Bordeaux’s Hidden Treasure
Dry White Bordeaux

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280,000 acres of vineyard

65 Appellations

Diverse Wines
Red, Dry White, Rosé, Sweet White, Sparkling

6+ times size of Napa Valley

Average Production = 5.3 million hectoliters

6460 Winegrowers
300 merchants
84 Brokjrs
34 Cooperatives
KEY FACTS

- Dry white wines represent 9% of Bordeaux vineyards (includes Crémant)
  - But circa 25% of the Pessac Léognan appellation
  - In 1950’s dry white accounted for 60% of the vineyard area
- 10 appellations
- 9800 hectares (24,000 acres)
- Annual production averages 63 million bottles (482,000 hl)
THE DRY WHITE APPELLATIONS – 10

- AOC Bordeaux – 71%
- Entre-Deux-Mers – 13.3%
- Graves Blanc 6.4%
- Côtes – 4.2%
- Pessac Léognan Blanc – 2%

- 1 - Côtes de Blaye, Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux
- 2 - Côtes de Bourg
- 3 - Francs Côtes de Bordeaux
- 4 - Graves de Vayres
- 5 - Entre-Deux-Mers
- 6 - Entre-Deux-Mers-Haut-Benaude
- 7 - Graves
- 8 - Pessac-Léognan
- 9 - Côtes de Bordeaux St-Macaire
- 10 - Ste-Foy-Bordeaux
In 1999 there was twice as much Semillon planted as Sauvignon Blanc.

SURFACE AREA BY WHITE GRAPE VARIETY:

- Sauvignon Blanc: 45%
- Semillon: 47%
- Muscadelle: 6%
- Other white grape varieties (Colombard, Merlot Blanc, Chenin, Folle Blanche, Mauzac, Ondenc and Ugni Blanc): 2%
DIVERSITY OF SOILS

- **Gravel soils**
  - Left bank of the Garonne and Gironde.
  - Absorb and store up heat.
  - Encourage the grapes to ripen.

- **Limestone soils**
  - Right bank.
  - Relatively warm soils.

- **Clay soils**
  - Right bank.

Sauvignon Blanc grapes prefer the cooler soils – so usually planted near the bottom of the slopes.
SAUVIGNON BLANC GRAPE

- Likely origins in the Loire Valley – first reference to Sauvignon Blanc in Bordeaux dates back to 1736.
- Parent of Cabernet Sauvignon (along with Cabernet Franc)
- Vigorous variety with average budding (later than Sémillon)
- Principal descriptors
  - bell pepper, boxwood leaf, cat pee, broom, blackcurrant bud, tomato leaf, nettle, grapefruit, passion fruit, white peach, gooseberry, asparagus
- Rootstocks – depends on soils – typically 3309 and 101.14 (or Fercal if there is a lot of active limestone)
  - Contrast for Semillon when more often Riparia is used to manage production
SAUVIGNON BLANC – TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS

• 1990’s - Role of the late Professor Denis Dubourdieu and Andre Lurton

• Denis Dubourdieu & Team
  • First to establish a scientific definition of the aromas in grapes and wines - specifically the aromas of Sauvignon Blanc.
  • Discovery of the pre-cursor aroma molecules
  • Little known until the mid-1990s about these compounds, except the role of isobutylmethoxypyrazine (IBMP) in the bell pepper character
  • Dubourdieu also developed the technique of skin contact in white wine making
### Characteristic Aromas Identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Molecule</th>
<th>Associated characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-mercapto-4 methyl-pentan-2 one (4MMP)</td>
<td>• Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Broom blosom</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-mercapto-hexan-1-ol acetate (A3MH)</td>
<td>• Blackcurrant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Grapefruit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Passion fruit</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-mercapto-4 méthyl-pentan-2-ol (4MMPOH)</td>
<td>• Lemon peel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-mercaptohexan-1ol (3MH)</td>
<td>• Grapefruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Passion fruit</td>
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</tbody>
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**Identification of the compounds responsible for creating the characteristic aromas of the Sauvignon Blanc variety**
Sauvignon Blanc Characteristic Aromas

Origin and formation of molecules responsible for creating aromas

- These molecules exist in the grape and must in the form of **non-volatile precursors**
- These molecules become volatile with the interaction of a specific **enzyme**.

![Diagram showing the process of converting non-volatile precursors to volatile aromas](image)
SAUVIGNON BLANC
THE INFLUENCE OF WINEMAKING FACTORS

• Skin contact / pre-fermentation maceration:
  • A proportion of the precursors are contained in the grapes’ skins,
  • maceration on skins has an influence on the aromatic potential of the musts.

• Pressing
  • can also encourage the extraction of aromas and aromatic precursors.

• Reductive Winemaking
  • Avoiding the oxidation of musts (using inert gas and protection with sufficient sulphiting).
Sauvignon Blanc Characteristic Aromas

Other influencing winemaking factors

Winemaking factors influencing Aroma Characteristics

• choice of yeast strain
• fermentation temperature
• nutrients available for yeasts to develop
• quantity of oxygen...
• Maturation Method
• Lees stirring
• Closure
Tasting

A Journey Through the Appellations and Styles
Accounts for about 14% of the dry white wine produced in Bordeaux

Between the Dordogne and Garonne rivers

Winemaking dates back to Roman times (2000 years ago).

Reputation as a wine area really started with Benedictine Monks during the Middle Ages

Circa 1500 ha under vine (3700 acres) – and about 2560 winegrowers

A majority of clay-limestone soils.

Blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and a little Muscadelle.

For Entre-Deux-Mers – wines must be a blend
CHÂTEAU SAINTE MARIE VIEILLES VIGNES, 2015 , ENTRE- DEUX-MERS

Family owned estate - Stephane Dupulch (Blend: 63% Sauvignon Blanc, 27% Semillon & 10% Muscadelle

- **Organic:** Certified
- **Vineyard:** From 35 year old, densely planted vines on one of the highest peaks in the Gironde region.
- **Soil:** Gravelly, well draining soils. On south facing vineyards
- **Viticulture:** Farmed organically, yields are kept at around 6 clusters per vine.
- **Vinification:** Quick cold soak followed by pneumatic press. Fermentation in stainless steel tanks.
- **Aging:** Aged 6 months in tank on the lees before bottling in the spring.
BORDEAUX BLANC

The largest white appellation

- A regional appellation.
- Surface area currently under production: 6,500 ha.
- Accounts for 68% of the dry white produced in Bordeaux.
- Diversity of soils which influence the characteristics of dry white wines.
- Balance between Sauvignon, Sémillon, Muscadelle.
- Diverse styles – and includes dry white wines made in Médoc, Sauternes, Saint Emilion and other ‘red’ only appellations.
Family owned property in the Entre-Deux-Mers (Daignac) - Veronique Barthe – the first woman winemaker at La Freynelle in the eight generations that her family has owned the property.

- Veronique was the first woman born into the family since 1789!

**2015 Chateau La Freynelle**

60% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Semillon, 15% Muscadelle

Pre-fermentation maceration for 2/3 Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle

Fermentation in stainless steel vats at low temperatures.

Maturing on fine lees until bottling. protein stabilization and tartaric acid
SAINTE-FOY-BORDEAUX

- Overall Sainte-Foy-Bordeaux represents 1% of the Bordeaux vineyard
- East of the Entre-Deux-Mers region heading toward Bergerac. Eastern limit of Bordeaux
- Vineyards lie on an alignment of hills and plateaus that dominate the river Dordogne.
- There are 19 small communes in Sainte Foy Bordeaux,
- Total of 207 hectares – 22 wine growers
- Original AC (1937) was only for white & sweet wines
- Reds included in the AOC since the 1990’s
- Soils – Mixed with lots of marl, loam, sandy soils – some clay/limestone
- Lot of producers just use the AOC Bordeaux appellation
2013 CHÂTEAU DU CHAMPS DU TREILLES, 'VIN PASSION’, SAINTE FOY DE BORDEAUX

- Small family property owned by Jean-Michel Comme (winemaker / general manager Pontet Canet) and his wife Corinne
- 100% Biodynamic farming
- Clay-limestone soils
- 2013 Château du Champs des Treilles “Vin Passion”
  - Manual harvest
  - Blend: 34% Sauvignon Blanc, 33% Semillon, 33% Muscadelle
  - INOX fermentation
  - Natural yeasts
  - Left on fine lees 2 months
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CHÂTEAU LA DAME BLANCHE, 2013 BORDEAUX BLANC

- The white wine of Cru Bourgeois Château du Taillan in the Medoc family-run estate (Cruse family)
- Currently run by Armelle Cruse - 5th generation of the long established Cruse family, owners of the property since it was acquired by Henri Cruse in 1896.
- 2013 Château La Dame Blanche
  - 100% Sauvignon Blanc
  - Hand harvested
  - 12 hour PFM
  - Vinified in INOX
  - Lees aging one month + some batonnage
LUNE D'ARGENT CLOS DES LUNES, 2012, BORDEAUX BLANC

• Very old Sauternes vineyard – situated between Yquem and Guiraud.

• Purchased by Olivier Bernard (Dom. De Chevalier) in 2011

• Grapes cultivated organically

• 2012 Lune d’Argent, Clos des Lunes
  • 70% Semillon, 30% Sauvignon Blanc
  • No PRM on the Sauvignon
  • SB fermented in INOX, 25% of Semillon fermented in barrel
  • Maturation: The wine is aged for 6-7 months in 25% oak barrel and 75% stainless steel tanks.
GRAVES AOC

- To the South-East of Bordeaux, a strip of land 50 km long that runs alongside the Garonne river.
- Surface area in white production: 752 ha. (2519 ha in total)
- Average annual white production: 33,794 hl.
- Pebbles and sand mixed with silty clay soils.
- Blend of Sauvignon and Sémillon.

Graves Classification

- Drawn up in 1953 and completed in 1959.
- Classification per commune and per type of wine (red/white).
- 16 growths listed with no system of hierarchy:
  - 9 white wines and 13 red wines.
- All belong to the Pessac Léognan appellation.
Long known for its high quality dry white wines
CHÂTEAU DE CÉRONS, 2013 GRAVES BLANC

- Small family estate (11 ha) in the beautiful village of Cérons – Xavier and Caroline Perromat
- Soil: Mixed gravel and clay soil with sand and shingles upon a marine limestone subsoil.
- Sustainable viti – 6,600 planting density
- 2013 Château de Cérons Blanc
  - 50% Sauvignon 40% Sémillon, 10% Sauvignon Gris
  - Hand harvested
  - Slow pressing of whole bunches. (some PFM)
  - Fermentation small stainless steel tanks – uses different yeasts for each variety.
  - Lees stirring for 4 to 6 weeks after fermentation
  - Aged for 13 months before bottling
FRANCS, CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

• A small appellation, 50km to the north-east of Bordeaux
• 377 ha (of which 18 ha planted to white) – 32 winegrowers region of small estates
• Right bank of the Dordogne river
• The most continental zone of the Gironde – and highest elevations (110 meters asl)
• Clay-limestone soils containing “crasses de fer” (iron rich sandstone)
• White wines possess powerful aromas of ripe fruit and are generous on the palate
CHATEAU LES CHARMES GODARD, 2013, FRANCS COTES DE BORDEAUX

- Family estate located in Saint Cibard, owned by Theinpoint Family (Nicholas)

- Soils: Clay-limestone on marl

- Planting density = 5000 vines/ha and 40 year old vines

- 2013 blend: 50% Sémillon, 35% Sauvignon Gris, 15% Sauvignon Blanc

- Hand harvested, barrel fermented (500 L) with circa 20% new – selected yeasts

- Aged circa 7-8 months on lees with some batonnage.
Pessac-Léognan

**Land of Graves Classified growths**

- Appellation established in **1987**.
- Located to the **South** of Bordeaux and its suburbs.
- Surface area in production: **268 ha.**
- Average annual production: **10 306 hl.**
- Soils settled upon thick layers of gravel, shingle and **pebbles**.
- Blend of **Sauvignon** and **Sémillon**.
- Historically more **Sauvignon Blanc** than Semillon in Pessac
- More challenging variety to grow than Semillon + only larger, rich estates could afford to do this.
CHÂTEAU OLIVIER BLANC, 2012 PESSAC LÉOGNAN

- One of the oldest properties in Bordeaux – dating back to 11th century.
- Original Chateau destroyed by fire (1882) - completely rebuilt.
- 1867, Chateau Olivier purchased by Mayor of Bordeaux, Alexandre de Bethmann. Still owned by the de Bethmann family
- Large 250 ha estate with 50 ha under vine
- Soils: gravel over clay and limestone – white grapes planted in the less gravel and more clay/limestone soils
- 38 ha red grapes and 12 ha white grapes
- Density 8000 – 10,000 vines/ha
- Blend 2012: 78% Sauvignon, 20% Sémillon, 2% Muscadelle
- About 1/3 skin contact, mix of INOX and barrel fermentation, aged 9 months on lees
Questions

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