

RICHARD KIHLLTD

Fine Wine Shippers and Brokers

Established 1969

2017 BORDEAUX EN PRIMEUR

At the beginning of April we were in Bordeaux to taste the 2017 vintage, the year that may well be remembered for its late Spring frosts...However whilst statistics report 40-50% reductions in overall quantity of Bordeaux grapes harvested, the fact is that the properties where we tasted, i.e. the better and best chateaux of the region, actually had a **very good harvest** with any frost damage only affecting their lesser plots rather than the vineyards responsible for the *Grands Vins*.

The seven best appellations, where almost all of the top Chateaux are to be found, make up less than 15% of Bordeaux production and these are largely on or near the Gironde estuary. In 2017 the river played a hugely important part in protecting the Left Bank communes from the frost with St Estèphe, St Julien and Pauillac actually making more wine on average than over the previous few years. Chateaux with vineyards on higher ground also tended to be more successful. However there was considerable damage in parts of Margaux, and on the Right Bank where, although the Pomerol plateau was largely untouched, a number of Saint Emilion properties lost their entire crops.

2017 is a heterogeneous vintage but where the frost was absent the region enjoyed a relatively 'normal' growing season: June was unusually wet but was preceded by a dry and mild Spring and followed by a good summer with average temperatures and low rainfall. With an early growth cycle and a dry summer, the harvest was very early and undertaken between the September rains, which had the positive effect of softening the grapes' skins and speeding up their maturation. However neither the late rainfall, nor the wet June, did much to assuage a drought which in effect lasted the entire year and ensured small, concentrated grapes.

Amongst the better chateaux of Bordeaux we found quality to be very high, although not quite at 2015 or 2016 levels. Many people liken them to the 2014s which were excellent in the northern Médoc, although we think that in Pomerol the 2017s are potentially superior. However it would be too difficult to categorise 2017 as a Left-Bank or Right-Bank year as we found wonderful wines in all regions, even in Margaux, Pessac-Leognan and Saint-Emilion, despite the issues with the April frost.

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We can offer the following wines priced 'in bond' per dozen bottles. The 2017 vintage will be shipped from Bordeaux in 2020. Most wines are available in halves or magnums for an extra £15 per case; please enquire for all other formats. If a wine for which you are looking does not appear please ask as we may be able to source further stocks. Prices are subject to currency fluctuations.

Tasting notes variously are from Jancisrobinson.com, Lisa Perotti-Brown for erobertparker.com, James Suckling, Neal Martin and Antonio Galloni for Vinous.com, Jane Anson of Decanter Magazine and Richard Kihl Ltd. 'Boxed' wines are those that we particularly recommend for quality and/or price.

RIGHT BANK – Les Cotes de Bordeaux, Pomerol, St Emilion

-----**Fronsac**-----

Ch Carlmagnus Fronsac

£ 110

*Lovely ripeness on the nose with a delicious sweet entry on the palate. Crisp acidity and firm tannins support the rich fruit which persists long on the finish. Good wine. RKL. "A solid and chewy red with dark-berry and cherry character. Medium body, firm tannins and a fresh finish. Clean. **89-90 points**" jameussuckling.com. One of Neal Martin's "Twelve Best Potential Value-for-Money Wines" of the vintage: "... a bright, lively bouquet with blackberry, raspberry and red cherry aromas, a floral note with time. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin. Sure, it is a little oaky towards the mocha infused finish but it feels long and harmonious with a caressing finish. Worth investigating! **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

Ch Les Trois Croix Fronsac

£ 150

*"Rich in texture, with good density of blackberry fruit – a classic blend. The yield was little lower than 2016, but was still 40hl/h. The acidity is a little higher than the previous vintage but there is still a softness to the tannins. Owned by the Léon family, who vinify in 30hl wooden vats: one vat per half a hectare of grapes. This year 33% new oak was used, up 6% on 2016. Just one single plot was affected by frost here. Drinking Window 2022-2034 **91 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. One of Neil Martin's Twelve Best Potential Value for Money 2017s: "... initially felt a little overdone on the nose like one or two of its Fronsac brethren. That said, it seems to "calm down" in the glass and attain more definition. The palate shows more composure with supple tannin, well judged acidity and a precise, detailed finish that bodes well for the future. The more this aerates, the more composed and refined it becomes. This is a muscular yet paradoxically, refined Fronsac from Patrick Léon. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

-----**Castillon**-----

Ch Montlandrie Castillon, Cotes de Bordeaux

£ 175

*Dark fruit and richness on the nose, clearly much fuller-bodied. Firm tannins and crisp acidity on entry with time in the glass required before the black fruit and licorice flavours are able to emerge. A powerful wine with a long finish. RKL. "This has great aromatics right off the bat and a creaminess to the fruit. Yet there's still freshness delivered by menthol notes on the finish, along with tight spices. This is a young Cabernet Sauvignon that is already pulling its weight. Firm, bright, with real finesse and confidence ...Drinking Window 2022-2032 **92 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "A blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Montlandrie gives up notes of crushed black plums, red currants and black cherries with suggestions of cigar box, yeast extract, tapenade and underbrush. Medium-bodied with a solid backbone of firm, grainy tannins, it has beautiful freshness and a mineral-tinged finish. **91-93 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com*

-----**Pomerol & Lalande de Pomerol**-----

Ch La Chenade Lalande de Pomerol

£ 145

*Lovely intensity on the nose with typical leafy Cabernet Franc notes; good concentration on the palate but the overriding impression is of elegance and finesse. A long finish with purity, precision and excellent balance. This should drink well quite early. RKL. "Deep purple crimson. Smells of small, wild hedgerow berries and raspberry vitality. Second-fill barrels and just a hint of chocolate. Lovely freshness and that fine graphite note on the finish. Refined texture, just a little chewy for now, and lots of fruit and a persistent finish. Drink 2020-2028. **16.5 points**" jancisrobinson.com (JH). "...comes from gravel soils in Lalande de Pomerol...It has a tightly wound bouquet, a little more black fruit than red, just a touch of black truffle. The palate is medium-bodied with edgy tannin, a pinch of black pepper and spice, a little short but nicely balanced with a pretty, earthy finish. It is not the greatest La Chenade that I have tasted in recent years, yet given the frost damage it should be considered a success. **88-90 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

Ch Enclos Tourmaline Pomerol**£ 1,060**

*Enclos Tourmaline is a tiny property situated on the highest part of the Pomerol plateau between Le Pin and Trotanoy and with an annual production of about only 250 cases. "Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2017 Enclos Tourmaline (100% Merlot) opens with baked blackberries and black forest cake scents plus underlying spice cake, espresso and preserved plums hints. The medium to full-bodied palate has very firm, grainy tannins and just enough freshness supporting the berry preserves flavors, finishing on a spicy note. **90-92 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com "This is very structured and dense with ripe tannins and an encompassing mouthfeel for the vintage. Full-bodied, layered and rich. Beautiful fruit and intensity. Only 2,500 bottles made. **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com*

Ch La Conseillante Pomerol**£ 1,475**

*Delicate and very pretty on the nose with a depth an intensity that gradually emerges with time in the glass. Beautiful entry, very soft and elegant with subtle power coming through on the mid-palate and firm tannins emerging to provide structure. Very long finish with incredibly persistent fruit. Undoubtedly one of the finest wines on the Right Bank in 2017. RKL. "... a wine of total finesse and class. Bright, floral and beautifully lifted, the 2017 is exceptionally polished and nuanced from start to finish. Despite its mid-weight, gracious personality, the 2017 has real staying power. Technical Director Marielle Cazaux gave the fruit about 2 days on the skins, with no SO2 at crush. Cazaux added that the malos were quite fast. The blend is 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc. Frost reduced production by around 15%, while drought further reduced yields in the Franc by a further 10%. As for the wine, well, the 2017 was magnificent on each of the three occasions I tasted it. **94-97 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com. "The 2017 La Conseillante displays a deep garnet-purple color and simply sings of crushed blueberries, mulberries and ripe plums with suggestions of violets, chocolate box, rose hip tea and a waft of menthol. The palate is medium-bodied with impressive richness at this elegant weight coupled with vivacity and supported by plush, velvety tannins, finishing with great length and energy. This is an arrestingly beautiful expression of this vintage! **95-97 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com*

Ch Gazin Pomerol**£ 695**

*Powerful on the nose with an intense red fruit character; strong entry with excellent fruit concentration and a firm tannic structure. A 2017 for the longer term. RKL. "The 2017 Gazin has a very classic Pomerol bouquet with black brambly fruit infused with black truffle and subtle raspberry confit notes. Then, as it opens, there are loamy aromas that lend more complexity. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannin and a fine bead of acidity. There is a slightly powdery texture, feeling quite saline. White pepper and fennel notes become more conspicuous towards the finish. Just a classic Gazin from proprietor Nicolas de Baillencourt and his team. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, vinous.com. "A dense and flavorful red already with dark-berry, seaweed and wet-earth undertones. Full body and round and chewy tannins. Green olives on the finish. Serious for the vintage. **94-95 points**" jamessuckling.com*

Ch La Petite Eglise Pomerol**£ 330**

*A wonderful dark fruit Merlot entry but showing so much more elegance and finesse than Denis Durantou's cheaper 'satellite' wines; very fine with good balance and length. RKL
"An elegant second wine of L'Eglise Clinet with dark berries, spices and stones. Medium body and silky and polished tannins. **90-91 points**" jamessuckling.com
"The 2017 La Petite Eglise was picked from 12 to 22 September at 41hl/ha and is matured in 50% new oak. Just one small parcel near the Barbanne tributary was touched by frost but nothing on the plateau. It has a straightforward bouquet with more red fruit than black, hints of freshly tilled soil and pencil shavings. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin, a touch more compact than previous vintages but beautifully focused and silky smooth towards the sustained finish. Excellent. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

Ch Clinet Pomerol**£ 680**

*"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2017 Clinet opens slowly to reveal vibrant red and black fruits: red currants, black cherries, plums and cassis with touches of roses, yeast extract, wood smoke and crushed rocks. Medium-bodied with firm, grainy tannins and a taut, muscular palate of tightly wound fruits and compelling mineral accents, it finishes long with wonderful purity and fragrant earth accents. **92-94 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, RobertParker.com. "The 2017 Clinet was picked from 19 to 26 September for the Merlot and on 29 September for the Cabernets at 35hl/ha. It is matured in 72% new oak and the remainder one year old. The alcohol is 13.1° compared to say 14.4° for 2016. It has a perfumed bouquet with mainly red berry fruit, top notes of loam and a touch of violet. It is certainly well defined. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin, well delineated, and saline in the mouth. It is quite open towards the finish, perhaps with less grip than other Pomerols that I have tasted, but it is undeniably elegant and well balanced with a hint of cured meat cropping up on the aftertaste. Classic Clinet! **92-94 points**" Neal Martin, vinous.com*

Ch L'Eglise Clinet Pomerol**£ 2,060**

An amazing nose, very expressive with intense black fruit notes; a sweet, lip-smacking entry with wonderful fresh acidity, medium-body but an incredible depth that hints at a long life ahead. Controlled and focused all the way through with a hugely long finish and wonderful finesse. A brilliant wine. RKL

"The 2017 L'Eglise-Clinet was picked between 12 and 22 September, the Cabernet Franc coming in on the last day. Nothing was touched by the frost. It is matured in 70% new oak. Denis Durantou did not specify the exact quantity produced, "Just enough for my friends" according to his spec sheet! The bouquet is very succinct, perhaps more open than either the 2015 or 2016 at this early stage, extraordinarily pure with blackberry, wild strawberry, smoke and truffle. It just gets better and better as it opens in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin, linear and focused, very fresh with pointed acidity. This is full of tension and poise, a touch of graphite emerging towards the finish that lingers in the mouth with superb salinité at the end. It completes a triumvirate for Denis Durantou after the 2015 and 2016s. **95-97 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"This really rolls on the palate with fantastic fruit and tannins. Full-bodied, structured and layered. Long, long finish. Impressive all the way. **97-98 points**" jamessuckling.com

"A blend of 90% Merlot with 10% Cabernet Franc, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 L'Eglise Clinet opens with crème de cassis, black forest cake and preserved plums notes with suggestions of underbrush, lilacs and star anise plus an invigorating spark of Bing cherries. Medium to full-bodied and built like a brick house with very firm, ripe tannins and very refreshing acidity supporting the tightly wound muscular fruit, it finishes with epic persistence and bags of energy. This will be extremely long lived! **96-98+ points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch L'Evangile Pomerol**£ 2,050**

"This has a lovely silkiness to it, one of the real successes in the appellation in terms of the texture and the quality of the tannins. It's a fairly powerful 100% Merlot with 100% new oak - an unusual combination because the old vine Cabernet Franc was lost to frost in 2017. This is one of the few wines that gets close to the quality of 2016, even if it's not quite there in terms of its completeness. 30 days maceration at reasonable temperatures has brought out the heart of plump blackberry fruit, while delivering subtle tobacco and slate elegance. I like this a lot. 100% organic in the vineyard (2016 was 95% organic) but not certified. 60% grand vin this year, from 40hl/ha. **95 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "...a stunning wine. Frost wiped out half of the potential crop, including all of the Cabernet Franc, which means the Grand Vin is 100% Merlot. Rich, sumptuous and explosive, the 2017 possesses remarkable depth and stunning intensity in all of its dimensions. The purity, energy and textural resonance of the fruit is ravishing...A massive, concentrated wine, L'Évangile is going to need a number of years to be at its very best, but it is magnificent, even in the early going. In a word: dazzling! **94-97 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

Ch Les Cruzelles Lalande de Pomerol**£ 200**

With the same 80:20 Merlot/Cabernet Franc mix as La Chenade this is a step up in power and potential longevity; with more intensity and tannic structure the Cruzelles retains a beautiful precision on the palate with no shortage of elegance and finesse. RKL. "This has plenty of distinct strands of flavour – some real stuffing to the rich red fruits, persistent tannins infused with freshness. The Merlot was picked 13 to 22 September and Cabernet Franc on 22 September. From gravel and clay soils with a little sand. An excellent choice in Lalande-de-Pomerol, from the skilled hands of Denis Durantou. Drinking Window 2023-2036. **91 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "The 2017 Lés Cruzelles...has a little more cohesion and focus than the La Chenade at this early stage, blackberry mixed with raspberry and loamy scents, fresh and full of vim. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannin. This is very nicely focused with crisp acidity, saline and persistent on the finish. Excellent – this is as good a Lalande de Pomerol as you will find in 2017. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

Vieux Chateau Certan Pomerol**£ 2,060**

Having avoided frost catastrophe by just 1° and including some Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend for the first time in 5 years, Alexandre Thienpoint announced that with the 2017 they were 'back to Bordeaux', compared with the character of the previous two vintages. It is a beautiful, elegant wine with tension, precision and freshness, fine tannins and a lovely texture. RKL

"The 2017 Vieux Château Certan was picked in three passages through the vineyard, 12 and 13 September, 18 and 19 September and finally 25 September to 2 October. The yields are 37hl/ha with 14.2° alcohol and a 3.75 pH. It is the first vintage to contain Cabernet Sauvignon for several years. It has a very pure, Merlot-driven bouquet with black cherries, redcurrant and wild strawberry scents, just a hint of iris and incense in the background. The 70% new oak is nicely integrated here. The palate is medium-bodied with edgy tannin, a deep well of black and red fruit interwoven with allspice, truffle, white pepper and a little sage. This Vieux Château Certan manifests more complexity and profundity as it aerates, delivering genuine, spine-tingling mineralité on the persistent finish. It gains even more precision when I return to the property to re-taste it again. Tasted twice, ten days apart at the property. **94-96 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"Composed of 81% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Vieux Château Certan gives up gorgeous black raspberries, crushed black currants and warm black berries on the nose with chocolate-covered cherries, violets and star anise suggestions plus black truffles and wood smoke. The palate is medium to full-bodied with wonderful concentration in the mid-palate and firm, very finely pixelated tannins, with seamless freshness and fantastic length. **96-98 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

-----**Saint Emilion**-----**Ch Ausone St Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé A****£ 5,600**

Wow! Surely *THE* best wine of the vintage...extraordinary fruit intensity on the nose with concentrated, juicy fruit in the mouth, a very firm tannic structure and immense depth. Outstanding. RKL

"This is totally stunning, demonstrating depth, texture, salinity and flesh. It manages to be both austere and generous at the same time, pushing and pulling. It's a totally different conversation to many others wines this year. There was no frost effect here, although some of their other estates were fully wiped out. 100% new oak. Drinking Window 2027-2043. **97 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine

"The 2017 Ausone is without question one of the wines of the vintage. Stunning in its grandeur and presence, the 2017 possesses marvelous depth and remarkable aromatic intensity from the very first taste. Dark red and blue stone fruit, licorice, menthol, lavender and sweet spice build into the rich, flamboyant finish. The 2017 is 55% Cabernet Franc and 45% Merlot with the Franc very expressive today. The fruit saw about 30 days on the skins, including a week of cold soak. But those are mere details. The 2017 Ausone is a total stunner. That's all there is to it. **95-98 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

"...the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Ausone offers up slowly emerging notes of crushed black plums, blackberries and mulberries with nuances of anise, violets, new leather and unsmoked cigars plus suggestions of black olives and truffles and a touch of cast iron pan. Medium to full-bodied with firm, very finely grained, super ripe tannins and an uplifting backbone of freshness perfectly supporting the profoundly layered, tightly wound yet incredibly intense fruit, it finishes very long with mineral accents and compelling tension. **97-99 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch Canon St Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé**£ 810**

Intense, dark fruit on the nose, cool and so good. Gorgeous, succulent entry with layers of sweet, dark fruit and chocolate. Beautifully fresh and balanced with wonderful finesse and length. Classic and elegant. RKL

"This is very focused and fresh with limestone and crushed-stone character. Medium to full body, integrated tannins and a salty finish. Shows lots of minerality already. Umami licorice undertones. **94-95 points**" jamessuckling.com

"A rich, explosive wine, the 2017 Canon exudes class from the very first taste. Huge aromatics resonate through to the palate, where the wine is deep, fleshy and beautifully layered. Effortless and gracious, Canon is a wine of real pedigree. I don't think the 2017 will reach the dizzying heights of the 2015 or 2016, but it will be interesting to see how close it gets. **93-96 points**" Antonio Galloni, vinous.com

"The deep purple-black colored 2017 Canon offers-up intense notes of crushed blackberries, black cherries and warm cassis with touches of fertile loam, yeast extract, beef drippings and iron ore plus a waft of garrigue. Medium to full-bodied with great freshness and firm, rounded tannins, it's very earthy in the mouth, finishing long and mineral-laced. A very serious wine, it is also fun, bright and vivacious and should age impressively. **94-96 points**" Lisa Perrotti-Brown, RobertParker.com

Ch Cheval Blanc St Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé A**£ 5,300**

Intense concentration on the nose followed by a luxurious entry of sweet red and black fruits. Broad on the mid-palate with a firm structure and full-body. Drier on the finish but very long and very powerful. RKL. "The 2017 Cheval Blanc bristles with tension. Because of severe frost damage, in 2017, the Grand Vin includes a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon (14%), from gravelly soils, which gives the wine very unusual flavor and structure profile. Vibrant and pulsing with a real sense of direction, the 2017 is going to need a number of years to be at its very best. Even so, it is an utterly fascinating wine. **93-96 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com. "This is tight and very tannic with a linear and steely backbone of texture. Full-bodied, compacted and complete. Muscular and flexing it but polished and toned. Wow. There is 6% cabernet sauvignon in the blend, which may be giving this even more strength. Very, very long. Very Left Bank in terms of the power and depth. **97-98 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Figeac St Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé**£ 1,475**

A beautiful, elegant Figeac, silky ripe integrated tannins, intense red fruit flavours and so totally in balance you could very happily drink it now. Modern and precisely made but missing nothing of the character of the property and the terroir. A huge success. RKL

"... It has a deep purple hue. The bouquet is very well defined, quite strict at first with well-behaved blackberry, raspberry, pressed rose petals and just a touch of violet. The palate is medium-bodied with a fine backbone, fresh in the mouth with a sense of energy, quite precise and linear with a pinch of spice towards the finish, a little graphite lingering on the aftertaste. This is unapologetically classic in style and whilst it might be over-shadowed by the sensational 2015 and 2016 Figeac, this is an impressive follow-up to that might pair that has really put Figeac back on the map. **93-95 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com "Deep cherry red with lots of purple. Lifted and fragrant. Finely and intensely scented. This is very fine: pure and precise, some red fruit on the palate. Succulent, juicy, scented on the palate too. Silky, charming, mouth-watering. So succulent, so precise, unforced. **18.5 points**" jancisrobinson.com (JH)

"The 2017 Figeac is magnificent. Beautifully layered and exquisite in the glass, the 2017 possesses remarkable balance and harmony from the very first taste. An utterly beguiling, captivating wine, the 2017 simply has it all. Bright, red-toned fruit, mint, spice, lavender and rose petal overtones flesh out in the glass, but above all else, Figeac is a wine of total harmony. The Grand Vin includes 10% second generation fruit. Even so, production is down around 50%. **94-97 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

Ch Saintayme St Emilion Grand Cru**£ 130**

Lovely freshness on the nose with good intensity – very pretty cherry and cassis notes. Medium-bodied and elegant on the palate with moderate length. This will make very tasty early drinking. RKL

"A fresh and clean wine with blackberry, blueberry and salty character. Medium body and firm and silky tannins. 90-91 points" jamessuckling.com

"The 2017 Saintayme was picked between 29 September and 9 October, matured in 30% new oak. It has a well defined, cranberry and blackberry scented nose, very natural and elegant, the oak neatly intertwined with the fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with slightly rustic tannin, but very well balanced and surfeit with charm. You could almost run away and drink this already! But for now, we should wait until at least Denis Durantou has bottled it. 89-91 points" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

Ch Tour St Christophe St Emilion Grand Cru**£ 220**

"The 2017 Tour Saint Christophe, owned by Peter Kwok, showed much more delineation and terroir expression compared to Bellefont-Belcier tasted alongside. The aromatics are packed with black cherries, cassis and bilberry, just a light touch of the sea emerging with time. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe tannin, plush black cherry and boysenberry fruit laced with orange rind and quince towards the fresh and focused finish. Very fine. 91-93 points" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"Dense and layered red with dark berry, volcanic ash and white pepper. Full-bodied, layered and chewy. Muscular. 93-94 points" jamessuckling.com

LEFT BANK – Graves/Pessac-Leognan, Médoc, Margaux, St Julien, Pauillac, St Estephe

-----Graves/Pessac Leognan-----

Domaine de Chevalier Cru Classé Pessac-Léognan rouge**£ 510**

"This is really delicious and round with soft and ripe tannins. Full body and juicy fruit. Shows ripeness and balance. A pretty wine to watch for the future. 93-94 points" jamessuckling.com. "Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2017 Domaine de Chevalier opens with a cedary waft giving way to a good core of crushed black currants, blackberries and mulberries with suggestions of black truffles, tilled soil and black olives plus a hint of smoked meats. Medium-bodied with a good, solid frame of ripe, fine-grained tannins and oodles of freshness, it is elegantly fruited yet well sustained on the mid-palate and long finish. 93-95+ points" Lisa Perotti-Brown, RobertParker.com

Ch Haut Bailly Cru Classé Pessac-Léognan**£ 880**

This is a beauty, such purity and elegance. Beautiful blueberry fruit entry with tannins and acidity evident but so well-balanced. Medium-bodied, long and elegant, so classy. RKL "The 2017 Haut-Bailly is an understated beauty. Nothing in particular stands out rather it is the wine's balance that impresses most. All the classic Haut-Bailly signatures come through in a mid-weight, super-finessed wine that hits all the right notes. Dark red and blue stone fruits, graphite, smoke, licorice and incense are all laced into the super-expressive finish. The 2017 emerges from the estate's central, most historic parcels, as those vineyards were not affected by the April frost that took with it 30% of the production. 93-96 points" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com. "Very deep garnet-purple colored, it has a wonderfully spicy nose of cinnamon stick, cloves, anise and fenugreek with core of roses, warm blueberries, black forest cake and black raspberries plus hints of underbrush and iron ore. Medium to full-bodied with firm, ripe, grainy tannins, it has oodles of freshness and great finesse, continuing bright and energetic on the long, mineral finish. 94-96 points" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch Haut Brion Premier Cru Classé Pessac-Léognan**£ 4,320**

Wonderful concentration on the nose with good richness and more obvious power than La Mission. Intense fruit through the mid-palate, well-structured and long. Waves of dark fruit and coffee notes keep coming on the finish. A very fine Haut Brion. RKL. "... a more generous bouquet than the La Mission Haut-Brion at this point: black cherries, blueberry, a little confit fruit, hints of warm gravel and clove. It is much more restrained than the previous vintages – cooler and linear. The palate is medium-bodied with firm tannin, nicely structured with more grip in the mouth than the La Mission. What it has in common with the aforementioned is a sense of symmetry. It feels very persistent with a light marine/oyster shell influence on the finish. This probably has the edge over the La Mission Haut-Brion at the moment, but intra-family competitiveness aside, it boils down to a great follow-up to the brilliant 2015 and 2016. 94-96 points" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "... a little closed on the nose, revealing fresh blackberries, black currants and dark chocolate with suggestions of pencil shavings, beef drippings, tilled soil and cracked black pepper plus a waft of lavender. Medium to full-bodied, it has very firm, ripe, grainy tannins and a lively backbone structuring the tightly knit earth and black fruit layers, finishing with compelling mineral and perfumed layers. 95-97 points" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com. "A hugely captivating wine, one of the contenders for red of the vintage. There's an incredible plush, dense texture to the fruit here, with just the slightest pulling back on the final section that suggests the damson, cassis and black cherry fruit is not at the full extent of ripeness seen in 2016 and 2015, but there is absolutely no question that this is a successful, rich and well-expressed wine. It's extremely powerful and well constructed, with great tannins and a succulence which grows through the palate. 3.73pH. Drinking Window 2026 - 2042. 97 points" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine

Ch La Mission Haut Brion Cru Classé Pessac-Léognan **£ 2,950**

"The aromatics here are incredible, and there is the most gorgeous density of black brambly fruit on display. It's graceful but intense, and utterly delicious. It doesn't have the same intensity through the palate as the wonderful 2016, but it really does stand out in the vintage as being extremely good quality. It's going to take its time to come round, so settle in for the long haul. 51% of overall crop. 3.86pH. Drinking Window 2026-2042. **96 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "... is very deep garnet-purple in color and scented of crushed blackcurrants, blackberries and chocolate-covered cherries with suggestions of cigar box, bay leaves, Indian spices and dusty soil. Medium to full-bodied with very firm, grainy tannins and a racy backbone supporting the taut, muscular fruit, it has bags of mineral and earthy suggestions layering the very long finish. **95-97 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch Smith Haut Lafitte Cru Classé Pessac-Léognan rouge **£ 820**

"This is a solid Smith for the vintage with blackberry and blackcurrant character. Full to medium body, firm and silky tannins and a lingering finish. Excellent potential here. **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com. "The 2017 Smith Haut Lafitte is easily one of the highlights of the vintage. Dense, unctuous and impeccably balanced, the 2017 exudes depth from start to finish. Charcoal embers, graphite, menthol, licorice and sage add myriad shades of nuance to the plush, unctuous dark raspberry jam fruit. This is a super impressive showing from Smith Haut Lafitte. I tasted the 2017 two times. On both occasions, the wine showed tremendous aromatic and flavor depth. **94-97 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

-----**Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Moulis**-----**Ch Potensac Médoc Cru Bourgeois** **£ 200**

Lovely broad palate with plenty of juicy berry fruits. Well-balanced tannins. Should drink before the 2016. RKL. "Deep cherry red. Lovely bright fruit aroma, really fragrant, almost a touch floral. This has lovely freshness in both the acidity and the tannic structure. Extremely fine tannins, almost delicate, and yet there is an underlying power and persistence. Tannins much finer than I recall from previous vintages. One of my favourite wines of the primeurs tastings. Should be GV. Drink 2022-2033 **17 points**" jancisrobinson.com. "A bright and vivid young red with currant, berry and floral aromas and flavors. Medium-bodied, tight and concentrated. Fine tannins. **91-92 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Tour St Bonnet Médoc Cru Bourgeois **£ 90**

Good value at Cru Bourgeois level has been hard to find in 2017 but old favourite Château Tour St Bonnet offers just that: situated high up the Médoc and close to the Gironde River they have avoided the problems experienced by many others in 2017 and produced an excellent little 'drinker'. RKL. "The 2017 Tour St. Bonnet shows plenty of ripeness at this stage with glossy black cherry and blueberry fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin, quite dense and powerful for a Médoc with impressive density on the finish. This punches above expectations. **88-90 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

-----**Margaux**-----**Ch Brane Cantenac Grand Cru Classé Margaux** **£ 576**

"Dark currant, berry and fresh herb character. Full-bodied, juicy and flavorful. Very structured. Solid finish and length. Better than 2014? **92-93 points**" jamessuckling.com. "A lovely wine that sits extremely prettily though the palate, with a seductive expression of florality and blackberry fruits. It's not as powerful as the past two years, but is skilfully worked with soft grilled oak notes. It doesn't sacrifice the excellent quality that this estate has been producing. Drinking Window 2025-2038. **93 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine

Ch Giscours Grand Cru Classé Margaux **£ 510**

"An accomplished, enjoyable Giscours. The fruit character is less generous than 2015 and 2016, but it still has presence and charm. Damson, bilberry, charcoal and slate are cradled by fine tannins that point to well-controlled extraction. There's no dip through the mid-palate, and the overall structure is juicy and elegant rather than exuberant. A juicy frame that will age well. Drinking Window 2025-2038. **93 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "The 2017 Giscours is a terrific, and also a worthy follow up to both the 2015 and 2016. Rich and pliant in the glass, the 2017 exudes notable depth in its super-ripe dark cherry, plum, chocolate, leather and menthol flavors. Above all else, the 2017 offers a striking combination of juiciness, freshness and brightness, with terrific depth and plenty of nuance. The 2017 finishes with notable creaminess and textural elegance. This is very nicely done. **90-93+ points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

Ch Labegorce Margaux Cru Bourgeois **£ 210**

"An excellent Labegorce, full of rich black fruits, textured and layered. A great success in the vintage, with a mouthwatering delivery that holds itself with confidence. It's not hugely intense, as is often the case this year, but makes up for it with a poised delivery and firm, juicy tannins. Drinking Window 2025 - 2038. **92 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "A juicy and rich red with lots of fruit and wet-earth character. Medium to full body, ripe tannins and a fresh finish. **92-93 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Malescot St Exupéry Grand Cru Classé Margaux**£ 430**

Lovely intense ripeness on the nose with red fruits exploding from the glass...soft, sweet fruit on entry, well-supported by a firm tannic structure but lovely juiciness persists long on the finish. Delicious Margaux for the vintage. RKL. "The 2017 Malescot St. Exupéry has a simpler bouquet than recent vintages with high-toned red cherry and raspberry fruit, quite "warm" compared to its peers and it would benefit from a little more delineation. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin. It is not a complex Malescot St. Exupéry but I admire the balance and focus. There is plenty of tightly wound red berry fruit laced with cedar and smoke, quite finessed towards the finish with a long spicy aftertaste. I would just like the aromatics to step up to the grade of the palate, so let's see how this shows once in bottle. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "A fantastic 2017 from Margaux with a deep and ripe core of fruit in the center palate. Silky and juicy tannins. Full body, plenty of fruit and a long, flavorful finish. **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Margaux Premier Cru Classé Margaux**£ 4,320**

With its silky ripe tannins and wonderful texture Thibault Pontallier likened 2017 Margaux to the iconic 1996; understated power, medium-bodied and with supreme finesse and incredible length, it is clearly one of the finest wines not only of the Left Bank but the whole vintage. RKL

"The 2017 Margaux, matured in 100% new oak, was blended in the second half of February. It has a very pure, floral bouquet with scents of iris and violet infusing the black and subtle blue fruit. There are touches of crushed stone and with aeration, a little candied orange peel. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe tannin, very harmonious in the mouth, caressing and sensual with black fruit, hints of graphite and a light marine influence. There is a fine build to this Château Margaux, commencing almost understated but finishing with an insistent grip and a long, quite spicy aftertaste. It's not the bewitching 2015, however it purrs like a Rolls Royce and will age with panache. **93-95 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"A blend of 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Château Margaux charges from the gate with opulent kirsch, raspberry preserves, wild blueberries and cassis notions accented by roses, violets, Chinese five spice and fragrant earth with touches of underbrush and truffles. Medium-bodied, it fills the mouth with vibrant, ripe red and blue fruits, layering in perfume and spice nuances. It's framed by very finely grained and plush yet firm tannins and great tension, finishing with epic length. **96-98 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

"This is a very dense Margaux, and especially for the vintage, with a full body, grainy tannins and a long and rich finish. Impressive depth of fruit and structure. Luscious and muscular at the same time. **97-98 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Palmer Grand Cru Classé Margaux**£ 2,350**

Lovely ripeness and concentration on the nose; beautiful entry – medium-bodied, seamless, with tannins and acidity completely integrated, and elegant, ripe fruit through the mid-palate and long on the finish. A fine and classic Palmer that will provide pleasure over many decades to come. RKL. "The 2017 Palmer was cropped at 38hl/ha between 20 and 29 September and then matured in 65% new oak (though this sample was taken from a used barrel as usual). For me there is quite a large difference between the Palmer and Alter Ego, the bouquet here is much more sophisticated and demonstrating more delineation: black fruit, iris, brown spices, a touch of clove and a subtle brine influence in the background. The palate is medium-bodied with very fine tannin, crisp acidity, smooth and harmonious with a palpable sense of tension. I love the purity here, almost to an extent that I felt like asking Thomas Duroux to eschew the new oak! This has great potential and I love the typicité that I hope will not be obstructed. **93-95 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is a sexy and well-formed 2017 with very velvety and suave tannins that go on for minutes. Full-bodied, soft and round. Extremely long and last for minutes. **97-98 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Rauzan Segla Grand Cru Classé Margaux**£ 645**

Very aromatic with lots of cassis and strawberries. Beautifully soft on entry with ripe, silky tannins and a delicious fruit backdrop. Balanced and very long. An entrancing Margaux. RKL

"The 2017 Rauzan-Ségla is matured in 50% new oak with 14% vin de presse, which was apparently from the high quality Cabernet this year. It has a fascinating bouquet with pure blackberry, iris, crushed stone and a light estuarine influence that becomes stronger with aeration, just a faint touch of oyster shell developing in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with very fine tannin, crisp acidity, very elegant and refined, possibly the most feminine Rauzan-Ségla in recent years with a silky smooth finish. It is not the instant showstopper like the 2015 – this is more understated and needs time for its quality to be fully appreciated. Tasted on three occasions. **92-94 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"This is tight and focused with a super precise palate of blackberries, blackcurrants and hints of flowers. Full body, linear tannins and a long finish. **94-95 points**" jamessuckling.com

"Composed of 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot and sporting a deep garnet-purple color, the 2017 Rauzan-Ségla (Rausan-Segla) has a profound nose of cassis, warm blackberries and black plums with touches of baking spices, violets, mocha and smoke plus a waft of garrigue. Medium to full-bodied with a great core of sustained, energetic black fruit, a frame of fine-grained tannins and a lively backbone, it finishes with great length. **94-96 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

-----**Saint Julien**-----**Ch Beychevelle Grand Cru Classé St Julien****£ 650**

Overlooking the Gironde river the Beychevelle microclimate completely escaped any frost damage and allowed them to produce a really terrific 2017. Wonderfully rich and powerful on the nose, the entry follows through with a mouthful of ripe fruit, balanced tannins and acidity and superb length of finish. Against its peers this is certainly one of the finest wines of the vintage.

RKL

"Very fine tannins already with a solid core of blackberry and blueberry character. Hints of flowers. Full-bodied, well-integrated and tight, not to mention fresh and long. **93-94 points**" [jamessuckling.com](#)

"The 2017 Beychevelle is absolutely gorgeous. Creamy and beautifully layered on the palate, Beychevelle exudes exotic richness in its ripe red/purplish berry fruit. Even though the 2017 is rather flamboyant in style, it retains quite a bit of brightness to play off its more extroverted leanings. Beychevelle was impressive on the several times I tasted it. **92-95 points**" Antonio Galloni, [Vinous.com](#)

Ch Branaire Ducru Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 410**

This is a lovely Branaire and in our opinion almost up to the quality of the 2016: Lovely fruit purity on the nose and on entry, medium-bodied in the mouth with wonderful balance and nicely defined 'classic claret' flavours of cassis, tobacco and spices. The 2017 Branaire will mature relatively early and will be a wine that you really want to drink. RKL. "This is very tight and focused with a precise depth of blackberry and blueberry fruit. Full body, melted tannins and a fresh and vivid finish. Shows a compacted style. **92-93 points**" [jamessuckling.com](#). "The 2017 Branaire Ducru was picked 13 September until 4 October over a three-week period, cropped at 39.6hl/ha. The alcohol here is 13.2°. The wine is aged in 60% new oak, which is how the sample was made. It has a harmonious bouquet with brambly black fruit, melted tar and tobacco scents, not powerful but precise. The palate is medium-bodied with a smooth texture, fine tannin, just a subtle savory note developing and merging nicely with the black fruit, hints of white pepper and cedar towards the poised finish that is quintessential Saint-Julien. There is an essence of drinkability about this Branaire-Ducru and I can imagine this being approachable after three to four years. This is a very fine Branaire-Ducru. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, [Vinous.com](#)

Ch Ducru Beaucaillou Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 1,480**

Wow! What a glorious entry - a profusion of pure Cab Sauv cassis fruit, wonderful balance and such freshness..! Beautifully integrated tannins, great finesse and a very long finish. IF this is second only to Leoville Las Cases in St Julien, it's by a hairs breadth...RKL. "The 2017 Ducru Beaucaillou was picked from 18 to 23 September for the Merlot, and from 25 to 30 September for the Cabernets. It is matured in 100% new oak over 18 months. It offers copious black fruit, violets, bay leaf and Asian spice notes on the nose that gathers momentum in the glass after a deceptively understated opening. The palate is medium-bodied with quite firm tannin, the oak nicely integrated, not quite as harmonious as the 2016 but then again, few 2017s are. There is a rigid structure to this Ducru Beaucaillou underneath the carapace of ripe black fruit with touches of tobacco and spice lingering on the aftertaste. It is probably going to require more cellar age than many of its peers but it will be worth the wait. **93-95 points**" Neal Martin, [Vinous.com](#)"A little less intense and concentrated than the 2016, this focusses more on rich, smoky, finessed aromatics. The overall feel is gourmet and well textured, with some welcoming rich spice. A serious contender for the top St Julien in 2017, this has wonderfully fleshy blackberry fruits, a screech of graphite adding some mineral overtones, and a great dash of grilled oak. 7,500 cases of Ducru this year instead of 10,000 - they weren't affected by frost, but the Cabernets were just less generous this year, down to around 30hl/ha. This is accomplished winemaking, with great energy and poise. 100% new oak. 3.79pH. Drinking Window 2027-2040. **96 points**" Jane Anson, [Decanter Magazine](#). "There was no frost at Ducru-Beaucaillou in 2017 due to its proximity to the estuary. This barrel sample comes from the final blend, which was made in early 2018. Composed of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Merlot and sporting a deep garnet-purple color, the 2017 Ducru-Beaucaillou is intensely scented of blackcurrant cordial, blackberries and lavender with hints of crushed rocks, iron ore, rose hips and Provence herbs plus touches of wood smoke and sandalwood. Medium-bodied, very firm and grainy in the mouth, it possesses lovely freshness, lifting the intense flavors, finishing long and minerally. Sporting an incredible core of muscular mid-palate fruit, this wine should age incredibly. **95-97+ points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, [Robert.Parker.com](#). "Holy.... This is so powerful and dense with amazing depth of fruit and beautifully ripe tannins. Full body, layers of fruit and tannins. It's has a long finish but then kicks off at the end. Remains classic in style. **97-98 points**" [jamessuckling.com](#)

Ch Gloria St Julien**£ 315**

Lovely ripeness on the nose with lots of dark fruit notes. Sweet and mouthfilling on entry, this will be a delicious early-drinking claret. RKL "Tight but plentiful fruit extraction. The expression is a little less full than in 2016, but there is both finesse and grip to the fine, firmly held tannins as they travel through the palate, accompanying cassis, fern, rosemary, heather and cigar box notes. Enjoyable stuff. Drinking Window 2025-2040. **92 points**" Jane Anson, [Decanter Magazine](#) "The 2017 Gloria is superb. At once deep and fleshy, but also beautifully delineated, the 2017 is incredibly satisfying. Succulent red and blue fruit, cedar, tobacco, anise and leather are some of the many notes that develop in the glass in an explosive, potent Saint-Julien that delivers the goods, and then some. Best of all, Gloria remains one of the most compelling values in all of Bordeaux. Don't miss it. Tasted three times. **91-94 points**" Antonio Galloni, [Vinous.com](#)

Ch Gruaud Larose Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 615**

Familiar Gruaud nose of liquorice, cedar and cassis with hints of coffee and a good intensity. Lovely balance on entry, very attractive with sweet dark fruits emerging mid-palate. Excellent length with good finesse, this will be a very good Gruaud Larose for medium-term drinking. RKL. "The 2017 Gruaud Larose was picked from 15 to 20 September for the Merlot and from 21 to 3 October for the Cabernets, fermented in wood and cement tanks and aged in French oak, 80% new for 18 to 24 months. It comes in with 12.88° alcohol. Quite deep in colour, it has an introverted bouquet at first that demands a lot of coaxing from the glass. There are notes of black cherry, iodine and just a touch of pencil lead. The palate is medium-bodied with finely balanced. An unpretentious but pretty Gruaud Larose that is benefitted by what is clearly a prudent extraction. The oak is neatly integrated with a linear, almost pastille-like finish and quite a sustained aftertaste. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "A firm and silky young red with an attractive center palate of fruit and hints of cedar. Fresh, tight and compacted. **92-93 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Lalande Borie St Julien Cru Bourgeois**£ 220**

Lovely fresh nose with very pretty red and black fruit notes. Delicious entry with pure blackcurrant flavours and medium body. Good balance, fresh and well-structured. Classic claret from the owners of Ducru Beaucaillou. RKL. "Deep crimson. Lifted cherry fruit overlaid with oak sweetness. Juicy fruit with just a slight bitterness as if the extraction was slightly hard, but nice fruit in the middle. Really juicy on the finish and the tannins are fine and add to the length. Good freshness. Drink 2023-2030. **16 points**" jancisrobinson.com (JH)"Bruno Borie mentioned that there was a little frost on the western part of Saint-Julien here. A blend of 66% Merlot and 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, the medium garnet-purple colored 2017 Lalande-Borie has a beautiful nose of red roses, dusty soil and powdered cinnamon with a core of red currants, black cherries and kirsch plus a touch of warm plums. The palate is medium-bodied with a chewy frame and lively backbone supporting the muscular fruit, finishing savory and with great persistence. To be aged for 12 months in barrel, in one-third new oak. **88-90 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com"The 2017 Lalande-Borie is a powerful, dense wine endowed with serious depth. Sadly, frost wiped out half of the crop. As for the wine itself, it is quite huge. Big and rich in the glass, Lalande-Borie offers serious intensity as well as structure. Sweet tobacco, menthol, licorice, spice and dried herbs add layers of nuance to this decidedly potent edition of Lalande-Borie. Sadly, yields are down a punishing 40%. **90-92 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com. "A firm and tight center palate with dark berry, currant, and mint character. Full body, layered and flavorful. Shows a solid mid-palate. **91-92 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Langoa Barton Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 390**

Characteristic control and precision on nose and palate; beautifully balanced and complete with good concentration of damson and blackberry fruit. Lots of finesse and elegance and a moderate to good length. A classic Langoa for the medium-term. RKL. "The 2017 Langoa Barton was picked from 15 to 18 September with respect to the Merlot and from 22 to 29 September for the Cabernets, matured in 60% new oak. It has a ripe, brine-tinged bouquet, not complex compared to previous vintages, but pure and developing light smoke and truffle scents with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with quite sharp tannin to create a tensile Langoa-Barton, saline with moderate depth, just a touch of pencil lead that surfaces towards the finish. It is exactly what I expected, which is a good thing given the track record of this Saint-Julien. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is very solid and tannic with a beautiful core of blueberries, blackcurrants and other blue fruits. Crushed stones, to boot. Full body and a flavorful finish. Serious for the vintage. **93-94 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Leoville Barton Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 650**

Real power and intensity on the nose; soft, balanced entry before classic Barton tannins emerge to provide a firm structure. A real thoroughbred and not far off the quality of the 2016. This should be longer-lived than many '17s. RKL "The 2017 Léoville Barton has a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon this year at 93%, the remainder is Merlot. It was picked between 15 and 18 September for the Merlot and 22 to 29 September for the Cabernet Sauvignon, then aged in 60% new oak. It has a perfumed and pure bouquet that demonstrates a little more cohesion and refinement than some of its Saint-Julien peers. Blackberry and touches of bilberry fruit, cedar and crushed stone – this is a knockout nose with bags of potential. The palate is medium-bodied with filigree tannin, perfectly pitched acidity and beautifully integrated oak. Seriously, this is nudging (not equaling, nudging!) the 2016 in terms of quality and there are just a handful of properties where I can state that this year. **93-95 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com "This has a stronger, tighter and more concentrated expression in this vintage than its sister property, although it's not as concentrated as its last few vintages. It's back to a more old school expression for the appellation, suiting the vintage, and it's one of the better-framed wines on display here. Good quality, with ground coffee, dark chocolate and tight cassis notes, all subtly and harmoniously put together. Drinking Window 2024-2038. **95 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine "One of the few truly exceptional Left Bank wines of the vintage, the 2017 Léoville-Barton is simply fabulous. The 2017 also has the distinction of having a very high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon. Inky crème de cassis, white flowers, lavender, crushed rocks, menthol and spice give the 2017 a distinctly layered, resonant feel. The 2017 offers fabulous density and structure, although the tannins need time. The blend is 93% Cabernet Sauvignon and 7% Merlot. The September rains were especially challenging for the Merlot and Cabernet Franc. As a result, Cabernet is pushed up in the blend, while there is no Franc at all. Tasted two times. **93-96 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

Ch Leoville Las Cases Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 1,775**

*Rich and textured with long sweet fruit, medium-bodied with lovely bitter-sweet cassis, cedarwood and coffee on the mid-palate. Classically built with very fine tannins and a long finish. Wonderful finesse - one of the top wines of the vintage. RKL. "This is very muscular with formed and bright tannins that give the wine super drive and length. The tannins build on the finish with a lovely integration of black fruits. Serious for the vintage. **96-97 points**" jamessuckling.com. "One of the very few wines in this vintage that truly stains the glass with its wonderfully vibrant anthocyanins. This is an exceptional wine - Léoville just knows how to knock it out of the park again and again. An early vintage meant everything was blended and in barrels before Christmas, with 7.5% press wine, so this has had some time to settle down already. There's huge persistency through the palate, very similar to last year. It has presence and a grip that doesn't want to let go, and you don't want it to either. It continues to reveal itself over the course of the glass, showing slate, cassis, blackberry and charcoal. It's not as powerfully knitted as the 2016, but watch out for those tannins. I expect this will be a wine that, like the 1996 and 2016, will close down and evolve extremely slowly. Stunning aromatics. 90% new oak. 3.72pH. Drinking Window 2027 - 2042. **97 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "The 2017 Léoville Las Cases, a blend of 79% Cabernet Sauvignon with 11% Cabernet Franc and 10% Merlot from 50- to 90-year-old vines, is deep garnet-purple in color and simply sings of crushed blackcurrants, wild blueberries and plum preserves with notions of wood smoke, cigar boxes, crushed rocks and beef drippings. Medium-bodied with wonderful intensity and vivacity, it gives a firm, fine-grained frame and a densely packed mid-palate, finishing long and earthy. This should age incredibly! **96-98 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com*

Ch Leoville Poyferré Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 660**

Beautiful ripe nose with good concentration, sweet and savoury notes and some cedar wood. Typically soft and luxurious entry before fine tannins emerge to tame the juicy red and black fruit; medium-bodied with very good length. RKL
*"The 2017 Léoville-Poyferré boasts serious depth and concentration within the context of the year. Bright and floral, with beautifully layered fruit, the 2017 is at once gracious and powerful. Raspberry jam, chocolate, new leather and spice all flesh out in this decidedly exuberant, fleshy Saint-Julien. Many 2017s are quite open, but Léoville-Poyferré is quite reticent. Some of that may be attributable to high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in a blend composed of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Because of the late season rains, only 3 out of the 5 parcels that typically inform the Grand Vin were used. Tasted two times. **92-95 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com*
*"Yields in 2017 were 44.34 hectoliters per hectare. The 2017 Léoville Poyferré is very deep purple-black in color with super intense notes of freshly crushed blackcurrants, wild blueberries and Sichuan pepper with hints of lavender, baking spices and wood smoke. The palate is medium-bodied, firm and grainy with restrained, understated fruit and a long, mineral-laced finish. **93-95 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com*
*"This has lower alcohol than usual, but doesn't sacrifice the mouthfeel. There's a succulent damson and cappuccino expression through the finish here, along with tautly constructed, bouncy tannins that are both expressive and powerful. It's one of the more rich and round wines in St-Julien, as fits the house style. Extremely accomplished, it's powerful and will clearly age well. It's somewhere between 2014 and 2015 in quality, but not touching the majestic 2016. A success in the vintage, underlining again that St-Julien has had an extremely lucky 2017. Drinking Window 2026-2038. **95 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine*
*"Very tight and energetic finish to this young, new red with currant and blackberry character. Hints of crushed stones. Dense and four-square with a chewy tannin structure and a long finish. Very muscular. Serious encore to the 2016. Same level? **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com*

Ch Saint Pierre Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 460**

*This is very good – wonderful intense fruit on the nose followed by a packed palate of pure red and black fruit flavours, supported by soft tannins and fresh acidity. An excellent Saint Pierre for the vintage. RKL. "They have done a great job this year of not dipping far below the quality of the last few vintages. The only indications really are in the texture and the more savoury-edged register of the fruit. The tannins are a touch more pulled in on the finish, closing things off just slightly too early. Overall this is a clear success, with punch, personality, juice, fine tannic hold, and notes of bilberry fruits, charcoal and cedar smoke. Very good quality. Drinking Window 2026-2040. **94 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "One of the real gems of the vintage, the 2017 Saint-Pierre is powerful, deep and quite concentrated. Despite its obvious richness, the 2017 has more than enough supporting structure to back it up. Gravel, smoke, tobacco, leather, licorice and spice lead into the potent finish in a muscular, tannic Saint-Julien built for the cellar. This is an outrageously beautiful wine. Tasted three times. **92-95 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com*

Ch Talbot Grand Cru Classé St Julien**£ 450**

*Nice ripeness showing on the nose; medium-bodied on the palate with some very nice sweet, juicy fruit. Refreshing acidity on the mid-palate with some well-balanced tannins. This will make relatively early-drinking and a long time before the 2016. RKL. "The 2017 Talbot was picked from 18 to 4 October using manual and optical sorting, matured in 50% new oak. It has a relatively light but well-defined, floral bouquet, pressed flower filtering through that blackberry and boysenberry scents, a little clove and bay leaf lending complexity as it opens in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with fine but firm tannin that frame the slightly savory black fruit, just a little earthiness developing towards the finish. It is a classic Talbot really, exactly what you would expect for the vintage. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is solid and structured with blackberry and currant character. Full-bodied, muscular and dialed-in. **92-93 points**" jamessuckling.com*

-----**Pauillac**-----**Ch d'Armailhac Grand Cru Classé Pauillac****£ 380**

"The 2017 d'Armailhac has an opulent bouquet despite this comprising one of the highest percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon ever, which Philippe Dhalluin attributes to the maturity of the berries. There is some lovely cassis and blueberry fruit here with a smear of vanilla. The palate is structured with fine tannin, here the Cabernets are much more expressive with a fine bead of acidity, an attractive pencil lead tincture coming through towards the finish. This is a more floral d'Armailhac that will drink well for the next decades. [Readers should note that my sample included 60% new oak although the final blend will be 40%.] Tasted three times with consistent notes. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"Opulent and powerful for d'Armailhac with blackcurrants, blackberries and black olives. Full-bodied, tannic and extremely muscular. Very well done indeed. **93-94 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Clerc Milon Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 620**

Super richness and concentration on the nose; linear, elegant and fresh in the mouth with wonderful depth, creaminess and fine, black fruit flavours. With ripe, firm tannins this is going to be one of the longer-lived wines of the vintage. Made somewhat in the image of Mouton Rothschild itself. RKL. "It's immediately obvious from both colour and first nose that this has a wonderful richness to it, offering powerful cherry pit, graphite and dark chocolate notes but without being overly sweet. A serious wine that is delivering on its potential, vintage after vintage. The Cab Franc vines are on limestone and clay here, and reached perfect ripeness. Overall there is a higher percentage of both Cabernets than usual in the blend. 9% press wine. 50% new oak. **94 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "... the 2017 Clerc Milon is deep garnet-purple in color and scented of crushed red and black currants, wild blueberries and black pepper with touches of cigar box, violets, underbrush and menthol. Medium-bodied and with a very firm structure of wonderfully ripe, pixelated tannins and exhilarating freshness, it finishes long with notes of pebbles and floral perfume. **93-95 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch Duhart Milon Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 560**

"Very pretty chocolate and dark-berry character with a medium to full body, soft and silky tannins and a fresh finish. Balanced and refined. **90-91 points**" jamessuckling.com. "The 2017 Duhart Milon is deep, luscious and fruity, with lovely mid-palate depth and pliancy. Soft, silky tannins wrap around a core of dark red and blackish fruit. The 2017 is a very pretty Duhart Milon with plenty to recommend it. This is really quite lovely. The blend is 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot. Duhart is another impressive wine in a portfolio from Lafite that is especially strong this year. **89-92 points**" Antonio Galloni, vinous.com

Ch Grand Puy Lacoste Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 645**

Classic GPL cassis intensity on the nose followed by a broad and rich palate. Tannins nicely balanced, very classic and long. A delicious, medium-weight Grand Puy Lacoste that should drink well relatively early. RKL
 "... It has a clean, precise and conservative bouquet that takes time to open. I like the mineral tension here, the focus, and hints of freshly shucked oyster shell emerging with time. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannin, fresh in the mouth with plenty of cedar and tobacco-infused red and black fruit that drive a long, slightly peppery finish. It is a quintessential Grand Puy Lacoste, sans the frills of the 2016 and yet you can already imagine this being drunk to the very last drop in about ten years time. It is simply a very likeable Grand Puy Lacoste in the making. Tasted twice with consistent notes. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, vinous.com "These guys often over-deliver in challenging years, and have done so yet again. As you would expect in a vintage that has produced such an excellent Lacoste Borie, this GPL is exceptional, a real success that's juicy and carefully extracted. It has weight and impact, with a Pauillac tannic hold and presence. It's one of my wines of the vintage, and a must buy. The balanced, sculpted, juicy black fruits fully deliver personality and signature style. Harvested 15-29 September, yielding 45hl/ha. 80% new oak. Drinking Window 2025 - 2038. **94 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter.com

Ch Haut Batailley Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 495**

The traditionally 'under-stated' character of Haut Batailley seems to have gone with the change of ownership and the 2017 is much more in keeping with the style of Lynch Bages itself. The nose is tight yet concentrated with a wonderful intensity that becomes evident with time in the glass. Super freshness and dark-fruit purity in the mouth with power, persistence and excellent length. A little new oak is showing but the wine is well-balanced and very elegant. What a start for the new regime! RKL
 "The 2017 Haut-Batailley is a hugely promising wine. Sumptuous and expressive in the glass, with gorgeous layers of fruit that unfold effortlessly, the 2017 has quite a bit to offer. Silky tannins add an air of sensuality to a core of dark fruit, lavender, leather and spice notes. Tasted next to the bottled 2016, the 2017 speaks with an effortless refinement. The oak is especially well judged for a young wine. The Cazes family is putting a serious amount of investment behind their newest acquisition. Among other things, an ambitious replanting program is underway. Jean-Charles Cazes told me yields were generous in 2017, which is quite unusual for the year. **91-94 points**" Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com. "This is very structured and serious. Full-bodied, tannic and powerful. Boom. This is one of the best Haut-Batailleys in years. From the new owners, who also own Lynch-Bages. **94-95 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Lafite Rothschild Premier Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 4,950**

Beautiful aromatics and terrific intensity on the nose; lovely fresh, sweet entry with the fruit filling out across the mid-palate.

Showing a huge step up from the Carruades, it's strong and classically Lafite. A top vintage for this property. RKL

*"The 2017 Lafite-Rothschild had been blended in mid-March, a couple of weeks prior to my visit, therefore it was important to let this settle and aerate. Moreover, I returned on my final day in Bordeaux mid-April for a second reading. It feels very aloof at first, even a little green, although that ebbs away with time in the glass to reveal pure blackberry and bilberry fruit, touches of brine, cedar and graphite. Patience discloses a really quite sublime array of aromas. The palate is where all the action is: filigree tannin, very well judged acidity, harmonious and poised with a silky smooth finish that glides across the mouth. It does not possess enormous length but it is very precise and, for want of a better, less clichéd word, classic from start to finish. Tasted twice with consistent notes. **95-97 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

*"This is delicious, a real take-a-step-back moment. There's a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon here, complex and layered with cassis and bilberry notes that tease the attack before being filled out with charcoal, slate, cedar, and even truffle hints, even at this early stage. The finish just doesn't want to quit. It's effortless but questioning, and most importantly it feels like a Lafite - for me this is a contender for red wine of the vintage. Less intense than 2016, but still just beautiful. 40hl/ha yield, unaffected by frost, or maybe just one tiny corner. 99% new oak. 3.75pH. Drinking Window 2027 - 2045. **98 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine*

*"Composed of 96% Cabernet Sauvignon with 3.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Lafite Rothschild is a little shy on the nose to begin, opening out to scents of crushed blackcurrants, black cherries and warm black plums with touches of yeast extract, charcuterie, cigar box and fertile loam plus a hint of iron ore. POW—the paradoxically ethereal, medium-bodied palate hits you with vibrant, exhilarating black fruit and previously latent floral layers, supported with fantastic freshness and super fine-grained, pixelated tannins, finishing with persistent mineral and perfumed layers. Truly. Stunning. **97-99 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com*

Ch Lynch Bages Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 880**

Intense and profound on the nose with rich black fruit notes. Beautifully elegant entry with balance and nicely integrated tannins. Medium-bodied and perhaps not as flashy as usual but extremely good and with real finesse. RKL

*"The 2017 Lynch Bages was picked from 18 September with the young Merlot vines and finishing on 30 September. It was cropped at around 50hl/ha. It is aged in 75% new oak for 18 months. It offers good intensity on the nose, not as precise or as mineral-driven as the 2016 last year, with cedar and pencil shaving infusing the black fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin, very refined, a touch of white pepper and cedar with impressive depth on the finish. This will be an approachable Lynch Bages, probably pre-destined to be overshadowed by the magnificent (if nascent) 2016 but it will certainly give 20 to 25 years of drinking pleasure. Tasted four times with consistent notes. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

*"They've had their foot on the extraction pedal here, but the extremely dark fruit has great finesse. It is broad-shouldered and savoury-edged, and each time I tasted this wine it seemed a little richer and more complete, over-delivering for the year. This is going to age extremely well. 2% Petit Verdot makes up the blend. 75% new oak. Drinking Window 2025-2038. **95 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine*

*"This is an excellent Lynch that starts off slowly and then drives at the end with dark fruit and hints of hazelnuts. Strong and focused tannins. A beautiful young wine. **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com*

Ch Mouton Rothschild Premier Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 4,320**

Complete and rounded on the nose with a wonderful creamy richness. Concentrated and sweet entry with very firm tannins and a certain Cabernet austerity mid-palate. Very persistent fruit however with a beautiful texture and density on the finish. Very classic Mouton. RKL

*"...This First Growth is driven by the Cabernet Sauvignon, as you would expect given the high percentage, expressive pencil lead and cedar that infuse the slightly introspective black fruit. Dare I say that it actually reminds me of Latour in style? The palate is medium-bodied, finely tuned and precise, a more masculine Mouton-Rothschild compared to the last three vintages, fresh with a sustained, lightly spiced finish that lingers in the mouth. That backbone is accentuated more during my second visit in mid-April. It is a cliché but this Mouton-Rothschild is unashamedly "classic" in style, perchance "le petit frère" of the 2010 Mouton-Rothschild that also contained a lot of Cabernet Sauvignon (though before you search the archives, yes, the 2011 and 2012 contained the same proportion!) Tasted twice with consistent notes. **94-96 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

*"This is a very shy and tight Mouton with blackberries, blackcurrants and hints of terracotta. Full body and very integrated tannins that are extremely polished and beautiful. Spicy and white-pepper finish. Sexy and exciting. So long and refined. **97-98 points**" jamessuckling.com*

*"The 2017 Mouton Rothschild has one of the highest percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon ever at 90%, with 9% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot. Very deep purple-black in color, the nose is already singing of crushed black currants, warm blackberries and chocolate-covered cherries with hints of violets, star anise, cinnamon stick and cloves plus wafts of pencil lead and unsmoked cigars. Medium-bodied, wonderfully delicate yet intense in the mouth (gaining some richness in the mid-palate on my second taste two and a half weeks later), it has super fine-grained, smooth tannins and incredible freshness, finishing very long with tons of tightly wound layers. Wow. This vintage is going to be very long-lived in the cellar! **97-99 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com*

Ch Pichon Baron Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 1,175**

"...a very sophisticated, pure and quite intense bouquet with black fruit, cedar and potent graphite aromas. This feels very focused and the 80% new oak is seamlessly integrated. The palate is medium-bodied with a smooth entry, very sleek and silky with a gentle grip. There is a lovely sweetness here, perhaps less austere than I was anticipating with a very long, quite spicy finish.... **93-95 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is very centered and focused on the mid-palate with beautiful currant, coffee and walnut character. Full-bodied and superfine. Strong tannins and a long and bright finish. Lots of blackcurrants and blackberries in the end. **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com. "... 2017 Pichon-Longueville Baron is deep garnet-purple in color and simply sings of vibrant blackcurrants, black cherries and rose hip notes with nuances of potpourri, incense, licorice and pencil shavings plus touches of cigar box and fertile loam. Medium-bodied, super intense and possessing stunning poise, it has very firm, fine-grained tannins and a beautifully silken texture, with bags of freshness and a very long, perfumed finish. **95-97 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch Pichon Lalande Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 1,116**

This is a fantastic Pichon and not far off the quality of the 2016, albeit in a more structured and focussed style. The firm tannins on entry take time to give way to the elegant and luxurious fruit of a more typical Pichon Comtesse, with wonderful richness and finesse on the finish. This is an exceptional wine for the vintage. RKL. "...intense on the nose, the new oak coming through a little strongly since the sample came from a new barrel, the final blend consisting of 60% new wood. The palate is medium-bodied with firm tannin, the Cabernet Sauvignon driving this alone with layers of black fruit laced with cedar and graphite. It is a very "Pauillac" Pichon Lalande, less opulent and giving than recent vintages and more in the style of say, the 1996 or 2010. There is very good persistence on the saline finish but it is clearly a wine that is going to require more cellaring than its peers...**93-95 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is a really fascinating young Pichon Lalande with a dense center palate of currants, crushed stones, salt and seashells. Really long and intense. Wonderful energy. Showing character of some of the top years of the 1980s. **95-96 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Pontet Canet Grand Cru Classé Pauillac**£ 1,010**

"The 2017 Pontet Canet has a very ripe and pure, slightly high-toned bouquet with touches of iodine inflecting the black cherry and cassis fruit. There is a subtle floral aspect to this Pontet-Canet, more iris than violet. With aeration there are hints of graphite and crushed stone, some of its initial opulence ebbing away. The palate is medium-bodied with fine balance on the entry, slightly chalky tannin, a fine sense of energy and poise. On the two readings of this wine, this was perhaps the most difference. The mid-April tasting had a very similar nose however, the palate demonstrated far more backbone, linearity and mineralité, not to mention a sapidity that was not present in the showing at the end of March. Ah yes, that's the Pontet I love. I expect this to land at the upper end of my banded score once in bottle. Tasted twice at the property. **92-94 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is incredibly transparent and refined with blackcurrant, blueberry and mineral character. Full-bodied, layered and ethereal. Tannins have a crushed-stone character. Long and persistent. **96-97 points**" jamessuckling.com. "...2017 Pontet-Canet opens with vibrant wild blueberries, black raspberries and crushed plums with notions of cinnamon stick, violets, unsmoked cigars and pencil lead plus wafts of roses, lavender and tilled black soil. Medium-bodied with very fine, incredibly plush tannins, it is deliciously savory in the mouth, with wonderful freshness and spectacular energy delivering many layers, resulting in a very long, mineral-laced finish. **96-98 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

-----**Saint Estèphe**-----**Ch Calon Segur Grand Cru Classé St Estèphe****£ 740**

Again in 2017 Calon is superb; wonderful intensity and freshness on the nose followed by exquisite balance and elegance in the mouth. Whilst the recent revamp of the visitors' reception at Calon Segur under the new ownership does not necessarily improve one's experience, improvements in the quality of wine most certainly do, with efforts to better express the terroir and to achieve a more traditional blend certainly paying dividends. Exceptional wine. RKL

"...There is a palpable sense of "coolness" imbuing the aromatics and like other Saint-Estèphe barrel samples, it conveys a subtle estuary-like tincture. The palate is medium-bodied with saturated tannin, beautifully integrated new oak that lends this a silky texture. Perhaps this is the smoothest of all the 2017s I encountered within this appellation, a classy and sophisticated Calon-Ségur in the making and heightened by the thrilling tension towards the finish and the latent energy that lingers in the mouth. Excellent. **92-94 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

"Inky core with black-cherry rim. Ripe, dark and with a fine mineral cast to the cassis fruit, which is ripe but not sweet. Paper-fine tannins in many layers. Great ageing potential but also accessible. Deceptively accessible, suggesting lack of ageing ability, but I don't think that is the case. Cool, fresh, serious, fine cassis fruit. The finesse comes from the lack of sweetness but there's no lack of fruit. Dry, firm and very St-Estèphe, with tannin structure. But the structure is filled molecule by molecule with the fruit. It's so finely balanced. There's more firmness than in Cos but there's still excellent harmony. Opens to a hint of violets. Super-moreish and juicy even with the structure of the terroir. **17.5+ points**" jancisrobinson.com (JH)

"This is very delicate on the attack but it grows on the palate with firm and silky tannins that turn lightly chewy. Builds consistently. Compacted and tight. **94-95 points**" jamessuckling.com

Ch Capbern St Estèphe Cru Bourgeois**£ 174**

Château Capbern (formerly Capbern-Gasqueton) is the sister chateau of Calon Segur. Whilst in the past much of the production would have found its way into the vats at Calon, Capbern is now very much a château in its own right, lying between the two Segurs, Calon and Phelan, and overlooking the Gironde estuary. Not only is this prime St Estèphe terroir, but it benefits from the winemaking expertise employed at Calon Segur. This is rapidly becoming one of better-known values of the Northern Médoc. Good concentration of solid dark fruit on the nose; lovely freshness on the palate, neat and balanced with moderate length and nice elegance. RKL

*"Deep crimson with purple rim. Fresh and delicious bramble and cassis fruit. Firm, finely grained, super-fresh. Slightly chewy but with plenty of dark fruit in the middle. Full but balanced. Drink 2023-2030. **16.5 points**" jancisrobinson.com (JH)*

*"The 2017 Capbern was cropped at 43.5hl/ha and matured in 60% new oak. It has a fresh, lively cranberry and blackcurrant-scented bouquet, a little savory in style with hints of Japanese nori (seaweed). The palate is nicely structured with a keen thread of acidity. There is a little compactness on the entry but it gently unfolds towards the finish that exerts subtle grip. It is the precision rather than the power that defines this Capbern and if released at similar prices to previous vintages, could be one of the must-buys of 2017. **89-91 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com*

*"Dark berries and crushed stones. Medium body, firm and silky tannins and a fresh finish. Tightness. **91-92 points**" jamessuckling.com*

Ch Cos d'Estournel Grand Cru Classé St Estèphe**£ 1,295**

Super intensity on the nose with real depth. Lovely fresh entry - beautiful in the mouth with lovely ripeness and lots of crunchy tannin. 2016 was a very hard act to follow but this is a magnificent effort. Certainly one of the wines of the vintage. RKL

*"The 2017 Cos d'Estournel is matured in 60% new oak and comprises 13% alcohol, approximately the same as the 2016. It has a more expressive and welcoming bouquet than usual, maybe more indicative of how this wine will mature in bottle, less opaque than the 2016. A common theme throughout the range from Cos d'Estournel is a Pauillac-inspired backbone/tannic structure coupled with an attractive scent wafting over from the estuary...think mudflats, oyster shells and the tang of sea spray. It gains a little intensity with aeration but never fully lets go. The palate is very well balanced with filigree tannin, rendering this one of the most approachable barrel samples from the estate in recent years. The coolness of the latter part of the season defines this Saint-Estèphe more than the precocity of June: streamlined, cool and linear with a velvety finish that feels sleek, to the point of being understated, though that belies its length and focus. This is simply a very classy wine in the making and typical of the more recent sophisticated style pursued by the property in recent years. **94-96 points**" Neal Martin, vinous.com*

*"Love tasting this wine. You almost want to drink it for its harmony and balance. Full-bodied and so complete with cloves, spices, dark berries and hints of chocolate. Wonderful integration on the finish. **97-98 points**" jamessuckling.com*

*"The final blend of the 2017 Cos d'Estournel is 66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc. Very deep purple-black in color, it offers up intense scents of crushed blackcurrants, blackberries and black cherries with touches of incense, spice cake, star anise and plum preserves plus a perfumed hint of potpourri. The palate is medium-bodied with very firm yet wonderfully ripe, "sweet", fine-grained tannins at just 13% alcohol—something of a miracle in our modern times. The palate sports fantastic freshness and tons of energy emitted from the intensely perfumed black fruit layers, finishing on an epically long-lingering mineral note. Truly profound. **97-100 points**" Lisa Perrotti-Brown, RobertParker.com*

Ch Lafon Rochet Grand Cru Classé St Estèphe**£ 380**

*Wow - this could be one of the bargains of the vintage! Intense on the nose with rich, dark fruit notes soaring from the glass. Solid entry on the palate with excellent concentration, ripe fruit and good complexity with liquorice and coffee accompanying blackcurrant. Moderate to full-body and great length. RKL. "The 2017 Lafon-Rochet has matured in 50% new oak and the remainder in one-year old. I have to say, the bouquet is very expressive with plenty of blackberry, wild hedgerow, oyster shell and pressed flower that blossom in the glass. It is very well defined and more sophisticated than I have detected in recent vintages. Perhaps this is the first vintage where the new winery, replete with concrete vats, has really played a serious role in meliorating quality. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy black fruit, quite saline in the mouth with just a hint of black olive. There is a slightly grainy texture with a sustained peppery finish, completing a crisp and vivacious Lafon-Rochet that should please many wine-lovers. Expect this to land at the top of my banded score. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This is a lovely St-Estèphe this year, firm and bright with bristling fruit right out of the gate - hugely unusual to see that this year. This is one of my favourites, and is totally charming with its cassis and damson fruit, but it's the juice and friendly tension that sets it apart. Silky and enjoyable. Buy. Drinking Window 2025-2040. **93 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine*

Ch Meyney St Estèphe Cru Bourgeois**£ 225**

*Good intensity on the nose with no little power and cassis and plum notes. Beautifully linear and defined on the palate with pure dark fruit and a long finish. Medium-bodied and very fine. RKL. "The 2017 Meyney has a clean and fresh bouquet with blackberry and raspberry fruit mingling with cedar and light cigar humidior aromas. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent, ripe tannin and a fine bead of acidity. I find this surprisingly juicy in style that probably belies the structure underneath. This will be one of the more approachable Saint-Estèphe wines in this vintage, but one that I find well made. **90-92 points**" Neal Martin, vinous.com. "This is very nicely done with a lithe yet structured core of dark fruit and round, juicy tannins. Medium to full body, a driven line of acidity and a long finish. **92-93 points**" jamessuckling.com*

Ch Montrose Grand Cru Classé St Estèphe**£ 1,180**

"The 2017 Montrose represents 37% of the total production this year and it was cropped at around 45hl/ha. It has a little more volume and intensity compared to the Cos d'Estournel that was tasted immediately prior to my visit. Blackberry, raspberry, cedar and pressed flowers bloom in the glass, though there is a noticeable change with aeration after 20 minutes – hints of juniper and bay leaf, rendering a more nuanced and complex array of aromatics. The palate is medium-bodied with edgy tannin and it feels a little chalky in the mouth, yet also tensile and certainly extremely focused. There is already a palpable sense of energy in situ, well structured and vivid, though not as complex or as nuanced as the 2016 Montrose on the finish since the growing season forbade that. I appreciate the pastille-like purity on the aftertaste and the potent tang of cracked black pepper and graphite that hang around for 45 seconds after the wine has departed. It is a fine, very classic Montrose and I suspect more approachable than those of yesteryear. Tasted twice at the château. **94-96 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com. "This has more Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend this year, the highest level since 2006, because the Merlot didn't quite make it through the September rains unscathed. The wine is correspondingly powerful with a robust accompanying acidity that promises a long life. The fruit character is savoury, succulent and extremely persistent, with fleshy blackberry alongside touches of redcurrant and a pulsating freshness that keeps on coming. Harvested 12-29 September with twelve days spent actually picking, compared to sixteen days over the last few years, with more hands on deck. They have never been affected by frost, as far as they can remember, and 2017 was no exception. The wind is always such a benefit here. A normal yield of 45hl/ha, 37% of which was for the grand vin. 60% new oak. Drinking Window 2025-2040. **96 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine. "This is pure and tight with gorgeous cabernet sauvignon character of blackcurrants, blueberries and crushed stones. Full-bodied, yet compacted and polished. It shows a long and beautiful tannin texture at the end. Just rolls off the palate. **96-97 points**" jamessuckling.com. "The 2017 Montrose is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot. Deep purple-black in color, the nose is a little closed at first, but with coaxing, it opens to reveal remarkable earth and exotic spice notes of crushed rocks, black truffles, star anise, cassia and fenugreek over a core of crème de cassis, blackberry preserves, violets and blueberry pie with touches of cigar box, charcuterie and black soil. Medium-bodied with a rock-solid frame and an exquisitely ripe, very fine-grained texture, it has wonderful freshness with electric energy and a very long, minerally finish. Possessing great poise and intensity, this is one of the greatest Montrose's I have tasted! **96-99 points**" Lisa Perotti-Brown, Robert.Parker.com

Ch Ormes de Pez St Estèphe Cru Bourgeois**£ 225**

(From the Cazes/Lynch Bages stable): Lovely purity on the nose with red and black fruit notes; pure and fresh on entry with well-balanced, ripe tannins and good fruit concentration. Whilst it is not a wine quite on the same scale as the big-hitters down the road, Montrose, Cos d'Estournel etc, it is a very well-made and elegant wine which will provide a lot of pleasure over the medium-term and is a real success for the vintage. RKL

"Ormes has managed another good vintage after a run of them. This is a lovely wine and a buy for me. Succulent, bristling and charming, it has juicy brambled fruit extraction and tension. It doesn't take itself too seriously, just asking to be loved. The fruit spectrum is rich with blueberries and damsons, with integrity and a swirl of vanilla bean oak. Includes 6% Cabernet Franc in the blend. No need to wait too long for this. 45% new oak. Drinking Window 2022-2035. **92 points**" Jane Anson, Decanter Magazine "The density for the vintage is impressive with dark-berry and cherry character. Medium to full body, velvety tannins and a fresh and bright finish. Linear and driven. **92-93 points**" jamessuckling.com

"The 2017 Les Ormes de Pez was matured in 45% new oak with 13.42% alcohol. None of the vines were touched by frost. Cropped at round 50hl/ha, it has a clean, pure red cherry, blackcurrant and cedar-scented bouquet, more Pauillac in style than Saint-Estèphe. The palate is well balanced with ripe tannin that feel more malleable than previous vintages at this stage, a little saline in the mouth with a silky smooth finish. This will be delicious over the next couple of decades and I suspect it will be more approachable than the 2016. Don't ignore this. **91-93 points**" Neal Martin, Vinous.com

Minimum order: one dozen bottles. **Payment:** on receipt of invoice. **Shipment:** arrival expected Spring 2020 to LCB. **Bottle sizes:** we can offer HALVES and MAGNUMS for a surcharge of £15 per case and other sizes on request. Please advise any special bottling requirements when placing your order otherwise all orders will be taken as bottles (75cl). **Delivery:** delivery, duty & VAT charged at prevailing rates at time of clearance from bond. OFFERED SUBJECT TO STOCKS REMAINING AVAILABLE & TO MARKET FLUCTUATIONS. THIS LIST CANCELS ALL PREVIOUS LISTS. (E&OE)

If there are any 2017 Bordeaux not listed in which you would be interested please do ask us as it may be possible to source them for you.