

Bordeaux 2008 en Primeur

May 2009

2008 vintage was dramatically better than I had expected. It had all the qualities that make an excellent and in some cases, a great vintage so special. **ROBERT PARKER**

If I had to sum 2008 Bordeaux up in one word, that word would be 'surprising'. **JANCIS ROBINSON**

"...the vintage is very good for the top names of Bordeaux. From petite châteaux to the premiers crus, the reds show lovely aromas, fruity palates and silky tannins. The bright acidity on many of the wines gives them long and lively finishes... The 2008 reds will be lovely clarets for claret lovers, as the English might say. Or, in a more direct way, if you love typical Bordeaux you are going to love many wines in 2008. They are real racy reds from Bordeaux, not superripe-style wines..." **JAMES SUCKLING Uncorked, WineSpectator.com**



The Bordelais are in the habit of announcing new vintages with dubious meteorological pedigrees as 'much better than you are expecting', so when they made the same noises about the 2008s as they had done about the pretty scrawny 2007s, I did not take much notice. But I think all of us tasters who descended on Bordeaux recently were brought up short by just how well the 2008s were tasting – particularly in view of how relatively cool and wet the 2008 summer was last year in Bordeaux.

The weather was good all during the week of primeurs tastings and, as one long-serving Bordelaise put it, sunshine in primeurs week is worth quite a few euros on the opening price. But I don't think it was just the spring sunlight putting us all in a good mood. The reds we tasted had good healthy colours, excellent acidity, (mostly) ripe tannins (although some of the lesser left bank wines tasted a little green) and enough fruit. Perhaps more important was what the wines did not show. There was none of the dangerous vapidity of the 2007s. None of the overripeness that some producers headed for in the early years of this century in a misguided attempt to copy California Cabernets. Nor, in the same vein, was there evidence of excessive oakiness – even on the right bank where the overall level of wine and winemaking was really quite inspiring in 2008. **JANCIS ROBINSON**

It did not take me long to realize that the 2008 vintage was dramatically better than I had expected. It had all the qualities that make an excellent and in some cases, a great vintage so special: exceptionally dark opaque colors, gorgeously ripe fruit, stunning purity almost across the board, great freshness (because it was a cool year), slightly higher acids than normal, and remarkable density as well as concentration. Moreover, one of the significant keys to evaluating quality is the maturity of the tannins. In 2008, the tannins are unusually velvety, even in wines that may lack concentration. By day three I was thinking about how this could have happened. When you look at all the facts (not the rumor-mongering from irresponsible bloggers), it seems clear that after the vinifications were done in late October and early November, something excellent had been produced. The wine producers all knew it, but Bordeaux is always the first to be accused of over-hyping their wines, and the global economic crisis had begun in earnest by November, 2008.

So why has the quality of the 2008 vintage turned out to be excellent, with a number of superb wines that are close to, if not equal to the prodigious 2005 or 2000 vintages (two years with many of the best wines I have ever tasted from top to bottom)? **ROBERT PARKER**

With prices up to 50% lower than the 2007 and with excellent recent reviews and scores we have decided to release a Bordeaux 2008 Offer. However, as there is uncertainty with the exchange rate and the on-going tax structure for wine in Australia, we are offering the wines as a classic English styled En-Primeur in which you pay to secure the wine in France now with the freight and taxes being charged to you at the time of shipping and delivery. In the past we have offered an up-front price inclusive of all taxes.

Wines are sold in three bottle minimums and you pay the **PAY NOW** price only to secure the wine. This **PAY NOW** Price is the price of the wine based on the current exchange rate and the first offer prices out of Bordeaux. Once we receive your order we will secure these wines and confirm this price. The **FULL PRICE** is our current estimate of the total you will pay if the wines were to be shipped today. You will be charged the difference between these two prices at the time of shipping in early to mid 2011. The exact amount of this final payment will be influenced by the exchange rate at this time as well as the Australian Duty and WET Tax. Due to the fluctuating exchange rate and the possibility that the taxation levelled on wine may change we feel it more transparent to process this last payment when the wines are shipped.

Regards

Alex Wilcox

The following wines are listed alphabetically

Alter Ego de Palmer, Margaux

PAY NOW: \$76

FULL PRICE \$98

Minimum Order 3 bottles

The second wine, the outstanding 2008 Alter Ego de Palmer, a blend of 52% Merlot and 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, is one of the finest examples of this cuvee I have tasted. Well-integrated wood smoke intermixed with notes of creme de cassis, earth, and forest floor are found in this opulent, deliciously fruity, round, and sensual effort. It should drink beautifully for 10-15 years **89-90 ROBERT PARKER**

Angelus, St Emilion

PAY NOW: Sold Out

FULL PRICE Sold Out

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Made from yields of 30 hectoliters per hectare, this blend of 58% Merlot and 42% Cabernet Franc exhibits an inky/blue/purple color as well as a sweet bouquet of blueberries, blackberries, camphor, forest floor, and a hint of spring flowers. Although backward, it reveals great intensity, sweet tannin, a nuanced, lively personality, full body, and a promising style. Like a lot of these wines, the score for this wine is probably low given the late malolactic fermentation as well as a later than usual blending. There have been so many great wines from Angelus since 1989 that it is hard to put the 2008 in the context of some of the other remarkable vintages. My guess is that there are five vintages that will ultimately eclipse it - 1989, 1990, 1998, 2000, and 2005, but not by much. However, the 2008 is not far off the mark of any of those legends. It should drink well for 25-30 years. **92-94 ROBERT PARKER**

Warm, toasty nose with real juice and life to it. Relaxed winemaking. Quite a bit of force though less vibrant than the Ch Ausone I have just tasted. But good purity and not too much alcohol. Sweet and succulent – just a little hint of dry tannins on the end. **17.5 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Bernadotte, Haut Medoc

PAY NOW: \$29

FULL PRICE \$37

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Pretty impressively dark crimson. Meaty/toasty nose with lots of appeal. Sweet start and very easy. Lots of pleasure. Firm and dense but with lots of flesh too. Quite energetic. This could be a very GV. Good quality oak from the posher properties with which it is associated (Pichon Lalande notably) and some nice ripe fruit. **16.5 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Dark cherry, earth and wild hedgerow on the nose, a little subdued at the moment but good definition. This is a softer textured Bernadotte, lighter tannins, fleshier on the entry but with those telltale characteristics of graphite and cedar towards the finish. Very linear at the moment. Fine. **88-90 NEAL MARTIN**

Beychevelle, Saint Julien

PAY NOW: \$69

FULL PRICE \$89

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Made in a seductive, soft, charming style, the 2008 Beychevelle is destined to be drunk during its first 15 years of life. It is a sensual St.-Julien offering pretty raspberry and cranberry fruit as well as hints of darker fruits on the palate. With soft tannins and good purity, this is a medium-bodied, well-made, evolved, forward 2008. **88-90 ROBERT PARKER**

Branaire Ducru, Saint Julien

PAY NOW: \$67

FULL PRICE \$87

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Sweet black raspberry and blueberry fruit intermixed with hints of acacia flowers and crushed rocks always provide Branaire with a distinctive perfume. In the mouth, there is impressive purity, a powerful yet elegant style, noticeable but sweet tannin, and nicely integrated acidity. The wood component is not apparent given the density and richness of the fruit. The 2008 should come close to rivaling the 2005, 2003, and 2000. Consume it over the next 20+ years. **91-93+ ROBERT PARKER**

Calon Segur, Saint Estephe

PAY NOW: TBC

FULL PRICE TBC

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Deep crimson. Very different. Spicy sweet nose – very fluid. Quite a contrast to the austere Montrose we have just tasted! Quite rich and supple and fireworks. Round and rather glorious though not at all tarted up. Very fresh. Firm and with great spin though no compromises. Very classic. A very confident vintage for Calon-Ségur. **17.5+ JANCIS ROBINSON**

Perhaps that explains the elegant, but rich style of the 2008 Calon Segur, which is dominated more than usual by Cabernet Sauvignon. Cropped at 40 hectoliters per hectare, it is a blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, and 2% Petit Verdot. Its sweet perfume of black currants, tobacco leaf, and licorice is followed by a wine with superb purity, good freshness, and a full-bodied style with ripe tannin as well as a long finish. Somewhat reminiscent of the 1996, although this vintage carries a much higher percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2008 should be relatively approachable given the sweetness of the tannins, and will evolve for 20-25 years. **90-93 ROBERT PARKER**

Clarence Haut Brion, Pessac-Leognan

PAY NOW: \$107

FULL PRICE \$138

Minimum Order 3 bottles

45% Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc.

New name for the second wine. Very deep purplish crimson. Sweet and scented and then pretty light and polished. Lots more Cabernet in evidence than in the Chapelle de la Mission tasted alongside. And drier. Sleek but a little bit of a hole in the middle. Something not fully ripe about the finish. **16 JANCIS ROBINSON**

The second wine, the 2008 Le Clarence de Haut-Brion, offers sweet, pure, black cherry and black currant fruit, a distinctive underlying minerality/earthy component, medium body, and a rich, flavorful personality. Give it 2-3 years of cellaring and consume it over the following 15. **89-91 ROBERT PARKER**

Clerc Milon, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$74

FULL PRICE \$96

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Aromas of sweet tobacco interwoven with cedar, black currants, and subtle smoky menthol emerge from the medium-bodied 2008 Clerc Milon. While slightly austere, it exhibits sweet black currant fruit along with hints of mocha and underbrush. Its substantial tannins are neither aggressive nor unripe, and the wine reveals the beautiful purity and seamlessness that are the hallmarks of so many 2008s. **89-91 ROBERT PARKER**

Clos du Marquis, Saint Julien

PAY NOW: \$64

FULL PRICE \$83

Minimum Order 3 bottles

For many years, Las Cases' second wine has been the equivalent of a classified growth in the Medoc. The 2008 Clos du Marquis may be one of the two or three finest second wines I have tasted from proprietor Jean-Hubert Delon. A blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot that came in at 13.5% natural alcohol, it is a pure, deep, full-bodied effort displaying classic aromas of creme de cassis, licorice, and crushed rocks. On the palate, there is a sensational black fruit character, no hard edges, and a seamless integration of all the component parts. This wine should drink beautifully for 15 or more years. **90-93 ROBERT PARKER**

Conseillante (La), Pomerol

PAY NOW: TBC

FULL PRICE TBC

Minimum Order 3 bottles

90% of production. Merlot with 14% Cabernet Franc. 90% new oak but with malo in tank not barrel. Zesty nose. Fresh, fine nose. Subtle and juicy and really rather glorious. That's my only criticism. Easy to like. Very sweet and

engaging with good dynamism but just a hint of sawdust. Lots of oak! Very polished – though a little bit dry on the finish. **17 JANCIS ROBINSON**

This estate has long been known for its elegant, complex, racy, supple, delicious wines, but the 2008 is more massive, structured, and concentrated than usual. There is a lot going on in this richer, more tannic effort. No one will be disappointed, but purchasers should not expect a wine that will be drinkable upon release. A dense ruby/purple color as well as plenty of concentration, sweet, but elevated tannins, and a huge finish suggest this estate is moving in the direction of Gazin, Lafleur, and Trotanoy. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2030. **ROBERT PARKER**

Cos d'Estournel, Saint Estephe

PAY NOW: \$187

FULL PRICE \$242

Minimum Order 3 bottles

A blend of 66.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 31.5% Merlot with 2% Petit Verdot, this is a lovely nose, very refined, pure blackberry, cassis, a touch of cedar/pine forest, superb definition – more feminine than usual. Just a touch of dried orange peel in the background. The palate is medium-bodied, fine tannins, very fresh, very precise rather than a powerful, expansive Les Fort. Like the Grand Vin, it has an aloof finish. Well-crafted, wonderful focus if the depth of a great vintage like '05. **18 JANCIS ROBINSON**

The 2008 Cos d'Estournel possesses an atypically high (85%) amount of Cabernet Sauvignon, with 13% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc. The first vintage vinified in the new facility, an unusually high percentage of the crop (78%) was included in the grand vin. The bad news is that yields were a minuscule 25 hectoliters per hectare. This wine achieved 13.8% natural alcohol, and the number of days between the flowering and harvest was 160, compared to the normal 100-110 (one of the keys to understanding the exceptionally high quality that characterizes the 2008 Bordeaux). There were no serious heat waves during the growing season, which meant that the maturation process was slow, long, and ideal. Combine that with the very low yields, and the superb weather from mid-September to late-October, and the often splendid results are much easier to comprehend. The inky/purple-hued 2008 Cos is still very young, and probably will improve even further as the wine came out of malolactic fermentation very late. It reveals exceptionally precise, fresh aromas of black fruits, crushed rocks, licorice, flowers, and subtle smoke. Dense and high in tannin, the extraordinary richness of polyphenols has given the wine power, substance, and depth, but the sweetness of the tannin and the seemingly low acidity, even though the wine tastes remarkably fresh and the pH is only 3.57 (compared to pH's close to 4 when the fruit is this ripe), has given the wine a precision and elegance that is remarkable. And don't forget, this is probably the highest percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon ever used in a Cos d'Estournel blend. This wine should gain weight, richness, and a few Parker points by the time it is bottled. It is even denser and richer than the 1996, with an index of polyphenols at 80, which is not unusual for many of the top wines of the vintage, but is extremely high, and more along the lines of what one would find in the top wines of 2005. It should evolve for 30-35 years **94-96+ ROBERT PARKER**

Ducru Beaucaillou, Saint-Julien

PAY NOW: \$176

FULL PRICE \$227

Minimum Order 3 bottles

In Bruno Borie's words, the 2008 Ducru Beaucaillou is "well above 2004, with much more structure than 2007, and more sensuality than 2006." I would add that it is even better than that, and as profound as the 2005. Approximately 33% of the crop made it into Ducru, which came in at 13.1% natural alcohol. This 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot blend reveals a dense opaque purple color as well as a gorgeously sweet bouquet of spring flowers, creme de cassis, blackberry liqueur, licorice, espresso roast, and spice. A testament to the density and richness of this wine is the fact that no oak is apparent in the aromas or flavors. The wine is unctuously textured, but analytically, it has a good level of total acid and sound pH. This fabulous offering will age effortlessly for 30-40+ years. **96-98 ROBERT PARKER**

Duhart Milon, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$72

FULL PRICE \$92

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Purple. Extremely deep colour – deeper than Lafite! Fine, scented, aromatic and flattering on the nose. Lovely texture. Rather forward and fine tannined. Powdery texture. Lots of Cabernet (73%) but very ripe Cabernet. Very fine and neat – truly baby Lafite, except that of course it tastes much less embryonic in terms of development than its stablemate Lafite. A very successful seductive Duhart-Milon. Great balance **17+ JANCIS ROBINSON**

As I have previously written, Duhart Milon has become one of the stars of Pauillac thanks to the meticulous attention to detail as well as the investments made by the Rothschild family. A blend of 73% Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Merlot, with the Cabernet picked during the week of October 8-15, and the Merlot a week earlier, the 2008 offers up sweet aromas of cassis, licorice, crushed rocks, and forest floor in an expressive, graceful aromatic display. Freshness, superb concentration, high but ripe, sweet tannins, and good acids characterize this dense, concentrated wine. It possesses a stunning upside potential of 25-30 years. Yet, like so many of these 2008s, the ripeness of the tannins along with the density and sweetness of the fruit suggest it will be approachable at an early age. **93-95 ROBERT PARKER**

Echo de Lynch Bages, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$46

FULL PRICE \$59

Minimum Order 3 bottles

This is the re-christened Haut-Bages Averous. This has light cedary fruit on the nose, cigar box with sous-bois aromas developing in the glass. Good definition – very “classic” Pauillac. The palate is medium-bodied, grainy tannins, good acidity, edgy, blackberry, cedar and a touch of black pepper towards the finish. Moderate length. A decent Deuxième Vin. **88-90 NEAL MARTIN**

Evangile, Pomerol

PAY NOW: \$176

FULL PRICE \$227

Minimum Order 3 bottles

It was an atypically late harvest at this famed Pomerol estate, beginning on September 29 and ending on October 14. Even more remarkable were the frighteningly low yields of 20 hectoliters per hectare. The final blend was 88% Merlot and 12% Cabernet Franc, and the natural alcohol hit 13.7%, among the highest of the last one-hundred years. The acidity is surprisingly good given the ripeness of the fruit and the generally high alcohols in the 2008 Bordeaux. The dense purple-colored 2008 l'Evangile exhibits a floral nose of sweet mulberries, black currants, and black cherries, a full-bodied, lush texture, silky tannins, and an exceptionally fine finish. While not that evolved, this precocious Pomerol was tasting unusually well for such a young barrel sample. It should drink well for 15-20 years. **93-95 ROBERT PARKER**

Extremely deep crimson. Healthy look. Rich and spicy nose – much riper than some Pomerols (eg Conseillante and Église Clinet). Very heady and seductive. Rich and round and very flattering. Even a little tarry. Pretty chewy on the finish. Rather dry on the finish. Super opulent. Tar macadam dry finish. Fat and fleshy. Super flattering but may prove not as long lived as some?

17 JANCIS ROBINSON

Forts de Latour, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$156

FULL PRICE \$201

Minimum Order 3 bottles

The second wine seems to have picked up most of the Merlot from the Latour vineyards (31.5% Merlot and 66.5% Cabernet Sauvignon dominate the blend). The 2008 Les Forts de Latour is a forward, pure wine displaying remarkably sweet tannins along with aromas of black currants, forest floor, and a hint of underbrush. Opulent, round, and generous, it should drink well for 15-20 years, possibly longer given the fact that the 1982 Les Forts de Latour is still a beautiful wine, and it's “only” 27 years of age! **91-93 ROBERT PARKER**

Giscours, Margaux

PAY NOW: Sold Out

FULL PRICE Sold Out

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Healthy crimson. Already quite complex, seductive aromas. Fresh start with real spring in its step – energetic and lively and very well balanced yet with real intrigue still to be revealed. Good wine. Neat finish. Tightly packed. Limpid – wonderful confidence! **17.5 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Giscours, made by the same winemaking team that makes Du Tertre (which did not show well in my tastings), reveals sweet tannins and overall far superior quality, which makes me think Du Tertre will improve with time in barrel. The sexy, opulent 2008 Giscours exhibits plenty of dark fruit, forest floor, and earthy notes, sweet, velvety tannin, and good fresh acids. This medium to full-bodied effort should prove to be outstanding with more time. **88-90 ROBERT PARKER**

Gruaud Larose, Saint Julien

PAY NOW: \$72

FULL PRICE \$92

Minimum Order 3 bottles

While it is not the 2000 or 1990, the 2008 is the finest Gruaud Larose I have tasted in eight years. Not a blockbuster, it is more beefy and dense than other recent vintages, revealing notes of pine forest, smoke, herbs, licorice, black currants, and cedar. With high but ripe tannins, medium to full body, and a strong finish, it will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring, and should keep for 20 years thereafter. **89-91+ ROBERT PARKER**

Mid crimson with a pale rim. Very sweet for a St-Julien. Almost right bank ripeness. Sweet start. Not as classical as most St-Julien. More forward and winning! Attractive drink for the medium term. Hint of chocolate even. Medium charge of tannins. Polished silky texture. Very beguiling.

17 JANCIS ROBINSON

Haut Bailly, Pessac-Leognan

PAY NOW: \$112

FULL PRICE \$144

Minimum Order 3 bottles

The 2008 exhibits superb minerality as well as the delicacy of a great culinary preparation, packed and stacked with flavor, yet light on its feet. The 2008 will compete, perhaps eclipse the sensational 2005 and 2006. A dense

ruby/purple color is followed by notes of charcoal, graphite, black currants, sweet cherries, spice box, and subtle earth. The wine possesses super purity, a medium to full-bodied, gorgeous texture, ripe, sweet tannins, and a layered mouthfeel. The acidity provides freshness, vibrancy, and delineation to all the component parts of this very concentrated yet quintessentially elegant wine. It is a sensational effort that should begin showing secondary nuances of complexity in 8-10 years, and evolve for three decades or more. **95-97 ROBERT PARKER**

Haut Brion, Pessac-Leognan

PAY NOW: \$436

FULL PRICE \$563

Minimum Order 3 bottles

41% Merlot, 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Cabernet Franc. Much deeper colour than La Mission 2008. Really powerful dark purple colour. Minerals and lightness of touch on the nose. The most solid red from this stable but a little muted at this stage. Very firm, even slightly austere Cabernet tannins and pretty drying on the finish. Far from opulent. Needs, like La Mission, to put on a bit of flesh. Medium persistence. Impressive purity of fruit – the opposite of tarted up. **18 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Production for the 2008 Haut-Brion represents only 35% of the grapes harvested, and while production can be over 12,000 cases in an abundant vintage, 2008 will be one of their smallest ever, with only 7,000 cases produced from a blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot, and 9% Cabernet Franc. The 2008 reminds me of a hypothetical blend of the 1996 and 1998. It is a classic, elegant, but substantial Haut-Brion with a dense ruby/purple color as well as crushed rock, spring flower, blueberry, and black currant characteristics presented in a vivid, vibrant, full-bodied style that cuts an ethereal feel across the palate. Haut-Brion is somewhat akin to Cheval Blanc in that it can be seemingly light on the palate, but very intense in flavor. That is the case with the 2008. There is plenty of tannin, but it is very ripe. This impressive, deep wine requires patience, and a ten year wait is mandatory. This formidable Haut-Brion should have a 40-50 year lifeline. **95-97 ROBERT PARKER**

Lafite-Rothschild, Pauillac

PAY NOW: TBC

FULL PRICE TBC

Minimum Order 3 bottles

The 2008 Lafite Rothschild is one of the most profound young wines I have ever tasted. From a taster's perspective, it is reminiscent of a blend of the 1996 and 2003, but when you compare those vintages analytically, that makes no sense whatsoever. Representing only 40% of the production, this blend of 83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, and 4% Cabernet Franc boasts an opaque ruby/purple color (one of the darkest Lafites I have seen in 30 years) as well as an extraordinary, blockbuster aromatic profile of lead pencil shavings, forest floor, black fruits, licorice, and a hint of unsmoked, high-class cigar tobacco. In the mouth, a massive richness is accompanied by a freshness, delineation, nuance, delicacy, and mind-boggling density. Even after three decades of tasting, I am still astonished when tasting such a prodigious wine as this. Full, inky, and rich with creme de cassis and spice box characteristics as well as a length that I stopped measuring after a minute, the wine reveals a sweetness to the tannin and an opulence to the fruit that suggests a hot, sunny vintage, but again, that was not the case. There wasn't a great deal of heat, but there was more sunshine than the negative press reported at the beginning of September. This is a great, great wine. The harvest at Lafite took place between October 1-7 for the Merlot grapes, the Cabernet Franc was picked in mid-October, and the Cabernet Sauvignon between October 7-14 - an unbelievably late harvest for this estate. This wine should evolve for 30-40 years and last 50 or more. As I have indicated before, Lafite's second wine is now one of Bordeaux's finest second wines, and is made very much in the Lafite style. **98-100 ROBERT PARKER**

Lafon Rochet, Saint Estephe

PAY NOW: \$59

FULL PRICE \$76

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Lafon Rochet's backward, unevolved 2008 exhibits a dense ruby/purple color along with loads of ripe tannin. While still austere and not expressing itself as impressively as I would have hoped, there is a lot here. Consequently, my judgment is somewhat conservative and reserved until this wine has had more time in the barrel. **87-89 ROBERT PARKER**

Langoa-Barton, Saint-Jullien

PAY NOW: \$89

FULL PRICE \$114

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Dark and concentrated. Wild flowers and dark and dangerous aromas. Sweet foxglove start – definitely floral – and then slightly hollow. Drying finish. Not quite complete, though competent enough. Very dry finish but lots of personality. **16.5+ JANCIS ROBINSON**

Impressively big, muscular, and formidably backward, this dense, full-bodied 2008 possesses beautiful fruit, but extremely high tannins as well as a blockbuster style that is difficult to fully appraise. It will require at least 6-8 years of bottle age, and should last for three decades. It will probably be at least 2-3 points better than my conservative score suggests. **88-90+**

Latour, Pauillac

PAY NOW: TBC

FULL PRICE TBC

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Damn me for saying it, but I actually think the 2008 Latour will turn out to be even better than the 2005 or 2000. I still have a weakness for the 2003, but it is somewhat atypical in how forward, fleshy, and opulent it is. The 2008 Latour is a more concentrated version of the 1996, and that's saying something. The harvest took place between September 29 and October 7 for the Merlot, but the Cabernet Sauvignon finished around the 19th of October. The natural alcohol of 13.48% may be the highest ever achieved at Latour. The final blend is 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, and 1% Cabernet Franc. Moreover, in a low yield year, only 40% of the production made it into the grand vin, so even with the global economic crisis, this is going to be a tightly allocated wine – with under 10,000 cases produced. A fabulous infant, it exhibits an inky/purple color as well as extraordinarily pure notes of creme de cassis, crushed rocks, and flowers. The fact that there is no hint of oak is a testament to the vintage's density and richness. The wine possesses full-bodied power as well as a boatload of tannin, and it is even more backward than Lafite Rothschild. Nevertheless, the hallmark of a great wine and potentially top-notch vintage is the sweetness of the tannin, and that is evident. The wine is young, unevolved, and incredibly pure (another hallmark of this unexpectedly magical vintage) with an amazingly long, textured, layered finish. It should be forgotten for 5-8 years, and consumed over the following four decades. **96-98 ROBERT PARKER**

Léoville Las Cases, Saint Julien

PAY NOW: \$220

FULL PRICE \$284

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Readers should not be surprised that the 2008 Leoville Las Cases is a great classic as the selection process here is as Draconian as at any of the first-growths. Slightly more than one-third of the production made it into the grand vin, a blend of 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Merlot. Yields were just under 38 hectoliters per hectare, and the natural alcohol of 13.4% is among the highest ever measured at this estate. The harvest was very late, between October 6-18, and the result is a wine boasting extraordinarily sweet tannin as well as abundant black cherry and cassis notes intermixed with a prominent underlying minerality. Despite the massive density, concentration, and length, the wine is extremely precise, nuanced, and impeccably pure. This phenomenal effort should be more drinkable in its youth than many other vintages of Las Cases because of the ripe tannins and sweet fruit density. It will need 5-10 years of cellaring, and should last for 40+ years. **95-97+ ROBERT PARKER**

Extremely deep blackish crimson. Spicy oak on the nose – very intense. Then amazingly opulent on the nose. Round and dense and dramatic. Like a cross between mulberries and tarmacadam. The Cabernets were naturally more than 13% apparently. Real excitement. Neat though not extraordinarily long finish. Still very, very youthful. The finish is very dry and brooding but much more supple than some earlier vintages. Drink 2018-35 **18 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Leoville Poyferre, Saint Julien

PAY NOW: \$90

FULL PRICE \$116

Minimum Order 3 bottles

This powerful, dense, full-bodied 2008 is still backward and unevolved, but it possesses a dense purple color as well as sweet aromas of creme de cassis, vanillin, crushed rocks, and flowers. With high but ripe tannin and a long finish, this wine will benefit from 5-8 years of cellaring, and should keep for three decades thereafter. **92-94 ROBERT PARKER**

Lynch Bages, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$100

FULL PRICE \$129

Minimum Order 3 bottles

This strong effort from Lynch Bages may turn out to be the finest wine produced here since the 2000. It is a backward, powerful, opaque purple-colored 2008 with fine acids, firm but sweet tannins, and thick, dense levels of attractive blackberry and cassis fruit intertwined with notions of underbrush, lead pencil shavings, and roasted herbs. It appears to be a denser, richer effort than some of the more lightweight Lynch Bages offerings of recent years. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2030. **91-93+ ROBERT PARKER**

Margaux, Margaux

PAY NOW: \$400

FULL PRICE \$517

Minimum Order 3 bottles

87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot. Bright crimson. Rather opulent on the nose – hints of tobacco – and a little more burly and savoury than usual, perhaps because of less Merlot flesh. Dry start with the same backbone as the Pavillon Rouge. Firm, very fine tannins. No shortage of acidity. Mainly structure at the moment. Very clean but very youthful. Great freshness. Purity but I do feel we are tasting this too young. It should take on a bit more flesh. Very straight backed. Very fresh. Very embryonic. **18+ JANCIS ROBINSON**

This is a superb vintage for Chateau Margaux, and while it may be too early to say this, the 2008 appears superior to the 2007, 2006, 2004, 2003, 2002, and 2001. Only 36% of the crop was utilized and the yields were

40 hectoliters per hectare. An exceptionally late harvest for this estate began on October 3 for the Merlot, and finished on October 23. The final blend includes a whoppingly high 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, and dollops of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. As always, the first characteristic one notices is the extraordinary floral component as well as the sweet black currant fruit allied to full-bodied richness, sweet tannin, and superb freshness and delineation. In many ways, the 2008 is reminiscent of the 1996, but the former wine is showing even more density and concentration than the 1996 did at the same point in its evolution. The 2008, which appears set for 30-40 years of longevity, is a remarkable effort from this great estate. **95-97 ROBERT PARKER**

Mission Haut Brion, Pessac-Leognan

PAY NOW: \$329

FULL PRICE \$424

Minimum Order 3 bottles

43% Merlot, 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc. Dark crimson. Lightly fragrant with a hint of tea leaves. Now this is elegant! But it's rather different from old La Missions. Much more polished and suave. Once this puts on weight it should come into better balance. At the moment it's perhaps just a little too light, but is certainly marvellously pure and has a wonderful line along the palate. **18 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Another property that is harvested very late (September 23-October 17), the 2008 La Mission-Haut-Brion is a powerful, backward effort that is not yet fully expressing itself. A blend of 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot, and 6% Cabernet Franc, it reveals a deep blue/purple hue in addition to sumptuous aromas of melted asphalt, graphite, blueberries, and black currant liqueur. Dense, with high but velvety tannins, top-flight purity, and a full-bodied, backward, formidably endowed style, this beauty seems to be set for a long life. It is difficult to compare 2008 with any other recent vintage, but the closest would probably be 1998. A La Mission made for four decades or more of cellaring, it is a top-notch effort that should improve during the elevage in barrel. **94-96+ ROBERT PARKER**

Montrose, Saint Estephe

PAY NOW: Sold Out

FULL PRICE Sold Out

Minimum Order 3 bottles

An undeniably great Montrose, after some time in wood, the 2008 should achieve the heights of the 2003, 1990, and 1989. Stylistically different from those wines, the 2008 harvest took place between September 29 and October 15, and yields were a modest 44 hectoliters per hectare. This superb terroir west of the Gironde River possesses a remarkable amount of gravel in the soil base. Sixty percent of the production made it into the 2008 Montrose, and the person responsible for so many great Haut-Brions, Jean-Bernard Delmas, came out of retirement to take charge over the last several vintages for proprietor Martin Bouygues. An inky/purple color is accompanied by sweet, pure aromas of black fruits and spice. This full-bodied wine exhibits superb concentration, sweet tannin, and a multilayered, textured, full-bodied mouthfeel with no hard edges. The sweetness of the tannin, the extraordinary purity of fruit, and the intense aromatics suggest a year of great ripeness. The difference between the 2008 and the 2003, 1990, or 1989 is the freshness and purity of expression. This should be a long-lived wine (35+ years), yet it will drink surprisingly well at a young age. For some reason, it comes across like an even more pure example of the 1989, even though there is nothing essentially comparable between the two harvests. **95-98 ROBERT PARKER**

Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$429

FULL PRICE \$553

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Mouton's vineyard was harvested between October 2-15, and the wine possesses an unexpectedly high pH of 3.85 (high for this vintage, but normal for a riper year). Made from low yields of 34 hectoliters per hectare, it achieved a natural alcohol content of 13.2%, one of the highest ever for this estate. Made from 54% of the production, the 2008 Mouton Rothchild's final blend of 83% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17% Merlot has resulted in an atypically sweeter, more direct and opulent, fleshy Mouton. Keep in mind that this cuvee, because of the high Cabernet Sauvignon content as well as the terroir, is often backward, structured, and nearly foreboding in its youth. However, I do not think the 2008 will behave in that manner. There is plenty of tannin and exceptional density and ripeness, but the tannins are velvety, and I was amazed by how charmingly forward and fleshy this wine already is. A deep purple color, sweet aromas of creme de cassis, smoke, cedar, and an unmistakable floral component (another characteristic of the Cabernet Sauvignon in 2008) are found in this precocious, succulent Mouton that should firm up and put on more weight with aging. My score is somewhat conservative because it is hard to forget their prodigious 2006, but the 2008 will provide far more enjoyment and pleasure over the near-term than the 2006. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2035. **94-96 ROBERT PARKER**

Tighter and denser than the Petit Mouton with hidden depths and less obvious seduction. Very neat and firm with some fine polishing of texture and definite minerality at its core. Dry finish. Very fresh and neat. Finer boned than many Moutons – almost playing the Lafite card. All very introvert but nothing flashy. I found myself swallowing this at 9.20am! Well done. **18.5 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Palmer, Margaux

PAY NOW: \$272

FULL PRICE \$350

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Dark and glowing. Quite grown up and sophisticated. Draws you in on the nose – much more compelling than most 2008s. Sweet start - 51% Merlot! – very unusually high for 2008 and for Palmer. The opposite of Ch Margaux. Actually quite Ornellaia like, very soft and rich. Very seductive and lively. With velvety texture. Neat and energetic. Cool, even slightly minty. Really lots of pleasure. Even if quite unusual. The Palmer team love it – not least because it was so difficult. Italian bite. (Not that this will be a popular tasting note in Margaux.) Quite electric. 13.4%. **18 JANCIS ROBINSON**

The 2008 Palmer, which tips the scales at 13.5% natural alcohol (among the highest achieved at this property), is a blend of 51% Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 8% Petit Verdot. It is a massively rich wine with an inky/purple color, sensational density of fruit, velvety tannins, a glorious bouquet of black fruits, licorice, incense, and subtle barbecue smoke, a superb, full-bodied mouthfeel, and a fabulous texture and length. With several minutes of swirling, an enticing floral note emerges. The wine's glycerin and sweetness suggest it will be approachable 3-4 years after bottling, yet keep for three decades or more. It appears to be among the finest Palmers made this decade, rivaling both the 2005 and 2000. **95-97 ROBERT PARKER**

Pavie Macquin, Saint-Emilion

PAY NOW: Sold Out

FULL PRICE Sold Out

Minimum Order 3 bottles

I tasted this wine on four occasions, on one of which I was convinced it was still going through malolactic fermentation. It is another superb effort from this property that was elevated to premier grand cru classe status until a judge in Libourne, for unknown reasons, threw out the classification, a decision beyond belief, that is now under appeal. A number of exceptional wines have emerged from Pavie Macquin, which is managed by Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt, and the 2008 boasts a whopping 14.5% natural alcohol, higher than in 2005, 2000, or 1998. While extremely high in tannin and very unevolved, for those with patience and cold cellars, or who plan to pass on their wines to their children, this is a worthwhile choice. It is that backward, concentrated, and impressive. It exhibits a black/purple color in addition to stunning notes of graphite, black fruits, underbrush, chocolate, and roasted coffee beans. Full-bodied, powerful, and rich, the high but sweet tannins, combined with the freshness of the acids make for a remarkably youthful, nuanced wine that should easily age for three decades. **93-95 ROBERT PARKER**

Pavillon Rouge, Margaux

PAY NOW: \$79

FULL PRICE \$101

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Moderate intensity on the nose, quite earthy, perhaps less exuberant than previous vintages. Dark fruit – touches of boysenberry and wild hedgerow. A faint hint of thyme. The palate has an understated entry, leading to a rounded, softer Pavillon, texturally like Merlot but with more Cabernet flavours: cedar, sous-bois and a touch of tar. Moderated length. It almost has a Pauillac-like austerity towards the finish, which is an attractive virtue but not in the same class as recent vintages. **87-89 NEAL MARTIN**

68% Cabernet Sauvignon. Second wine which soaked up most of the 2008 Merlot. Mid crimson. Quite delicate and fragrant but no sign of unripeness. Quite angular. Lots of fine tannin. Much less fleshy than Pavillon usually is – lighter rather than softer than the grand vin this year. **16 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Pichon Baron, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$123

FULL PRICE \$159

Minimum Order 3 bottles

Firm, but sweet tannins (which suggests ideal maturity) characterize this 2008. Displaying good minerality along with plenty of floral, creme de cassis, blackberry, coffee, and white chocolate notes, this full-bodied, dense, promising Pauillac is built to age for 20-25 years. **92-94 ROBERT PARKER**

Very vibrant blueish purple. Complete and neat. Low key but in the same idiom as Latour with 71% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tight and dry and not at all flashy. Serious stuff. May well develop into something really quite considerable. **17+ JANCIS ROBINSON**

Pichon Lalande, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$132

FULL PRICE \$170

Minimum Order 3 bottles

The 2008 Pichon Lalande's final blend was 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Only 38% of the crop made it into the grand vin, and the result is a wine that blows away the 2005. Terrific texture and opulence, forward fruit, sweet tannin, and a lush personality are found in this dense purple-colored 2008 along with copious quantities of sweet berries, roasted coffee, underbrush, black currant, and black cherry fruit. Sensationally pure, textured, and full-bodied, this will be a flamboyant, showy offering in its youth, but it is capable of lasting 20-30 years.

94-96 ROBERT PARKER

Dense crimson with a slightly weak rim. Scented, aromatic. Just 29% Merlot but this seems very fleshy and seductive. Not the firmest 2008 though there were dry tannins on the finish. A little lighter than some – a rather

different, less dense wine than some more ambitious 2008 Pauillacs – but should give lots of pleasure. Very rich and round and flattering. There is ripeness and real charm here too. Impressive length. Drink 2015-25 **17.5 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Pontet Canet, Pauillac

PAY NOW: \$137

FULL PRICE \$177

Minimum Order 3 bottles

A wine for our children's children. Nobody in Bordeaux is more attentive to detail than Alfred Tesseron is at Pontet-Canet. Fashioned from incredibly low yields, a very late harvest, and a Draconian selection, the 2008 will not be close to drinkability for at least a decade, and it should still be in superb form circa 2060. An absolutely amazing effort, it boasts an inky/black/purple color as well as an extraordinary bouquet of creme de cassis, graphite, charcoal, and incense, blockbuster depth, and full-bodied power. The tannins are high, but they are remarkably velvety as well as well-integrated. Sensational acidity gives the wine precision and vibrancy, but the impression is one of massive concentration and power. The 2008 Pontet-Canet, a candidate for the wine of the vintage, is a tour de force in viticultural precision and winemaking savoir faire. **96-98+ ROBERT PARKER**

Rauzan Segla, Margaux

PAY NOW: \$103

FULL PRICE \$133

Minimum Order 3 bottles

This outstanding effort is atypically forward, sexy, and opulent. Only 45% of the crop made it into this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot. Yields were 47 hectoliters per hectare, which is slightly higher than some estates, but the harvest was very late, between October 2-21. Sweet cassis, black cherry, licorice, tobacco leaf, and spice box are all present in the complex aromatics. In the mouth, the wine offers generosity, roundness, sweetness, and velvety, ripe tannins. I was surprised by how forward, precocious, and delicious this wine has already become. It appears set for a relatively long life of 25+ years. **91-93 ROBERT PARKER**

Smith Haut Lafite, Pessac-Léognan

PAY NOW: \$82

FULL PRICE \$105

Minimum Order 3 bottles

The 2008 Smith-Haut-Lafitte, which is somewhat reminiscent of the brilliant 1998, exhibits sweet cassis, tobacco leaf, earth, and barbecue characteristics in its complex aromatics. The wine reveals ripe, supple tannin, medium to full body, gorgeous fruit, impeccable purity, and a luscious texture. It should be relatively approachable in its youth, and last for 25+ years. The final composition was 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, and 7% Cabernet Franc. **93-95 ROBERT PARKER**

Terte (Du), Margaux

PAY NOW: \$56

FULL PRICE \$72

Minimum Order 3 bottles

This has a light, earthy nose with good definition, cedar and sous-bois, just a hint of black tea. The palate is very fine with pure black fruits, cedar, a touch of vanilla, svelte, fully ripe tannins and well balanced on the finish. This is a great success for the vintage. Sorbet-like finish. **90-92 NEAL MARTIN**

Toasty, mildly cocoa nose. Very pretty texture – not forced. Reminds of du Tertre's style. Neat. Complete, but a bit forward. Very slightly rasping tannins on the finish. Drink 2012-18 **16 JANCIS ROBINSON**

Bordeaux 2008 en-Primeur Order Form

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Branais Ducru 2008	\$67	\$87	3		
Calon Segur 2008	TBC	TBC	3		
Clarence Haut Brion 2008	\$107	\$138	3		
Clerc Milon 2008	\$74	\$96	3		
Clos du Marquis 2008	\$64	\$83	3		
Conseillante (La) 2008	TBC	TBC	3		
Cos d'Estournel 2008	\$187	\$242	3		
Ducru Beaucaillou 2008	\$176	\$227	3		
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Echo de Lynch Bages 2008	\$46	\$59	3		
Evangile 2008	\$176	\$227	3		
Forts de Latour 2008	\$156	\$201	3		

Wine	Pay Now	Full Price	Min. Order	Order	Total
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Gruaud Larose 2008	\$72	\$92	3		
Haut Bailly 2008	\$112	\$144	3		
Haut Brion 2008	\$436	\$563	3		
Lafite-Rothschild 2008	TBC	TBC	3		
Lafon Rochet 2008	\$59	\$76	3		
Langoa-Barton 2008	\$89	\$114	3		
Latour 2008	TBC	TBC	3		
Léoville Las Cases 2008	\$220	\$284	3		
Leoville Poyferre 2008	\$90	\$116	3		
Lynch Bages 2008	\$100	\$129	3		
Margaux 2008	\$400	\$517	3		
Mission Haut Brion 2008	\$329	\$424	3		
Montrose 2008	Sold Out	Sold Out	3		
Mouton Rothshild 2008	\$429	\$553	3		
Palmer 2008	\$272	\$350	3		
Pavie Macquin 2008	Sold Out	Sold Out	3		
Pavillon Rouge 2008	\$79	\$101	3		
Pichon Baron 2008	\$123	\$159	3		
Pichon Lalande 2008	\$132	\$170	3		
Pontet Canet 2008	\$137	\$177	3		
Rauzan Segla 2008	\$103	\$133	3		
Smith Haut Lafite 2008	\$82	\$105	3		
Terte (Du) 2008	\$56	\$72	3		
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