



Bordeaux Left Bank – Bordeaux Right Bank: Can We Still Distinguish the Difference?

Mary Gorman-McAdams, MW, Bordeaux Wine Council
Jo-Ann Ross, DIPWset, CSW, CSS

AGENDA

- Bordeaux Key Facts
- Distinguishing Factors
- Tasting

BORDEAUX KEY FACTS AND MAP

277,250 acres of vineyard

65 Appellations

Diverse Wine Styles:

Red, Dry White, Rosé, Sweet White, Sparkling

6+ times size of Napa

27+ times the size of The Finger Lakes

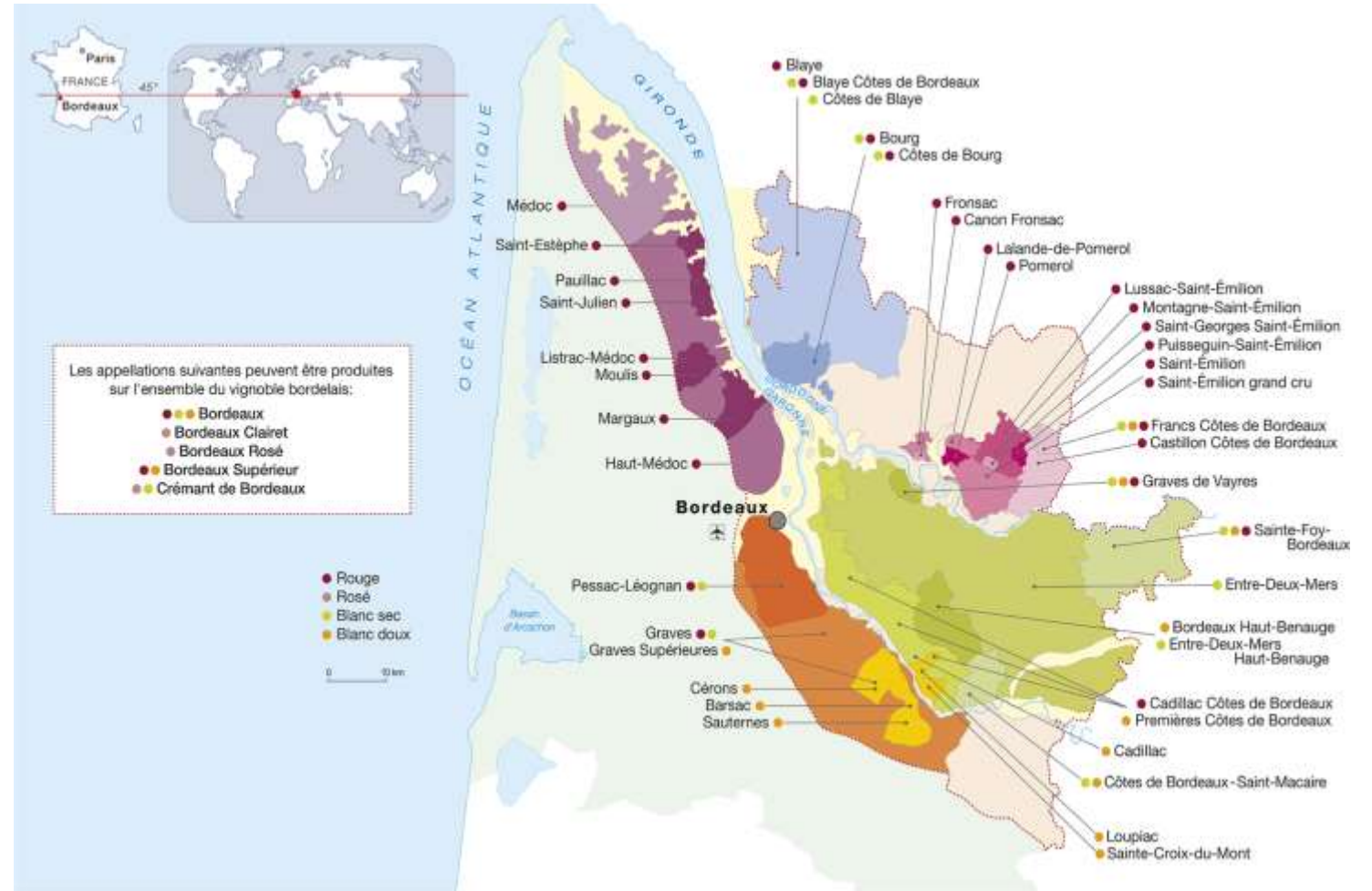
Average Production = 56 million cases

6,100 Winegrowers

300 merchants

76 Brokers

33 Cooperatives (in 3 co-op unions)



GENERALIZATIONS OF LEFT VS. RIGHT

Left Bank

- 1855 (set in stone) - Source of most of Bordeaux's most famous classified growths
- Gravel soils – low lying gravelly hills - wines predominantly from Cabernet Sauvignon
- Near the Atlantic - struggling a little more to ripen given the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean
- Wetter, cooler summers and milder winters
- Wines:
 - More tannic, tighter, needing more time before being ready to drink
 - darker, black fruit profile and especially notes of cassis, cedar and lead pencil

Right Bank

- Cult wines / 'garragiste' movement (mid-1990's) - Pétrus and Le Pin
- Moveable classification of Saint Émilion and home to such non-classified greats as
- Clay, limestone soils – with some sand and gravel (higher plateau and slopes – wines predominantly from Merlot
- Drier, warmer summers & cooler winters
- Wines
- Fleshier, more plush and voluptuous with rounder tannins - ready to enjoy earlier
- More plummy, red fruit profile, black tea and tobacco leaf

LEFT BANK = Médoc and Graves

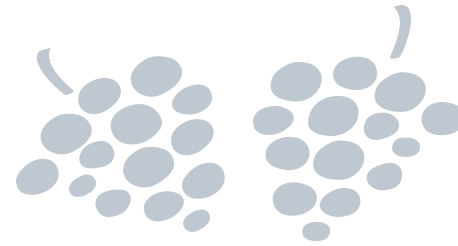


Médoc et Graves

- 1 Médoc ●
 - 2 Haut-Médoc ●
 - 3 Listrac-Médoc ●
 - 4 Moulis-en-Médoc ●
 - 5 Margaux ●
 - 6 Pauillac ●
 - 7 Saint-Estèphe ●
 - 8 Saint-Julien ●
 - 9 Graves ●●
 - 10 Pessac-Léognan ●●
- Rouge ● Blanc sec



Key figures



18,1% of the total Bordeaux winegrowing area

50,000 acres

(40,000 in Médoc, **10,000** in Graves (incl PL)

10 appellations



Less than **15%** of properties cover an area totaling between **12 and 37 acres**

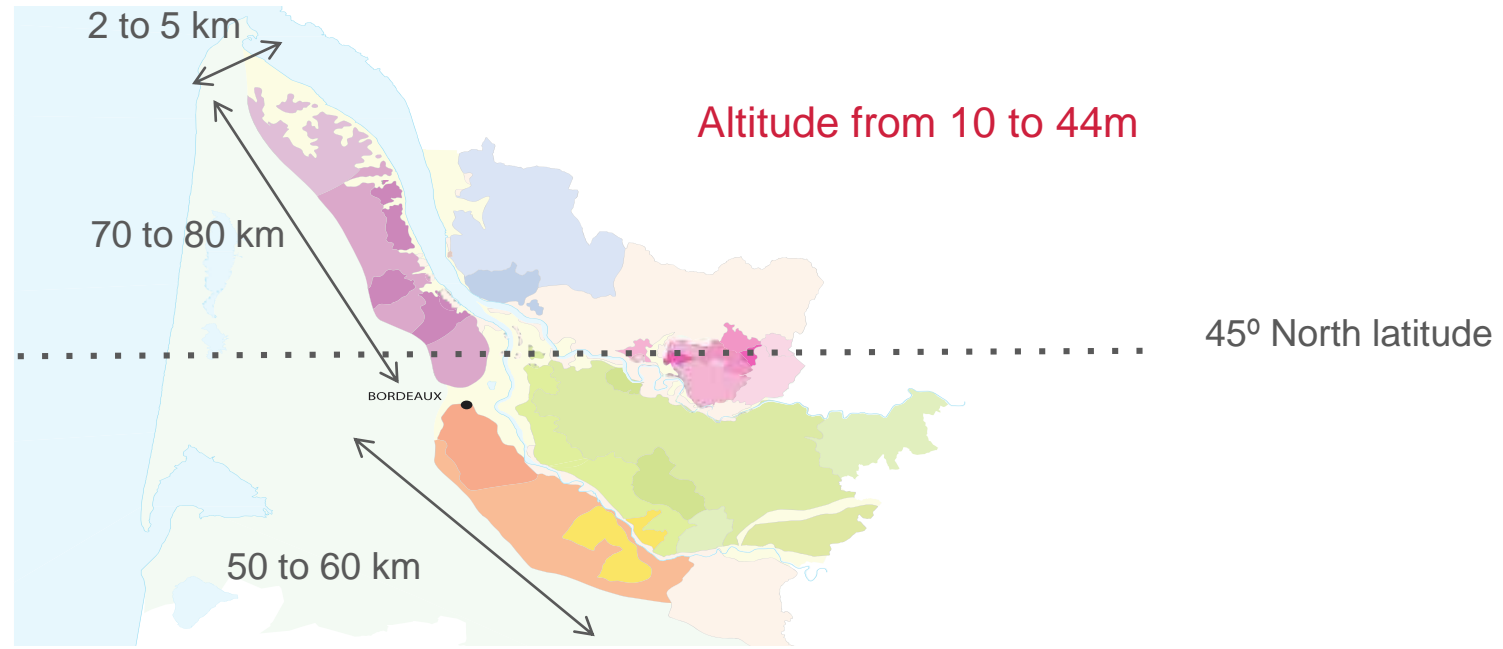
More than **20%** of properties have an area under vine of more than **75 acres**

954.183 hl produced = **127** million bottles

CIVB / Source: Customs 2017



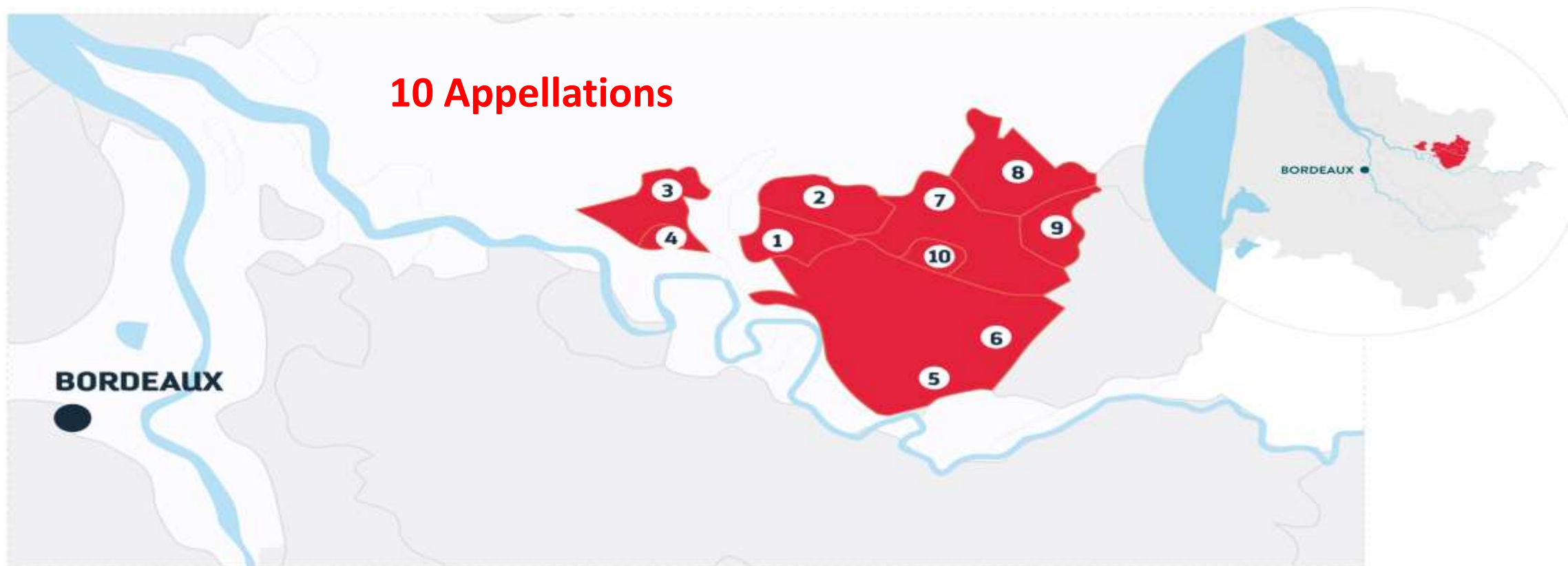
Geographical location and climate



- ✓ Mild climate, favorable for winegrowing
- ✓ Warm and humid, with a regular amount of sunshine
- ✓ The Médoc area is located between two stretches of water, so temperatures are regulated



Right Bank : Saint Emilion, Pomerol, Fronsac + Satellites

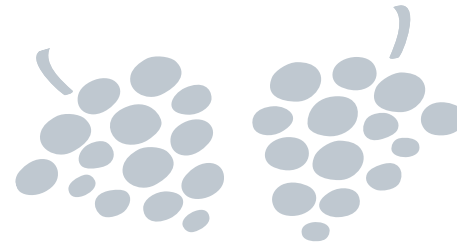


10 Appellations

- 1 Pomerol ●
- 2 Lalande de Pomerol ●
- 3 Fronsac ●
- 4 Canon-Fronsac ●
- 5 Saint-Émilion ●
- 6 Saint-Émilion Grand Cru ●
- 7 Montagne-Saint-Émilion ●
- 8 Lussac-Saint-Émilion ●
- 9 Puisseguin-Saint-Émilion ●
- 10 Saint-Georges Saint-Émilion ●
- Rouge



Key figures



11% of the total Bordeaux winegrowing area



30,000 acres

10 appellations



Average estate size: **20** acres "The hill with a thousand châteaux"

564,823 hectolitres = **75** million bottles



Geographical location and climate

- Rolling plateau (100 to 130 meters asl),
- Hilly with deep valleys, but no steep slopes .



- ✓ More continental climate, favorable for winegrowing
- ✓ Great diversity of soils – Clay, limestone, sand, gravel of varying compositions
- ✓ Right Bank area is located north of the Dordogne river



DIFFERENTIATING LEFT FROM RIGHT

SIZE

- Left Bank: estates tend to be larger
- Right Bank: estates are much smaller

PRODUCTION – average

- Left Bank: produces almost 127 million bottles
- Right Bank: produces about 75 million bottles.

TERROIR

- Left Bank: NOT simply 'gravels' – you also find different clay soils, sandy soils and pockets of limestone.
- Right Bank: generalized as clay-limestone, but very diverse – types of clay, (black & blue clays etc.) but also gravels and sandy soils.
- Many combinations and permutations

THE IMPORTANCE OF MERLOT on both banks

- Dominant grape for right bank wines, the left bank is more varied.
- Left Bank – once outside the classic communes of Margaux, Saint Julien, Pauillac and Saint Estèphe – more Merlot
- Merlot accounts for 66% of all red plantings in Bordeaux.

Something to think about

- You can take ‘Cabernet’ out of a left bank wine, but you cannot eliminate the sense of ‘left bank-ness’ or birthright ! *or can you ???*) – we will see
- Left Bank – regardless of blend ≈ more rigorous, tighter structure
 - think ‘suit and tie’ compared to the more open style from the right bank.



TASTING BLIND – CAN WE DISTINGUISH THE DIFFERENCE?

- When we know what is in the glass it is *very easy* to differentiate and argue why one wine is left bank and another wine is right bank.
- With blind tasting it is not so easy – increasingly so because:
 - LEFT BANK: more wines have not just more Merlot but are made in a more supple style to appeal earlier.
 - RIGHT BANK: we can see some increases of Cabernet in wines to add freshness and to balance Merlot in warmer years.
 - Blind tasting is just not easy !!!!

THE PROOF WILL BE IN THE TASTING...

BORDEAUX 2014 VINTAGE – THE ‘MIRACLE’ VINTAGE

- Wet winter (wettest in 50 years) but mild very little frost
- Early bud break and quick flowering (some Merlot issues) ≈ *early vintage??*
- Butcool, humid, overcast summer – July & August
 - Kept pH low, preserved acidity levels but
 - Delayed ripening
 - Increased disease pressure
- Véraison – protracted and uneven
- Long Indian summer (or a delayed ‘*real*’ summer) saved the day (august 27 through end of October) – but with some right bank heavy rains
- Overall considered a Cabernet vintage

BORDEAUX 2014 – THE WINES

- Elegance over power
- High acidity
- Deeply colored, with aromatic complexity
- Medium+ flavor concentration
- Lack the richness and concentration of 2010
- Tannins fine and smooth – 2014 left bank more structured than 2012
- Right bank less powerful than usual – easier drinking
- Excellent for dry whites and sweet Bordeaux

WINE #1 – CHÂTEAU MAUVESIN BARTON, MOULIS-EN-MÉDOC 2014

- Moulis – more inland away from the estuary (south of Saint Julien and north of Margaux) – soils more gravel than Listrac
- Blend: 53% Merlot, 29% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
- Soil: Calcareous clay, some gravels and sand
- Vinification: Plot by plot vinification, thermo-regulated stainless steel vats of small volume, maceration and fermentation in tank
- Maturation: 12 months in barrel, 1/3 from new barrels with 3 different suppliers, 1/3 from 2011 wine barrels, 1/3 from two Léoville Barton wines.
- SRP: \$ 24



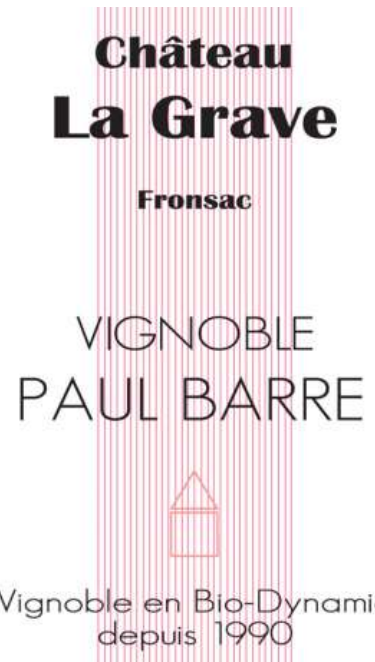
WINE #2 – CHÂTEAU FONROQUE, SAINT-ÉMILION GRAND CRU CLASSÉ 2014

- Owned from 1931 to 2017 by the Moueix family - considered their birthplace! (now Guillard family – insurance firm) – still managed by Alain Moueix
- One single plot 17.6 ha - Certified organic (2006) and biodynamic (2008)
- Early ripening site – harvest typically a week earlier than neighbors
- Hand harvest and gentle pressing in old 100 year old basket press
- Vini in trad' cement tanks & some foudres
- Blend: 90 % Merlot 10 % Cabernet Franc
- Soil: limestone plateau and clay-limestone coast
- Maturation: In barrel with 30% new oak
- SRP: \$ 30



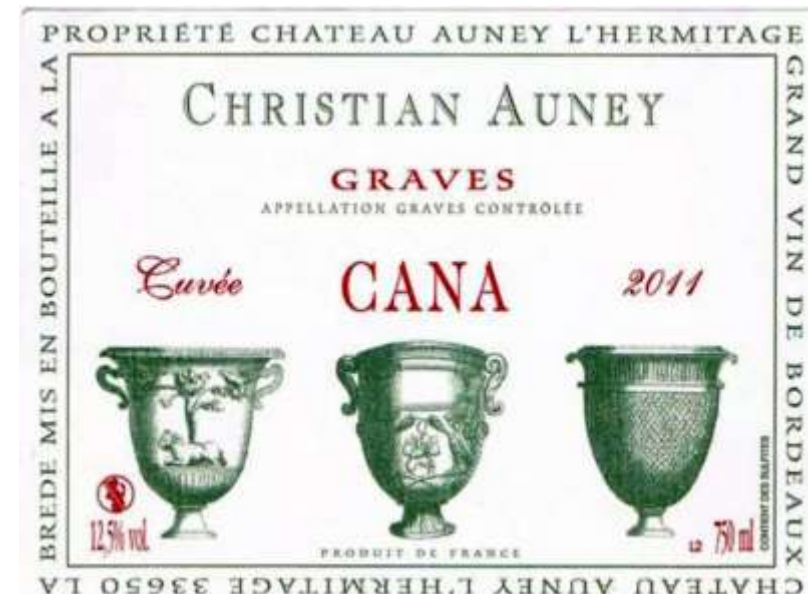
WINE #3 – CHÂTEAU LA GRAVE, PAUL BARRE, FRONSAC 2014

- 7 hectares
- Biodynamic since 28 years
- Blend: 66% Merlot, 26% Cabernet Franc, 8% Malbec
- Soil: thirty year old vineyards in Sandy clay based
- Vinification: Mix of INOX and used barrels - indigenous yeast. Sulfur is used but minimally.
- Maturation: Aged in a combination of stainless steel and used barrels.
- SRP: \$ 33



WINE #4 – CHÂTEAU AUNEY L'HERMITAGE 'CUVÉE CANA', GRAVES 2014

- Christian and Sylvie AUNEY
- Commune of Brede – 10 small plots totaling 8.5 ha – Cuvee Cana comes from a 1.5 ha plot
- Never used any chemicals and now certified BIO
- Manual harvest – plot by plot
- Vinification in INOX – small tanks (50 hl)
- Blend: 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot
- Maturation: 15 months in oak barrels (25% of the barrels are renewed every year).
- SRP: \$ 30



WINE #5 – CHÂTEAU LARRIVET HAUT-BRION, PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2014

- Owned by Gervosan family since 1987 – 72 ha of vineyard – with more Merlot (55%) than Cabernet Sauvignon (20%) and Cab Franc (5%)
- Blend: 48% Cabernet Sauvignon 45 % Merlot, & 7% Cabernet Franc
- Soil: Deep gravel, clay and sandy soils
- Vinification: Plot by plot vinification - stainless steel. Traditional vinification at high temperature (28-32°C) 3-4 pumping over per day and MLF in vat
- Maturation: Aged 14 to 18 month in 1/3 new, 1/3 one use and 1/3 twice used oak barrels
- Consultant used to be Michel Rolland – now is Stéphane Derenoncourt
- SRP: \$ 40



WINE #6 – CHÂTEAU MONTLANDRIE, CASTILLON, CÔTES DE BORDEAUX 2014

- Purchased by Denis DURANTOU 2009
- Soils: 12 ha vineyard on clay and limestone soils on the plateau of Castillon – with elevation up to 80 meters
- 6000 vines / ha
- Blend: 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon
- Vinification: Plot by plot vinification in small, temp' controlled, stainless vats (range in size from 24 hl 82 hl.)
- MLF in vat.
- Maturation: 30% new French oak on an average of 14 months.
- SRP: \$25



WINE #7 – CHÂTEAU BOURGNEUF, POMEROL 2014

- Vayron Family since 1821 - Bourgneuf is one of the oldest family owned estates in Pomerol.
- Blend: 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc
- Soils: 9 ha vineyard on the slopes of the Pomerol plateau (single plot) , - three major soil types:
 - Higher part of slope - pure clay producing rich, dense grapes with great phenolic qualities – the best soils
 - Middle of slope - clayey-sand to sandy-clay, soils producing elegant yet complex grapes
 - lower portion of slope - gravelly,
- Vinification: Temperature controlled, cement vats with manual pumping over . MLF in vat
- Maturation: The barrel-ageing in French oak (35% new, 65% one and two use) for 12 to 14 months.
- SRP: \$45



WINE #8 – CHÂTEAU PHÉLAN SÉGUR, SAINT-ESTÈPHE 2014

- Bernard Phelan and his son Frank
- Owned by Gardinier family (1984 to 2017) now Belgian owner - Philippe Van de Vyvere.
- 70 ha vineyard
- Soils: Clay-gravels on the hillocks and plateau of Saint-Estèphe
- Blend: 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot
- Viti: Sustainable with precision plot by plot viti , 8500 vines / ha
- Vinification: Plot by plot vinification (40-60 hl). \
- MLF mainly in barrique but some lots in vat
- Maturation: The proportion of new barrels never exceeds 50%.
- SRP: \$47



THANK YOU!