance out the vegetal overtones. Regains composure as it finishes softer than expected. Needs some time. 86-88 – Alex Lалlos

Lafon Rochet

30% Merlot, 65% Cabernet, 5% Petit Verdot. Dark color throughout this densely concentrated claret. Things look good from the get-go here - The nose really shows off the quality here. Loads of cherry, and rose petals, and blackberry with some nice spicy character as well. A pretty wine that still boasts some structure yet preserves its elegance. Good complexity .Recommended...84-86 - Alex Lалlos

Meyney

More on the vegetal side of things, but nice. Light ruby red color with an even lighter rim. This wine finishes a bit thin, but it keeps my attention throughout the mid-palate. 82-84 - Alex Lалlos

Petit Bocq

Purple plum core color. Nice aromas of chocolate, cassis, and tar. Decent concentration here with some vegetal notes on the mid-palate. Interesting and elegant. Easy drinking 83-85 – Alex Lалlos

Phelan Segur

Dark plum purple color with a light ruby rim. Powdered chocolate on the nose with some espresso and currants. Light, but elegant - Not as much power as some of the other wines I've tasted from St Estephe, but good quality nonetheless. 86-88 – Alex Lалlos

Valrose Cuvee Alienor

60% Cabernet Sauvignon , 40% Merlot. Medium plus red garnet color. Cherry cream on the nose. Good use of structure. Red fruit, spicy with good concentration. Some mineral gravel. 88-90 – Andy Frieden

St Emilion

“3” de Valandraud

Medium ruby core with a purple rim. A touch of menthol floats over dark fruit and game aromas. Soft and approachable on the front palate with dark fruit flavors.

This is a second wine to both Valandraud and Virginie de Valandraud. 86-88 – Mike Supple

Angelus

62% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Franc. 25 hectare vineyard with 38 year old vines planted in clay and limestone soils. 100% new oak. Beautiful ruby red color from core to rim. The nose has a lot of nicely integrated aromas of wood, fruit, and crushed earth. Delightful and full bodied, this effort has some power to it without being too heavy or over-extracted. Minty and fresh on the mid-palate with some nice berry flavors as well. Less tannic on the end, but this should make it accessible within the first few years of bottling. 10,000 cases. Michel Rolland Consults. 88-90 – Alex Lалlos

Arrosee

Violet core color with a light ruby rim. This wine has a very restrained nose of crushed flowers, candied strawberry, and cola. Medium mid-palate and a nice long finish. 87-89 - Alex Lалlos

Ausone

Opaque color. Restrained with perfume of dark black fruits cassis and black cherry with tarry phenolics, black chocolate and blueberry fruit with intense concentration. Seductive lushness that seamlessly builds on the palate with persistence that is just precious in the ability to show such a refinement now. The structure explodes with a huge rich mid-palate. 94-96 - Andy Frieden

Barde-Haut

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. Ruby purple with lighter rimmed edge. Pretty perfume of Cherry blossom. Plum fruit with medium –acid and medium tannins that are ripe and well integrated. Showing well now! 88-90 - Andy Frieden

Beausejour Becot

70% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Franc, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. 15.92 hectare vineyard on the limestone plateau of St Emilion. 35 year old vines. Hand harvested between Oct 2-11.

Table sorted 3 times. 100% new oak from eight coopers. Bright ruby red color. Beautifully fruit forward aromas of black fruits (plum, black cherry, and blueberry) complimented by some earthy tones as well. This has a lot going on... Supple mouth-feel supported by fine tannins and an excellent finish. Well done! 6,500 cases. Jean-Philippe Fort consults. 89-91 - Alex Lallos

Bellevue

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. Biodynamically farmed. 6.20 hectare vineyard situated on a south-southwest facing slope next to Angelus. 40 year old vines. Yields of 32 hls/ha. 70% new oak. This is definitely above average stuff. Deep and dense in the glass with lots of dark fruits to compliment an array of tobacco, and anise. Good mouth feel and nice length. This is a very well made wine and a star of the region! Thienpont and Derenoncourt consult (this is their last vintage). Just over 2,000 cases. 92-94 – Alex Lallos

Bellevue Mondotte

90% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tiny 2 hectare vineyard on the limestone plateau above and east of Pavie Decesse and Pavie Macquin. Average age of vines is 47 years. Yields only 25 hls/ha. Hand harvested between Sep 23 and Oct 3. 28 months in 100% new oak barrels. Dark rich extracted colors. Opaque purple/ruby core with a bright fuchsia rim. Big aromatics with ripe blackberries up front followed by candied black licorice, cassis, black raspberries and spicy cigar box with a lingering touch of blueberries. Sweet entry on the palate with pretty impressive body, nice limestone and chalk minerality with fairly bold tannins on the back. Maintains the rich dark blackberry fruit from the nose with a big spicy undercurrent of cinnamon through the finish. Definitely one to watch for this vintage. 90-93 points - Mike Supple

Cadet-Bon

85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc. Five hectare vineyard situated on the clay and limestone slope called the 'Butte de Cadet'. Similar soils to Pavie, Ausone, etc. 35 year old vines. Yields were 30 hls/ha. Hand harvested, sorted, and destemmed. 50% new oak. Inky purple core with a pink rim. Fresh plum and candied black fruits with a floral edge. Sweet lush entry on the palate. Black fruits and fairly refined tannins. Good backbone with a lingering toasty finish. 1,660 cases. Derenoncourt consults (since 2004). 86-88 – Mike Supple

Canon

Beautiful vibrant red color with an equally vibrant rim. Lots of red fruits dominate the nose replete with raspberry, under-ripe plum, and strawberry. A nice menthol character comes out as well with a few swirls of the glass. Showing good concentration and a medium length finish defined by baker's chocolate and dark raisins. 89-91 – Alex Lallos

Canon La Gaffeliere

55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 45 year old vineyard planted in clay and limestone. Hand harvested between Oct 2 and 11. Yields were 30 hls/ha. 80% new oak. Beautiful fruit forward aromas of blackberry, currant, and milk

chocolate. Silky in the mouth with good tannins towards the medium finish. I really like this wine... It is nicely balanced and nothing is out of place. This effort shows the Estate put a lot of effort into producing a very good wine during a tricky vintage. 88-90 - Alex Lallos

Chauvin

80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 14.95 hectare vineyard. Dark ruby red color with a pinkish rim. Nice attractive nose of dark cherry with some black as well as dark plum. Dusty tannins balance out the fruit nicely towards the finish. This calls for a second sip! 88-90 – Alex Lallos

Cheval Blanc

55% Cabernet Franc, 45% Merlot. Dark purple core with full intensity. Weedy and herbaceous with ripe cherry fruit. Elusive supple texture with an overall nice balance. 88-90 - Andy Frieden

Clos Badon-Thunevin

Medium dark purple and ruby in the glass. Herbal aromas with charcoal, dark cherry and blackberry. Smooth and rich in the mouth, this wine is almost drinkable now. With a little more age, this should be a very nice easy drinker upon release. 86-88 – Mike Supple

Clos de L'Oratoire

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. 10.32 hectare vineyard with 35 year old vines planted in clay and limestone. 80% new oak. This is a very forward example. Might not have a super long life, but right now it boasts some interesting blueberry, cassis, and leather notes. While the mid-palate is more earth / mineral driven than the nose, it still shows some good depth of fruit. The acidity plays well with the ripe tannins, while the finish is defined by sweet vanilla, rose petals, and a touch of light spices. Complex and deep for the vintage. 87-89 – Alex Lallos

Clos de Sarpe

85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc. Some vines as old as 80 years planted in thin clay and limestone soils. Yields were a tiny, tiny 12 hls/ha. 100% new oak. Perhaps this was a bad barrel sample, but something was not right here. Aromas of dried fish, olive, and broccoli. Only 480 cases. Jean-Philippe Fort consults. 78-80 – Alex Lallos

Clos des Menuts

The name says it all. Decent color and aromas of red currant, sour cherry, earth and spicy clay. The palate is very light and acidic up front with a thin mid palate. Fairly astringent tannins with a short finish. 82-84 – Mike Supple

Clos Fourtet

88% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc. 27 year old vines planted in thin clay and deep limestone plateau. Hand harvested between Oct 3 and 12. 75% new oak. Black and ruby core with a bright pink rim. Bold herbal aromas over blackberry and slate. Lush fruit entry and very fine tannins make a great mouth feel. Plum and

blackberry with lingering coffee flavors. Only 3,500 cases (down from 6,000 cases in 2005). Derenoncourt consults. 92-94 – Mike Supple

Clos Saint Martin

75% Merlot; 15% Cabernet Franc; 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tiny 1.33 hectare vineyard facing south west looking over the Dordogne River – providing a temperate maritime influence. 36 year old vines planted in a mix of clay and limestone soil atop the limestone plateau. 100% new oak. Purple opaque color to the rim. Perfume and sweet ripe finish – more graceful and refined! Malolactic in barrel – provides extra aromatics. Balanced wine with medium acidity – ripe small grained fruit tannins as opposed to harsh wood tannins. Located between Beau-Sejour and Belle Vue! 500 cases. Michel Rolland consults. 90-92 - Andy Frieden

Cote de Baleau

70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Purple with full intensity. More classic nose with perfume of Black Fruits mineral graphite and gravel. Whoa! Intense spicy fruit and a purity of mineral focus on the palate. Dark dense powerful fruit with balanced tannins. A lovely wine of full intensity. 86-88 - Andy Frieden

Couvent des Jacobins

Bright red color seems to push the substantially lighter rim all the way to the edge of the glass. Slightly vegetal on the nose but also shows some dried flowers and chocolate. Nice overall effort for the vintage. 86-88 - Alex Lallos

Croix de Labrie

100% Merlot. Dark and inky color. Beautiful aromas of violets with ripe, fleshy plum and boysenberry. Lush entry on the front, though the fruit falls short and gets a bit acidic on the finish. 87-89 – Mike Supple

Destieux

66% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Franc, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon. Clay over limestone with one hectare rich in silica (slope). Yields were 32 hls/ha. 100% new oak. Light ruby red color throughout. Lightly smokey nose of vanilla, spice, and cedar. Slightly tannic towards the end, but overall a nice effort. The fruit begins to build mid-way through the first sip and follows through a medium finish. The oak needs to integrate. 2,500 cases. Michel Rolland consults. 86-88 - Alex Lallos

Faugeres

85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 35 year old, 20 hectare vineyard planted in clay and limestone soils. Yields were 30 hls/ha. 50% new oak. Nice ripe nose of cherry, cardamom, and bittersweet chocolate. A bit thin throughout even though the nose indicates some fruit and power. Lacks concentration and seems to be have some pine-tar and bitter characteristics on the palate. Tart and lean finish, but should come together better than it tastes today. 4,200 cases produced. Neipperg and Rolland consult. 81-83 – Alex Lallos

Figeac

Spicy and earthy on the nose with some underlying berry flavors. A rather thin mid-palate. Showing pretty well at this stage - soft and clean throughout, there is nothing wrong with this wine, but nothing exciting either. 85-87 - Alex Lallos

Fleur Cardinale

75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 35 year old vines planted on rich clay atop limestone mother lode. Yields were 35 hls/ha. Hand harvested, twice sorted. 100% new oak barrels from 6 different coopers. Excellent floral notes on the nose with some ripe blackberry, chocolate, and subtle spices such as clove and cinnamon. Has some nice acidity throughout with medium length finish. This is dense, but soft and easy to drink. In fact I like this very much for the vintage. 6,500 cases produced. Michel Rolland assistant Jean -Philippe Fort consults. 91-93 – Alex Lallos

Fombrauge

Ripe and rasy on the nose with some interesting woody character to it as well. Mineral driven, while showing some nice blackberry and coffee. Needs some time to integrate, but should be an easy drinking wine early on in its youth. 86-88 - Alex Lallos

Gracia

60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc. Tiny 1.83 hectare vineyard planted in clay and limestone soils. Average age of vines is 33 years. Hand harvested and hand-destemmed. 100% new oak. Inky and dark in the glass. Nutmeg over plum, black raspberry and a touch of spicy oak on the bold rich nose. Dark in the mouth with very fine tannins. Spicy black fruits are underscored by a streak of clay and minerals. Long intense finish. Much care was taken in 2007 during harvest. Harvest between October 3 and October 18. Minuscule yields of 18 hls/ha. 375 cases total. Jean-Philippe Fort consults. 92-94 – Mike Supple

Grandes Murailles

95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. More heavy sands and clay atop the mother load of limestone soil profile. The second lowest yield and second smallest Grand Cru classe. Intense color with opaque purple to the rim. Gorgeous nose with perfume of black fruits, gravel, and mineral, pavement and pen ink! Ripe and concentrated, a blockbuster wine. Extensive green harvest. Big wine with excellent structure and aging potential. 90-92 - Andy Frieden

Grand Pontet

75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Light red color throughout. Nice character here - Smells like fresh strawberry, cherry, and blackberry. Also displays some earthy tones on the nose and on the palate. This is a beauty that only falls short on the finish. Should be a gem during the first few years of life. 85-87 – Alex Lallos

La Bienfaisance

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. Clay and limestone soils. 50% new oak. Yields were 40 hls/ha. Semi-dark color with very little rim variation. The nose of licorice and tar just

explode from the glass. This Merlot heavy blend has some herbal tea notes with tobacco as well. Good fruit and some floral notes throughout the mid palate, with a medium finish. Derenoncourt consults. 86-88 – Alex Lалlos

La Confession

Great black fruits on the nose of the densely concentrated claret. Good color, good concentration, good mouth-feel. Nothing wrong with this wine... Seems a bit riper than a lot of its counterparts, which I really like, but it is certainly not over-extracted or over-ripe by any means. Interesting and a star of the vintage. 92-94 – Alex Lалlos

La Dominique

Bright purple core with a violet rim. Earthy cassis and black cherry aromas. Toffee on the front palate followed by dark roasted fruit and a touch of clay. Nicely balanced with impressive depth for the vintage, and smooth, ripe tannins. 87-89pts. - Mike Supple

La Gaffeliere

80% merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc. 22 hectares under vine. Dark ruby in the glass. Great nose with lots of darker fruits and violets. The mid-palate shows sweet black cherries, cedar and spice with subtle tannins followed by a seamless finish. Very well done. Derenoncourt consults. 91-93 – Alex Lалlos

La Mondotte

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. 4.5 hectare vineyard situated on clay and limestone plateau above Pavie-Decesse. 50 year old vines with yields of 25 hls/ha. Hand harvested on Oct 11. 100% new oak for 18 months. Stephane Derenoncourt consults. 90-92 David Derby

La Gomerie

100% Merlot. Tiny 2.52 hectare vineyard with 32 year old vines to ancient, heavy sands atop clay and crasse de fer while 27% is on the same limestone plateau as Beau-Sejour-Becot. Yields of 35 hls/ha. Hand harvested on Oct 1 and 2. 100% new oak. 930 cases. Jean-Philippe Fort consults. 89-91 – David Derby

La Tour du Pin

This Estate is across the street from Cheval Blanc. Opaque purple color with a violet rim. Starts off a bit vegetal on the nose but quickly turns in chocolate and blueberry. Interesting wine... The mid-palate starts off earthy and finishes with some nice sweet tannins. Good effort... 86-88 – Alex Lалlos

Les Angelots de Gracia

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. Miniscule 1.26 hectare vineyard next to Angelus in sandy-clayey soils atop crasse de fer. 33 year old vines. Hand harvested, sorted and destemmed. Ultra low yields of 21 hls/ha. 70% new oak. Dark ruby in the glass. Very spicy aromas of ginger, nutmeg and anise over crushed rose petals. Fresh and balanced on the palate with rich, spicy fruits and a lingering finish. Only 300 cases. 90-92 – Mike Supple

Larcis–Ducasse

78% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon. 35 year old vines planted on 10.8 hectares on the Cote Pavie. Color is a rich red garnet with full intensity. Clean and pure, the brett is almost completely gone. Now I can really get behind this wine as all the effort of Stephen Derenoncourt has paid off well. Nice creamy nose of super cassis de Dijon. Pleasing crème de cassis peaks with black raspberry fruit in the mid-palate wrapped in precise ripe tannins – a big wine. Derenoncourt consults. 89-91 - Andy Frieden

Lucia

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. Yields were 30 hls/ha. 3 hectare with some plantings back to 1901. Soil is clay and limestone. Hand harvested and twice table sorted. 80% new oak. Red garnet color with a purple core – full intensity. The nose is a crème de cassis with perfume lifting out of the glass nicely. Body and acid are medium with fine grained touchy tannins that should integrate nicely. This is an evolved wine already with plus concentration and a lush feel developing now. Derenoncourt consults. 91-93 – Andy Frieden

Lusseau

Located near Monbousquet – Owned by the technical director from Pavie. Dark inky purple like so many Right Bank Merlot based wines and the 2005's and 2006's too – fuchsia edged rim. Modern wine from low-yields – new oak and sweet red fruits. Medium acid lush high PH gives a rich mid-palate with plus concentration and a 30 second finish. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Meyney

More on the vegetal side of things, but nice overall quality here. Light ruby red color with an even lighter rim. This wine finishes a bit thin, but it keeps my attention throughout the mid-palate. Good stuff, not great, but definitely a pleasing wine. 87-88+ - David Derby

Monbousquet

70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Brilliant deep red color. Complex aromas of sweet cherry, chocolate, coffee, and Asian spices on the nose. Fat and rich in the mid-palate (something I have not been able to say about a lot of 07s). The finish is a bit tannic, but the wine is complete. In fact this one might even benefit from a couple years in the bottle, but will still be drinking nicely long before your 05s and 06s – 91-93 – Alex Lallo

Pavie

70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 37 hectare vineyard with due south orientation planted on the limestone plateau with clayey slope and sandy-clay at the base. Average age of vines is 45 years. Yields were 30 hls/ha. Hand harvested between Oct 8-10. Malo and aging in 70% new oak for 26 months. In a year where many stumbled Pavie turned out another exceptional product. This may not be as long lived as some other examples of Pavie, but it is rather enjoyable nonetheless. Bright acidity, good

minerality, and a nice tannic structure define this wine in the mouth, while ripe berry flavors and vanilla seem to dominate the nose. The berry flavors continue to expand through the mid-palate with a round and delicate finish full of chocolate and light coconut. Very well done. Michel Rolland consults. 91-93 – Alex Lallos

Pavie Decesse

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. 3.65 hectare vineyard planted on the limestone plateau with 47 year old vines. Yields were only 33 hls/ha. 100% new oak. Vibrant red color - Nice profile of ripe red fruits with some strawberry and rose petals. Shows a slight streak of dried herbs and black olive, which contributes nicely to the overall complexity of this wine. Has some nice sweet oak and semi-sweet chocolate as well. Good play between fruit character and earth driven components. The finish is well integrated and exceptionally long. Great wine! Michel Rolland consults. 92-94 - Alex Lallos

Pavie Macquin

45% Malbec; 30% Cabernet Franc; 25% Merlot. 15 hectare vineyard on the clay and limestone plateau and cote Pavie (right behind Pavie Decesse). The color is dark purple with full intensity. The wine has a unique feminine floral perfume of cherry spice and with a peak of black raspberry fruit, and is framed with slate and mineral purity. The wine has medium to medium-high acid and is framed with graceful tannins that should please even the toughest critic. Thienpont and Derenoncourt consult. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Peby Faugeres

100% Merlot. 45 year old vines planted on brown limestone soils. Tiny yields of 27 hls/ha. 100% new oak. Vegetal and green on the nose with some red fruits showing towards the end. Under all the green character the wine is actually very expressive with some sweet oak / vanilla undertones to compliment the red fruits. A tad astringent towards the back, but whose complaining? 85-87 - Alex Lallos

Petit Cheval

75% Cabernet Franc, 25% Merlot. Dark purple core with full intensity. A weedy herbaceous nose. Black berry with bramble spice, tobacco and cigar box with some crushed gravel minerality. The wine has a medium to high acidity with super ripe tannins building to an oily texture with an overall balance. – 84-86 - Andy Frieden

Pierre de Lune

100% Merlot. To compensate for the high yields, 15% of the wine was 'saignee' or bled off the initial pressings and free-run juice. Final yields were 26 hls/ha. The color has a super-ripe almost black color all the way to the rim. The nose is clean and pure black cherry of crème de cassis perfume. On the palate, there is a cherry blossom with mineral and stone purity. A young wine that will develop upon release. 90-92 - Andy Frieden

Quinault l'Enclos

75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Malbec.

Dark inky purple Opaque with full intensity. 18.2 hectare vineyard with 50 year old vines planted on sandy and gravelly soils. Hand harvested and sorted twice. Yields of 31 hls/ha. 45% new oak. Creamy Cherries and perfume blossoms on the nose - Complex wine. Black Cherry Black Raspberry attack which builds into a huge mid-palate of richness already at this young stage. The balance is excellent with drying crushed rocks and gravel that are developed now! This is one of the better Quinault tasted out of barrel. 6,250 cases. Jean Philippe Fort is the consultant. 91-93 - Andy Frieden

Rol Valentin

97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. 7.5 hectare vineyard of which 40% is in sandy soils north of La Gomerie and 60% is in clay and limestone soils east of St Emilion next to Valandraud and Fleur Cardinale. Vines are 40+ years old. 80% new oak. Deep purple color in the glass with an only slightly lighter red / purple rim. Sweet cherry and plum on the nose followed by vanilla. Mineral driven with lots of strawberry and boysenberry in the mid-palate. Nicely done. This could be a serious sleeper! 1,660 cases. Derenoncourt is consultant. 86-88+ - Alex Lallos

Sansonnet

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 7 hectare vineyard planted to 45 year old vines on thin clay and limestone soils atop the chalky St Emilion plateau. Hand harvested with net yields of 28 hls/ha. One third new oak. The 2007 Ch. Sansonnet was not holding up in the company of the 2003, 4, 5 & 6 which all showed well. Light color, which set the stage for what this wine was all about. Going for style instead of power is the right decision for this vintage, but there are extremes. Hardly any body or structure. Lack of tannin provided a soft, easy drink. Derenoncourt consults. 83-85 – David Derby

Secret de Cardinale

100% Merlot. Tiny 1.2 hectare block planted to 35 year old vines in clay atop limestone. Hand harvested. Medium intensity of red garnet color. Perfume of cherry fruit with pungent complex cherries and black truffle savory meaty character. Refined powdery leathery tannins. Quality is persistent in this wine. 310 cases only. Jean Philippe Fort consults. 89-91 - Andy Frieden

St Georges Cote Pavie

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. Only 5.5 hectares. Sweet cherry with blackberry and a faint hint of black olive on the nose. Has a nice luscious mouth-feel that builds in power towards the back. This is a very pleasing wine. 88-90 – Alex Lallos

Tertre Daugay

Medium purple and ruby core with a pink rim. Spicy plum, anise and black cherry aromas. Sweet boysenberry palate entry surrounded by dark chocolate. Nicely refined tannins. 86-88 – Mike Supple

Troplong Mondot

Nice crystal clear red color with a slightly lighter red rim. Expressive aromas of blackberry jam and dark chocolate with undertones of fresh herbs and vanilla cream.

Feels great in the mouth with medium length to finish. Nice balance of fruit and acid, with plenty of tannins. 88-90 – Alex Lалlos

Valandraud

Dark purple in the glass. Very complex aromas: big berries, wet earth and black olives. Sweet entry onto the palate. Full, yet very tight. Soft tannins build through to a bold finish. Dark fruit flavors linger with a touch of light minerality. One of the more impressive wines from the vintage. 92-94 – Mike Supple

Villemaurine

Medium ruby/purple core with a red rim. Nice black cherry, red currant and floral aromas. Lush entry with deep fruit flavors, dark chocolate and refined tannins. 87-89 – Mike Supple

Virginie de Valandraud

Medium-dark purple core with a ruby rim. Candied cherries with herbal, earthy notes. Fairly bold acid with big earthy flavors. More depth and complexity to it than many '07s. Tannins are ripe and balanced with a long dark roasted fruit finish. 86-88 – Mike Supple

St Julien:

Beychevelle

55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. Medium ruby in the glass. Tight aromas of red currant, red cherries and a touch of clay. Some decent currant and black cherry fruits, but a touch thin on the mid-palate. Medium chalky tannins with a somewhat short finish. Very well done. 88-90 – Mike Supple

Branaire Ducru (2nd taste)

63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet franc. Dark red color pushes all the way out to the rim. Sweet cherry on the nose with a touch of mocha chocolate and espresso. Very expressive nose. Beautiful texture and the finish is excellent. Nicely integrated tannins. This is a winner! Pleasant and should perform well for a decade after bottling. 92-94 – Alex Lалlos

Ducru Beaucaillou

90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot. Deep beautiful color in the glass with ripe cherry, blueberry, and tobacco on the nose. The mid-palate is soft like velvet. This is a real show stopper to say the least. Purity of fruit and nicely integrated oak define this stellar wine. Beautiful now, I suspect it will age gracefully for a number of years once it hits bottle. Very well done and highly recommended. 89-91 – Alex Lалlos

Gloria

Cloudy ruby color all the way to the ruby red rim. Cherry and cassis on the nose with some subtle tar and licorice. A tad lean through the mid-palate but finishes smooth with fine tannins and long length. 90-92 – Alex Lалlos

Gruaud Larose

61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 2% Cabernet Franc. Ruby core with a fuchsia rim. Black cherry, cassis and cedar aromas. A touch herbal with green pepper notes on the front palate, followed by black cherries. Pretty good mid-palate with medium tannins and a spicy finish. 87-89 – Mike Supple

La Croix de Beaucaillou

95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot. 67% new oak. This second wine of Ducru Beaucaillou is better than a lot of the Grand Vins I tasted in 2007. Dark ruby red core with a lighter red rim. Uplifting nose of crushed roses, subtle chocolate, and a tad of espresso. Some fresh herbs and bright red fruits round out the nose beautifully. Some sour cherry on the mid-palate with nice silky texture and smooth tannins. Everything is nicely integrated. 86-88 - Alex Lallo

Lagrange

68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot. Medium ruby with a purple and fuchsia rim. Light aromas of cherry, plum and clay surrounded by sweet floral notes. Thin on the front palate. Better on the mid with notes of orange zest and black cherry. Fairly bold chalky tannins on the finish. 86-88 – Mike Supple

Lalande de Borie

50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc. I recently tried a 1989 Lalande Borie just to have a reference point for this 07'. The 89' was brilliant and held up far better than I thought it would. Says a lot for the future of this stellar 2007 Lalande Borie. The 2007 boasts a dark ruby colored core with bright cherry, subtle spices, and mocha on the nose. A hint of tobacco and cedar present as well. This wine is dense and delicious with good underlying minerality (well worth every penny) An extremely fashionable wine for the price. 84-86 - Alex Lallo

Langoa Barton

77.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 7.5% Cabernet Franc. Bold purple and ruby core with a fuchsia rim. Nice plum aromas with blackberry, cherry and violet notes. Very fruity on the front palate. Medium tannins with a big red cherry and toasted oak finish. 86-88 – Mike Supple

Leoville Barton

70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Medium ruby core with a fuchsia rim. Cinnamon, spicy plum, cassis and black cherry aromas with a hint of earth. Light entry with a soft black fruit mid-palate. The tannins build, yet stay very soft and elegant. Good length on the finish. 88-90 – Mike Supple

Leoville Poyferre

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, 4% Cabernet Franc. Medium ruby core with a fuchsia rim. Caramel aromas surround dark boysenberry and black cherry fruit. Fairly oaky on the front palate followed by toasty cherry, cassis and roasted earth. Round tannins, and very approachable already. 89-91 – Mike Supple

Saint Pierre

73% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot. 50% new oak. I liked Saint Julien as a whole in 2007, but this wine is a certain exception. Very herbaceous and under-ripe. Lean and austere with a short and tart finish. 82-84 – Alex Lallo

Talbot

66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot. Very solid ruby core and rim. Dusty aromas of gravel and clay with black cherry, blackberry and an herbal note. Sweet, soft entry. Dry tannins build on the edges, but leave the mid a little hollow. Decent fruit, but a bit short. 84-86 – Mike Supple