

WINE TASTER

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Bordeaux 2002, the year of the terroir

It would be ridiculous today to deny the influence of the economy and the market on the establishing of the reputation of a vintage. 2002 is struck by the seal of infamy, before even being bottled. The market is full, the present crisis smoulders, the anti-French feeling snuffs out the remaining sharpened appetites, and each foretells a lifeless "primeur" campaign.

These considerations, however, do not predict the quality of the vintage or the weather. In effect, the weather was very mediocre during virtually the whole summer. Dull damp days, regular rainfalls and low temperatures, did not leave much place for sun. Beginning September, the case was closed, if the rainfall had been of a seasonal norm, we would have been in for another 1992, with maybe a touch of 1984. And then, history repeated itself for all the well wishers of the Bordelais, the climatic miracle took place and the sunny, dry and airy weather returned until mid October. This condition allowed the late

ripping green varieties with the 'over-ripening' into the caricatural excesses of maturing and of unlimited concentration. Here the balance is deemed of utmost importance.

Château Chadenne

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A full wine, fat and rich, upheld by densely constructed, but slightly sharp tannins.

Château de La Dauphine

not noted

The sample was reduced. Unquestionably the wine, rich, long, serious, but still linear will have to be re-tasted.

At the end of year 2000, Jean Halley, former shareholder of Promades, purchased three properties in Fronsac and Canon Fronsac. In Fronsac, La Dauphine is a property where everything had to be created. Jean Halley, invested a great deal in order to build a cellar and a vat house. He also undertook serious work in the vineyards of the two other domains, Château Canon de Brem and La Croix Canon.

The most successful in the 2002 vintage

Château Climens
Château Coutet
Château Suduiraut
Château Clos Haut-Peyraguey
Château Sigalas-Rabaud
Château Doisy Daëne
L'Extravagant, du château Doisy Daëne
Château Haut-Brion, red
Château Haut-Brion, white
Château Pape Clément, red
Château Malartic-Lagravière
Château La Mission Haut-Brion, red
Château Smith Haut-Lafitte, red
Château Cheval Blanc
Château Ausone

the production was destined to supply the Cave Cooperative. He then attempted, in a difficult vintage, his first vinifications. His work on the vines and in the cellar is particularly meticulous, and very successful. The wines reveal finesse and expression. This success immediately gave him confidence. But the real change in direction came after a meeting with Jean-Luc Thunevin (Château Valandraud) and Alain Vauthier (Château Ausone). These two charismatic winegrowers of the region of Saint Emilion made him realise the real potential of the soil of his vineyard, situated on the clay and chalk slopes of the Entre deux Mers, opposite the region of Saint Emilion, on the left bank of the Dordogne. The result of this meeting was the launching of a micro cuvée named La Fleur Mongiron. This cuvée, produced from 2,5 hectares of land planted with vines aged more than 45 years old, received a great deal of attention. From winter pruning, to the time the grapes are taken to the cellar, the work is exemplary. The rest of the vineyard, with younger vines of 25 years old, produces a wine in the Bordeaux appellation, Villa Mongiron, more fruity and presenting more fluid tannins, but of excellent maturity.

Château Mongiron, Diablotins de Mongiron

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This Cuvée Prestige is 80% cabernet sauvignon and 20% merlot, planted on a very chalk soil. Harvested on the 15th of October, the wine was vinified in open casks. Very rich, this black wine is very fresh in fruit and has a body of great length, nicely sustained by a