

the result of three factors: a great terroir (limestone-clay, hillslopes) and the amount of investment and work that is now going into the region. 2001 is again being quoted as a similar vintage. Look out for a number of new, upcoming names.

Castillon had more rain than anywhere else in the Libournais and this is reflected in the inconsistency in the wines. The vineyards had to be in good condition and even then severe selection was needed. Thierry Valette of Clos Puy Arnaud reckons he put 40% of the crop on the ground while yields at Stéphane Derenoncourt's Domaine de l'A are 10 hectolitres/hectare.

Producers in Lalande de Pomerol were successful if they handled the fruit with care. This was not a year for over extraction.

COTES DE CASTILLON

Clos Puy Arnaud ★★★ (16.5)

Dense, pure and zesty. Velvety texture and tannins. Good length. Bravo. 2010–16.

Ch d'Aiguilhe ★★★ (16)

Less power and intensity than 2005 and 2003, more on length and finesse. Natural acidity and freshness. 2010–16.

Clos Les Lunelles ★★★ (16)

Tight and firm. Elegant toasted aromas combined with dark raisined fruit. Good length. 2010–16.

Domaine de l'A ★★★ (16)

Aromatically fine. Red berry, raspberry nuance. Tight, firm structure. 2010–16.

Ch Joannin Bécot ★★★ (15.5)

Firm, medium-bodied wine.

Tasting at Pomerol's
Château la Conseillante

PESSAC/GRAVES

PERFORMING WELL AND/OR IMPROVING SIGNIFICANTLY

Domaine de Chevalier (cc)

Ch de Fieuzal (cc)

Ch Brown

Ch La Louvière

Ch Haut-Bergey



Less fruit than 2005 but balanced. 2010–16.

Ch Clos l'Eglise ★★★ (15)

Red berry fruit. Freshness of the vintage. 2009–12.

Ch de Laussac ★★★ (15)

Easy, fruity, round. Light in volume and frame. 2009–12.

Ch Veyry ★★★ (15)

Firm, clean. Mid-weight fruit. Crisp finish. 2010–16.

Ch Cap de Faugères ★★★ (14.5)

Jammy red fruit, powerful and heavy but for crisp acidity on the finish. Touch disjointed. 2009–12.

Ch d'Ampélia ★★★ (14.5)

Delicate and long but a touch lean. 2009–12.

COTES DE FRANCS

Ch de Francs, Les Cerisiers

★★★ (16)

Mellow, aromatic. Great fruit flavour. Interesting for early drinking. 2008–12.

Ch Puyguéraud ★★★ (15)

Lighter weight and frame than top years but linear and clean. 2010–16.

Ch Puyguéraud, Cuvée George

★★★ (15)

Firm and austere. Tough

tannic structure. Dark fruit and peppery notes. Will need some bottle age. 2012–18.

Ch Marsau ★★★ (14.5)

Earthy red berry and plum fruit. Solid if a little dull. 2009–14.

FRONSAC

Ch de La Dauphine ★★★★★ (17)

Definite improvement on 2005 with fruit from Canon de Brem now in the blend. Elegant, fruit-driven bouquet, soft, round fruit. Well-judged oak and a touch of minerally complexity on the finish. 2010–18.

Ch Dalem ★★★★★ (17)

Lovely intensity and purity of fruit. Polished tannins. Freshness and length. Gains in elegance and finesse. 2010–18.

Ch du Gaby ★★★★★ (17)

Eclipses the 2005. Should make a really fine bottle. Intense, elegant with firm but fine tannins. Mineral complexity. Harmonious. 2012–20.

Ch Moulin Pey-Labrie

★★★★★ (17)

Powerful wine. Spicy, even exotic nose. Mellow, round and fruit packed. Tannins fine and long. 2012–20.

Haut Carles ★★★★★ (17)

Lovely, intense fruit concentration. Tannins smooth and elegant. Ripe flavours but long, clean finish. 2010–18.

Ch Les Trois Croix ★★★★★ (16.5)

Medium bodied, harmonious. Lively, racy fruit on the palate. Elegant and long. 2010–18.

Ch Cassagne Haut-Canon, La Truffière ★★★ (16)

Cabernet element quite dominant. Blackcurrant notes. Appears lighter in weight but aromatic and long. 2010–18.

Ch Fontenil ★★★ (16)

Rich, perfumed. Plenty of crunchy fruit. Solid tannic frame. 2010–18.

Ch Haut-Ballet ★★★ (16)

An improving estate. Lovely fruit expression. Pure, elegant. Refreshing finish. 2011–18.

Ch Haut-Mazeris ★★★ (16)

Fine, clean, linear in style. Less intensity than 2005 but attractive fruit. 2010–16.

Ch Moulin Haut-Laroque

★★★★ (16)

Plenty of fruit extraction. Solid but ripe tannic frame. Oak a little invasive but should settle in. Clean finish. 2010–18.

Ch Villars ★★★ (16)

Plenty of crunchy fruit. Full and round. Freshness on the finish. 2009–18.

Ch Vrai Canon Bouché ★★★ (16)

Under new ownership and management since 2005 and one to watch. Less vigour than the 2005 but mellow, tender fruit, fine tannins, minerality and length. 2010–18.

Ch Barrabaque ★★★ (15.5)

Clean, fresh and harmonious. Red berry aromas and minerality. 2010–18.

