

Bordeaux & Bordeaux Supérieur 2015 and 2016s

By Panos Kakaviatos for *Decanter*

Tasting Bordeaux and Bordeaux Superior AOC wines from the 2015 and 2016 vintages earlier this year, the two-part French wine adage – grand année, petit vin; petit année, grand vin – came to mind.

Since both 2015 and 2016 vintages can be considered “grand” the first part of the adage applies. Meaning that in great vintages, savvy consumers should seek out more economically priced wines (and the opposite for lesser vintages).

In 2015, weather conditions were optimal. Flowering, fruit set and ripening took place under excellent conditions with, for the most part, sunny days and cool nights.

2016 proved superb for reds: a long Indian summer ensued after early September rains bringing grapes to excellent maturity. While conditions were not quite as optimal for whites, some producers handled the hot, dry summer very well, as this tasting proved.

So, these two vintages proved an ideal occasion to taste many so-called petits vins of the Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC appellations. Not only did excellent climactic conditions ensure high quality wine, they also led to ample quantities, which means no shortage of

supply could put any low stock-based price pressure on wines that are already economically priced.

In 2015, vintners made nearly 3m hectolitres of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC wines. The figure jumped to nearly 3.25m last year. With prices as low as £5 per bottle, budget conscious consumers should think indeed in terms of two great vintages and purchase some of these so-called petits vins. While many would be ideal for summer barbecues, some that I tried at Planet Bordeaux – the official association for these wines – can grace even discerning gastronomic tables.

You will be able to taste some of these wines from Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur at the VinExpo show by the lake, opposite door 29: “La Brasserie des Bordeaux.”

A note on methodology

The white 2016s and red 2015s are in bottle for the most part, while the 2016 reds assessed in late March this year were all samples. The over 200 wines tasted for this article were assessed blind over a two-day period. *Decanter* has published the notes of wines I scored highest, having known only vintage and appellation beforehand.

Wines to try Whites 2016

Château Bois Malot, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

91

£16.90 **Catchpole Cellars**

Lovely kiwi and quince aromas. The palate has lip smacking juiciness, neither cloying nor heavy. Medium finish that provides much pleasure with iodine freshness. A by-the-glass Bordeaux that is perfect.

Drink 2017-2019

Château Thieuley, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

91

£9-11 **Wine Society**

The owners describe it as a “party wine” but it is more than that. Pleasing notes of pear, peach and grapefruit with excellent palate substance. Rich and even somewhat serious.

Delicious. And an excellent price.

Drink 2017-2020 ➤



Le Sec de Rayne Vigneau, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

91

£10 **Fine & Rare**

The nose is somewhat subtle but with aeration yields wet stone, touches of white peach and notions of exotic fruit like mango. The palate is more expressive, with fine quince like notes, and crispy, apple-like juiciness. Very enjoyable! **Drink** 2017-2020

Château Grand Jean, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

90

www.vignobles-dulon.com

Rich and robust with white apricot aspects and grapefruit. The palate has medium body and balance with freshness and weight. Lovely overall texture. Fine! **Drink** 2017-2019

Château le Grand Verdu, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

90

£8 **L'Assemblage Ltd**

Slight smoky aspects appeal to the senses and yet there is no oak, as the wine is aged in stainless steel tanks for about five months. The palate is fresh and has juicy fruit, and floral aspects coming no doubt from the 10% Muscadelle (the rest of the blend made from 60% Sauvignon blanc and 30% Sémillon). An excellent white for the vintage! **Drink** 2017-2020



Château La Freynelle, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

90

£9 **Frank Stainton Wines**

Peach, lemon custard nose reveals a rich and scrumptuous wine with energy, too. Indeed,; the seasalt freshness intrigues the taster. As it turns out, this wine was selected as a top 6 wines in the "Oscars of Bordeaux" - an annual taste test where only female bloggers based in France tasted the wines. Highly recommended! **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Mezain, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

90

£11 **Tesco, Asda**

Gorgeous explosive fruit. Grapefruit. In spite of the 100% Sauvignon Blanc, not at all varietal. The palate shows moderate succulence and - more important in the context of the vintage - freshness. I could have oysters with this. Medium finish. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Vermont, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

90

www.chateau-vermont.fr

Some Kiwi fruit, juiciness as well. This is lip smacking delicious on the palate. Drinkable. Lots of lift on the finish! Available for delivery directly from producer. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Caminade Haut Guerin, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

89

www.caminadehautguerin.com

This has pleasing notes of white peach with floral notes, no doubt coming from one-third Muscadelle. Rich and suave, too. Shows some weight on the finish, as a wine with body and presence that could go well with a roast chicken à l'orange for example. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château d'Haurets, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

89

www.ducourt.com/en

Although not available in the UK, what prevents you from ordering online from Bordeaux? Bright and fun. I like the juiciness and relative lift on the palate. You get just enough weight on the palate, but the overall impression is of a pleasing, easy drinking summer wine. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Pierrail, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

89

www.chateau-pierrail.fr

Built in the 17th century by the Segur family on the site of an older Middle Age château, this charming property made a fine white in 2016. After skin contact at low temperature, light pressing, and fermentation in new oak barrels, the wine delivers a fresh and frank delivery with a touch of floral. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Roc Meynard, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

89

www.vignobleshermouet.com/en/

One of the whites with more vivid fruit and freshness on the nose. Floral and white stone fruit as well as citrus. The 50-50 blend of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc has a lively vivacious palate and a lifting finish. Nice job! Available for delivery directly from producer. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Belle Garde, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

www.ducourt.com/en

Ripe yellow peach. The palate is a pleasing if somewhat warm expression of white Bordeaux, considering the vintage. Consider this with scallops in fettucini with white cream sauce or veal in a white sauce. Really fine texture on the palate. And only £4 per bottle, if ordered from Bordeaux. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Haut Mondain, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

www.leshautsdepalette.fr

This has red apple and grapefruit aspects, with acacia flowers and some lychee,

coming from the vintage no doubt. A fruity mouth, with fresh notes of grapefruit dominating the finish, I would enjoy this on its own, chilled, on a sunny summer porch. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Lamothe de Haux, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

£9-12 **Rodney Densen Wine**

I like the palate energy here. Green apple, crispy. Nose is white stone fruit, again. Stewed peaches. The nose, that is. Palate is more brisk, shows more energy. Made from skin contact maceration to 50% so there is a feeling of concentration but never heavy. Nice job! **Drink** 2017-2019

Château La Verriere, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

www.chateaulaverriere.com

Some skin contact maceration for this wine of 100% Sauvignon Blanc lends a certain roundness that combines with a pleasing grassy aspect, fresh and frank. From a hot and dry vintage? I could not tell!! **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Les Combes, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

£9.95 **Stone Vine & Son**

Aged in stainless steel, the wine ripe yellow peach aspects, a rich and substantial palate. For the price, a great value! **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Suau, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

www.chateausuau.com

Organic farming and certified Ecocert, the wines are produced under the direction of Michel Rolland. Juicy yellow peaches and touches of floral preface a rich body, even somewhat viscous in texture, but overall with very pleasing fruit flavors. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Timberlay, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

www.robertgiraud.com

Straightforward, with fine expressions of juicy apricot. Some complexity on the nose, stone fruit, a hint of pear. Light on the finish. Fine enough - and not pricey at all. **Drink** 2017-2019

Sauvignon de Seguin, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

£7.99 **Laytons**

A straightforward style, Sauvignon driven, but not overly varietal. Fresh on the palate, and tasty, with energy, and perfect for a summer barbecue! **Drink** 2017-2019

Dourthe No. 1, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

£7 **The Wine Society**

A frank expression of white Bordeaux that displays energy and lime and lemon freshness not too different in style from a fine Chablis AOC. And in 2016 that is darn good. **Drink** 2017-2019

Ronan by Clinet, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

£7 **Bordeaux Index**

The slightly reductive aromatics should subside, as the palate is both substantial and flavorful with lip smacking yellow peach and other stone fruit flavors. On the richer side of the spectrum. **Drink** 2017-2019

Sirius de Maison Sichel, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

88

£12.95 **Wine Direct**

A rather robust white, with fine acidity matching the rich ripe yellow peach notes. Medium body with a smooth finish. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Jean Faux, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

87

www.chateaujeanfaux.com

Quite tasty in its fruit expression, with some tropical aspects like pineapple and mango. Pleasing density to the palate. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Sainte Catherine, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016

87

www.chateau-sainte-catherine.fr/

The nose gives off floral, beeswax and spice. The palate is seductive enough, with medium body and adequate ➤



freshness. There is a creamy aspect to the mid palate with both lime and some mango. Overall quite fine this blend of 90% Sauvignon and 10% Sauvignon Gris. Available directly from the producer. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château Fonfroide, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016 86

www.cdf-chateaux.com
Has energy, a light frizzante feel, with a bit of CO2 present. Apple, lime, fresh. **Drink** 2017-2019

Esprit de Malromé, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016 87

www.malrome.com
Sappy and flavorful. Citrus driven. Some papaya and exotic ripe fruit, even a touch of banana with pineapple. A bit of warmth on the finish, but full of flavor. **Drink** 2017-2019

Château la Caussade, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2016 86

www.chateaularame.com
Light on its feet but perfect for a warm summer day as it displays pleasing freshness and zest. **Drink** 2017-2019

Reds AOC Bordeaux 2015 & 2016

Château Belle Garde Cuvée élevé en fût de chêne, Bordeaux AOC 2015 91

£9.75 **Lea and Sandeman**
Cohesive and flavorful, with ripe fruit aromas. The palate is fairly complex with crushed tobacco, brambly red fruit, cassis, and coffee notes coming no doubt from the élevage in barrel. A pleasure to drink, a bright red fruit aspect on the medium finish - and one of the best wines of this blind tasting of Bordeaux AOCs

Château Grenet, Bordeaux AOC 2015 91

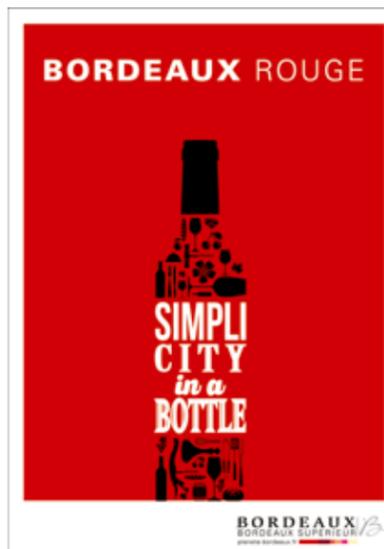
www.sc-vignerons.fr
Made from carefully sorted grapes and vinified in stainless steel at low temperatures with a long maceration, this very smooth blend of 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec recently won gold at the Concours de Vins in Paris. I could see why, given its frank expression of ripe, red fruit with some dark fruit as well. A fine vintage, simply expressed here, but with freshness and lift. A lovely, organically made wine. Order direct from Planet Bordeaux!

Château Joinin, Bordeaux AOC 2015 91

www.chateaupipeau.com
Widely available in the US, UK buyers should look for this online and have it shipped directly from France. At under £9, one of the very best of the reds in this series, displaying ripe plum and blackberry notes. The savory palate is nuanced, leading to a refreshing, almost full-bodied drink. Belongs to the same owners as Château Pipeau in Saint Emilion.

Château La Freynelle, Bordeaux AOC 2015 90

£9.75 **Stainton Wines**
This estate is making both excellent reds and whites. The 2015 red exudes ripe



plum and cherry fruit aromas that lead to vivacious red fruit and freshness on the palate. Very pleasing!

Château Tour de Mirambeau Réserve, Bordeaux AOC 2015 90

£8-10 **Ratcliffe & Brown**
Not only does this Merlot dominated blend exude ripe plum and black cherry, but also adds an extra dimension here of nuance, that sets it apart from many other wines tasted blind in the Bordeaux AOC category. The palate is well structured with ripe tannins and a smooth finish.

Ronan by Clinet, Bordeaux AOC 2015 90

£6-10 **Bordeaux Index**
Quite a bargain this wine, coming from the director of the famous Pomerol estate Château Clinet. The 100% Merlot Bordeaux AOC Made is silky-smooth claret with both black cherry and ripe plum on the palate, balanced out by refreshing acidity. A juicy wine that invites drinking. One of my favorites from this blind tasting.

Château Castagnac, Bordeaux AOC 2016 89

www.chateau-castagnac.com/en
For the price, a no brainer: Quite fine intensity, with juicy strawberry and plum fruit framing a rather dense mid palate that leads to a lifting finish. A delicious wine!

Château Fonfroide, Bordeaux AOC 2015 89

www.cdf-chateaux.com
Ripe and flavorful, with lip smacking red berry fruit and a pleasing medium bodied aspect. The price is right, too. **Drink** 2017-2020

Château Puy de Guirande, Bordeaux AOC 2016 89

www.grandmoulin.com
Dark fruit, plum and blackberry notes lead to nuance and freshness on the palate, which ends with pleasing lift on the fresh finish. Very tasty wine!



Damnation du Château Roques Mauriac, Bordeaux AOC 2015 89

www.levieux-vignerons.com
Quite a nice wine, aromatic in its expression of red and dark berry fruit. Medium body. **Drink** 2017-2021

Château La Rose Videau, Bordeaux AOC 2016 89

www.gonet.fr
Vivid and delicious notes of ripe blackberry and strawberry. The palate however has a cool elegance about it, happily typical of the 2016 vintage. Medium body and smooth finish. Very promising barrel sample! **Drink** 2018-2022

Maison Sichel Sirius, Bordeaux AOC 2015 89

£9-11 **Fells**
Lovely blackberry and plum aromas. The palate smooth and juicy. A rather complete wine with savory aspects leading to a medium+ finish.

Château de Beauregard-Ducourt, Bordeaux AOC 2015 88

www.ducourt.com/en
Ripe and juicy nose here. Red fruit, cherry and plum. Palate savory and would be a decent by the glass selection. Not the longest wine. **Drink** 2017-2020

Château Haut Vieux Chêne, Bordeaux AOC 2016 88

www.grandmoulin.com
You have to applaud the richness and savory aromas and flavors: quite fruity yet also with spice. Medium-bodied, with a frank and clean fruit expression, leading to a medium finish. **Drink** 2018-2021

Château Magondeau, Bordeaux AOC 2016 88

www.chateau-magondeau.com
Made from 100% Merlot, this exhibits rich red and dark fruit aromas, showing off a quality vintage like 2016. The palate is concentrated, yet balanced, with richness leading to a cool blueberry like finish, medium in length. **Drink** 2018-2021

Château Petit Moulin, Bordeaux AOC 2016 88

£7 **Bibendum**
Red brambly fruit and leafy green freshness combine to make a juicy medium bodied wine that would be perfect for a barbecue or with a roast chicken. The tannins are smooth and of a fine grain.

Château Thieuley, Bordeaux AOC 2015 88

£11 **Charles Taylor Wines**
Lovely fruitbasket aromas, more red than dark fruit, lead to a brisk attack, with touches of toast and more fruit. The tannin is smooth and the finish pleasingly medium.

Château Bonnet, Bordeaux AOC 2015 87

www.andrelurton.com
Pleasing light aromas of blackcurrant and plum. Medium bodied creamy aspect, pleasingly ripe and charming. **Drink** 2017-2020

Château de Foucaud, Bordeaux AOC 2015 87

www.chateau-sainte-catherine.fr
Here an unprepossing red, no great shakes but no pretention either. A smooth red for your barbecue. **Drink** 2017-2020

Château Mezain, Bordeaux AOC 2015 87

£9 **Asda**
There is rich brambly red and dark fruit here, with medium body that seems to gain extra weight from oak derived tannins and flavors. Certainly a more "modern" style that should please some more than others.

Château La Caderie "Expression", Bordeaux AOC 2016 87

www.chateaulacaderie.com
Fresh plum nose, even floral. There is a pleasing juiciness to the mid palate albeit in a rather light bodied expression. Perfect for the barbecue! **Drink** 2018-2021 ➤

Château Moulin de Vignolle, Bordeaux AOC 2016

87

www.grandmoulin.com

There is much fruit on the nose, and the attack is brisk enough. This wine borders on being a bit heady, and lovers of that style should seek out the rich concentrated expressions of dark ripe fruit here. **Drink** 2018-2021

AOC Bordeaux Supérieur 2015

Château Jean Faux, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

91

www.chateaujeanfaux.com

Very concentrated, like the ripe skin of the grape and not bitter. Quite a bit of body here and slightly heady and hedonistic wine. I would think that this pleases the crowds and some critics, too. Dark cherry, plum, damson, violet, fresh on the finish: pretty gorgeous stuff. Have seen it on sale in the US, but not in the UK.

Château Bossuet, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

90

fr.chateaux-dubost.com

From vines grown near Pomerol, a fine entry here. Vivid ripe fruit expressions of

blackberry and plum, with oak derived spice, and medium body with tannic grip that augurs well for the future. Indeed, a bottle that can be held for a few years before enjoying properly.

Château de Cazenove, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

90

£7 **Berry Bros & Rudd**

One of my favorites of the tasting. Red fruit aromatics with some vanilla aspects from the oak. The palate is fresh and lifting, with light red berry fruit notes, and a certain medium body marked by lift and tannins that are smooth. Located between Château Dauzac and Château Siran in Margaux, the wines are predominantly Merlot based and matured in oak barrels for 12 months.

Château La Paillette, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

90

dbrasseur33@orange.fr

Order from France! A great deal as the nose is marked by rich and brambly fruit with fine integration of oak derived spice. The alcohol-tannin-acidity balance is well managed in this medium bodied wine, with decent tannic grip and smooth texture. Pleasing lift on the medium and frank finish.

Château Larteau, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

90

£14 **Fine & Rare**

The price may be high, but this has quite a bit of substance to the palate! Cool fruit nose, blueberry. Very pleasing juiciness. Medium body. Red berry, plum fruit. Lift on finish. A wine for fine gastronomy.

Château Le Peuy Saincrit, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

90

£8.50 **Derventio Wines**

This has quite a bit of verve, with red cherry and ripe strawberry jam. Medium to full body. Tannic grip, too. Smooth and juicy, with a lingering finish. Excellent!

Château Trocard, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

90

£7 **Berry Bros & Rudd**

This has pleasing strawberry and blueberry fruit, a cooler expression with lift, and a medium body. I could have this with roast chicken and mushrooms or even veal and mushrooms: the bright acidity would match the fat from the meat.

Château Bolaire, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

89

£7 **Fine & Rare**

Quite an impressive wine, with no less than 60% old vine Petit Verdot, with 35% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Bright red fruit aromas with hints of spice. The rather substantial palate exudes crunchy red fruit freshness, with tannic grip.

Château des Arras Cuvée traditionnelle, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

89

£7 **Nickolls & Perks**

The nose is baked plum, clafoutis, then the palate shows density and sustain, with lip smacking juiciness, here. Medium bodied. Agreeable. Medium finish. Nice.

Château Fleur Haut Gaussons Malbec “La Viminière”, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

89

£20 **Berry Bros & Rudd**

Lovely aromatic integration of oak spice and blackberry and blueberry fruit on the nose. The palate is savory and robust, with richness in its expression of dark ripe fruit.

Château Larroque, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

89

£11-14 **Charles Taylor Wines**

This has nuance in its integration of light espresso from the oak with plum jam and strawberry fruit aromatics that invite drinking. The palate is rich, yet well balanced, and with fine tannic grip. Medium body with a medium finish. Located in the centre of Entre-Deux-Meres.

Champ de Fleuret, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

89

www.vplse.com

Substantial and interesting, with vivid fruit flavors and aromas, including forest strawberry, red licorice, and tangy ripe raspberry on the palate. The acidity lends freshness. I could imagine having turkey with this or even a steak. Made by the cave co-operative of Puisseguin Saint Emilion.



Château de la Cour d'Argent, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

89

£11 **Waitrose**

Cocoa powder, fruit cake. Agreeable attack, smooth and ripe to a medium bodied nuanced palate, that leads to a medium, slightly heady, finish. And the price cannot be beat!

Château Tour de Gilet, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

88

£7.99 **Waitrose**

A wine that blends oak influence and ripe plum fruit well, with a palate marked by smooth tannin and a medium body, leading to a rather fresh and agreeable finish.

Château Lamothe-Vincent “Héritage”, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

88

www.lamothe-vincent.com

Juicy blackberry and plum, quite intense tannic grip, but the juicy mid palate is savory. Overall pretty darn good.

Château Recougne, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

88

£7.99 **Majestic Wine Warehouses**

Lovely substance and grip, with ripe red fruit - as one would expect from 2015. Smooth and fun to drink. Perfect for the summer barbecue!

Château Damase, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

88

www.cavedelugon.com

Rich and fairly balanced expression of ripe red fruit. Fine integration of tannin and alcohol and acidity. Smooth on the palate.

Château Moutte Blanc Cuvée Moisin, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

88

www.moutte-blanc.fr

Smooth and balanced; rather quaffable. Not among the very best, but ripe fruit - strawberry and plum - and agreeable finish.

Château Majoureau Cuvée Hyppos, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

87

www.chateau-majoureau.fr

A suave texture with ripe strawberry and plum fruit. Brisk acidity brings freshness and lift to this mainly Merlot based blend. Pleasing texture and medium finish. The price is right, and you can order online from the Bordeaux based Planet Bordeaux.

Château de Parenchère “Cuvée Raphaël”, Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2015

87

£14 **Spirited Wines**

Forest freshness, ripe red berry fruit. A fine drink with medium body.



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planete-bordeaux.fr