

# CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

## Dynamic winemakers making innovative and expressive hillside wines

Finding family-run, authentic and innovative wines across the Côtes de Bordeaux is one of the pleasures of Bordeaux. And in successful vintages like 2019 there are lots of wines to recommend in both red and white styles.

This tasting covered around 190 wines from Blaye, Cadillac, Castillon, Francs and Sainte-Foy, with the final selection covering 119, though there were plenty more excellent wines that we didn't have space to include, because **this is a vintage that has delivered fruit-forward, well-structured and sappy wines that can either be drunk now or kept for drinking over the next three to five years.** And as ever these wines provide some of the best values in the entire region.

Each of the five sub-regions has its own distinct personalities and terroir, with certain key characteristics in common – **primarily vineyards that are built on slopes (or côtes), allowing for great sunlight and drainage for ripening the grapes, as well as making them stunning places to visit.**

Their geography also provides excellent soils for quality winemaking, whether limestone dominant in Castillon and Francs, or clay and gravel dominant in Sainte-Foy and Blaye and Cadillac. It means that Merlot is the constant grape throughout all five areas, often with Cabernet Franc as the accent grape in Castillon and Francs, and Cabernet Sauvignon in Cadillac, Sainte-Foy and Blaye. And increasingly you find an extra dash of Malbec and Petit Verdot in the blends across all five, giving deep black fruits and a welcoming kick of spice.

These are also **five areas where you are likely to be greeted by a family member if you visit – around 90% of estates in the Côtes de Bordeaux are independently-owned. It means that mixing up tradition and creativity is**



Photograph: Corinne Couette

Chéty family, Château Haut-Colombier and Château Bellevue

**easy, helped by new generations arriving** and also by the usually small sizes of the properties that means new techniques and artisanal winemaking can be trialled with ease.

**You'll also find plenty of organic and biodynamic certifications here plus others such as Bee Friendly or Vegan.**

With nearly 85% of vineyards certified with an environmental label, the Côtes are increasingly leading the way in Bordeaux in terms of environmentally-conscious low impact winemaking.

Francs and Castillon both seem to have done exceptionally well in 2019, but there are brilliant wines to be found everywhere.

There are less whites overall in the Cotes than red (just 10% of production) but we found plenty to enjoy. As a rule expect the wines to be fresh and fruity and to be consumed young.

**This is a tasting that I look forward to every year, and came away once again convinced of the value and pleasure to be found in the Côtes de Bordeaux.**

### WHITES

#### BLAYE CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

##### Château Mondésir-Gazin 2019 91

Crisp, well defined, this stands out among the Blaye whites for delivering definition and lift. **Drink 2021-2026 Alc 12.5%**

##### Château des Tourtes, Cuvée Prestige 2019 90

Well balanced with a fresh zip through the wine. 100% Sauvignon Blanc and retains appealing aromatics even with oak ageing. Juicy, appealing. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 14.5%**

##### Château Cailleteau Bergeron 2019 89

Slight reduction which gives an appealing steely edge to the aromatics; this is enjoyable, easy to approach classic Blaye white. Doesn't try too hard and succeeds because of it. Terra Vitis. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13%**

##### Petit Secret 2019 89

This is enjoyable, one to recommend, easy drinking, fresh and floral with juicy citrus and apricot fruits. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13.5%**

##### Château La Rose Bellevue, Grappe Diem 2020 89

Aromatic nose, lemon and tropical touches – pineapple and peach with a slight touch of honeysuckle. Good acidity and juicy lemon core. Slight viscosity to it giving weight added by some bitter orange rind flavours and soft oak hints. **Drink 2021-2023 Alc 13%**

##### Château les Bertrands, Pente Sud 2019 89

This has oak-impact giving a round mouthfeel, and toasted almond notes are evident on the attack. Charming sweet nectarine fruit and gentle citric bite. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13%**

##### Château Vieux Planty, Passion 2019 89

This is good, with a smoky edge and gourmet appeal. After a minute the lovely nectarine notes come through and overall this is successful, with personality. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13%**

##### Château Haut Colombier 2020 88

Lemon, nectarine rind and honeyed caramel notes on the nose. The palate is really lively, good crunchy apple fruit and nicely balanced acidity. Would work well with food, this is a fine, easy drinking wine. **Drink 2021-2023 Alc 13%**

##### Famille Sabourin, Réserve La Maison Girondine 2019 88

High floral character to the point that the Muscadelle is doing most of the heavy lifting on the aromatics. It is gentle, whispering upwards out of the glass, has character and a distinctive voice. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13.5%**

##### Siffle Merle, Jadéite 2019 88

This takes some of the Sauvignon Blanc aromatics down and puts the focus more squarely on toasted apricot and nectarine notes. Touches of smoke on the attack, and there is an attractive uplift as it opens. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 14.5%**

##### Le Blanc du Grand Barrail 2020 88

A slow burn, but as it opens it shows attractive stone fruit character and a saline lick. First vintage certified organic. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 12.5%**

#### FRANCS CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

##### Château Puyanché 2019 92

Love this, clear character and poise, silky texture along with lime zest to add lift, pep and definition to the flavours. Aged in barrel. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 14%**

##### Château Les Charmes-Godard 2019 91

Pale green yellow colour, this is a more serious white that needs a bit of time in bottle to unwind. Honeysuckle flavour alongside the citrus shows its dominant Sémillon blend. Attractive slate minerality. Clever winemaking as ever from Nicolas Thienpont. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 13%**

##### Château Puygueraud 2019 89

Nicolas Thienpont's Sauvignon Blanc-dominant Francs give a different expression from his Les Charmes-Godard and one that for me has more immediate appeal. This is good and extremely juicy, with focus on white pear and nectarine. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13.5%**

#### SAINTE-FOY CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

##### Château Carbonneau, Margot 2019 91

This is a fresh, floral, gently lilted Sauvignon Blanc. A classic crisp white Bordeaux well expressed and so different in character from the preceding one that it proves the point that you don't know what to expect in a glass of Sainte-Foy white Bordeaux. In organic conversion, unoaked. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13%**

##### Château Hostens-Picant 2019 90

Pretty high alcohol for a white wine so watch out ordering it over lunch if driving (although this could be a benefit of lockdown lunches at home...). On the palate it is balanced, and this is a lovely wine full of fat ripe apricots and some drops of salted citrus slices. It's big shouldered but generous. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 15%**

##### Château Trois Fonds 2020 90

Succulent citrus fruits, juicy uplift through the body. Floral notes appear as it opens. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 13%**

##### Château de Claribès, Sauvignon Cent pour Cent 2020 89

Full of pep, well controlled through the palate, juicy on the finish. Good depth to the flavour, ensuring this has plenty of personality. Organic since 2010, vegan. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 14%**

### REDS

#### BLAYE CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

##### Château Bonnange 2019 92

Unfiltered and unfinned, clear chocolate, liquorice, cassis. You can tell some money has been spent on this and that confidence levels are high, but it truly delivers a beautiful salinity that runs through the palate and ensures a mouthwatering finish. A good and relatively new estate, one to follow. **Drink 2021-2030 Alc 14.5%**

##### Château Cailleteau Bergeron 2019 91

This is spicy from the first taste, instantly hits the tongue, liquorice and coffee beans, followed by black cherries on the palate giving some juice and freshness to an otherwise quite dark palate. Tannins are present and just about stay on the right side of not overwhelming the mouth and fruit. This will get better with age. **Drink 2022-2025 Alc 14%**

##### Château Mondésir-Gazin, Bardon 2019 91

Always a name to look out for in Blaye, making classical top-end wines that deliver fruit, balance and just enough glamour to stand out from the rest. This is enjoyable, has a feeling of sinew that runs through the fruit and gives it a juicy signoff - and it's an extremely unusual 100% Malbec, making it extra worth seeking out. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 13.5%**

##### Château Fontarabie 2019 91

Seductive and heady nose here, floral notes and purple fruits. Lovely density and weight on the palate, chewy and gently gripping. Cherry, strawberry and blueberry juice and purity of flavour. Feels headier and more rich compared to many but well balanced. Really enjoyable glass. **Drink 2021-2025 Alc 14%** ➤

**Château Graulet 2019** 91

Floral, fruity and spicy, a good complex nose here, the texture is smooth with softly grippy tannins. This has a deep flavour - liquorice root and charcoal-edged blackcurrants and cherries. Long finish. Feels quite rounded and well made, offering more substance than some of the others. **Drink** 2021-2025 **Alc** 14.5%

**Château Cap Saint-Martin, Cuvée Prestige 2019** 90

Heady nose with impact, sweet strawberries, liquorice and black plums. I love the texture, vibrant and chewy - it just coats the mouth with grippy but gentle tannins. Feels really alive and bright in the mouth. Good concentration of flavours with support around the sides giving weight to the overall feel. Very ripe fruit, and you get a sense of the heat but it's quite well balanced and integrated. A great food wine. **Drink** 2021-2025 **Alc** 14.5%

**Château Chamaille 2019** 90

Smells juicy and ripe and delivers on the palate. Has a real tang to it. Bright fruit - strawberry and raspberry which settles and integrates to gentle tannins. Fresh and fun. Clean, precise, well worked. Easy drinking and a nice light fun style. **Drink** 2021-2026 **Alc** 13.5%

**Château Haut Colombier 2019** 90

Soft and smooth on the palate, this has a nice chewy mid-palate offering vibrant red cherry and strawberry flavours and supportive tannins that are present but well-integrated. Enjoyable. 5% Petit Verdot completes the blend. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 14%

**Château Lacaussade-Saint-Martin, Trois Moulins 2019** 90

The palate is soft but succulent and alive. Great combination of bright cherry fruit with gently gripping tannins and overall weight on the palate. Tannins play their part to support and add length and complexity. Good length with a vein of black pepper and liquorice spice coming in at the end adding interest. HVE3. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 14%

**Château Les Aubiers 2019** 90

Tannins are immediately grippy and coat the mouth slightly overpowering the fruit, but it does still come through and there is freshness and vibrancy underneath. I

imagine this will get better in another year but it's appealing. Interest is on the nose and palate. 5% Malbec completes the blend. **Drink** 2022-2026 **Alc** 13%

**Château Haut Prieur 2019** 90

This has attractive balance and an underlying sweetness to the black cherry fruit while maintaining a sense of form and lift. Good quality. Aged in one-fill oak barrels for 12 months. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 14.5%

**Château Petit Boyer, Les Confidentiels Cuvée Paloma 2019** 90

Classic chocolate dusted damson nose, this suggests carefully made with a thorough chargrilled-kiss in its aromatics. Fermentation in barrel and aged in 100% new oak. HVE3. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 14.5%

**Château Bellevue, Amphorae 2019** 89

Aged in amphora, this has some reduction at the moment but there is a good emphasis on hedgerow brambled fruit that expands through the mid palate. Plenty of salty saline licks that come into play through the finish, and a good grip. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 14.5%

**Château des Matards, Cuvée Nathan 2019** 89

A deep, dark and sultry nose here, black cherries and blackcurrants. Rounded ripe fruit with a light presence of tannins and soft weight in the mouth. Easy drinking. **Drink** 2021-2023 **Alc** 14%

**Château du Vieux Puit 2019** 89

Freshly picked strawberries and red cherries on the nose. Juicy and vibrant

with perfumed elements coming into play on the mid-palate. I like this, it's bright and fresh, no airs and graces but well-defined, unfussy fruit. Good. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 13.5%

**Château Grand Secret 2019** 89

Oak aged in one-fill barrels, 100% Merlot, this is pretty plumped up with ripe berry fruit flavour. There are smoked oak notes and overall this is enjoyable despite a trace of heat through the finish. Plenty of personality. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 15%

**Château la Gamaye, Cuvée Prestige 2019** 89

The palate is upbeat, there are some astringent tannins but these will integrate with a bit more time because the fruit is there - strawberry, raspberry and red cherry. Succulent on the mid-palate, sweet jammy fruit and good persistence. A crowd pleaser. Organic conversion since 2018. **Drink** 2021-2025 **Alc** 13.5%

**Château la Raz Caman 2019** 89

Touche of tar through the edges of the palate, this has oak impact but is balanced by blackberry and blackcurrant fruits and a dusting of rosemary and black pepper spice. Good stuff. 15% Petit Verdot completes the blend. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 14%

**Château Haut Bourcier, Cuvée 10H 10 2019** 89

Softly floral nose with touches of red cherry, plum and liquorice. The texture is smooth with ripe and fresh fruits dominating. Lovely freshness and cherry flavour. A light, easy drinking style. HVE3. **Drink** 2021-2023 **Alc** 14.5%



**Bourcier family, Château Haut Bourcier**

**Château Le Grand Moulin 2019** 89

The palate is rich and ripe, chewy, very lovely, good texture and depth of flavour though you do get that cherry alcohol flavour coming through with a spicy oak-laced kick at the end. A food wine. 5% Malbec completes the blend. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 13%

**Château Les Garelles 2019** 89

The palate is succulent and sweet, lively and fresh, oak comes in on the mid-palate darkening the overall profile and making it a bit more serious. Bright cherry fruit then a bit of oak, would work with food. Interesting blend with both Carmanère and Malbec, with 5% Cabernet Franc rounding things out. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 13%

**Château Mayne Guyon 2019** 89

Lively fruit and dark, more black cherry and plum than bright strawberry here. Tannins are present and help hold up the fruit. Easy drinking and good with food. HVE3. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 14%

**Château Bourdieu Absolu 2019** 88

Smells inviting with cherry and plum fruit. I like the immediate texture here, it's quite grippy and the tannins make themselves known but there's fruit as well, strawberry and red cherries offering some freshness and acidity. Feels a bit weightier and structured than some - even if it doesn't have the power to go full throttle. **Drink** 2021 2024 **Alc** 15%

**Château Dubraud 2019** 88

Soft berry fruits, starts well, pliable tannins, fades a little on the finish but there is charm here. Touch of Malbec (5%) gives a kick through the finish. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 12.5%

**Château Gigault, Cuvée Viva 2019** 88

Jammy cherries on the nose here, succulent and welcoming. The fruit flavours expand on the palate bringing blackcurrant and blueberry with tannins that are softly gripping. In organic conversion. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 14%

**Château Haut Bertinerie 2019** 88

Here there are bright red fruits, it's a little soft through the mid palate but there are attractive liquorice root notes and well placed tannins. Not as good for me as their 2018, but still an enjoyable Blaye from a successful name. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 14%

**Château Haut-Canteloup 2019** 88

Expressive nose, brambled fruits - blackcurrants and dark cherry flavours with hints of menthol. Juicy and immediately appealing here, really lively, more strawberry than anything, not overly complex but good fun. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 13%

**Château Haut Grela 2019** 88

Rich cherries and chocolate on the nose with a hint of florality, this smells inviting. Juicy and lively on the palate, red cherry flesh and strawberry juice. It's light and fresh, no real presence of tannin but doesn't feel too light. Nice length. Easy to drink. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 14%

**Château Haut Lalande, Grand Vin 2019** 88

A classic well balanced Blaye, plenty of black fruits, firm but fresh tannins; traditional but it does it well. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 15%

**Château Jussas 2019** 88

Fresh and lively on the nose, plums and damsons, a tiny bit jammy/stewed almost. A soft texture and taste on the palate, cherry fruit with chewy tannins in support. Flavour fades quite quickly but enjoyable for easy, everyday quaffing. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 13.5%

**Château Les Bertrands, Nectar des Bertrands 2019** 88

A rich and darkly seductive nose, jammy and stewed fruit with liquorice and aniseed touches. Good purity here, more menthol and eucalyptus on the palate, almost overpoweringly so, but the fruit kicks in too and this is nice. Well balanced. Oak and wood spice linger at the end. One to decant and have with food. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 14.5%

**Château L'Escadre, Tradition 2019** 88

Darkly fruited nose, black cherries and bramble fruits with oak notes. The texture is supple with ripe fruit flavours, tannins softly gripping the sides of the

mouth. It has depth of flavour but the oak is a bit too present and dominating, masking the fruit freshness at the end. **Drink** 2021-2025 **Alc** 15%

**Château Les Chaumes, Vieilles Vignes 2019** 88

Sombre fruit on the palate, almost chewy in its weight. Feels subdued and overpowered by the weight of the tannins but as it opens tobacco, coffee and charcoal comes out. Should improve with another few years in bottle. **Drink** 2022-2025 **Alc** 14.1%

**Château La Rose Bellevue, Grappe Diem 2019** 88

Summer berry fruits on the nose, soft and not too powerful. This has juice, florality on the palate, with strawberry and red cherry. An unusual style, very aromatic but juicy with soft tannins. **Drink** 2021-2025 **Alc** 14%

**Château Monconseil-Gazin 2019** 88

There's a nice impact of bright cherry fruit on the palate, good immediate freshness and juice though it doesn't linger too long and there's only a slight presence of tannins which offer a bit of support at the end. **Drink** 2021-2024 **Alc** 13%

CADILLAC  
CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

**Château Biac 2018** 93

Liquorice, damson and chocolate shavings abound. As ever this wine stands out for its quality. Full of well defined black fruits, a juicy finish. The vintage tasted here is a year older than the others because they age it for longer at the chateau. 6% Petit Verdot completes the blend. This was the last vintage made with consultant Patrick Léon. His son Bertrand has now taken over the role. **Drink** 2022-2028 **Alc** 13.5%

**Alt 120m 2019** 91

From an estate located at 120m altitude (it says on the label the highest point of the Gironde but doesn't give further details as to exactly where) and 100% Cabernet Sauvignon - so all in all an interesting wine that is worth keeping an eye out for. As is often the case with the (rare) entirely Cabernet wines, there is a clear austerity but it has a sapidity running through it, and grows on you as it opens. Aged in barrels for 12 months. **Drink** 2022-2028 **Alc** 13.5% ➤



Boyer family, Château du Cros

#### Château du Cros 2019 90

Well judged extraction, unfussy firm fruit that is ripe but not over ripe, lovely emphasis on raspberry and redcurrant fruits. This is an estate that I enjoy in white and don't often explore in the reds but it's easy to recommend. Not trying too hard, and yet managing to impress. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13.5%**

#### Château Réaut 2019 91

Attractive damson colour, well-judged smoked cedar on the nose, fairly Left Bank in feel because of its tannic hold. Sweet berry fruit comes in through the mid palate, and overall plenty to enjoy, as is often the case with this estate (with its 600 co-investors, many of whom help each year with harvest). Organic conversion as of 2020. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château du Grand Moueys 2019 90

Heavy bottle and we had real trouble getting the cork out on two separate bottles. Hope you have more luck than me, because there is lovely plump ripe fruit in here when you make it through. A little burly perhaps, but pleasurable. Will be aged in amphoras from the 2020 vintage. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Haut Peyrat, Prélude d'Haut Peyrat 2019 90

Perky bright fruits, a cheerful wine that would be great with an aperitif plate of charcuterie. Unoaked, and it works because they are very careful to bring out the juicy character of the berry fruits. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château le Doyenné 2019 90

Clear charred damson on the nose, plenty of fruit to balance out the charred

oak notes. A touch of heat on the finish but overall this is successful and has personality. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château de Lyde 2019 89

Bright and perky black cherry fruits, this is enjoyable with a nice emphasis on berry fruit helped by a cold soak before fermentation. Unfussy, aimed at being drunk young, and it's successful, with a fresh balance. **Drink 2021-2026 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Baracan 2019 89

An unusual blend here with such a high amount of Cabernet Franc, certainly for the appellation, with attractive floral aromatics on the nose. Clear austerity, will benefit from another year softening in barrel but this is perky and interesting, with a juicy finish to the redcurrant and raspberry fruits. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château de Birot 2019 89

40ha of beautiful slopes overlooking the Garonne river, this is a lovely estate that has produced a fine 2019, with black fruits, well defined tannins and uplift on the finish. Fairly traditional in expression built around structure but still allowing the fruit to come through. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château de Laville 2019 89

This is partly vinified and aged in barrel and certainly at this early stage you feel the oak in the flavour and fatness of the texture. No doubt it will settle and there is good fruit underneath, plump and engaging. Terra Vitis. From the Gonfrier family. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Lagrange 2019 89

Softly brushed raspberry and blackberry fruits, feels well poised and has lift. A little austerity right now but should reward another year in bottle. Aged in a mix of both vats (which are built into the floor) and oak barrels. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Langoiran 2019 89

One of the most beautiful estates in the region, this is fairly dark in colour with purple and damson reflections, has charm, a little abrupt on the finish but has promise. A Vignobles Gonfrier estate. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Sissan, Grande Reserve 2019 89

Balanced, bright ruby red fruits that deepen as it travels through the palate.

Keeps the emphasis on fruit all the way through, although there is a tannic frame here and you can expect a good five to 10 years drinking ahead. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Charivari, L'Aventure Nocturne 2019 89

This is powerful and silky in texture. Smoked caramel notes fill out the mid palate. Unfiltered, unfinned, free run juice only, aged in neutral french oak barrels of around five years old. This is an excellent estate that has an imaginative range of wines by talented winemaker/owner Nea Berglund, and is really worth following. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Clos du Château de Cadillac 2019 89

On limestone soils, there is austerity on the opening beats and pretty serious tannins throughout, but also a lovely sense of uplift on the finish and the dark berry fruits build in power as it unrolls in the glass. One to watch - give a few years in bottle. Impressive concentration. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 13%**

#### Château Dudon, Cuvée Jean-Baptiste 2019 89

A Jean Merlaut-owned estate since 1961, this has smooth edges, the tannins have been carefully worked and it is easy to approach. Aged 20% in cement vats and 80% in one and two year fill barrels. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Les Conseillans 2019 89

A deep plum purple in colour, this has an attractive texture with silky mouthfeel overall. A little subdued on the finish but there is charm here, with a kick of spice. 6% Malbec completes the blend. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Bourdon la Tour 2019 88

Sweet black cherry and strawberry fruit, tannins are supple and fine boned, and there is juice through the finish. Plenty of charm and ready to drink soon but should last a good 5 years. From the Charles Yung family. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château de Lestiac 2019 88

Oak is a little dominant, although there is good ripeness to the fruit underneath, and it has personality. Classic Cadillac character in that the black fruit seems dominant and it seems almost Left Bank in character. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**



Château Haut-Rian family, beehives

#### Château Haut-Rian, Classique 2019 88

Unfussy, emphasis on strawberry and red cherry fruit, earthy, enjoyable. Dietrich family, with winemaker Pauline Dietrich. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13.5%**

#### Château de Marsan 2019 88

Touches of redcurrant on first nose, sweet oak aplenty, it has appeal and would be a good by the glass choice. Raspberry fleshy fruit but overall lacks a little freshness. Long maceration, 12 months in oak. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Malagar 2019 88

Vanilla bean, damson and raspberry fruit, this is aiming for a gourmet confident feel and pulls it off. A little sweet but there is character here and fresh acidities. Estate once owned by the writer François Mauriac. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13.5%**

#### Château Nénine 2019 88

Damson in colour with vibrant violet edging. There are clear charred oak notes, along with touches of chocolate and damson fruit. Luxurious, silky texture, with Cabernet playing a big role in the dark fruit expression. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13.5%**

#### Château Prieuré Canteloup 2019 88

Well balanced, appealingly ripe fruits, classic, traditional in character but it works and has charm. An estate that has been in the hands of the same family for 80 years, run by Valerie and Xavier Germe since 1991. In organic conversion, certification expected 2021. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Tanesse 2019 88

Traditional, tannic hold, good firm black and red fruits. From an estate overlooking the 18th century fortress of Château Langoiran. Full bodied, classical. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 13.5%**

#### Les Vignes de Coulous 2019 88

Cherry red, charred cedar on the nose, unoaked and it feels it, with an emphasis on fresh summery fruit and a kick through the finish. Unpolished, charming, approachable. Organic, short maceration to ensure the focus kept on fruit not tannins. **Drink 2022-2026 Alc 14%**

### CASTILLON CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

#### Clos Puy Arnaud 2019 93

Obvious from the first nose that there is depth and rippling fruit in this wine. You get plump blueberry and raspberry set against the slate-textured minerality that makes limestone such an exciting soil for the Merlot grape. Deeply coloured, there is austerity here, of the kind that grips the flavour to your palate, and promises to age. Biodynamic certified. Tasted blind, this is the same score that gave the wine En Primeur, and is easy to recommend. **Drink 2023-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Ampélia 2019 92

Here you get the skip in the step of a limestone-focused Castillon. Lovely depth of colour with some bright violet rim around the edge of the glass. The right kind of austerity and a saline lick on the end of play, balancing the sappy red fruits. Enjoyable from François Despagne. Organic certified. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14%**

#### Château le Rey, Les Argileuses 2019 92

Full plum purple in colour, touch of reduction on the nose. As it opens, lovely supple black fruits and a kick of acidity takes it up on the finish. I really admire the winemaking at this property, and it's easy to recommend. A non-Bordeaux bottle shape emphasises that this isn't a classic Bordeaux approach, and it is one to seek out. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Bouty 2019 91

Owned by Les Frères Thienpont, this needs time in the glass and probably another few years in bottle. An attractive rusticity and sense of unforced fruitfulness. Really grows on you as it opens up in the glass and starts showing spice and tenacity - there is real grip here, and it unrolls for longer

than you expect at first. Good stuff. Old vine Merlot. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château la Brande 2019 91

Soft berry fruits, well judged in terms of its tannic/acidity balance, this has a ton of dark berry fruits and plenty to recommend. Very good. 3% Petit Verdot completes the blend. In organic conversion, certified as of 2020 vintage, and beginning biodynamic conversion. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

#### Château Côte Montpezat, Cuvée Compostelle 2019 90

Plummy fruit on the nose and the attack, this has a slightly hard kick of acidity but there is liquorice and chocolate to balance and soften things up with a gourmet edge. Good quality, tannic bite closes in on the finish suggesting this will age well. Good quality 29ha estate, certified bee-friendly. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château le Peyrat 2019 90

Dark ruby colour, touches of smoke on the first attack deepening to boysenberry, damson fruits, a full mouthfeel. The estate was extended by 20ha in 2018 with a purchase in the excellent commune of Belvès de Castillon, and this 5th generation of the family shows no signs of slowing down. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Moulin de Clotte, L'Authentique 2019 90

No added sulphur, and this feels like a wine with personality and unfussy appeal. Slight reduction at this stage - no doubt they made the sensible choice to work this way because not adding SO<sub>2</sub>, but just be aware to give it some time in bottle or decanter to really let those blackberry and cassis fruit flavours out. Attractive liquorice root notes on the finish. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

#### Château Pitray 2019 90

A fairly classic Castillon, dark berry fruits on the attack with brighter raspberry and redcurrant notes coming in through the mid palate giving lift and definition. Tannic hold, some smoked grilled oak notes. Attractive. Owned by the same family for 600 years, today headed up by Jean de Boigne, the 26th generation of his family at the estate. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14.5%** ➤

**Château Rochers Bellevue 2019** 90

A ton of colour here, glass staining purple, and this has a sweetness to the damson fruit that makes it extremely appealing, given depth and lift by fresh acidities. The tannins line up along the finish but they are well worked to ensure nothing is overly constricted. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13%**

**Château Roque le Mayne 2019** 90

Good freshness, a real sense of tension runs through the body. Dark fruit dominates, and there is clear tannic hold. Overall a confident wine with plenty to enjoy. 5% Malbec completes the blend. Beginning organic conversion. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14.5%**

**Clos Louie 2019** 90

This has a sappy unforced feel, from a certified biodynamic estate. An even split between Merlot/Malbec, and the two Cabernets, meaning 25% Cabernet Franc completes the blend stated here. Plenty of personality, one to look out for. Certified biodynamic. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14.5%**

**Petit Fombrauge, Merlot de Petit Fombrauge 2019** 90

This is a special cuvée of just 1,500 bottles with no added sulphur. It is a little sour on the finish, but zippy and full of bright fruit, and has tons of charm. Great to see the Côtes making wines like this. No need to wait - make the most of these raspberry fruits while they are this fresh and engaging. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 12%**

**Château Bréhat, B de Bréhat 2019** 89

The violet rim is extremely promising although on the palate this translates into a freshness that almost veers too high towards austerity. It is saved by the fruit that floods in through the mid palate, and this is overall an enjoyable sappy wine that would be great with a plate of charcuterie. Good stuff from Jerome and Beatrice de Monteil. Unoaked. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 15%**

**Château des Demoiselles 2019** 89

A reliable estate from the Ducourt family. Clear cedar-edged oak notes that are a little evident on the attack at this early stage but soften to an attractive smoky edge on the close of play which bodes well for its approachability in a few years in bottle. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

**Kalyk family, Château Picoron****Château Picoron 2019** 89

Sweet damson fruit, this is confident and well expressed, good layers of flavour. Needs a few years in bottle as it is structured rather than sappy, but good quality. Plenty of changes going on at this property at the moment, making it one to watch. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château Haute Terrasse 2019** 89

In organic conversion, this is a good choice for an early to medium term drinker with plenty of well sculpted red and black berry fruits, and a nice tick of saline-tinged acidity that runs through the palate. Good sense of energy while still maintaining focus. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château La Pierrière 2019** 89

This is enjoyable, has a brightness to it that is both unfussy and appealing. Not overly structured, classic in balance, a more traditional take on Castillon but entirely successful, from a family that has been in place on this site since 1607. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château les Armes de Brandeau 2019** 89

Silky in texture, well balanced on the attack and through the mid palate, although a touch of heat which just throws the balance off on the finish. There is a ton to enjoy here though, and it's an attractive interplay between summery and autumnal fruits. A lovely estate also with an imaginative approach to wine tourism. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

**Château Tour d'Horable 2019** 89

Pierre Faytout is the 5th generation of

his family at the property. Fresh and sappy with juicy black fruits and a saline kick. Organic, biodynamic. The family were once coopers, but this bottling is unoaked. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13%**

**Château Veyry 2019** 89

Lovely sweet damson fruit, balanced by bright acidities, this is perky and bright. Dark bitter chocolate on the finish brings things to a slightly quick ending, but it's very good and has promise to soften further over next few years. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 15%**

**Château Blanzac 2019** 88

Good depth to the black fruits, well balanced between tannin and fruit, fairly traditional in feel, this doesn't quite have the skip in it step that you can find in many clay-limestone wines from Castillon, but there is plenty to enjoy, and it is well structured. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château de Belcier 2019** 88

Deep ruby in colour, aged in oak and it has firm tannins surrounding the fruit. Serious in character, making it a traditional take on Castillon. Good, if a little subdued. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14%**

**Château la Clarière 2019** 88

Well-balanced, some clear austerity on the attack. This has grippy tannic hold, some sour cherry edging to the otherwise plummy raspberry fruits. As it opens in the glass the fruit comes out, but this remains one of the zippier higher acidity Castillons in this lineup. A reliable and good quality estate. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château Le Pin de Belcier 2019** 88

A firm ruby plum colour, careful colour extraction and an emphasis on ripe berry fruit on the nose. The Malbec plays an oversized role in terms of deep black pepper spice and a rustic bounce to the tannins. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château Pillebois 2019** 88

Firm ruby colour, attractive violet edging. This starts off with a lovely burst of summery fruits, strawberry and raspberry and sappy tannins. It glides to a finish rather quickly but it has an unfussy charm and is well

expressed. No need to wait. New owner since 2019, with plenty of investment and new ideas happening. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 13%**

**Arbo family, Château Puyanché and Godard Bellevue****Le Secret du Manoir 2019** 88

Severine and Philippe Emile are the owners of this special bottling from Château Manoir du Gravoux, located in the high quality soils of St Genès de Castillon. The colour is a little darker than some, reflecting perhaps its 50% new oak ageing, and its plump 100% Merlot fruits. The oak is a little dominant right now, and I suggest giving it a few years in bottle to soften, but there is a creamy mouthfilling quality to the raspberry and red cherry fruits, and it's full of promise. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14.5%**

**Faret 2019** 88

Fairly heavy handed on the oak, this has ambition and nice elements of chocolate shavings and liquorice, but not much sense of place. It's a good wine, no question, from the cooperative cellars of Les Vignerons de Puisseguin. Plenty of changes behind the scenes also, with a new president and a new technical team **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 14.5%**

FRANCS  
CÔTES DE BORDEAUX**Château Cru Godard 2019** 92

An enjoyable and reliable estate, and this is an excellent example of classic Francs signature - juicy, full of life, a real sense of the limestone terroir in its saline finish and plenty of ripe red and black fruits. Ready to drink but will have a good 5 or 10 years ahead of it. In biodynamic conversion. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14.5%**

**Château Godard Bellevue 2019** 91

Raspberry and black cherry on the nose, good depth to the fruit through the mid palate. This is good quality, firm tannins, clear austerity, could do with another year in bottle to soften. **Drink 2022-2030 Alc 14.5%**

**Domaine Haut Ventenac, L'Authentique 2019** 91

Enjoyable layers to the raspberry and black cherry fruits both on the nose and the palate. Astringency and bounce to the tannins suggests this has a good five to 10 years ahead of it and there is juice on the finish. Unoaked and yet without the sometimes overly-marked austerity that you can get from unoaked reds in Bordeaux, this is impressive and easy to recommend. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

**Château Puyfromage 2019** 90

Cherry red, edged with cedar and touches of grilled vanilla bean. On the palate there is well-controlled raspberry and strawberry fruit, overall this is an unfussy wine with soft tannins and emphasis on easy pleasure. Good stuff from this 53ha estate that sits on the limestone plateau of Francs. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

**Château Franc Cardinal 2019** 89

Tannins are fairly evident at this early stage, edged with rusticity although well balanced by dark fruit. The tiny touch of Malbec makes an impact in the flavour profile, and overall this is fairly traditional in feel and structure. Should be a great food wine and has confidence and poise. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13.5%**

**Château Pleyssac-Tayac 2019** 89

Damson, raspberry fruits, filled out by a tarry smoke that shows the oak influence. Quite different in character from many, with a sense of confidence and depth. This is one of the oldest estates of the appellation, with soils that are higher in clay than many in this limestone-dominant region. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13%**

**Château Clos Fontaine 2019** 88

Plump raspberry and cherry fruits right from the first nose, sweet cedar notes, rich in mouthfeel, a little abrupt on the

finish but plenty to enjoy. Aged in barrel but no new oak. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

**Château Laulan 2019** 88

Bright and cheerful cherry aromatics on the nose, some rustic tannins but sappy unfussy red fruit character, enjoyable stuff from Bruno and Frédérique Citerne. Estate located in the village of Francs. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**

SAINTE-FOY  
CÔTES DE BORDEAUX**Château Hostens-Picant 2019** 90

Always a more classic, structured flavour profile than some in the appellation, this goes for a confident feel and it succeeds. There is a clear tannic frame holding its black cherry fruit in check, and smoked tar notes from its 12 months oak ageing. Starting organic conversion as of 2020. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 15%**

**Château Pré la Lande, Cuvée Diane 2019** 90

Velvety red in colour, this is a wine that is filled with personality, and that feels both unforced and rustic in all the best ways. Unfiltered, natural yeasts, manual harvest, there is plenty of structure but it is not difficult to approach. Organic, biodynamic and vegan. **Drink 2022-2028 Alc 13.9%**

**Michel Baucé, Château Pré La Lande****Château L'Enclos, Réserve 2019** 88

A medium to full plum colour, classic Bordeaux on the nose, red fruits, cherry and raspberry dominant, clear cedar sweetness. This is well made. Owned by Vignobles Lamont. HVE3. **Drink 2021-2028 Alc 14%**