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BORDEAUX EN-PRIMEUR

Bordeaux is back with good wines at every price point. The large production coupled with better technical progress and investment in the satellite areas has helped immeasurably. These are wonderful, fresh, cool climate cabernets which really grace the table. There is real value to be had here - Remember for the same price as Te Mata Coleraine 2016 you can buy Domaine de Chevalier 2017 and Penfolds Bin 707 is more expensive than Figeac!

"In tasting, the 2017s are mid-weight, fruity wines. In many cases, the 2017s are built on an axis of persistence and length, rather than textural opulence. Red-toned fruit and lifted, floral aromatics are typical. Alcohols are a bit lower than they have been in the recent past. Stylistically, the 2017s are reminiscent of the 2014s, but with a bit more flesh."

Antonio Galloni Vinous

"The best 2017 reds are approachable when young yet are also built to age. This "good young/can hold" signature is something that Bordeaux hasn't really ever been able to nail quite like this. Previous earlier-drinking vintages with cellaring potential relied on rich, concentrated, hedonistic fruit to carry it off, à la 2009. But, 2017 is all about finesse, perfume and aromatic intensity as opposed to weighty richness. The most successful 2017 reds tend to have moderate acidity, although the acids can appear fresher because the wines aren't as rich and powerful as 2015 or 2016. They are mainly elegant, medium-bodied styles with moderate alcohol (generally 13-14%) and have intensely perfumed, multi-layered aromatic profiles."

Lisa Perotti Brown Wine Advocate

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2017 BORDEAUX EN-PRIMEUR OFFER

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Wine	Price/bottle (inc GST)
2017 HAUT BRISSON (St Emilion)	\$50.00
2017 LA CHENADE (Lalande de Pomerol)	\$45.00
2017 TOUR SAINT CHRISTOPHE (St Emilion)	\$60.00
2017 MEYNEY (St Estephe)	\$60.00
2017 FONBADET (Pauillac)	\$70.00
2017 BARDE HAUT (St Emilion)	\$75.00
2017 LA CABANNE (Pomerol)	\$75.00
2017 D'ARMAILHAC (Pauillac)	\$95.00
2017 BRANAIRE DUCRU (St Julien)	\$100.00
2017 BEAUSEJOUR BECOT (St Emilion)	\$120.00
2017 DOMAINE DU CHEVALIER (Pessac)	\$125.00
2017 GRAND PUY LACOSTE (Pauillac)	\$155.00
2017 LEOVILLE BARTON (St Julien)	\$155.00
2017 LYNCH BAGES (Pauillac)	\$215.00
2017 PONTET CANET (Pauillac)	\$230.00
2017 FIGEAC (St Emilion)	\$340.00

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2017 Haut Brisson (St Emilion) - \$50

A strongly fruited, quite powerful and dark wine, this is a rich Haut-Brisson with lovely smooth, ripe oak tones which embrace the juicy fruit. It is structured but there are no hard edges here and the length is stunning. Very concentrated and certainly the most impressive vintage of this wine to date, it is the way in which the tannins are managed which makes it so compelling.

Score: 17.5+/20 Matthew Jukes, Matthew Jukes' Blog, April 2018

The 2017 Haut Brisson is endowed with tremendous depth and plushness. The blackberry, bittersweet chocolate, clove, gravel, licorice and new oak flavors speak with authority. Bold, ripe and texturally intense, with tons of plushness, Haut Brisson shows the more flamboyant side of Saint-Émilion off to great effect. Hail wiped out a considerable amount of the château's vineyards on the plains, so the wine was only made from the parcels on the plateau. In 2017, Haut-Brisson is impressive.

Score: 90-93/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com, May 2018

The tentative blend of the 2017 Haut Brisson is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Very deep purple-black in color; it has a decadent nose of crème de cassis, baked blackberries and black forest cake with hints of licorice, tapenade and roses. The palate is big, rich, full-bodied and full-on ripe with tons of black fruit preserves, spice and savory layers supported by plush tannins and just enough freshness, finishing long.

Score: 89-91/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (236), April 2018

2017 La Chenade (Lalande de Pomerol) - \$45

Composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, the 2017 La Chenade is medium to deep garnet-purple in color and has quite an earthy nose giving notes of truffles, mossy bark and tilled soil over a core of red and black plums and a waft of incense. Medium-bodied, it fills the mouth with refreshing red and black fruits supported by chewy tannins and finishes with an invigorating lift.

Score: 88-90/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (236), April 2018

Deep purple crimson. Smells of small, wild hedgerow berries and raspberry vitality. Second-fill barrels and just a hint of chocolate. Lovely freshness and that fine graphite note on the finish. Refined texture, just a little chewy for now, and lots of fruit and a persistent finish.

Score: 16.5/20 Julia Harding MW, JancisRobinson.com, April 2018

A lovely, beautiful vibrant quality to the tannins that sit quietly under the fresh but full dark fruits. From gravel and clay soils, a few plots were affected by frost. Harvest took place between 14 and 22 September. No new oak here.

89/100 Jane Anson, Decanter.com, April 2018

2017 Tour Saint Christophe (St Emilion) - \$60

The 2017 Tour Saint Christophe, owned by Peter Kwok, showed much more delineation and terroir expression compared to Bellefont-Belcier tasted alongside. The aromatics are packed with black cherries, cassis and bilberry, just a light touch of the sea emerging with time. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe tannin, plush black cherry and boysenberry fruit laced with orange rind and quince towards the fresh and focused finish. Very fine.

Score: 91-93/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

Dense and layered red with dark berry, volcanic ash and white pepper. Full-bodied, layered and chewy. Muscular.

Score: 93-94/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

The 2017 Tour Saint Christophe is another in a series of brilliant wines from proprietor Peter Kwok and consultant Michel Rolland. The 20% Cabernet Franc adds striking brightness to play off the dense, dark Merlot in this plush, beautifully nuanced Saint-Émilion. Already impeccably balanced, the 2017 appears to have a very promising future. Mocha, espresso, wild flowers and mint add the closing shades of nuance.

Score: 91-94/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com, May 2018

2017 Meyney (St Estephe) - \$60

The 2017 Meyney has a clean and fresh bouquet with blackberry and raspberry fruit mingling with cedar and light cigar humidor aromas. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent, ripe tannin and a fine bead of acidity. I find this surprisingly juicy in style that probably belies the structure underneath. This will be one of the more approachable Saint-Estèphe wines in this vintage, but one that I find well made.

Score: 90-92/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

This is very nicely done with a lithe yet structured core of dark fruit and round, juicy tannins. Medium to full body, a driven line of acidity and a long finish.

Score: 92-93/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

Two thousand seventeen is a very fine vintage for Meyney. A powerful, resonant Saint-Estèphe, the 2017 is endowed with striking aromatics that give the wine a bit more freshness than has been the case in some recent vintages. Dark red-toned fruit, leather, smoke and grilled herb overtones add nuance throughout. This is one of the finer recent vintages I have tasted from Meyney. Winemaker Anne Le Naour did a terrific job with the 2017. The blend is 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 11% Petit Verdot, aged in 40% new barrels. Tasted three times.

Score: 89-92/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com, May 2018

2017 Fonbadet (Pauillac) - \$70

The 2017 Fonbadet is positively stellar. Plump, juicy and impeccably refined, the 2017 has so much to recommend it. Silky tannins wrap around a plush core of bright, red-toned fruit in this super-expressive inviting Pauillac. Fonbadet is not the most complex Pauillac readers will come across, but its balance and sense of harmony are simply impeccable.

Score: 91-94/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

2017 Barde Haut (St Emilion) - \$75

A rich, unctuous wine, the 2017 Barde-Haut is endowed with magnificent concentration and richness. Inky black fruit, chocolate, menthol, licorice and spice infuse this spectacularly rich, voluptuous Saint-Émilion. The 2017 saw 4-5 days on cold soak about four weeks on the skins, with no SO₂ during fermentation. Most of the wine is aging in 300L barrels, which is a bit larger than the norm in Bordeaux.

Score: 92-95/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

The 2017 Barde-Haut was picked from 18 September to 2 October, matured in 80% new oak for 18 months. It has a sensual bouquet with black cherries, a touch of oyster shell and iodine, well defined and focused. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin, a fine bead of acidity, more volume than the Poesia, especially towards the finish that exerts a gentle grip in the mouth. It feels very silky in texture with a persistent finish. This is a really excellent Barde-Haut, in my opinion, with the upper hand over the Clos l'Eglise this year, frankly not far off the 2016 in quality. Bravo Hélène et Patrice Garçin-Léveque.

Score: 92-94/100 Neil Martin, Vinous.com

2017 La Cabanne (Pomerol) - \$75

The 2017 La Cabanne is a Pomerol cru that flies just under the radar. This latest release continues to prove that François Estager owns some serious terroir, located right next to Trotanoy in fact. It has a nicely detailed bouquet with scents of blackberry, pencil lead and undergrowth aromas. It is not as complex as the 2015 or 2016 but there is palpable focus and good vigor. The palate is medium-bodied with well-defined red berry fruit laced with brown spice and a discrete, almost cola-like tincture. This feels nimble, poised and for want of a better word, joyful. It might not be the most profound Pomerol that François Estager has ever made but I can see this drinking beautifully over the next decade.

Score: 90-92/100 Neil Martin, Vinous.com

2017 D'Armailhac (Pauillac) - \$95

A blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, the 2017 D'Armailhac is deep garnet-purple in color and very open on the nose with expressive notes of crushed black cherries, black raspberries and cassis with hints of baking spices, lavender and wood smoke. The palate is medium-bodied with a great core of vibrant red and black fruits, ripe, grainy tannins and superb freshness, finishing long and minerally.

Score: 90-92/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (236), April 2018

The 2017 d'Armailhac has an opulent bouquet despite this comprising one of the highest percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon ever, which Philippe Dhalluin attributes to the maturity of the berries. There is some lovely cassis and blueberry fruit here with a smear of vanilla. The palate is structured with fine tannin, here the Cabernets are much more expressive with a fine bead of acidity, an attractive pencil lead tincture coming through towards the finish. This is a more floral d'Armailhac that will drink well for the next decades.

Score: 90-92/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

Opulent and powerful for d'Armailhac with blackcurrants, blackberries and black olives. Full-bodied, tannic and extremely muscular. Very well done indeed.

Score: 93-94/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

2017 Branaire Ducru (St Julien) - \$100

The 2017 Branaire Ducru was picked 13 September until 4 October over a three-week period, cropped at 39.6hl/ha. The alcohol here is 13.2°. The wine is aged in 60% new oak, which is how the sample was made. It has a harmonious bouquet with brambly black fruit, melted tar and tobacco scents, not powerful but precise. The palate is medium-bodied with a smooth texture, fine tannin, just a subtle savory note developing and merging nicely with the black fruit, hints of white pepper and cedar towards the poised finish that is quintessential Saint-Julien. There is an essence of drinkability about this Branaire-Ducru and I can imagine this being approachable after three to four years. This is a very fine Branaire-Ducru.

Score: 91-93/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

This is very tight and focused with a precise depth of blackberry and blueberry fruit. Full body, melted tannins and a fresh and vivid finish. Shows a compacted style.

Score: 92-93/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

The 2017 Branaire-Ducru offers lovely depth and density. The characteristic dark red/purplish fruit character of Branaire comes through beautifully. As always, Branaire is a wine of polish and finesse. Stylistically, the 2017 comes across as a smaller scaled and more accessible version of the 2015. If that sounds appealing, well, it is. The 2017 is really quite lovely.

Score: 91-94/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com, May 2018

2017 Beausejour Becot (St Emilion) - \$120

The 2017 Beau-Séjour-Bécot is dark, dense and inviting, with striking textural richness and fabulous depth. Succulent black cherry, chocolate, new leather, spice and menthol. All the elements fall into place in a soft, beautifully resonant Saint-Émilion from the Bécot family.

Score: 91-94/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

The 2017 Beau-Séjour Bécot is less immediate on the nose compared to the 2015 and 2016. This takes a little time to unfurl, eventually offering a mixture of red and black fruit, crushed rose petals and just a touch of cassis. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannin, fine structure and freshness. It is not a powerful Beau-Séjour-Bécot but is imbued with great freshness and whilst it does not possess the structure or depth as the last couple of vintages, I appreciate the mineral aftertaste here.

Score: 91-93/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com

2017 Domaine du Chevalier (Pessac) - \$125

Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2017 Domaine de Chevalier opens with a cedary waft giving way to a good core of crushed black currants, blackberries and mulberries with suggestions of black truffles, tilled soil and black olives plus a hint of smoked meats. Medium-bodied with a good, solid frame of ripe, fine-grained tannins and oodles of freshness, it is elegantly fruited yet well sustained on the mid-palate and long finish.

Score: 93-95+/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (236), April 2018

The 2017 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge was cropped at 34hl/ha between 11 and 29 September and is matured in 35% new oak for 18 months. It has a vivacious bouquet with quite generous black fruit, raspberry, brine and black olive that is well-defined and focused, if not possessing the complexity of the previous two vintages. The palate is medium-bodied with fine, slightly edgy tannin – layers of black fruit interlaced with melted tar and graphite, closing in a little towards the finish with a gentle grip. I appreciate the deft manner in which this fans out and leaves a mineral residue on the finish. A Domaine de Chevalier of refinement rather than power, one with “buvabilité” or “drinkability”.

Score: 92-94/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

This is really delicious and round with soft and ripe tannins. Full body and juicy fruit. Shows ripeness and balance. A pretty wine to watch for the future.

Score: 93-94/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

2017 Grand Puy Lacoste (Paulliac) - \$155

As you would expect in a vintage that has produced such an excellent Lacoste Borie, this GPL is exceptional, a real success that's juicy and carefully extracted. It has weight and impact, with a Pauillac tannic hold and presence. It's one of my wines of the vintage, and a must buy. The balanced, sculpted, juicy black fruits fully deliver personality and signature style. Harvested 15-29 September, yielding 45hl/ha. 80% new oak.

Score: 94/100 Jane Anson, Decanter.com, April 2018

This has a thrilling nose which, in spite of the weighty dominance of Cabernet, is perfectly red-fruited and sonorous. This is a sleek thoroughbred with power and grace and it is layered with flashes of both red and black fruit on the palate. The finish has more muscle and more tannin looms as the flavour senesces on the back of the palate and the result is a game of flamboyance and reticence warning the drinker that while the flavour entices you in, there is also the need to exercise restraint because this is not a wine for drinking in the short term in spite of its apparent precocity. Throughout the flavour there is levity and this is what makes this powerful wine such an unequivocal success. François-Xavier Borie agrees with this character. He smiled – ‘don't forget we are serious’.

Score: 18.5+/20 Matthew Jukes, Matthew Jukes' Blog, April 2018

2017 Léoville Barton (St Julien) - \$155

This has a stronger, tighter and more concentrated expression in this vintage than its sister property, although it's not as concentrated as its last few vintages. It's back to a more old school expression for the appellation, suiting the vintage, and it's one of the better-framed wines on display here. Good quality, with ground coffee, dark chocolate and tight cassis notes, all subtly and harmoniously put together. Drinking Window 2024 - 2038

Score: 95/100 Jane Anson, Decanter.com, April 2018

The 2017 Léoville Barton has a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon this year at 93%, the remainder is Merlot. It was picked between 15 and 18 September for the Merlot and 22 to 29 September for the Cabernet Sauvignon, then aged in 60% new oak. It has a perfumed and pure bouquet that demonstrates a little more cohesion and refinement than some of its Saint-Julien peers. Blackberry and touches of bilberry fruit, cedar and crushed stone – this is a knockout nose with bags of potential. The palate is medium-bodied with filigree tannin, perfectly pitched acidity and beautifully integrated oak. Seriously, this is nudging (not equaling, nudging!) the 2016 in terms of quality and there are just a handful of properties where I can state that this year.

Score: 93-95/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

One of the few truly exceptional Left Bank wines of the vintage, the 2017 Léoville-Barton is simply fabulous. The 2017 also has the distinction of having a very high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon. Inky crème de cassis, white flowers, lavender, crushed rocks, menthol and spice give the 2017 a distinctly layered, resonant feel. The 2017 offers fabulous density and structure, although the tannins need time. The blend is 93% Cabernet Sauvignon and 7% Merlot. The September rains were especially challenging for the Merlot and Cabernet Franc. As a result, Cabernet is pushed up in the blend, while there is no Franc at all. Tasted two times.

Score: 93-96/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

2017 Lynch Bages (Pauillac) - \$215

This is an excellent Lynch that starts off slowly and then drives at the end with dark fruit and hints of hazelnuts. Strong and focused tannins. A beautiful young wine.

Score: 95-96/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

The 2017 Lynch-Bages is a wine of impeccable balance and class. Deep, fleshy and inviting, the 2017 should be ready to deliver pleasure with minimal cellaring. All of the Lynch-Bages signatures come through in a very pretty, deceptively medium-bodied wine loaded with personality. Lynch-Bages is never a huge wine, but like most of his colleagues, proprietor Jean-Michel Cazes opted for especially delicate extractions.

Score: 92-95/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

A stunning nose which combines density and also exuberance, this is a lovely if full wine with bold richness and also length and complexity. The detail is superb and there is impressive control on the finish, too. Superb.

Score: 18+/20 Matthew Jukes, Matthew Jukes' Blog, April 2018

2017 Pontet Canet (Pauillac) - \$230

Blended of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Pontet-Canet opens with vibrant wild blueberries, black raspberries and crushed plums with notions of cinnamon stick, violets, unsmoked cigars and pencil lead plus wafts of roses, lavender and tilled black soil. Medium-bodied with very fine, incredibly plush tannins, it is deliciously savory in the mouth, with wonderful freshness and spectacular energy delivering many layers, resulting in a very long, mineral-laced finish.

Score: 96-98/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (236), April 2018

The 2017 Pontet Canet has a very ripe and pure, slightly high-toned bouquet with touches of iodine inflecting the black cherry and cassis fruit. There is a subtle floral aspect to this Pontet-Canet, more iris than violet. With aeration there are hints of graphite and crushed stone, some of its initial opulence ebbing away. The palate is medium-bodied with fine balance on the entry, slightly chalky tannin, a fine sense of energy and poise. On the two readings of this wine, this was perhaps the most difference. The mid-April tasting had a very similar nose however; the palate demonstrated far more backbone, linearity and mineralité, not to mention a sapidity that was not present in the showing at the end of March. Ah yes, that's the Pontet I love. I expect this to land at the upper end of my banded score once in bottle. Tasted twice at the property. Drink 2021-2040.

Score: 92-94/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

This is incredibly transparent and refined with blackcurrant, blueberry and mineral character. Full-bodied, layered and ethereal. Tannins have a crushed-stone character. Long and persistent.

Score: 96-97/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2018

The 2017 Pontet-Canet showed progressively better on each of the three occasions I tasted it. Deep, pliant and beautifully layered in the glass, the 2017 exudes class. Dark red cherry, plum, pomegranate, licorice and rose petal infuse this super-expressive and highly nuanced wine from proprietor Alfred Tesseron and technical director Jean-Michel Comme. Harvest ran from September 18 through October 4. The blend is 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot and is aging in 50% new oak, 35% amphora and 15% one year old oak. Tasted three times.

Score: 92-95/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com, April 2018

2017 Figeac (St Emilion) - \$340

The 2017 Figeac was picked from 7 September to 3 October at 22hl/ha (average across frosted and non-frosted parcels) with 13.5° alcohol. It has a deep purple hue. The bouquet is very well defined, quite strict at first with well-behaved blackberry, raspberry, pressed rose petals and just a touch of violet. The palate is medium-bodied with a fine backbone, fresh in the mouth with a sense of energy, quite precise and linear with a pinch of spice towards the finish, a little graphite lingering on the aftertaste. This is unapologetically classic in style and whilst it might be over-shadowed by the sensational 2015 and 2016 Figeac, this is an impressive follow-up to that might pair that has really put Figeac back on the map.

Score: 93-95/100 Neal Martin, Vinous.com, May 2018

The 2017 Figeac is magnificent. Beautifully layered and exquisite in the glass, the 2017 possesses remarkable balance and harmony from the very first taste. An utterly beguiling, captivating wine, the 2017 simply has it all. Bright, red-toned fruit, mint, spice, lavender and rose petal overtones flesh out in the glass, but above all else, Figeac is a wine of total harmony. The Grand Vin includes 10% second generation fruit. Even so, production is down around 50%.

Score: 94-97/100 Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com, May 2018

The 2017 Figeac is composed of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Very deep garnet-purple in color; the nose sings of Cabernet Sauvignon—bright crushed black currants, blackberries and wild blueberries with wafts of lilacs, pencil shavings, tobacco, tilled earth plus a hint of bay leaves. The medium-bodied mouth is fine, elegant, minerally and incredibly vivacious with tons of energy. Bright and refreshing with firm, grainy tannins and a provocative hint of chew, it finishes with great length. This should age wonderfully. 100% new oak was used for this sample and it is very well-integrated.

Score: 94-96/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (236), April 2018

Deep cherry red with lots of purple. Lifted and fragrant. Finely and intensely scented. This is very fine: pure and precise, some red fruit on the palate. Succulent, juicy, scented on the palate too. Silky, charming, mouth-watering. So succulent, so precise, unforced.

Score: 18.5/20 Julia Harding MW, JancisRobinson.com, April 2018

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