

# Bordeaux reds

## Exploring the latest vintages

**Great quality wines can be found at all price points, says Panos Kakaviatos, reviewing the latest vintages of Bordeaux AOC and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC**

Much has been said about the need to uproot uncompetitive Bordeaux AOC vineyards, but not enough about talented winemakers making the most of the finest terroirs. Within the Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC categories, producers are now not only investing in quality viticulture and vinification, but also travelling to market their wines domestically and internationally.

At a recent blind tasting of over 120 red Bordeaux AOC and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC wines from the 2021, 2022 and 2023 vintages, winemakers from Frédéric Borderie and Céline Lauret (of the eponymous Bordeaux estates) to Julia Gazaniol of Château de Parenchère shared their latest releases.

Good to excellent quality wines at accessible price levels are essential for Bordeaux to meet the challenge of ferocious international competition, especially as statistics indicate that people are increasingly drinking less but better-quality wine.

### 2022: An excellent year

The superb 2022 vintage included some top-scoring wines at the tasting. 'One can immediately sense the full ripeness, depth and length from this vintage,' explains Philippe Breslau of Planète Bordeaux (the Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC producers' union).

The 2022 vintage generally reflects ripe fruit and high alcohol. Yet many of the wines tasted also exuded freshness and verve, balancing the vintage's opulent overall profile.



### The unsung heroes providing great value

But even more impressive is how well several 2023s and even 2021s performed. Prices vary, with some wines costing £20 and others closer to £10, but all the top-scoring wines selected for this article punch well above their weight in their AOC categories.

The 2021 vintage was a vivid contrast to 2022: much lower in alcohol, sometimes with hints of green. However, as seen below, some estates produced superb expressions, even in this less promising year. Then, 2023 was in some ways a midpoint between the character of 2021 and 2022: moderate alcohol but with ripe fruit and good depth.

Some savvy retailers are already passing this value on to their consumers. 'The challenging economic

winds affecting Bordeaux will be the same as those affecting the entire wine industry, and the consumer demands value, regardless of price point,' says Ben Giliberti of Washington DC retailer Calvert Woodley. Bordeaux's lesser-known names and 'petits châteaux' have been a bright spot,' he explains: 'our customers appreciate the quality and value offered.'

The following selection of wines offer great examples of the opulence of the 2022 vintage – but also the gems that can be found in 2021 and 2023. Taken together, these wines provide an exciting snapshot of Bordeaux producers continuing to provide excellent quality and value on the global stage.

**Discover more:**  
[www.planete-bordeaux.fr](http://www.planete-bordeaux.fr)

### Bordeaux AOC 2023

#### Laurent Dubois, Château le Chêne de Margot 90

[vignobles-dubois.com](http://vignobles-dubois.com)

The first certified organic vintage of this wine displays meadow-like freshness and brambly red fruit. Smooth, brisk and ripe, with a distinct orange peel freshness on the finish, it would go well with lamb tagine or paella. **Alc** 13.5%

#### Château la Fontaine de Genin 89

Bright ripe fruit, plum and blackberry aromas and flavours. A juicy and cooler blue fruit mid-palate with excellent structure. The tannins need time to evolve, so this requires two to three years cellaring for an early drinking window. **Alc** 14%

#### Maison Sichel, Sichel Merlot 88

[sichel.fr](http://sichel.fr)

Bright strawberry and cotton candy aromas presage a pleasingly light, easy-drinking red, well made and balanced. **Alc** 13.5%

### Bordeaux AOC 2022

#### Château de Sours, Quarry de Sours 92

[contact@chateaudesours.com](mailto:contact@chateaudesours.com)

Superlative performance for a Bordeaux AOC in its inaugural vintage, with grapes picked from plots characterised by poor soils on limestone bedrock. Perfectly ripe Petit Verdot lends spice and balance to the Merlot. A delicate red with freshness and depth, balancing the 14.5% alcohol and long finish. Ideal for a gourmet meal. **Alc** 14.5%

#### Vignobles Fournier, Château de Bonhoste 91

[chateaubonhoste.com](http://chateaubonhoste.com)

With brambly red fruit, this wine exudes friendly charm. Crafted from grapes grown on a well-draining clay-limestone hillside facing Saint-Émilion, the wine has nuance and character, along with racy tannins. A top wine to be enjoyed over a gourmet meal or on its own. **Alc** 13.5%

#### Château l'Indécise, Clos des Mes 91

[chateaulindecise.com](http://chateaulindecise.com)

An excellent certified organic wine: well balanced and easy-going, yet structured, reflecting ripe fruit and smooth tannin, without the heat or dryness of the vintage. **Alc** 14%

#### Château du Petit Puch, Le Bordeaux 91

[chateaupetitpuch.com](http://chateaupetitpuch.com)

This excellent 100% Merlot shows floral, juicy red and black fruit aromas and flavours. The wine is well balanced with taut acidity and smooth tannin, and the structure to match beef Wellington. Soft extraction, aged in stainless steel for six months. HVE certified. **Alc** 14.5%

#### Maison A. de Luze, Cuvée '88-89' 90

[maison-adeluze.fr](http://maison-adeluze.fr)

Made from a single plot of grapes, this wine offers ripe blackberry and cassis, alongside chocolate brownie and cake notes. Smooth, with nuance and verve. Only 6,000 bottles produced. **Alc** 13.5%

#### Vignobles Courselle, Château Thieuley 90

[thieuley.com](http://thieuley.com)

Lovely wine, with smooth tannins – rather creamy – and plenty of ripe, clean fruit, displaying balance between acidity and alcohol. Quite fresh for the vintage. **Alc** 13.5%

#### Vignobles Siozard, Château du Claouset 90

[vignobles-siozard.com](http://vignobles-siozard.com)

Crafted from vines grown on clay-limestone soils, vinified and aged in vats for 12 months, this 100% Merlot exudes juicy blackberry and plum aromas and flavours. Balanced and fresh, with a pleasing finish. Great value! **Alc** 13.5%

#### Domaine des Grandes Maisons, Château la Rame 90

[chateaularame.com](http://chateaularame.com)

While conveying the ripe fruit of a sunny vintage, this wine has especially lovely breadth and depth to its palate. Try with mushroom risotto or grilled steak. **Alc** 13%

#### Château Haut-Meyreau, l'Instant H 90

[invindia.fr](http://invindia.fr)

Vinified in stainless steel vats, this excellent 100% Cabernet Franc has cool and intriguing aromatics: wild strawberry, blackberry and mint. Try with roast chicken in an orange sauce. **Alc** 14%

#### Château Joinin 90

[chateau.pipeau@wanadoo.fr](mailto:chateau.pipeau@wanadoo.fr)

Vivid ripe black fruit, clean and smooth on the palate, which combines richness

and energy. Ideal summer barbecue wine, with tannic structure to benefit from two-three years' ageing. Great value. **Alc** 14.5%

#### Domaine le Trébuchet, Grès 90

[domaineletrebuchet.com](http://domaineletrebuchet.com)

Aromas and flavours of candied black cherry, crushed mint and wet stone. An excellent example of Bordeaux AOC winemakers crafting Cabernet Franc with finesse: the cuvée Grès conveys elegance with energy even in a hot vintage. Aged in sandstone eggs, with fine lees stirred by convection. **Alc** 14.2%

#### Vignobles Vincent, Château Lamothe-Vincent Reserve 90

[lamothe-vincent.com](http://lamothe-vincent.com)

Dark fruit aromas presage a palate with concentration and richness: red and black fruits delivered in a velvety, thirst-quenching palate. Supple and balanced. Try with duck breast or mushroom fricassée with herbs. **Alc** 14.5%

#### Vignobles Dubois & Fils, Château les Bertrands 89

[chateaulesbertrands.com](http://chateaulesbertrands.com)

With aromas of sweet strawberry jam and plum, this pleasing wine reveals richness on the palate with notes of fine chocolate. Enjoy on its own, slightly chilled. **Alc** 13%

#### Vignobles Famille Andre Lurton, Château Bonnet 89

[andrelurton.com](http://andrelurton.com)

Brambly red fruit and ripe blackberry intermingle with herbaceous notes. In its alcoholic power, this wine almost evokes sangria on a hot summer day, but the acidity and smooth tannins lend balance, with bright red fruit on the finish. Enjoy with a mushroom tart, grilled meats, or just on its own. **Alc** 13%

#### Fwine, Marquis de Lafon 89

[fwine.fr](http://fwine.fr)

A powerful wine, with mid-palate succulence and juiciness. While a sense of headiness mirrors the heat of the vintage, this is nonetheless fun on its own. **Alc** 14.5%

#### Vignerons mais autrement, Baron Rocheau 89

[vignerons-autrement.com/fr](http://vignerons-autrement.com/fr)

Supple and smooth, this wine exhibits cherry and plum aromas and flavours. Well balanced with a medium finish. Ideal by the glass for a casual drink or with turkey fillet in a cream and mushroom sauce. **Alc** 13.5%



**Château Malagar, La Croix Bouey de Malagar 89**

chateau-malagar.com

Fresh floral and fruit aromatics, with a hint of wet stone. The palate is pleasantly fresh, with a finish that is crisp and tangy for this vintage. **Aic** 14%

**Producta Vignobles, Mission St-Vincent 89**

producta.com

Pleasing ripeness, sweet licorice rather than jammy fruit makes for a nuanced palate, with svelte tannins and well integrated oak. The finish is marked by some heady alcohol, mirroring the heat of the vintage, but this still drinks well without food. **Aic** 13.5%

**Château Franc Baudron, Recto 88**

chateau-franc-baudron.com

Red fruits, strawberry jam and spice, along with green pepper; this 100% Merlot exhibits a supple palate with fine tannins. An ideal match for charcuterie on a summer day. Organic certified. **Aic** 14.5%

**Vignobles Jean Queyrens et Fils, Château Pilet 88**

chateau-pilet-vins-queyrens.fr

There's no denying the ripe fruit aromas and flavours of cassis, blackberry and plum. A tasty wine, guaranteed to please by the glass, and excellent value. **Aic** 13%

**Vignobles Lobre Jc, Château de l'Aubrade 88**

vignobles-lobre.com

Frank aromas of red and black fruits with a touch of spice presage a fleshy, round and rather tannic palate, which could stand up to lamb chops. A heady and rich finish. **Aic** 14%

**Rogerie Père et Fils, Terres d'Ancêtres 88**

scea-rogerie.com

This organic old-vine Merlot spends fifteen months in terracotta amphorae, lending freshness. Cool blue and blackberry fruit aromas emerge; the wine conveys richness and vibrancy. Even if the finish shows some heat, there's a sense of autumnal freshness. Serve with grilled meats or mushroom risotto. **Aic** 15%

**Château Pey la Tour 88**

chateaupeylatour.com

A reliable producer; this vintage exhibits ripe, rather jammy, black fruit. A heady aspect reflects the heat of the vintage, finishing with a note of chocolate cake. Serve on the cooler side, enjoy on its own. **Aic** 15%

## Bordeaux AOC 2021

**Pallaruelo Pascal, Château Mazetier 89**

A bright, fresh attack, with ripe cassis and plum and hints of wet earth. Fine tannins are delivered in a pleasantly light-bodied palate, with a savoury finish marked by cedar. Try with lentils braised in red wine. **Aic** 13.5%

**Petit Frederike, Château Moulin de Bernat 89**

famillepetitvignobles.fr

A fine nose, exuding red fruit, menthol and spice. The palate is rich, with ripe fruit and surprising depth for the vintage. **Aic** 13.5%

**Cardarelli, La Borne 1949 88**

vignobles-cardarelli.com

Ripe fruit aromas presage a juicy palate – rich for the vintage, with seamlessly integrated oak. Enjoy this with a gourmet barbecue or to start a dinner party. **Aic** 14.5%

## Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2022

**Château Moutte Blanc, Moisin 92**

moutte-blanc.fr

The beautifully deep, dark purple hue suggests the ideal ripeness of old-vine Petit Verdot. A gorgeous bouquet of blackberry, damson and tomato leaf precedes a fresh attack. While the palate packs a punch, it is very smooth. An exciting wine and a great ambassador for this AOC category. Fit for a gourmet dinner, given its long herbal and ripe plum finish. **Aic** 14.5%

**Famille d'Amecourt, Château Bellevue 90**

famille-damecourt.com

Blackberry, plum and lead pencil aromas precede a balanced, smooth palate. While somewhat heady, the wine also exudes freshness. Try with prime rib, roast pigeon or fine cheese. **Aic** 13.5%

**Vignobles Borderie, Château les Gravières de la Brandille 90**

vinborderie.fr

Impressive, ripe black fruit with oak-derived toasty notes. Fine mid-palate juiciness and smooth tannin. An almost creamy texture, but the finish has lift and invites further drinking. **Aic** 14%

**Château de Camarsac, Vieilles Vignes 90**

camarsac.com

Crafted from old-vine Merlot and Cabernet, this cuvée offers vivid aromas of dark berries (blackberries, black currants), saddle leather and red pepper, revealing subtle palate power with pleasing texture. Round and bright; enjoy on its own, or try with slow-cooked ribs. **Aic** 14%

**Vignobles Dubergé, Château Saint Sulpice Prestige 90**

While the regular cuvée is widely available in the US, the Cuvée Prestige offers more vivid, ripe fruit aromas and a rich yet suave palate of blackberry, cassis and subtle oak flavours. **Aic** 15%

**Vignobles du Château des Landes, La Salargue 90**

vignobles-lassagne.fr

Blackberry, plum, licorice and clove precede a supple attack and a smooth, medium-bodied palate. Pleasing finish, quite moreish and balanced. **Aic** 14%

**Château la Loubière 90**

vignoblesjade.com

Engaging aromas of wild strawberry, black cherry and white pepper introduce a slightly jammy palate – but with balancing acidity. Smooth tannins leave an impression of nuance and nobility. A wine to enjoy with a luxurious meal or on its own. **Aic** 15%

**Château de Parenchère, Raphaël 90**

parenchere.com

Lead pencil, plum, cassis and strawberry aromas and flavours; a racy wine with smooth tannins. The vintage's heat is apparent, but the finish is marked by a pleasing note of fine espresso. **Aic** 14%

**Recougne, Château Recougne 90**

chateau-recougne.fr

Ripe black fruit and licorice, with the potency typical of the vintage. The concentrated palate reveals toasted espresso and jammy fruit. Recognised as a top Bordeaux Supérieur, from old vines grown on south/south-east facing clay slopes. Try with red meat, game, leg of lamb or aged, cow-milk cheeses. **Aic** 14.5%

**André Bessette, Château la Verrière 89**

chateaulaverriere.com

This wine consistently performs well. Alongside rich blackberry and jammy plum fruit, the warming alcohol in this vintage brings gusto and personality. **Aic** 14.5%

**Bwine, Château de Seguin 100% Malbec 89**

bwine-bordeaux.com

A rich, heady nose, with ripe blackberry and licorice. While the alcohol is felt, the balancing acidity reassures. Serve this limited-edition Malbec – aged in amphorae – chilled. **Aic** 13.5%

**Château Dauzac, D de Dauzac 89**

chateaudauzac.com

Hedonistic, with aromas and flavours of ripe black fruit and spice revealing a medium-bodied, fruit-driven palate. **Aic** 13.5%

**Château la France, Cuvée Carbone Engagée 89**

chateaulafrance.com

At first you get the impression of an easy-going quaffer, but time in glass reveals depth, with aromas and flavours

of ripe plum and blackberry. Try with tapas, quesadillas or more traditional red Bordeaux pairing options. **Aic** 13.5%

**Château de Seguin, Prestige 89**

bwine-bordeaux.com

A fine, well balanced wine from this consistently well performing producer. Delectable ripe fruit with the tannic structure to pair with duck breast, for example. **Aic** 12.5%

**Château Astrelus, Juliette 88**

astrelus.sumupstore.com

Lead pencil notes and ripe fruit reveal a light-bodied wine with finesse and reassuring tannic grip. **Aic** 13%

**Lecourt et Filles, Fleur de Caillet 88**

chateaulcourtcaillet.fr

This wine leaves an overall impression of soft elegance, with brambly red berry fruit and plum. **Aic** 13%

## Bordeaux Supérieur AOC 2021

**Vignobles Hervé Lhuillier, Château Fleur Haut Gaussens 90**

chateau-fleurhautgaussens.com

Considering the challenges of this vintage, this well crafted, ripe wine is plump and pleasing. It has the acidity and the dry extract to stand up to grilled steak with wild mushrooms and a creamy sauce. **Aic** 13.5%

**Château Maison Noble, Prestige 89**

chateau-maisonnoble.com

Smooth, supple and subtle, this wine has freshness and energy and is very good for the vintage. **Aic** 13.5%

**Château Vermont, La Grande Cuvée 88**

chateau-vermont.fr

Ripe fruit aromas and flavours from this reliable producer. The light-bodied palate shows a balance between toasty oak aspects and rather generous, fleshy fruit. The tannins are light, reflecting judicious extraction. **Aic** 14%

