



February Wine Club

Thank you for joining us for another edition of the wine club. In this wintery weather we are turning to hearty red wines with dark blue fruits from the Cotes du Bourg in Bordeaux.

The Côtes de Bourg is located on Bordeaux's Right Bank where Merlot is often the dominant grape in any blend. The winery is a stone's throw from the banks of the Gironde river, closer to Margaux on the Left Bank than St.Emillon and Pomerol on the Right. Wine making in this area dates back to Roman times and there is evidence that Caesar sent an emissary to build a fortress on the hill above the river as a military outpost. The soil in Bourg is varied and the region is known for its rolling hills. Property is relatively affordable, particularly for unkempt land with great exposure – natural circumstances allowing for winemakers to limit their use of chemical intervention in the vineyards.

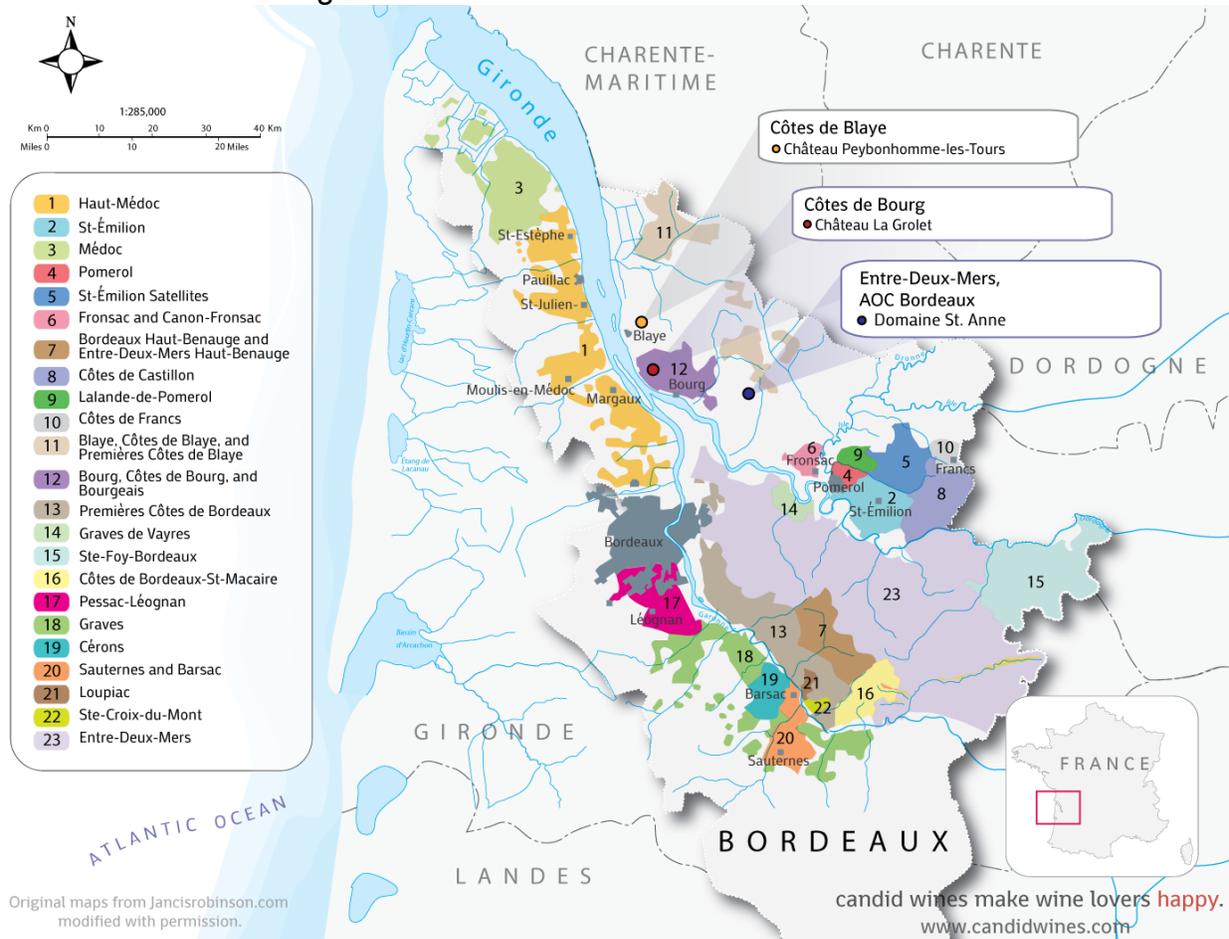
Where many in Bordeaux and elsewhere chase points and look to construct wines that will perform well for reviewers and critics, these three families pursue biodiversity and eschew the hallmarks of technological winemaking. New oak barrels are kept to a minimum in the wineries and any talk of additives is verboten. Instead, the wines are intended to be a reflection of what happened in the vineyard that year and they are made with as little intervention as possible.

2012 is a particularly strong vintage in Bordeaux – we are happy to feature two wines from this year. Each of the wines pairs well with hearty fare - we hope enjoying these (hopefully) final days of winter over Bordeaux and braises welcomes in spring.

Thank you again for your support of independent winemakers. We look forward to seeing you soon!

With appreciation,
Cubby, Nathan, Catie O, Katherine & Mac

Find the Cotes de Bourg under no. 12:



Chateau la Grolet, Tete de Cuvee, 2015

Jean-Luc and Catherine Hubert, along with their son Guillaume and daughter Rachel, manage the estate from the vines to the bottling line. The family, on Catherine's side, has been growing wine in the area since 1895, and in 1997 they were able to purchase La Grolet in the Côtes de Bourg. At the heart of the family's efforts is a dedication to organic and biodynamic farming. Between Château Peybonhomme Les Tours and La Grolet, the Hubert's are the largest biodynamic farmers in the Côtes de Bourgs and Côtes de Blaye regions.

During the French Revolution, the owner of Château La Grolet backed the King and ended up donating his most prized possession to the anti-Royalist forces, drenching the history of the Château in blood. Literally and figuratively headless, the Château charted a wandering course through history until the Hubert's came along in 1997 and purchased the land and the Château.

The La Grolet "Tradition" and "Tête de Cuvée" wines from Château La Grolet are both marked by the distinct, older vine Cabernet Sauvignon that forms the backbone of the wines, even though it represents less than half of the blend. Merlot is the most widely planted grape on Bordeaux's Right Bank, but these are wines where the Cabernet seems to play the starring role. Both wines are ageworthy, though the Tête de Cuvée has more tannin and tends to represent the older parts of the vineyard. We expect it to live well into its second decade, where the Tradition is a wine to enjoy in the first ten years after vintage.

To cook: Duck soup, Carrot and red lenti ragu, Carne asada

Trois Petiotes, 2012

Domaine Les Trois Petiotes, a 3-hectare estate in the Côtes de Bourg owned by Valérie Godelu, has been a proponent of less is more on the field and in the cellar for more than a decade.

The name of Valérie's domaine, Trois Petiotes, is regional dialect for "3 Little Girls", a tribute to her 3 daughters. After the birth of her 3rd daughter, Valérie and her husband, Denis, decided that life in the city wasn't for them. Dreaming of becoming a winemaker,

Valérie went to enology school. After graduating, she made the unlikely decision to move to Bordeaux and began making wine without chemicals or additives in the heart of, perhaps, the most conventional winemaking region of France.

Valérie became interested in natural wine because she found herself enjoying drinking these wines the most. Also because she believes the environment above all should be respected and that great wines are primarily made in the vineyard not in the cellar. She now owns 2.5 hectares of vines in the Cotes du Bourg and grows Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and, interestingly, Malbec, which while now unusual for the region was widely grown here prior to the phylloxera epidemic in the late 19th century.

Fully destemmed with stainless steel tank fermentation, the wine is aged in neutral oak for 4 years with minimal sulfur addition. The result is a very expressive wine with a beautiful structure combining vibrancy and texture. The wine, a blend of Merlot (around 65%), Cabernet Franc and Malbec, shows pretty notes of red plums, black and blue berries, cigar wooden box, and violet with menthol and savory undertones. With a superb minerality coming from the soil, a mix of sand, clay, limestone and gravels, supple tannins, and bright acidity, the wine is welcoming and exciting.

To cook: Chorizo tacos, Sweet potato pommes anna, hangar steak with Bordelaise

Chateau Falfas, 2012

With 20 hectares of vineyards planted on rolling hillsides of Bayon in the Côtes de Bourg, Château Falfas has a winemaking heritage that dates back to the 14th century. The Château was in fact one of the very first in Bordeaux to practise organic and biodynamic methods. Veronique (the winemaker) is Francois Bouchet's daughter. François Bouchet was the pope of biodynamics in France, he brought it in the 60s and was very close friend with Lalou Bize Leroy and Anne Claude Leflaive. He helped DRC to become biodynamic as a consultant. Falfas has been certified biodynamic since 1989 and serves as a prime example of what biodynamics can achieve in Bordeaux.

Today Veronique builds on the traditions of the past with a very simple philosophy: the best wines are not “made” but rather “grown”. She remains passionate about practicing biodynamic principles to extract the very essence of the terroir, producing authentic, rich and generous wines.

This wine is the classic, Right Bank Bordeaux blend of Merlot (55%), Cabernet Sauvignon (30%), Cabernet Franc (10%) and Malbec (5%), made by Veronique Cochran. The estate is regularly mentioned as one of the best in the Cotes de Bourg and surprises people who might not expect wines of this caliber outside the more famous Cru.

The wine is fermented on native yeast and elevage takes place over 11 to 14 months in a mix of 25% new 75% used French oak barrels.

To cook: Beef rib roast, salt and pepper beef ribs, fresh and wild mushroom stew