Bordeaux Bonanza

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

And just like that… I was complaining about shipping issues back in October, but, as we turn the corner into the new year, the flood gates have opened. We are back in the chips (AKA wines), as they say. And what better way to ring in the new year than with shelves full of Bordeaux?

In this month’s Wine News, we’ll be celebrating the fact that our ship has come in. You’ll find details on the new arrivals we’re most excited about, plus favorite values and oldies—what we do best! Our Bordeaux team has been faithfully tasting away, and you’ll find their reviews in these pages. Ryan Moses takes us on a tour of superb collectibles soon to arrive. I explore more pre-arrivals on pages 4, 5, and 6. Jacques Moreira talks about his sweet spot for 2018s on page 4. I examine my relatively new love affair with Right Bankers on page 7. And Alex Schroeder takes us home with his picks on page 8. Bordeaux lovers look no further: 2022 is already delivering the goods.

We’ve just celebrated our 45th anniversary, and we couldn’t be prouder to have such a great group of people along for the ride—staff and customers alike. Thank you all for being part of the K&L family!

2015 Saint-Pierre, St-Julien ($67.99) Neal Martin believes that Saint-Pierre “is becoming one of the go-to Saint-Julien crus” and we’re quick to agree. Saint-Pierre is a structured, complex, age-worthy gem that seems to be hitting one high note after another, and this 2015 is a quintessential example. JD97: “...Reminiscent of the 2010, only with more elegance... It’s an incredible wine that builds with time in the glass, has no hard edges and is going to 3-4 decades of life. Bravo!”

2009 Guiraud, Sauternes (375 ml $36.99) VN 97: “The 2009 Guiraud is one of the gems of Sauternes this vintage, one of the finest offerings in recent years. It has a wonderful, beautifully delineated bouquet with expressive scents of wild honey, orange pith, Seville orange marmalade, and just a hint of pineapple. The palate is beautifully defined with pure botrytised fruit, supremely well balanced with a vivacious, ginger and white pepper-tinged finish that lingers long in the mouth. Outstanding.”

1999 Gruaud Larose, St-Julien ($149.99) Well, it is 23 years old and ready! I love the ’99s. Plenty of fruit, all leading up to a definitive, refreshing, chalky finish that goes on forever. RP: “An exotic perfume of tapenade, new saddle leather, damp earth, black currants, cherries, and smoke jumps from the glass of this impressive, powerful 1999. The wine is medium-bodied with moderate tannin. This dark plum/ruby-colored St.-Julien requires another 2-3 years of cellaring.”

Key: 90 Critic Score on 100-Point Scale  RP Robert Parker Wine Advocate  VN Vinous  WS Wine Spectator  JS James Suckling  WE Wine Enthusiast  DC Decanter
New Year, New Arrivals

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

2015 La Salle de Poujeaux, Moulis ($19.99) This is the second label of Château Poujeaux, one of the most well-regarded estates in the Moulis region of the Médoc. Owned by the Cuvelier family with winemaker Stéphane Derenoncourt consulting, the vineyards are farmed sustainably, and the wine is made meticulously. This is a high-quality, affordable entry into the phenomenal 2015 Bordeaux vintage. No hard edges here at all.

2012 Haut Chaïgneau, Lalande de Pomerol ($19.99) We have had good success selling wines from this property, and this 2012 is elegant and plummy. Ready right now. Our good friend James Suckling scored it 90 points: “A balanced and delicious red with plum, spice, and chocolate character. Medium body and fine tannins.”

2004 Brillette, Moulis ($21.99) The 2004 vintage is very underrated being after the 2003 and before the great 2005. This is fantastic news for us, as it means we can snap them for remarkable prices! Despite being outshined by flashier years, 2004 is a classic Bordeaux vintage, and many are just getting ready to drink. JS: “Very pretty aromas of spice, cedar, and fruit follow through to a medium-bodied palate, with firm, silky tannins and a fresh finish.”

2014 Lynch Bages, Pauillac ($139.99) This has been K&L’s biggest-selling classified growth for the 2014 vintage. Not only is it a serious contender for the top non-First Growth of 2014, but it was priced correctly at the property. Only a few cases left.

Oldies but Goodies


2006 Pagodes de Cos, St Estephe ($84.99) No doubt that Cos Estournel wines shone in the 2000s. This second wine is worthy of a fine meal. Stephen Tanzer: “Bright, deep ruby-red. Bright aromas of cassis, licorice, violet, and smoked meat. Juicy and on the lean side but with good flavor intensity and subtle sweetness. Not a fleshy style but boasts good fruit and spine.”

1996 Meyney, St Estephe ($59.99) Another Meyney vintage to go along with the 2005, 2009, 2015, 2016, and 2019. In 2020, Jeb Dunnuck said, “This estate has been on a roll of late,” and we couldn’t agree more. One of the oldest estates in the Médoc, Château Meyney sits on a hilltop overlooking the Gironde estuary. 50 hectares, all in one plot. The wine is deep red, earthy, and well-structured. A fine Cabernet vintage, and this wine is a superb value.”

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I find it frustrating to go to a nice restaurant and order a fabulous meal, to find a wine list with only young vintages for sale. As someone who prefers to drink Bordeaux with some bottle age, I always bring my own bottle and pay the corkage. Here are a few suggestions for like-minded drinkers. These are great for the table and in a prime drinking spot.

2010 Maucaillou, Haut-Médoc ($44.99) WS: “Offers a solid core of plum and anise framed by black tea and backed by a supple, fine-grained finish. This puts on weight nicely while it airs in the glass, but stays supple and gentle overall.” Decant and enjoy.

1999 Chasse Spleen, Haut-Médoc ($59.99) WS: “Wonderful aromas of crushed berries and flowers. Medium-bodied, with fine tannins and a fresh finish.” I love these 1999s, and most are excellent right now.

2009 Lalande-Borie, St-Julien (1.5L $119.99) Magnums are the perfect size for two people, and corkage should be reasonable. I absolutely love this wine—and so do our customers: we’ve sold over 1,500 bottles of this beauty. There is no more Lalande-Borie name—now it is Petite Ducru. JS 92: “Round and silky, with a lovely richness of chocolate, currant, and plum character. Full and flavorful.”

1996 Meyney, St Estephe ($59.99) Another Meyney vintage to go along with the 2005, 2009, 2015, 2016, and 2019. In 2020, Jeb Dunnuck said, “This estate has been on a roll of late,” and we couldn’t agree more. One of the oldest estates in the Médoc, Château Meyney sits on a hilltop overlooking the Gironde estuary. 50 hectares, all in one plot. The wine is deep red, earthy, and well-structured. A fine Cabernet vintage, and this wine is a superb value.”
Best in Class, By the Case

Get a full case of these wines that are soon to arrive at K&L!

2018 Siran, Margaux 12-pack in OWC ($479.00)  Wine Enthusiast’s #1 rated wine of 2021 for less than $40 a bottle when you buy by the case. WE: “From an estate in the southern part of Margaux, this wine has just the right mix of rich tannins and taut blackcurrant flavors to give upfront freshness and potential for further aging. Structured and fruity, it should be drunk from 2027.” K&L has followed this wine for many years—it always represents a great bargain. Congratulations Edouard Maililhe.

2016 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac 6-Pack in OWC (1.5L $3000) A full case of six magnums for your cellar. This is an absolutely fabulous wine and rated #2 on James Suckling’s Top 100 Wines of 2021: “Aromas of blackberry, dried blueberry, gravel, mocha, and cigar box. Light fresh-herb undertone. It’s full-bodied with firm, ultra-fine tannins, and fresh acidity. Focused and minerally with a long finish. Great length. Very tight and restrained at the moment. Wait until at least 2026 to take a look.” Just three cases available.

Stock Your Cellar with Our Collectible Picks

By Ryan Moses

One of the great joys of Bordeaux is the access to back-vintage renditions of some of the world’s greatest wines. At K&L, most days often start with searching for the next opportunity on a collectible gem, old favorite, or over-delivering cellar treasure. It’s a bit of an obsession, honestly, but it pays off in the depth of selections we are able to offer for you here. If your resolution happens to include backfilling your cellar, look no further.

Now well into their second decade, the 2010s still bear the incredible structure that will undoubtedly make them some of the longest-lived in the region. A perfect example is 2010 Montrose ($299.99). Robert Parker called it a 50- to 75-year wine, but even today it delivers all the dimensions that make this Second Growth so cherished.

A bit more accessible, 2010 Rauzan-Ségla ($169.99), "a wine that could easily be mistaken for a First Growth," according to Jeb Dunnuck, is an excellent introduction to the profound modern-era wines of this prolific Margaux estate.

Those looking for an irresistible, ready-to-rock 2010 will want to check out the hedonistic 2010 Troplong-Mondot ($199.99), which might be more of a rival for top Napa cult Cabs with its rich texture, but will hold its own in a lineup of top-flight Bordeaux.

Speaking of reference-point vintages, it has become clearer with each passing year that 2016 is the standard against which most modern years of Bordeaux will be judged. As with most vintages, 2016 Malescot-St-Exupéry ($79.99) is the place to start, as it is one of the most rewarding high-end collectibles you’ll find; the 2016 is no exception. Considering how comparable vintages are easily creeping into the $100s, this is a sweet-spot buy with few parallels.

The same can be said for the acclaimed Pauillac classic 2016 Grand-Puy-Lacoste ($99.99), which has quickly become a benchmark vintage for the historic château. And for those looking for a cellar centerpiece, 2016 Palmer ($399.99) has four 100-point scores, and, as Dunnuck says, it is “Bordeaux at its most regal and classic.” Thomas Duroux made a masterpiece in 2016.

Looking towards Sauternes, we find ourselves with terrific depth in the iconic Château d’Yquem. Still unrivaled after all this time, the First Growth is responsible for wines of dynamic character that can’t be found anywhere else. We have a soft spot for the 2011 Château d’Yquem (375ml $199.99) which still is available for modest pricing (in the scheme of Yquem) but is among their finest releases this century. Also in that club is the “majestic brilliance” of the 2009 Château d’Yquem (375ml $299.99), which is widely considered among their best-ever releases from the historic estate.

For an under-the-radar vintage, there are few buys that are savvier than Domaine de Chevalier’s 2014 ($59.99). It delivers the undeniable Pessac profile in a complete package, and we’re bringing it to you at market-low pricing. For Left Bank, cellar-worthy selections from a top property, it’s hard to beat Domaine de Chevalier.

Another Bordeaux classic and a 96-pointer from Antonio Galloni is 2016 Prieuré-Lichine ($49.99). Again, this is one that you won’t find at a better price, and a lot of the market is well over $60. For a wine of refinement and restraint that really shows a wonderful sense of place and will age beautifully for years, look no further.

From the 2018 vintage, we have a pair of sneaky-good picks from ascendant properties who are at the top of their game. 2018 Phélan-Ségur ($49.99) is making better wines than ever. We’ve been long-time fans of this estate, but it is exciting to see them get the kind of acclaim that puts them among the elite ranks of St-Estèphe. This double 95-pointer is a best-ever rendition, but we’re also keeping a close eye on the 2019 and 2020. And Christian Moueix has truly mastered the treasured terroir of a modern-era Right Bank champion in 2018 Bélair-Manonage ($189.99). It perfectly balances a seamless and endlessly complex palate and is a challenge to the cult collectibles.
2018s: Soft and Supple

By Jacques Moreira

Recently, the Hollywood staff got to taste the 2018 samples sent to us last year from France. We focused on the appellations of St-Émilion, Pessac-Léognan, and Margaux. The 2018 vintage had a rough beginning, and more than its fair share of challenges, but it all ended very well! Hot days, cool nights, optimal weather through October. What else can we ask for? For a more detailed insight on this vintage please refer to our vintage report.

Here are some highlights from our tasting:

**2018 d’Aiguilhe, Côtes de Castillon ($28.99)** I must tell you, we have here one of those values that doesn’t come by that often. Elegant aromatics of cocoa powder, ganache, wood incense, cherry, and vanilla waft from the glass and follow on the palate, where it showcases its rich fruit and ripe tannins. It is quite delicious.

**2018 Sansonnet, St-Émilion ($39.99)** Whenever I seek a St-Émilion, I envision a wine that is rich, generous, almost opulent. I also expect to open my wallet bit wider for it. Not here! For a very reasonable price, this wine delivers a luscious, generous palate of kirsch, blueberry liqueur, chocolate, and fresh tobacco. It’s rich, but not excessive. A perfect steak wine.

**2018 Rauzan-Ségla, Margaux (1.5L $274.99)** It is impressive in its power yet equally remarkable in its finesse. It seems an almost effortless endeavor, but nothing could be further from the truth. We know how hard the team at Rauzan-Ségla, from the vineyards to the cellars, worked to offer us this œuvre d’art. They must be very proud of their effort. As for me, I am making sure to splurge and gift myself a couple of bottles!

**2018 Grand Mayne, St-Émilion (Pre-Arrival $64.99)** The captivating aromatics and rich cherry-chocolate palate is followed by exotic spices, cloves, herbs, and ripe tannins. I am completely smitten with this classic St-Émilion. It will evolve and keep improving beautifully. A very special bottle.

**2018 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux (Pre-Arrival $64.99)** Our tasting group thoroughly enjoyed the Malescot. There is something remarkably fresh yet complex about it. The fruit is perfectly ripe, and so is its tannin structure. A very silky experience to be enjoyed for many years to come. I would suggest getting a case and enjoy a bottle every year after decanting.

**2018 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (Pre-Arrival $99.99)** Displays the perfect balance between power and elegance. Its firm structure grips the exquisite palate, as it should in such a superior wine. It is meant for the cellar, and I do mean it. One can easily expect to be enjoying this three decades in the future—even more. But you don’t need to wait that long to drink it. I say four to five years and a good decanting will reveal its magic.

**Bonus: One Great In-Stock 2019**

**2019 Pavillon de La Reine, Pauillac ($24.99)** This is the “house” wine from the famous hotel Pavillon de la Reine in Paris. I have seen this beautiful place on the Place des Vosges, but, alas, have never been inside. Now I have tasted their wine! I have to point out the price, after all this is a Pauillac! Very approachable now, with loads of chocolate and cassis notes. Serve it tonight with dinner.

Clyde’s 2018 Picks

**2018 de Chantegrive, Graves ($19.99) 92 WE:** “This wine is young but has great potential. The tannins shine, balanced with powerful black fruits and a solid, dense texture. The wine will age well and will be at its best from 2023. “Cellar Selection” (RV)”

**2018 Cantemerle, Haut Medoc ($39.99)** These folks hit it out of the park every year. **94 WE:** “A well-constructed wine that is ripe with black fruits and integrated tannins, this is in a good place for aging. Black-currant fruitiness is balanced by a dry, smoky core that holds promise. “Editors’ Choice” (RV)”

**2018 Malartic-Lagravière, Pessac-Léognan ($59.99) 94 JS:** “Blackberry, hot-stone, and blueberry aromas follow through to a full body with chewy, dusty tannins... It shows lots of Pessac character, reminding me of the stoney soils of the area. Give this at least three or four years to come together. Try after 2024.”

**2018 Soutard, St-Émilion ($64.99) 97 JD:** “It’s hands down the finest wine I’ve tasted from this estate and offers a thrilling bouquet of cassis and black raspberry fruits as well as notes of camphor, tobacco, dried flowers, and dried rose petals. Full-bodied and flawlessly balanced, with silky tannins and that rare richness without weight character that’s the hallmark of truly great wines, it’s going to benefit from 3-4 years (it’s brilliant even today) and have 20-25 years of prime drinking. Hats off to the team at Soutard!”

**2018 Pichon-Baron, Pauillac ($189.99) 96-98 AG:** “The 2019 Pichon-Baron is a wine of extraordinary depth and resonance.”

We offer six excellent wine clubs at KLWines.com
2019: the Best of the Trilogy?

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

The 2018, 2019, and 2020 vintages in Bordeaux are each excellent—and pretty distinctive from one another. In general, 2018 is riper and more voluptuous; 2019 has more brightness and acid; and 2020 marries the two. Good things come in threes: taken together they form a classic trilogy, just like in the years 1998-1999-2000 and 2008-2009-2010. The jury is out here, but I sure like the focus and precision of the 2019s—not to mention the freshness.

In Stock


2019 Fleur Cardinale, St-Émilion ($38.99) 92-94 NM: “The 2019 Fleur Cardinale has a very composed bouquet, perhaps more so than its sibling, Croix Cardinale. It offers black cherries, black olive, and light cassis aromas, all nicely integrated with the oak. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy black fruit mixed with graphite and cedar, almost Left Bank-like towards the structured finish. Excellent.”

2019 Grand Mayne, St-Émilion ($44.99) We love this property. Here it is, and Neal likes it. 94-96 NM: “The 2019 Grand Mayne takes its time to unfold in the glass, eventually delivering enticing and very pure red berry fruit, beautifully defined and less exuberant than some of the vintages I was tasting 15-20 years ago.”

2019 Phélipon-Ségur, St-Éstèphe ($49.99) Sweet, effusive aromatics take over right away! Elegant red fruits all in perfect harmony; rounded tannins. A very fine wine—maybe the best ever from them?

2019 Kirwan, Margaux ($49.99) Very spicy aromas with blackberries in abundance. Soft, round tannins. Quite nice, with violet undertones. 95-97 WE

2019 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge ($69.99) Lovely, round, sweet fruit on the nose and palate; creamy layers of silky, deep red fruit drench the mouth, leading to the long, rich finish. Perfectly balanced and delicious DDC.

2019 La Gaffelière, St-Émilion ($84.99) Another must buy from this property—they are on a roll. Fabulous aromas of black raspberry and blackberry. Very perfumy. Quite full-bodied, thick, and palate-filling. Lush, sweet, and sexy. Seamless; regal. 95-97 RP

2019 Beychevelle, St-Julien ($119.99) Wonderful spicy aromas; sweet, black cherry fruit flavors, a touch of cola. Soft and warm on the palate.

2019 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac ($139.99) Brilliant opening price by Alfred Tesseron—but we got very reduced allocations for the 2019 vintage. We had 400 cases of the 2009, and we were lucky to get 150 this year, so fans of this estate should snag the elegant 2019 while we have it in stock.

2019 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien ($99.99) Tasted twice, as the UGC (Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux) and the property both sent me samples. Black color. Super sweet aromas of red roses and cassis. Big wine; full-bodied; tons of everything. Ager, and one of the better wines I tasted. 97-99 JD, 97-99 WE

2019 Léoville-Poyferré, St-Julien ($104.99) Great concentration of deep, dark, dense red fruits, with notes of black cherry. Good power, richness, and long-finishing. A steal compared to the 2018.


2019 Canon, St-Émilion ($179.99) DC 98: “Sleek, elegant, and appealing even before you get your nose near the glass. Aromatically it is deep and rich, and then it revs up and takes off. Dense, compact, and intense, zingly limestone vibrancy and grip. Winemakers say they are looking for balance all the time, but here you feel it, with tiny pulses of electricity that appear from beginning to end of the palate.”

2019 Montrose, St-Éstèphe ($179.99) DC 98: “Oh this is good, it steals up on you with real depth of flavor, stately and concentrated in a way that reminds me of a 1996 or a 2016. Extremely measured, very clear that this is going to age effortlessly, it is extremely discreet and yet packed with persistent flavors.”

2019 Vieux Château Certan, Pomerol ($339.99) RP 97-100: “…Very deep purple-black in color... slowly opens out to reveal a heart-stopping perfume of red roses, kirsch, black raspberries, violets, and star anise over a powerful core of plum preserves, blueberry pie, and boysenberries plus hints of cardamom, sandalwood, and Ceylon tea. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is achingly graceful.”

Find blue-chip Bordeaux on auction now at KLWines.com
Pre-Arrival 2020s for Your Cellar

By Clyde and Trey Beffa

A mix of values and top wines from the 2020 vintage, which was the third in the latest trilogy of great Bordeaux years (2018-2019-2020). For some reason, Bordeaux tends to produce these three trilogies at the end of decades. Some Bordelais compare this one to the 1988-1989-1990 wines. My notes (CB) and Trey’s notes (TB).

2020 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc ($28.99) This property has been on a roll since Philippe Dambrine took over in the early 2000s. Seems like they hit the ball out of the park every year. The 2020 has nice aromas of cassis and rose. Good mid-palate flavors and lingering finish. This property is south of the Margaux region. CB

2020 Tour St-Christophe, St-Émilion ($32.99) Tasted in California: Deep color, almost black. Lovely nose of Asian spice and toasty oak. Powerful, blackberry flavors, with some red berry hints on the back palate. Big and powerful wine with lots of mineral on the finish. Very good as usual. CB


2020 Phélan-Ségur, St-Estèphe ($47.99) Excellent property recently sold by the Gardinier family. Tough to beat their fabulous 2019, but this 2020 comes close. Nice nose and full bodied on the palate. Plenty of structure for the long haul. CB


2020 Kirwan, Margaux ($49.99) Another super effort from this estate in 2020. Congratulations to Sophie and the Kirwan team. Spicy, toasty oak aromas with black raspberries thrown in. Great texture on the palate. Superb depth of flavor and a lingering finish—all this for under $50. CB

2020 Langoa-Barton, St-Julien ($49.99) What a delightful wine with super Asian spice aromas and some cherry cola on the palate. Finely balanced with fruit covering the tannins. More black fruit flavors than red fruits. CB

2020 d’Issan, Margaux ($64.99) This wine is always solid of late. Red raspberry aromas that follow to the palate. A serious wine for the cellar. Great value. CB

2020 Haut-Batailley, Pauillac ($64.99) Rich and toasty with a velvety core of dark cherry and blackberry fruit. Concentrated but very pure and seamless. Balanced and fresh. Hints of minerals and graphite in the background. CB

2020 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan ($69.99) A great value here! Soft and sweet on the palate with earthy flavors, and great length on the finish. Black cherry flavors. Soft, round tannins. As good as their 2016 and 2018—and well-priced for sure. CB

2020 La Gaffelière, St-Émilion ($79.99) Dark color, intensely concentrated fruit, velvety, and explosive fruit that lingers on the finish. Hints of mocha and black cherry. Tannins are ripe and integrated. Lots of power, but the wine seems very approachable. TB

2020 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien ($94.99) Wonderful nose, aromatic and fresh. Explosive fruit jumps from the glass. Long and lingering finish. One of my favorite 2020s! TB

2020 Clinet, Pomerol ($104.99) Surely one of the top wines of the vintage. Intense, ripe blackberry jam on the nose. Nuances of blueberries on the palate. Plummy, lush, sweet, and sexy on the palate. So well made. Long finish. CB


2020 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac ($139.99) A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petit Verdot. This blend accounts for one of the lowest percentages of Cabernet in the final blend in recent memory. Toasty aromas with hints of coffee and chocolate in the mouth. This is a classically styled Lynch-Bages that will age well. TB

2020 Pichon-Baron, Pauillac ($174.99) Coffee and tobacco flavors. Long on palate. Super wine. Jean René is making great stuff at Baron. This wine is a keeper. CB

2020 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac ($199.99) So good it reminds me of the fabulous 1989, which is drinking perfectly now after 30-plus years. The Merlot really shines here. This wine will give any of the fabulous vintages 1981 through 1990 a run for the money. So elegant, but with plenty of structure for a long cellar life. CB

2020 Cos d’Estournel, St-Éstèphe ($225.00) The fruit seems to jump from the glass. Crunchy red currant and black cherry fruit are concentrated yet balanced. This wine shows a good deal of power and density but still is alive and fresh in the mouth. Savory flavors of sweet herbs, spice, and cocoa powder linger on the finish. TB

2020 Figeac, St-Émilion ($239.99) Pure and seamless. Crunchy high-toned fruit, lots of minerals and a balanced yet firm finish. Excellent wine that should be included in your cellar selections. TB

2020 La Conseillante, Pomerol ($239.99) Tasted at the property. 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc. They call this property the Burgundy of Bordeaux, but this wine is all Pomerol. Plummy, fat, and quite rich on the palate. Fresh and lively—very focused on the palate. Sweet finish with tannins being hidden by fruit. CB
2020 Palmer, Margaux ($359.99) Very dark in color, dense and powerful, yet with a wonderful elegance and sweetness of fruit. Alive and fresh; wonderful purity. One of my favorites of the vintage. TB

2020 Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac ($659.99) Toasty, perfumed, and nearly exotic fruit in the aromas. Cassis and velvety red currant fruit in the mouth. It shows ripe fruit tannins that are seamlessly integrated with the rest of the wine. This is a classic Mouton with alcohol around 13%. A wine that should age well but also show well early on in its life. TB

An Affair to Remember: Clyde and the Right Bank

By Clyde Beffa

OK, I know that I rarely drank Right Bank Bordeaux in the ’70s or ’80s or ’90s—in fact, as K&L Bordeaux Buyer, our store shelves were, for decades, packed with Left Bank beauties. Then, all of the sudden, I started buying more Merlot-based Bordeaux—and drinking more of them! As I enter my Golden Years, my tastes have changed so that now I really enjoy softer-styled Bordeaux—fruity and less tannic. I love older Left Bank Bordeaux also, probably because they are less tannic and more fruit forward. Well, no matter: here are some Right Bank wines that we have in stock and that I highly recommend.

2015 Grand-Pey-Lescours, St-Émilion ($19.99) A wonderful, mature, value Merlot. Plump and ripe like most 2015 St-Émilions. Should be great with chicken or turkey, but also lovely with quail or rabbit. A must try.

2016 Vieux Château Palon, Montagne-St-Émilion ($26.99) I bought this wine many years ago and really enjoyed it in the early 2000s. It has appeared again, and it is delicious. 92 JS: “Plenty of charred oak, but this muscular Montagne-St-Émilion also has a ton of crushed berries that provide succulent balance. The long finish is harmonious enough to drink well already. 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc.”

2016 Siurac, Lalande de Pomerol ($29.99) We discovered this estate only a few years ago when we spent a night at the property and had a wonderful dinner there. For a 2016, the Siuric is silky, perfumed and exceptionally beautiful. Lots of finesse with sweet menthol and pretty herbal notes. This property was recently purchased by the Pinault group of Latour fame.

2015 Siurac, Lalande de Pomerol (1.5L $44.99) In general, the 2015s are softer than their 2016 counterparts, and this wine is no exception—it is super lush!

2010 Grand Mayne, St-Émilion ($74.99) Grand Mayne always makes a value wine, but, like Rodney Dangerfield, it gets no respect. Sweet and sexy with some of that 2010 tannin at the back end. Decant one hour, and enjoy with a pork roast.

2017 Tour St-Christophe, St-Émilion (1.5L $79.99) A superstar property that makes great wines for low prices. 95 JD: “This estate made a stunning 2017, and I continue to love this wine. A typical blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, the 2017 Château Tour St-Christophe has remarkable purity in its black raspberry and blueberry fruits as well as complex spice, candied violet, spring flower, and cedar herb aromas and flavors.”

1994 La Tour-Figeac, St-Émilion (1.5L $129.99) This wine comes from vineyards located directly between Cheval Blanc and Figeac. Excellent and consistent winemaking has been the hallmark of La Tour-Figeac. We sold out of our first batch quickly here, and we just got 50 more magnums. The 27+ years old magnum is in a perfect spot right now.

2018 Pavie-Decesse, St-Émilion ($149.99) One of the first wines we tasted on our 2019 buy trip, and we loved it. Not overdone at all—great balance. We only have a few cases.

2016 Figeac, St-Émilion ($299.99) This property is on a roll, and they have a beautiful newly renovated winery. Rumor has it that Figeac will be the next St-Émilion First Growth. This is a very linear and driven Figeac with smooth and fine tannins. Full-bodied, yet compact and reserved. Blackberry and chocolate flavors. Cellar it.

2010/2015/2016 La Gaffeliere Six Bottle Sets (2 Bottles of Each Vintage $929.99) One of our favorite properties over the last seven years. Three exceptional vintages for this under-appreciated winery. Don’t miss these fine 6-packs—only five remain in inventory. And be sure to get some of their great 2017, 2018, and 2019 vintages. Up until now, the wines have been values.
New Arrivals
By Alex Schroeder

There is no better Bordeaux selection on the American market than K&L’s. Thanks to our Direct Import program led by Bordeaux Buyer Clyde Beffa, we have a much wider selection, significantly lower prices, older vintages, and a more well-informed staff than all of the competition. Yes, even despite the looming shipping crisis, our inventory is stocked to the brim with old and new favorites, and these are a few you will find on the shelves at all three stores right now.

2015 & 2016 Barde-Haut, St-Émilion Château Barde-Haut falls into the category of “All-Time K&L Favorite,” and for good reason. Many of you have met owners Hélène Garcin-Lévêque and Patrice Lévêque during one of the several wine dinners they have had with us. They are pure class. Their wines are quintessential St-Émilion, hailing from terroir just adjacent to Tour St-Christophe.

We opened the 2015 and 2016 for the staff to taste and we were evenly split between which was our favorite. The perfume on each had dark cherries, currants, violets, and potpourri, toast and and baking spice—the 2015 ($44.99) had a rich silky texture, subtle underlying acidity, and a long savory finish. The 2016 ($46.99) displayed great freshness, tannic structure, and vivacity behind the rich fruit, with a more searing acid-driven finish.

2015 Beau Soleil, Pomerol ($29.99) This is a new château for us, but when you find a Pomerol for under $30, you must try it, and I’m glad we did! This has an unmistakably express Merlot bouquet of red fruits, mint, pepper, herbs, and dark earth. The texture is true to the vintage—rich, generous, and silky with pure fruit and a finish that tremolos for nearly a minute. This is one of the finest Merlot values in our store; it should move quickly!

2018 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc ($39.99) Cantemerle is one of the few Left Bank Grand Cru Classé châteaux not located inside one of the main communes. As such, its price is usually much better than the other Grand Crus while its quality is right up there with them. 2018 was a difficult year for them; they had to cull over half of their fruit due to mildew. What survived, however, made great wine. This is one of the most expressive 2018s I’ve tasted, with flavors of blueberries, raspberries, pomegranates, and red currants, framed by subtle toast. The vibrant fruit is very lively and the finish is impressively long.

2016 Terrasson “Cuvée Prévenche” Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux ($14.99) The region of Castillon is difficult to beat in terms of ready-to-drink, younger, value-driven wines, and this delicious cuvée is no exception. “Prevenche” is French for “Periwinkle,” probably so named because of the lovely floral aromas the wine has alongside its strawberry compote and sous-bois flavors. The wine is red-fruited, medium-bodied, and shows the wonderful acid/tannin balance of the 2016 vintage—it is just so utterly delicious and drinkable for the price.

2018 Tour du Moulin, Fronsac ($19.99) The power of 2018 is on full display in this Right Bank gem. It shows blackberries, dark cherries, licorice, and graphite across a full-bodied, silky texture. Yet the wine remains so balanced and approachable, even in its youth. This is my pick for a burger pairing. But can easily hold its own with a rich ribeye. It would be a great wine to have lying around in the cellar for the next five to ten years.

2018 Saint-Estèphe de Calon-Ségur, St-Estèphe ($29.99) Calon Segur made some of the best wine of St-Estèphe in 2018. If the grand vin proves too tempting to keep your hands off until it has aged to perfection, this is a wonderful short- to mid-term substitute. Made from the younger vines of the property (average age: 22 years), the third label displays incredibly expressive blackberry and blueberry fruit, licorice, herbs, and spice leading to plush silky tannins and subtle acidity through an impressive finish. Blind tasted, I would never guess this was an affordable third label. A steal!