Bordeaux Classifications
“Navigating and Understanding the Movable ones”

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- 65 Appellations
- 277,000 acres
- 6300 Winegrowers
- 300 Negociants
- 34 Co-operatives
- 5.3 million hl (707 million bottles) / yr (10 yr avg)
BORDEAUX – FIVE MAIN CLASSIFICATIONS

• 1855 Classification – Médoc & Sauternes
• Graves Classification (1953 – updated 1955)
• Saint Emilion Classification (1955)
• Crus Bourgeois de Médoc
• Crus Artisans du Médoc

No classification in Pomerol
Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

- North of the city of Bordeaux
- Triangular peninsula stretching along the Gironde Estuary.
- Cover some 37,000 acres
- Stretches south to north over about 50 miles
- 8 Communes
CRU BOURGEOIS

- **Quality Classification** term for a group of red wines produced in the Médoc
- ‘Bourgeoisie’ concept dates back to the Middle Ages - when Bordeaux was under English rule
- ‘Bourgeoisie’ = a sort of merchant class who were granted certain tax exemptions on wine sales in France and for export - afforded them opportunities to buy chateaux & vineyards
- Cru Bourgeois list (of sorts) existed way back around the time of the Medoc Classification - 248 specific wines were listed in 1858 in a book published by Mr. d'Armailhac
- Wines played an important role in the development of the Medoc’s export market
- Hard times - End of 19th and early 20th Century until WW1 and The Great Depression
CRU BOURGEOIS- NEXT PHASE

- **1932** – First ‘official’ Crus Bourgeois classification by the Bordeaux brokers
  - Brokers developed a list of 444 properties with the designation Cru Bourgeois – list was registered but *never ratified / submitted for Ministerial approval*

- **1962** – A Union of Cru Bourgeois members/properties was created
  - Managed by a 4 member board of directors - Jean Nony, Jean Miailhe, Philippe Gasqueton and Max Cuvelier.
  - Purpose = to defend the interests of the owners

- **1966 and 1978** - original 1932 classification were revised – but you had to be a member of the ‘club’ to be considered

- **1979** – the *European Community Labelling Regulations* approved term "Cru Bourgeois" provided that the conditions for its use were specified by French law.
CRU BOURGEOIS- NEXT PHASE

• **2000** – EU insists they need to ‘tidy up their act’ AND that
  
  • The classification be *open to any AOC wine from any of the 8 Medoc communes*
  
  • It be distinguished by three levels
    
    • *Les Crus Bourgeois Exceptionnels, Les Crus Bourgeois Supérieurs et les Crus Bourgeois.*

  • Classification was carried out by a jury of 18 wine professionals –
    
    • “*reconnus sur la Place de Bordeaux*”!

  • Classification based on evaluation of 7 criteria (terroir, grape varieties, viti-vini, quality consistency, reputation of the property, tasting the wine)

• **2003** - This ‘new’ classification was announced
CRU BOURGEOIS- NEXT PHASES

• **2003** Classification – 490 châteaux applied for Cru Bourgeois status BUT the Alliance accepted only 247 = **UPROAR**

  • 9 Crus Bourgeois Exceptionels, 87 Crus Bourgeois Supérieurs and 151 Crus Bourgeois.

• **2007** - **the 2003 classification was annulled** by French court and the French Fraud Office banned the use of the term ‘Cru Bourgeois’

  • Alliance responded - saying Cru Bourgeois = symbol of wine quality and NOT a classification

• **2008 - 2009**: Agreement to develop a new ‘fair’ system - **La Sélection Officielle de ces Crus Bourgeois**
CRU BOURGEOIS – 2010 TO 2015

• **2010** – Cru Bourgeois re-introduced as the *La Sélection Officielle de ces Crus* Bourgeois (announcing the 2008 selection) – only one level of classification – Reconnaissance Cru Bourgeois.

• Under the new system – many changes
  
  • It is the wine of a specific vintage that is ‘certified’ not ‘classified’ - only the Grand Vin
  
  • Finished wines assessed on a yearly basis (2 two years after the harvest) and accessed by an external independent body VERITAS
  
  • Strict production rules – including min aging 18 months
  
  • Having the ‘reconnaissance one year is non guarantee for the next’
  
  • Official sticker on each bottle
THE FUTURE

• 2015 – Members of the Alliance des Cru Bourgeois voted to create a two-tier system that will see its members’ wines split into Cru Bourgeois and Cru Bourgeois Supérieur

• Back to a more ‘real’ classification system

• New system will be introduced in 2020 with the 2018 vintage
CRU BOURGEOIS – NUMBER OF WINES

- 2014 – includes 278 wines
- 2013 – includes 251 wines
- 2012 - includes 267 wines
- 2011 - includes 253 wines
- 2010 - includes 260 wines
- 2009 - includes 246 wines
- 2008 - includes 243 wines
TASTING – PART A

• Château Greysac, 2012, Cru Bourgeois Médoc
• Château du Moulin Rouge, 2012, Cru Bourgeois Haut- Médoc
• Château La Tour de Mons, 2012, Cru Bourgeois Margaux
• Château Tour de Pez, 2012, Cru Bourgeois Saint-Estèphe
Saint Emilion Classification
SAINT EMILION - WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT A CLASSIFICATION

• Saint Emilion Grand Cru is **NOT** a classification – it is an AOC/AOP appellation

• Saint Emilion Grand *Cru Classé* and Premier *Grands Crus Classé* are classifications within the Saint Emilion Grand Cru Appellation

• So to be eligible for classification, vineyards must adhere to and be within this higher appellation.
SAINT EMILION CLASSIFICATION

• Saint Emilion – compared to the Medoc tardy in instigating a classification (lack of sufficient support back in 1855)

• Syndicat viticole started planning for one back in 1930)

• Principles for the classification established in 1954 - INAO taking responsibility for the classification

• 1955 - First attempt published on June 16th, 1955

• Original list contained 12 Premier grands crus classés and 63 Grands crus classés and unlike the 1855 Classifications is renewable ever ten years (or so)

• 1958 - 1955 Classification amended Creating and A and B ranking - upgrading châteaux Ausone and Cheval Blanc to premiers grands crus classes (A)
SAINT EMILION CLASSIFICATION - TIMELINE

• **1969** – Full revision of the classification – Premiers Grands Crus Classés stayed intact but number of Grands Crus Classés upped to 72.

• No new classification in 1979

• **1986** – New revision - one demotion from PGCC (Chateau Beau-Séjour Bécot ) and GCC reduced back to 63

• **1996** – Beau-Séjour Bécot reinstated as a PGCC and Angélus promoted to Premier Grands Crus Classé, making the PGCC 13. Also the # of GCCs reduced to 55.

• **2006** – Pavie Macquin and Troplong Mondot promoted to PGCC. Now we have 15. Plus there were **11 demotions** at GCC level reducing the number to 44.

**UPROAR ENSUED !!!**
SAINT EMILION CLASSIFICATION – TIMELINE (2006 TO 2011)

• String of litigations & court rulings = **2006 Classification annulled.**
• 2009 – new ruling – interim compromise
  • 1996 classification to be reinstated BUT keeping the 2006 promotions
    • So **15 PGCC** and **57 GCC** (55 from 1996 and 2 that were promoted in 2006)
  • Compromise classification –binding up to 2011 vintage
SAINT EMILION CLASSIFICATION – TIMELINE 2012 ….

- **2012** – New system (thoroughly revised in 2011) - that included
  - Ministry of Agriculture and INAO now oversee the Classification
  - Commission of non-Bordeaux wine professionals* to taste the wines**
  - Independent testing bodies - VERITAS and Qualisud
- 96 candidates, and 82 were accepted
  - 18 as premiers grands crus classés and 64 as grands crus classés, the latter including 16 newly promoted estates
  - Châteaux Angélus and Château Pavie elevated to PGCC A,
  - Elevations to PGCC B
    - Château Valandraud
    - Château Canon-la-Gaffelière
    - Château Larcis Ducasse and
    - La Mondotte
SCORING – RANKING SYSTEM – SAINT EMILION GRAND CRU CLASSE

- Ten vintages tasted
- 50% for wine tasting notes
- 20% for Estate’s Reputation
- 20% for vineyards & terroir
- 10% for how the vineyard is managed
- Must score 14/20 to receive classification
SCORING – RANKING SYSTEM – SAINT EMILION PREMIER GRAND CRU CLASSE

• 15 vintages tasted
• 35% for wine tasting notes
• 35% for Estate’s Reputation
• 20% for vineyards & terroir
• 5% for how the vineyard is managed
• Must score 16 / 20 to receive classification
Unlike the 1855 Classification it has an official mechanism / a process for qualification and a set of criteria by which the wine and property is independently judged.

- The initiative must come from the Chateau/winegrower (and not the broker)

- Once classified Chateaux cannot augment size of holding for 10 years (or duration of classification)
SAINT EMILION – PREMIERS GRANDS CRUS CLASSEES

CLASSE A

• Château Ausone
• Château Cheval Blanc
• Château Angélus*
• Château Pavie*

CLASSE B

• Château Beauséjour (héritiers Duffau-Lagarrosse)
• Château Beau-Séjour-Bécot
• Château Bélair-Monange
• Château Canon

CLASSE B

• Château Canon la Gaffelière*
• Château Figeac
• Clos Fourtet
• Château la Gaffelière
• Château Larcis Ducasse*
• La Mondotte*
• Château Pavie Macquin
• Château Troplong Mondot
• Château Trottevieille
• Château Valandraud*

* Denotes properties promoted for 2012
TASTING B

• Château La Clotte, 2012, Saint-Emilion Grand Cru Classé (since the beginning)
THANK YOU!

Questions