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WINE MERCHANTS

2018

BORDEAUX EN PRIMEUR

ALL WINES ARE EN PRIMEUR OFFERS - ORDERS AND PAYMENT IS TAKEN NOW WITH THE WINES DUE TO ARRIVE MID-2021. PRICES ARE THE ALL UP FINAL LANDED COST.

2018 BORDEAUX

In the highest-quality 2018 reds, phenolic ripeness was achieved beautifully. The quality of the tannins can be stunning across all red varieties. Many winemakers were purring about a “cashmere-like” texture, which is an accurate term for some top wines. Equally exciting is the sheer spectrum of flavor compounds. We're mainly looking at black and blue fruit characters (not so much red fruit), but with a lot of floral, mineral and savory nuances in the most complex wines. Higher alcohols of 14% to 14.5% are nicely offset by the mid-palate density of the superlatives as well as mineral, dried herbs and floral sparks, which go some ways to boosting the soft background acids and injecting seamless freshness. And so, it is the plush tannins rather than the acidity that tends to pave and extend the finish of the best 2018 wines. Lisa Perrotti Brown Wine advocate

WHAT IS EN PRIMEUR?

Bordeaux is unusual in that it sells the majority of its top wines while still in barrel. This gives the chateau better cash flow (though they hardly need it these days) while providing the consumer with the best possible price (debatable as well).

Nevertheless some estates have limited production, so if you wish to secure certain wines, usually at the best price, this is the way to go. Our pricing on the wines is the all up final landed cost which takes out the exchange rate risk for our customers (most other importers quote the ex-cellar price only and not the final landed cost). The wines will land mid 2021.

Buying made easy - if all this information is too much we have selected three interesting mixed cases from wines across different appellations in Bordeaux and at different price points.

TO ORDER, CALL CARO'S ON (09) 377 9974 OR 0800 422 767
OR EMAIL WINE@CAROS.CO.NZ

2018

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ALL WINES ARE EN PRIMEUR OFFERS - ORDERS AND PAYMENT IS TAKEN NOW WITH THE WINES DUE TO ARRIVE MID-2021. PRICES ARE THE ALL UP FINAL LANDED COST.

Wine	Price/bottle (inc GST)
2018 Armailhac - Pauillac	\$105.00
2018 Beau Sejour Becot - St Emilion	\$130.00
2018 Bellefont Belicier - St Emilion	\$89.99
2018 Branaire Ducru - St Julien	\$115.00
2018 Canon - St Emilion	\$240.00
2018 Domaine de Chevalier - Pessac-Léognan	\$155.00
2018 Duhart-Milon - Pauillac	\$160.00
2018 Grand-Puy-Lacoste - Pauillac	\$160.00
2018 Haut Bages Liberal - Pauillac	\$89.99
2018 Haut Brisson - St Emilion	\$49.99
2018 La Chenade - Lalande de Pomerol	\$39.99
2018 La Fleur Bouard - Lalande de Pomerol	\$62.99
2018 Lagrange - St Julien	\$100.00
2018 Lanessan - Haut Medoc	\$36.99
2018 Leoville-Barton - St Julien	\$180.00
2018 Les Cruzelles - Lalande de Pomerol	\$54.99
2018 Meyney - St Estephe	\$64.99
2018 Ormes des Pez - St Estephe	\$66.99
2018 Poesia - St Emilion	\$69.99
2018 Pontet-Canet - Pauillac	\$240.00
2018 Prieure Lichine - Margaux	\$89.99
2018 Rauzan-Segla - Margaux	\$205.00
2018 Ripeau - St Emilion	\$72.99
2018 Saintayme - St Emilion	\$39.99
2018 Tour St Christophe - St Emilion	\$59.99

MIXED CASES

Mixed Case #1 - Saintayme + Les Cruzelles + Lanessan

6 Bottles (2 of each) - **\$263.94** 12 Bottles (4 of each) - **\$527.88**

Mixed Case #2 - Tour St Christophe + Ormes dez Pez + Haut Brisson

6 Bottles (2 of each) - **\$353.94** 12 Bottles (4 of each) - **\$707.88**

Mixed Case #3 - Bellefont Belicier + Prieure Lichine + Haut Bages Liberal

6 Bottles (2 of each) - **\$539.94** 12 Bottles (4 of each) - **\$1079.88**

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2018 Armailhac, Pauillac - \$105

The 2018 D'Armailhac (14.5% alcohol) is composed of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot, harvested September 12 to October 3. Deep garnet-purple colored, it reveals a very fruity nose of crushed blackberries, warm black cherries and mulberries plus hints of potpourri, spice cake and pencil shavings. Full-bodied, the decadent palate delivers loads of black berry layers and a firm, grainy frame with underlying freshness and an earthy finish. Wonderfully opulent D'Armailhac!

91-93/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown

Deeply colored, the 2018 Château D'Armailhac is a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and the rest Petit Verdot brought up in 40% new barrels. Cassis, hints of blue fruits, graphite, charcoal, and spicy oak notes all emerge from this deeply colored effort. Rich and full-bodied on the palate, it offers ripe, present tannins, terrific freshness, and a great finish.

92-94/100 Jeb Dunnuck

This is clearly one of the most concentrated d'Armailhacs that has been produced in recent decades owing to the extremely small and concentrated berries, especially Cabernet Sauvignon, harvested at the end of the growing season. It's also one of the best, with clear personality and power, and although still the least complex of the three Pauillacs in the Mouton stable, it should offer the best value giving a ton of rich fruit and cigar box frisson. 5% Petit Verdot makes up the blend. 3.7pH. Tasted several times – always with the same impression.

94/100 Jane Anson

2018 Beau Sejour Becot, St Emilion - \$130

The 2018 Beau-Sejour Becot is composed of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. The Merlot was harvested on September 12-25, and the Cabernet varieties were harvested on October 4, 5 and 10. Yields were 46 hectoliters per hectare, and it is anticipated that the wine will age for 16 months. Sixty-five percent of the wine will be matured in new barriques, while 35% will be aged in vats, amphorae and large oak casks of 20-hectoliter capacity. Deep garnet-purple colored, it leaps from the glass with bold, expressive notions of stewed plums, blackberry pie and Black Forest cake with nuances of menthol, mocha, molten licorice and wild sage plus a waft of lavender. Full-bodied, the palate is laden with latent energy, offering slow-releasing glimpses at dark, seductive berry preserves layers and vibrant earthy accents, framed by firm, grainy tannins and seamless freshness, finishing long and mineral laced.

95-97/100 Lisa Perrotti Brown

The 2018 Beau-Séjour Bécot is fabulous. Dense, rich and explosive, the 2018 has it all. Soaring aromatics and a huge spine of tannin give the 2018 its regal contours. The 2018 was barreled down late, and it is still coming together, especially in its aromatics, but its potential is evident. A wine of tremendous character and personality Beau-Séjour Bécot dazzles in 2018. It is an utterly captivating Saint-Émilion from Juliette Bécot and Julien Barthe, along with their consulting winemaker Thomas Duclos.

94-97/100 Antonio Galloni

There's a beautiful delicacy here that balances the creaminess and fleshy texture of the fruit. The aromatics gather pace in the glass while the tannins are plentiful but not heavy, serving to emphasise the minerality, slate and stunning rosemary and white pepper edge.

95/100 Jane Anson

2018 Bellefont Belcier, St Emilion - \$89.99

Tasted on multiple occasions, the 2018 Château Bellefont-Belcier always showed brilliantly, with a full-bodied, sexy style that's very much in the vintage. Coming from a 12.5-hectare vineyard just beside Larcis Ducasse (this is an incredible terroir) and a blend of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc, and the rest Cabernet Sauvignon, aging in 40% new French oak, its deep purple color is followed by a classic bouquet of ripe black fruits, tobacco leaf, earth, and spice box. Deep, rich, and textured, with sweet tannins, it's another rock star effort this vintage that's going to benefit from just short-term cellaring and keep for two decades or more.

95-97/100 Jeb Dunnuck

A suave and controlled Bellefont-Belcier with much of the flavour sitting right at the back of the palate and this is fascinating because it builds slowly to a crescendo of flavour. The palate is sleek and not as dense as many wines on account of the elegance and freshness of the Cabernet Franc which also adds perfume and class. A slow wine to evolve, this will be a classic, but one must wait for more than a decade for this wine to blossom. Score:

18+/20 Matthew Jukes

Intense aromas and flavors of blue fruit and violets. Hints of green tea and black olives. Changes all the time. Medium-to full-bodied with polished and very silky tannins. Love the center palate. The finish lasts for minutes. This year, about one-third cabernet franc gives an edge to the merlot and the touch of cabernet sauvignon.

95-96/100 James Suckling

2018 Branaire Ducru, St Julien - \$115

This is a fantastic Branaire with deep and dark fruit, such as blackberries and blackcurrants. Lots of raspberries, too. Full-bodied with firm and creamy tannins and a super long finish.

95-96/100 James Suckling

The 2018 Branaire-Ducru is fabulous. Bright, lifted and impeccably precise, the 2018 is one of the best recent Branaires I can remember tasting. The 2018 is distinguished by its vertical lift, striking aromatic intensity and exceptional balance. Lavender, rose petal, gravel, mint and sweet red/purplish berry fruit are all given an extra kick of textural richness. More than anything else, I was blown away by the wine's density and precision. The 2018 is dazzling. There's not much else to say. The 2018 is 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc. Tasted three times.

93-96/100 Antonio Galloni

This is a delicious and silky-smooth Branaire with fondant fruit notes and a deep, dark core. At no stage does the oak or alcohol interrupt the flow of fruit and the overall impression is of a wine with serious class and definition. Great balance and nice weight make this a very rewarding drop if not quite one of the stellar Châteaux in this vintage. I think it will last for a long time, too, given the quality of tannins on display.

18+/100 Matthew Jukes

2018 Canon - \$240

The 2018 Canon is blended of 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.69 and 14% alcohol. Deep purple-black in color; it comes sashaying out of the glass with glamorous notes of cinnamon stick, baked blackberries, black cherry compote and licorice plus an undercurrent of plum preserves and smoked meats and, with coaxing, reveals a lovely floral signature of candied violets and red roses. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is wonderfully soft-spoken, whispering of fragrant floral and earthy scents beneath a core of profound, mouth-coating black and blue fruits, draped in a high level of super ripe, plush tannins, finishing with amazing freshness and perfume with loads of mineral sparks emerging.

97-99/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (April 2019), April 2019

The 2018 Canon bristles with energy, tension and explosive, vertical lift. Dark, powerful and full of personality, Canon is magnificent in 2018. Time in the glass brings out a range of dark fruit, mineral, floral and saline notes, but readers will have to be patient in order to enjoy the 2018 at its fullest splendor. Most importantly, I am blown away by how much precision and persistence there is given the wine's concentration and overall richness. The 2018 Canon is magnificent. That's pretty much all there is to it. The blend is 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Sauvignon. Technical Director Nicolas Audebert added that he and his team left more leaf cover to protect the fruit from the extreme heat and dryness of the summer. Once in the cellar, extractions were done as gently as possible, Audebert explained. Tasted four times.

94-97/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

Pretty closed up right now, this is full of latent energy. It's extremely powerful and precise, with poise and tension but also with generosity and density, yet it errs on the side of not giving much away rather than giving too much. You have to give it time in the glass for those cool blueberry, bilberry and tightly spiced notes to come to the fore. The stunning texture is clear but the aromatics take their time. This is a wine that carries its finesse with great skill, and they have done a brilliant job of allowing this aspect to shine amongst the heat of the vintage, allowing the density to inch deeper with every minute in the glass. This wine just gets better and better; Harvest ran from 7 September to 9 October, the longest ever here, with no pressure of rot. 42hl/ha yield. Thomas Duclos consults.

97/100 Jane Anson, Decanter.com, April 2019

2018 Domaine De Chevalier - \$155

This wine is a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 5% Petit Verdot to be aged for approximately 18 months in oak barriques, 35% new. Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Domaine de Chevalier starts a little closed before bounding out of the glass with bold expressions of fresh blackcurrants, kirsch, black raspberries and fragrant earth plus nuances of lilacs, Sichuan pepper and menthol. Medium to full-bodied, the palate maintains elegance and sophistication, with a lovely ripe, finely grained frame and plenty of freshness to back up the floral and black fruit layers, finishing long and perfumed.

94-96+/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (April 2019), April 2019

Wow. I can't get over the pureness of fruit in this wine with so much currant, tar and wet-earth character. Flowers, too. So aromatic. Full body, yet pureness and brightness of fruit. Layered. Incredible depth and beauty. 65 per cent cabernet sauvignon, 30 per cent merlot and 5 per cent petit verdot. Greatest ever?

Score: 99-100/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2019

The 2018 Domaine de Chevalier is magnificent. Bright, lifted and wonderfully nuanced, the 2018 has so much to offer.

Olivier Bernard turned out a dazzling Domaine de Chevalier in 2018 that speaks to precision and nuance above all else. Rose petal, mint, savory herbs and crushed rocks add striking aromatic top notes to this stunning, breathtakingly beautiful wine. The tannins need time to soften, but I doubt readers will be in a rush. The 2018 is simply majestic - that's all there is to it. The blend is 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot. Tasted three times.

94-97/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

2018 Duhart Milon - \$160

This Pauillac is produced by the team who make Lafite, and it has been on top form in recent vintages, receiving impressive scores from the critics. However the Estate's new Director - Jean-Guillaume Prats - believes that this is the best Duhart ever made. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot.
FarrVintners

The 2018 Duhart-Milon is composed of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot, with the Cabernet Sauvignon harvested September 25 to October 4 and the Merlot harvested September 17-25, and it has 14% alcohol. Deep garnet-purple colored, it leaps from the glass with exuberant notes of Black Forest cake, plum preserves and crème de cassis with hints of spice cake, woodsmoke, potpourri and eucalyptus. Full-bodied, rich and laden with layers of black fruit preserves and spices, it has a velvety texture and just enough freshness, finishing long. Very impressive—the densest, most opulent Duhart I have tasted!
93-95/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown

Black core with barely a rim. So wonderfully scented, like the Clerc Milon. Blackcurrant tea, pure cassis, almost floral, but so pretty. Firm and dry but super-refined on the palate, dry tannic finesse. Finely balanced for the long term. Dark and savoury and full of such refined elegance and dark finesse. A beauty. (JH)
17.5/20 Julia Harding

The 2018 Château Duhart-Milon checks in as a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot that hit 14% alcohol. Beautiful black currants, smoked earth, chocolate, and damp earth notes flow to a medium to full-bodied, incredibly elegant Duhart-Milon that has ultra-fine tannins, a weightless texture, terrific balance, and a great finish. Seemingly all about finesse and elegance, it builds nicely on the palate and has a great finish. It should match or exceed the brilliant 2009.
94-96+/100 Jeb Dunnuck

2018 Grand Puy Lacoste - \$160

A wine of precision, energy and nuance, the 2018 Grand-Puy-Lacoste is fabulous. Freshly cut flowers, mint and sweet red berry fruit grace this exquisite, nuanced Pauillac. Medium in body, understated and classy, Grand-Puy-Lacoste is one of the highlights of the year. In a word: impeccable. The 2018 is 78% Cabernet Sauvignon and 22% Merlot from yields of 40 hectoliters per hectare.
93-96/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

Black core with wide purple rim. Great purity of intense, ripe but fresh black fruit. The fruit flavours are ripe not overripe and scented with cassis and blueberry yet overall there is a freshness to balance the fruit and that rocky/pencil quality that was also on the Lacoste-Borie. Darker and more mineral on the palate, then really bright on the finish with refined tannins. There's a real elegance here thanks to the purity of the fruit and the finesse in the tannins. Harmony and finesse right to the end. A very good year for Grand-Puy-Lacoste. (JH) 14% Drink 2025-2038
17.5/20 Julia Harding MW, JancisRobinson.com, April 2019

This captures the style of the vintage to a T, with vividly ripe cassis and plum fruit, carried by solidly built but fine-grained structure. Lots of graphite and tobacco accents hang in the background for now. A firmly grounded wine.
95-98/100 James Molesworth, Wine Spectator, March 2019

(78 Cabernet Sauvignon, 22 Merlot) | 75% new oak | 14% alc | 40 hl/ha There is an amazing volume of aroma when you approach this wine and it is ripe, bold, ever so slightly exotic and also all-enveloping. It alerts the senses and prepares you instantly for tasting the wine. On the palate all of the fruit notes and oak tones are marshalled perfectly and they are already in sync. Unlike some of the wines from this vintage, this is a well-drilled wine with not a molecule out of place. It is long, fine, detailed and also youthful and the tannins are some of the finest and chewiest I have seen. This bodes well. While many 2018s are unnervingly forward, but will also hold well, GPL warns the drinker that while the fruit is certainly exuberant and toothsome it would be a mistake to tackle this wine too early in its lifetime. I would leave it for at least ten years before uncorking a bottle. By this time, I think that this will be considered one of the most elegant and finely-tuned wines of the vintage.
18.5+/20 Matthew Jukes, MatthewJukes.com, April 2019

2018 Haut Bages Libéral, Pauillac - \$89.99

The 2018 Haut-Bages Libéral takes all of the signatures of the property and turns them up to 11. Rich, ample and yet also incredibly refined, the 2018 is a total knock-out. Super-ripe red cherry, plum, cedar, tobacco and star anise infuse this powerful, sumptuous Pauillac. Even with normal yields of 45 hectoliters per hectare, Haut-Bages Libéral is a stunningly deep, potent wine. The blend is 79% Cabernet Sauvignon and 21% Merlot.
92-95/100 Antonio Galloni

A more unfussy than slick wine, less sumptuous than some as is often the case with this estate, but as you sit with it you start to realise there's real quality here. It has a juiciness and integrity to the cassis and bilberry fruit, alongside brambles and hedgerows, with chewy tannins that build slowly through the palate providing a welcoming cushion of support.
92/100 Jane Anson

2018 Haut Brisson, St Emilion - \$49.99

The 2018 Haut Brisson is an absolutely gorgeous wine. Radiant and plush, with striking fruit density, the 2018 captures all the best the vintage has to offer: Dark cherry, plum, mocha, chocolate, dried flowers and menthol build in a creamy, sensual Saint-Émilion loaded with near and medium-term appeal. Haut Brisson is especially fine in 2018. The blend is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, with new oak at 35%. Tasted three times.

90-93/100 Antonio Galloni

It has a deep garnet-purple color and comes charging out of the glass with baked black cherries, warm blueberries and preserved plums with touches of pencil shavings, kirsch and chargrilled meat plus a waft of Indian spices. Full-bodied, the generously fruited palate has a lovely plush texture and just enough freshness, finishing with a menthol lift.

90-92/100 Lisa Perrotti Brown

One of the bigger St-Emilion wines this year, silky but concentrated with powerful and pure dark cassis fruit. It's juicy and intense, with good extraction giving chewy but well structured tannins. It has good ageing potential.

92/100 Jane Anson

2018 La Chenade, Lalande de Pomerol - \$39.99

A blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc from gravelly soils, the 2018 La Chenade comes from the team of Denis Durantou and is still aging in 30% new barrels. It offers a rich yet savory style in its black raspberries, dried cherries, leafy herbs, and chocolate-laced aromas and flavors. Beautifully balanced, medium-bodied, and silky, this is another remarkable wine in the vintage that's well worth seeking out.

90-92/100 Jeb Dunnuck

(80 Merlot, 20 Cabernet Franc) | 30% new oak | 14% alc | 12000 bottles were produced | Picked between 17th and 25th September and the Cabernet Franc was picked on 25th September Thrilling balance and great density of fruit mark this as a wine with huge potential and the oak is certainly present, but it is the skin tannins which bring the palate together. Imposing and indulgent this is a mighty wine and there is a superb red-fruited theme in the background which will emerge in time.

17+/20 Matthew Jukes

This is produced by Denis Durantou of Château L'Eglise Clinet. The vineyard is in Lalande de Pomerol on gravel-based sandy soils. The 2018 La Chenade is composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc with 30% new oak. Deep purple-black in color; the nose is slightly reticent and broody, offering notes of tar, chargrill and damp soil to begin, giving way to a core of fresh plums, black cherries and kirsch plus touches of bay leaves and iron ore. Medium-bodied, the palate is fresh and juicy with plenty of bright black fruit and a plush texture, finishing long and refreshing.

90-92/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown

2018 La Fleur Bouard, Lalande de Pomerol - \$62.99

Deep garnet-purple in color; the 2018 La Fleur de Bouard displays pronounced scents of baked blackberries, black cherry coulis and tilled soil with hints of kirsch, dried herbs and fungi. Medium to full-bodied with generous black fruits and a soft texture, it has just enough freshness and an earthy finish. The blend here is 85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon.

89-91/100 Lisa Perrotti Brown

There is clear quality here with ripe blackberry and loganberry fruits and sweet vanilla bean touch on the finish. It's approachable and will be ready to drink within a year or two.

89/100 Jane Anson

2018 Lagrange - \$100

Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Lagrange opens a little closed and broody, slowly revealing cedar chest, tar, pencil shavings, camphor and fragrant earth scents with a baked plums and warm cassis core plus a hint of yeast extract. Full-bodied and jam-packed with black fruits and earthy accents, it has a solid frame of firm, chunky tannins and just enough freshness, finishing on a persistent mineral note.

93-95+/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (April 2019), April 2019

This is a very velvety-textured Lagrange with blackberry and purple-fruit character: Lavender and black-tea undertones. Full body. Long and caressing.

93-94/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2019

The 2018 Lagrange is off the charts. Bold, plush and beautifully resonant in the glass, the 2018 possesses tremendous richness and textural intensity. Super-ripe dark cherry, plum, espresso, mint and licorice build in a racy, sumptuous Lagrange loaded with personality. The 2018 is one of the best recent vintages I have tasted. Tasted two times.

92-95/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

2018 Lanessan, Haut Medoc - \$36.99

The 2018 Lanessan is a striking Haut-Médoc. Pliant, supple and inviting, the 2018 has so much to offer. Bright floral notes and soft, pliant red plum fruit give the wine tons of immediacy and pure appeal. Tasted two times.
88-91/100 Antonio Galloni

I have enjoyed Lanessan over the last few years, and there's a lot to take note of here. It's a pretty serious take on the vintage with a strong architecture of cassis fruits, pencil lead and slate, more 2016 than 2015 in style. It should age well. Good value.
92/100 Jane Anson

2018 Leoville Barton - \$180

Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2018 Léoville Barton simply sings of crushed black cherries, blackcurrant cordial and wild blueberries with touches of violets, dark chocolate, allspice and cardamom with a waft of stewed tea. Full-bodied, rich and decadently fruited in the mouth, the generous fruit has a solid structure of firm, ripe, grainy tannins and oodles of freshness, finishing long and layered.

94-96/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (April 2019), April 2019

The 2018 Léoville-Barton is fabulous. Graphite, gravel, crème de cassis, mint, violet, spice and exotic spices are some of the many notes that infuse this stunningly beautiful unctuous Saint-Julien. In 2018 Léoville-Barton has an extra dimension of volume and resonance, yet it never loses its super-classic mid-weight structure and regal bearing. The blend is 82% Cabernet Sauvignon and 18% Merlot.
93-96/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

I loved the 2018 Léoville-Barton. It's a classic, structured, backward wine based on 82% Cabernet Sauvignon and 18% Merlot that's still resting in 60% new French oak. While never the most showy or opulent, this team always fashions a fresh, focused, incredibly age-worthy wine, and the 2018 follows suit, revealing a vivid purple color, notes of crème de cassis, crushed violets, salty minerality, and lead pencil shaving-like aromas and flavors. Medium to full-bodied, concentrated, and incredibly elegant on the palate, it has building tannins, flawless balance, and integrated acidity, all making for a wine that's going to demand upwards of a decade of bottle age yet keep for 40 years or more. The tannin quality here is exceptional and this is a wine you won't regret having in the cellar.
95-97+/100 Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com, May 2019

2018 Les Cruzelles, Lalande de Pomerol - \$54.99

This is produced by Denis Durantou of Château L'Église Clinet. The 2018 Les Cruzelles is blended of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc with 40% new oak and 14.5% alcohol. Deep purple-black in color, it features slightly reduced notions of asphalt and tires over a core of warm red and black plums, blackberry pie and boysenberries with hints of fruitcake, incense and potpourri. Full-bodied, rich and packed with perfumed black fruit, it has a velvety texture and seamless freshness, finishing long.
91-93/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW

Clay/gravelly soils in this parcels give the Cruzelles a darker fruit profile and greater breadth as well as more tannic clout than its sibling. Inky, dark blue/purplish fruit, lavender, spice, menthol and licorice all develop in the glass. This is an especially powerful, structured expression of Lalande de Pomerol, and it works beautifully.
90-93/100 Antonio Galloni

From the team of Denis Durantou, notes of cassis, violets, tobacco, and earth all emerge from the 2018 Château Les Cruzelles, which is a blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc brought up in 40% new barrels. It's medium to full-bodied, elegant, and weightless on the palate, with loads to love. I also suspect it will represent a stunning value for true wine lovers (and drinkers) out there.
91-93/100 Jeb Dunnuck

2018 Meyney, St Estephe - \$64.99

A very dense yet tight and focused red with blackcurrants, blackberries and hints of spices and walnuts. Full-bodied, very compact and long. Intense finish.
95-96/100 James Suckling,

The 2018 Meyney is powerful, dense and super-expressive. Gravel, game, scorched earth, smoke, licorice, incense and spice infuse this potent, virile Saint-Estèphe. The fruit profile and oak integration point to a transition towards a less extracted style. Even so, there is plenty of the richness readers have come to expect from Meyney. Tasted two times.
91-94/100 Antonio Galloni

It's clear that this is hugely concentrated, as is the Montrose right next door, but there's also beautiful juice and freshness underneath the black fruits and the powerful grip. Tannins, acidity and fruit: it's all there. This is great quality and should be long-lived, with a rich palate, evenly balanced and austere in all the right places. Another good vintage at this increasingly impressive property.
94/100 Jane Anson

2018 Ormes des Peze, St Estephe - \$66.99

The 2018 Ormes de Pez is dark, plush and enveloping. Smoke, cured meats, licorice, violet, crème de cassis and dried flowers give the 2018 striking nuance. Unctuous and intense in its ripeness, Ormes de Pez is decidedly opulent in 2018. The 14.6% alcohol is evident, and yet the wine shows terrific balance, as well as quite a bit of promise. The blend is 50% Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.

89-91/100 Antonio Galloni

The inky colored 2018 Château Ormes De Pez checks in as 50% Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc, and the balanced Petit Verdot that's still aging in 45% new French oak. It offers lots of ripe black cherry and blackberry fruits intermixed with subtle violets and background oak. With building richness, medium to full body, ripe tannins, and remarkable purity of fruit, it's another incredibly impressive Saint-Estephe that's going to need 4-6 years of bottle age and be long-lived.

91-93+/100 Jeb Dunnuck

This has the luxurious kick of the Lynch Bages stable and is brilliant value for this level of quality. It seems to manage this every vintage and is just such a brilliant drinking wine. 2018 is another excellent year here, with deep fruitfulness of brambled hedgerow alongside liquorice and woodsmoke. It has a polyphenol index of 84IPT, so this is full of tannins but they don't feel overpowering. Tasted several times and always striking.

93/100 Jane Anson

2018 Poesia, St Emilion - \$69.99

Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Poesia opens with notes of baked black cherries, mocha, spice cake, redcurrant jelly and black raspberries with nuances of dried roses, aniseed, candied violets and Christmas cake plus a waft of molten licorice. Full-bodied, rich and packed with red and black fruit layers, it has a solid structure of firm, finely grained tannins and compelling freshness, finishing very long and layered.

94-96/100 Lisa Perrotti Brown

Poesia is terrific in 2018. An exotic mélange of dark red cherry, plum, spice, leather and cedar envelops the palate. A wine of density, power and textural resonance, the 2018 is shaping up to be one of the under the radar gems of the vintage. Quite frankly, I am blown away by the wine's balance at this admittedly very early stage. The 2018 might be the best Poesia yet. The blend is 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc.

91-94/100 Antonio Galloni

The powerful soils this wine is sourced from, on the west side of the appellation near Peby Faugères, give grip and concentration through the palate. It's an extremely rich and deeply coloured wine, and you can feel the ease with which everything was extracted.

91/100 Jane Anson

2018 Pontet Canet - \$240

The 2018 Pontet-Canet is made up of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot.

Picking began on September 24 and finished on October 5; aging is in 55% oak barriques and 45% amphorae. Very deep purple-black in color; it comes rolling sensuously out of the glass with all the opulence and seduction of Cleopatra on a carpet. It emerges with flamboyant scents of crème de cassis, preserved plums and blueberry compote, and after a few moments, it bursts with nuances of molten licorice, sandalwood, Chinese five spice, candied violets, dark chocolate and dried roses, followed by underlying earthy suggestions of fallen leaves, black truffles, underbrush and wild sage.

Full-bodied, wonderfully dense, rich, impossibly layered and very, very decadent, the palate delivers all it promises on the nose, with a firm, wonderfully velvety frame and finishing with epic length, a scintillating wave of freshness and a beguiling perfume. This is one for true hedonists.

97-99/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (April 2019), April 2019

The 2018 Pontet-Canet is a freak of nature. Dark, rich and explosive, the 2018 possesses off the charts richness and concentration, much of it coming from tiny yields of just ten hectoliters per hectare, or one third of a normal crop.

The 2018 soars out of the glass with stunning aromatic intensity and depth. Black cherry, gravel, grilled herbs, leather, lavender and menthol stain the palate. Dense and hedonistically ripe, the 2018 is a stunningly beautiful wine. The grapes were crushed by hand. Because of the tiny yields, the entire production was vinified in Pontet-Canet's new smaller concrete vats. All winemaking was done manually, without the aid of external temperature control or electricity.

The 2018 is aging in a combination of 55% new oak and 45% terra cotta amphora. Quite simply, I have never tasted anything like it.

96-99/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

Deeply colored, the 2018 Pontet-Canet checks in as a blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, and the rest Petit Verdot that was destemmed by hand, fermented all in concrete tanks (punch downs only) and is still aging 55% in new French oak and the balance in concrete amphoras. It's an incredibly rich, opulent, and plush Pontet-Canet that offers loads of black and blue fruits, licorice, crushed violets, and graphite aromas and flavors.

Full-bodied, powerful, beautifully textured and layered, it's reminiscent of the magical 2009 with its rare mix of both hedonistic and intellectual pleasure. Unfortunately, the estate was decimated by mildew in the spring and lost a full two-thirds of their total production.

96-98/100 Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com, May 2019

2018 Prieure Lichine, Margaux - \$89.99

The deep garnet-purple colored 2018 Prieure-Lichine slips sensuously out of the glass with gorgeous raspberry coulis, chocolate-covered cherries and warm cassis scents with hints of candied violets, licorice, camphor and wilted roses. The full-bodied, richly fruited palate is beautifully perfumed with loads of floral accents and has a firm frame of ripe, grainy tannins, finishing long with some mineral notions coming through. Very pretty.

91-93/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown

The 2018 Prieuré-Lichine is gorgeous. Bright and racy in the glass, the 2018 impresses with its magnificent purity of fruit. In 2018, Prieuré-Lichine has terrific energy and cut. It is perhaps a bit less creamy than the 2016, but also impeccable in its balance. Part of that is driven by the higher percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend in 2018. Rose petal, lavender, mint and spice add nuance to a core of red/purplish fruit. Tasted two times.

92-95/100 Antonio Galloni

Prieuré Lichine has done a great job of capturing the rich concentration in the cassis and blackberry fruits that are easily found in 2018, wrapped up perfectly in juicy, vibrant strands of acidity and tannin. There's no question that this is an intense wine, and although the alcohol is not especially high it has a generous texture. Spice notes lend a sense of uplift to balance out the exuberance of the palate. I expect this will close down for a good few years before coming into its own. Prieuré Lichine operate a gravity-fed winery for gentle handling of the fruit. 2018 saw a yield of 35hl/ha.

Aged in 45% new oak.

94/100 Jane Anson

2018 Rauzan Ségla - \$205

The 2018 Rauzan-Ségla is blended of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested from September 27 to October 11; Merlot from September 13-27; Cabernet Franc on September 28; and Petit Verdot from September 28-29. The wine has 14% alcohol and aging is anticipated to be 18 months in barriques, 65% new. Deep purple-black in color; it comes bounding out of the glass with exuberant notes of warm plums, crème de cassis, Black Forest cake and candied violets with hints of mocha, Indian spices and fragrant earth plus a waft of crushed rocks. Full-bodied, multilayered and sporting a lot of freshness and tension in the mouth in spite of all its decadent perfumed black fruits, it has a firm, finely grained frame and seamless freshness, finishing long and fragrant. Seduction in a glass.

97-99+/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW, Wine Advocate (April 2019), April 2019

This is one of the most structured and deep Rauzans I have tasted with a full body, layers of fruit and a firm and polished tannin backbone. Compact and composed. Such depth and power: 60 per cent cabernet sauvignon and 40 per cent merlot.

99-100/100 James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com, April 2019

The 2018 Rauzan-Ségla is fabulous. Regal and soaring in the glass, Rauzan-Ségla is simply unforgettable. Stunning aromatics and layers of flavor develop in the glass in a drop-dead gorgeous Rauzan that will leave readers weak at the knees. Inky and explosive, the 2018 possesses off the charts intensity and richness. Leather, licorice, spice and grilled herbs add nuance as the 2018 builds to a huge crescendo of aromas, flavors and textures on the finish. I won't be surprised if one day the 2018 is considered among the greatest Rauzan-Ségla of all time. It is a tremendous achievement by the property and the team lead by Technical Director Nicolas Audebert. Don't miss it! Tasted four times.

97-100/100 Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, May 2019

Unquestionably in the same class as the 2016, the 2018 Rauzan-Ségla is magical stuff and plays in the top tier of the vintage. A rough blend of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and 2% each of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot brought up in 65% new French oak, its deep purple color is followed by complex notes of sweet crème de cassis, cigar tobacco, crushed flowers, lead pencil shavings, and crushed rock-like minerality. Full-bodied, concentrated, and incredibly classic in style, it's made in a style similar to the 2016 yet is slightly more elegant (possibly not as concentrated), with building structure, beautiful purity, and a great, great finish. Like most vintages from this estate today, it will drink beautifully in its youth yet easily evolve for 30 years or more. For the data-driven people out there, this beauty hit 13.2% alcohol with a pH of 3.68. You probably couldn't have too much of this in the cellar.

Score: 96-98/100 Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com, May 2019

2018 Ripeau, St Emilion - \$72.99

A real standout, the 2018 Ripeau is a powerful, explosive wine with tons of richness as well as structure. Dark raspberry jam, espresso, mint and leather emerge reluctantly. Today, the 2018 is dense and packed to the core, but it also appears to have terrific potential. Even with all of its richness, the 2018 has a lot of energy and tension. I can't wait to taste it from bottle. The 100% new oak is already quite well-integrated for a young wine at this stage of its life. Most importantly, Ripeau is positively stellar in 2018. The blend is 67% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tasted two times.

92-95/100 Antonio Galloni

This vineyard has a little over eight hectares in production, and the average age of the vines in 2018 was 35 to 40 years old. The soil is composed of sandy, slightly gravelly soils atop a ferrous clay subsoil. The blend is 67% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Total aging is expected to run 16 to 18 months in 100% new barrels, and the wine has 14.2% alcohol. Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Ripeau opens with blackberry pie, warm plums and black raspberries scents with suggestions of Christmas cake, truffles and earth. Full, rich and spicy in the mouth, the velvety palate has lovely freshness and a long, savory finish.

91-93/100 Lisa Perrotti Brown

The impact of investments since 2015 and the arrival of the Gregoire family continue to pay off, and there's a genuine feeling of excitement now growing around Ripeau. Last year, the Cabernet-heavy blend was forced by the frost, but this year it is entirely reflective of the new vineyard plantings, and of where they see the estate heading. 2018 is also the first vintage in the new winery, allowing more precision over the different plots that was no doubt very welcome. Intense blueberry and cassis fruit flavours are well balanced, and joined by a smoky polish that gives character and will integrate further during ageing. An estate to watch. A yield of 26hl/ha. 3.6pH. Claude Gros consults.

93/100 Jane Anson

2018 Saintayme, St Emilion - \$39.99

Produced by Denis Durantou of Château L'Eglise Clinet, the 2018 Saintayme is made of 100% Merlot with 30% new oak and 14.5% alcohol. Deep garnet-purple colored, it bursts from the glass with plum preserves, crushed blackberries and chocolate-covered cherries with hints of lavender, unsmoked cigar and fragrant earth. Medium to full-bodied, the palate reveals beautiful freshness and elegance with soft tannins and loads of mineral sparks on the finish.

89-91/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown

Denis Durantou's 2018 Saintayme is especially fine in 2018. Bright, floral and energetic, Saintayme really shines. In fact, I can't remember a recent vintage with this much finesse. The tannins need time to soften, but there is plenty of radiant fruit waiting to emerge. I won't be surprised if the finished wine is even better than this note suggests. Tasted two times.

89-92/100 Antonio Galloni,

From the team of Denis Durantou, the 2018 Saintayme (100% Merlot brought up in 30% new oak) is a total charmer that savvy readers should snatch up. Offering full-bodied notes of black raspberries, kirsch, and spice box, it has silky tannins, a terrific sense of elegance and purity, and outstanding length. Drink it on release and over the following decade.

90-92/100 Jeb Dunnuck

2018 Tour St Christophe, St Emilion - \$59.99

In 2012, Hong Kong-based Peter Kwok purchased this vineyard located in Saint-Christophe-des-Bardes. The average age of vines is 30 years old. The wine is aging in 40% new oak barrels, 40% one-year-old and 20% two-year-old barrels and is expected to run 18 months. The blend is 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, with fruit from the Cassevert lieu-dit, and the wine has 14.6% alcohol. Deep purple-black in color, the 2018 Tour Saint-Christophe bursts out of the glass with wonderfully pure blackberry, blueberry and boysenberry scents with an undercurrent of plum preserves, star anise and cinnamon stick with wafts of charcuterie and dried herbs. Full-bodied, the palate is packed with vibrant, juicy black fruits with a ripe, rounded tannin texture and fantastic freshness, finishing savory.

92-94+/100 Lisa Perrotti-Brown

Blueberry and blackberry character with hints of white pepper and chalk. Salty, too. Full-bodied, tight and polished with fantastic texture and length. Very closed and tight with gorgeous tannin quality.

96-97/100 James Suckling,

This tiny, picturesque vineyard on the east side of Saint-Émilion has turned out another brilliant wine with their 2018 Château Tour Saint Christophe. The vineyard covers 6.5 hectares of terraced slopes sitting just across from Château Barde-Haut and consists of old vine Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The 2018 is a tentative blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, harvested from September 25 through October 15, that hit 14.6% alcohol and is aging in 40% new French oak, with the balance in second- and third-fill barrels. Its deep purple color is followed by a medium to full-bodied, ripe, brilliantly concentrated Saint-Émilion that has terrific purity of fruit, classic minerality and graphite characteristics, good acidity, and building tannins. In short, it's a classic wine from this cooler terroir that's going to benefit from short-term cellaring and cruise for two decades. It well worth a multiple case purchase!

93-95+/100 Jeb Dunnuck