

Bordeaux

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BORDEAUX has the reputation of producing some of the world's most famous and expensive wines.

It's also a typical example of French classification with a hierarchy of wines that dates to 1855.

The first growths Chateaux: Lafite, Latour, Margaux, Haut Brion, and Mouton Rothschild, as well as top notch wines such as Cheval Blanc, Ausone, and d'Yquem are pretty much out of reach for the average punter. I'm a wine-writer and have only tasted Latour, Margaux and Haut Brion of the five first growths.

These days though it's great to know that you can pick up cheaper versions of these wines when there was a time when plain old AOC Bordeaux was mainly sub-standard plonk.

Everyday Bordeaux may not be quite as grand as the most expensive but it gives you a good idea of what Bordeaux is all about and makes great wine for drinking as the colder weather moves in.

Bordeaux Blanc Château Toutigeac 2016 (£7.99, Bordeaux-Undiscovered)

Unlike the Medoc which is very flat and featureless save for the grand Chateaux which dot the countryside, Entre-Deux-Mers is a beautiful area of Bordeaux with softly rolling hills and picturesque French villages. It's a great place to source white wine for everyday food matching. There are generally two styles: very fresh and dry, and whites that have a little more of a honeyed edge to them. This wine,



which adds Semillon (40 per cent) and Muscadelle (10 per cent) to Sauvignon Blanc, is in the latter category. Aromas of waxy apple skin mingle with floral notes and a hint of honey while the peachy palate has a slight honey tang to it.

Dourthe Réserve Montagne Saint Emilion 2015 (Pictured, £11.99 Waitrose on promotion with 25 per cent off from Oct 4 until Oct 30)

Generally, there are two styles of red in Bordeaux based around the proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot used in the blends. Properties on the left bank of the Dordogne river put in more Cabernet and are a little firmer in structure, whereas right bank wines are a little more luscious using a higher level of Merlot. Montagne

Saint-Emillion is a classic example of a right bank wine and this wine has 90 per cent Merlot and 10 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon. It's a lovely wine to wash down over some lamb steaks, with seductive and fragrant aromas of soft spices and red fruits on the nose and a soft but elegant palate that dries nicely on the finish and



grips enough for food matching.

Château Pey La Tour Bordeaux 2014 (£9.99 Waitrose, on promotion until October and later in November with 25% off to £7.49) This a blend of 90 per cent Merlot, 5 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon and 5 per cent Cabernet Franc. It's a slightly

different style to the previous red in that its classic Bordeaux plum and cassis aromas are to the fore. It's a not complex wine but it's very enjoyable all the same with a nicely structured plummy palate that has a slight herbal edge and some tannic firmness to the finish.

Knock this down over a steak.