

Red Wines (695)
Today's Bordeaux is Affordable Bordeaux

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 Fleur Cardinale 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$50

A blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is vinified in stainless steel then aged entirely in new barriques. Massively dark in color with black tinges throughout, the wine smells of roasted black plums, licorice and lilac. The silky tannins and round palate give this wine loads of sex appeal while the integrated acidity keeps the whole package very nicely structured.

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 Canon 2011 St-Émilion Premier Grand Cru Classé \$130

Purchased by Chanel in 1975 and restored bit by bit, this stately, 34-hectares château is one of the largest in St. Émilion today. This vintage displays masses of minerality alongside moderately extracted, sweet mulberry fruit highlighted by chocolate notes. The wine has plenty of smartly concentrated, almost gluttonous fruit vigor balanced by suave tannins and buoyant acidity to develop well in the long haul.

94

Château Chauvin 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$45

Composed primarily of Merlot with 12% Cabernet Franc and aged 45% in new and 55% in once used oak, this wine could use decanting as it is a bit funky on the nose. The supple and creamy palate is judiciously structured by the wine's bright, almost tangy acidity. This is very drinkable, whether on its own or with a nicely marbled steak.

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.

94

Château Fleur Cardinale 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$45

This wine was so hedonistically fruit-driven that it smells more like Napa than Bordeaux. (More significant in Cabernet Sauvignon than the 2012, this vintage is composed of 70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon.) Deep in color – almost black to rim – it shows an exotic nose with oodles of fruit. Again, aged 100% in new barriques, this had an intense but pleasant oak spice. Predominantly round tannins with just a hint of barrique-driven, tannic rigor nicely frame the just-noticeable alcohol and help pull this layered wine into a delightfully long finish.

94

Château Grand Corbin-Despaigne 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$37

Composed of 75% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, this juicy, sumptuous and dynamic palate has a lovely, caressing texture. It boasts excellent concentration and freshness, making this still youthful wine highly drinkable very early on. Every sip is an explosion of cherries, plums and wildflowers. This plush red offers terrific value!

94

Château Laroze 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$27

This is a charmer. Its bright, forest berry nose leads to a voluptuous palate layered with baking spices, espresso grinds and musk. The sculpted tannins are gentle and there is just enough acidic tension to give the palate verve. This blend of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon was aged 50-50 in new and older barriques.

94

Château La Serre 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$47

This wine's tart-smelling nose is forward and engaging, smelling of cranberry compote, lingonberry syrup and kirsch. It's accessibly round on the mid-palate and properly structured by corraled tannins and crisp acidity. Its medium-plus, savory finish with nicely integrated oak (50% new) shows generous minerality. This is composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc.

94

Couvent des Jacobins 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$39

This property was established in 1902 on clay-based soils that have patches of sand and limestone. This combination of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc aged 45-55 in new and

older barriques has terrific concentration. The effusive nose of forest berries, baked cobbler fruits, wild strawberries and dried, parched earth is compelling. The full-bodied palate is curvaceous and smooth.

93

Château Balac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$45

Blueberries, boysenberries and hint of mocha ripple from the glass. The palate is plump with sumptuous fruit guided by firm tannins and lilted acidity. Highly structured and lightly drying on the lengthy finish, this is a wine for the table. This blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc is aged in barriques of first, second and third use.

93

Château Biac 2010 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$55

This wine has a deep, dark core and all the compact and pure fruit you'd expect from an excellent vintage like 2010. Layer upon layer of black fruits mix with exotic spices. The Asseily family is not trying to make an "appellation wine but rather a Biac", and this wine's wide appeal suggests that they're right to do so! This is 84% Merlot and 16% Cabernet Sauvignon.

93

Château Canon 2012 St-Émilion Premier Grand Cru Classé \$75

Composed of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc, this wine has an almost aggressive nose of licorice, charcoal and roasted plums. (Decanting for several hours is highly recommended!) Its broad and mouth-filling palate leads to a strong finish laced with red currants and minerals. Ripe, accessible and incredibly classy with excellent tension!

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 Chauvin 2014 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé (Sample) \$45

This brooding wine has a beetle shell black core. Its nose is quiet and minerally, but its flavors are expressive. This tastes of black plum skins and blackberries. The tannins are firm but smartly sculpted and nicely encase the well-balanced 13.5% abv. This is 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 45% new and 55% once used barriques.

93

Château Couhins 2005 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$25

Blackberries, black currants and savory spices light up the rich, enticing nose of this bewitching wine. On the palate, light tones of dried earth and drying mushrooms are creeping in, showing

this wine is starting to pass into its tertiary stage. The tannins are refined and the acidity is vigorous, so there's no need to rush to enjoy this wine.

93

Château Couhins 2008 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

Made of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, this wine has a compelling, almost seductive, spiciness on the nose. The well-proportioned palate follows with black currants, black cherry preserves, roasted plums and licorice. It's a highly ripe wine, but it shows elegance and class. The refined tannins and crisp acidity pull the vibrant flavors into a lingering finish.

93

Château Corbin 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$40

This wine is super expressive. Its nose is packed with tart cherries, red currants, açai, and pomegranate seeds. Its palate goes a step further in ripeness and complexity adding raspberry coulis and an undercurrent of earthiness. There's crisp structure via the refreshing acidity and pleasantly caressing tannins. This 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc from vines averaging 30-years-old was aged in 40% new and 60% older barriques.

93

Château de Ferrand 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$35

This fusion of 77% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 9% Cabernet Sauvignon from this estate founded in the 17th century has an intensely mineral but otherwise reserved nose. The palate pulls out the stops, however, with bold and flatteringly ripe strawberries, red currants & Marasca cherries. The zippy acidity is pleasantly tart and the tannins are suavely integrated. The wine's slightly showy oak (60% new, 40% older) should become more subtle in the next year or so.

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!

93

Château La Louvière 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$40

Dating back at least to 1310, La Louvière comes from "La Lobeyra", which means "wolves' den" and refers to the healthy wolf population in the forest at the time. A dazzling array of aromas waft from the glass: dark forest berries, forest floor and peat smoke. There's a lovely, dense fruit core providing generous flavor on the mid-weight palate. This is a blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot.

93

Château Laroze 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$33

This decadently fruited nose is laced with whiffs of incense and espresso. It has a broad palate with creamy, mouth-coating tannins and a serious fruit intensity that is particularly notable for the vintage. Sassy, high-pitched acidity gives this medium-bodied wine excellent freshness. This combination of 65% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon is certain to be a crowd-pleaser.

93

Château Latour-Martillac 2006 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$50

As Tristan Kressmann, head of Latour-Martillac, said, "The problem with 2006 is that it follows in the footsteps of 2005." Such is typically the case for wines that precede or follow "great" vintages. However, this wine doesn't lack a thing. Its beautifully developed nose of tobacco leaf and (interestingly) roasted potato leads to a palate that - with time and air - reveal damp cigar, forest floor, smashed mulberries and Christmas spices. This tour de force is firmly structured without giving way to dryness and lingers on the amply flavored finish. This is composed of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot and 4% Petit Verdot and was aged in 40% new oak.

93

Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$75

Full-bodied with a lovely tension reigning in its seductive expansiveness on the palate, this wine has plentiful ripeness coupled with impressive finesse. This combination of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot is exceptionally well-priced to be such a consistent over-achiever. With aeration, the dominant aromas of blackberries, blackcurrants and fireplace smoke begin to incorporate tones of savory spices and dried roses.

93

Château Soutard 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$45

Composed of 63% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Malbec has a star-bright, gleaming appearance. Its nose showcases oodles of fresh strawberries. The mid-palate tastes of ripe red plums, açai and red cherries sprinkled with cinnamon and balsamic. Suavely managed tannins and vivacious, bracing acidity give this wine both beguiling sippability and solid staying power. The influences of the 60% new and 40% once used barriques are brilliantly integrated into the wine's fruit. This is 63% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Malbec.

92

Château Biac 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$55

Winemaker Patrick Léon and the Asseily family made a big switch in the dominant variety this year, turning to more Merlot (57%) and much less Cabernet Sauvignon (29%) with their spice race of 12% Petit Verdot and 2% Cabernet Franc. The bottled blend tastes of sloe, boysenberries and toasty spice. The voluptuous fruit is corralled by perky acidity and lightly sandy tannins.

92

Château Carbonnieux 2013 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$35

I almost always buy this château's white and tasting this red reminded me to buy its rouge, too. This is a bright, elegant and crunchy wine replete with blackberries and black plum skins. Its new barrique treatment (about 35%) is sophisticated, integrated and subtle. There's just enough of every element in this wine to make it highly enjoyable today. This is made of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot.

92

Château Carlmagnus 2011 Fronsac 1er Vin \$22

From the Arnaud Roux-Oulié portfolio, this varietal Merlot aged 50% in new and 50% in older oak is a rock star. It punches way about its weight, especially given the challenging vintage. Granted, it's not for everyone. Deep in color with masses of sweet spice and ganache on the nose, it turns into a lovely juxtaposition of sweet and savory on the palate. Balsamic vinegar glaze, chocolate-covered Marasca cherries and cola mingle with grilled meat. The 35-year-old vines must help contribute to the wine's solid finish.

92

Château Couhins 2009 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$30

Rather closed on the nose, this wine shows a strikingly plush palate. It tastes of roasted plums and blackberries baked in a cobbler. The generous finish shows a lovely woodsiness reminiscent of classic Bordeaux reds. The acidity is a bit soft, but the finessed tannins should help this hold nicely.

92

Château d'Agassac 2012 Haut Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

A somewhat funky nose with loads of peat and underbrush leads to a juicy core with lots of licorice, black plum skin and black currant jelly. Though it could handle it, I appreciate that there is no obvious new oak use here. The ample, medium-bodied palate is noticeably concentrated and delivers a lingering, layered finish. This is a serious wine at a very affordable price.

92

Château Dassault 2013 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$37

I admit I was rather surprised with this wine because I often find Dassault far too extracted and oaky. And, by no means was its 2013 vintage shy. However, more so than in other vintages, I found this wine impressively well-balanced with smartly integrated, toasty new oak. It is richly fruited and explosive on the nose with loads of blackberries and blackcurrants. Ganache, sweet spice and dark chocolate linger pleasantly on the medium finish.

92

Château de Sales 2011 Pomerol \$35

This is energetic and roaring with savory spicy and voluptuously ripe fruit. The graphite-led nose dives into a delightful jumble of mulberries and blackberries on the palate. Grainy tannins provide superb balance, drawing this fairly complex wine into a pleasant finish. This 72% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon trio sees only 5% of new barriques during its 12 months of aging.

92

Château d'Hanteillan 2014 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois (Sample) \$32

Intensely fresh and vigorous, the masses of perfectly ripe blueberries are complemented by a generous spiciness. The moderately concentrated palate lights up with sparks of acidity and lively tannins. Showing good focus and dynamism, this is drinkable fun.

92

Château Faurie de Souchard 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$35

This wine's lifted and playful nose of balsamic-laced strawberries leads to a palate of blueberries and cranberry chutney. There's a moreish succulence supported by sassy, racy acidity. Gentle spices linger on the finish. Very drinkable today, this has polished layers of fruit and minerality that are sure to enjoy a broad appreciation.

92

Château Haut de la Bécade 2012 Pauillac \$33

Midnight black at the core, this wine rears with ripe yet vibrant black fruits: black currant, sloe and black plum abound. Zesty acidity invigorates the accessible, juicy, medium-bodied core surrounded by fluid, highly managed tannins. The lingering finish is suave, showing notes of cedar and violets. I would be happy to sip this any day. It definitely punches above its weight.

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 Julia 2012 Pauillac Cuvée Gabrielle \$36

This Pauillac is deeply colored but brilliantly clear. Its smoky nose leads to a pure, spritely and youthful core of red fruits: pomegranate, dried cherry and red plums. Broad on the attack, there is a lovely intensity of fruit lifted by nervous acidity and caressed by sleek tannins. This is an incredible value, considering the wine as well as the fact that the château sits between châteaux Latour and Lynch-Bages!

92

Château La Garde 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$45

Sexy and sultry, this wine has smoky top notes. The palate is dense with black fruit flavors sprinkled with exotic spices and cocoa. The dusty tannins and crisp acidity work in lockstep, giving the palate a seamless feel. This is 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot made in stainless steel with pigeage then transferred into barriques (33% new) for malolactic fermentation.

92

Château Laniote 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$50

Feisty red currants drive the nose of this perky wine. The palate shows underbrush, minerals and ripe raspberries that transform into a savory, medium finish. The thirst-quenching acidity and lightly choppy, demanding tannins keep the ample fruit and generous alcohol in check. A bit disjointed, it could use a bit more time in the bottle. This is 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 40% new and 60% older oak.

92

Château La Pointe 2012 Pomerol \$45

More voluptuously fruit-driven than its 2011 counterpart, this wine smells of smoky fireplace cinders, a bouquet of roses and black cherry cobbler. Lush and soft on the concentrated mid-palate, there is rip-roaring acidity providing refreshment through the lingering finish.

92

Château Laroque 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$30

This is slightly more mature and showing less aggressive oak on the nose - despite also being aged in 50% new oak - than its 2012 counterpart. This is a blend of 83% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon is very similar in composition to the 2012, too. Aromatically becoming, the bouquet smells of mulberries, black cherries, sloe, licorice and graphite. Upfront, it is round and finessed with supple tannins, then the medium finish turns grainy and a bit drying. Best with food and, perhaps, a bit more time.

92

Château Latour à Pomerol 2007 Pomerol \$69

This wine needs time to open up. It – along with other 2007s – seems to be in a pent up stage now. Still, what shows beneath suggests it will be worth the wait. There's an intense, compact fruit core of plums and cherries that beckons. Damp peat adds intrigue. It's all surprisingly youthful for an 8.5 year old wine, and the wine doesn't show signs that it might taper off any time soon. The palate is impressively smooth with creamy tannins. A few hours in a decanter allows the aromas to soar. Additionally, this showed beautifully on Day Two when a half bottle had been left overnight under VacuVin.

92

Château Latour-Martillac 2005 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$67

This property is named for the seventh century tower erected by Montesquieu's ancestors, built during the reign of Eleanor of Aquitaine as part of a fort to monitor the road from Bordeaux to Toulouse. Bouquet-wise, this wine straddles youth and initial development. Its nose is broad with an exotically ripe, blackcurrant, loganberry and cassis nose. Though only 13% abv, the palate feels pleasantly warm. The tannins are becoming gossamer and the acidity backlights the whole mouthfeel. The finish has staying power and nuance. The blend is the same as its 2012 sibling (55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot).

92

Château Latour-Martillac 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$35

Super smoky with struck flint notes on the nose, this wine's deeply-colored core with black streaking makes an immediate, positive impression. Flavors of ripe berries, plums, tobacco and smoke flood the palate. It's a well-proportioned wine with enough love handles to give the mid-palate pleasing density, but enough acidic grip and fine-grained muscle to provide plenty of support. The finish is long and complex, showing there's much potential to be unlocked in the years to come. This is 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot.

92

Château le Caillou 2012 Pomerol \$70

This blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc was vinified in thermo-regulated concrete tanks then aged in 30% new and 70% older barriques. The result is a ripe and appealing concoction of mulberries, blueberries, sweet cream and ganache. The round and silky palate finishes with good length and a wide breadth of flavors.

92

Château Malartic-Lagravière 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$75

This ambitious red has a vibrant nose of crushed mulberries, potpourri and mulling spices. The copious fruit core generously coats the mouth while laying off on the acidity and tannins, giving the wine immediate drinkability. Still, there's enough profound concentration and intensity to keep this wine on its toes for a while. Its 60% new oak is smartly integrated.

92

Château Malmaison Baronne Nadine de Rothschild 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc \$25

This wine's nose is incredibly nuanced. It starts with briar patch and blueberry notes then moves to anise and Lapsang Souchang. Lovely ripeness of the fruit reflects in the succulent tannins, too, which are further buffered by medium acidity. Juicy and irresistible, I'd happily add this to my cellar.

92

Château Montviel 2012 Pomerol \$50

This is a big, buxom and exuberant blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc from a 4.5-hectare vineyard. Aged 50-50 in new and once-used oak, there's no shortage of mocha and

spice. This has the well-proportioned structure, solid concentration and generous complexity to age well for several more years.

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

Château Perron 2012 Graves Rouge \$22

A dapper mix of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, this wine smells of blackcurrant leaf and pipe tobacco. Its creamy, mouth-filling palate is cram-packed with black fruits, but its leathery notes suggest it's already beginning to mature. This is a suavely crafted wine.

92

Château Plince 2009 Pomerol \$40

Maturing nicely, this wine gives an overarching impression of ripeness guided by gentle acidic lift. Damson plums, cedar and leather fill the ripe and sensuous palate. Pleasurable on its own, it would really shine at the table with a richer meal between its ample core and refreshing, stylish finish.

92

Château Plincette 2011 Pomerol \$35

Smoky and woody with unctuously ripe fruit, this blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc is made in concrete then aged in 30% new and 70% older barriques. Creamy and spicy on the first impression, invigorating acidity and sandy tannins square off on the palate and provide great focus. This is ready to enjoy but may hold on for a while longer.

92

Château Sérilhan 2012 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$30

This is a sexy package. The aromas begin with an array of spices that is followed by a concentrated, succulent palate of blackberries and black plums dashed with good balsamic. Integrated acidity and refined tannins give this good drinkability, and solid, mineral finish is definitively moreish.

92

Château Villa Bel Air 2010 Graves Rouge \$22

Crafted from 32 hectares of approximately 17-year-old vines, this mix of 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc has an enthusiastically forward and pure nose of red apples and black cherries. The palate adds some smokiness. Its tugging texture makes it

great for food, but its nicely round mid-palate makes it drinkable without. Moreover, for this price, this is a steal!

92

Clos de la Cure 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$30

This 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc is sumptuous and bewitchingly concentrated. I never would have guessed that 50% of this wine was aged in new barriques; the chocolate and toast notes are rather discreet. There are black plums and blueberries on the palate along with some freshly turned earth. Though the tannins are firm, this is very drinkable – even alone – thanks to its generous fruit. This wine has lots of flair.

92

Clos Marsalette 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$33

This wine smells of sweet mulberries and crunchy blackberries. It's made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, and it receives a healthy dose of 50% new oak. A bit bold and brash now, this wine has plenty of concentration, complex length and harmonious finesse to give it time to settle down in the coming years.

92*

Fugue de Némin 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 ageability while smartly countering the elevated alcohol. In sum, this is a real heartthrob.

91

Château Bertineau Saint-Vincent 2013 Lalande de Pomerol \$25

This smells vibrant on the nose with aromas of freshly-picked black currant and black cherry. Such lovely purity! This blend of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc is aged entirely in older oak, allowing the fruit character to sing. It is nicely constructed with a medium body weighing between nervy acidic lift and posh tannins. It's a delightful wine at an especially good price.

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 Capbern Gasqueton 2012 St-Estèphe \$24

This is a show-stopper between its effusive nose and verbose fruit character, which together give this wine vibrancy and sex appeal. Boisterous aromas and flavors of black fruits are accompanied by sultry notes of forest floor. This will appeal to those preferring wines that saturate the palate with fresh fruits.

91

Château Carlmagnus 2014 Fronsac 1er Vin \$14

All Merlot, vinified in wooden vats and aged 50-50 in new and older barriques, this is all about intensity. The color is beetle shell black, and its nose smells of prune juice. However, its palate does an about-face. It tastes of red cherries, tart plums and açai sprinkled with earth. Completely flustering, it's also quite cool to see this chameleon change. The plump palate has feisty acidity and streamlined tannins, giving this 2014 good drinkability.

91

Château Corbin Michotte 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé 12.5%

Made from a slim yield of 34 hl/ha coming from seven hectares of vines averaging 40 years old, this blend of 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon will benefit from time in the bottle. Its charmingly rustic nose begins with a concentrated earthiness and peatiness then segues into sour cherries and sweet spice. Only 40% aged in new barriques with the rest seeing only stainless steel, this wine nonetheless has a rough-and-tumble, woody tannin attack. Happily, they almost melt into the copious fruit layers on the palate. Bewitchingly persistent, there's no need to rush to drink this.

91

Château Couhins 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$30

This wine sports a tantalizing ripeness that yields to a delightfully elegant palate. Tasting of plums and loganberries, its tannins are well-behaved and its refreshing acidity is suavely integrated. Aged in three equal parts, this combination of 62% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Cabernet Franc sees new oak, once-used oak and stainless steel. Owned by INRA, this is a highly sophisticated operation with all sorts of tools available - the most important being intelligent and sensible winemaking.

91

Château de Camensac 2014 Haut-Médoc Cru Classé (Sample) \$30

Big, bold and flavorful, this 50-50 Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon blend is packed with blackberries and mulberries. Though ripe and succulent, there is muscle and vigor in the stylish structure. The moderately persistent finish shows tantalizing, oak-derived notes of mocha and bonfire.

91

Château de Chantegrive 2012 Graves Rouge \$19

This wine has decidedly deep ruby color laced with black. Its aromas brood with creosote and black tar sizzling in the summer sun. It tastes of boysenberries, cassis and baked plums. The

extravagantly ripe fruit is well-balanced by medium acidity and gentle but grainy tannins. This is a 50-50 blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon aged for 12 months in 50% new oak.

91

Château de La Dauphine 2011 Fronsac \$30

This is a more elegant counterpart to the château's robust 2012. It tastes of cranberry compote, red plums, sweet spice and cola. Velvety, gentle tannins take a backseat to the sassy acidity in focusing the full-bodied, densely concentrated palate with noticeable extract.

91

Château de Pressac 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$42

This wine is an old school blend: 69% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, 9% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1.5% Carmenère and 2.5% Malbec, aka Noir de Pressac. It is imposingly black in color and smells of a jumble of forest berries and sliced plums. Its nicely balanced palate moderates the high alcohol with mouthwatering acidity and sculpted tannins. Modestly layered with medium-minus finish, light tobacco smoke notes suggest this is starting to evolve – so far to benefit.

91

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

This blend of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, aged 40% in new and 60% in older barriques, smelled very much like a St-Émilion thanks to its dusty, baked earthy aromas. Tasting of blueberries, bramble and crunchy black cherries, this shows a lightly spicy finish. Forward in still youthful fruits, this has nicely supporting and lightly dry tannins.

91

Château Haut-Lagrange 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$22

Starting with aromas of fireplace smoke, underbrush and peat brick, this wine offers ladles of berry fruits on the palate. The lightly lush body is held firmly in place by dusty tannins and bustling acidity. This is a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot.

91

Château Haut-Lariveau 2011 Fronsac \$30

This is the second property purchased in Fronsac by former computer specialist Bénédicte and former chemist Grégoire. This château's top wine is made entirely of Merlot and vinified in stainless steel and concrete then aged in 20% new and 80% older oak. Its palate is layered with perfectly ripe fruits, including blackberries, blackcurrants and sloe. The medium finish carries a hint of forest floor. The high-toned acidity gives this medium-bodied wine ample lift, and that may also be what is keeping this wine rather fresh for a 2011.

91

Château Haut-Nouchet 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

This is a firm, steely wine with strident tannins. Copious blackberries and black plums help ease their strike on the palate. Licorice abounds, especially on the solid finish. Aged 18 months in

barriques, one-third new, the muscular 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot blend does a fine job of eating up the oak influence.

91

Château La Cabanne 2013 Pomerol \$30

This is a feisty and chiseled wine replete with a broad array of crunchy red and black fruits. There's even some pleasant, texturally balancing black plum skin bitterness on the attack. While the 55% new and 45% older oak is well integrated, the four-square structure could use some more time in bottle.

91

Château La Croix Lartigue 2011 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$37

Save the distinctive cedar and spice box notes, I might have thought I was in Napa when blind tasting this wine. It's brazenly bold with fruit so opulent that it's almost gluttonous – in a good way! Its sumptuousness is well-balanced on the palate between supporting acidity and drizzle-soft tannins. This suave blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc was aged one-third each in first, second and third use barriques.

91

Château La Garde 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$45

A different blend than the 2011, this uses 2% late-ripening Petit Verdot along with its 67% Cabernet Sauvignon and 31% Merlot. The palate is vinous, plump and drinkable thanks to its excellent freshness. Its lightly toasty and dark chocolate aromatic top notes are nicely integrated and help this be a more accessible style for palates preferring fruit generosity. There is seemingly no end to the black currant and blackberry motherlode here!

91

Château La Lauzette 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

Liz and Frans Roskam own this Lustrac château as well as Château Cantenac in St-Émilion. The glass-staining color promises copious fruit, and the wine does deliver. This vintage tastes of black plums, blueberries and peat bricks. The firm and nicely dense palate is super savory and very juicy with layers of complexity yet to be revealed. Lively acidity keeps everything buttoned up.

91

Château Lanessan 2012 Haut-Médoc \$23

Firm in palate-enveloping texture, this Cru Bourgeois has a lovely mid-palate succulence. Grippingly fresh flavors of black cherries, loganberries and sloe make a big impact. The tannins are lightly chewy and the acidity is balanced. This hulk of a wine has screaming appeal for the price (if "big" is your style). This is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot and 4% Petit Verdot.

91

Château La Patache 2012 Pomerol \$35

Lots of drinkers will enjoy this silky textured, voluptuous blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc. It has a custardy mid-palate and gossamer tannins along with plenty of freshness – both of fruit character and acidity. It's a bit quick on the finish and not particularly complex, but it's still a fun drink.

91

Château La Pointe 2011 Pomerol \$45

This aromatic and fresh wine offers a cornucopia of popping-ripe fruit including blueberries, raspberries, pomegranate arils and açai. The palate and medium-plus finish back fill with savory elements of freshly-picked mushrooms and mineral tones of graphite and asphalt. Finessed acidity and lightly taut tannins give this solid structure for aging.

91

Château La Pointe 2013 Pomerol \$45

This supple, sophisticated wine engages with layers of complexity, once it starts to open up. It smells of rose petals, vanilla, Assam tea and boysenberries. There's a surprisingly lusty core of fruit for a 2013. To complement this, the tannins are almost silky and the acidity certainly is fine-tuned. La Pointe sits on the western edge of the Pomerol appellation, and with about 23 hectares, is one of the largest producers of the appellation.

91

Château Laroque 2012 St. Émilion Grand Cru \$30

This wine hails from a highly unique property that has 85 hectares all together. It's a gorgeous place to visit with its rolling hills, natural landscape between vines and majestic château. This vintage is 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, and it smells initially of wildflowers and roses. Those aromas slip away quickly and heavier, toasty oak tones come forward. Black currants saturate the palate and do a good job sopping up some of the oak.

91

Château La Tour Figeac 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$43

Established in 1876 when Château Figeac sold a portion of its estate, the original La Tour Figeac was split in two just over 100 years later. Today the estate is 15 hectares. This wine, a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc, is bold with hedonistically ripe and pristine clean fruits. Svelte tannins dominate its excellent supporting structure. It tastes of black licorice and blackberries, and it's a charmer for sure.

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 Les Carmes Haut-Brion 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$52

This is classic Pessac-Léognan with its moderate extraction, firm palate in its youth and ample plum fruit with cedary nuances. Composed of – unusually – of 59% Cabernet Franc, 22% Merlot and 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is an aromatic delight. It's impressive to read that it is aged in 90% new oak; I wouldn't have guessed anywhere near as much.

91

Château Monregard la Croix 2012 Pomerol \$30

Pure Merlot, this wine offers a bright, uplifted nose with oodles of sweet spice and dried leather. It's a fairly complex wine, as evidenced by its good length and positive development - especially dried earth and truffle. This bottling is surprisingly easy drinking, despite the generous new oak tones, thanks largely to its generosity of sweet plum fruit in the mid-palate.

91

Château Moulinet 2011 Pomerol \$35

This wine is exuberant on its balsamic vinegar-drizzled, red-fruited nose. The palate takes the fruit into a darker zone with blueberries and black cherries. The caressing palate boasts suave tannins and a glossy, mouth-coating palate revived on the finish by perky acidity. This is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc coming from vines aging 29 years of age. Fifty percent new barriques were used.

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.

91

Château Plince 2011 Pomerol \$30

A concoction of 74% Merlot and 26% Cabernet Franc, this wine has extravagant fragrance. It is mouth-filling and pleasantly intense on the palate with bramble fruits and underbrush. Baking spice from the wine's 33% new oak comes through on the lingering finish. This is terrifically drinkable, thanks especially to its lilted acidity.

91

Château Plincette 2013 Pomerol \$35

This 90% Merlot with 10% Cabernet Franc is awesome. It's sensual. It's masculine and meaty. It has a juicy drinkability thanks to its suave tannins and thirst-quenching acidity. The fresh berry fruit is dynamic from the nose through the medium finish. You can drink it now or wait for more brooding, earthy tones to develop.

91

Château Rochebelle 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$40

This big and boisterous blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc aged entirely in new oak is a head-turner. It's full-bodied with dense, even gutsy, extraction. Suave and polished, it's more about overt, in-your-face fruit than complexity. I'd find it hard to have a second glass, but lots of drinkers will enjoy its fleshy and creamy hedonism.

91

Château Saint-Pierre 2012 Pomerol \$40

Composed of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc, from 30 year-old vines planted in sandy and gravelly soils, this wine is exuberant with its fresh berry fruit on the nose. Its palate turns to savory and mineral, adding dimension and compelling complexity. Suave and creamy tannins pair with mild and integrated acidity to pull this clingy, lusty wine into a long finish.

91

Château Samion 2013 Lalande de Pomerol 2013 \$35

Made entirely of Merlot and aged in 20% new oak with the rest in 80% one year oak, this is juicy with crisp and crunchy red fruits and a flash of anise. Racy acidity defines the structure as the refined, pillow-y tannins relax in the background. This is the tiny family domaine of Jean-François (son) and Jean-Claude (father) Berrouet, the latter who oversaw 40+ vintages at Pomerol's Château Petrus in Pomerol.

91

Château Tour de Pez 2012 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$22

Caramel aromas grace the nose before the palate dives into a mix of sweet red plums, black plums, baking spices and toasty brioche. Opulently juicy on the palate, the jumble of flavors slides into a solid finish, where complex notes of forest floor and fireplace cinders join the tasty and forward fruit. This has lovely complexity.

91

Château Tour de Pez 2013 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$21

This nose is compelling but rather wound up. With a few hours in the decanter, the aromas relent modestly. It's clear that there is considerable concentration beneath it all. The wine seems to hoard black currants and crunchy blackberries, laced with strands of black licorice and sultry asphalt. A terrific richness of fruit forms the bold body, which is nicely supported by invigorating acidity and a fresh mulberry finish.

91

Château Tour du Moulin 2011 Fronsac \$20

This wine has a sparkling bright, ruby appearance. Pure flavors of mulberry, cranberry, and blueberry shine. Tasty, savory and woody, this is loaded with lots of flavors, none of them relating to oak. This blend of 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon hailing from a 7 hectare estate is aged entirely in older barriques. It's ready for the dining table.

91

Clos 56 2013 Pomerol \$50

This wine wears its 100% new barrique on its sleeve. Savory spices are followed by sweet spices, all carried by the magnanimous fruit toward the pipe tobacco-nuanced finish. Plentiful in mulberries and blackberries, it's a very lovely drink likely best enjoyed in the mid-term. This bottling is named for the size of the vineyard, 0.56 hectare, purchased in 2010. Only 2,000 bottles were made.

91

Croix de Beaucaillou 2013 St-Julien \$35

This bottling's label promises a good start. It's designed by Jade Jagger (Mick's daughter) and inspired by the name "Beaucaillou" means "beautiful stones". The liquid doesn't disappoint. Forward and smoky on the hedonistic nose, this blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot and 3% Petit Verdot is a whirlwind of fruit that feels filigree on the palate thanks to its lighter weight vintage, wispy tannins and waterfall of crackling acidity.

91

Domaine de l'A 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$50

Composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, this is svelte. It has a midnight black color and sees 40% new oak along with 60% once used oak. Its ample palate piles on the mulberries, dried cranberries and sweet black cherries. Layered with spices, cigar wrapper and leather, this is a pure, nuanced, layered and dynamic wine. Full on the palate with rounded tannins and fresh acidity, this is playful and serious at the same time.

91

Domaine de Musset 2013 Lalande de Pomerol \$20

This delightfully complex blend of 75% of Merlot, 20% of Cabernet Franc and 5% of Cabernet Sauvignon from vines averaging 40 years old sees 80% new and 20% older oak. There's a pleasantly plummy palate, soft tannins, integrated acidity and a moreish finish. Brilliant value!

91

Le Petit Haut Lafitte 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$34

A combination of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot, this drinks as well alone as it does with food. Tobacco notes appear among the red currants and pomegranate on the palate. Despite its grainy tannin feel, this vintage has a pleasant roundness and easy-going acidity that gives it gulpability.

90

Bouquet de Monbrison 2012 Margaux \$30

Sporting a fairly pale, crimson color, this Margaux shows pretty red fruit aromas. The palate offers some underbrush notes of briar patch and twig along with a vigorous, cleansing acidity that pulls the lingonberry and raspberry flavors into a solid finish. Compelling and suave!

90

Château Andron Blanquet 2012 St-Estèphe \$34

Pale scarlet in color, this wine's nose shows plenty of energy. The palate blasts with tart cranberries, cocoa and baking spice. The dusty tannins seem to be trying dry the otherwise juicy palate. Pleasantly refreshing, this is approachable yet also has satisfying, underlying complexity.

90

Château Anthonic 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$29

The reserved nose brings on crushed gravel and pencil shavings. It's the palate that develops the fruit character, especially tangy raspberry and red currant. The smooth texture, supple tannins meld nicely with the energetic acidity. The finish partitions the palate, leaving the toast, earth and mushroom notes to linger.

90

Château Baret 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$20

Made of 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc from vines that average 30 years in age, this wine is aged in barriques (renewed one-third each year) for 12 months. Today it is juicy, young and exuberant with thick but rounded tannins and integrated acidity. It's a terrific value and was made with the help of the late Denis Dubordieu.

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 Bel-Air 2012 Pomerol \$39

This varietal Merlot has developed nicely, showing fresh fruit as well as delightful savory and autumnal characters that layer on complexity. The use of one-third new barriques add a profusion of spice notes. The velvety tannins and fresh acidity pull this concentrated and exotic wine into a long finish.

90

Château Bellevue de Tayac 2012 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$40

Made in a ripe, exotic and dramatic style, the smoky, cigar wrapper nose remains very Bordelais. Broad shouldered and full-bodied with caressing tannins, the black fruit flavors develop into a layered and lingering finish.

90

Château Bonalgue 2012 Pomerol \$40

The sultry, smoky nose segues to a deeply fruit-driven palate with oodles of black currants, blackberries and black cherries. The fruit is impressively pure in flavor. Ripe and tender tannins are joined by moderate acidity, making this a Pomerol for earlier drinking.

90

Château Bourdieu la Valade 2014 Fronsac \$19

Made from grapes picked from the top of the Fronsac plateau as well as a south-exposed hill, this wine tastes of sunshine. Gobs of blueberries, currants, cigar and damp earth ooze from the glass with an undeniably Bordelais character. This exotically ripe wine has a creamy palate with subtle acidity. Composed of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet France and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon from 25 to 30 year-old-vines, this blend is aged 75% in stainless steel and 25% in barriques. It's a easy drinker, especially for those preferring exuberant New World wines but wanting an introduction to Bordeaux.

90

Château Calmeyrac 2012 Médoc \$30

Smelling of fireplace smoke and briar patch, this rich red smells very Bordelais. The densely flavored palate is impressively well-integrated: exotic spice and dry-aged meat meld with summer berries. The attack is round and lush, but the palate then gives way to firm acidity complemented by svelte, broad tannins. This charmer is a great match for red meat.

90

Château Cambon La Pelouse 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

This wine's mineral, reserved nose offers discreet strains of charcoal and fireplace cinders. The palate reverberates with complexity, from Marasca cherries and loganberries to dry-aged beef and roasted nuts. The tannins have a slightly sharp, shard-like quality now, but those should subside as you wait to pull the cork.

90

Château Canon 2012 Canon-Fronsac \$70

Though aged 50% in neutral vessels and 50% in barriques of one or more wines, I detected overt toast and chocolate notes. There's plenty of wine for that oak influence though. Blueberries, red cherries and sloe jam abound. This is an exuberant and playful varietal Merlot with impressive purity, suave tannins and highly integrated acidity. This is not to be confused with Château Canon in St-Émilion!

90

Château Canon 2013 St. Émilion Premier Grand Cru Classé \$65

Reserved on the nose and somewhat pale in color, this wine shows far less fresh fruit than its younger, 2014, sibling. The entry is earthy and peppered with pencil lead tones. On the back palate, the fruit fleshes out with bramble, black plum skin and sweet cherries. The acidity is almost sharp and the tannins have a robust, wide-grained texture.

90

Château Cantelauze 2011 Pomerol \$35

This is an overtly ripe style replete with exotic spices, liqueur-soak cherries and dried cranberries. Full-bodied, round and dense, I thought I might need a steak knife to cut through it, but then in rushed the racy acidity and stylish, tugging tannins. This is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc aged entirely in new barriques.

Drink: 2016-19

90

Château Cantelys 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

This powerhouse of a wine has an enveloping nose of drying black plums and potpourri. It's exotic, ripe and balanced. Graciously and generously concentrated, this should age well for its first six or seven years.

90

Château Cantenac 2013 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$38

This mix of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc comes from vineyards composed of 50% clay and 50% gravel. The textural result is a grippy palate with sandy tannins. The 33% new oak is showy now. Milk chocolate and ganache tones abound. However, there's solid concentration and a strong finish here indicating that, with patience, this should evolve very nicely in bottle.

90

Château Couhins-Lurton 2011 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$35

This wine shows both sweet and savory characteristics. There are black currants, black cherries, cedar box and briar patch. There's surprising lightness on the palate that seems reflective of the vintage, but there's good mid-palate juiciness thanks to the 77% Merlot. The remaining portion is Cabernet Sauvignon, which gives this wine enough tannic scaffolding to prop it up a few more years.

90

Château Dassault 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$37

I could taste the ambition in this blend of 82% Merlot, 23% Cabernet Franc, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% mystery grape. Though its nose is reserved, its palate shows some volatility with strong flavors of balsamic vinegar. Tasting otherwise of strawberries and lingonberry compote, there's a nice tension on the palate between the considerable alcohol, plump fruit and dry, tugging tannins. The medium finish tastes primarily of cinnamon-sprinkled brownies, showing the influence of its 85% new oak.

90

Château Dauzac 2013 Margaux Cru Classé \$45

This wine has a considerable oak presence on the nose with toasted, exotic spices and dark chocolate nuances. It's massive in flavor as well as in oak-derived structure, which feels rather

dry and imposing. Impressively, the wine has the fruit concentration to handle it, assuming all the elements eventually integrate. I suspect they will.

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 de Crabitey 2011 Graves Rouges \$22

For a Graves red, this is surprisingly opulent in brooding character. It's amped up with red forest fruit and dense dark chocolate. It's a Graves with sass! This bargain Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot combo should make waves.

90

Château de la Dauphine 2014 Fronsac (Sample - Blended, Not Bottled) \$30

This wine is almost intimidatingly dark, and its sumptuous nose shows off its new oak. (Michel Roland has been consulting since 2011.) Full-bodied and voluptuously ripe, it's going to have its lovers and haters. It will also fill every crevice of your mouth with flavor: blueberries, roasted plums, sloe and a plethora of sweet and savory spices. The tannins are cuddly soft, but there is terrific acidic freshness offering solid support.

90

Château de La Dauphine 2012 Fronsac \$30

It's worth visiting La Dauphine just for the dramatic views over the meeting point of the Dordogne and Isle Rivers. The wines are pleasant, too, if you prefer richer styles. This 2012 is a case in point. The fragrance is packed with black plums and cinnamon raisin toast. The linebacker-esque, 15% abv palate is chunky with ripe fruit and has a soft, custardy feel. Perky acidity helps keeps things in line and pull the flavors into a moderate finish.

90

Château de Lamarque Marquis d'Evry 2014 Haut-Médoc (Sample) \$25

One of the oldest châteaux in the Médoc yet still family-owned, this property's story began in 1050. Generally speaking, the young wines need time and the old wines still have time to go. Whatever the bottles' ages, they reflect – as wines often do – the gentle, graceful and fun-loving demeanor of their proprietors, Marie-Hélène and Pierre-Gilles. This 2014 is deeply colored, loaded with tannin and steeped in concentration. Juicy black plums dominate the palate and leather nuances escape on the focused, medium finish. It definitely needs time, and if you like your Bordeaux well-aged, this allows you to do so without breaking the bank today.

90

Château de Valois 2012 Pomerol \$40

This is a fresher, livelier style of Pomerol, popping with sour cherries and bright, crunchy red berries. Its simultaneously structured yet supple and showcases pristine clean fruit. More, please! This is 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc.

Drink: 2016-19

90

Château Gloria 2011 St-Julien \$45

Super dark in black-inflected color, this wine tastes as brooding as it looks. There are popping-ripe fig, raisin and black plum jam notes on nose. Forest floor, peat, licorice and spice layer onto the palate. Suave, caressing tannins and invigorating acidity keep this blend of 69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc flowing.

90

Château Grand Corbin 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$35

This wine's slightly cloudy appearance suggests it may be unfiltered. The nose smells predominantly of forest floor and fireplace smoke, then the palate brings on bushels of tart red berries. The tannins feel a bit rustic, but they should flesh out with a bit more with time. This is 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 50% new barriques.

90

Château Kirwan 2013 Margaux Cru Classé \$32

Fragrant with floral aromas on the nose, this smartly crafted red exudes Margaux typicity. This classically accessible (price-wise) Bordeaux is well-equipped to benefit from time in the cellar thanks to its firm, tannic backbone and bustling acidity. Still, its whirlwind of ripe blackberries and crunchy black currants offers enough amplexness in the mid-palate to give it perfectly pleasant drinkability now. The harmony is enticing, as is earthy, lingering finish.

90

Château Kirwan 2012 Margaux Cru Classé \$40

Overtly fragrant, the complex bouquet shows underbrush, forest floor, tobacco and tomato leaf. The classy, fruit-filled mid palate tastes of red raspberries and cherries. Thoroughly Bordelais, this clean, polished wine finishes with enticing minerality.

90

Château La Cabanne 2011 Pomerol \$30

This varietal Merlot has a firm palate composed of chewy tannins and zippy acidity. There's plenty of concentrated, chunky fruit and a lightly waxy texture to accompany this wine's age-worthy structure. Musky notes accompany the black cherries and boysenberries into a medium finish.

90

Château La Création 2013 Pomerol \$35

This wine has a smooth and ample palate cram-packed with sweet mulberries and strawberries doused in baking spices. The palate is extravagantly fruit driven with cornucopias of ripe berry fruit. Red cherries and chocolate come through on the full-bodied and well-balanced palate. This is 55% Merlot, 43% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 50% new oak.

90

Château Laniote 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$49

Impressively expressive on the nose, this wine smells primarily of tar sands and earthiness. A delightful core of blueberries and lilac light-up the medium-plus body. Acidic verve invigorates the plump palate, and the two combine to offer a highly pleasure-driven wine. Leathery notes on the finish show initial tertiary notes, but it still has plenty of time ahead of it for now. This is 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon.

90

Château Latour-Martillac 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$49

Made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot coming from vines that average 35-years-old, this is a seriously finessed wine that - aromatically - is a bit stubborn now. However, it tastes deliciously of tobacco, licorice and black plums, has mouthwatering sapidity and isn't shy on the finish. This is just starting to unfold.

90

Château Les Grands Chênes 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$23

Broodingly dark in color with oodles of mulberries and blackberry cobbler fruit, this wine adds exotic touches on the palate with Ras El Hanout spice. Seriously classy with a compact core of fruit, minerally terroir tones dominate the medium finish until the toast and mocha notes surface.

90

Château Lespault-Martillac 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$28

Composed of 65% Merlot and 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, it's not surprising this wine shows the plumpness typical of Merlot. The vines are over 50 years old, so they deliver richly concentrated fruit, especially blackberries and black plums. Fermented in concrete, the wine is then aged 16 months in one-third each new, once-used and twice-used oak barrels. The wine finishes with a pleasantly smoky edge.

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 L'Inclassable 2012 Médoc \$18

This is a firebrand of a bottle! Big and modern on the nose, it shows a wide band of tantalizing flavors: unctuously ripe red cherries, raspberry coulis, forest floor, freshly picked mushrooms and peat fire. There's good girth and viscosity in the mid-palate. Relaxed tannins and supporting acidity work to cinch it in. Savory spice graces the finish. This is a crazy good value!

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 Montviel 2013 Pomerol \$50

This wine is unabashedly fragrant (the 20% Cabernet Franc) and fleshy (the 80% Merlot). Oodles of ripe strawberries drizzled with well-aged balsamic vinegar take center stage. The fruit is fastidiously clean, yet the wine is packed with flavor nuance. It has a sexy combination of harmonious refinement and gluggability.

90

Château Moulin Haut-Laroque 2011 Fronsac \$32

Château Moulin Haut-Laroque began bottling wines in 1890, among the first in Bordeaux to do so. This combination of 65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Malbec aged in 40% new barriques is packed with enticing energy. Thanks to the pleasantly mouthcoating viscosity and suave tannins, this is easy on the palate. The polished mouthfeel keeps the mouth watering as the deeply ripe flavors of blackcurrant draw into a medium finish of blackcurrant leaf, dried twigs and savory spice.

90

Château Olivier 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$35

This 55 hectares / 135 acres estate sits on the outskirts of Bordeaux, and this wine is a 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot blend. This 2012 has an inviting, ripe fruit nose scented with evergreen. The palate is broad with its pleasant plumpness prevailing over the slightly

gruff tannins. The tastes blackberries and red cherries dipped in milk chocolate extend into a finish with good staying power. This will age very nicely thanks to its super-charged fruit concentration.

90

Château Paloumey 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

This is a layered wine that can coax just about anyone into a second glass. The gutsy attack drenches the palate with rich blackberries and crunchy black currants. Notes of peat and forest floor join on the palate, where ripe yet textured tannins and firm, crunchy acidity offer lift and refreshment. This drinks beautifully now.

90

Château Peyrat-Fourthon 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$40

While there's no rush to drink this wine, it has time to evolve thanks to its magnificently concentrated perfume, spritely structure and medium-plus finish. The boldly ripe forest berries are accompanied by generous oak toast notes. The palate is framed by tugging oak barrel-derived tannins and sassy acidity.

90

Château Fonbadet 2012 Pauillac Cru Bourgeois \$35

Delicious! This starts off reserved and minerally but opens up beautifully with air. Briar patch and boysenberry join with pipe tobacco and freshly-turned earth to draw out the solid finish. Svelte in structure with chewy tannins and zippy acidity, it's easy to throw back a few glasses.

90

Château La Croix Romane 2012 Lalande de Pomerol

Belonging to the Vignobles Dubard portfolio, this is a blend of 80% Merlot and 10% each of Cabernets Franc and Sauvignon. Dripping with sumptuously ripe forest fruits, milk and dark chocolate flavors coat the palate. The tannins are velvety, but the lifting acidity keeps the viscosity in check. It almost heaves with toasty new oak flash, but that will be a turn-on for some. Besides, the generous finish suggests this might age to some benefit.

90

Château Luchey-Halde 2009 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

Holding on for now, this wine has unctuously ripe berry fruits but not much structure. The finish has good length with licorice and incense notes, but it's hard to tell whether the soft acid and mild tannins can keep the wine from turning to mush after a decade or so.

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 Plince 2008 Pomerol \$35

Deeply colored crimson at the core, this wine has developed a rusty rim. It is full-bodied and boisterous with pleasantly gritty tannins that leave the palate just a touch dry. It's the perfect complement to a hearty, red meat dish. Medium on the layered finish, this tastes of dried red fruits and fallen autumn leaves. Drinking well now for those that like a bit of autumnal character in their juice.

90

Château Plince 2011 Pomerol \$35

Deep ruby in color, this wine showcases black cherries, oven-crisped blueberries and cassis. It wine boasts a sturdy structure and plentiful complexity. Silky tannins and integrated acidity create harmony and drinkability. It turns lightly gritty on the textured finish.

90

Château Rahoul 2011 Graves Rouge \$28

This blend of 72% Merlot, 26% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Petit Verdot is starting to reveal notes of advancement. Its moderately youthful nose smells of cranberry compote, sweet spice and cigar box. Generous and creamy on the palate, it has just enough acidic balance to create an elegant expression. This wine sees one-third each new, once used and twice used oak. The lingering finish shows mulberries and cigar box.

90

Château Renard Mondésir 2012 Fronsac 13.5%

This delightful wine has a big, smashing nose with crushed blackberries, roses, tobacco leaf and a touch of funk. It is just as playful and engaging on the flavorful palate. The gently sculpted but structuring tannins, crackling acidity and medium-plus palate density sing in harmony. This is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc from Fronsac's molasse terroir. It sees 10% new and 60% older barriques with the rest aged in stainless steel.

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 Talbot 2012 St-Julien Cru Classé \$45

Charming on the nose and palate, this 2012 does seem to be maturing quickly (only one bottle tasted). The graceful nose smells of rich red and black stone fruits drizzled with milk chocolate. The sumptuous, supple palate brings on exotic spices that linger on the persistent finish.

90

Château Talbot 2013 St-Julien Cru Classé \$47

This wine is smart wine from a difficult vintage. The forward, high-toned nose packs in impressively ripe fruit and tobacco leaf. The structure is polished, with the rounded, gossamer tannins meshing seamlessly with the medium body and vivacious acidity. Overall, the wine is gallantly integrated. (NB I scored it the same during Bordeaux's En Primeurs week.)

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.

90

Château Villars 2011 Fronsac \$21

Thirty-nine-year-old vines produce the 72% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon for this seriously tasty bottling. There's no shortage of boisterously ripe mulberries and boysenberries. An attractive hint of volatility broadens the wine's aromatic horizons. The satisfyingly weighty palate exhibits some new oak flavors of vanilla and spent coffee grinds. This bargain will find many friends thanks to its fleshy generosity and flavorful finish.

90

Château Yon-Figeac 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$35

This wine is almost demonstrative it is so aromatically open! Ripe mulberries spill across the sumptuous palate. Merlot clearly dominates (82% with 14% Cabernet Franc and 4% Petit Verdot) but does so gracefully with a sumptuous and sensuous mouthfeel sporting smooth tannins. The medium fruit concentration leads to a good, minerally finish. This should evolve nicely through its first decade.

90

Clos Beaugard 2013 Pomerol \$44

Made almost entirely of Merlot, this is a big and exotic wine that tastes of macerated cherries and strawberries drizzled with balsamic. It's approachable and supple with integrated tannins and acidity pulling the dynamic flavors into a medium finish.

90

Clos de la Treille Niarfeix 2014 Lalande de Pomerol \$NA

This wine sings of Bing cherries and blueberries. It's round, easy and gentle on the palate with a lifted and generous finish. It's a people pleaser and is surely best bought in multiples for festive gatherings; everyone will want a second glass!

90

Clos du Marquis 2012 St-Julien \$50

This Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant wine is tar black in color. Its nose is surprisingly prune-like with figs and smashed black currants. Luckily, the palate picks up with more liveliness thanks to the feisty acidity. Briar and black currant leaf add freshness to the palate, too. Its finish is surprisingly clipped given the layers of flavors and the solid fruit intensity.

90

Clos Vieux Taillefer 2014 Pomerol \$55

Deep in color, this wine shows compact and dense fruit flavors, starting with succulent plums, blueberries and loganberries. The palate is round with suave tannins and integrated acidity. There's plenty of oak spiciness here with 60% of the wine aged in new barriques. Its toasty, medium finish suggests this 100% Merlot has a ways to go and that it should develop to benefit.

90

Croix Canon 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$55

Chanel purchased Château Matras in 2011 and renamed it Croix Canon in reference to its historical name, Clos Canon, as well as the 12th century church in its vineyard. This wine has the same proportions as its sister wine, Château Canon, but it mysteriously has a bloody, savory, flinty, olive-y aroma more akin to Syrah! Full-bodied with moderately vigorous tannins and forward acidity, there's no need to rush to open this.

90

Domaine des Mimosas 2014 Lalande de Pomerol \$35

This is a rabble-rouser! Blousy and exotic, this is a blend of 79% Merlot and 21% Cabernet Sauvignon fermented in concrete and aged in oak: 35% new, 35% once used and 30% twice used. Plentiful tannins and buoyant acidity work to balance the custardy, turbo-charged mid-palate. Açai, cassis and warm pastry dough splash across the palate and into the medium finish.

90

Enclos de Viaud 2012 Lalande-de-Pomerol 13.0% \$35

This wine starts with a pleasant note of roasted black plums. The next layer brings popping ripe blueberries, like those in a cobbler coming straight from the oven. Then comes a surprising note of dusty earth. The tannins are gritty though hardly demanding. This could be sipped without food, though a meal would surely enhance it. The finish lingers, showing nice refreshment and solid concentration.

90

La Gravette de Certain 2013 Pomerol \$48

Round, lush and hyper-suave, this wine is impressively harmonious, even with only moderately lifted acidity and broad-shouldered, bulky palate feel. Tasting of blueberry coulis, this hails from a selection of young vines not yet ready for the château bottling.

90

La Rose Pauillac 2012 Pauillac \$26

This wine has a showy, concentrated nose of black currants, roses, briar patch, tart cranberry. The toothsome core is saturated in fresh fruit and baking spices. The highly integrated acidity seems to rely on the light tannins to do the structuring.

90

Le Haut-Médoc de Lascombes 2010 Haut-Médoc \$38

This wine is pretty delicious! It's perfectly balanced between its generously ripe black fruits, moderate-plus acidity and svelte tannins. I do wish that its finish wasn't so quick, even if it is the "third wine" of Château Lascombes, based in Margaux. Hopefully the finish of cola, caramel and toast integrates with time.

90

Mouton Cadet 2013 Médoc Réserve \$19

Boldly colored, this textbook Bordeaux red tastes of sweet spices, blackberries and black currants. Moderate in body with a springy mid-palate, its suave tannins and integrated acidity give this smartly structured wine good drinkability.

90

Valentine par Valentine 2011 Côtes de Bordeaux Rouge \$19

The Néel and Chombart families only make the Valentine red in good years. The 2011 is an ambitious effort, and their hard work shows, from the diligent hand-harvesting to the tedious punch-downs. The wine's immensely dark color is followed by a bountifully aromatic nose that is just starting to show some evolution through its tones of damp forest floor. Black and red plums join copious masses of blackberries to fill the palate of this 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon duo. The fine tannins lead the nuanced flavors into a medium finish.

89

Château Altimar 2012 Pomerol \$40

Plump, rich and ballsy in extravagantly ripe fruit, this wine is unabashedly turbo-charged in extraction and oak. Still, "only" 40% of the wine is aged in new barriques with another 40% aged in once-used oak as well as 20% in tank. Crafted from 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is for hedonists. Nonetheless, it has very good structure and should hold its youthful figure well for a while.

89

Château Anthonic 2014 Moulis-en-Médoc (Sample) \$27

Purchased by Cordonnier in 1977, this château has 40 hectares of largely clay-inflected limestone soils. This is a smart blend of 71% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc that shows lightly choppy tannins but nicely ripe plum and cherry fruits that give this wine a pleasant mid-palate texture.

89

Château Auney l'Hermitage 2012 Graves Rouge \$24

This wine is well-balanced from start to finish. There are crunchy blackberries and cracked black pepper notes. Though 25% of the oak is new, the nicely ripe fruit seems to easily absorb it. The acidity refreshes and highlights the moderately tugging tannins. Enticing notes of damp earth and peat linger on the finish, inviting the sipper to keep going back to the glass.

89

Château Beaumont 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Boysenberry, cranberry compote and fireplace cinders jump out of the glass. The palate is equally exuberant, oozing with fresh and ripe blueberries and black plums as well as an attractive hint of prune. The decadently soft palate has loads of richness and considerable mid-palate density. This will be a crowd pleaser! It's sipping well now and has plenty of refreshment to be offered as a wine by-the-glass.

89

Château Beaumont 2014 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

A bit of a bruiser, this is turbo-charged with flavor. Highly defined on the full-bodied palate with firm acidity and strapping tannins, this tastes of black currants, licorice and cedar. Buckle up!

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 lilted acidity. This is fun in a glass! It is composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and see no oak.

89

Château Bel Air 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$19

Incredibly fragrant, the nose starts with rose hips, thyme and plums. The dances with lively acidity and mild tannins. Very well-balanced with elegant fruit tension, this is ready to gulp down.

89

Château Bel-Air 2012 Puisseguin St-Émilion \$24

This is the newest of five properties in the Vignobles Dubard portfolio. The blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc has a rich, ruby color and moderately fragrant nose. It has the palate

presence of 2012 – nicely round with generous tannins – but the fruit restraint – black plum skin, tart cherries, acidic blackberries and licorice of 2011. Notes of asphalt, peat and sultriness preside. Full-bodied and round on the palate with generous tannins, this is a very good by the glass option thanks especially to its medium, integrated acidity.

89

Château Belgrave 2010 Haut-Médoc \$55

Covering 60 hectares that abut St-Julien, Château Belgrave made a fascinating wine from its ripe and succulent 2010 vintage. This is highly nuanced, smelling of sweet spices and forest berries. Its tannins are firm but finely crafted, and this wine has impressive refreshment. This is a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot.

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 Bonneau 2012 Haut-Médoc \$22

Ruby red color from core to rim, this pretty, medium-bodied wine smells of roses, raspberries and dried strawberries. The delectable, luscious fruit core brings in black currants and blackberries. The vigorous tannins and strong acidic backbone give this a strong Left Bank identity.

89

Château Cantelauze 2012 Pomerol \$30

This is a big and vigorous wine with a slightly four-square structure but plenty of succulent fruit to fill it in. It smells of blackcurrants and blackberries with exotic alpine forest high tones. Made of 90% Merlot with Cabernet Franc, spice abounds from start to medium finish, thanks to the 100% new barriques.

89

Château Cassagne Haut-Canon La Truffière 2012 Canon-Fronsac \$35

This wine screams, “Bordeaux!” Its evergreen aromas are joined by masses of wild cherries, dried cranberries and tart pomegranate arils. The moderate finish is layered with earth and tobacco nuances. This is a perfect wine-by-the-glass for a bistro. It has the same blend and production methods as its 2011 stablemate.

89

Château Charmail 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

Deep, dark and brooding in appearance, this wine has a very closed nose. The palate is more forthcoming with layers of charcoal, granite and berries. The chiseled palate crackles with

acidity but delivers well-behaved tannins. The solid length and good fruit concentration suggests that this wine has some staying power.

89

Château Clément Saint-Jean 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$16

A wildly mineral nose turns to deliver red currant preserved and raspberry tart. Engaging and ready to drink, bracing acidity ensures that the generous, palate-coating body surrounded by drizzle-soft tannins doesn't feel heavy at all. Brilliant value!

89

Château d'Escurac 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Very accessible now, this wine has something for everyone – thanks especially to its creamy tannins and integrated acidity. It starts off aromatically sultry and smoky with peat fire ashes and roasted black plums then flips to a palate replete with blackcurrants and vanilla bean.

89

Château La Garde 2012 Pessac-Léognan La Terrasse de la Garde \$22

Perfectly Bordelais in aromas and delightfully well-balanced with a great yin-yang of rich texture and light firmness, this wine is a great candidate for the table. Tobacco, peat, savory spice and black cherries contribute complexity.

89

Château de Lamarque Marquis d'Evry 2012 Haut-Médoc \$38

Resoundingly earthy on the nose, this wine segues into baking spice, bramble and black cherry on the chewy palate. Suave tannins and refreshing acidity pull the diverse flavors into a solidly lingering finish. Sophisticated, intense and well-structured, this will age nicely for at least a decade.

89

Château de Lamarque Marquis d'Evry 2013 Haut-Médoc \$38

Blueberries leap out of the glass of this well-proportioned, medium-bodied red. Spicy on the attack, effusive berry fruit drenches the palate that leads to a smoky finish. Burly tannins and perky acidity will give this wine plenty of ageing viability in the bottle, but it's already tasty to drink.

89

Château de Rouillac 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$32

Pigeage and remontage helped create the onyx black core of this blend of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon and 46% Merlot. The pure fruit flavors of roasted black plums and crunchy blackberries meld with savory tones of damp earth and roasted game. It's chunky and hefty, but it has just enough of everything to strike a very nice balance.

89

Château de Rouillac 2011 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

Formerly owned by the famous Baron Haussmann who envisioned the great, wide boulevards of Paris, this 21 hectare property is now owned by former soccer/football player Laurent Cisneros and his wife, Sophie. Primarily devoted to red wine, the Cisneros recruited the highly respected Eric Boissenot, who otherwise works exclusively in the Médoc, to work with their wines. This one tastes of blackberries and blueberries and shows very good purity. It has pleasantly lifting acidity, but its lightly papery and drying medium finish is a bit distracting.

89

Château des Portets 2012 Graves Rouge \$NA

This wine is fairly fresh on the nose with hints of tobacco leaf mixed into its core of red currants and cranberry compote. It is boisterous and generous on the palate with loads of acidic oomph, exotic spices and lit charcoal nuances. This wine needs a big, meaty dish!

89

Château de Portets 2009 Graves \$28

This mid-depth colored wine has a rich nose of smoke, campfire cinders, fallen autumn leaves and roasted plums. The palate is custardy and rounded with caressing tannins and moderate acidity. Its umami palate is delightfully unusual and surprising. This is drinking well now and has a small capacity to evolve to benefit...but, why wait? It is supremely satisfying as it is. This cuvée of 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Franc is a fantastic value.

89

Château Deyrem Valentin 2012 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$43

Showing off lots of French forest terroir with its 50% new barrique aging regime, this boldly oaked wine backs up the toast, espresso and spice on the palate with pure and sumptuous, black fruit influences, namely cassis. I find its showy style tiresome, but others will feast upon this. Voluptuous in texture with creamy tannins and supporting acidity, this finishes surprisingly quickly with a touch of lifting licorice.

89

Château Doms 2012 Graves Rouge Cuvée Amélie \$25

This is named for the founder of the estate, not the current, fifth generation winemaker. It's approximately 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in a significant proportion of Cadus oak, which the current Amélie believes suits very well Merlot. The palate has a vast array of flavors: mocha, raspberry, roasted red plum and licorice. The round mouthfeel is encased by sweet, silky tannins and supported by seamless acidity.

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 du Moulin Rouge 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$18

This wine pours into the glass with a bang! Its exuberant, savory nose gushes with barbecue spice, roasted poultry and beef stock aromas. Baking spices highlight the concentrated, fruit-filled palate that leads to a suavely dry finish. Between its spritely acidity and lightly sandy tannins, this is a good by-the-glass candidate.

89

Château du Taillan 2010 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois

Creamy, juicy and expressive, this Cabernet Sauvignon-dominated wine coupled with Merlot and Cabernet Franc is solidly delicious. Its black fruit aromas are heady, but its balance is precise. Prim tannins and crisp acidity gently frame the mid-weight body.

89

Château Dutruch Grand Poujeaux 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc \$29

What a gorgeous nose! Starting with tea leaves and black plums, this wine moves into an expansive mid-palate knit together by structuring tannins and compelling acidic refreshment. Savory on the finish, this is good for just a glass and even better for a meal. Class act!

89

Château Fleur Haut Gaussons 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$17

This Malbec and Merlot blend sports a nose of fireplace smoke and underbrush. The palate carries on the link with cigar box top notes followed by black currants and tart blackberries. Highly engaging thanks to its sensuous fruits and moderate complexity, this wine overdelivers for its price point.

89

Château Fonbadet 2013 Pauillac Cru Bourgeois \$37

Fonbadet has been under the watch of the Peyronie family for generations. This 2013 is composed of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% total of Petit Verdot & Malbec. This sports a big and generous nose with masses of blackberries and black currants counterbalanced by crunchy, perky acidity and lightly strict tannins. There is slightly obvious oak, but that won't bother most consumers.

89

Château Fontenil 2011 Fronsac \$30

Dany and Michel Rollan oversee this 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon blend. Its dark color has black streaks. Predictably expansive on the nose, this effusively ripe wine tastes of figs, balsamic vinegar and chocolate truffles. Round on the mid-palate with slightly grainy oak tannins, this wine has good freshness overall. There's some overtly oaky pomp and circumstance, but overall it's a well-balanced wine that many will enjoy.

89

Château Gaby 2011 Canon-Fronsac \$25

The vines for this wine may average 35 years in age, but Château Gaby dates back to 1660. This 80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon is enormously ripe. It tastes and smells of figs, wine-poached pears and spicy gingerbread. Though it has a custardy mid-palate, its clenched tannins and medium-plus acidity support its high alcohol very well. Made in concrete tanks then aged in 50% new and 50% older barriques, this super-charged package is impressively well-suited for the table. I love its lingering tobacco finish.

89

Château Gemeillan 2013 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

Briar and black fruit dominate on the densely fruited nose. Plump yet refreshing, the youthful fruit is vibrant - even fun! The spicy, herbal finish shows nice length.

89

Château Grand Barrail Lamarzelle Figeac 2010 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$40

Composed of 65% Merlot and 35% Cabernet Franc, this château was taken into the hands of Dourthe in 2005. It's an excellent terroir for Cabernet Franc in particular, and this variety makes up one-third of the cuvée. Savory and vinous with tones of red plums and marionberries, this wine calls for grilled meats and a good decanter.

89

Château Graves de Pez 2010 St-Estèphe \$40

This savory wine has a reserved nose yet a deeply rich palate packed with boysenberries, tart cherries and blueberries. With air and time, charcoal and charred campfire wood work to the surface, too. It's a fairly weighty wine with gentle tannins and middling acidity. The finish is modest, but the wine should work well with casual, bistro-style dishes. This is a pleasantly chewy combo of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot whose highly integrated wood use makes this a very accessible and food-friendly wine.

89

Château Haut-Brisson 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru 13.5% \$55

This fragrant wine has a pleasant nose of dusty red earth, worn leather, dried tree bark and cardamom. The plentiful, ripe and super-clean berry fruit character is utterly satisfying with a brightly fresh and ripe core. The wine's acidity is supporting but verges on being a bit soft for this medium-plus bodied wine. The easy-edged tannins provide light, supplemental tension. It's a wine made for earlier rather than later drinking, and it's plenty tasty right now.

89

Château Haut-Colombier 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$14

Super young, über dark and rather reduced, this is a little fighter! It has licorice, peat and seared game funk along with molten blackberries and cassis. The palate is broad, but perky acidity tightens up the overall feel. You can taste both the depth of fruit from the clay soil as

well as the tension from the terroir's limestone. Vinified in concrete tanks, this is aged in vats and older barrels with several rackings. It was a pleasure tasting this sassy blend of 85% Merlot, 10% Malbec and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Drink: 2016-18

89

Château Haut-Plantey 2014 Haut-Médoc (Sample) \$19

Primarily aged in tank, this wine is meant to emphasize juicy, youthful fruit. There is, however, a touch of pruniness to the flavors. That won't deter most drinkers, however, thanks especially to the vivacious and strongly savory palate. Made by the owners of Château La Lauzette, this offers terrific value and food-friendly serviceability.

89

Château Joanin Bécot 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$30

This property is owned by Juliette Bécot and its wines are overseen by the Rolland team. Incredibly bright and concentrated in cranberry color, this wine is gamey and stinky...but in an intriguing way. Made of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc harvested at a rather meager 36 hl/ha, this is aged in new (60%) and once used barrels. The palate starts with a deluge of minerals, flint and savory nuttiness. The palate follows on with baked cherries and licorice. Altogether, it is accessible, intriguing and rather complex – not an easy trio to pull off.

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 Cabanne 2012 Pomerol \$30

Supple and sensuous, this wine is loaded with potently ripe mulberries. Sumptuous tannins and supporting acidity give this wine just enough support while making it very sippable. Not especially complex, though aged 55% in new and 45% older oak, this is definitely a pleasure-giver. This is a varietal Merlot.

89

Château La Création 2012 Pomerol \$33

This dynamic wine has a bewitching, crepuscular hue with onyx streaks. The nose is fascinating with campfire and forest floor accented by a becoming touch of funk. Black plums and black cherries saturate the palate, which is lifted by perky acidity. This fusion of 64% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon should develop a large crowd of groupies.

89

Château Laffitte Carcasset 2014 St-Éstèphe Cru Bourgeois (Sample) \$25

Almost flamboyantly ripe on the nose, this St-Éstèphe composed predominantly of Cabernet Sauvignon with Merlot and Petit Verdot tastes of sloe jam and elderberries. Particularly for this northern Médoc appellation, its tannins are unusually smooth.

89

Château Laffitte Laujac 2011 Médoc \$30

This wine is surprisingly deep for a 2011 and decisively youthful as well. It's intensely black curranty with licorice and sweet baking spices. While rather straightforward, it has a pleasant, up-front impact of both fruit and spice. The medium finish comes in grainy layers, making this a wine best enjoyed with food. It is 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot.

89

Château La Garde 2011 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

A 60-40 mix of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, this wine is aged 100% in oak and a good portion of it was new. Definitely an ambitious wine, there is lots of toast, anise and smoky spiciness combined with lavishly ripe black plums. Its rounded tannins make it approachable now.

89

Château Lagnet 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$25

A bit balsamic on the nose, this wine is sumptuously ripe with dried berry fruits and plentiful baking spices. The palate is well-defined by moderately firm tannins and spritely acidity. It would be easy to tuck away a few glasses of this bottling. It's incredibly savory with cracked pepper spice and earthy nuance. Fun!

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 Lauzette 2010 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

The La Lauzette wines are harvested at 45 hl/ha without green harvesting. Co-proprietor Liz Roskam believes it's a fad that is biting the dust. (And, why not just manage the vines properly from the start?) This vintage has more Cabernet Sauvignon than usual, clocking in at 70%. It tastes of licorice, dried fig and black plum skin. Long on the finish, the excellent, bracing acidity gives this wine drinkability and longevity.

89

Château La Lauzette 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

A blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot and a dash of Cabernet Franc, this wine shows terrific fruit concentration that is expertly balanced with crunchy acidity and lightly leathery tannins. Though aromatically reserved, the palate is expressive with cassis, black plums, savory spices and old tobacco. The lingering finish works as nicely with dry-aged steak as it does with a Cuban cigar.

89

Château La Lauzette 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

In this challenging vintage, the Roskams dialed back and made only 30% of the château wine, moving the rest of it into their second label. Par for the course of this vintage, the color is slightly paler, the fruit more inflected with notes of green peppercorn, the tannins a touch grainier and the acidity a bit racier. But, it all comes together nicely with impressively pure and plump mid-palate fruit and an elongated, blueberry-tinged finish.

89

Château Landat 2012 Haut Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot is rather pale and a bit cloudy, but its nose exudes fresh fruit. Exuberant aromas of cranberries, tart blueberries black currants connect with toasted brioche aromas on the broad palate tempered with laser-like acidity and sculpting tannins.

89

Château Lapinasse 2012 Graves Rouge \$25

Unlike the other Lapinasse reds, this one is darkly colored with black streaks at the core. Terrifically pure, it smells of red currants, licorice and smoked meats with a touch of milk chocolate and mocha. Chunky with fruit, there's lilted acidity to focus the medium body. The focused, lingering finish adds notes of damp earth.

89

Château Lapinasse 2013 Graves Rouge Les Terraces de Colas \$15

There's only about 30 centimeters (11 inches) of soil before you hit the bedrock in this vineyard! The resulting wine has a fragrant and profusely forward nose whose smells of blueberries and red cherries seem to reverberate in the glass. The 40% Cabernet Sauvignon embraces the juicy and round Merlot core with firm tannins that turn vigorous and slightly drying on the finish. This wine sees only second and third use oak.

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 La Rose du Pin 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$13

This wine packs some punch. It's impressively youthful and divinely pure. The palate tastes of briar patch and boysenberries. Juicy, soft and easy-going, this will make lots of sippers - and their wallets - very happy. This is 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon.

89

Château La Vieille Cure 2011 Fronsac \$30

Firm and rugged in its youthfulness, sweet red berries peek through this full-bodied wine's exotic earthiness. The palate has dense, lusty fruit elevated by mouthcoating, streamlined tannins that gives this wine good drinkability. This is 76% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon aged for 15 months in one-third each new, once used and twice used barriques.

89

Château Le Bosque 2011 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$42

Ruby-colored with rust inflections, this wine shows positive development yet still has room to develop to benefit. It smells of fallen autumn leaves and underbrush mashed with mulberries and blueberries. The well-concentrated and generously fruited palate has a lightly viscous texture.

89

Château Le Crock 2011 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$35

This wine's perfume is definitively Bordelais between its cigar box intrigue, evergreen highlights and black fruit flavors. Clean, polished and well-proportioned, this fusion of 46% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon and a whopping 17% Petit Verdot has immediate charm. Its solid finish and charismatic pedigree should give this wine good staying power.

89

Château Le Gravillot 2012 Lalande-de-Pomerol \$22

Vincent Bruno makes wine from four AOCs on the Right Bank. He added this château to his collection in 1998. A pure Merlot, this has a lovely purple tinge at its core. Fresh and forward on the nose, its creamy palate is surrounded by bristly and firm tannins that could use some time to quiet down. Blueberries and smashed cherries meld nicely with smoky overtones right through the medium finish.

89

Château Léognan 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$NA

This estate was established in the 17th century. Fast-forwarding to 2006, it was acquired by Philippe & Chantal Miecaze of Domaine de Chevalier. It is a boisterous wine with explosive berries, cigar box and smoke. Its broad palate is firm yet well-balanced thanks to its artful blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon with 30% Merlot.

89

Château l'Enclos 2012 Pomerol \$41

This blend of 85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 3% Malbec was surprisingly austere in comparison to its magnanimous 2011 bottling. It's crisp and taut on the palate while showing noticeable – and enticing – earthy notes of development. Though 40% was aged in new barriques, new oak flavors are not obvious on the palate.

89

Château Lespault-Martillac 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$38

Massively colored with lots of muscle on the mid-palate, this is an impressive wine. It has a blackberry and roasted plum core with licorice highlights. It's hard to imagine a Bordeaux of this stature and from such a noble vintage could classify as “glou glou”, or gluggable, but I'd say it does. This was the first year the Domaine de Chevalier team did everything themselves, having taken over the estate's management in 2009.

89

Château Les Ormes 2010 St-Julien \$60

Deeply colored, this mid-weight wine boasts clean and fresh black fruits. The voluptuous but nicely lifted mid-palate is countered by drying tannins that feel like over-steeped tea. The refined fruit flavors are joined by coffee, spice and charred wood aromas on the palate that linger into the medium finish.

89

Château Lestrilie Capmartin 2010 Bordeaux Supérieur \$13

This is a pleasantly rustic wine with earthy underpinnings and chunky but smooth tannins and crunchy acidity. It smells like a basket of red and black cherries sprinkled with crushed graphite. This Merlot dolloped with Cabernet Sauvignon that sees some oak, but none of it is new.

89

Château Le Sartre 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$33

Compared to many other 2010s, this wine is genteel and refined. Its nose is replete with mulberries, dried raspberries and spice rack. Its politely tugging tannins and refreshing acidity give this tantalizingly ripe wine solid structure for mid-term aging. Comprised of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot grown in deep gravel soils, this is a very Bordelais class act.

89

Château Le Sartre 2011 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$24

Aged 16 months in 60% new barriques after being vinified in stainless steel, this blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot shows impressive integration. There are smoky and tobacco-y notes on the nose, but otherwise there's not much obvious oak. Mulberries, dried black plum skins and blackberries invade the palate, all supported by very fine-grained tannin. Medium on the finish with good nuance, this should evolve nicely in the next few years.

89

Château les Guyonnets 2014 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux Héritage \$9

Sophie & Didier Tordeur grow the 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon for this wine in clay-limestone soils. Its very deep color is spotted with vibrant magenta highlights. It smells exotic with wild berries, blackcurrant leaf and pencil lead. It is ripe and generous but well-balanced with dry and gangly tannins and bracing acidity. With a bit of time and a chargrilled ribeye steak, this will turn heads! The solid finish unfolds plenty of flavor, signaling that this wine should have a solid, mid-term future.

89

Château Lestrille 2010 Bordeaux Supérieur \$11

This wine is strikingly different from its 2009 counterpart. Minerally, slate-y and earthy on the nose, its youthful, fresh and resolutely dark black fruit is well-concentrated and should evolve to benefit. The grainy tannins and nervous acidity will help with that.

89

Château Lilian Ladouys 2012 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$26

This bottling's smoky and compelling nose leads with a peaty influence. The round, fruit-forward palate shows light viscosity, generous but succulent tannins, hedonistic and lingering spicy notes on the modestly tugging finish.

89

Château Magneau 2012 Graves Rouge \$19

Forward and extravagantly ripe, this will have broad appeal for its moreish slurpability. A combination of equal parts Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, it boasts bright red flavors of cranberries and raspberries alongside baked blackberries. Though one-third is aged in new oak barrels, it's hard to pick it up on the palate as the wood is so well integrated.

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 Monbrison 2012 Margaux \$46

Dense - almost buff - with concentrated fruit, this wine shows excellent structural harmony that slides into a generous finish. It has a sultry contrast of pungent forest floor and damp cigar with blackberry and black cherry preserves. There's no evident new oak, but there is a brightening note of licorice.

89

Château Mongravey 2012 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$35

Reserved and minerally nose, chunky black fruit comes forward on the palate. The toast and cocoa of new oak blend harmoniously into the palate core, leaving the finish with lots of spice and licorice. Smooth and sleek, this is a handsome, compelling bottling.

89

Château Moulin Riche 2011 St-Julien \$40

Hailing from the Leoville-Poyferré family of wines, this fusion of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot and 5% Petit Verdot is smartly crafted though it doesn't necessarily taste Bordelais. No matter. Its lightly leathery nose with toasted spice nuances complemented by blueberries and sloe jam are highly appealing and offer a moderate finish.

89

Château Patache d'Aux 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Impressively toasty and chocolatey on the nose, the palate brings on supple cobbler fruit flavors. There's a veritable swarm of mulberries, black cherries and blueberries! Given the firm tannins, sturdy body and nuanced, anise-inflected finish, this wine has the legs to age nicely for a while.

89

Château Pibran 2012 Pauillac \$35

This wine has an extravagant nose of ripe black and red fruits speckled with copious amounts of freshly grated cinnamon. The creamy, mocha-led palate with pillow-soft tannins and mild acidity is very approachable. This nicely layered and well-concentrated 2012 needs time to settle in bottle.

89

Château Pierhem 2011 Pomerol \$40

This is a super vinous, varietal Merlot made from 60-year-old vines. Its crackling, feisty acidity gives it excellent drinkability. Bramble and sweet spice fill the medium-bodied palate and linger on the finish. This is aged 80% in new barriques and 20% in tank, but the oak is impressively well integrated.

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 Pigneau 2010 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$21

This Merlot has a 10% dash of Cabernet Franc and is aged entirely in barrique, 25% of which is new. Its thoroughly dark color and forward nose promise concentrated fruit, and they deliver just that. Fragrant and fresh forest berries and Morello cherries contrasted with forest floor and fresh mushrooms. They all linger on the finish. While full-bodied and high in abv at 14.5%, there's feisty acidity to offer very good structural support.

89

Château Plince 2007 Pomerol

A bit rough around the edges on the first go, this opened up nicely on Day Two, with only about a half glass taken from the bottle to taste it on the first day. In that 24 hours it gained charm with a velvety texture developing. Its initial green notes had rounded off, too. Roasted black plum and blackberry cobbler fruit flavors showed through on the more accommodating palate. By Day Two, the wine was even enjoyable on its own. Do decant!

89

Château Plince 2013 Pomerol \$44

Earthy, funky, spicy and exotic, this is three-quarters Merlot and one-quarter Cabernet Franc. Its fragrant youthfulness and supple structure make it a pleasure to drink early on. Its lightly toasty oak notes – only one-third new barriques are used – are nicely integrated.

89

Château Plincette 2012 Pomerol \$35

Hailing from a tiny 0.83 hectare / 2 acres vineyard, this is 90% Merlot with 10% Cabernet Franc. It shows pleasantly funky with gamey notes on the nose. It tastes of blackberry fruits and baking spices and is gluttonous on the palate. Despite being a bit unctuous, this is highly drinkable.

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

Château Roche-Lalande 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

Made of 50% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, this ripe wine has a sweet attack of sugar-roasted black plums. On the palate, damp earth joins to give the wine depth, hanging on through the medium finish. Though aged 12 months in French oak, the palate is demure with no blattant wood notes.

89

Château Rouget 2009 Pomerol \$80

Round, ripe and generous, this is just what one would expect from such a heralded vintage and a distinguished appellation. Baked black cherries, hints of tar and loads of damp forest floor cover the nose and palate on this hefty wine with a midnight black core. Medium-plus, lifting acidity works with moderately vigorous – if well-tamed – tannins to give this wine vitality. Drinking well now, it's also showing a pleasant touch of development. However, with its short finish and somewhat baked fruit character, it's peak potential is likely near.

89

Château Sainte Barbe 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$17

This wine has a muscular and brooding nose that smells of charcoal and cassis. Composed of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, it is made in concrete and stainless steel vats. Contrary to the nose, the palate is almost rambunctious with brighter fruit tones of cherry preserves and strawberry pie. Pithy tannins and spry acidity provide very good balance.

89

Château Ségur de Cabanac 2010 St-Estèphe Reserve \$55

This is a classically-styled “claret”. Its nose smells of cedar, spice rack, fallen autumn leaves and peat, and its palate tastes of red cherries, mulberries and black currants. It becomes more expressive even with just a few minutes, so do give it time in the glass. The layered complexity and moderate length are supported by a lightly tugging texture from start to finish. This blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot pairs easily with a wide array of foods.

89

Château Tanesse 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$17

This full-on Bordelais blend of 49% Merlot, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot is ready to be shared at the table. It would also pair well with a bold cigar. Overtly perfumed, the wine smells of a potpourri of blackberries, loganberries, blueberries, briar patch and smoked beef. The palate tastes just as extravagant. It is nicely round in the mid-palate with good flesh, custardy tannins and somewhat mild acidity. Alas, the panoply of flavors vanish on the short finish. Still, it's a fun, full-throttle wine for early drinking.

89

Château Tayet 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$14

This blend of 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Petit Verdot is sexy and round. It's extremely ripe with notes of fig jam and cassis. There's good complexity on the gently structured palate, including a medium finish. The De Schepper family oversees these 10 acres in Macau, very near Margaux.

89

Château Tertre de Viaud 2011 Côtes de Bourg \$20

The nose of this 82% Merlot and 18% Cabernet Sauvignon blend is introverted. However, its palate is more forthcoming, turning out delightfully nuanced before transitioning into a

persistent finish. Its flavors include candied boysenberries, freshly-turned earth, dried mushrooms and air-dried beef. The palate is incredibly savory and impressively harmonious, too. The tannins are fluid, the acidity is supporting and integrated, and the medium-plus body has just the right amount of heft to support it all. This is a terrific bistro wine or a house wine or European wine drinkers. Tremendous value!

89

Château Trébiac 2011 Graves Rouges \$17

Wow-this red has impressively crispy acidity alongside firm and grainy tannins. The duo makes for a vibrant and tugging core. While this wine needs food, there's an obvious elegance to its red berry fruit nuanced by spices and crushed stones. Value-wise, it's over the top.

89

Clos du Roy 2012 Fronsac \$25

With its funky nose, this wine needs decanting. Once teased out of the bottle, this wine becomes round, succulent and fun. There's the tang of black currants and the juiciness of sweet plums, all complemented by generous cinnamon notes. Zippy acidity melds with graciously smooth tannins to give the wine very nice balance. Hailing from both the hills and plateau with many vines growing in clay soils, this wine is 90% Merlot and 5% each of the Cabernets aged in one-third new and two-thirds old oak.

89

Delphis de La Dauphine 2012 Fronsac \$20

This wine has a big nose packed with red currants and cardamom. The caressing texture and medium-bodied palate are supported by crackling acidity. The medium finish is lightly and pleasantly drying. This should drink nicely through its first six to eight years.

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.

89

Domaine de Courteillac 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$19

How lovely! This wine starts with intriguing woody and earthy notes then moves into seductive meaty flavors. Flavor-wise, it's a charmer. Structure-wise, it's demanding. The fruit core is tight and the acidity is seriously frisky. The solution is serving it with a hearty meal! Though it's not obvious on the palate, this wine sees 50% once-used and 50% new barrique. Stéphane Derenoncourt is a consultant.

89

Duluc de Branaire-Ducru 2011 St-Julien \$31

Well-steeped in flavors of red and black berries with sculpted tannins and lilting acidity, this sipper is highly accessible and moreish. Though coming from young vines averaging 20 years of age, the fruit is manually harvested and treated to barrique aging. This is a mix of 56% Merlot, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Petit Verdot.

89

Enclos de Viaud 2014 Lalande de Pomerol \$35

A bit leafy and green with loads of red fruits, this wine has forceful tannins and lots of extract. Somehow this blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon vinified in stainless steel then aged in barriques, 10% new, pulls it off rather well. It's a youngster, but it should settle down in time.

89

Esprit de Pavie 2011 Bordeaux Rouge \$26

Perfect for a nice piece of flank steak or prime rib, this is a delicious wine with nuances of bottle development! Its color is turning rusty on the edges, and its structure is nicely melting into this wine's generously fruited core of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Its flavors are a bit unusual but utterly compelling: balsamic vinegar, black cherry confit and smoked bacon.

89

Initial de Desmirail 2011 Margaux \$23

This is a vinous equivalent of the proverbial tall, dark and handsome. It starts with rich aromas of damp forest floor on the nose then moves into layers of blackberries and black plum skins on the palate. There's a pleasant tannic bite to structure the plump mid-palate. It's all manually harvested (unusual at this price point) and composed of 69% Merlot and 31% Cabernet Sauvignon.

89

Jacques Boyd 2012 Margaux \$26

This is one of the three "second" wines of Château Boyd-Cantenac. The smoky nose starts with tangerine peels, licorice, black plums and used charcoal grill. The mid-palate shows good girth and vigorous fruit character spiced with subtle oak. Good acidic tension prolongs the finish.

89

Le Petit Haut Lafitte 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$35

This wine has an easy-going palate with oodles of crunchy red berries buffered by tones of peat and tobacco. An inkling of vanilla rises on the back palate then leads to a medium finish. Pleasantly dry with tugging tannins, this is a mid-term (drinking) dynamo. The Smith-Haut Lafitte team harvested later than most in this vintage and eventually brought on 250 pairs of hands to bring in this fruit quickly.

89

Les Vignerons de Tutiac 2013 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Lieu-Dit Le Pin \$25

Tasting of fireplace smoke and black plums, this nicely concentrated, dark red has a medium finish. Composed entirely of Merlot and hailing from well-positioned, hillside vineyards, it's aged in 100% new French oak and definitely shows off its smoky pedigree. This offers excellent value.

89

Marquis de Calon 2012 St-Estèphe \$28

This delicious wine is hedonistic. Redolent of black currants and cassis and tinged with graphite and tobacco, it goes down easily. Medium-bodied with a hint of mouth-coating viscosity, this is sleekly structured. It would make an excellent wine by the glass in a fine dining restaurant.

89

Mouton Cadet 2013 St-Émilion Réserve \$25

This is a very attractive, textbook example of red Bordeaux. It is bright and supple on the palate with moderately firm tannins and well-concentrated mulberry fruit. The solid finish melds raspberries, blueberries and cigar box. This is a blend of 88% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon.

89

Vieux Châteaux Renaissance 2014 Bordeaux 12.5% \$28

This deeply-colored wine made from 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon grown on gravel and chalky-clay soil has a bright, fruit-driven nose with licorice, rose petals and peat fire. This is a delicious wine that will make many friends thanks to its perky, mouthwatering acidity and tame tannins. It's a drinker for sure, so don't be surprised when if you finish bottle more quickly than you expected!

88

Apollon Le Divin 2012 Graves Rouge \$45

Composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a highly ripe wine from its roasted red fruits to its round mouthfeel to its creamy tannins. There is no shortage of spiciness thanks to the wine's aging in 50% new and 50% once-used barrels. The flavors are vibrant and layered. Blueberries set in on the moderate finish. With so much exuberance, this is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

88

Cap Royal 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

This wine smells of forest floor and wild blackberry bushes. Deeply colored, crunchy on the palate, and nicely compact with considerable fruit density, this is a highly agreeable drink. Though not particularly complex, this blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon is nonetheless satisfying, especially considering its price.

88

Château Altimar 2011 Pomerol \$50

Big and imposing both on the bouquet and the palate, this wine is 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Turbo-charged and linebacker-like on the full-bodied and densely fruited palate, this wine shows hints of sweet oak spice along with its black plums and loganberries. The buoyant acidity provides good structure and carries the wine into a medium finish.

88

Château Andron Blanquet 2011 St-Estèphe \$36

Noticeably oaky on the nose, this wine's generously ripe and roasted mulberries and cherries are laced with vanilla extract and crème caramel. Though teeming with fresh fruit, there's not much oomph in the palate here, a reflection on the vintage. Drink sooner rather than later.

88

Château Arnauton 2012 Fronsac \$14

This is 90% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 2% Malbec is made in concrete then aged it in older barriques. This vintage has an exuberantly ripe nose stuffed with berries: blackberries, boysenberries and açai abound. Lilac and anise highlights come in on the palate. The structure is graceful, creating a silky backdrop for the wine's moderate complexity. This wine over-delivers for its price.

88

Chateau Barbé 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$18

This wine is part of the Bayle Carreau stable. It sits on a plateau drenched in sunshine. Hence, it's not surprising that this wine has a thick, generously ripe palate of black plums. It also offers spice, iodine and licorice. While its flavors are boldly overt, it has loads of perk on the palate and good length, too. This is 75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec.

88

Château Béhère Courtin 2009 Pauillac \$70

This bright, limpid wine made of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot sports a rust-tinged edge. Its aromas are definitively Bordelais, starting with cigar box, peat, red currant and boysenberry. The overtly ripe, generous body is well-structured, even if its plush tannins don't show much characteristic Pauillac grip. The finish is medium-plus, due in part to the buoyant acidity. The fallen autumn leaves surfacing on the finish show the development of pleasant tertiary character. It's a very tasty bottle, if a bit expensive, even if it does sit next door to two First Growths.

88

Château Bélair 2007 St-Émilion Premier Grand Cru Classé \$50

Smells of crushed cherries, mulling spices and fallen autumn leaves fill the glass. The mouthfeel is supple, the tannins are suave and the acidity is deftly integrated. The medium body sports solid layers of flavor that carry into a persistent finish. Drinking very well know, this has legs to hold on but may only improve a limited amount given its modest lift.

88

Château Bel Air 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

This wine has a deep color with becoming maroon highlights. The extravagant aromas are predominantly non-fruit ones: forest floor, peat and cut hedges. The palate moves into elements of gravel and blackberry fruit. The slightly husky, raspy tannins nicely encase the rich, generously layered fruit. This wine has great balance and very good everyday accessibility.

88

Château Bel Orme Tronquoy de Lalande 2014 Haut-Médoc \$23

Extravagantly ripe, dark fruits kick off this dazzling wine: sloe, boysenberry and black currant preserves. It's an easy choice for Merlot lovers (over 60% Merlot, accompanied by Cabernet Sauvignon and a touch of Cabernet Franc) and those who like more ample styles. The creamy, weighty palate is enveloped by vivacious acidity and mild tannins. The medium finish is layered and accented by licorice tones. This is a good candidate for decanting. This château sits in the Quié family stable with Rauzan-Gassies and Croizet-Bages.

88

Château Bertineau Saint-Vincent 2014 Lalande de Pomerol \$38

Very ripe and exotic on the nose, this smells of wildflowers and sloe jam. Its parcels neighbor Pomerol's Château Bon Pasteur, where the wine is actually made. This blend of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc aged entirely in barriques is part of the Rolland Collection.

88

Château Biac 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux B de Biac \$35

This wine is dynamically fruit-driven and packed with roasted black plums and sweet black cherries. Medium-plus in body with 13.5% abv, this wine has lilted acidity offering plenty of refreshment. This is composed of 57% Merlot and 43% Cabernet Sauvignon.

88

Château Brillette 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$23

This red boasts a classic Bordeaux nose with plenty of forest floor and cigar box aromas. Red fruits - especially plums - dominate the nicely concentrated mid-palate strictly kept in place by gangly and lightly coarse tannins and vivid acidity. This will be highly drinkable in its youth.

88

Chateau Cantelaudette 2012 Graves de Vayres Rouge Prestige 2012 \$18

This fresh red sports mulberry tones complemented by savory, spicy nuances. Modestly complex with good purity and decent concentration, this blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc is an easy-going wine that offers tremendous value. This wine is aged in a barrique program that is renewed every four years.

88

Château Cantemerle 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Classé \$40

If you like a bit of tannic sass in your wine, this one has you covered. It's enticingly gripping without showing harshness. Blackberries, black plums and blueberry cobbler flavors swim across the overall harmonious palate. For those who prefer tighter wines, this will go down the hatch with ease, even without food by its side.

88

Château Cantemerle 2012 Haut Médoc Cru Classé \$35

Beginning with its deep color and minerally nose, this wine starts off as a very subdued wine. However, it doesn't take long for it to open in the glass. Slightly rustic tannins and marked acidity focus the medium-bodied palate tasting of an interesting mix of cassis, iron and spice. Drink: 2017-20

88

Château Cap Léon Veyrin 2011 Listrac-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

This wine's rich, black-fruited nose bursts with raisins and black currants. The exuberant palate takes off with baking spice and supple cobbler fruits. Suavely rounded from 25 to 30 days on the skins and 12 months of barrique aging, 50% new, this wine's generous tannins with highly-integrated acidity give it excellent drinkability. This is 60% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Petit Verdot.

88

Château Caronne Ste. Gemme 2014 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$17

Displaying appealing aromatics of field flowers mingled with cassis, this wine will certainly attract the "sniff hounds". Its palate has firm but finessed tannins and bustling acidity. This property sits just a stone's throw from St-Julien and has a similarly elegant, structural pedigree. Fifty percent of the grapes are manually harvested and the final wine sees 30% new oak.

88

Château Chantelune 2010 Margaux \$55

Lightly rustic on the nose, this wine puts up aromas of briar patch, licorice and peat bricks. Medium-plus in body, this wine has oomph without feeling too weighty. It has creamy tannins, well-settled acidity and a lightly mouthcoating texture that lingers on the palate. I love the modern label with the dog howling at the moon – a highly atypical vibe for this 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot Bordelais blend.

88

Château Chasse-Spleen 2014 Moulis-en-Médoc \$26 (Sample?)

This juicy, round and impressively ripe Moulis will appeal to lovers of fruit-forward wines. It's decidedly modern and just a bit clunky with some overly obvious oak influences of mocha, spent coffee grinds and vanilla extract. Rounded tannins and medium acidity make this feel rather sumptuous. The medium-plus finish is rather impressive, showing that this wine has time to settle down in bottle.

88

Château Clarke Baron Edmond de Rothschild 2012 Listrac-Médoc \$38

Bright and lively looking flowing into the glass, this wine has something for everyone. The smoky nose starts with an exotic flair of smoke, chocolate and caramelized marshmallow, then the palate follows with pristine clean, crunchy red fruits. The sculpted tannins and kicking acidity give this excellent drinkability. While the impact is mostly upfront and the finish is fairly quick, this delivers solid pleasure.

88

Château Couhins 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$30

This wine has a delightfully ripe and tremendously pure mulberry and blueberry nose. This trio of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc is handled with utmost care, from double triage and over-night chilling upon reception to coddling in barriques (one-third new) for 12 months. Its broad and firmly tannic palate means it shows best with food today.

88

Château Dalem 2013 Fronsac \$28

While this bottling has more pedigree than its Château de la Huste stablemate, it's just as drinkable early on. It, too, is made of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc but aged in a bit more new oak (50%). Its intense nose presents an intriguing combination of damp forest floor, lit charcoal, crunchy strawberries and lightly ripe blueberries. Chalky tannins and marked acidity give this medium-bodied wine refreshment and tension.

88

Château de Braude 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$17

The electric and flattering nose of mulberries and raspberries starts this experience off with some punch! Dramatic flourishes of earthiness enter on the palate with forest floor, allspice and grilled bread. Juicy from start to persistent finish this delivers excellent value now but can hold on for a few years, too.

88

Château d'Eck 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$17

This is the first release of this newly refurbished, 11th century château that was purchased by Frédéric Gonet in 1999. It's firm and brooding with loads of bramble fruit, so it should reward additional time in the bottle.

88

Château de Coudot 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Artisan \$20

This wine wows with a flourish of perfume! The concertedly ripe fruit is pure and engaging. Flavors of blueberry pie and spice cake saturate the taste buds. Moderately tugging on the palate and showing perky acidic lift, plentiful refreshment elongates the finish. This is Cabernet Sauvignon dominant with Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

88

Château de France 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

Packed with smoky mulberries and blueberries, this wine is sensuous and lusty yet still very drinkable thanks to its solid fruit freshness and vivid acidity. This is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot aged in barriques (40% new) for 12 months.

88

Château de Francs 2011 Francs-Côtes de Bordeaux \$19

This blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon saw 50% new oak for 12-14 months. The resulting wine has a deeply colored, intense maroon core. Its nose is ripe, fragrant and promising, and its palate delivers. There are mulberries, blueberries, pomegranate seeds and licorice. The bewitching finish brings on touches of forest floor and damp cigar, too. It's just about all you'd hope for in a young Bordeaux, and it costs less than a Jackson!

Drink: 2016-17

88

Château de la Dauphine 2012 Fronsac \$20

This 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc wine is turbo-charged with red and black berries and toasty mocha top notes. It's unctuous, creamy and sensual on the palate. It aims to be a people pleaser, but it will best suit those who like a dollop of toasty oak in their wine. This was aged for 12 months in 30% new and 70% older barriques.

88

Château de la Dauphine 2014 Fronsac \$26 (Sample)

Characteristically showy for Château de la Dauphine, it's easy to see this winery's style in this 2014. This sample had a mosh pit of strawberry jam and cherry cobbler. Unctuously ripe and verging on gluttonous, I would find it daunting to drink more than a glass, but many would be happy to slurp down the bottle. It's palate certainly lends to that, thanks to its velvety tannins, caressing acidity and popping ripe fruit. Alas, while it is indulgent, I don't find it very refreshing.

88

Château de Landiras 2012 Graves Rouge \$25

Outgoing on the nose, this wine sparkles with oodles of smoky barbecue and sweet spice notes. Caressing tannins and good blueberry fruit vitality makes it a fun and quaffable drink. Owner Michel Péliissié has retired from architecture, but he still knows how to build things, including good wines.

88

Château de Lardiley 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$9

This mix of 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet is grown in a small, two-hectare vineyard planted on sandy, clay-limestone soils. Its nose shows berry cobbler fruits lavishly dusted in notes of spice rack. Mulberries, red plum preserves and baked cherry cobbler show moderate persistence on

the palate. The chewy tannins and bustling acidity nicely support this well-rounded, wallet-sparing wine that has pleasant length with a hint of leafy freshness.

88

Château de Lionne 2014 Graves Rouge \$20

This wine screams with vivacious, youthful red fruits: cranberries, lingonberries and sweet-tart strawberries. The palate brings on riper notes of blueberry compote and cinnamon. Generously broad on the mid-palate, the tannins are integrated and pleasantly leathery. The solid finish shows hints of tobacco. This is 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon hailing from vines averaging 25 years old and made exclusively in concrete.

88

Château de Perron 2010 Lalande de Pomerol \$24

This 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon is a mass of blueberries and tart black cherries. It's approachable in its fresh and clean fruit character, yet rugged in its appealingly grippy tannic structure. Throw it back on its own or with a roasted chicken.

88

Château de Portets 2011 Graves \$25

This dark, scarlet-colored wine is a sultry one. Its bouquet is smoky and briary. There's a of rawhide intrigue, too. The palate turns to dusty, dried earth and faded rose petals along with dried red plums and lavender. Though the wine is reaching its initial tertiary expression, its exuberant florality is beguiling. Its tannins are mildly demanding and slightly chunky, and its acidity is thirst quenching. This can drink well alone but certainly will shine brightest at the table with meat-based dishes. The finish is very generous in length and highly nuanced with an over-riding savory, bouillon-like character.

88

Château de Sales 2012 Pomerol \$30

This is a youthful wine with no obvious new oak (only 5% of new barriques used during *élevage*.) The result is a fun, yummy and easy-to-drink beverage packed with mulberries and blueberries. This 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc is a solid value.

88

Château des Fougères 2012 Graves Rouge Clos Montesquieu \$30

This blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot shows an intimidatingly deep color. It's black almost to the rim! Its palate is nicely supple with oodles of ripe black plums and loganberries. Caressing tannins and integrated acidity with hints of spice from 30% new oak barrels give this stylish red solid accessibility.

88

Château Deyrem Valentin 2011 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$42

Coming from 13 hectares of deep gravel soils, this near equal split of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with a dash of Petit Verdot shows impressive finesse. Strawberries, cranberry compote

and roses perfume the palate. The medium finish shows gentle spicy tones from the one-third new and once and twice used barriques. This makes for fun sipping!

88

Château d'Hanteillan 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$17

This moderately weighty wine has a vibrant line of acidity with zingy red fruits: lingonberry, goji and raspberry. Popping ripe blueberries emerge on the juicy palate. There's no evident new oak. The tannins are marked but unpleasant. Drinking nicely now, this should improve in bottle for the next few years.

88

Château Doyac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Boisterously round and juicy, this big bodied wine sports oodles of cedar plank and baking spices alongside forest berries. There's a beet root tone on the lingering finish that suggests some tertiary character development. The beguilingly clingy tannins and snappy acidity give this wine a polished structure. This is textbook Bordeaux.

88

Château du Grand Bos 2014 Graves Rouge \$31

This youthful red has abundant color and an enticing nose of Italian amaro. The palate explodes with crunchy cranberries, pomegranate seeds, exotic spices and Lapsang Souchong tea. The curvy, full-bodied palate is well-proportioned with enough vivacious acidity to pull the flavors into a medium finish. Fermented in stainless steel and aged in wood barrels, this wine's fruit comes from 30-year-old vines.

88

Château du Mouret 2012 Graves Rouge \$21

This wine is savory, spicy, juicy and exotic. It tastes of fresh fig and boysenberry highlighted by licorice. It would be a great wine by-the-glass! Firm and grainy tannins and notes of cedar and underbrush make this a very Bordelais bottling. This is 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc from vines restored by the Médeville family in the early 1970s.

88

Château d'Uza 2012 Graves Rouge \$NA

This hyper-young wine needs either more time in bottle or a good decanting, if being consumed now. It has masses of color, brisk acidity and steely tannins. Blackcurrants laced with licorice adorn the nose and are joined by sexy, musky notes on the palate.

88

Château Fontaine de l'Aubier 2012 Médoc \$12

Glass-staining legs lead to a full-bodied wine, even if the abv isn't very high. This is definitely a wine for the table. Forward, dark cherry, blackberry and sloe fruits merge with an underlying earthiness and minerality. Freshly foraged mushrooms take over the medium finish.

88

Château Fourcas Hosten 2012 Listrac-Médoc \$20

This value fighter is composed of 45% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc. Plump with lightly scruffy tannins and refreshing acidity, this tastes of black currants, blackberries, North African spices and tree bark. It's quite firm now, thanks primarily to the drying tannins. It could use another year or so to mellow out. While its medium finish suggests there is time for that, the leather and tobacco leaf notes of evolution suggest it may be entering its prime.

88

Château Grange-Neuve 2012 Pomerol \$33

This wine must be on steroids. It is highly extracted and jam-like on the palate. It is so ripe that its 2% Cabernet Franc can't do much to lift it aromatically or structurally. I couldn't make it through a glass, but many will love the turbo-charged character of this hedonistic, stylistically divisive wine.

88

Château Hauchat la Rose 2012 Fronsac \$16

Made entirely of Merlot vinified in stainless steel and aged 40% in new and 60% in older barriques, this is a lively bottling. Its pale, dark cherry color has gleaming reflections. Very medium in weight on the palate, it has playfully tugging tannins and thirst-quenching acidity. Only moderate in concentration, there's no reason not to drink it up and enjoy its youthful berry fruits.

88

Château Haut-Beyzac 2014 Haut-Médoc Classic \$18

Big and bold with black licorice and cassis flavors, the mouth-filling palate shows enormous breadth. Most remarkable is its über fruit purity. The soft mid-palate belies the wine's 75% Merlot while its gravelly tannins and nippy acidity nod to its 25% Cabernet Sauvignon.

88 Château Haut-Coteau 2012 St-Estèphe \$28

Drinking very well now, this is hard to resist. There's a caramelized top note that is followed by toasted brioche and sweet raisin bread on the palate. Its linger, fruit-packed finish is scrumptious. The well-proportioned structure gives this wine top-notch drinkability.

88

Château Haut-Gravet 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Grand Chemin 13.5% \$45

Lovely forest-y nose. Bright red cherry fruits. Hints of rhubarb and dried cranberry. Juicy palate, generous tannins, full body but without pondering weight. Generous palate and hints of peaty smokiness. Rich and round, unusually accommodating for young Bordeaux, especially in an off vintage. Brilliant work! Seriously tasty if definitely European in style. More of a UK than a US style, though it generously round.

88

Château Haut-Maillet 2013 Pomerol \$40

Composed of 79% Merlot and 21% Cabernet Franc vinified in stainless steel tanks, this wine sees 30% new barriques and 70% older oak. It's clean and chunky on palate with firm, crisp tannins. Moderately persistent flavors of pomegranate seeds, baked strawberries and sweet raspberries show light nuances of milk chocolate and spice.

88

Château Hourtin-Ducasse 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$18

Deep purple in color, everything about this wine sings with vibrancy. The palate is extravagantly ripe with black fruits. There's enough extraction that it even feels a bit thick. The tender tannins and reserved acidity contribute to the overall softness of this 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.

88

Château Jander 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc \$37

Powerful and loud, this wine's boisterous nose is brimming with roasted blackberries, cassis and dark chocolate drizzled with balsamic. It's really rather sexy. That is, juicy, drinkable and fun. Still, the wine is moderate in complexity, so it's best enjoyed early on. While it is malleable and can be served with or without food, it works very well on its own.

88

Château Jeanrousse 2012 Fronsac \$25

This is a very accessible, varietal Merlot, especially when you want a dollop of overt oak with your wine (50% new oak aging). The nose is pure and fresh with popping-ripe blueberries tinged with notes of vanilla-inflected sweet cream. Tangible energy and juiciness comes with this medium-bodied package wrapped in smooth tannins and supporting acidity. It would be a solid by-the-glass performer.

88

Château la Cardonne 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Exotic from start to finish, this wine leads with a smoky nose backed by pure, dark fruits. The generous, broad palate feels glamour and mouth-coating. Forest floor and spices lead into the nicely structured, medium finish. There's just enough of everything with nothing feeling over-the-top here.

88

Château La Couspaude 2014 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé (Sample) \$35

This sample bottling of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon grown on clay-limestone soils is slightly cloudy and a touch medicinal. Its flavors are predominantly milk chocolate and toasted walnuts. Its soft tannins, mild acidity and creamy glycerol give it an easy-going palate feel, but there was much stuffing to keep it going for too long.

88

Château la Grave Haut-Brisson 2010 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$39

Bursting with ripeness, this deeply fruit-driven, full-bodied wine tastes of roasted black plum skin, blackberry and licorice. Its lightly chalky texture is accompanied by refined and grainy tannins accented by discreetly integrated acidity. This offers the ripeness characteristic of 2010 with plenty of good lift, so it should hold nicely in the cellar in the mid-term.

88

Château la Gravière 2013 Lalande-de-Pomerol \$13

This bottling is exotically spiced with exuberant and obvious oak. Those who love modern-style wines with plush tannins and masses of fruit will particularly love this blend of 88% Merlot and 12% Cabernet Franc.

88

Château La Lauzette 2009 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

The La Lauzette wines tend to show a heftiness thanks to one-third of the vineyard being a mix of clay and limestone and two-thirds being clay and gravel. That plus the vintage create a charismatic wine here, bursting with big, black fruits and heady oak spice. Its dusty tannins and buoyant acidity give the voluptuous mid-palate lovely definition.

88

Château La Lauzette 2014 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

This firm wine is a structure fiend. The moderate body has rip-roaring acidity and steely but polished tannins. Past the grip, it's all liquid blackberries and black plums dusted with sweet spices. Moreover, all that concentrated fruit is incredibly clean and fresh in flavor.

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 Lamothe de Haux 2013 Côtes de Bordeaux \$14

A fusion of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc that sees one-third new oak, this wine has a forward and richly toasty nose. The palate contributes Damson plums and blueberries that combine a lovely sweetness of fruit with a nudge of mocha. This juice delivers excellent drinkability.

88

Château Lanessan 2011 Haut-Médoc \$20

This wine proffers decidedly forward nose packed with smoky and earthy tones. The palate fills in the fruit with black plums and black currants. The creamy oak and the nudging tannins both stand out a bit. Vivacious acidity pulls the flavors into a moderate finish.

88

Château Larmande 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$45

Surprising brickish tinges on the rim and whiffs of old tobacco suggest this wine may be advancing more quickly than should be typical for a 2012. However, it's a pleasant drink with sour cherries and balsamic vinegar complexity. The nicely finessed tannins and buoyant acidity carry the wine into a mild finish. This is 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 60% new and 40% older barriques.

88

Château Larrivaux 2012 Haut-Médoc \$19

Boasting a pretty ruby core with purple inflections, a vibrant nose teeming with oodles of forest berry fruit zooms from the glass. A generous core of fruit parks in the mid-palate, where it is framed by perky acidity. Delightfully focused flavors of cranberry compote and red currants with no obvious oak notes smoothly slide into a medium finish.

88

Château La Patache 2014 Pomerol \$22

This wine smells of damp tree bark and damp, fertile earth. Its plush palate is generous in baking spices, thanks to its vinification in barriques followed by aging 20% of the wine being aged in 30% new barriques and 70% older barriques with the rest being aged in stainless steel. Made of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc grown in clay and gravelly soils, this is incredibly suave and holds a lingering finish. It doesn't sing of Pomerol terroir, but most folks won't mind that, especially for the price.

88

Château la Pensée 2013 Lalande de Pomerol \$27

This wine has an impressively crystal clear appearance about its red color, the latter surely reflecting this stylistically lighter vintage. Its fruit is bright and delicate with blueberries and mulberries. A hint of fallen autumn leaves enter toward the finish. Drinking now.

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 le Caillou 2011 Pomerol \$69

While this wine's 2012 counterpart is more overtly fruit-driven, this vintage is rather old school. There's more than a little funk, and it might be too much for some. This Merlot-dominant blend paired with Cabernet Franc tastes of hung game and blackberry compote.

88

Château Léognan 2009 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

This is a richly juicy wine with roasted blackberries and tobacco. It's definitely evolving now – a bit quickly for a 2009 – but it is showing well and its clock is still ticking. The Miecaze family makes miniscule amounts, about 2,500 cases a year of the red, so the wines can be a challenge to find.

88

Château Le Sartre 2009 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$30

The same as the 2011 blend, this vintage saw slightly more new wood, about two-thirds. There is some very dried-out fruit laced into the wine's full-bodied core inundated with roasted black plum concentration. There's just enough nuanced structure here to expect to see this wine last at least a generous decade.

88

Château Les Roches Gaby 2012 Canon-Fronsac \$24

Blended from 80% Merlot and equal parts Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon aged only in older oak, this wine has a massively ripe nose with oodles of red and black baked fruits. Its fruit is so rich that it tastes like a forest berry cobbler right through the moderate finish. There's also a beguiling touch of balsamic vinegar on the nose. This drinks well now for those wanting a big boned wine.

88

Château Lestage 2012 Lustrac-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$16

This wine launches with a very ripe and smoky nose with peaty, forest floor influence. The palate doesn't shirk on personality, bringing in blackberries and cassis. The majestically balanced palate demonstrates admirable refinement, with firm and lightly grainy - but not drying - tannins. The solid, medium finish is generous with savory spice and mixes in with aromas of old, leather-bound library books.

88

Château Lieujean 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$17

Dramatically fruit-driven and still showing a very fresh dimension, this wine boasts a nose teeming with deeply ripe plums and mulberries strewn with balsamic. Impressively youthful though not very complex, the palate tastes of strawberry preserves and hot cocoa. The gentle tannins and subtle acidity add to the immediate drinkability.

88

Château Lilian Ladouys 2011 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$30

This wine proudly displays its 40% new French barriques. Crème caramel and melted dark chocolate dominate the nose. There's plenty of fruit to support it: blackberries and plums fill the mid-palate. Its lingering, fireplace smoke-stoked finish is exotic but likely makes it a polarizing wine between the "more oak" and "less oak" camps of drinkers.

88

Château Lusseau 2012 Graves Rouge \$35

This wine has an enormously oaky nose with wowingly ripe, black fruits. Its palate is sumptuous and full-bodied with creamy tannins. This combination of 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec is almost a bit gooey, but there is a solid, concentrated core of mulberries, blueberries and sloe jam.

88

Château Marquis d'Alesme Becker 2012 Margaux Cru Classé \$43

This wine is all about impact. Starting with a big nose exuding black and red fruits, the same follows onto the palate, where dried flowers, licorice and charcoal notes add depth. Slightly hedonistic, the generous palate is plump and silky right through the lingering finish.

88

Château Marquis de Terme 2012 Margaux \$40

This wine has a very agreeable character. Its dark color, soft acidity and gentle tannins don't look to make waves. Tasting of mulberries, dark cherries and blueberries, there is a lovely fruit succulence. This is a very suave and drinkable Margaux for the mid-term.

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 Maucamps 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

Compelling notes of red cherry coulis and Marasca cherry liqueur ring from the glass. Round and vibrant on the palate with exuberant and well-placed acidity with streamlined tannins, this is easy drinking! With a touch of chill, it could even work on a picnic. Some layers of earth and incense flourish on the finish, which is certainly thirst-quenching.

88

Château Maurac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$26

Zingingly pure with blueberry preserves on the nose, this wine has a direct and youthful zeal. Oozing with fruit juiciness, the texture is primly firm, though not dry. The spicy finish draws out deeply diverse fruit notes of dried figs, açai and raspberry. This will be brilliant with 30-day, dry-aged steak.

88

Château Mazeyres 2011 Pomerol \$35

This blend of sweet cherries and cranberry compote is delicately sprinkled with cinnamon and allspice. Mouthwatering acidity and gentle, sculpted tannins give this medium-bodied wine an elegant and pleasantly restrained palate feel. This blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc aged in 40% new and 60% once used barriques is highly drinkable.

88

Château Milon 2012 St-Émilion Cuvée Caprice \$15

This is a pure Merlot from 25-30 year-old vines grown at the base of the St-Christophe-des-Bardes plateau. It's very fruit-driven with lots of blueberries and wild cherries with a pleasant earthiness on the medium finish. The price is pretty fantastic, too!

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 de Clotte 2014 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$18

Moulin de Clotte reaches back to the 19th century. Today, it is planted with 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. It's crafted in an easy-going style, which meshes nicely with its moderate complexity. The soft plum fruit flavors allows it to drink well now but has the concentration to age to benefit for several more years, especially as its broadly structured tannins carry it along with aplomb.

88

Château Moulin de la Rose 2010 St-Julien \$65

Deep and richly youthful in color, this wine's impressively vibrant, black currant nose cues up Cabernet Sauvignon to a blind taster. The accompanying, lifted and forward lavender and rose petal notes make for charismatic aromatics. The dusty but mild tannins leave the palate just a touch dry, making it a wine perfect for the table. There's a suspicion of tobacco on the moreish finish. Interestingly, this St-Julien château is one of the few in the commune that isn't an 1855-classified property. Mind you, it carries a price tag as though it is.

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 Nardique de la Gravière 2012 Bordeaux Rouge Supérieur \$15

Coming from the château's oldest (60-years-old) vines, this textbook Bordeaux red has a firm and crunchy mid-palate with very good fruit intensity. It tastes of riper, black fruited tones of sloe, loganberry and cassis with lovely charcoal fire nuances.

88

Château Noblet 2014 Côtes de Bourg \$20

This wine tastes of zingy blackcurrant juice. Its smooth and amply fruity mid-palate has low-intensity tannins and lightly lifting acidity. A blend of 70% Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon, it is lively and clean with minty hints on the swift finish. It's not super complex, but it has everything it needs.

88

Château Olivier 2008 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$33

This bottling has a funky and reserved nose with very mature, mashed mulberry fruit notes. The palate shows some lighter, fresher notes of black plums and blackberries. Thanks to its solid structure, this is showing well now and should continue to develop pleasantly thanks to its considerable complexity and enticingly long finish tasting of dry-aged steak.

88

Château Plince 2010 Pomerol \$39

Deep and impenetrable in color, this wine has a nice brightness from start to finish. It's a big and domineering wine with a regal structure focused on lifting, brightening acidity that tingles on the medium finish. Its tannins are tiny and fine, yet lightly grainy. There's a pleasant, lively note of evergreen on the nose. The palate gives a deep reservoir of black cherry and black plum fruit, all traced in licorice. While showing good liveliness on the palate now, the medium finish and evident development already present suggest the wine is ready to drink, though it should hold on a while.

88

Château Poitevin 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$19

This wine has exactly what you need. It starts with an invitingly dark color that segues into a developing nose showcasing peat, forest floor and dried mushroom. The forest berry flavors

remain subdued on the back palate, where well-constructed tannins and caressing acidity converge to give this wine very good drinkability.

88

Château Potensac 2012 Médoc \$26

Dark in color with mulberry inflections, this wine is inviting in every way, including the price point. Clean, fresh and exuberant, its nose smells of roasted cherries and blueberries dusted with sweet spice and cinnamon. The lightly chewy, well-managed tannins and juicy core are reined in by vivid acidity.

88

Château Puy Castéra 2011 Haut-Médoc \$23

This is a serious wine that offers impressive value. Boysenberries, black plum preserves and fresh figs coat the palate, all highlighted by mocha and hot asphalt top notes. There's no rush to pop the cork, but if you do, you'll be rewarded now anyway. The oak is still a bit showy, but this is overall a very savory wine.

88

Château Ramage La Batisse 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$24

Dark and brooding in color, this wine's looks alone scream intensity! Savory, woody and peaty in aromas, this wine pops with mystique. Surprisingly, its palate bursts into blackberry flavors then drifts into a finish tasting of infused black tea leaves. There is a delightful layering of nuance wrapped up by a discreet structural regime. It all works very well!

88

Château Roche-Lalande 2010 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$35

Very deep in color at the core, this wine is already sporting a brick tinge at the rim. On the nose, new oak aromas of baked brioche with milk chocolate chips stand out. However, on the palate, there is very nice integration of lightly dry tannins with a solid fruit density that leads to a medium finish tasting of forest berries. This blend of 48% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot has some time to evolve in the bottle.

88

Château Roland la Garde 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$28

This wine comes from the same portfolio as Sainte-Luce Bellevue. Similarly, this one seems pushed to its limits. It is already showing lightly evolved notes, surely due in part to its very long 18 months of élevage in barriques, one-third of which are new. For the time being, this one manages well enough with its grandiose juiciness followed by an attractive combination of savory and sweet spices. While its structure is well-balanced, its fruit is exceedingly over-ripe. At least there is some enticing spiciness on the moderate finish.

88

Château Sémillon Mazeau 2012 Lustrac-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

This effusive wine is a exotic and somewhat funky on the nose, showing licorice, black currant leaf and hot asphalt. Medium body. Creamy and accessible tannins surround the medium body while integrated acidity gives the wine a bit of lift. Easy to drink, this would be a good wine-by-the-glass.

88

Château Sénéjac 2013 Haut-Médoc \$16

Pleasantly supple and juicy, this is a refined 2013 with a seriously charming fragrance of cedar, dried black currants and plump cherries. This is composed of 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot.

88

Château Sergant 2013 Lalande de Pomerol \$27

This is a lively, varietal Merlot loaded with freshness and vibrancy. Though aged 50% in new and 50% in once used oak, it's impressively seamless and more about fruit and terroir than the forests of France.

88

Château St-Georges Côte Pavie 2011 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$50

This small, 5.5 ha property created in 1873 sits right beside Château Ausone. Its 2011 effort is rather reserved on the nose. The palate is more forthcoming with mulberries, loganberries and dusty earth. Medium-plus in body with broad, grainy tannins and lightly tart acidity, there is great balance in this bottling. Unfortunately, it seems a touch oxidized, a character it shares with its 2012 vintage.

88

Château St-Georges Côte Pavie 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru Classé \$50

Limpid and bright red in hue, this wine displays with gusto its nicely concentrated flavors. There are blueberries, cranberry sauce and açai encased by cinnamon, cloves and caramel. Sadly, the succulent fruit shows a touch of oxidation. Its moderate complexity suggests mid-term drinking. Like its 2011 sibling, this is 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc aged 50-50 in new and older barriques.

88

Château St-Robert Poncet-Deville 2011 Graves Rouge \$25

This wine has a deep core with black tinges. Its blackcurrants, mulberries and strawberries are marked by spice, leather and tobacco. Its tannins and acidity feel like they have melted into the core of the wine. Perfect for those that like a soft wine that works either at the table or on its own. This is 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon.

88

Château Tayac-Plaisance 2012 Margaux \$30

This smoky, brooding nose delivers layers of black fruit flavors. The generous and intense fruit ripeness gives the wine a plump mid-palate and full-ish body. The pillowy tannins and buoyant acidity merge easily and support the moderate finish with a licorice lift.

88

Château Tenein 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$13

This wine is almost opaque with its beetle shell black color. It smells of baked berries, especially blueberries and blackberries, sprinkled with baking spices. This is an easy-drinker with its extraordinarily ripe flavors backed by moderate acidity and refined but structuring tannins.

88

Château Teynac 2011 St-Julien \$38

This small, 12.5-hectares property manually harvests their grapes. This wine's delicately smoky nose with woody undertones stems from its aging in one-third new oak. Black currants and blackberries fill in the firmly structured palate that shows best with food. Overall, this is nicely integrated and very Médocain, style-wise, with 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot and a sprinkling of other varieties.

88

159 Château Teynac 2012 St-Julien \$30

There's a lot going on with this wine! Black plums, fireplace smoke and damp gravel start the aromas that peel off the nose. Housed within an appealingly rustic structure of grinding tannins and fresh acidity, save this for a hearty meal. Though it feels a bit clunky on the palate, this mineral, primary wine is fun to sip.

88

Château Tessendey 2012 Fronsac \$17

Produced in thermo-regulated concrete tanks then aged in 20% new and 30% older barriques, this wine has very good balance. Its fruit flavors are big and bold with oodles of perky red notes: red cranberry compote, raspberry preserves and lingonberry syrup. Enormously pure, its mineral tones shine through, especially on the moderate finish. It's very easy to drink a second - or even third - glass of this refreshing red.

88

Château Tour Bicheau 2014 Graves Rouge \$22

This wine has a mid-depth, garnet color with onyx lacing. Its perfume begins on an earthy note then unleashes an impressive blast of ripe boysenberries. The palate follows with blueberries and baking spices. Satiny tannins and medium acidity join with a fruit-packed core to create mid-palate plumpness. There's enough layered fruit and minerality to allow this to evolve nicely in the next few years. This fairly flashy blend of three-quarters Merlot and one-quarter Cabernet Sauvignon sees stainless steel and oak.

88

Château Tour de Grenet 2012 Lussac-St. Émilion \$22

Vincent Bruno's style can be seen in almost all of his wines, including this one: the polished structure embraces succulent mid-palate fruit dolloped with generously toasty spice. The firm, sculpted tannins take charge while the relaxed acidity sits in reserve. This wine has piles of fruit flavors, especially blueberries, mulberries and kirsch.

88

Château Turcaud 2012 Bordeaux Rouge Cuvée Majeure \$18

This wine is seriously structured. Its dry, sand papery tannins are lightly emphasized by persistent acidity. It smells of iodine and smoked sausage as well as Marasca cherries and Damson plums. Lightly disjointed now, it should settle down with time. There's very good concentration to allow for beneficial bottle aging.

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.

88

Château Vieux Planty 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Prélude \$27

This wine has a bit of spritz that, while a odd, is nonetheless fun. Blackberry and umami spice dynamics blow-out the palate with energy and vigor. There's a sassy mineral component on the finish that adds dimension and interest. This is 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon that saw 18 months of barrel aging.

88

Château Vignot 2009 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$55

Aromatic and graceful, this is an easy-drinking St-Émilion, especially considering the overarching power of the vintage. It's very ripe and rich in black plum skins and black currants. Deep into the nose, there's a hint of delectable funk and refined vanilla bean. The medium-plus finish brings on layers of peaty earthiness. Ample in body with moderate alcohol and corralled tannins, this blend of 53% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon is showing well now.

88

Château Villars 2012 Fronsac \$20

This wine seems to taste of tart black cherries soaked in minerals. On the palate, there is a charcoal presence, both in flavor and in an unusual - but fascinating - scratchy texture. This wine shows terrific freshness that extends the flavors into a moderate finish. This is 76% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 40% new and 60% older barriques.

88

Clémentin de Pape Clément 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$40

The second wine of Château Pape Clément, this is made of slightly more Merlot than Cabernet Sauvignon along with a combination of 5% total Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. As indiscreetly ambitious as its bigger sibling, this wine has more overt oak than fresh fruit, but that characteristic is likely to attract many a follower.

88

Clos du Canton des Ormeaux 2011 Pomerol \$46

This is a relative newcomer in Pomerol, established in 2005. This wine is made of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc grown on clay-limestone soils covered in gravel. It is aged 50-50 in new and older barriques. Pomegranate seeds explode on the palate. It's a muscular hulk with broad tannins, average acidity and overt baking spice and chocolate notes. A bit simple overall, it's showing well now and would be a good by-the-glass selection.

88

Clos Floridène 2012 Graves Rouge \$20

Grown on soils rich in iron oxide, this blend of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc has a broodingly deep color with a hint of cloudiness. Its nose is enormous and forward with oodles of forest berries and gobs of spice. The palate brings roasted fruits: cherries, plums and boysenberries. The balanced and smooth finish lingers with dried figs.

88

Divinus de Château Bonnet 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$25

A blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine has an über-dark color with a black core. Aged 18 months in new French oak, the nose is generous in its smoky, charred aromas. The palate offers cassis, blackberries, vanilla beans and cola. It is big and boisterous with a bewitching and exotic ripeness. This character accompanied by medium acidity and suavely structured, fine tannins gives this moderately concentrated wine solid accessibility. This top-of-the-line cuvée isn't made every vintage.

88

Enclos de Viaud 2010 Lalande-de-Pomerol 13.5% \$35

This bottling balances between a youthful fruit character and attractive advancement. Its palate dances with barbecue spices, old leather, chipped bark and mashed mulberries. It's drinking very well now and should not only hang on but also continue to develop well for the next 2-3 years.

88

Frans & Liz Roskam 2014 Bordeaux Rouge Roskam Red \$14

A blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is just plain fun. It's not as profound as the La Lauzette or Haut-Plantey wines also made by the Roskams, but its velvety

texture and sensual amount of concentrated flavors of loganberries and cassis will probably please as many or more drinkers looking for a more casual sip.

88

Le Jardin de Fleur La Mothe 2012 Médoc \$NA

Smoky, cedar-y, spicy and seductive on the nose, this layered wine's aromatic profile will lure in fans easily. (Despite the bouquet, the wine sees no oak whatsoever.) Its voluptuous palate stuffed with mulberries and blueberries will seal the deal. With an easy-going structure, it won't make old bones, but it's highly drinkable now and should remain enjoyable several more years.

88

Les Cadrans de Lassègue 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$30

Château Lassègue began making this second label from the Côte de St-Émilion in 2008. The 2012 shows boastful black plums and blackberries largely thanks to its 90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Plush and velvety on the palate with smooth tannins and bold ripeness, it tastes rather ambitiously oaked, even if only 20% was new. The moderate finish shows there's still some time for the elements to integrate.

88

Les Demoiselles de Falfas 2014 Côtes de Bourg 13.5% \$19

This wine's obsidian color is loaded with magenta reflections. It tastes of sweet and tart cherries as well as exotic spices. Three-quarters Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon, this has a plump mid-palate and caressing tannins. Its fruit is pure and youthful with very good intensity. It drinks well young, but its moderate finish suggests it should hold well for several years.

88

Maison Sichel 2011 Margaux \$26

This wine fulfills the role Alan Sichel said it should fill, "It's a Margaux you can rely on." This wine is more than that, too, given its incredibly affordable price. It is a well-defined, juicy, forest-fruited, lightly peaty wine that is moreish. It shows tell-tale signs of classic Bordeaux in its affable evergreen notes along with a modern sense of refreshing sippability.

88

Maison Sichel 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$11

A tasty blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine spoils its sippers with rich forest fruit intertwined with lightly toasted oat character. The moderate finish cues up delightful cigar box tones that keeps one going back to the glass.

88

Mouton Cadet 2013 Bordeaux Edition Vintage \$14

This wine smells of mulberries, cherries and smoked meats. Its 85% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 7% Cabernet Franc hail from the Côtes de Bourg and Côtes de Blaye. Smooth tannins frame the succulent core and pull the flavors into a medium finish.

88

Mouton Cadet 2013 Graves Rouge Réserve \$18

Made of 56% Merlot and 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, this smells of forest berries and peat. Firm and pleasantly grainy tannins keep in line the concentrated, juicy palate filled with blackberries. It could probably use a bit more time in the bottle and should drink nicely for its first four to five years.

88

Sirius 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$11

This is an equal partnership of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in this vintage. The aim for this Maison Sichel wine is that it taste consistent from year to year while making sure that an informed wine drinker would enjoy it, too. As such, it would be an excellent glass pour for large restaurant groups. This 2012 shows handsome touches of maturity, including leather and tobacco leaf. The buoyant acidity and roundish tannins add a lightly tugging texture to this overall elegant wine.

88

Valentine par Valentine 2013 Bordeaux Blanc Réserve \$19

This is half and half Sauvignons Blanc and Gris. It's vinified entirely in barrique and ages in those barrels for at least six months. This vintage tastes of toasted white bread, golden raisins, brioche, butterscotch and roasted Mirabelles. Though medium in body, it is only moderate in concentration, despite its exotic and broad aromatic profile.

87

Baron de Brane 2011 Margaux \$30

This is a decidedly feminine wine with finely cultivated tannins and highly integrated acidity. Its nose is reserved, showing little more than stoniness, red currants and strawberries. Only 12% of the wine is aged in barrique, 40% of which is new, which keeps the focus on the fruit rather than the forest. This second label of Brane-Cantenac is an equal split of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

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 Aney 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

Lovely black plum skin and crunchy blackberry fruit show on the nose. Not shy about its tannins and acidity, this wine is a bit gangly. While time will help resolve the structure, it won't bring on any more ripeness from this rather lean year. It's definitely made in the firm style of "grandpa's claret", but give it another year and its charm will surely be

87

Château Beaumont 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

Classically Bordeaux with its tobacco leaf and cedar top notes, this wine's nicely concentrated flavors segue into red currants, raspberries and blueberries. Clean and approachable with curvy tannins and integrated acidity, this blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot drinks well now, by the glass or with a peppercorn steak.

87

Château Bel-Air 2013 Côtes de Bordeaux Grand Vin \$30

Mid-depth crimson in color, this bottling smells of Marasca cherries and lilacs. Moderate in body, it has a focused and well-integrated - if slightly lean - mid-palate with faintly rustic tannins and invigorating acidity. It tastes of cherry preserves! This is a gulpable lunch wine made of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in both tanks and barriques. Before the Coiffe family purchased the property, it was run St-Julien's Borie family, Jean-Eugène Borie being Roland Coiffe's grandfather.

87

Château Belgrave 2011 Haut-Médoc \$49

Showing tobacco leaves and briar patch on the nose, this wine moves into red cherries and succulent field strawberries on the palate. Pliant and well-proportioned in body and alcohol, the finessed tannins are not at all drying. That means this drinks very well now. Moreover, if you like color, this wine's got it.

87

Château Bellegrave 2012 Pomerol \$55

This lively, supple and compelling combination of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc has solid acidic focus and no overt oak influence thanks to its judicious barrique program of one-third each of new, once-used and twice-used barrels. The palate is a dynamic jumble of popping-ripe blueberries and peat.

87

Château Bellevue 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Vieilles Vignes \$24

A full-bodied blend of 65% Merlot and 35% Cabernet Franc, this 35-year-old vine fruit sees 12 months of repose in French and American oak. It's boldly fruity with mulberries, smashed blueberries and sloe jam. The lightly funky finish shows a hint of Brett and some unexpected notes of strawberry hull. There is decent concentration and average balance overall, and it's a nice sip for now.

87

Château Bellevue Peycharneau 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$18

This producer suggests decanting this wine for an hour or two before serving. If there's not time, there's no worry. This is a gulpable wine that gives a drinkable glass straight from the bottle. It's ripe with mulberries and Morello cherries, has drizzle-soft tannins and boasts buoyant acidity.

87

Château Bel Orme Tronquoy de Lalande 2012 Haut Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$23

Dazzling with its pure fruit flavors nuanced by earthy, smoky tones, this mid-weight wine has focused, bustling acidity to frame its palate. A nip of tannins shows up on the medium finish.

87

Château Bertenon 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$34

This fragrant wine shows lightly developed notes of cardamom and cigar smoke along with youthful red fruits like cranberry and red currant. The wine ages a lengthy 18 months in new French oak, and there is a corresponding bitterness on the palate that isn't entirely unpleasant. Still, the wine is a bit overwhelmed by effusive oak tones, despite the lovely fruit concentration that leads to a medium finish.

87

Château Bonnet 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$12

A 50-50 mix of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine has a boisterously ripe palate packed with black fruits: black currants, blackberries and black cherries. Though only medium in body, there's a pleasant fruit sumptuousness backed by sweet tannins and easy acidity that will have broad appeal.

87

Château Bouscalt 2012 Graves Cru Classé Rouge \$32

Smoky and peaty with lit charcoal notes on the nose, this wine has enormous body with lots of perfectly ripe black fruits. Made of almost equal portions of Merlot (48%) and Cabernet Sauvignon (47%) with 5% Malbec, the layered but cuddly tannins give this wine solid drinkability now. Vinified in stainless steel and concrete, it is barrique-aged, 40% of which is new.

87

Château Cassagne Haut-Canon La Truffière 2011 Canon-Fronsac \$21

This château's name is certainly a mouthful. So is its wine, thickly layered with blackberries and mulberries. However, its nose is rather reserved, save its copious mineral tones, especially crushed flint. The firmly but kindly structured palate has bustling acidity and streamlined tannin. It's clearly classic and shows well now but is ready for drinking up. This is 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon vinified in thermo-regulated concrete then aged in 20% new and 80% older barriques.

87

Château Charmail 2014 Haut-Médoc (Sample) \$30

Crepuscular in color, this moderately viscous wine layers on bold flavors. Blackberries, black currants and blueberries taste as though they are slathered with baking spice. There's a pleasant kick of crisp acidity on the finish.

87

Château Corconnac 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois (Sample) \$20

Seemingly vibrating with black fruits on the nose, the wine turns surprisingly reserved on the structurally rigorous yet integrated palate. Spice, vanilla and black plum resurface on the finish.

87

Château Côte Montpezat 2011 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Compostelle \$25

Located 40 km/25 miles due east of Bordeaux, this Castillon property is planted on the same clay and limestone soil (70% on slopes and 30% on the plateau) that gained St-Émilion its global recognition. Post its vinification in stainless steel tanks, 30% of this wine is aged in new French oak then bottled without fining and filtration. The result is a harmonious wine stuffed with black plum flesh and popping-ripe black cherries that sees a perky pomegranate relief on the moderate finish. The considerable concentration of vibrant fruit shows the TLC put into this wine. The caressing mouthfeel is balanced by sleek tannins, making the bottling very drinkable.

87

Château Crabitey 2012 Graves Rouge \$24

This wine has an enormously dark color with a midnight black core. It is surprisingly evolved for a 2012, showing muddled mulberries and a slightly stewed fruit character. Aged in barrels, one-third new, the wine's vanilla and cocoa notes stand out from its fruit. Its super soft tannins and mild acidity make this approachable, as long as one doesn't mind the overt oak. This is composed of 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Sauvignon.

87

Château d'Agassac 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Dark at the core, this wine offers sultry aromas, including spicy oak notes and peat brick fire. Red cherry, black plum and elderberry jams blend in the bouquet. After a fast explosion of initial flavor, the palate drops off quickly in flavor diversity and finish, but there's solid structure supporting it all.

87

Château de Cruzeau 2012 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$25

A bit light in body, perhaps thanks to its young vines under 18 years of age, this 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc blend has vivacious, ripe strawberries and red plums on the silky palate.

87

Château de La Dauphine 2013 Fronsac \$30

Technical Director Bernard Lamaud called 2013 the worst vintage he has ever lived, perhaps in part because La Dauphine was converting to organic viticulture. (The wines will be certified organic from the 2015 vintage forward.) And, this wine does reflect its tough growing season in its light dilution and modest finish. However, it's perfectly well-behaved otherwise with spritely acidity and lightly sandy tannins balancing the lovely cranberry compote and fresh fig flavors complemented by Christmas spices.

87

Château de la Grave 2012 Côtes de Bourg Caractère \$20

For over 15 years, Philippe & Valérie Bassereau have been overseeing this family property completed by a stunning Louis XIII-style château. This 2012 has raven black color. Its aromas offer roasted mulberries and loganberries. The palate is attractively vibrant with youthful fruit but so ripe that it feels lax in structure, despite the 20% Cabernet Sauvignon accompanying the Merlot. Still, the wine is holding on well and the palate brings along caramelized hazelnuts and chocolate-dipped figs.

87

Château de la Rivière 2012 Fronsac 14% \$38

This deeply colored wine has an intense entry of black plums and black currants that seethe with brooding intrigue. Composed of 85% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Malbec, this is a wine to suit a broad array of palates looking for a ready-to-consume wine. This wine shows a lovely integration of its mocha and ganache notes from the 40% new barriques. The chewy structure should keep this on its feet for a while.

87

Château de l'Aubrade 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$10

This blend of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon is super woody on the nose with undertones of lit coals. The palate is redolent of cassis, blueberry preserves and cherry pie filling. Lilac and lavender perfume the moderately layered finish. Spicy and drinkable, this has silky soft tannins.

87

Château de Laussac 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$17

This is an extravagantly ripe wine with thick layers of black currants and crushed, baked blackberries. The gently handled Merlot (75%) and Cabernet Franc (25%) grapes turn into a soft and smoochy wine that, while easy-drinking, shows its alcohol a bit. There is decent length on the palate, and many a sipper will appreciate this wine's overt and lush style.

87

Château de Lisennes 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Tradition \$13

This is a spicy red made of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot. Moderate in color with the light maroon highlights of advancement, it shows attractive notes of old spice box. The

tannins are turning slightly leathery though there's a solid juiciness trying hard to cover the wine's firm core. The finish is pleasantly long.

87

Château de Malleret 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$15

This Haut-Médoc sports a bright and fresh color with mulberry reflections. Underlying the lightly spicy and earthy nose is a pudgy belly of summer fruits. The moderate length feels pleasantly smooth. This is a great by-the-glass candidate.

87

Château de Parenchère 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Raphaël \$23

Meaty and gamey with notes of blackberries and black plums, this blend of 70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Cabernet Franc is fun. Only moderately concentrated, it won't last long. Still, it has fresh fruit flavors and an accessible palate composed of subtle tannins and bright acidity.

87

Château de Ribebon 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Réserve \$18

From Bordeaux's Right Bank in the village of Pessac-sur-Dordogne hails this wine made from 80-year-old vines planted in the classic clay limestone soils of the region. With just 10% each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, this Cabernet Franc-led wine is an atypical blend. It's nonetheless very tasty as well as very classically Bordelais in aromas. The nose and palate are restrained in fruit but nicely robust overall. The lightly drying tannins mesh with the mellow acidity to keep the dried red fruit flavors bustling. This finishes - though quickly - with a solid and enticing minerality. This wine delivers strongly for its price point.

87

Château des Arras 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Traditionnelle \$12

This wine has a sexy nose of underbrush, pine needles, old leather, mulberries and mulled strawberries. It is a blend of 60% Merlot and 20% each of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc with no new oak influence. The nicely vinous core is framed by papery, crunchy tannins and integrated acidity. Bright and cheerful to drink, there is a clear Bordelais character.

87

Château de Sours 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$17

Made of 70% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot and 5% each of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, this dark purple and violet wine has some rust-colored lacing. This smells of fireplace timbers, mulberries, tinned black cherries, anise and cherry cough syrup. The mouth-coating viscosity and finely sculpted tannins with inobtrusive acidity make this a good wine for those who dislike firm reds. Aged in 30% new and 70% two- and three-year-old barrels for 13 months, this is an ambitious wine that hits its mark.

87

Château des Tourtes 2014 Bordeaux Rouge Le Duo \$13

Nicely fruity and smooth on the palate, this wine has notes of briar and underbrush. Its mouthwateringly juicy fruit core is medium in body with a svelte structure. There are gentle tannins and non-intrusive, medium acidity with good freshness and purity. This unoaked composition of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon provides a moderate finish.

87

Château de Villambis 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Minerally top notes give way to significant fruit ripeness accompanied by toast and dark chocolate tones. There is terrific structure composed of caressing tannins and refreshing acidity that pull the moderately diverse palate flavors into a medium finish. This should be a show stopper!

87

Château Devise d'Ardilley 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$27

Starting with a very minerally nose smelling like spring rain on cold pavement, this turns into a rather lush wine on the palate. Flavors of fresh black currants slide onto the palate and are joined by black currant leaf, tobacco, chocolate, vanilla and toast. The palate's notable extraction links with mild acidity to create a cuddly mouthfeel.

87

Chateau Doms 2012 Graves Rouge \$20

This wine has a gorgeous magenta reflection throughout the core. Amélie Durant makes all of her reds in stainless steel then ages them in cement to emphasize their fruit. This one has almost aggressively fresh red currants, black currant leaf and a touch of vanilla bean. This is 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon.

87

Château Donjon de Bruignac 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Bruignac Premium \$20

This property lies south-east of St-Émilion and overlooks the Gamage River. Today's château overlooks the ruins of a first century Gallo-Roman villa. This pure Merlot shows an open and lovely nose replete with mulberries and roses. The soft palate brings on pillowy tannins and invigorating acidity along with tones of earthiness, dried autumn leaves and sweet Marasca cherries. The finish is solid and the harmony irreproachable.

87

Château de Seuil 2012 Graves Rouge \$23

This is old school Bordeaux. There is a profusion of opposing, red and black, sweet and sour flavors with plenty of tugging bitterness on the finish. Licorice and dried herbs envelop this blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc.

87

Château du Grand Bos 2012 Graves Rouge \$40

This wine is smacked with ripeness. All the fruit tastes like it's been blended up and baked in a cobbler, from ripe mulberries to black cherries to black currants. The moderate finish layers on notes of damp forest floor and funk. This is dense, expressive and sultry.

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.

87

Château du Taillan 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Classically styled, this firm red has a moderately deep color with flavors of blackberry cobbler. Nicely concentrated, savory flavors of licorice, asphalt and spice add spark to the palate. The finish is quick, but this is a pleasant red.

87

Château Enclos Haut-Mazeyres 2013 Pomerol \$42

This dark wine has a sultry, smoky nose that is lifted by tangy red currants and baked cherries on the palate. The sweet mocha influence is a bit oppressive, but many won't mind that at all. The bracing acidity gives this pleasant lift.

87

Château Fleur de Plaisance 2014 Côtes de Bourg Vieilles Vignes \$20

This accessible wine composed of 83% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc and 1% Malbec is lightly viscous. It's big and black in fruit character and laden with sweet spices. The modest finish offers cranberry compote perkiness, leaving the palate refreshed.

87

Château Fontenil 2012 Fronsac \$25

This wine has a vigorously aromatic nose and an expansive palate. The moderately concentrated blackberry and loganberry fruits flavors are complemented by baking spices. It's not particularly complex, but the medium body, gossamer tannins and moderate acidity are inviting. This is aged in 60% new and 40% older barriques.

87

Château Gloria 2012 St-Julien \$40

The forward, fresh fruit nose boasts brooding black fruit character laden with oak spice. Almost pudgy with fruit at its core, the lightly rustic tannins work to corral the palate. The perfumed finish shows good length.

87

Château Haut Barrail 2014 Médoc (Sample) \$26

This is a very approachable wine, full of blackberry and boysenberry fruit highlighted by soaring cedar tones. Roaringly fresh, the moderately concentrated flavors in the medium body finish rather quickly but with a pleasant tinge of mocha.

87

Château Haut Cloquet 2012 Pomerol \$27

Composed of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc, this wine starts with a leafy, tobacco-y and funky nose. The modestly complex palate splits nicely between savory, earthy notes and juicy, blueberry flavors. The seamlessly integrated structure of discreet tannins and medium acidity make this an easy-drinking wine.

87

Château Haut Dina 2014 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$16

A blend of 70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is an enormously ripe, round and juicy expression of Castillon that whose perky - almost amaro-like - acidity gives it invigorating balance. The firm tannins seems to cut off the otherwise seductive fruit core. This wine sees no new oak, whatsoever.

87

Château Haut-Mouleyre 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$15

Sumptuous in black fruits and underbrush, this wine has a clean and focused nose. Its deep color has jet black inflections at the core. The palate feels invigorating yet streamlined with supporting acidity and velvety tannins. Licorice and sweet spice surface on the moderate finish. This is 74% Merlot and 26% Cabernet Sauvignon crafted in stainless steel.

87

Château Haut-Vigneau 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$23

Concocted from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot that sees 15 to 18 months of oak, this wine is a rather simple and easy-drinking wine with a light finish. Not for the long haul, it will do a fine job at a casual table today thanks to its pretty, red fruits and absence of obvious new oak.

87

Château Jean Faux 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$27

Made of organically certified 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, this very pleasant 2013 sees 50% new oak and 50% once-used oak for about a year. It is vibrantly pure with flavors of

blackberries and blackberry coulis. The tannins are slightly briary, but there's a nicely medium finish. Stéphane Derenoncourt is a consultant.

87

Château Labat 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Heady in aromas, this vivacious red swaggers with its perfectly ripe blackberries, black plums and black cherries. The primly balanced palate moves into licorice, cola and sweet spices before tobacco and leather hints slide into the moderate finish. Showing some flattering evolution, the tender tannins and balanced acidity should allow this to evolve nicely for several years.

87

Château La Brande 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Réservee \$16

This Todeschini family wine is followed by the Rolland family of oenologists. Its fruit – a blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon – is laden with spices, cracked black pepper, forest floor and iron. Playing second fiddle to these non-fruit notes is a compact mass of black plums. Though dense and brooding in flavor, this wine has nicely lifting, bustling acidity.

87

Château Lacombe Noillac 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$17

This property sits far north on Médoc peninsula, 40 minutes from Pauillac and just over 1.5 hours from Bordeaux itself. It's one of those reminders of just how spread out the collective Bordeaux vineyards are. The first sniff of the 2012 is attractive, clean and well-defined with plentiful dark red fruits, licorice and exotic spices. The polished, supple palate is laden with loganberries and black currants. The impressively long finish adds a touch of truffle. Kudos to the Lacombe Noillac team, particularly given the gentle price.

87

Château Lagrave Paran 2009 Bordeaux Supérieur Cuvée Geraldine 14.3% \$25

This deeply colored wine has a beautifully smoky nose that dances between fresh and evolved. There's a noticeably elevated level of alcohol as the fresh and boisterous young fruit subsides, but it's not detracting. The wine's full body is attractive, round in mild acidity and easy on the gums with its integrated tannins. The finish lingers and offers classical, Bordelais flavors, especially of tar, savory spice and lit tobacco. This is 40% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Cabernet Franc.

Drink: 2016-17

87

Château La Mothe du Barry 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

Made entirely of Merlot, this wine smells of balsamic-drizzled cherries. The palate introduces blueberry compote. Nicely structured with a voluptuous mouthfeel feel jazzed up by perky acidity, this drinks very nicely, indeed.

87

Château Lamothe de Haux 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$14

Vanilla and cherries dominate this wine's nose. Composed of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc, this wine has a plump mid-palate, seamless tannins and feisty acidity. This is great for a picnic, casual lunch or a by-the-glass offering in a wine bar.

87

Château Lanessan 2002 Haut-Médoc \$26

This wine is showing lovely development with smells of cedar trunk, dried cranberries and damp, moss-covered logs. The palate is on the lighter side of mid-weight with elegant, seamless tannins and well-measured acidity. It's holding on impressively well for a wine with only a moderate finish.

87

Château Lanessan 2012 Haut-Médoc \$23

This wine's dark chocolate and black cherry nose reveals underlying evergreen scents. Incredibly fresh, this has a lovely fluidity to the palate feel thanks to the soft tannins and supporting acidity. This would work nicely as a business class airline wine or in a high-end bistro.

87

Château La Tour de By 2011 Médoc \$16

This forthright wine has a serious Médoc pedigree. Texturally it is pleasantly round, ample and dense. The black currant flavors are marked by woodiness and freshly-cut planks, so those appreciating grittier styles (especially at reasonable prices) will fall for this.

87

Château Laubes 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$17

This wine's inky black core and brash vanilla nose make it a rabble-rouser. Still, this thoroughly ripe blend of 74% Merlot and 26% Cabernet Sauvignon supports its boisterousness well. Its creamy palate and robust body are nicely supported by well-balanced acidity and caressing tannins. An exotic mash-up of licorice, baking spice, caramel and pancake syrup slide into the finish.

87

Château Laujac 2011 Médoc \$22

This wine has an enticingly rustic nose jumping with red berries and charcoal bricks. It's cuddly on the well-integrated mid-palate with solid density and more velvety tannins than you'd expect from a more modest Médoc bottling. The medium-bodied, über-spicy finish is, to me, one of the wine's most compelling aspects. Drink early.

87

Château Laujac 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

This is a classic Médoc, showing a bouquet of damp pine needles and underbrush accompanied by a robust showing of black currants. The palate has jelled together nicely: the tannins are seductively creamy and the acidity is supporting but discreet. Though generous in body, there is no heaviness here. The beef jerky flavors creeping in on the moderate finish add a nice savory character.

87

Château Le Bourdieu 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

This wine is true to its Bordelais origins. The nose starts with cedar plank and woody spice. The palate then transitions the experience into a decadently ripe mosh pit of cherries and currants accented by notes of vanilla bean and marshmallow. It's an easy one to sip.

87

Château Lécuyer 2012 Pomerol \$49

This wine has a smoky nose smelling of fireplace embers. The palate follows with oodles of black currants and cassis. The mild tannins and sweet viscosity make it feel thick and syrupy on the palate. This 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet France will have its followers, but I couldn't drink a glass.

87

Château l'Enclos 2011 Pomerol \$60

A gutsy profusion of black cherries, boysenberries and licorice jump from the nose of this wine. The palate punches with powerful fruit, but it is easy-going on the structure. A bit of a one-trick pony in its boisterous fruit, its sass is nonetheless compelling. This is 85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 3% Malbec aged in 40% new and 60% older barriques.

87

Château les Grands Chênes 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

This wine smells like damp earth! It smells of forest floor and smoky peat fires. The palate generously ladles out blueberries and blackberries doused with baking spices. Round yet well-proportioned, this moderately dense wine is tempered by lifting acidity.

87

Château les Ormes Sorbet 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

The wine shows a provocative, terroir-driven nose packed with tobacco, cardamom and allspice. The lightly drying tannins and firm acidity give this wine good bite. Black currants dominate the flavors, right through the moderate finish.

87

Château Les Rambauds 2014 Malbec \$10

Now here is an original drink from Bordeaux: a pure Malbec! This wine exudes mulberries on its sumptuous, fruit-driven nose while the back palate shows a hint of Malbec's characteristic

earthiness. The rest of the wine is easy-going thanks to harmoniously integrated acidity supporting the round and textured, medium body. This was launched with Maison Sichel at VinExpo 2015.

87

Château Lestage Simon 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$35

As dark as prune juice, this wine's palate actually tastes a bit pruney. There are also flavors of fig and baking spice. In contrast, there is a vibrant acidic sass to support the supple palate with satin-like tannins. The sweet-savory contrast lasts through the moderate finish.

87

Château Liversan 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Deeply colored with a bright and clean nose, this wine smells of blackberries and tomato leaf. It's got some punchy spice and menthol, too! The palate proffers blueberries, mulberries and baked strawberries with a hint of smokiness through the moderately firm and mid-length palate. The custardy body is encircled by well-behaved tannins and invigorating acidity. It's highly drinkable, but a touch rustic overall. Enjoy at the table.

87

Château Luchey-Halde 2009 Pessac-Léognan \$79

This wine has a fresh nose with a generous mix of red currants and bramble. The palate has a pleasant plumpness typical of 2009, but it follows with a fresh. There are notes of tobacco leaf, sautéed cherries, brown sugar and charred wood. The tannins are approachable and easy; they leave the acidity to do the structural support. Moderately layered in complexity, this should evolve to some additional benefit over the next few years. This is 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, 12% Petit Verdot from a 19-hectare vineyard surrounded by three ridges.

87

Château Lusseau 2013 Graves Rouge \$30

This wine has good weight and would be the perfect companion to a hearty winter stew. Accessible now, it has a delightful mix of minerals, crunchy red fruits and blueberries. The grippy and lightly stringy tannins pair with fresh acidity to give this medium-plus body wine very good balance. This is 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec aged 12 months in barrels of one to three wines.

87

Château Magence 2012 Graves Rouge \$NA

This wine leads with an oak-driven nose of espresso and chocolate. The palate shows ambitiously ripe black fruits that offer a lovely vinosity. Alas, the tannins are ropy and tough, making the wine a bit disjointed. Still, this would work nicely enough with a hearty stew.

87

Château Magondeau 2012 Fronsac Beau Site \$18

Hailing from a winery established in 1878, this varietal Merlot is wildly fragrant. It smells of lilacs and rose buds as well as ripe strawberries and sweet cherries. The back palate adds wet forest floor leading into the moderate finish. The mouthwatering acidity and svelte tannins give the medium-plus body lift and drinkability. Though aged 33% in new barriques, the oak influence is very discreet.

87

Château Maucaillou 2011 Moulis \$30

Cedar box and spice pack into this wine's tantalizing, bold nose. The 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot create a raucous palate of flavors that follow into a medium finish of compact, youthful fruits layered with exotic spices. The vines planted in predominantly Guntz gravel soils with some clay-limestone soils average over 30 years old.

87

Château Maucamps 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

Though deeply colored at the core, there are rusty tinges hovering at this wine's rim. It smells alluringly of North African spices, tobacco and damp cigar. The moderately complex palate weaves in mulberries and blueberries. Bustling with acidic refreshment, this is a gulpable bottling.

87

Château Mille Roses 2012 Margaux \$25

Sure to be a "box office hit", this Margaux also offers tremendous value. Made of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc from vines averaging 25-30 years old, its chewy medium body of perfectly ripe fruit is balanced by singing acidity. There's a miniscule vein of toastiness running through the black currants and blackberries tinged with licorice and cola.

87

Château Nardou 2012 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux \$18

This is a blend of 80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc from a 15-hectare vineyard just east of St-Émilion. It smells of mulberries, roses and dried beef. The supple, creamy mid-palate is nicely dense with notes of black plum skin and roasted cherries. Though the middling acidity gives the wine accessibility, the firm tannins help pull the flavors into a medium finish.

87

Château Paveil de Luze 2011 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$35

Reticent on the nose, this wine introduces a wide array of flavors on the palate: cranberry compote, mulberries and stewed cherries mingle with underbrush and briar. The moderately intense mid-palate offers surprisingly supple tannins for a 70% Cabernet Sauvignon blended with Merlot.

87

Château Paveil de Luze 2012 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$35

Sumptuously ripe fruit gives this voluptuous wine good weight. Grounded by sculpted tannins and integrated acidity, the mouthfeel is silky and finessed. Generous spice and milk chocolate coat the lovely array of fruit flavors, namely mulberries and blueberries.

87

Château Pey La Tour 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Réserve \$17

This blend of 90% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot smells of old leather, beef jerky and savory spices. Its tannins have melted into its medium body core, which is lifted by zingy acidity. The finish is pleasantly minty.

87

Château Peyredon Lagravette 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

Singing with plump blueberry fruit, this lightly spicy wine has a supple body framed by soothing tannins and bustling acidity. The fruit freshness is enticing, but the modest finish turns a bit papery and dry.

87

Château Pigneau 2012 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$20

The Brunot family bought this château in 1978, when it was called Clos Piganeau. Vincent's 2012 vintage has a profound, non-fruit driven nose of dried earth and dusty corners. Its fruit character is initially reserved but opens up on the palate with sweet red currants and strawberry preserves dappled with savory spice. Racy acidity easily reins in this full-bodied, 14.5% abv wine.

87

Château Réaut 2012 Côtes de Bordeaux \$30

This Merlot-focused blend with Cabernet Sauvignon and a pinch of Cabernet Franc comes vines planted in deep gravel overlaid on clay and limestone soils. The result is an opaque, black-colored wine. Its intense, brooding nose smells of blackcurrants and cassis. Moderately firm with streamlined tannins and integrated acidity, there's a chunky core of ripe fruit. Graphite and slate dominate the finish. Though over three years old, the wine is still quite youthful.

87

Château Recougne 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$12

Composed of 77% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 9% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is aging, as evidenced by its rusty rim, and doing so rather well. Its broad nose of cooked mulberries scented with anise leads to a polished palate of mild, powdery tannins and refreshing acidity. This is highly drinkable, especially at this bargain price.

87

Château Robin 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$20

You'd think most would move from rainy, chilly Bordeaux to France's La Réunion off the eastern coast of Madagascar. But, passion prompts humans to do seemingly mad things, and the Caillé family did the opposite. In their tenth year of owning this property, they made a reserved wine whose nose initially smells of dusty cupboards and attics. Its firm palate reels with blackberry, iron and hung game flavors. There's a decent finish, and this wine's solid concentration suggests that it may have the legs to improve in the bottle.

87

Château Roche-Lalande 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$28

This wine reminded me of chocolate fondant: silky smooth and reminiscent of the texture of whipped butter. There is good fruit concentration underneath, but the oak-derived milk chocolate flavors are very evident now. It will make lots of palates happy, but its oaky flash is not for everyone.

87

Château Rollan de By 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

This dark, sultry-looking wine is decidedly manly with the first whiff smelling of a recently worn flannel shirt and aftershave. So, it is surprising that it turns rather tender on the palate, where a mix of black raspberries and red plums mingle. It is caressingly plush and creamy with gracefully sculpted tannins and integrated yet palate-cleansing acidity.

87

Château Roquetaillade La Grange 2012 Graves Rouge \$20

This wine surprises with a brick tinge on the rim and rather mature aromas of dried mushrooms. Nonetheless, it is showing well with flavors of Marasca cherries and baked strawberries slipping onto the palate. The mouthfeel is pleasantly custardy and dense, if a bit warm with alcohol.

87

Château Terre Blanche 2011 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Noémie \$15

Overseen by twins, this wine is concertedly, almost shockingly ripe. Composed of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is aged 12 months in barrel, yet there are no obvious new oak tones. Brooding fruit flavors of black plum skin and fresh fig, give this wine an exotic edge. Happily, the explosive ripeness of the palate doesn't overtake its structure. There's a nice mid-palate juiciness and decent acidic lift as well as a decent finish.

87

Château Timberlay 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$17

This 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc ages for about seven months in oak barrel. It is showing well and is ready to drink. The nose smells of Christmas spice, potpourri and balsamic. The palate tastes of grilled red meat and beef bouillon alongside red

cherry pie filling. The medium-minus finish has a lovely minty kick. This producer is Terra Vitis certified.

87

Château Tire Pé 2013 Bordeaux Rouge \$19

Tire Pé has been certified organic by ECOCERT since 2014 and has been farming organically since 2008. This bottling (one of four made) is an old school style with integrated - if rustic - tannins (well-suited to meaty dishes). It is impressively well-balanced by its vibrant acidity. Made entirely of Merlot, the palate tastes of cinnamon, mulled wine, pomegranate seeds and sloe jam.

87

Château Tour de Grenet 2011 Lussac-St. Émilion \$22

There is a lot of overt sweet spice, mocha and toasty brioche here thanks to the 20% new oak. The well-proportioned, slightly chunky palate with fleshy cherry flavors has fresh acidity and streamlined tannins. This would be terrific for a barbecue.

87

Château Tourteran 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Dark chocolate, soy, damp forest floor, baked mulberries and blueberries kick off the palate of this plush and lusty wine. Suave tannins and supporting acidity meld into a moderate finish. A generous dose of oak flavors throughout suggests this is best for those preferring "modern" wine styles.

87

Château Trois Moulins 2012 Haut-Médoc 2012 \$20

Starting with a pretty, lifted fragrance of roses and strawberries, the fruit changes to blackberries and black currants on the palate. Elegant yet possessing a powerful fruit core, the creamy tannins and crisp acidity nicely structure the mid-palate. It would benefit from some time in bottle and should develop nicely for several years.

87

Château Turcaud 2013 Bordeaux Rouge Cuvée Majeure \$18

This cuvée from the château's best parcels is typically 60% Merlot, but it's 80% in this vintage. The blend also – exceptionally – has 15% dollop of vintage 2014. The result is a smoky, flinty red tasting of ripe raspberries and pomegranate. Great value!

87

Domaine de Claouset 2012 Bordeaux Rouge Supérieur \$22

A combination of 90% Merlot (from their best parcel) and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine was surprisingly pale. But, color means nothing, especially when you have a wine this tasty. A vein of vanilla and caramel runs through the ripe black plums. Medium-bodied with crunchy acidity, this has excellent drinkability.

87

Dourthe 2013 Bordeaux La Grande Cuvée Rouge \$13

Composed of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Petit Verdot, this wine sees 12 months of barrel aging in new French oak. It shows loads of berries accented by sweet and savory spices. It's worth decanting this wine to allow its concentrated core of forest berries to unfold with flourish with a half-hour's time.

87

Enclos de Viaud 2011 Lalande-de-Pomerol 12.5% \$35

Strikingly more youthful and perky on the nose, this wine has an attractive leafiness that its bookend vintages do not. In that respect, it's a bit more typically Bordelais. However, there is the sibling-like richness of well-moderated extract on the palate. The 2011 also shares a kinship with the 2010 in its tobacco base notes. The palate's flavors of coriander, ripe black cherries and licorice are expansive, and the medium-bodied palate shows nice levity.

87

La Réserve de Léoville Barton 2012 St-Julien \$44

Crepuscular in appearance, this mineral wine smelling of struck flint and roasted plums offers a sumptuous palate of youthful fruit. The medium body is nicely concentrated, enough to offer decent length. More of a mid-term wine, this could use a year or two for its dusty tannins to settle down.

87

La Sacristie de la Vieille Cure 2011 Fronsac \$19

This is the second wine of Château de la Vieille Cure, and it's made of 72% Merlot, 26% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon. It's easy to see the stylistic link from the start with this wine's rustic nose. Both nose and palate have an old barn note accompanied by baked mulberries and touches of tanning hide. The acidity is high, but it compensates for the relaxed tannins. It's a decent by the glass wine, especially for those who don't shy away from a touch of funk.

87

Les Charmes de Magnol 2014 Médoc \$18

This is a member of the Barton & Guestier family. Fresh, zesty and crunchy with jubilant blueberry and boysenberry, this wine shows an attractive spice box note. There is a nice flow to the wine, thanks to its reserved tannins and tender acidity.

87

Les Vignerons de Tutiac 2013 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Lieu-Dit Coudrat \$23

Pure Merlot, this medium-plus bodied, moderately concentrated wine gushes with black plums. Of the trio of "lieu-dit" wines from Tutiac, it bears the least obvious oak imprint, despite about 18 months in new cooperage.

87

M de Monséгур 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$11

This varietal Cabernet Franc is made in stainless steel and 10% matured in oak barrels. Its deep color and well-ripened fruits will attract lovers of aromatic, sexy wine styles. Tomato leaf and cardamom aromas lead to black plum skin and blackcurrant on the palate, where there is also a hint of smoked bacon and cinnamon raisin. This pleasantly juicy fruit core leads to a medium finish. Style-wise, I would be hard-pressed to place this as a Bordeaux Rouge in a blind tasting, even with the cigar box nuances on the finish.

87

Michel Lynch 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$12

Composed of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, the richly fruity nose is packed with red currants, black cherries and ripe raspberries. The nose has a smoky, toasty note as well. The palate brings on a gamey element as well as supple, velvety, tannins. With well-integrated yet refreshing acidity, this is a good sipper with just the slightest hint of chewiness.

87

Prince de Tabourg 2012 Côtes de Bourg \$16

A 60-40 split between Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is nicely pure, enticingly savory and downright yummy. I'd easily drink two glasses of this briary, cranberry compote flavored with perky acidity and finessed tannins.

87

Vieux Château Gaubert 2012 Graves Rouge \$20

This combination of equal parts Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon is pure, light and lifted with green peppercorn top notes and flavors of cranberry juice and raspberry coulis. Its palate shows caressing tannins but vibrant acidity. Grown in alluvial soils in the commune of Portets, this wine has pleasant lightness and lift.

87

Zédé de Labegorce 2012 Margaux \$15

This starts with a reserved and somewhat smoky nose. With air, the wine develops lively and fragrant aromas of roses, raspberries and cranberry compotes. The oak is deftly integrated. Pleasantly light on the palate with lifting acidity and mild tannins, this is easy to enjoy.

86

Be Bordô 2014 Merlot Bordeaux \$10

This juicy, gluggable bottling is composed of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Medium in body at 12% abv with very light extract and sleek, this could even work with a light chill. This wine smells like a basket of fresh-picked summer berries sitting beside a light fire. Though short, the finish shows some Bordeaux-bred earthiness.

86

Château Argadens 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur \$16

This is a satisfying mix of 63% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. It is packed with Marasca cherries and mulberries. The moderately lingering finish is nuanced with intricate smoky notes.

86

Château Arnauton 2011 Fronsac \$18

Established in 1936, the Château makes this blend of 90% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 2% Malbec in concrete then ages it in older barriques. It has an exuberantly ripe nose with roasted red plums and blackberries baked in a cobbler. The tart, almost piercing acidity is fairly well-balanced by the modestly layered, medium-bodied palate. Supple tannins ease the acidic tension. The finish is rather quick, but it leaves a pleasant parting note of mocha.

86

Château Biac 2011 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux B de Biac \$35

This second wine of Château Biac is all about accessibility, from its ripe nose to its gentle tannins to its highly integrated acidity. Expertly ripened forest berries mark the moderately dense palate. Made of 81% Merlot, 16% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2011 is the fourth year the Asseily family commercialized this wine.

86

Château Briot 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$9

This Entre-Deux-Mers, family-run estate makes ready-to-drink wines. Mostly Cabernet Sauvignon with dabs of Merlot and Cabernet Franc, its fruit profile is reticent. The palate is more forward with red raspberries and black plum skin along with earthy notes. It's not bashful with its fairly firm tannins, yet it's still ready to sip thanks to its chunky core of fruit.

86

Château Cantillac 2014 Merlot \$16

This pure Merlot hailing from southeast of Bordeaux tastes of red cranberries and red cherries. Its intriguing dashes of sweet and savory spices make it approachable and give it nuance.

86

Château Cru Godard 2012 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux \$18

Forty-five year old vines growing in clay-limestone soils produce this wine's 65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Malbec. Both the nose and palate are dynamic between solidly pure red fruits, energizing acidity and crisp tannins. Its vigor makes it a terrific food wine. The medium finish suggests there's room for this nicely concentrated, organically certified wine to evolve to benefit.

86

Château de la Huste 2013 Fronsac \$20

La Huste means “the bump”, and these vines are found on some of the highest points of Fronsac’s town of Saillans. A combination of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, this is aged 40% in new oak with the rest aged in older oak. The forward nose spews baked plums and blueberries out of the glass. The custardy palate is broad and showcases medium acidity and velvety tannins. Modest on the finish, there’s no need to wait to enjoy this bottling’s youthful fruit. It’s an easy drinker and should be a box office hit. Owned by the Rullier family, this is made by the crew from its sister estate, Château Dalem.

86

Château de Lionne 2011 Graves Rouge \$20

Über-clean and youthful, this wine develops into red cherries, raspberries and strawberries on the palate. Though there is no new oak, there’s a surprising hint of milk chocolate there, too, along with crusty iron and underbrush. The tannins feel like grosgrain ribbon tannins. Though dry, it’s far from austere.

86

Château Gigault 2011 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Viva \$19

This varietal Merlot has a bold and sultry black color. Its boisterous aromas pop with skin-tight-ripe black plums and ooze with mulberries. Full-bodied with generous alcohol, the wine wears its 25% new French oak on its sleeves. Still, there’s an underlying acidic support and enough tannic backbone to keep everything in check. This is drinking well now and its modest finish suggests it’s a shorter-term wine.

86

Château Haut-Bacalan 2011 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$50

When Corinne et Charles-Henri Gonet acquired this property in 1998, it had been out of production for 70 years. The 2011 vintage falls at the beginning of its second decade of resumed production. Predominantly Merlot, this wine is decidedly restrained on the nose, save its tobacco leaf notes. The palate is firm and seems to be drying up. It’s definitely a food wine.

86

Château Haut-Maillet 2012 Pomerol \$40

This wine is composed of 79% Merlot and 21% Cabernet Franc with 30% aged in new barrels. It possesses an exotic, parched earth character along with lots of baked red cherries. It’s round and lightly spicy. The fruit is a bit dull and lacking liveliness, but the structure is properly balanced.

86

Château Haut Mayne 2012 Graves Rouge Mayne du Cros \$11

This wine has a nicely evolved nose showing fallen autumn leaves and wet tobacco. Blended from 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Cabernet Franc and 30% Merlot, it exudes juiciness and simplicity. Alas, that won't give it much longevity. Still, the palate has lots of crunchy red

cherries and currants with pleasantly velvety tannins and smooth acidity. Though aged in 30% new oak, its signature isn't left on the wine. All of this along with the easy price tag, should make for an easy-to-sell wine.

86

Château La Chapelle 2014 Bordeaux \$12

Composed of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc, this wine from Puisseguin-St-Émilion shows the plushness of Merlot and the scruffy tannins of Cabernet Franc. Its lifted aromatics are reminiscent of a rose garden. It's definitely a wine for the table given its dry, tugging palate. Pleasant and very Bordelais, its short finish suggests drinking up soon.

86

Château La Coudraie 2013 Bordeaux Rouge \$12

This blend of 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon has a highly reserved nose but its palate shows delicate inflections of black plums and tar. It's short on the finish, but at this price and with this tastiness, who cares much?

86

Château La Grangère 2012 St-Émilion \$26

This wine feels big and round on the attack, but on the palate it hollows out. Light on structural components, I wouldn't wait long on this one. Enjoy the moderately concentrated notes of cigar box, forest floor and cassis now.

88

Château Lamartine 2014 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$11

This highly ripe mix of 85% Merlot with Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc creates a hedonistic nose on this wine. There's fireplace smoke, warm earth and baked plums. There is solid structure for the generous breadth of the palate though the 13.5% alcohol stands out a bit. The moderate finish and limited complexity suggest that this should be drunk on the early side.

86

Château Lamothe de Haux 2014 Côtes de Bordeaux Première Cuvée Rouge \$20

This blend of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc is as incredibly young as it is oaky. For many, there won't be enough wine vis-à-vis the oak, but the chocolate, graham cracker and vanilla will please many others. It's modest on the finish, so there's likely little time to allow for much more integration. Enjoy now.

86

Château les Trois Croix 2012 Fronsac \$18

This property dates back to 1712 and sits at 86 meters/282 feet, which is the highest point in Fronsac. Highly aromatic and very cherry and red berry, this wine contains 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc. Smoky fireplace cinders come from 37% new and 19% second use barrique. (The remainder is 14% stainless steel and 30% older oak.) It is voluptuous and dense with pure fruits and moderate complexity.

86

Château Marsau 2012 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux \$18

This varietal Merlot is harvested at a relatively low 38 hectoliters per hectare. Its dark, raven color is impenetrable. Blackberry, licorice, sloe jam and dates coat the palate. Lenient acidity and grippy tannins work hard to keep the wine in balance. This and its seriously short finish suggest this needs drinking up fairly early, preferably with a hearty meal. This is for lovers of chunky, decadent wines.

86

Château Pardaillan 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$18

This wine's nose shows bright, forest berry fruits and the palate follows through with rambunctious bramble notes. The tannins are firm and the acidity is noticeable. Overall, the wine is slightly disjointed. Still, there's no obvious new oak and there's only moderate concentration, so this isn't a keeper. Enjoy it for what it is. This is 90% Merlot with the remainder split evenly between Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec.

86

Château Peyredoule 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$14

For the area, this is a fairly complex blend of 84% Merlot, 6% Malbec, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. Juicy and round on the palate, this is a supremely ripe, almost Napa-esque, wine that tastes of ripe blueberries and blackberries. However, it sees no oak at all, has a juicy core and boasts lively acidity and lightly grippy tannins to keep everything nicely structured. Quick on the finish, it's not for the long haul, but it's a happy sipper today.

86

Château Sainte-Marie 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Vieilles Vignes \$15

This pristine clean wine smells of pine trees and cedar box and has some simple but nice cherry fruit. A blend of 64% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Cabernet Franc, it is made for early drinking given its one-note fruit and quick finish.

86

Château Ségur de Cabanac 2011 St-Estèphe Réserve \$60

Showing some tertiary color in the core, this 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot blend is showing less zip than its 2010 "classic" counterpart. There's no doubt the flavors are robust and decidedly Bordelais in their leather, cigar wrapper and dried mulberry aromas, but its structure feels a bit taxed. It might be the bottle, or it might be a temporary phase. Either way, this is a solid red when served with hearty fare, even if its moderate acidic lift and fading freshness suggest it won't last as long as the 2010.

86

Clos du Vieux Plateau Certan 2012 Pomerol \$47

This is a chunky and almost clumsily ripe blend of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. It's a bit volatile on the nose and ponderous on the palate. This doesn't have a well-developed skeleton to make old bones, but it's perfectly pleasant now.

86

Passion de Magondeau 2012 Fronsac \$22

This is another varietal Merlot from Château Magondeau. This one is similarly exuberant on the nose and also has bold, swashbuckling red fruits. Cherries, mulberries and rhubarb pie explode from the glass. It's very spicy, too, likely attributable to the two-thirds new oak. There are savory notes of coffee grinds and dried earth that add complexity. It's very drinkable, even if it is a touch watery in palate concentration. Modest on the finish though it's supposed to be the higher level wine of the two, it's ready to drink and should drink earlier.

86

Petit Chapeau 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$11

This wine's first whiff smells of Bordeaux (forest floor and tobacco). The second smells of milk chocolate Hershey's Kisses. It's juicy and easy on the palate with a mix of blueberries and black plums. A blend of 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, it's a killer value that overdelivers for its price point.

86

Château Aney 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Firm, rather scratchy acidity harnesses this medium-bodied, deeply fruited wine. In contrast, its tannins are impressively silky and the mid-palate has a pop of caressing glycerol. The palate is full-throttle with berry fruit and savory spice.

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.

86

Château Bellevue Peycharneau 2013 Sainte Foy Bordeaux Rouge \$NA

This blend of 65% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc reminds me of an Italian amaro. It starts with sweet, North African spices and ample juiciness then turns to pleasantly bitter tannins and a gently clenching palate. Correct, fresh and clean, I can imagine enjoying this with a burger.

86

Château Bergey 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$12

Deep scarlet in color, this wine has a pleasantly fruit-driven nose with notes of blueberry preserves and roasted black plums standing out. Full-bodied and a bit warm on the moderate finish, the nicely toasty oak stands out just a bit, but this wood-driven flair will be a hit with some sippers.

86

Château Bernadotte 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

Leafy tones and green peppercorns pop with freshness on the nose. The mulberries and blueberries give the mid-palate a bit of heft. Light tannins and perky acidity give this good drinkability.

86

Château Bibian 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Fleshy red fruits dominate the nose and are followed on the palate by forest floor, cigar and toasty oak nuances. There is just enough moderate weight to make this feel pleasantly cuddly on the palate. Though short, the finish carries a lovely spiciness. This is a great glass with food.

86

Château Bois Pertuis 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$14

This wine has a firm and somewhat backward nose with hints of incense and musk. There are oodles of black currants and ripe plums along with a bloody, saline and feral quality. The backbone of tension comes from the lightly raspy acidity. This is 93% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Sauvignon that sees no oak.

86

Château Bolaire 2008 Bordeaux Supérieur 13% \$25

This wine isn't shy about its color; the pitch black core looks impenetrable. Nearing the rim, there's only the slightest bit of rust-inflected mulberry. Still, the wine looks more youthful than it tastes as cedar bark and old leather notes are prevalent. The plump mid-palate gives mulberries, richly ripe cherries and freshly-cut logs. The tannins are resolved and the acidity is a bit meek, but the whole of the wine is enticing now.

86

Château Bourdicotte 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$12

This is a bit reserved and reduced on the nose. On the palate, however, there is much to please, including lilac, licorice, blueberry and blackberry. This wine is tender and succulent at the core with moderating acidity and mouthcoating tannins. Interestingly, it is 85% Malbec and 15% Merlot. This would be a sure hit at a backyard barbecue.

86

Château Brondelle 2012 Graves Rouge \$21

This wine is an inky mass. It smells of winter's peat fires and tastes of roasted black plums. It's one-note in fruit flavor, but it is brimming with juiciness, kind in its streamlined tannins and light in acidity. This is one to kick back and enjoy to the fullest.

86

Château Chantelys 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$19

The first sniff is rustic with pungent aromas of hung game, tobacco and decomposing autumn leaves. The palate initially feels firm, but an almost fibrous fruit texture layers onto the palate, giving the tannins solid support. The smooth acidity pulls the developed flavors into a solid finish tinged with smoky notes. This is ready to drink.

86

Château Cissac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$34

Concentrated and dark at the core, the rim turns a deep cranberry color. The big and exotic nose percolates with sweet and savory spices. Unctuous blackberry cobbler fruit contrasted by perky black currant notes give this medium-plus bodied wine fantastic drinkability, despite the highly structured palate. The finish is disappointingly short.

86

Château Citran 2012 Haut-Médoc \$23

Dark in color with smoky, charred wood aromatics, this nose seems to be promising a muscular, rustic wine. Indeed, it is. The chunky, black plum fruit is overlaid with copious licorice, black currant leaf, campfire and camphor aromas. Aggressive tannins corral the broad palate.

86

Château Clos Bourbon 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$16

Smelling of ripe mulberries and juicy pomegranate seeds, this wine offers an impressively fresh palate with noticeable but suavely integrated, sweet oak spices. Its palate offers a cornucopia of fresh fruit and ample vinosity reeled in by sinewy tannins that give a gruff palate feel. Grown in clay-limestone soil with veins of iron schist, this blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon is best showcased with food.

86

Château Clos Fontaine 2012 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux \$11

Jan and Florian Thienpont oversee this small, 3.6 ha property. It initially seems as though it were made in a boisterous style, starting with a richly smoky, über-ripe nose. But the palate brings on freshness and precision. This 100% Merlot has a curious mix of cranberry juice, cassis and evergreen tones. Fleshy tannins and a quick finish suggest this is an early drinker.

86

Château Corconnac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois 13% \$30

This is 40% Merlot and 60% Cabernet Sauvignon - a lot of Cabernet Sauvignon for an Haut-Médoc! It smells of mulled berries, peat logs and pencil lead. The palate gives some barnyard funk and lifted balsamic notes. The tannins are ripe but lightly coarse while the acidity is mercifully integrated. Drinking very well now, it still has some time to unfurl its generous flavor-fueled energy despite its short finish and rather limited complexity.

86

Château d'Arveyres 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur \$17

Composed of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, this unfussy wine shows youthful berry fruits and no clear notes of new oak. Pleasantly lifting, this even drinks nicely on its own. This comes from a clay-limestone vineyard with rocky subsoils that faces south and south-east toward St-Émilion.

86

Château de Crain 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$20

This wine is composed of 60% Merlot, 20% Malbec and 10% each of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc. A portion of the blend is aged in new barriques for six months. Profoundly magenta in color, this wine has a very youthful appearance. The primary nose shows blueberry preserves, black cherries, licorice and charred wood. The juicy palate is plump and custardy in texture with oodles of baking spice, gentle tannins and integrated acidity. This carefully crafted wine has a modern, international appeal that nonetheless shows the marks of Bordeaux with its hints of cedar box and cigar wrapper.

86

Château Le Lau 2014 Graves de Vayres Perle Noire \$10

This is an exuberant, pure Merlot that tastes of cranberry and raspberry. Ripe it is, but it also offers a pleasant, minty leafiness. It is moderately round in the mid-plate with very defined, tugging tannins. The clipped finish surprises by delivering a savory, mineral note. Totally gulpable!

86

Château de Malleret 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$18

Baked mulberries, blueberries and red cherries come through on the nose and are followed by dabbles of milk chocolate and cinnamon on the palate. Exotic and plush, with caressing tannins and supporting acidity, this is destined to be a crowd pleaser.

86

Château des Places 2012 Graves Rouge \$18

This is a wine to drink up quickly as its color and aromas are maturing. It is certainly maturing well. Incredibly ripe with surprising weightiness, there is a lot of spice alongside black and red berries in this 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Sauvignon blend that shows slightly dry tannins on its finish.

86

Château du Bois de l'Église 2013 Haut-Médoc \$9

Darkly colored with sweet - even jammy - fruit, the wine's round palate is nicely framed by lightly tugging tannins. Juicy and vibrant, this wine's blueberry spice cake notes are downright fun!

86

Château du Retout 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Rich with lush black fruits and concerted toastiness, this is easy-going and can be enjoyed early on. Moreover, its short finish suggests its best enjoyed young. Despite the overt plumpness in the mid-palate, there is a solid structure to keep the wine in line.

86

Château Fayau 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$17

This wine looks vaguely cloudy at its pitch black core. On the nose, the mineral tones overshadow the reserved fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with lifting acidity and modest extract, making it an easy-to-drink wine. The flavors of this 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon mix are a bit simple, but there's a decent finish. Though suavely crafted, this is a wine for immediate drinking rather than stashing away.

86

Château Feret Lambert 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

Deep, dark and black at the core, this wine has a maroon rim. The nose shows its barrique aging, one-third new renewed each year. There's dark chocolate, balsamic-drizzled strawberries and raspberry preserves. The fruit core is dense and the palate is forgiving and supple. This is a fine introduction to Bordeaux at a very accessible price. This is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon.

86

Château Fleur La Mothe 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$19

This is quintessential bistro wine, replete with très Bordelais aromas of cedar box, spice, black currant and blackberry. It's a seductive nose that leads to a firm, slightly biting and drying palate. The moderate finish shows tinges of espresso and fireplace smoke.

86

Château Fournas Bernadotte 2011 Haut-Médoc \$15

Behind the predominant, sweet oak character, there's some nicely ripe red fruit. Mulberries, Marasca cherries and peak-of-summer ripe red plums abound. The tannins are lightly stringy and raspy, but there's enough fruit concentration to buffer the bite.

86

Château Greysac 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$18

This hits all the typical Bordeaux markers in both aromatics and structure, and it's a reliable name available for a very fair price. It smells of creosote, smoked peppercorns and milk chocolate chips strewn across popping-ripe blueberries and boysenberries. The finish turns up some evergreen tones that freshen the medium-bodied palate.

86

Château Haura 2013 Graves Rouge \$14

Denis Dubordieu has rented this property from Bernard Leppert for a decade. This bottling is made of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot. It sees 12 months of oak aging, of which one-third is new. The result is a raucous mix of mulberries, black cherries and blueberries, akin to a cobbler made with peak-of-summer fruit! There's lovely tannic structure to give the wine mild grip as well as integrated yet refreshing acidity. This mid-weight wine is a pleasure to drink now.

86

Château Haut-Bergey 2006 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$36

This wine is definitely in its geriatric years with faded fruits on the nose. Its structure is soft and supply now, but its finish is quick, showing only light mulberry notes and hints of dark earth. This is a combination of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot from vines averaging 40 years of age.

86

Château Haut Gravet 2010 St-Émilion Grand Cru \$45

This wine's deep mulberry color promises a mouthful and it definitely delivers. There's that beautiful St-Émilion earthiness on both the nose and the palate along with a packed pail of ripe forest berry fruits. The tannins are round and accommodating and the acidity is gentle, making this a highly drinkable wine. It's a great house wine for any time of year between its succulent mouthfeel and its juicily ripe black and blue fruits.

86

Château Hourbanon 2012 Médoc \$24

Red currants and roses perfume the nose and palate. The mid-weight palate layers savory spice on the fresh and pure red fruits. Highly drinkable thanks to its soft tannins and lilted acidity, this wine's modest finish suggests that this is best in the short-term.

86

Château Hourtin-Ducasse 2011 Haut-Médoc \$18

Pale in color with rust shades running through the core, this wine looks to be advancing quickly. The fruit flavors are also in the tertiary spectrum. It smells of fallen autumn leaves, cigar tobacco and spiced cranberry sauce. The palate tastes saturated in oak though only one-third new barriques are used. There's just not enough fruit concentration.

86

Château Julia 2013 Haut-Médoc \$20

With a tagline “the smallest château in Pauillac” (she also makes a Pauillac-appellated wine), an ambition to fully transition into organic farming, and a female winemaker taking over a family domaine that previously only sold to co-ops, there’s plenty of curb appeal in the Château Julia story. This wine’s vineyards are in St. Laurent-Médoc, just west of St. Julien. Juicy and smooth, there’s a mix of forest berry fruit and toasted walnuts.

86

Château Labatut 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$12

The vines for this wine face directly south, and you can almost feel that warmth in every sip. There are aromas of balsamic, candied cherries and sweet strawberries. The palate adds a different dimension with its gamey tones. It’s very drinkable thanks to its svelte tannins and very medium acidity. This is a blend of Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

86

Château Labégorce Margaux 2012 Margaux \$23

Though its appearance is jet black, this wine exudes aromas starting with licorice, charcoal and asphalt. The palate is magnanimous in juicy black fruits that coat the palate like custard. Savory spice slips in on the finish. The easy acidity is counterpoised by leathery tannins. Highly drinkable!

86

Château La Chandellière 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$19

Dark color with pure, dense black plums on the nose, the palate moves into confectioned tones with cherry cordial, blackberry compote and chocolate. The medium body is nicely focused by round tannins and integrated acidity. This is a polished Cru Bourgeois that is ready to drink.
Drink: 2017-18

86

Château Ladignac 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$18

Deep in color and exotic in ripe fruit, this fuller-bodied Cru Bourgeois tastes of lit timber, blueberry preserves and fig. There's no evident new oak, but there's decent fruit concentration. A pleasant plum skin bitterness takes over the moderate finish.

86

Château La Lauzette 2008 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$28

This is the fourth vintage of this Lustrac-Médoc produced by wife-and-husband team Liz and Frans Roskam. This wine has a broad nose of tobacco and earth with subdued fruit. The palate offers black plums, a hint of prunes, beef jerky and soft tannins. Enjoy soon. (This might not have been the best bottle as their other vintages showed much more energy and focus.)

86

Château Lamothe de Haux 2014 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Traditionnelle \$16

This trio of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc is vinified in stainless steel and concrete and never sees a lick of oak. That's curious as I tasted the wine twice and both time noted sweet spice and vanilla extract nuances. The nose and palate show wild flowers, blueberries, red cherries and hints of hard-stemmed herbs. Sassy acidity and mild tannins support the medium body. It's a great picnic red, yet it has good length on the finish, giving it an unexpectedly serious finale.

86

Château Larose-Trintaudon 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Cigar box, cedar needles and graphite exude from the nose of this wine. The palate's fruit is enthusiastic with gobs of ripe, black fruit flavors: black plum, fig, black currant jam and cassis. While rather modest on the finish with smooth texture and light refreshment, this would be a very accessible wine by-the-glass.

86

Château Larroque 2009 Bordeaux Rouge \$13

This property sits on clay and limestone soils on the Left Bank, bordering Graves. This fusion of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc is deeply colored with a midnight black core. It smells primarily of minerals and damp earth. The palate's cherry and blueberry preserves are starting leaning into mature notes, but its balanced acidity should keep this in holding pattern for a few years. The strict tannins seem to cut the finish to a medium length.

86

Château La Tour de Cholet 2011 Ste-Foy-Bordeaux Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$22

This blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc is made from organically grown grapes vinified in stainless steel then aged in a mix of newer and older oak. Hailing from just southwest of the town of Bergerac, this is a slice of country heaven. The wine is a big gob of crunchy red currants accompanied by strawberry cobbler. The lovely mid-palate density has only modest lift, but that allows for early enjoyment. Savory fruit and Christmas cake abound on the moderate finish.

86

Château Le Breuil Renaissance 2013 Médoc \$17

This wine shows considerable tannins up-front but generous and pleasantly ripe fruit sweeps in to support them. Cassis, loganberries and sweet spice-dusted phyllo come through on the palate.

86

Château le Mayne Turon 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$10

This wine composed of 46% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Cabernet Franc made in concrete and stainless steel has a smoky and toasty nose doused with cinnamon. Its medium-

bodied and slightly chunky palate shows gossamer tannins and supporting acidity. This drinks well now and has a surprisingly solid finish.

86

Château les Ancres 2011 Bordeaux Rouge \$13

This wine sports a lightly rusty rim on a dark burgundy core. It has a nicely evolved, lightly plump mid-palate with creamy tannins and fresh but discreet acidity. The medium-minus finish with moderately complex layers shows why this wine has aged so well thus far. Today, it is showing steeped tealeaves, tanned leather, boysenberries and allspice. This blend of 68% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Cabernet Franc is for those who prefer their Bordeaux on the advanced side.

86

Château les Arromans 2013 Bordeaux Rouge \$13

This blend of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc has a pronounced color, especially impressive for the challenging 2013 vintage. It smells of highly ripe mulberries and cherries. The palate is drenched in sexy, peat fire smokiness though the wine sees no oak. Medium-bodied, this wine has lots of liveliness between its chewy tannins and racy acidity. This drinks well alone, but its gamey tones suggest that for most it would be best with food.

86

Château Les Gravières de la Brandille 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur

Composed of fruit from vines of at least 40 years, this blend of 65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Cabernet Franc smells like textbook Bordeaux. Its nose is earthy and showing a hint of tobacco-led evolution. Muddled boysenberry and black cherry fruit hovers on the mid-palate. The grainy tannins are lightly drying, seeming to sop up the super short finish.

86

Château Les Hauts de Palette 2012 Côtes de Bordeaux \$20

Mid-depth cranberry red, this blend of 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc offers a little bit of everything in this casual Bordeaux rouge. The palate is juicy with lovely ripeness, soft tannins and crisp, integrated acidity. The moderately intense flavors reveal rich berry fruit dusted with mocha. This is svelte and well-executed.

86

Château Lestuille 2009 Bordeaux Supérieur \$11

Almost entirely Merlot, this wine seesaws between ripe and unripe notes. There are blackberries and cassis alongside blanched asparagus and zucchini peel. It's an awkward juxtaposition. The structure, however, is lovely with dense fruit, dry tannins and zingy acidity. The red wines have recently overtaken the whites as the majority style produced between both Lestuille and Lestuille Capmartin, and owner Estelle Roumage seems to still be finding her way with them.

86

Château Lusseau 2011 Graves Rouge \$30

Composed of 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec, this wine is surprisingly soft, round and plump. It tastes of sweet spice, mulberries and ripe red cherries. It is straightforward with modest concentration. It's a nice drink but a bit simple for the price.

86

Château Lusseau 2013 Graves Rouge Cuvee Bérengère \$18

This blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon shows flecks of cranberry, especially at the rim. Its nose is youthful and surprisingly ripe. Over-ripe notes of roasted plums and black raisins are evident, too. The creamy and accessible palate shows just hints of tannins coupled with mild acidity. The light finish delivers hints of vanilla (though there's no oak used) and evergreen.

86

Château Martinat 2012 Côtes de Bourg \$22

This bottling of 80% Merlot and 20% Malbec is planted at 6,200 vines per hectare, which is dense for the area. The glass shimmers with the color of eggplant skin. Mulberries and blueberries permeate the palate, and the good finish delivers pleasant turned earth and mulch tones. Clean and correct, there's no obvious new oak which, along with the mid-palate plumpness and velvety tannins, makes this an easy-drinker.

86

Château Mauvesin Barton 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc \$23

Sumptuously ripe and accessible, this palate tastes of Godiva chocolate covered cherries. Mulberries and peat layer heading into the medium finish. Plush tannins and fresh acidity give this proper structure and drinkability.

86

Château Mille Roses 2012 Haut-Médoc \$15

Deep in color, this wine's boisterous nose smells of balsamic, black tea, mulberries and cherry preserves. Sumptuous and gently structured, this ready-to-drink wine has a moderate finish.

86

Château Montlau 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

This property sits at the edge of Entre-Deux-Mers, overlooking the Dordogne Valley. Its blend is two-thirds Merlot and one-third Cabernet Franc. The ensemble is nicely toasty, having seen a year's aging in French oak, one-third renewed every vintage. There are high tones of mint and green olives backed by loads of blackcurrants on the palate. Moderate on the finish, this is well-made and delivers lots of wine for the price.

86

Château Moulin Riche 2012 St-Julien \$23

This is sure to be a polarizing wine thanks to its overt ripeness and its obvious oak spice. It will be approachable for some and excessive for others. Generously rich on the palate, flavors of briar patch and cassis abound. The round tannins and delicate acidity fight to focus this robust wine.

86

Château Petit Freylon 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Sarah \$12

This wine is crafted from 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot. It's showing its age with its rusty rim and bouquet of tobacco and old leather. The palate feels a bit fresher with its oodles of sweet spice, liqueur-macerated mulberries and generous quantities of fruit. Ready to drink.

86

Château Pey de Pont 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$16

This is a body builder sort of red with a good extract and palate-saturating flavor. It's so big it almost needs a fork and knife to get through! It's lively blueberry and black cherry core is accented by peat and forest floor. The moderate finish suggests this is one to sip early.

86

Château Pey la Tour 2013 Bordeaux Rouge \$12

Mid-depth, ruby-garnet in color, this is vaguely cloudy, too. The nose smells of smashed cherries, blueberries and cola. The palate is smooth and creamy, making it highly accessible. This blend of 90% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc makes a great "house wine" between its easy-going profile and gentle price.

86

Château Peyrat-Fourthon 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$49

This medium-bodied, well-balanced Cru Bourgeois is gently complex and finishes with nice minerality. The bright nose leads to a palate of blueberries and tart cherries highlighted by notes of fireplace embers.

86

Château Pierrail 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

Raven black in color, this wine has a similarly dark nose of charcoal, balsamic and blackberry preserves. It is open and fleshy on the palate with decadent notes of spiced blackcurrants. A mix of 85% Merlot and 15% of the two Cabernets, this is aged 12 months in barriques. It's a charmer, but it will mostly appeal to those preferring opulent wines.

86

Château Pilet 2013 Côtes de Bordeaux Prestige \$25

Fresh and easy drinking, I would happily toss this in the cooler for a picnic of charcuterie and pâté. The mid-depth color is an intense, cherry red that lightens to cranberry at the rim. The engaging, floral nose boasts black and red cherries and baking spices. The polished mid-palate

has vivacious acidic tension and lightly dusty tannins. This is a blend of 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in barriques for 12 months. Fewer than 500 cases were produced. It could probably hold longer, but it's so lovely now, why wait?

86

Château Reynon 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux 13.5% \$12

This wine received lots of TLC. It is hand-harvested (unusual for the appellation), vinified under temperature control and aged for 12 months in barriques, one-third of which are new. The deep, purple-tinged color initially impresses, and while the juice is delicious and delightfully accented by licorice tones, the palate feels disjointed. Medium-plus in body with suavely crafted tannins, the acidity feels aggressive. There is a lingering finish of cassis and cigar smoke that is truly engaging. It is worth giving this Denis Dubordieux composition of 70% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Petit Verdot a bit more time.

86

Château Romfort 2012 Côtes de Bourg \$12

Composed of 70% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Malbec, this wine sees both stainless steel tanks and French barrels. Though three years old, it is still youthful, thanks in part to its vigorous yet well-balanced structure. The cinnamon top notes provide initial allure and the palate follows through with blackcurrants and blueberry cobbler fruit that linger on the finish.

86

Château Roquefort 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Roquefortissime \$15

This is a big, dark, lightly jammy Merlot with sweet tannins and gentle acidity. Not particularly complex, save some vanilla and chocolate notes on the finish, this delivers what most folks want in a glass of affordable Merlot.

86

Château Roquetaillade La Grange 2014 Graves Rouge \$19

Dark, sultry and broodingly black at the core, this blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot is similarly pouty on the nose. Its flavors range from ripe blackberries to spicy pepper, but it's not particularly layered. The firm tannins are finely-grained and carry the flavors into a decent finish. This provides lots of enjoyment now.

86

Château Roques Mauriac 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Grand Vin \$20

This wine is a nice glass of red with good energy. It is harmonious on the palate, and it's just easy to drink. Hailing from one of the highest plateaus of Entre-Deux-Mers, it tastes of red currants and pomegranate seeds.

86

Château Sainte Barbe 2013 Bordeaux Rouge Merlot du Château \$12

This wine has a lightly rusty core with streaks of garnet. Its nose is reserved with aromas of blueberries, mulberries, licorice and baking spices. Cola, vanilla and toast appear on the palate. Mild tannins and integrated acidity pull the flavors into a nice finish that shows earthy hints of positive evolution. This would make a highly gulpable wine by the glass.

86

Château Teynac 2013 St-Julien \$38

Delicious and lively, this wine's bursts of bramble, blueberry and blackberry are irresistibly fresh. Simple but attractive, the dazzling acidity and lighter body give this immediate drinkability.

86

Château Tour Saint Vincent 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

A "modern" wine style, this 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot boasts gobs of exotic spices and fresh vanilla bean. Its tannins are velvety and its acidity is discreet. Given the minimal structural support, it's a wine to drink up while enjoying its fleshy plum fruit.

86

Château Tronquoy-Lalande 2012 St-Estèphe \$39

Carbon black at the core, this wine has an enticingly layered aromatic profile. It starts with mineral, licorice and medicinal notes before moving into smoky tones and black currant fruit at the juicy core. Firm and a bit dry with scraggly tannins and pronounced acidity, this could use time to relax in the bottle.

86

Clos la Bohème 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$40

This is a pistol! An organically grown blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot, this wine oozes with overtly ripe blueberries and loganberries. The ripeness is so dazzling as to remind me of vintage Port. Christmas spices lace through the lightly bitter finish. The sensuous palate has cuddly tannins yet lightly tart acidity. There's enough concentration and structure to suggest that this is a mid-term wine.

86

Delphis de La Dauphine 2013 Fronsac \$20

The second wine of Château La Dauphine, this is composed of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Thirty percent of the wine receives barrique aging, 10% of which is new. The remainder is stored in concrete tanks. It's a surprisingly pale wine considering its deeply-colored big brother. It's more fragrant and lighter weight, too (only 12.5% abv). Floral on the nose, it tastes pleasantly tart and tangy with flavors cranberries and rhubarb.

86

Diane de Belgrave 2010 Haut-Médoc \$25

Much of this goes into on-premise in France, but don't let that deter you from seeking it out. It will reward you with gusts of forest berries and opulent black cherries on the palate that are carefully curbed by rounded tannins and invigorating acidity. This is a lovely food wine.

86

Domaine de Claouset 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$11

Made entirely of Merlot from the Entre-Deux-Mers area, co-owner David Siozard calls this a "vin de soif", or a "thirst quencher". Its millefeuille of blackberries and licorice flavors is moreish, and though there is no new oak, there's a touch of fireplace smoke on the palate that Siozard believes comes from good fruit maturity in this vineyard.

86

Dourthe 2013 Bordeaux Rouge No. 1 \$13

This bottling has a sophisticated mix of sweet fruit, earth and tobacco with accents of sweet spice. Made of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% of Petit Verdot, this wine is as ambitious as it is true to its terroir. Packed with red and blue fruits and gently tugging tannins, it's just complex and structured enough to work better with food than alone.

86

Les Hauts de Pez 2011 St-Estèphe \$29

50% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, 12% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

Still showing a youthful color, this wine throws some light sediment. Its nose is vaguely smoky, with nuances of toast, charred wood and Lapsang Souchong tea. Silky tannins and medium, well-integrated acidity give the wine equal amounts of lift and drinkability. The moderate finish shows tasty notes of dried mulberries.

86

Prince de Tabourg 2014 Côtes de Bourg \$16

This blend of 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon is a solid red Bordeaux at a reasonable price. There are hot chocolate top notes followed by juicy blackcurrants, licorice and a touch of leafiness. Very modest in concentration, this is an early drinker.

86

Château Clement St-Jean 2012 Médoc \$16

Framed by bright, engaging acidity, this medium-bodied wine has a very nice depth of red fruit flavors. They string into a moderate finish of strawberries, milk chocolate and anise. Nicely balanced, this makes for easy sipping.

85

Aurore de Dauzac 2013 Margaux \$35

Despite the rather pale color, this Margaux has a flagrant style. It is intensely dominated by oak-derived aromas. There is sweet toast, vanilla extract, Hershey's Kisses and forest berry

preserves. Lenient tannins give this blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot immediate drinkability.

85

Be Bordô 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Bordeaux \$10

Saturated in berry fruit flavor, this is an easy-drinking Cabernet Sauvignon. Showing no trace of new oak, this screw-capped tippler is fun and easy on both the palate and wallet. Its flavors are one-note and its finish is swift, so drink up!

85

Château Ampélia 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 13% \$19

Coming from centuries of St-Émilion winegrowers at Grand Corbin-Despaigne, François Despaigne was the seventh generation to take over that property then immediately look for another adventure. In the neighboring Castillon, François has taken on Ampélia, creating a blend of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc in this bottling. Aged one-third each in new, second and third use barrels, it's a soft and silky early drinker full of mulberries and blueberries.

85

Château Bournac 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$35

This is a wine for whisky lovers: it smells strongly of vanilla, sweet spice and crème caramel. The palate shows some forest berry flavors, but it's the sweet spice and roasted nut qualities that push to the front. This opulent palate leads to a moderately long finish with a creamy, lingering texture.

85

Château de Costis 2013 Bordeaux Rouge \$11

This blend of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon has a youthful mulberry color. Its nose smells of cranberry bogs and briar patches. Its palate is demanding with a lifted acidity that accentuates pleasantly coarse tannins. Though overall a simple wine with a moderate finish, there are some layered flavors here and the price is very fair.

85

Château de Clotte 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$20

This blend of 30% each of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon with 10% Malbec is rather floral with unusual (for Bordeaux) but delightful lavender notes. Soft and plump with nice mid-palate weight and proper balance, it is abruptly short on the finish.

85

Château de l'Aubrade 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$13

This is big, rich, round and ripe, making it easy to imagine having a second glass. It is nicely evolved with hints of earth and leather accompanying the flavors of boysenberry cobbler. Supple on the palate, the resolved tannins and subtle but supporting acidity make this ready to drink.

85

Château Fougeailles 2013 Lalande de Pomerol \$NA

Jam-packed with black currants, this wine is also inundated with oak bluster. It's not a bad sip, but the toast and chocolate intensity, concentrated glycerol and succulent 75% Merlot fruit make it hard to see any lift from the 25% Cabernet Franc. Still, the fruit is incredibly pure.

85

Château Haut-Maillet 2011 Pomerol \$40

This wine is advancing quickly. Its nose shows an overt and earthy funk as its fruit freshness fades. The palate is gentle with low-intensity tannins and mild refreshment. Its younger counterparts are more compelling. This is 79% Merlot and 21% Cabernet Franc.

85

Château Hervé-Laroque 2011 Fronsac \$14

This is the second wine of Château Moulin Haut-Laroque, and the two bottlings are distinctly different. The aim of this wine is to make something earlier-drinking, and as the fruit is already fading into fallen autumn leaves here, that has certainly been accomplished. There's some funk on nose and the palate brings on an exaggerated sip of barnyard. The structure is well-knit but this blend of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged entirely in older barriques is drinking now.

85

Château Lafont-Menaut 2013 Pessac-Léognan Rouge \$18

This is made of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc aged in 30% new oak. It starts with a juicy attack replete with red and black cherries, but the mid-palate is light on concentration and the finish is clipped. Enjoy in its youth.

85

Château Lauduc 2012 Bordeaux Rouge Classic \$11

This wine is delightfully pure in forest berries on its still rather youthful nose. The palate shows more nuanced notes of peat and well-worn leather. This is showing well now in its diverse flavor composition of primary and tertiary notes along with its glossy, smooth tannins.

85

Château Majoureau 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

Made of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon grown in clay-limestone slopes overlooking the Garonne, this wine is made in stainless steel tanks. It has a dark maroon core and scents of underbrush and pine needles. The super pure fruit tastes of mulberries, blueberries and marionberries. Palate also shows milk chocolate, and it has a wispy texture with light concentration that makes for easy drinking. This is a good choice for a casual drink.

85

Château Maledan 2009 Bordeaux Supérieur \$12

Made of 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc, this wine is developing mature notes alongside its very ripe, mulberry and bramble fruit notes. Its rim is becoming rusty, too.

The wine shows a plumpness and concentration typical of 2009 as well as smooth tannins and moderate acidity. Alas, it finishes short. Drink up.

85

Château Maledan 2010 Bordeaux Supérieur \$12

Just one year younger, this bottling is far fresher than its 2009 counterpart. It's full of briar patch and bramble fruits as well as sweet spice (it spent some time with oak). Spry acidic lift gives this supple red quaffability and age-ability.

85

Château Rouget 2010 Pomerol \$70

Having liked the 2009, I was highly disappointed in this 2010. It's high in alcohol, muddled in overripe flavors and utterly lacking in refreshment. That's a shame given that the wine has decent length and in a year as noble as 2010, it surely could have been a more typical expression of Pomerol. Sadly, its gentle tannins and lax acidity won't allow it to hold on long.

85

Barton & Guestier 2014 Bordeaux Rouge Passeport \$10

This blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon has a smoky, woody nose and a broad palate packed with mulberries, crushed raspberries and cherry cobbler fruit. This is delightfully slurpable thanks to the integrated, soft tannins and creamy acidity. This offers killer value.

85

Château Beaumont 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

Mid-depth in color, this wine boasts a bright and aromatic nose that suggests ample ripeness. The medium-bodied palate delivers blackberries and roasted plums along with grilled game. Lifting acidity pulls the flavors into a moderate finish accented by savory spice.

85

Château Bel-Air La Royère 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux L'Esprit de Bel-Air La Royère \$22

This blend of 90% Merlot with equal parts Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon smells reduced and flat. There is a hint of gaminess, too. However, the moderately concentrated mid-palate brims with pleasantly pure fruits of mulberries, blueberries and Morello cherries. A bit firm and structurally awkward, this should settle out nicely in the next few years.

85

Château Beynat 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Léonard \$26

This wine gets its plentiful ripeness from its south-facing hillside. Composed of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc, these 26-year-old vines give an exuberantly ripe, if only moderately concentrated, expression of their site. The glass smells like a basket of smashed summer berries

sprinkled with baking spices and balsamic vinegar. It's friendly and ready-to-drink. Impressively, this château is focused entirely on direct sales to both consumers and the trade.

85

Château Bréhat 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$13

This wine showed both funkiness (dusty barn floor) and reduction. While attractively rustic, it's hard to discern the fruit in this youthful wine. The moderate finish is savory and peppery, but where is the fruit in this blend of 80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon?

85

Château Cabannieux 2012 Graves Rouge \$15

This wine radiates an impressively bold color. Unfortunately, it has an awkwardly sweet attack with loads of coconut flavor alongside herbal highlights. There is redemption in the pleasant juiciness, easy tannins and highly integrated acidity. It's overt and a bit extravagant, but many would enjoy this by-the-glass in a casual setting. There's a pleasantly moderate finish.

85

Château Carbonneau 2012 Ste-Foy Bordeaux Rouge Séquoia \$15

This mix of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon is whiplashed with barnyard aromas. Massively ripe flavors of mulberry and blueberry smash onto the nose. The palate follows with more meager aromas of mocha and clove. Round and dense on the mid-palate, there is an attractive, mouthcoating creaminess. The tannins are rather reclusive and the acidity is reluctant, but for a fast-drinking Bordeaux, one can't complain much about the price or flavor delivery.

85

Château Chatard 2014 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$16

Composed of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc, this wine has a dark garnet core. Its nose and attack are raucously primary. There's lots of youthful fruit, with blueberries and pomegranate seeds dominating, but no scents of oak. Its firm, vertical core comes from the somewhat pungent acidity and strict tannins. The complexity is modest, but this offers a perfectly fine glass in its early years.

85

Château Citran 2011 Haut-Médoc \$23

This pale red wine is lightly rimmed with a rusty hue. The reserved nose offers game, chocolate and dark roast coffee beans. Integrated with easy-going acidity and copious mid-palate fruit, this is an easy sipper.

85

Château d'As 2012 Graves Rouge \$19

This wine is a bit off-kilter. Its aromas are both green and volatile. Its flavors range from tart cherries and cranberries to mint to balsamic vinegar. Its palate is relaxed and supple, so it's a

perfectly fine sip in a casual setting. This is 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc.

85

Château de Belcier 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$20

Like many properties in the area, this one is linked to the family of the famous philosopher Montesquieu. This is a dry and savory blend of 69% Merlot, 26% Cabernet Franc and 5% Malbec that will work best with a hearty, home-cooked meal. Its palate is packed with mulberries but only hints of toast, thanks to the judicious use of 25% new French oak. Its moderately weighty core is plump with polished and rounded fruit and soft, easy-going tannins. It drinks well now and has enough stuffing for short-term keeping.

85

Château de Cérons 2012 Graves Rouge \$24

Fresh and forward on the nose with notes of strawberries and red currants, the palate shifts to show lightly evolved nuances of fallen autumn leaves. There's crunchy acidity alongside deftly managed, gentle tannins that carry the flavors into a modest finish.

85

Château de Cérons 2010 Graves Rouge \$24

With light brick lacing in the core and a hint of worn leather on the nose, this seems to be in its drinking prime. Its relaxed acidity and melting tannins elegantly harmonize with the black cherry core on the palate. Twenty percent of the wine, composed of slightly more Cabernet Sauvignon than Merlot, was aged in new oak.

85

Château de Crain 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$8

A blend of 80% Merlot with Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc and Malbec, this has an impenetrably deep color. It is reserved on the nose save its flagrant mineral tones of schist and charcoal. The moderately vinous palate has a lovely fluidity to its texture, even though it finishes short. It tastes of black cherries, black plums and cardamom but is overall rather simple. Still, what an amazing value!

85

Château de Piote 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$12

This cuvée of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Malbec is a bit of a bruiser with its supreme ripeness. Its palate is succulent with gobs of forest berries delicately balanced between supple tannins and mild acidity. It is definitely entering its prime, so don't delay enjoying.

85

Château d'Escurac 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Supple red fruits grace the gentle palate with pliable tannins. Leaving its most primary fruits behind, the remaining flavors of raspberry and kirsch provide a light tartness into the modest finish.

85

Château de Seguin 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$18

Composed of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is rather reserved on the nose with a light woodsiness, perhaps attributable to its one year of aging in oak barrels. Mulberries, blueberries and balsamic fill the faintly viscous, mildly concentrated palate. Though Spic-and-Span clean, it's aging quickly.

85

Château de Genibon 2014 Côtes de Bourg Prestige \$13

There's a lot of substance in this coal-black wine, and there's a lot of oak, too. The nose smells of a chocolate-flavored latte doused with baking spices. The full-bodied, cassis-driven palate is richly ripe with sumptuous black fruits, velvety tannins and reserved acidity. The finish is surprisingly modest, suggesting this is best in the early-term. It is a blend of 62% Merlot, 25% Malbec and 13% Cabernet Sauvignon.

85

Château de Retout 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Jet black in color, the extravagantly oaky nose drenched in sweet spice suggests a big wine. However, with just moderately concentrated mulberry fruit, there's not much for the oak to enhance. Moreover, despite the pleasant viscosity, the firm tannins overtake the palate.

85

Château Dutruch Grand Poujeaux 2013 Moulis-en-Médoc \$29

A combo of 72% Cabernet Sauvignon and 28% Merlot, this medium-bodied wine is a bit lean and stringy with ropy tannins and pungent acidity. The black fruit flavors are a bit murky though showing a pleasant earthiness. It seems that the fruit may be drying up quickly.

85

Château du Vallier 2014 Côtes de Bordeaux (Sample) \$20

Vignobles Dulong, a family winemaking operation for over 250 years, purchased this 20-hectare property in 2004. This blend of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc aged one year in barriques is intensely, inky black. Its aromas of ripe fruit, cola, licorice and sweet spice are extravagant. The wine tastes of North African spices, black cherries, prunes and ripe figs. The round mid-palate is nicely balanced by mature and lightly drying tannins and supporting acidity. There's good concentration in the medium body, but there's only modest complexity, so it's likely best earlier on.

85

Château Eyquem 2012 Côtes de Bourg \$17

Part of the Bayle-Carreau portfolio, this property overlooks the Gironde at the confluence of the Dordogne and Garonne. It is bright, clean and ripe on the nose with blackcurrants and blackcurrant leaves. Its combination of 60% Merlot with 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Malbec shows the firmness of the latter two with muscular tannins and invigorating freshness. Though only moderate on the finish, this is a nice glass now and should hold a bit longer.

85

Château Falfas 2011 Côtes de Bourg 13% \$22

Blended from 55% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Malbec aged in 33% new French oak, this wine is certified organic by ECOCERT and farmed biodynamically as well. Its aromas are divided between fresh, advancing and tertiary. The nose starts with cherries then moves into leathery and earthy tones. The palate tastes meaty and also has notes of licorice and cassis. Clean and correct with boisterous tannins to keep the medium body, juicy goodness in line, this is drinking well now and its moderate finish suggests its best enjoyed younger.

85

Château Floréal Laguens 2014 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$14

This is made of 53% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Cabernet Franc. It's generously mineral as well as a touch minty on the nose. It's creamy mid-palate explodes with red and black plums. Perfectly clean with lots of fruit on the attack and a decent finish, this is stridently youthful now but may not have enough layers to age well in bottle for very long.

85

Château Fonréaud 2012 Lustrac-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

This wine starts out with a bang of fireplace cinders and cigar smoke. There's also a touch of aged balsamic...it's all invigoratingly enticing. Alas, the palate is modestly concentrated and direct with an overt, tannic firmness. Still, the turkey jerky, smoked bacon and roasted veal aromas on the palate make this enticing for a hearty red meat dish in the immediate term.

85

Château Franc-Cardinal 2011 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux \$15

This jet-black wine looks assertive in the glass. It's fairly fresh for a 2011 with a bouquet of black currants and cassis wrapped up in nuances of damp earth and cracked twigs. Generous in body and alcohol, the gently melting tannins and fresh acidity give this cherubic wine refreshment and focus. Sophie Holzberg vinifies this wine slowly then ages it in 225-228 liter French oak barrels. It is a blend of 72% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Franc and 4% Malbec from 30-year-old vines grown in clay, limestone and sandy soils.

85

Château Gadet Terrefort 2012 Médoc Cru Artisan \$30

Seductively smoky on the nose with peat and underbrush tones, this wine has a rich mid-palate of berry fruit that feels a bit ponderous. The acidity is decent, though a bit lenient, and the tannins are low intensity.

85

Château Grand Tertre 2014 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$21

As intensely stained as a black hole, this wine is full-on black. Its nose is crammed with exotic spices, sloe jam and loganberries. Piled on top of that is a mess of licorice, dark chocolate and fennel. There's no shortage of new oak here from start to super vanilla-laced finish. At the right price, it would easily pass as a wine by the glass in a casual restaurant.

85

Chateau Gravelle-Lacoste 2015 Graves \$19

This is reserved and reduced white Bordeaux that poses as "mineraly". Sure, it hails from a cooler bit of the appellation, but this wine is impressively austere, even when returning to a half-full bottle a day after it was originally opened. And, it's a 2015! Yes, it is approximately 75% of the more demure Sémillon, but one-quarter of the wine is composed of the aromatic Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Smelling of sulphur and wet river rocks on the nose, the palate offers meager and tart yellow plums along with early summer peaches. They might become more dynamic with bottle age; however, given the modest fruit expressiveness, lack of oak complexity and fast finish, this looks like an early drinker.

85

Château Haut Prieur 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$15

This wine comes from south-facing slopes covered in clay and limestone. The vines average 40 years in age and the oldest are 60-years-old. All of these factors lead to the wine's intense fruit concentration and juicy core of black plums and black cherries. Post-vinification in stainless steel, the wine is aged for 12 months in older barrels to contribute a lightly roasted, lightly toasted marshmallow quality to the wine. It's a showy wine, but for those that like that style, this can be their go-to, especially for this price.

85

Château Haut-Rian 2012 Côtes de Bordeaux Prestige 13% \$15

Dark cherry-colored at the core, this is a blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in Allier barriques. Its bouquet gushes with blackcurrants, blackberries, peat and nuances of game. Medium-bodied with moderately intense complexity, there is a lovely tertiary character developing on the nicely balanced palate. Leather and earth are entwined with dried fruits and sweet and savory spices. This seems to be reaching its peak, so don't hesitate to drink up.

85

Chateau Hostens-Picant 2011 Ste-Foy Bordeaux Rouge \$25

This 2011 has impressively ripe fruit. It's packed with blueberries and ripe red cherries. Medium bodied and light spirited, it carries a lovely spiciness. There is a pleasant complexity of fresh notes and earthy, branchy and tobacco-y tones that gives this wine layers. This blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc is aged in one-third new oak barrels, but their influence is impressively subtle. Not a big wine, this is ready for early drinking.

85

Château Hyot 2011 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Réserve 13% \$20

This wine is full of nicely ripe blueberries, tart blackberries and licorice. It's reserved on the nose, and even with decanting, the wine doesn't fully open up. There's still some nicely youthful fruit here, and it has just enough boisterous structure to make one sit up straight and notice it. The modest finish is lightly papery and a touch dry, but with a nice meal, few will notice.

85

Château la Branne 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$45

Impressively extravagant on the nose, this wine is big and oaky with savory and sweet spice. Mulberries and milk chocolate saturate then expand on the palate thanks to the lenient and creamy tannins and relaxed acidity. There's enough firmness for a lightly leathery finish.

85

Château Lacaussade Saint-Martin Trois Moulins 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$13

This estate faces the Médoc Grand Crus as it looks west over the Gironde Estuary. The happy recipient of western sunshine, this wine delivers blueberries, black cherries and boysenberries by the buckets. It's an easy wine with sumptuously ripe fruit that makes it downright slurpable. This mix of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Malbec is particularly not complex, but it's a perfectly enjoyable drink.

85

Château la Faivère 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

Composed of 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon aged 12 months in 50% new oak barrels, this wine is rampant with beef barbecue and mulling spices. While pleasantly round and succulent on the palate, its fruit profile is rather simple and the finish evaporates. Well-made and well-priced, enjoy this sooner rather than later. N.B. It's nice to see a clean and modern Bordeaux label without a drawing of château on it.

85

Château La France 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Gallus \$22

Coming from vines that average 31 years old, this big, rich and ripe wine tastes of mulberry and blueberry cobbler. It's simple with little complexity, despite seeing some time in barrique. This is 70% Merlot, 20% Malbec, 5% each of the Cabernets.

85

Château Lagravette Lacombe 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$15

This wine's oaky nose is ornate with milk chocolate and vanilla extract tones. It's exotic, and it's hardly terroir-driven. While the grainy tannins dry the palate a bit, there's enough generous fruit to pull the wine into a moderate finish. Its opulence is sure to make many friends.

85

Château Lamothe-Bergeron 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

This wine exhibits a nose of earthy and reticent red fruit. Timid cranberries, red currants and tart cherries predominate on the palate. The grainy tannins offer grippy structure to the roughly polished fruit.

85

Château La Rame 2014 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux La Charmille \$18

Rame means "rock" in old French. The soils here are silt and sand over clay and limestone. Made from 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is fermented in stainless steel then aged in oak, one-third of which is renewed every year. Packed with vigorous, youthful fruit, there are loads of blueberries and Damson plums with a judicious dusting of mocha and cinnamon. The medium finish is pleasant, but there's only modest complexity, so go ahead and enjoy.

85

Château Larrivaux 2011 Haut-Médoc \$19

This wine has a lightly smoky nose with lots of red and black berries. The palate comes through with cracked pepper and Nutella. This is a correct, if somewhat simple, wine that gets the job done.

85

Château Laville 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$13

This wine has an extravagantly overt nose of sweet spice and beef jerky. Oddly, there are not a lot of fruit flavors and the available berry fruit is mild in intensity. Still, it's supple on the palate with a touch of tannins and decent acidic balance. Made of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a big wine for those who like noticeable oak influence.

85

Château le Doyenné 2012 Côtes de Bordeaux \$22

This super ripe wine has a deeply saturated color. Its nose brims with sloe, boysenberry, licorice and unlit charcoal. Full in body and flavor with a dry attack and lightly rugged tannins, this would work well with anything off the barbecue pit. Its finish is quick, so drink up early on. A mix of predominantly Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, this is aged in one-third new French oak.

85

Château Les Conseillans 2014 Côtes de Bordeaux \$24

This wine's sultry, onyx core shows a small, maroon rim. Its nose is reserved but shows an attractive graphite note. The palate is big and brooding with a black plum skin pithiness. Fairly simple in flavors of ultra-ripe fruits and rather quick on the finish, this is best enjoyed early, especially with grilled meats. This is a blend of 65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Malbec and 7% Cabernet Franc aged in new and older barriques.

85

Château Lousteauneuf 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Hello, Oak! This wine shows an aggressive amount of it, especially with only moderately concentrated fruit to attempt to harmonize with it. The cinnamon stick, vanilla and toasted wheat bread flavors stick out. Structurally, the tannins and acidity are balanced and agreeable.

85

Château Lusseau 2012 Graves Rouge Cuvée Bérengère \$18

Herbs and mint soar from the glass of this fun and dynamic wine. If you enjoy lively, lifting acidity and crunchy tannins, this is a very drinkable, red-fruited wine that would be perfectly placed on a bistro table. Moreover, there's a decent finish. This is 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon.

85

Château Maison Noble 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$24

Composed of 68% Merlot and 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine has a reserved and woody nose. Its palate, however, is creamy and succulent. Showing moderate complexity partly derived from its 12 months in French oak, this wine has somewhat simple cherry and loganberry fruit flavors.

85

Château Pertignas 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Spéciale \$36

This is made of Merlot and at least 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, depending on the vintage. It is almost forbiddingly dark in color with somewhat backwards fruit on the nose. The palate gives roasted plums drizzled with balsamic vinegar. Though the tannins are low-intensity, there's a nice acidic exuberance on the palate. The finish tastes of baking spices.

85

Château Pierre de Montignac 2012 Médoc \$25

Smooth and suave, this is nicely constructed if rather straight-forward. Intense cassis and grape jelly flavors run across the modestly concentrated palate that finishes with the bright lift of tomato leaves.

85

Château Ramafort 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$24

Forest floor and peat blossom from the nose of this deeply ripe wine. The fruit is plush, but the flavors are more focused on earth tones than on fruit. There is noticeable mid-palate plumpness to keep the dry tannins at bay. The modest acidity offers only mild refreshment.

85

Château Reverdi 2011 Lustrac-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Broodingly dark from meniscus to core thanks to a high percentage of Petit Verdot, this is a pungently aromatic wine. Its first whiffs are of forest floor, cigar box and peat. Blackberry, mulberry and black currant swarm onto the palate, accented by a hint of vanilla and boiled candies. Suavely ripe and creamy, there's a nice fruit core to support the flashy flavors hailing from the (surprisingly only) 10% new barriques. The finish is generous, suggesting that there's good material here.

85

Château Rousselle 2012 Côtes de Bourg 13.5% \$18

This is a fusion of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Malbec and 2% Cabernet Franc grown on brown clay soil covering limestone. Planted at 5,700 vines per hectare, these vines more densely planted than many in the area. The result is a linebacker of a wine - exuberantly ripe and packed with chunky fruit flavors of fig, sloe jam and pomegranate. It seems the philosophy was, if there's lots of fruit, use lots of oak - 50% new and 50% one use, and the wood's exotic spice top notes heavily mark the wine. This is a weighty, custardy wine with relaxed acidity and a fast finish. It's drinking well now and probably won't hold too long given its lenient structure.

85

Château Saint-Julian 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur \$14

Not a small holding with its 30 hectares in Entre-Deux-Mers, this estate's wines come from vines that average 30 years old and are grown in clay and limestone. The nose is a bit stubborn now, save its nicely peaty undertones. The palate offers blissfully ripe cherries, slightly aggressive grainy tannins and integrated acidity. For an inexpensive Bordeaux, it's hard to complain.

85

Château Saint-Michel 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur \$20

Beautiful, clear maroon in color, this wine smells of dark plums, damp earth and asphalt under a hot sun. Its palate is easy-going with a wide-range splatter of red cherries, roasted red plums and blueberries on the softly tannic palate. Medium in body, this is a good by-the-glass wine for a bistro, and it is best paired with food rather than enjoyed just for sipping.

85

Château Suau 2014 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux (Sample) \$30

Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grown in clay and gravel are farmed organically for this property specializing in direct-to-consumer sales. The wine begins with super dark, almost impenetrable color and follows with a sultry nose of black currant, cassis and black cherry. Graphite, asphalt and grilled toast enter on the palate with shriveled black plum and dried black fig. Saliva-wicking tannins integrate with medium acidity to support this full-bodied wine. The solid finish has moderate complexity, and this bottling could use a little more time to unfold.

85

Château Tertre de Belvès 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$16

This pure Merlot is exuberantly ripe and even shows some stewed notes. It feels almost sweet with its generous viscosity and high alcohol. Still, it is clean and finessed with good mid-palate support. It finishes quickly, but it's a nice drink for now.

85

Château Villambis 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Gleaming bright but with a hint of cloudiness, this wine's aromas include roses, beet root and freshly turned earth. The modestly juicy and creamy palate is encased in firm but balanced, grainy tannins. This is a bit bland and lacks energy.

85

Clos Lunelles 2011 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$30

This mix of 80% Merlot with equal shares of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc hails from the highest point in the Côtes de Castillon – on the Sainte Colombe plateau – and has a showy, jet black appearance. Its nose is volatile with notes of prune and paint, and the palate is marked by the roughhousing tannins, despite the solid fruit concentration. I love the fancy packaging, and there are the smart new oak marks of ambition. However, this thick-feeling liquid just lacks energy.

85

Costes du Château Feret Lambert 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

Made of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a basic Bordeaux red with simple but clean flavors of baked strawberries and balsamic vinegar. With its freshness fading a bit, I would look to a younger vintage of the same.

85

Grand Enclos du Château de Cerons 2011 Graves Rouge \$NA

This wine has a perky nose and fairly deep core with a tiny cranberry rim. Made from 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, it has strong notes of evergreen and roasted asparagus. The fruit is a bit flat, the acidity is rather modest, and the tannins are firm, dry and stringy. It's a bit disjointed, so it's likely best to drink this up.

85

La Croix Bonis 2012 St-Estèphe \$40

Light and easy-drinking, this perfumed wine has pretty cranberry top notes. The modestly complex palate introduces overt milk chocolate tones. Though pleasantly juicy on the palate, it finishes dry and a touch coarse.

85

Ségla 2008 Margaux \$40

Château Rauzan-Ségla was founded in 1661. Three centuries and 33 years later, it came under ownership of Chanel. While wines of this estate usually prove to offer a good quality-to-price ratio, this one falls a bit short. Its vague berry and tobacco leaf aromas are tamped down. Its medium-plus body is only moderately concentrated and finishes short. There's decent acidic balance but little liveliness. It is fading quickly or perhaps never had much stuffing at the start. It might hold well enough for another year or two, but it doesn't have the layers to improve further to benefit.

85

Tutiac 2010 Bordeaux Rouge Lieu-Dit Verdot \$23

This wine has an unfortunate juxtaposition between highly ripened fruit and oxidation. It tastes of fresh and dried figs, has moderate acidity and feels a bit tired and overworked. Something is amiss here, which is a shame as this is more ambitious wine from the cooperative and from a good vintage.

85

Zénith de Fourcas Dupré 2012 Haut-Médoc \$20

Clear and star-bright in appearance this wine has a delightfully pure nose of cranberries and blueberry compote. The caressing palate has good concentration and adds chunky mocha flavors. Alas, the moderate finish turns hard between the elevated acidity and choppy tannins. Perhaps some time in bottle will smooth out the structure, but I am not betting on it.

84

Château Andron-Club Cordier 2012 Médoc \$14

This Club Cordier property owned by José Castells, a seventh generation winemaker, makes nothing but red in the far northern reaches of the Médoc. A blend composed of 50% Merlot, 48% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Cabernet Franc, this wine has a bright magenta-inflected, red color and shows properly ripe black fruits. Medium-plus in body, there are lightly prickly tannins and crisp acidity to give this wine verve.

84

Château Beauséjour 2011 Montagne St. Émilion \$25

Impressively volatile, this wine smells of raisins and prunes. On the palate, its fruits are dried out and baked. Still, for lovers of plush, massively ripe styles with soft acidity, this 50-50 split of Merlot and Cabernet Franc likely will appeal.

84

Château Brillette 2011 Moulis-en-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$21

Style-wise, this smooth and creamy-palated wine would work well as a gulpable by-the-glass selection in a wine bar. Its rather clear appearance and fragrant nose of mulberries and baked strawberries offer upfront appeal. Aging in equal portions of new and once- and twice-used oak gives this wine an overt chocolatey influence to accompany its flavors of strawberry jam, red currants and mulberries.

84

Château Cantelaudette 2012 Graves de Vayres \$16

Château Cantelaudette has a pretty view onto the Dordogne. This youthful wine is rather deep in onyx-like color with a bold, purple-tinged rim. Its nose and palate smell of dried cranberries and crunchy black currants. This medium-bodied wine has a pleasantly pithy mouthfeel and no obvious scents of new oak. It finishes short and is an early drinker, but it is certainly fun for now!

84

Château Cap de Faugères 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$27

Blended from 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon grown on clay-limestone molasse, this is a hedonistic wine. Overseen by Michel Rolland, the owners surely have pushed the definition of ripeness as far as possible. The wine tastes of fig and prune doused with baking rack spices. Heavy and full on the palate, it is tiresome to taste.

84

Château Castera 2011 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$24

Looking pale scarlet in color, this wine's nose is far less timid. It exudes crushed rocks and leafy tarragon. The lightly ripe, red fruit flavors give a surprisingly creamy and seductive mouthfeel. The well-proportioned fruit takes on noticeable flavors of Hershey's Milk Chocolate Kisses, which takes over the fruit in the end.

84

Château Corconnac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

Smelling impressively ripe with roasted black plums and black cherries, there's a lifting whiff of licorice on this wine's nose, too. The gutsy mid-palate tastes of black currants and crushed slate. The lingering finish ropes in balsamic and vanilla bean. It's incredibly expressive, but it's also light on structure.

84

Château de Bel 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge La Capitane \$17

This juicy wine has an interesting array of aromas, ranging from meat broth to nicely aged balsamic vinegar. However, like its sibling bottling from 2012, this is highly evolved for its age but interesting to taste. It's best to look into a younger vintage.

84

Château de Macard 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Réserve \$18

This moderate-bodied Bordeaux is a classic bistro carafe wine. It has perky acidity that accentuate the rather angular, shard-like tannins. It is a blend of 100-year-old Cabernet Franc (60%), 30% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon from Bordeaux's Right Bank near the village of Pessac-sur-Dordogne. It is probably drinking at its peak now as it is in its autumn phase of fruit flavors and full maturity in structural approachability.

84

Château de Lisennes 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$15

This wine shows notes of roasted red and black plums along with fresh-cut leather. The generous palate offers a nice caress, but the fruit flavors are starting to dry out and fade. This is made of 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon.

84

Domaine du Seuil 2014 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$13

This 50-50 Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon blend has a mid-depth, crimson core. Its timid nose shows reserved notes of hay, cherries and cooked cranberries. The medium-bodied palate livens things up with playful acidity, moderate tannins and a welcome absence of oak to allow the fruit to shine. This organic wine drinks well now. Its short finish suggests it is best drunk soon.

84

Château Fontblanche 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$13

This wine is darkly colored and sports a deep ruby rim. Its nose is broad and fruit-driven with sultry black cherries, loganberries and sloe jam. The attack adds nuances of peaty, forest floor and funky notes of cigar and truffle. Medium-bodied with a light vinosity and rounded tannins, this is suavely crafted. It does, however, have funk so it likely works best with game and red meats. This is a blend of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 5% Malbec that sees no wood.

84

Château Fourcas Hosten 2011 Lustrac \$20

It's little surprise this wine is an almost equal blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, given one half its plantings are on Pyrenéan gravels and the other half is on clay-limestone soils. A lot of TLC goes into its vinification with 75% of its fruit being hand-harvested, semi-gravity flow fruit movement and micro parcel vinification. Alas, while the wine is clean and correct, it lacks verve. Gritty, grainy tannins shorten the quick finish of blackberry and spice flavors.

84

Château Godard Bellevue 2011 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux \$19

Joseph and Bernadette Arbo make approximately 80,000 bottles of this blend of 60% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Cabernet Franc aged in 30% new French oak. It is moderately complex with notes of youth (vanilla extract, baking spices and roasted plums) and evolution (leather and cigar) mingling nicely now. Its soft tannins cuddle the full body making it easy to

drink now. And, one should. With its short finish and moderate intensity, this wine is ready to go!

84

Château Grand Ferrand 2014 Bordeaux Rouge \$10

This wine has a bold nose of black fruits laden with minerally nuances. The palate has a deeply unusual flavor combination of fertilizer, vitamins and beef jerky. This is a generously ripe wine that is correctly structured. A blend of 85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Malbec, this has a moderate finish.

84

Château Hurbanon 2013 Médoc \$18

This medium-bodied wine seems to be struggling a bit as it tastes of used tea leaves and spice box. There's a blend of red and black fruits on the modestly concentrated palate as well.

84

Château Kalon Nodoz 2014 Côtes de Bourg \$10

Carbon black at the core, this 70% Merlot, 15% Malbec and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon is turbo-charged with concentrated fruit. Pure from nose to finish, there are red currants, raspberries and loganberries. It's a bit rough-and-tumble tannin-wise, but those who like big, bracing reds may get a kick out of this. It's also incredibly accessibly priced.

84

Château Laffitte Carcasset 2012 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$40

The nicely woody nose pours out baking and savory spices, coconut and vanilla extract. Medium in body and moderately viscous, the briar fruits are one dimensional and the tannins are choppy.

84

Château Lagrave-Aubert 2014 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$15

This combination of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon is forward, pure and unforgivingly youthful. It tastes of pomegranate and milk chocolate-covered cherries. It's all exuberance and no sophistication, but loads of folks will love that and enjoy a glass or three. The Rolland team is at work here, too.

84

Château Lalaudey 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$29

This old school Bordeaux starts with cedar branch aromas. The palate brings on red berries and tobacco. It's fit for a piece of red meat with its scruffy, dry tannins that cut the finish a bit short.

84

Château Lamothe-Bergeron 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

Deep and pronounced in black color, the aromas of baked blueberries and boysenberries are highlighted by licorice, vanilla and cola. The palate brings in mint and game. With its demanding tannins and spritely acidity, this is a good match for a rich dish.

84

Château Landonnet 2014 Côtes de Bordeaux \$9

This wine's dark core is laced with black. Its dynamic aromas are full of spice, vanilla and toasted coconut peel. Moderately complex with layers of fresh fruits, baking spices and mocha on the palate, its structure is firm and pleasingly dry yet still easy to drink. The tannins are fine-grained and well-matched to the medium-plus acidity. This 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot wine is aged in oak barrels (presumably old, given the price) for approximately ten months.

84

Château Lauduc 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Tradition \$15

Composed of 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, 50% of this wine is aged in French and American oak for 12 months. Roasted plums and amaro splashes jump out on nose, but the moderately firm palate is a bit rough and dry. It's fine in a pinch, but it's ready to drink up.

84

Château La Bretonnière 2011 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$15

Firm, earthy and leathery, this wine has some attitude. The palate is unusual but enticing with blood orange top notes accompanying beef jerky and campfire cinders. Though the aromas are fascinating, the fruit is drying out a bit, so don't delay popping this cork. This is 93% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Sauvignon. Only a small portion sees aging in French oak barrels.

84

Château le Cossu 2014 Graves Rouge \$18

This is an unusual wine, but it pairs well with a picnic. It's easy-drinking and tastes of pleasantly tart cranberries and mint. It just hits the cusp of ripeness, and its concentration is modest. The tannins are a bit crunchy and green, too, but in the right context you'd likely not notice. This is a 50-50 mix of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

84

Château le Meynieu 2011 Haut-Médoc \$11

This is delightfully fragrant with cloves, milk chocolate, maple syrup and roses all coming out on the nose. Unfortunately, the attack expresses a slightly unpleasant bitterness. Overall, there's more oak expression than fruit, making it slightly unbalanced.

84

Château des Demoiselles 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux \$17

The name of this property came from a group of nuns who ran it in the Middle Ages. I love that! This concentrated red has a very deep, brooding color. It is a combo of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon that combines the mulberry notes of former and the black currant leaves of the latter. At least a portion of the wine sees 12 months of aging in oak, which seems to lend some spicy notes.

84

Château Lesparre 2011 Graves de Vayres \$17

This is a combination of 80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc. Unfortunately, the palate is oddly watery. It's fun for a glass or two with its pure red currants and ripe raspberries, but there's little complexity from start to moderate finish.

84

Château Les Tours de Peyrat 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Vieilles Vignes \$19

This wine isn't going to change the world, but it's a perfectly fine beverage for a casual table. Its composition of 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Malbec is clean and correct on every point. The nose shows fragrant and high-toned violet aromas as well as deeper accents of freshly-chopped wood. The mid-palate shows some spritely juiciness with cranberry and red cherry notes, but the moderate finish crashes with weighty, palate-stripping tannins. Without food, it's a bit "ouch", but with hearty fare, this can work.

84

Château Magence 2011 Graves Rouge \$17

This wine is aging nicely, from its lightly brick-tinged rim to its savory bouquet of worn leather and fallen autumn leaves. It is middling in weight with round tannins and a nicely dry tug on the finish that tastes of mellow cigar smoke.

84

Château Monconseil Gazin 2013 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2013

Blended from 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Malbec, today this is an awkward wine. Its strapping tannins work to keep its boisterously over-ripe fruit in check. It tastes of cassis, figs and licorice. Firm tannins, surely due in part to the terroir's limestone, give this wine a boisterous backdrop that is bolstered by overt acidity. This wine's medium finish shows there is some interesting material behind its current showing.

84

Château Moulin de la Rose 2012 St-Julien \$30

Two-thirds Cabernet Sauvignon and one-third Merlot, this is richly ripe - but almost flat - with black fruit flavors. The surprisingly vibrant acidity (given the ripe flavors) seems unusual, and sinewy tannins give the palate a hard feel. It's quite a contrast the the 2010 also tasted here.

84

Château Penin 2011 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Grande Sélection \$11

Made of Merlot from vines over 30 years old, this château is making the wine as ambitiously as possible: vibrating sorting tables, micro-oxygenation, barriques renewed every three years and more. It's certainly clean and exuberantly ripe with red and black plums. It is also soft with accessibility on the palate. However, it needs some backbone to prop it up.

84

Château Perthus 2014 Côtes de Bourg \$15

This 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon is the single wine made from a five-hectare estate. It spends 11 months in stave-enhanced barriques, which add some well-integrated notes of mocha and caramel. The nose smells like a grape cluster stems while the palate offers licorice, black currants and black plums. There's a lemony acidity that feels slightly out of place, but overall the wine works fairly well. The modest complexity indicates this won't improve much, but it is holding well now.

84

Château Péyredon Lagravette 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$30

This wine smells of wood shavings and tangy cherries. Strict on the palate with sharp, dusty tannins and vigorous acidity, there's only moderate flavor complexity. Enjoy soon.

84

Château Plantier Rose 2013 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$24

The slightly roasted flavors link to a round mid-palate with plenty of girth. The overt, sweet oak spice overwhelms rather than enhances the light fruit concentration. The strappy tannins cut into the moderate finish.

84

Château Roc Meynard 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$17

This property sits on the Fronsac border and has been producing wine for three centuries. It has a compellingly smoky nose redolent of fireplace cinders. It tastes of blackberries and blueberries on the palate and is very pleasantly juicy. It's advancing but doing so with style, even if it's time to pop the cork. This is 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon.

84

Château St-Hilaire 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$25

This dense red boasts nicely balancing, if frank, acidity and lightly rustic tannins. The earthy, smoky nose shows attractive tones of evolution, but the palate tastes mostly of oak: toast, hard spice and sweet chocolate. The finish is magnanimous, but it's a strange mix of developed flavors and new oak. I can't help but wonder if this wasn't a very good bottle.

84

Château Ségur de Cabanac 2012 St-Estèphe \$22

This wine is surprisingly disjointed. Though feeling only medium in body, it brims with alcoholic warmth. Its flavors lean to the leafy-green side of the spectrum. This seems off-brand for this château. Perhaps there's a bottle issue here?

84

Château Tire Pé 2012 Bordeaux Rouge Les Malbecs du Château Tire Pé \$23

Made exclusively of Malbec, it's not surprising this wine has a raven-colored core. It retains almost oddly primary aromas. It's all blackberries and black plum skins with charcoal and charred wood notes. The tannins are lightly dry and somewhat grainy. The integrated acidity gives nice freshness to this considered spice-drenched palate (aged for 14 months in 300- and 400-liter barrels).

84

Château Tour de Mirambeau 2012 Bordeaux Rouge Réserve \$13

This is juicy and sippable though it is definitely on the more mature end of its life, likely thanks in part to its modest concentration and one-dimensional fruit. Tobacco and leather dominate the wine's mulberry notes. The mild and lightly grainy tannins pull pleasant spice notes (like from the aging in 30% one-year-old oak) into the short finish. This is 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon.

84

La Roque de By 2012 Médoc \$15

Black currant, black cherry, blackberry and licorice load up the palate. There, moderately firm tannins and smooth acidity lend to a moderate finish of decadent, vanilla, blueberry jam and milk chocolate nuances.

84

Les Hauts de la Gaffelière 2012 Bordeaux Rouge \$12

This lightly cloudy wine has mid-depth, crimson coloring. Herbal top notes meld with briar patch, raspberries and red currants. This combination of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon has a mid-weight palate that is lightly opulent and showing hints of vanilla bean and French toast.

84

Mouton Cadet 2013 Bordeaux Rouge \$9

This wine has a lovely perfume of roses, blueberries and smoke (typical of fruit from the Côtes de Bordeaux.) It is a surprisingly taut blend of 80% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Cabernet Franc with grippy tannins and slightly angular acidity. First produced in 1930 as the second wine of Château Mouton Rothschild, today this label is the world's leading reference for Bordeaux AOC wines with its annual production of 12 million bottles.

83

Château de Birot 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$12

Established in the 17th Century, this producer vinifies in stainless steel then ages the wine in barrels (20% new) and concrete vats for 18 months. As dense and dark as tar sands, it's imposing in the glass. The nose verges on overripe with scents of prune, fig, iodine and mud. The leathery tannins and medium acidity – which gives just enough freshness to make this drinkable – do a good job of balancing the generous extract. It's fairly quick on the finish, where advancing flavors of leather and tobacco leaf show this blend of 77% Merlot and 23% Cabernet Sauvignon is ready to be sipped up.

83

Château du Breuil 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$16

Deeply colored, this wine starts off with a rustic attack that includes earthy aromas. Its palate continues firm and dry with shard-like tannins that slice off the moderate finish. The perky acidity is a bit aggressive for the moderate body and modest finish.

83

Château des Cabans 2012 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Wild and gangly on the nose, the wine smells of branches and earth. The palate strikes a different pose with an intense creaminess and flavors of milk chocolate-covered cherries and strawberries. Very confectioned, the finish doesn't last long.

83

Château Haut Beyzac 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$27

Pale in color with an earthy nose, I was surprised to sniff such vociferously ripe aromas of mulberry and blueberry cobbler. The dense and thick palate layers on the coconut and vanilla extract as well as an oily texture that the medium acidity can't quite clean up.

83

Château Laville 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$10

This wine has a nicely evolved nose with game and truffle nuances. The perfumed palate combines lilac and rose petal with sweet spice, mulberries and blueberries. It is medium-plus in body with corralled tannins and integrated acidity, yet it shows excellent support. This cuvée of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon is aged in tank and larger oak barrels for six months.

83

Château Lavillotte 2011 St-Estèphe \$18

This is an exceptionally rich wine – especially for the 2011 vintage – that shows a gluttonous amount of oak-derived flavor. The palate tastes of confectionery: vanilla extract, petit four glaze and Luxardo candied cherries. These are flavors that will appeal to some while being stomach-turning to others. This bottling's soft tannins and moderate acidity make it highly approachable now.

83

Château Maison Noble 2004 Bordeaux Rouge Cuvée Prestige \$22

This blend of 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc has a dark core with rusty inflections. Its nose is compelling with exotic notes of leather and dried blood, but the red plum fruits on the palate are considerably faded. Moreover, the fairly rustic tannins seem to be creeping in on the remaining flavors, cutting off the palate's breadth. This is past its best.

83

Château Martinat 2012 Côtes de Bourg Rouge Epicurea \$29

Like its stablemate, this wine is 80% Merlot and 20% Malbec. However, it spends 18 months in new French oak. It would certainly seem to have the massively ripe fruits to handle it. However, there are odd, green mango, tart raspberry notes and leafy herbs on the palate, too. Whereas the "Grand Vin" is showing well, this one is showing tobacco leaf notes on the nose as well as a leathery palate. The structure is fine but the finish is only moderate. A bit awkward, I'd drink this sooner rather than later.

83

Château Maurac 2011 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$26

This is a surprise vis-à-vis the very good 2012. This older sibling shows a highly reserved nose with dried fruit and sod aromas. The firm palate has stringy tannins and nervous acidity with moderate concentration that leads to a short finish.

83

Château Merlet-Club Cordier 2014 Bordeaux Rouge Les Collines Fleuries \$12

Here, Cordier oenologue Olivier Leblancs works with owner Marie-Claude Bonhur to make a true-to-type Bordeaux Rouge in the heart of the Entre-Deux-Mers. Leblancs said, "We are trying to express the fruit in the wine as closely as it tasted as a grape." This youthful blend of 52% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Cabernet Franc is archetypal Bordeaux. It has crunchy red and briary fruits to form a pleasantly juicy core and an earthy nose. It's modest but honest and carries a very fair price tag.

83

Château Pillebois 2012 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Vieilles Vignes \$9

This ripe, nicely concentrated wine from 35- to 60-year-old vine Merlot has 5% Cabernet Sauvignon mixed in. It is aged one year in one-third each of new, second- and third-use barrels. It tastes exotic between its roasted beef, baked blueberries and boysenberry coulis. It's juicy on the palate but not very complex. At \$9, however, it's hard to quibble.

83

Château Pomeys 2012 Moulis-en-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Reserved and earthy on the nose, this wine needs aeration. The palate steps in line with forest floor and old leather leading the way while roasted red plums linger in the background. The medium body and light tannins give this drinkability. A surprising pop of vanilla and herbs surface on the finish.

83

Château Sénylhac 2012 Haut-Médoc \$17

Boasting a mocha nose with ripe raspberry coulis and milk chocolate accompanied by evergreen notes on the palate, the tannins are soft and the acidity is well-managed. Alas, this medium-bodied wine has a hollow mid-palate.

83

Château St-Nicolas 2011 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$12

This wine begins with a rather evolved but attractive bouquet of worn leather and fallen autumn leaves. On the palate comes masses of sweet spice though the wine is vinified and aged in stainless steel. The 60% Merlot and equal portions of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc give the give flavors of an array fresh and dried sweet and sour red fruits. Perhaps just past its peak given the limping liveliness on the palate, this wine is still okay in a pinch. The moderate finish has some interesting layers. I'd be curious to try a younger version.

83

Château Tayac 2011 Côtes de Bourg Prestige \$9

Unusually, this wine is Cabernet Sauvignon dominant (65%) with 30% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. Aged in Seguin-Moreau barrels for a severely long 2.5 years, this wine is rustic and harsh. Its deeply-colored core has a rusty rim, and its full-bodied palate is dry and wanting for refreshment. Flavors of baked cherries and strawberries briefly hit the palate before the very short finish. I tasted two bottles and each showed the same character.

83

Château Terre Blanque 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$10

This is a bruiser of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. On the nose, it shows big, bright and seriously intense black fruits. On the palate, it delivers shriveled, bitter plum skins. The tannins pinch and the acidity only accentuates the bite. The finish is short as well. Its early days on this property for the brother-sister duo managing it, and it was also a difficult vintage.

83

Château Toulouze 2012 Graves de Vayres Grande Cuvée \$19

Blended from 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc and then aged in larger French oak barrels, this wine offers a nicely ripe palate of mulberries and dark cherries. There's not a lot of verve and the acidity is more sharply vinegary than invigorating. The finish is very fast.

83

Château Venus 2012 Graves Rouge \$19

Made from 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is herbal and zippy on the palate. Its aromas of lingonberry and strawberry are appealing, but they are overlaid with imposing vanilla and white chocolate. There's a moderate finish, so there's something underneath. Alas, this is a bit disjointed now.

83

Château Vignol 2013 Bordeaux Rouge Louisiane \$14

Composed of 90% Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is crimson with a brick-colored rim. This wine has a very reserved fruit aromas, favoring fallen autumn leaves and tobacco leaf. However, the modestly concentrated palate musters a bit more youthfulness with a big whack of fresh coconut (presumably oak-derived). Otherwise, its youth is fading fast. If you're curious about the name, read on. The philosopher Baron de Montesquieu created this château. Then, in the 19th century, its current owner refashioned its façade in a Louisiana-style character.

82

Barton & Guestier 2014 Médoc Passeport \$15

Bursting with oaky nuances and exorbitant oak ripeness, this wine is framed by extremely dry tannins that dry out the finish.

82

Badine de la Patache 2013 Pomerol \$45

This wine smells of cookies, mint chocolate in particular. It also shows some Hershey's Milk Chocolate Kisses and Cherry Coke. It's unusual for sure, at least for those who prefer savory wines. Nonetheless, its oak-induced sweet notes make it a highly accessible wine for the American palate that looks for something easier drinking than a firm, tannic and acidic red. Still, the wine is technically dry. However, the youthful plumpness and mild tannins do little to diminish the acute angles on the mid-palate.

82

Château Amour 2013 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$19

Sweet spices and balsamic drizzled cherries show on the ganache-heavy palate. Cuddly tannins and balancing acidity give this average lift. This seems more of a "red wine" than a Bordeaux wine.

82

Château Bellevue de Tayac 2013 Margaux Cru Bourgeois \$40

Don't be shy about decanting this big gun! It's packed with ripe fruit and overly generous oak. Baking spice abounds, as do mocha and Hershey's Milk Chocolate kisses. While certainly exuberant, the cacophony of sweet tones are nauseating. However, there is an attractive, juicy core of youthful forest fruits. It wouldn't hurt to step off the gas with the oak for better balance. Drink this blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Petit Verdot in its youth.

82

Château des Mille Anges 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$15

This wine accounts for half the estate's surface area. Producer Heather van Ekris machine harvests this wine, gives it a long, 25-30 maceration then ages it in one-third new barriques and two-thirds stainless steel tanks. The resulting wine has loads of inky color, oodles of cinnamon

and an extracted palate of dark cherries and black plums. The short finish and mild freshness suggest this wine doesn't have the structure to hold on much longer.

82

Château Gréteau 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$12

Reserved on the nose and abrupt on the palate, this finishes short, too. There's some mashed mulberries and blueberry cobbler notes, but this blend of 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Cabernet Franc lacks finesse and focus.

Drink: 2016-17

82

Château Lalande 2012 Lustrac-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$23

Blueberry, tart black cherry, black tar and charcoal spring from the wine's nose. The palate takes an entirely different tack with candied fruit, cola and ganache. The smooth structure will please those wanting a supple wine without any "bite".

82

Château La Mothe du Barry 2013 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$15

The grapes for this wine are grown under certified organic viticulture. Unfortunately, it is a rather awkward wine. The nose smells of balsamic vinegar and is very fatigued. The palate shows both sweet and tart red fruits. The tannins are rough and scraggly and are accentuated by the firm acidity.

82

Château Landreau 2012 Côtes de Bourg \$17

After the frost of 1956, this property didn't produce wine again until the Bayle-Carreau family acquired it in 1995 and restored it to its original function. This 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon mix sees 12-14 months of oak aging, but new oak doesn't show on the wine. Rather, it tastes of sweet cherries and black plum skins. Its medium-plus body is firm with vigorous acidity and rugged tannins. Its juxtaposition between extreme fruit ripeness and high-pitched acidity leaves it disjointed.

82

Château La Tonnelle 2012 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$22

Rather severe with a firm palate of rustic tannins drying out the plump mid-palate, there are some nice red fruits at the core: cranberries and dried strawberries. Food is a must to get past the fractured mouthfeel.

82

Château Les Bertrands 2014 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Prestige \$16

This is a surprisingly funky and over-ripe wine full of jam and stewed fruits. The fruit is a bit dull, though there's some nice spiciness on the modest finish. This is a 50-50 Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon blend fermented in stainless steel and aged one year in barrels (size and type not disclosed).

82

Château Penin 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge Tradition \$15

This property has been in the family since 1854. Today, Patrick Carteyron oversees the operation. This blend of 90% Merlot and 10% cabernet Franc is rather evolved both on the nose and in color. It smells tired and papery. The palate is vaguely cherried with balsamic tinges and the finish is fast.

81

Château du Cartillon 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$33

Extraordinarily ripe and candied fruit flavors make this straightforward bottling hard to sip. Structured but not drying, this is probably best on its own.

81

Château Grand-Maison 2011 Côtes de Bourg Cuvée Sélection \$14

This is an assertive wine with lots of gamey and funky aromas. The palate is savory, too, with notes of beef bouillon as well as black plum and blackberry. The acidity is oddly sour, and the simple flavors and modest finish give little hope this might integrate in time. Clearly ambitious, this is a blend of 81% Merlot, 17% Malbec and 2% Cabernet Franc aged in 50% new barriques.

81

Château Le Chêne 2012 Haut-Médoc \$17

This light-bodied wine has a pale ruby color with a paler cranberry rim. Red fruits mix with anise and leafy aromas. The grainy tannins lead to a moderate finish.

80

Château de Bel 2012 Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge \$16

This wine is overly evolved for its age. It is showing tired, macerated mulberries and green strawberries, even though the wine's acidity is nicely fresh. It is best to check for a more recent earlier vintage.

80

Château de Panigon 2013 Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

A very smooth blend of sweet strawberries, there is little structure on this medium-bodied palate.

80

Château Grand Secret 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$25

This varietal Merlot pushes the limits of interest. It's extravagantly ripe, with prunes and roasted figs. The dry finish is hard and needs a chaser of water. There's no doubt a lot of love went into the wine given 18 months in barrique (of undefined age), but it's hard to imagine drinking a full glass of this wine.

80

Château Hauteville 2012 St-Estèphe \$26

Tasting of hot chocolate, smoke and evergreen, there is a bit of red fruit on the palate, too. The tannins are fairly rounded, so some will enjoy its juiciness.

80

Château les Grands Maréchaux 2011 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$17

This is a mind-bendingly, crazy ripe wine, especially given that it is coming from Bordeaux in a very difficult year. It is wearing thin and tasting old. Perhaps it's this bottle, but this is not a particularly attractive blend of 88% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Cabernet Franc. The tannins are sticky and the acidity is disjointed while the finish is short and hard. Perhaps this bottle is off?

80

Château Perron 2014 Graves Rouge \$20

This wine is midnight black and massively ripe. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc this is made in an unusual style. There seems to be residual sugar and the tannins are almost non-existent. This smells of coconut and Hawaiian Tropic Tanning Oil. It tastes more of Gallo's Apothic than Bordeaux. There is a very big disconnect between this and its 2012 bottling (see note).

80

Château Romfort 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$12

This wine comes from a 15 ha vineyard composed of clay and sandy soils overlaid with gravel. It tastes of candied red cherries and watermelon Jolly Rancher. It is a blend of 85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Malbec. The palate feel is uninviting between its biting tannins and lackluster fruit. This estate is under the same ownership as Château la Bretonnière.

80

Michel Lynch 2013 Médoc Réserve \$15

Tough and Bretty with cherries and licorice, it would be hard to get through a glass of this.

79

Château Brethous 2012 Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux \$23

This varietal Merlot has enormous color, ranging from midnight blue to black. Its scents range from prune juice and oil-cured olives to Middle Eastern spices and green peppercorns. The unctuous palate is cuddly with modest, almost flabby acidity, and the finish is short. Something is awry here as the vines are grown both organically and biodynamically, and it seems there is plenty of ambition at this estate.

79

Château Sainte-Luce Bellevue 2012 Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux \$25

This is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon smells ripe with summer-laden notes of fig jam, boysenberry and fresh blueberry pie. Unfortunately, the palate is dry and moisture

stripping. Despite its quick finish, it is aged 18 (long) months in barriques, one-third of which are new. Perhaps a slightly less punishing aging regimen would allow the wine's nicely pure fruits to shine through in an easier drinking manner?

Drink 2015-17

76

Château Holden 2013 Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois \$20

Decidedly sweet with fruit preserves on the palate.

76

Château Plantier Rose 2012 St-Estèphe Cru Bourgeois \$23

Showing a boldly overripe nose with a black olive character that I associate more with the Rhône. This is a strongly bitter wine.

65

Château Le Cossu 2014 Graves Rouge La Numérotée \$35

This is an utterly perplexing wine, and I can only believe this is not the expression intended by the makers. It is wildly pale in color and very clear. It tastes of raw cranberries, green strawberries and fertilizer. Something is very unusual here, and I hope it is only my sample that is utterly awry. This is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot that sees délestage and barrique.