

# Bordeaux & Bordeaux Superieur 2011

Report by Jane Anson, Decanter's Bordeaux correspondent

**B**ordeaux is the largest quality wine-making region in France, stretching 132 miles from north to south, and 80 miles east to west. There are over 60 appellations found across the area but if you keep things simple and look out for the two names of AOC Bordeaux or AOC Bordeaux Superieur on your bottle, you'll be rewarded with a range of easy-drinking styles that are packed with the expertise and centuries of history that make Bordeaux the world's wine capital.

More than 4,000 winemakers bottle under these two appellations, from large producers crafting modern-styles branded wines to small family-run estates that follow traditions handed down over the centuries. All styles are produced, from a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes, sometimes with a touch of Malbec, carmanere or petit verdot. The range means you can easily find a match for a quick apéritif, a mid-week pizza, a romantic dinner, or to indulge in with your favourite dessert.

Every 13 seconds, a bottle of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur is consumed somewhere in the world – these are wines made to be enjoyed with friends, while relaxing, enjoying food, taking a moment to unwind. Often thought of as 'catch-all' appellations, it is worth seeking out the high spots that offer superb value-for-money.

For this tasting, we assembled red wines from the recent 2011 and 2012 vintages – both easy-drinking years that will offer plenty of enjoyment without having to wait too long to be ready to drink. The vintage most likely to be found on shelves right now is the 2011, while the 2012s are only just trickling into the shops, and will be seen more and more over the next six to 12 months.

2011 was one of those weird years

when Summer started in Spring, Autumn in Summer and Spring got a look in around Harvest time. 2012, on the other hand, started off wet and rainy, followed by an extreme period of drought in August and most of September, bookended by another period of rain around harvest time.

Certainly the vintages are not as uniform as 2010, but there are some excellent quality wines, with silky tannins and gentle fresh fruits. Both years were excellent vintage for the dry white wines, and 2011 particularly good for the sweet wines of Bordeaux. But there are some excellent reds also, if you use a little caution, and if you do your research. The difficulty comes often on the finish, where tannins can be a little drying, and green flavours dominate. The best wines have stayed away from over-extraction, and some have employed a clever use of oak – just enough to add complexity and round out the flavours, but not enough to drown out the delicate fruits.

Many of these wines are widely available in your local area, but the best way to get to know the wines and winemakers better is by visiting Bordeaux itself. When you come, pay a visit to Planet Bordeaux, the home of these wines located 15 minutes from the city centre of Bordeaux. There you'll find a well-stocked boutique, an award-winning wine museum, and regular events from art exhibitions to cookery and wine classes. And the location of Planet Bordeaux makes it a perfect launch for getting out into the towns, villages, and vineyards that surround the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bordeaux. Set alongside the two main rivers of the Dordogne and the Garonne, the winemakers of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur are ready to offer tastings to visitors, and are happy to spend the time to share their knowledge and passion for the grape.

## 2011s

Château le Grand Verdus, Cuvée Generation, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended  
www.chateaufgrandverdus.com

Philippe and Antoine le Grix de la Salle are father and son working together on the family estate (in fact three generations are working together, hence the name of the wine). The careful family-led approach extends to the viticulture, as they work according to sustainable agriculture with a limited use of pesticides. The blend here is 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, aged 13 months in small oak barrels. The result is good, fresh and fruity. No need to wait, should be perfect in the next few years. Drink 2013-2016. Alc 13.5% abv

BORDEAUX  
BORDEAUX SUPÉRIEUR

*Bordeaux Red  
Bordeaux Supérieur Red*

Smooth  
Harmonious  
Fleshy  
Aromatic  
Structured

Fine  
Round  
Profound

Rich  
Oaked  
Sharp  
Dense  
Delicate

www.planete-bordeaux.eu