

Favorite Wines
(75 Selected from 953 Wines)
Today's Bordeaux is Affordable Bordeaux

Sparkling

90*

Les Vins de Lisennes NV Crémant de Bordeaux Bulles de Lisennes \$20

This is a smashingly good Crémant de Bordeaux composed of Cabernet Franc, Muscadelle and Sémillon. It is pale and almost water white, but its nose offers many inviting aromas: white flowers, white peach pit, gooseberry, mint, ginger and a hint of caramel. Lite, thanks to its spritely acidity and light body, this wine is easy to drink. It is exuberantly refreshing thanks to its nicely drying effervescence, composed of small and cleansing bubbles.

White

94*

Château Couhins-Lurton 2013 Graves Cru Classé Blanc \$40

A varietal Sauvignon Blanc from young vines (averaging 15-18 years old), this wine has pithy and perky citrusy notes with accents of spice. Its forward nose leads to a suave and caressing palate with terrific concentration. Well-knit on the palate, there are enough layers here that it wouldn't hurt to decant it.

94*

Château Malartic-Lagravière 2013 Graves Cru Classé Blanc \$75

This 53-ha property devotes only seven to white grapes. When I taste a wine this complex, it makes me sad to hear those production numbers because this is so sublime. Its seductive, smoky nose smells of toasted brioche, lemon tea and honey. Its juicy core wraps itself around the tongue then delivers a savory, bone marrow flavor that lingers long on the finish.

94*

Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte 2013 Graves Cru Classé Blanc \$100

This wine has a turbo-charged nose of fireplace smoke, passion fruit and beeswax. Round, supple and suavely textured with lightly glycerol on the palate, this is both a highly gulpable and strongly intellectual wine thanks to its compelling intensity. It drinks beautifully now, but there's no need to rush.

93*

Château Olivier 2013 Graves Cru Classé Blanc \$35

Reserved and lightly sulfur-y on the nose, the more giving palate offers tangerine peel, pomelo and honeysuckle notes. It's deeply flavored thanks to its concentrated core composed of 68% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon and 2% Muscadelle that sees 35% new barrique. Its super-charged acidity produces a waterfall effect of salivating and drags the rambunctious flavors into a very long finish.

92*

Château Lespault-Martillac 2013 Pessac-Léognan Blanc \$24

Composed of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Sémillon from just 1.5 hectares, this was a stunner. Its pale yellow-green color gleams, and on both the nose and the palate, it is vibrant and serious. Its structure is impressive with waxiness on the round mid-palate, soaring acidity and a long finish. Lots of fragrances are packed in, from lighter notes like field flowers and pomelo to deeper ones like dried pineapple and Calvados.

92 *

Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte 2012 Pessac-Léognan Blanc \$99

This white is sheer seduction. Honeyed, suave and brilliantly succulent, this mouth-filling, long and incredibly complex white has many layers yet to unfold. It tastes of peaches and Canary melon accented with fennel frond, acacia and toasted brioche. This is one of my perennial favorites in white Bordeaux.

91*

Château Lacaussade Saint-Martin Trois Moulins 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Blanc \$12

How can a \$12 Bordeaux evoke so much emotion? For one, perhaps it's the fact that this is entirely opposite of the other wines I tasted from this appellation. It's 85% Sémillon and 15% Sauvignon Blanc. Furthermore, it is fermented then aged in 400-liter barrels for 12 months. There's a lot of TLC in this wine. The result is a sexy, vibrant wine that is distinguished for its concentration, complexity and lingering finish of exotic passion fruit, guava and ginger notes. Not only should this Blaye white hold, it should age to some benefit.

91*

Château La Garde 2013 Pessac-Léognan Blanc \$38

This is often a wine I enjoy, and the 2013 is drinking splendidly. Its lemony on the attack with lively acidity, lots of mid-palate energy and a suave and medium finish. There's a dynamic, grosgrain ribbon-like texture in the medium finish, too. It is 80% Sauvignon Blanc, 15% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Sémillon.

91*

Château Rahoul 2014 Graves Blanc \$27

This wine is dominated by Sémillon, which gives it lots of flair on the palate along with its oak barrel fermentation and lees stirring. It is 78% Sémillon, 15% Sauvignon Blanc and 7% Sauvignon Gris. There is a lovely succulence on the palate with flavors of guava, juicy summer peaches and wildflower honey. The lightly waxy texture is lifted by the perfectly integrated acidity. This should hold well, but I like it so much that I'd be useless at keeping it around!

90*

Château de Cruzeau 2013 Pessac-Léognan Blanc \$25

This André Lurton wine is incredibly aromatic. Its bouquet is a profusion of roses, baby's breath flowers, verbena and chamomile. The palate adds pink grapefruit and citrus peels. Its flavor exuberance is enticing, and there is a lot of tugging mid-palate texture. This varietal, barrique

fermented Sauvignon Blanc highly sippable and is sure to be a crowd-pleaser. I love how its array of scents linger on the palate.

90*

Château de l'Espérance 2013 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Blanc Instinct \$11

White cherries, mango and papaya fill this wine's bouquet. Honeyed on the palate, it is sumptuous, nuanced and refreshingly drinkable. This 100% Sauvignon Blanc is fermented and aged for nine months in Burgundy, Bordeaux and American oak barrels. Tasting it, you'd never know it was produced from fruit grown in "one of the most difficult vintages of the last decade".

90*

Château Jean Faux 2014 Bordeaux Blanc \$20

Made of 85% Sauvignon Blanc and 15% Sémillon, this bright and fresh wine has an equally youthful straw color. Its nose is jumping with candlewax, sweet spice and tangerine. The palate is pleasantly round with mid-depth weight. Spry acidity and a hint of tannins give this wine enough structure that it could age well. Terrific energy!

90*

Château La Grande Métairie 2014 Entre-Deux-Mers \$17

Youthful, fresh and exuberant, this combination of 56% Sauvignon Blanc, 35% Sauvignon Gris and 9% Muscadelle is the epitome of bang-for-the-buck Entre-Deux-Mers. Its producer is neither trying to make it a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc nor is it "oaking-it-up" to try to make a flashier, less characteristic wine for the appellation. It displays notes of oregano, ginger, yellow grapefruit peel, green tomato and celery. The invigorating acidity is well-placed, and there's just the slightest touch of pleasant bitterness on the medium finish. This is a serious out-performer.

90*

Château Nardique la Gravière 2014 Entre-Deux-Mers \$13

This quartet of 40% Sauvignon Blanc, 40% Sémillon, 10% Muscadelle and 10% Sauvignon Gris is a knock-out. You get a kick of grapey Muscadelle on the nose followed by the candlewax character of Sémillon as the wine glides onto the palate. The flavors moves into tropical tones with papaya and Key lime. It's got terrific zing that makes it good as an apéritif. Yet this coupled with its solid concentration and lingering finish give it the nuance to serve at the table, too. Just one puzzling question: how can this be so good and so inexpensive?

90*

Château Pont de Brion 2012 Graves Blanc \$14

This blend of 70% Sémillon and 30% Sauvignon Blanc comes from Langon in southern Graves. It is fermented in barrique and receives regular battonage for about six months. The result is a lightly honeyed nose with beeswax and roasted hazelnuts that is complemented by orange peel and spring flowers. It is round on the entry but turns tangy on the back palate. The perky acidity gives the medium finish a pleasant drying sensation. This is a killer value.

89*

Château Marjosse 2014 Entre-Deux-Mers \$13

Reserved on the nose with little more than waxy tones, this wine has a polar opposite palate. There's pungent pink grapefruit, fresh-cut nectarines, steeped Earl Grey tealeaves and zippy quinine tones. While made to drink early on, this has the complexity and medium-plus concentration to evolve to some benefit. This is a blend of 50% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon, 15% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Muscadelle. Pierre Lurton's whites offer tremendous value and pleasure.

89*

Château Moutin 2013 Graves Blanc \$22

On first sniff, the mid-depth yellow wine smells something like a cross of Chile and New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. Indeed, it is 90% Sauvignon Blanc. Then, the 10% Sémillon enters on the palate, giving a waxy texture and honeyed flavors. There are also savory tones of beeswax, ginger, old bay leaf and braised fennel along with surprisingly tropical fruits like pineapple, yellow mango, star fruit and guava. The palate is lightly creamy with perky, well-balanced acidity and moderate alcohol. Pithy on the finish, this is best with food though can drink well alone, too.

89*

Château Tour de Mirambeau 2014 Entre-Deux-Mers Réserve \$16

This wine turns into a dynamic surprise between its reticent aromas but expressive palate. Reserved on the nose, this wine smells of hay, wax and peaches. Its impressively energetic core has very good concentration and a lovely layering of sweet yellow plums and pluots. Though it's super dynamic in its youth, this wine has plenty of racy acidity balancing its moderate body to hang on a while.

89*

Dourthe 2014 Bordeaux Blanc La Grande Cuvée \$14

Made of Sauvignon Blanc, this wine starts all minerality on the nose, smelling graphite and struck flint. Singing with freshness, this wine tastes of pluot, white cherry, green gauges and mint. The mouthfeel offers a dramatic sense of tension thanks to the pungent acidity and pleasantly palate-saturating, custard-like character. Super pure, impressively finessed and finely concentrated, this wine offers a "bon vivant", have-another-glass sort of drinkability. I love the lingering notes of verbena and lemon curd on the finish.

88*

Be Bordô 2014 Sauvignon Blanc Le Crisp White Bordeaux \$12

Though largely on the tropical side of Sauvignon Blanc, there is some pleasantly grassy relief. Sweet spice comes through with a touch of viscosity on the brightly acidic palate to give this wine lots of vibrancy along with drinkability. This 85% Sauvignon Blanc and 15% Semillon is super drinkable, even if rather straightforward. Tasting this blind, I would have had a hard time placing it, and I surely wouldn't have picked Bordeaux. But, that's not the point. The point is that it is just really pleasant Sauvignon Blanc!

88*

Château Landereau 2015 Entre-Deux-Mers \$11

This minerally nose has impressive fruit restraint. It smells of lemon pith and cantaloupe and has an equally dynamic palate of succulent peaches and cantaloupe. It's easy to imagine throwing down a few glasses in a casual setting or allowing this wine to flesh out over the course of a meal. This is a delightful blend of 40% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sauvignon Gris, 20% Sémillon and 20% Muscadelle.

88*

Château Lestrille 2014 Entre-Deux-Mers \$12

Made of 85% Sauvignon Blanc, 12.5% Muscadelle and 2.5% Sémillon, this perky wine smells of cut grass, pencil asparagus and gooseberry. The palate broadens with riper tones that include tastes of white flowers, honey, yellow cherry tomatoes, cantaloupe and baked apricots. It is pithy and zesty on the palate with a super vibrant fruit core. It's incredibly refreshing and an awful lot of fun to sip.

88*

Château Puyanche 2014 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux Blanc \$17

Owners and winemakers Joseph and Bernadette Arbo took over this family property in 1984. This blend of 75% Sauvignon Blanc and 25% Sémillon grown in limestone-clay is vinified then aged seven months in French oak barrels, 50% of which are new. The palate is sumptuous and caressing with lively acidity to keep the medium body in check. It tastes of exotic fruits - especially papaya, mango and lime peel, all lightly dusted with a vanilla scent.

88*

Château Tour de Mirambeau 2014 Entre-Deux-Mers \$16

A blend of one-third each Sauvignon Blanc, Muscadelle and Sémillon, this was surprisingly reserved on the nose. I expected the Muscadelle to be explosive. Instead, it shows mostly hay and candle wax along with some peach fuzz. It's a vibrant wine with vibrant energy, good concentration of fruit on the palate and a moderately layered finish.

Rosé & Clairet

88*

Château Lamothe de Haux 2014 Bordeaux Clairet \$12

This is a rosé with flavor! In fact, it is almost more red Bordeaux than rosé it is so intense in flavor. It's 50% Merlot and 50% Cabernet Sauvignon from saignée juice. It tastes of blood oranges and Marasca cherries, has a lightly viscous mid-palate and has an impressively long finish for a rosé/clairet style.

Red

95*

Château Corbin 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$30

This blend of 80% Merlot and 20% vinified in thermo-regulated concrete then aged in barriques has an intriguing nose scented with rich black fruits and rain-drenched forest. It is brilliantly balanced with bright acidity and soft tannins that guide its millefeuille of fruit and savory oak spice complexity into a long finish. I wish I could drink the bottle! It's simply delicious.

95*

Château La Tour Figeac 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$45

Sumptuously flavored with a mille-feuille of layered complexity, this wine smells of balsamic-accented black cherries and fresh ganache. Blueberries and sloe help broaden the sensuous and pleasantly viscous palate. The crackling acidity and streamlined tannins give the wine drinkability and moreish-ness.

94*

Château Couhins 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$32

Owned and restored by France's INRA (National Agronomic Research Institute) since 1968, this gorgeous, state-of-the-art winery is a fine-tuned machine. This sexy, lush and beautifully balanced wine is a dynamic combination of cassis, black currants and cigar humidor. With impeccable, chiseled balance of grainy tannins and rapier-like acidity, this is set to age beautifully.

93*

Château Canon 2014 St-Émilion Premier Grand Cru Classé (Sample) \$68

Deeply colored, this young wine already shows impressive harmony - particularly remarkable given that 70% of the one-third of the wine that receives oak aging is new. The rest is stainless steel. The wine tastes of fresh, beautifully ripe black cherries and boysenberries. Sweet spice adds nuance that lingers into the medium finish. The suave and gossamer tannins work with the spritely acidity to give this full-bodied wine definition.

93*

Château Faurie de Souchard 2013 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$30

This wine has a gorgeously floral nose scented with lilac and rosebuds. The palate is refined in seamless, uplifting structure, pulling a concentrated nucleus of fresh fruits into a very persistent finish. Saturating, delicious and sensuous, this blend of 63% Merlot, 31% Cabernet Franc and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon shows no overt new oak, even though 50% is aged in barriques. More, please!

92*

Château Jean de Gué 2013 Lalande de Pomerol \$22

This wine is exotic, round, juicy and fun. Its palate is creamy, its tannins are svelte and its sippability is high. That said, it won't be a flash in the pan and has some ability to hold on. All this for a seriously easy price.

92*

Château Olivier 2001 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$50

This wine smells of iron, tobacco, and mulberries. It's beautifully evolved on the palate with both tertiary and lingering, fresh aromas. The acidity remains vibrant and the streamlined tannins have nicely integrated. Classically Graves, there is power and silkiness wrapped into every sip. This is 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc.

92*

Fugue de Nénin 2012 Pomerol \$32

This Pomerol shows breed. It's the kind of wine that makes me love Merlot from Bordeaux's Right Bank. This combination of 82% Merlot and 18% Cabernet Franc aged in 20% new and 80% older oak is beautifully pure. Black plums, sloe jam, cassis and loganberries smoothly spread across the velvet textured palate. The precise and vivacious acidity offers refreshment and age-ability while smartly countering the elevated alcohol. In sum, this is a real heartthrob.

91*

Château Biac 2011 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$55

Wow! This wine has a tremendously aromatic nose with smells of blueberries, cherry cobbler and lilacs. Fantastically finessed, fine-grained tannins align with medium-plus but unobtrusive acidity to give this wine bewitching tension on the palate. There's a fascinating and attractive soy note on the medium finish. This is the first year Biac included their new Petit Verdot in this blend, adding 2% to the 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc.

91*

Château Le Bosque 2010 St-Éstèphe Cru Bourgeois \$41

This château is neighbor to Sociando-Mallet and Calon-Ségur. Its black cherries, black plums and sloe saturate the palate, all accented by smoky peat tones. Highly drinkable without food and yet complimentary to hearty fare, this wine's smoky nose and lightly balsamic flavors carry lots of sex appeal.

91*

Château Pibran 2011 Pauillac \$32

This Pibran starts with a sexy nose smelling of peatiness and smoke. A hint of vanilla bean slips in as the wine opens in the glass. Juicy and plump with round, carefully constructed tannins, the source of vibrancy and energy stems from the lifting acidity. Though only moderate on the finish, there is a lot of fruit and structural precision evident in this super suave wine.

90*

Château Beauséjour 2012 Fronsac \$14

Composed of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, this is a dark, brooding wine. It is bewitchingly engaging with its fleshy, peak-of-summer cherries. Round and vinous with high energy, this wine's lingering finish brings on a spicy kick. Its structure is a harmonious trio of creamy tannins, pronounced acidity and full body. This is made in concrete

and thermo-regulated stainless steel then aged in 40% in stainless, 20% new barriques and 40% older barriques. It's killer good for the price.

90*

Château de Cérons 2012 Graves Rouge \$26

This wine is light and dynamic on the nose and palate. Made of equal portions of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot harvested at 40 hl/ha, the palate is multi-dimensional and nicely concentrated. The generous finish shows spicy green peppercorns and crunchy cranberries. This wine is quite simply fun to sip.

90*

Château Lestrière 2010 Bordeaux Supérieur le Secret \$20

Whoa! Bold and forward on the nose, this is a mosh pit of black plums and cherries. The palate adds bonfire and slate to this multi-dimensional, full-bodied dynamo that turns super savory on the lingering finish. Ambitious, this shows obvious, toasty oak, but it's nothing that the turbo-charged concentration can't handle.

90*

Château Le Thil 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$19

I love the energy of this wine. It is super juicy with an extravagant (if that's possible) quantity of perfectly ripe, primary fruit accompanied by flattering and spicy new oak. Wild blackberries, plums and dried rose petals mingle. It's about 80% Merlot finished with Cabernet Sauvignon. If you're looking for accommodations south of Bordeaux, check out this establishment's "Chartreuse", part of Les Sources de Caudalie.

90*

Château Montcanon 2014 Canon-Fronsac \$18

Crowd-pleaser alert! Its fairly clear color spreads out to a cranberry rim. This smells of wild cherries and field strawberries. Dark earth and cigar wrapper notes create complexity on the palate. Meanwhile the 25% new French oak integrates smoothly with the boisterous fruit. Zippy acidity smartly balances this full-bodied wine and gives it gulpability. I only wish the moderate finish were longer, but how can I complain given the price?

90*

Château Paloumey 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Impressively vinous, this drinks well on its own, but it can also stand up to an array of moderately rich foods at the table. Blueberries, cranberry compote and allspice dazzle the palate and hang on into the persistent finish. Medium-bodied with buffed tannins and thirst-quenching acidity, this blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc offers superb value.

Drink: 2017-19

90*

Château Siaurac 2014 Lalande de Pomerol \$25

This wine has boisterous fruits and lively purity. Blackberries, black cherries and black currants abound. Quaffable thanks to its invigorating acidity, sculpted tannins and bountiful flesh, this combination of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Malbec also has a lingering finish. Made in concrete, 10% is aged in new and 30% in older oak while the rest goes into tanks.

90*

Château Villa Bel Air 2011 Graves Rouge \$22

This blend of 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc has an exuberantly fresh nose with overtly ripe fruit nuanced with sexy, smoky tones. Mid-depth in color, the supple mid-palate is balance by nudging tannins and mouthwatering acidity. The generously plummy fruit is complemented by smashed forest berries and shavings of dark chocolate. Killer value! The vines grow in a unique micro-climate, surrounded by a forest.

89*

Château Beaumont Les Pierrières 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$19

Wow – this is impressively Bordelais. It's full of fallen branches, cigar box and cedar chest. It's also succulent and round with Morello cherry and black plum preserves dashed with savory spices. The opulent, mouthcoating tannins are supported by liting acidity. This is fun in a glass! It is composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and see no oak.

89*

Château Biac 2013 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux B de Biac \$35

Biac was the last to pick Merlot in the area – on October 16 – and their bet paid off. Made of 86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, this wine has a strikingly floral nose, gobs of red cherries on the palate, loads of mouthwatering acidity and smartly sculpted tannins.

89*

Château du Bois Chantant 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$13

This wine has an opaque black core with indigo highlights. The nose is sprinkled with hints of minerals, charcoal, asphalt and licorice. Dark and brooding on the palate, there are a lot of enticing, savory characters in this moderately complex wine. Its medium finish suggests it probably unfold well in the bottle. I can't believe the low price on this one.

89*

Château La Bourée 2014 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$17

This 35-hectare property has been passed down from father to son over the last century. This bottling is a blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc from vines that average 30 years of age. The resulting flavors are explosive with hints of licorice and savory spice emanating from this wine's nucleus of loganberry and cassis fruit. Viscous and full-bodied, this wine has a rather cuddly palate.

89*

Château La Grave de Bertin 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Heritage \$16

This exotic and engaging blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon is made in cement and stainless steel. Its nose exudes forest floor, bramble and blueberry cobbler. Full and round on the palate, it has gossamer tannins and precisely integrated acidity. This is aging well and is ready to drink.

89*

Château La Renaissance 2012 Pomerol \$30

In the land of (pricey) Pomerol, this is a "value" wine. This union of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc is meaty and muscular on the palate with copious amounts of youthfully wound-up fruit flavor. Red cherries sing on the palate, and there's no obvious new oak influence. Drinking very well now, this delivers a lot of pleasure.

89*

Château Mercier 2011 Côtes de Bourg Cuvée Prestige \$20

A blend of 75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec, this wine has 12 months in 100% French oak barrels. While the reticent nose shows minerals and graphite, the palate is unabashedly loaded with black plums, blackberries and seared blackcurrants. This is a sexy, fun and dynamic wine with good balance of lifted acidity, fine-grained, unobtrusive tannins and a medium finish.

89*

Château Pierrail 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Les Hauts de Naudon de Château Pierrail \$15

This wine's first whiff smells like sitting around a evening campfire in the woods. Round on the mid-palate with a rambunctious mix of dried cranberries, loganberries and lingonberries, this wine is fruit-focused and pure. It's a people-pleaser with soul and some potential to develop in bottle thanks to its proper structure of streamlined tannins and crisp acidity.

89*

Château Reysson 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$26

Ruby at the core, there's some brick color creeping along this wine's rim. Flavored with red currant jam, licorice and forest floor, this *tastes* very "Médocain" though its fleshy mid-palate of 90% Merlot *feels* unusually plump. Otherwise, it's very "English claret" in the most lovely sense. There's a light tannic tug and plentiful refreshment on the finish.

89*

Domaine de Courteillac 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$18

This wine is produced from an almost meager 35 hl/ha produced on the limestone plateau southeast of St-Émilion. Stéphane Derenoncourt consults on this blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc aged in 25% new oak, 25% once-used oak and 50% in tanks. Floral and engaging on the nose, this is elegant, juicy and supremely harmonious with a bright cherry finish.

88*

Château Lamothe-Cissac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

This wine starts with a fairly pale and clear red color with a potpourri nose steeped white tea and roses. The crunchy but sumptuous palate is cram-packed with lots of tiny red berries. The fruit purity and structural polish are ethereal. The tender tannins and integrated acidity gently lead to a moderately mineral finish.

88*

Château Larose Perganson 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

Dark at the core, this wine is more reserved in fruit on the nose and palate. However, it offers sexy earthiness, from crushed slate to truffles to sweaty, meaty tones. It's not all that tender on the palate tannin-wise, but it is nonetheless well-balanced overall - thanks especially to its solid mid-palate stuffing. With its fruit flavors waning, this seems to be at its drinking prime.

88*

Château Martinat 2012 Côtes de Bourg \$24

Tarmac black in color, this wine boasts an opaque purple color with spindly legs. A blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Malbec aged in French oak barrels for 14 months, the effusive nose smells of Middle Eastern spices and a jumble of black fruits. The palate has excellent, racy energy with concentrated, mid-weight and pure fruit. An oak-forward wine, it would nonetheless show well at the table now.

88*

Château Montfollet Le Valentin 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$21

This blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Malbec is a sleekly sculpted body builder. Though rare to see a Bordeaux with so much Malbec, Malbec is a traditional grape in the region. The nose starts with black plum, used tealeaves and peat fire. Generous on the palate with lovely and elegant layers of fruit, it's pure fun and sumptuousness with well-balanced structure.

88*

Château Moulin Pey-Labrie 2011 Canon-Fronsac \$25

Grown on hillsides with the area's famous clay and limestone "molasse", this Merlot has a 5% dribble of Cabernet Franc. The fruit from these approximately 65-year-old vines is vinified in concrete before 30% is aged in new oak while the remainder sees once-used and older barrels. It is maturing nicely with copious quantities of leather and fallen autumn leaves. Round and supple, the palate tastes of boysenberry, mulberry and black plum dashed with exotic spices. The finish is super savory and downright tasty.

88*

Château Turcaud 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$13

This is 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Cabernet Franc aged primarily in stainless steel. Smoked meats and barbecue spices inflect the nose while the palate livens up with

blueberries and açai. The polished mouthfeel has just enough of everything, from solid concentration to bracing acidity, to make this crunchy sipper truly enticing.

87*

Château Anniche 2014 Côtes de Bordeaux \$20

The Pion family has cultivated vines in the Entre-Deux-Mers region since 1914 and purchased this estate in 1989. Their vines average 40 years of age and are planted on the plateau (siliceous and chalky clay) and slopes (predominantly gravel). This one is a gem. It has deep color and high-wattage, black cherry nose. The palate layers on licorice, cracked dry twigs and violets, all of which lead into a medium finish. Pristine clean and super fresh, this is a drinker. It's good by the glass and with or without food thanks to its refreshing acidity and laid-back tannins. This is a 50-50 blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

87*

Château Dupeyrat Plouget 2014 Côtes de Bourg \$12

Flushed purple in the glass, this wine looks ready to impress. Indeed, lively and ripe on the hyper-youthful nose, it is a happy mess of blueberries, pomegranate seeds and toasted bread crust. Energetic and delightful to sip thanks to its terrific freshness, this would be a great wine by the glass. Made from 65% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec, the fruit comes from a hillside vineyard overlooking the Garonne that this family has been farming since the 18th century.

86*

Château Bellevue 2012 Bordeaux \$12

This is a very agreeable wine. Youthful, exuberant fruits of ripe mulberries and blueberries shout from the glass. The palate brings on some fried bacon notes along with a medium body focused by zesty acidity. Short on the finish but not on the fun, this is a tremendously good value.

Sweet

95*

Château de Rayne Vigneau 2009 Sauternes Première Grand Cru Classé \$40

This wine bursts from the glass with its huge and cool nose of gingerbread and sugar cookie topped apple crumble. It is delicious and vibrant, made from 80% Sémillon and 20% Sauvignon Blanc vinified in new oak (50% new). Delish and vibrant. It has lightly pungent acidity that keeps the wine's feel dynamic and youthful. It also has a hint of apricot peel tannins. Still impressively young, this wine hasn't shown anywhere close to what it has yet.

95*

Château Doisy-Daëne 2010 Barsac \$50

This wine has an exuberant nose. Its supremely well-balanced palate of 89% Sémillon and 11% Sauvignon Blanc comes from vines that average 40 years of age. The vinification and aging in barriques then inox, allows the rich layers of apricot skin, smoky tobacco and ginger to meld

seamlessly together. There's a lot of fun in this dynamic mouthful of flavors balanced between primary and tertiary notes.

94*

Secret de Château Biac 2011 Cadillac \$43 (500 ml)

Château Biac may be petite with only 9.8 ha, but it is on one of the prettiest segments of the Garonne with its amphitheater of vineyards perched above a turn in the river. Made from 100% Sémillon with 140 g/L of residual sugar, this is the sweetest wine made since the Asseily family purchased the property in August 2006. It's a decadent affaire with honey-drizzled dried apricots and copious baking spices. Suave and brilliantly balanced, it's a sweet wine I could drink all day.

93*

Château Haut-Bergeron 2011 Sauternes \$39

This wine, made of 85% Sémillon, 12% Sauvignon Blanc and 8% Muscadelle hailing from near Château Climens in Barsac, smells of honeycomb, dried apricots and toasted marshmallows. It is full-bodied between its 13.5% abv and 154 g/L RS. A sexy hint of cigar box on the finish shows the first notes of beneficial development. Lush, custardy and turbo-charged with pure fruit concentration, this wine has an exceedingly long finish!

92*

Château Lamothe Guignard 2013 Sauternes \$36

This is a wine that downright dazzles. Its densely concentrated nose is packed with caramelized sugar, maple syrup and dried apricots. It caresses the full-bodied, viscous palate then shoots in scintillating, high acidity to balance the blend of 90% Sémillon and 5% each Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Vanilla, toasted brioche and nougat from its elevage in oak barrels adds nuance, especially on the lingering finish. This is a brilliantly balanced and highly drinkable Sauternes with 118 g/L RS that bursts of youthful and pure flavors.

92*

Clos Haut-Peyraguey 2011 Sauternes Première Grand Cru Classé \$49

This is the quintessential Christmas pudding wine. It smells of iced tea, lavender sachets and donut peaches. This blend of 95% Sémillon and 5% Sauvignon Blanc that if fermented and aged in barriques (30% new) has no shortage of viscosity that helps drag the wine into a lingering finish of persimmon and nectarines. It has bewitching balance of hard-core sweetness at 153 g/L RS, racy acidity and a nicely crisp finish. It's beguilingly drinkable.

91*

Château Sigalas Rabaud 2011 Sauternes Première Grand Cru Classé \$50

This wine was harvested at 20 hl/ha. It smells decadent on its explosive nose: honeysuckle, golden raisins and fuzzy peach skin. This composition of 85% Sémillon and 15% Sauvignon Blanc both tastes of and feels like honey. This is deeply concentrated but surprisingly only moderate in viscosity with bright acidity that makes its 127 g/L of RS very drinkable. Moreover, the long

and complex finish has a pleasant dryness to it that give it terrific balance as well as a wide range of pair-ability at the table.

90*

Château Les Guyonnets 2011 Sainte-Croix-du-Mont \$15

This pure Sémillon bottling has an impressively mineral nose with cinnamon stick, apple sauce and tarte tatin. The palate adds apricot skins and honey. There is enormous viscosity and very high, 150 g/L RS, but there is also precise, chiseled acidity for balance. There's so much sumptuous fruit, this is easy to love. This was aged in one-year-old French oak barriques.

88*

Château Cantegril 2013 Sauternes \$30

This bottling of 80% Sémillon and 20% Sauvignon Blanc has a dynamic nose of honey, aloe and fern. The generously weighty palate brings along dried apricots and allspice. This nicely concentrated wine coats the palate with light viscosity then refreshes it with lively acidity. Fermented and aged nine months in barriques (one-third each of new, second and third use) then another nine months in stainless steel before bottling, this has loads of balance, great juiciness and the possibility to improve some to benefit.

87*

Château des Graves du Tich 2013 Sainte-Croix-du-Mont \$10

This wine has an exceedingly fresh nose! Singing with purity, this 100% Sémillon smells of orange peel and pith and chamomile honey. The palate brings on a deluge of flavors: ginger, dried peaches and apricots and tapioca. Vinified in barrels, this has a rounded palate, but there's also crackling acidity to give it terrific balance to the 102 g/L RS and extend the moderate finish. This is crazy good for the money!

87*

Château La Rame 2013 Sainte-Croix-du-Mont \$18

This pure Sémillon fermented in barrique has bright wine has delicious and exuberant flavors of tangerine and clementine. There's tarte tatin with anise sugar and vanilla bean on the palate. Medium plus in body thanks to its 125 g/L RS, it has very good concentration of pure pit fruits and balancing, zingy acidity. It's not super long, so don't hesitate to drink up while its fresh.