

# FLINT WINES

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Well, it took until July for this extraordinary campaign to draw to a close. It was over 3 months ago that we went out to Bordeaux to taste the wines and the painfully slow release by the châteaux of their much anticipated offerings has been tortuous. There was a worry that the delaying tactics would bore patient buyers to distraction but in fact the long wait served merely to heighten expectation and frenzy. Towards the end there were elements of London bus syndrome about proceedings; nothing for weeks and then suddenly everything at once. The middle week of June was especially dramatic with seemingly 7 or 8 important releases daily. The phone lines between London and Bordeaux were melting in the heat of impassioned begging.

From day one, we made a very conscious decision to buy just the wines that had impressed us and not be swayed by the lure of Parker points. After all, one of the roles of a wine merchant is to make selections, to guide you away from the flatterers and towards the genuine articles, to, ultimately, make your life easier. Frustratingly, all the wines that wowed us also wowed Parker, despite our differing tastes, and even some châteaux that we had hoped would remain under the radar, such as St Pierre, could not escape the highest praise. Having said that, from an investment rather than a consumption perspective, having Parker points on your side is key and without them certain châteaux may as well pack up and go home.

With the communes of Margaux and St Emilion generally overshadowed by their peers, we had a vintage as hyped as 2005 with an increased potential market chasing a smaller number of wines (in 2005 all communes performed well). It was little surprise then that pressure on so many châteaux would be so intense. There have been plenty of buzz wines this year; Pontet Canet, Lynch Bages, Leoville Poyferre to name but three. Every customer had to have these wines, price was not the issue, availability was. From our point of view selling the wines was not the difficult part, buying them was. As demand exceeded supply often by as much as tenfold, heightened by small initial releases from the canny châteaux, 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche releases became common place, themselves fuelling an immediate rise in the price of the wines. Anyone who paid under £1000 a case for Pontet Canet is sitting pretty knowing it's already trading at £1200.

In such a market prices were never going to be low. The emerging and influential markets of the far east, where they like to drink these top wines young and are consequently making the wines of Bordeaux a much more finite product than they used to be, do not have the same history of pricing as

we do where certain châteaux fit in to certain price brackets. Consequently, the movement of individual properties up the price ladder, what the Bordelais euphemistically call 're-positioning', is much more fluid than it once was and we need to get used to the idea that a wine is worth what the market will pay for it. Everyone thought release prices in 2000 and 2005 were high at the time but collectors who bought the right wines have made huge potential profits in the short period of time since then and therefore, although currently it seems difficult to imagine that certain châteaux have the scope to increase in value from their high starting point, history suggests they will.

Many of the wines we bought this year have already sold out but as bought selectively but with depth behind our purchases we still have a few cases of some terrific wines, many of which are looking increasingly good value, given the prices of the later releases. We didn't buy anything we didn't like so everything on the list below comes recommended! Just for the record, these 2009s are stunning. The best have a vitality and purity of fruit that is sensational. The Merlot-based wines tend to be less interesting as it was the Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot that really flourished in 2009. The consistent highlights are in the brilliant communes of St Julien, Pauillac and St Estèphe but the top wines from Graves, Pomerol, St Emilion and Margaux are also stunning, it's just that these four communes lack the strength in depth of the other three. By the way, the Sauternes are simply fantastic. Forget d'Yquem, which was a crazy price this year, and instead buy a case each of the five stars of the vintage that are Nairac, Coutet, Rieussec, Suduiraut and Climens for the same money as a half case of d'Yquem!

## Red Wines

### **2009 Château Fourcas Dupré, Haut-Médoc**

**£104ib/12**

*This terrific little wine really shone in much loftier company at the big Union des Grands Crus tasting (held at Château Cantemerle for the wines of Listrac, Moulis, Macau and Haut-Médoc). The nose was really pretty and pure, especially so for a wine at this level, and it had excellent balance and poise. There was good stuffing underneath, too and appealing bite and precision. The other Fourcas, Hosten, was much too black, modern and extracted, whereas as this was classic and harmonious with excellent concentration to give it a good life. This is seriously good value. Drink from 2015*

### **2009 Château Paloumey, Haut-Médoc**

**£115ib/12**

*For those of you who like black, extracted wines, look away now! We visited the château early in the morning with not all of us feeling our best (!) and it still shone though. The style is pure and feminine and there is excellent definition and length. The château was replanted some time ago and as the vines have aged so the wines have been getting progressively better but the value is still very much here. The oenologist just happens to be the same one as at Lynch Bages so you can see why we like this place!*

### **2009 Château Charmail, Médoc**

**£135ib/12**

*"This classic over-performer has turned out another super-attractive, supple-textured, dark ruby/purple-colored wine displaying notes of flowers, licorice, spice, and background oak. It should drink nicely for a decade or more. 89-91 pts." Parker Based in the northern part of Pauillac next to likes of Pontet Canet it has produced another classic style wine full of power, control and character. With the 2005, which also scored 90 points, trading at around £250ib this is a snip!*

### **2009 Château Bessane, Margaux**

**£168ib/12**

*From the same stable as Paloumey, this tiny estate (less than 3 hectares in size) has produced a belter in 2009. 40% of the blend is Petit Verdot, which has been so successful and the wine has beautiful drive and focus. A real bargain and so much better than so many of the over-extracted, much more expensive cru classé from the Margaux appellation.*

### **2009 Lacoste Borie, Pauillac**

**£170ib/12**

*This is the second wine of the resurgent Grand Puy Lacoste and it is seriously good. Lovely freshness with great bite and grip and purity. Very Pauillac, very classic and astonishingly good for a wine at this price. A real eye catcher. No note from Parker*

### **2009 Château Lalande Borie, St Julien**

**£175ib/12**

*"The finest wine I have ever tasted from Lalande Borie, the 2009 (50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and 10% Cabernet Franc) displays lots of purity along with a boatload of black currant, raspberry, and black cherry fruit, no evidence of wood, broad, rich, deep flavors, and a velvety texture. It should drink well for a decade or more." With the 2005 currently trading at around £250 this looks a snip at 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of that price.*

### **2009 Château Potensac, Médoc**

**£176ib/12**

*"A sleeper of the vintage, the 2009 is probably the finest Potensac ever made, eclipsing even the stunning 1982. This blend, dominated by both Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, hit 13.9% alcohol, but the pH is a normal 3.58. Dense, rich, and full-bodied with lots of freshness, the wine reveals abundant red and black currant fruit, a distinctive minerality, and a plush, full-bodied mouth feel. It should drink well for 10-15+ years. 89-91pts". Parker*

### **2009 Château Les Ormes de Pez, Saint-Estèphe**

**£238ib/12**

*From the stable of Lynch Bages, who have produced a cracker this year, comes this wonderful claret. Les Ormes de Pez has been on the up for a couple of years and this is its best wine to date. With a strawberry cream nose, lovely flesh, silky tannins, excellent power and very good length. The price is where the 2005 is now, and as this is a better wine, it looks very fair value indeed. "A sleeper of the vintage and the best Les Ormes de Pez made in decades, this opaque purple-hued 2009 offers up pure crème de cassis*

fruit intermixed with hints of charcoal, smoke, and crushed rocks. Medium to full-bodied and pure with good freshness as well as a soft, layered mouth feel, it will offer delicious drinking over the next 10-15 years."

### **2009 Château. Tronquoy Lalande, Saint-Estèphe**

**£242ib/12**

From the stable of Montrose since 2007 which includes the ex winemaker of Haut Brion, this really impressed at our tasting at Montrose. It has tell-tale St Estèphe grip and minerality which is enhanced by plenty of juicy but stylish flesh. It will need some time but looks to be a lovely wine. With Montrose itself scoring potentially 100 points (96-100) and no doubt being priced accordingly, this is a chance to enjoy a touch of the Montrose class for a fraction of the price. We preferred it to the Dame de Montrose "A dense purple color along with a beautiful bouquet of boysenberries, spring flowers, black currants, and a hint of ink, a full-bodied, supple, opulent mouth feel, and a long finish. 90-93." Parker

### **2009 Echo de Lynch Bages, Pauillac**

**£248ib/12**

The newly named second wine of Lynch Bages (changed from Haut Bages Averous with the 2008 vintage) is one of the star second wines of this vintage and a terrific wine in its own right. We think Lynch is one of the wines of the vintage and that view is backed up by the high quality of this second wine. It has super purity of fruit, lovely flavours, very good grip, excellent length and real breed. It's long and consistent across the palate and basically it's a mini Lynch. The first wine will cost quite a lot this year (and be hard to get) and this looks very fair value. With Lynch beginning to interest the Far East, there could be scope for the Echo to 'do' a Carruades, albeit on a smaller scale. This is way better than the 2005 version which is currently the same price. As you might have guessed this come highly recommended!

### **2009 Château de Fieuzal, Pessac-Léognan**

**£258ib/12**

We liked this and in fact it showed particularly well at a small mixed tasting at Angelus when we re-tasted it later in the day. For us Domaine de Chevalier was the stand out Graves but this showed up well in the race for second and price wise came in at way under some of its rivals in the photo finish. A genuine bargain.

"The finest I have ever tasted, this is an awesome De Fieuzal, with plenty of lead pencil shavings intermixed with blueberry, black raspberry, and sweet cherries. A touch of smoke also emerges from this opaque purple-colored wine. Full-bodied, with loads of glycerin, one can see the more generous, viscous nature of this vintage well-displayed, but also a terrific freshness and vibrancy. It should turn out to be a superb effort that drinks well for up to 30 years. 91-93+pts" Parker

### **2009 Château Gloria, St Julien**

**£280ib/12**

"There have been many great Glorias over the years as this property consistently over-performs. The 2009 may be the finest yet produced. Loaded with notes of Christmas fruitcake intermixed with red and black currants, licorice, spice box, and blackberries, this inky/purple-colored wine is atypically full bodied with a viscous texture, and loads of tannin, extract, and richness. Deep and layered, it will offer thrilling sipping over the next 25+ years. 91-93pts."

### **2009 Château Haut Bages Liberal, Pauillac**

**£285ib/12**

No note from Parker but we scored it half a point higher than the Gloria so they are very much on a par. The vineyards are well located, with parcels lying next to the likes of Latour and Grand Puy Lacoste and following extensive replanting in the 1970s the vines are now of a good age. It's therefore no surprise that under the dynamic new regime this property has succeeded massively in such a vintage.

### **2009 La Croix de Beaucaillou, St Julien**

**£295ib/12**

Like so many of these '2nd wines', La Croix is slowly evolving in to a wine in its own right and it certainly impressed when tasted at Ducru. With the first wine released at £2000 a case this is a chance to enjoy the Ducru style for a fraction of the price. Would also much rather drink this wine than many first wines such as Beychevelle which is also quite a bit more expensive.

"Ducru's second wine, the 2009 Croix de Beaucaillou, is a thrill to taste. Made from a single vineyard, it exhibits a dense purple color along with a creamy texture and loads of crème de cassis fruit intertwined with notions of charcoal, incense, and spice. Round, generous, and opulent, it can be drunk now or cellared for 15+ years. 98-100" Parker

### **2009 Château Haut Marbuzet, Saint-Estèphe**

**£320ib/12**

This is an impressive 2009, combining perfectly St Estèphe austerity with lovely, ripe, juicy fruit. Not marked by Parker but he tends to slightly under score it anyway. This must be the best wine ever made at the estate.

### **2009 Clos du Marquis, St Julien**

**£380ib/12**

From a separate plot but very much part of the Las Cases stable comes arguably the best version of this wine to date. It seems that everything from here played a blinder in 2009. The price looks very fair and for any one who fancies some Las Cases class for about a fifth of the price this looks a must buy.

"Clos du Marquis is being positioned by Jean-Hubert Delon as a separate single vineyard wine rather than Leoville Las Cases' second wine. The logic is simple. It has come from the same vineyard for over twenty years, and is not a true second wine in the sense that it is not made from Las Cases' discarded cuvees. The 2009 Clos du Marquis (70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) came in at 13.75% alcohol. It exhibits a deep ruby/purple hue along with sweet notes of crème de cassis, great purity, a full-bodied mouth feel, and terrific texture as well as length. It should evolve for 20-25 years. 91-93 pts". Parker

### **2009 Château Talbot, St Julien**

**£415ib/12**

To be honest we preferred the likes of Leoville Poyferre to this but that will be at least double the price of this and with that in mind this looks very fair value indeed. Parker compares it to the '86 and '82 which are £1100 and £1700 respectively so this has some scope. It was certainly rich and powerful, though still more St Julien than Pauillac.

"This is the most impressive Talbot since the 1982 and 1986. It reveals an opaque plum/garnet/purple color as well as knock-out aromas of black fruits, cedar, incense, licorice, and a Provencal garrigue-like character. Substantial, sexy, and seductive, it is almost sluttily in its exuberance and ostentatiousness. It was a thrill to drink this loaded St.-Julien. It should offer irresistible drinking over the next 20-25 years. 92-94 pts." Parker

### **2009 Château Langoa Barton, St Julien**

**£450ib/12**

"I found the 2009 Langoa Barton to be so painfully extracted, excruciatingly tannic, powerful, and backward that I wrote it "should be forgotten for 15 years, and may have some charm in 30-40." There is no doubting its level of concentration and massiveness, but, wow, proprietor Anthony Barton has sure pushed the extraction, producing a wine for our children's children. 90-92+" Parker

### **2009 Château Bellevue, St Emilion Grand Cru**

**£465ib/12**

From the stable of Angelus, who, this year, have produced, in our opinion, one of the best wines of St Emilion and in Parker's opinion have produced a potential 100 point wine, comes this gorgeous offering. We found it much more elegant than Parker and it certainly maintained its class despite being tasted next to Angelus itself. It is super stylish and beautifully knit with bags of concentration but real balance and harmony. We aren't recommending many St Emilions this year (this is the first!) but we loved this one!

"Loads of chalky minerality from limestone soils are obviously present in this wine, which has a dense purple color, a viscous, full-bodied mouth feel, huge fruit concentration, power, and structure. From yields of 28 hectoliters per hectare, the wine is rather massive and backward in the mouth. It looks terrific and could turn out to be superior to their

## 2009 Château Brane Cantenac, Margaux

£495ib/12

*Forget your over-extracted Rausan Seglas and Lascombes at 50% more money; this is the Margaux property you want. Since the 2000 vintage heralded a new era in this château's history with a super wine Brane has been making what we consider to be proper Margaux, proving that one can upgrade a property in this controversial commune without simply trying to win points with black wines.*

*This was a standout at the general Margaux tasting and is champion of refined, elegant, cultured Margaux of purity and understatement; in fact what the commune is supposed to be all about!*

*"Only 37% of the production made it in to the 2009 Brane Cantenac (slightly lower than most properties because the fruit was so good). This is a blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and 7% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.87 and finished alcohol of 13.2%. It is another offering that reveals no evidence of wood even though 70% new oak barrels were utilized. A dense plum/purple color is followed by a lovely perfume of flowers, boysenberries, black cherries, and black currants. Seamless in the mouth with stunning concentration, a seductive style, an exquisite Margaux delicacy, and levels of richness and intensity I have never before seen in Brane Cantenac, it should drink effortlessly for 30+ years."*

## 2009 Château Branaire Ducru, St Julien

£495ib/12

*One of our favourite wines of St Julien this year and released at what seems a very fair price. I (Jason) rated it above Barton for its finesse and balance and just above Gruaud Larose, although Sam perhaps preferred Gruaud. Either way, it's a terrific wine. It's a superb mix of understated power and refinement with excellent tannins and lots of weight. There is great aromatic mouth feel and impressive length and a delightful overall classicism. Super wine.*

*"Only time will tell whether the 2009, another great effort from Branaire, will eclipse the 2005 and 2003. Certainly at 13.6% alcohol it is the most powerful Branaire ever made, and the final blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot showcases what a great vintage 2009 is for Cabernet Sauvignon. An inky/blue/purple color is followed by raspberry, boysenberry, crushed rock, graphite, and floral notes, and an opaque, broad, dense, substantial, impressively structured wine without any hardness. It requires 4-5 years of cellaring, and should last four decades or more. 92-95pts" Parker*

## 2009 Château Saint Pierre, St Julien

£530ib/12

*This has been one of 'our' chateaux for a while now making lovely wines for less money than most of its neighbours. It's the smallest classed growth St Julien at 17 hectares and tends to remain under the radar despite strong ratings in recent vintages. However, this year it seems to have made a more conspicuous splash scoring its highest ever score and creating a real buzz*

*"This has been a fabulous wine over recent vintages, but I do not think many consumers have caught on. Of course, there is far less of this classified-growth St.-Julien than of any of the Leovilles, Beychevelle, Talbot, Gruaud Larose, or Branaire Ducru. Unbelievably powerful, rich, and impressive, this may be the finest St.-Pierre ever made. An inky/purple color is followed by notes of crème de cassis, spring flowers, and forest floor, a layered, full-bodied, powerful mouth feel, perfect balance, and extraordinary richness, purity, and unctuousity. This great St.-Julien should hit its peak in 7-10 years, and last for 30-50. Bravo! 94-98 pts". Parker*

*It's expensive compared to previous releases but as the best wine ever made at the property and one of the best wines of the commune, its price is more than fair and with the current releases coming out ever more expensive this could start to look good value in a few days time! Super wine.*

## 2009 Domaine de Chevalier Rouge, Pessac-Léognan

£530ib/12

*Everything about this property makes you love it. The owner, the philosophy, the wine! Major replanting some years back meant that the property stayed somewhat under the radar with just the shrewd cognoscenti loyally following. As the vines have got older so the wine has got even better but the style of winemaking has remained true to its origins. This has never been a wine that has pandered to the modern trend of over-extracted and over-oaked wines preferring purity and finesse. And that is not about to change. This 2009 is quite simply the best Graves wine outside of the Haut Brion stable with perhaps the one exception of Haut Bailly (50% more expensive). (We tasted a non-finished 100% new oak sample of Haut Bailly so it's hard to give an accurate assessment of that wine). It has a good dose of delicious Petit Verdot in it which gives it real vibrancy and it is wonderfully seamless and controlled. A great success.*

*"The finest wine I have tasted from this estate in my 30+ - year career, the 2009 (64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 6% Petit Verdot) from this hallowed vineyard in Leognan was cropped at 45 hectoliters per hectare and came in at 13% alcohol. It reveals an extraordinary, intense, pure, quintessential Domaine de Chevalier style, including silky tannin, dense plum, black currant, black cherry, floral, and graphite notes, terrific acidity, sweet tannin, and a full-bodied mouth feel with no weight, but admirable precision and freshness. Consultant Stephane Derenoncourt has coaxed out all the elegance and complexity at this great site. A future legend in the making, this could be the best Domaine de Chevalier produced over the last half century. It should drink well for 35-40 years. 94-96s" Parker*

## 2009 Grand Puy Lacoste, Pauillac

£570ib/12

*Not surprisingly Grand Puy Lacoste has made a lovely, classic-style claret that will delight true claret lovers in years to come. In our view Parker has slightly under-scored it at 91-93 but then a wine of purity, minerality and classicism is less his style. This wine walks all over the Margaux properties that have scored the same or more (Rausan Segla/Giscours/Prieur Lichine etc) and is all the better for not being over extracted and over-oaked. It is a little like a more intense and more complex Haut Batailley, with more depth and structure. What's not to like?*

## 2009 La Chapelle de la Mission, Pessac-Léognan

£695ib/12

*"There are approximately 2,000 cases of the 2009 La Chapelle de La Mission, the best one I have ever tasted. A blend of nearly equal parts Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon with 10% Cabernet Franc added in, it achieved 14.2% natural alcohol. The wine is a remarkable effort, with amazing density, extraordinary fruit quality, dense purple color with meaty notes alongside subtle barbecue smoke, camphor, black currant, sweet cherry, and blackberry. It has a lush, opulent texture, loads of glycerin, and admirable purity and length. I could have drunk a bottle or two just tasting it from the barrel! It should evolve for 10-15 or more years. 91-94pts" Parker.*

## 2009 Château Haut Bailly, Pessac-Léognan

£950ib/12

*"The greatest Haut-Bailly ever made? One can't speak enough of the job Veronique Sanders has done in 2009, allied with the owner, the American banker Robert Wilmers, who has given her carte blanche authority. Tiny yields have resulted in the most concentrated Haut-Bailly I have ever tasted. Eclipsing even the 2005, the 2009 (a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, and 3% Cabernet Franc) possesses 13.9% natural alcohol. Dense purple to the rim, it exhibits a precise, nuanced nose of mulberries, black cherries, black currants, graphite, and a singular floral component. A wine of profound intensity and full-bodied power, yet stunningly elegant, and never heavy or massive, it builds incrementally on the palate, and the finish lasts over 45 seconds. Remarkably, there is not a hard edge to be found in this beauty. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc were harvested between October 7 and 14, which explains their phenolic maturity. The wine's extraordinary freshness, elegance, and precision are nearly surreal. This tour de force should age brilliantly for 40+ years. 96-98+" Parker*

## 2009 Château La Mission Haut Brion, Pessac-Léognan

£6200ib/12

*"La Mission Haut-Brion has made so many great wines over the last 100 years, it would be stupid to say the 2009 somehow exceeds this estate's great classics, such as 1929, 1945, 1949, 1953, 1955, 1959, 1961, 1982, 1989, 1990, 1998, 2000, or 2005. Certainly it will take its place in the pantheon of all the great La Mission Haut-Brions ever made. There are 6,000 cases of it, made from a blend of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 47% Merlot, and 6% Cabernet Franc. The natural alcohol hit 14.7%, which far exceeds the perfect wines of 1982, 1989 and 1990. Opaque purple in color, with an extraordinary nose of blueberry liqueur intermixed with camphor, charcoal, hints of burning embers and truffles, and loads of black berry and black currant fruit, the wine has sublime concentration and purity, a finish that goes well past 60 seconds, and not a hard*

edge to be found in this sumptuous, almost over-the-top, full-bodied wine of enormous power and massive density and richness. An immortal effort, it should drink well for 50-100 years! 98-100pts" Parker

### **2009 Château Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac**

**£7500ib/12**

"This is the most backward and unevolved of all the Left Bank (Medoc) first-growths. In 10-20 years, the 2009 Mouton Rothschild should rank alongside the greatest vintages of the last three decades (1986 and 1982). Yields were a small 30 hectoliters per hectare, the final blend is 88% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12% Merlot, and the finished alcohol is 13.2% (not particularly high in this vintage). The pH is 3.81, and the index of tannins, the highest ever measured, a whopping 20% higher than the next highest vintage. The tannins, while present, are silky and well-integrated, one of the hallmarks of the 2009 vintage. An inky/purple color is accompanied by classic aromas of crème de cassis, violets, and hints of graphite and background oak. The overwhelming impression is one of layer upon layer of fruit, full-bodied opulence, and good structure. It tastes as if it were 2-3 months old rather than a post-malolactic, fully assembled barrel sample ... it's that young, but so incredibly promising. A 50- to 100-year wine? Probably. 96-98+ » Parker

### **2009 Château Haut Brion, Pessac-Léognan**

**£8000ib/12**

"There are 10,500 cases of the 2009 Haut-Brion, from a blend of 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 14% Cabernet Franc. For technicians, the highest ever natural alcohol, 14.3%, was achieved, with a pH of 3.9, which is about the same as the 1989 and 1990, as well as 1959. This is the kind of wine to send chills even up my spine, and I have been tasting here for nearly 30 years. An extraordinary nose of plum, blueberry, raspberry, crushed rock, and that intriguing floral as well as unsmoked cigar tobacco note (a classic sign of this terroir) is followed by a wine of creamy unctuousity reminiscent of 1989, but there is a freshness, vibrancy and precision that is historic and possibly unprecedented. Some graphite emerges as the wine sits in the glass, but the wine is very thick while at the same time precise and elegant. This is the quintessential expression of one of the greatest wine terroirs of the world. To reiterate, the good news is that there are going to be 10,500 cases of Haut-Brion in 2009, which is about 1,500 more cases than the 9,000 produced in 2005. This wine will probably need 7-8 years of cellaring when released and evolve as well as the 1959 has (which is still a perfect wine today), so we're realistically talking 50-75 years when stored in a cool cellar. (Tasted once.). 98-100pts" Parker

### **2009 Château Lafite, Pauillac**

**£6500ib/6**

"The 2009 Lafite Rothschild is a candidate for "wine of the vintage." Although the 2003 was powerful (12.9% alcohol), the 2009 came in at 13.4% alcohol. It is a blend of 82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot. Only 45% of the crop went into the grand vin, which may be the most concentrated Lafite I have ever tasted. There is not a hard edge to be found in this inky/purple-colored wine displaying notes of charcoal, incense, black currants, and licorice. In the mouth, it represents a liqueur of black fruits offered in a remarkably full-bodied, incredibly elegant, lush style. Expansive, savory, staggeringly concentrated, and voluptuous as well as wonderfully precise with a hint of minerality, this sensational wine's technical numbers are off the charts. Is this a replay of the 1959? Although it will be surprisingly approachable in its youth, this is a 50-100-year wine. 98-100pts" Parker

## **Sauternes**

### **2009 Château Guiraud**

**£365ib/12**

**£375ib/24 halves**

"The 2009 Guiraud is very tight on the nose, taking time to unfurl, with notes of apricot, peach, a touch of honeysuckle and quince. Good definition. The palate is impressive: tightly coiled, honeyed fruit, very fine acidity, linear at first then fanning out across the finish with notes of dried apricot, nectarine, a touch of almond and a faint hint of spice. With good length and unctuous on the finish, this Guiraud is impossible to ignore. 94-96 pts"

### **2009 Château Nairac**

**£480ib/12**

**£489ib/24 halves**

This was right up there with the more famous names showing amazing intensity, sweetness and balance. Gorgeous wine and better than the review below. One for the shrewdies.

"Nicolas Tari has certainly improved this estate in recent years. His 2009 has a well defined nose with apple-blossom, lime leaf, apricot and orange peel. Opens nicely the longer it remains in the glass. The palate is well balanced, very good weight on the entry with a citric thread of acidity interwoven through the pure honeyed fruit with a hint of ginger on the aftertaste. Nothing extravagant here, but supremely well crafted and succinct. 93-95" Parker

### **2009 Château Coutet**

**£540ib/12**

**£450ib/24 halves**

This was nothing short of sensational and undoubtedly one of the sweet wines of the vintage.

"The Coutet 2009 is a sensational effort from Philippe Baly and his team. It has a fragrant nose of honey, vervain tea, pineapple, frangipane and apple-blossom, well defined if needing a little more vigour at the moment. The palate is vibrant on the entry, informed by touches of apricot and orange peel, very focused and tensile towards the long, sensuous, viscous finish. It has the same minerality exuded by Doisy-Daene and reminds me of a stellar '62 tasted just a few weeks previously. A magnificent Coutet 96-98 pts. Parker"

### **2009 Château Rieussec**

**£615ib/12**

**£625ib/24 halves**

It was no great surprise that Rieussec nailed it in such a good vintage and we felt it could have been more expensive, with the 2001 trading at around £900.

"The minerality and stoniness really comes through on the nose of this Rieussec, more than the 2007. The palate is very well balanced with superb acidity, real tension, steely with great precision with notes of apricot, white peach and honey on the beautifully defined finish. Probably the best Rieussec since the astounding 2001. 95-97pts" Parker

### **2009 Château Suiduiraut**

**£625ib/12**

**£635ib/24 halves**

"One of the outstanding successes of the 2009 vintage, this may surpass the superlative 2007. It has a more understated nose at the moment, but is very well defined with honey, white peach, orange peel and crushed stones. The palate has a viscous entry, is very well balanced, very powerful with great depth and effervescent minerality. Layers of botrytis layer across the mellifluous finish that is beautifully defined and sensuous. Fabulous. 97-99pts" Parker

### **2009 Château Climens**

**£820ib/12**

**£830ib/24 halves**

We thought this would be over £1000 a case so were delighted at this price.

"Picked in just two tries, 90% picked in one try, tasting through 13 separate lots, the core components of a great Climens appear to be in place. Paying particular attention to the lots that constitute a large percentage of the blend (usually around 15%) the common themes are ones of great purity, persistency and precision. The aromatics display pure honey, minerals, occasionally a faint scent of spearmint and white peach, most with spellbinding precision. On the palate, Berenice Lurton has some stupendous lots at her disposal, with ample botrytis, ethereal definition, one or two more powerful, quite spicy lots and others that are shorter and will undoubtedly lend the blend an acidic cut. It will be a joy to taste this after bottling. 96-98pts" Parker