



# TORONTO VINTNERS CLUB Inc.

www.torontovintners.org



## 1996 BORDEAUX – THE LEFT BANK

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

**Reception: 6:00 PM, Tasting to start at 6:20 PM**

The Ontario Club, 5th Floor, Commerce Court South  
(Northeast Corner of Bay & Wellington Streets)  
Toronto, Ontario Tel: (416) 862-1270

The 1996 vintage is classic 'left bank'. The ripening conditions and harvest timing favoured Cabernet Sauvignon, which is the dominant grape variety planted in the vineyards along the left side (west side) of the Gironde River. Generally referred to as the Medoc, the major, most well known appellations (from north to south) along the left bank include Pauillac, St.-Estephe, St.-Julien, Margaux, Cantenac, then the larger area called Haut Medoc running south almost to the city of Bordeaux. Our wine buyers purchased all 'left bank' wines for this tasting, with the exception of Grand Pontet, Grand Cru, St.-Emilion, which is a flamboyant rising property from the 'right bank'.

Decanter Magazine declares that most, though not all, tasters believe 1996 is even better than 1995. Berry Bros. & Rudd, the renowned British wine merchant firm, state that 1996 is one of the finest vintages of the 1990s, rating it 9 out of 10, and arguably one of the top four vintages of the last century. Michael Broadbent has this to say, "Though upstaged by the attractive 1995s, this (1996) vintage is better than it was first made out to be, and improves greatly on acquaintance. Indeed, after looking through my (tasting) notes, I think it is a seriously underrated vintage." Robert Parker concurs with the general consensus that the northern Medoc appellations of Pauillac, St.-Estephe and St.-Julien had the greatest successes, rating them 96 points on his vintage chart.

A hot, dry June ensured rapid and uniform flowering, raising hopes for a plentiful crop. Unfortunately, heavy rain in early July and late August dampened much of the early enthusiasm. Not so, as noted above, in the northern Medoc areas which did not experience the heavier rains and consequently had healthy, fruit concentrated grapes. There was consolation for the regions hit by the rains because September was extraordinarily windy resulting in the vineyards drying out quickly, thus avoiding mold and mildew problems. Harvested under quite warm conditions, the wines are rich, complex, well balanced, revealing lots of ripe fruit with good acidity and structure. Merlot dominated 'right bank' wines show well and are considered distinguished, though the fruit quality seems better in the cabernet-based wines.

Let's see if our three northern Medoc wines prove more interesting than the others. How will our Grand Cru St.-Emilion challenger fair? Will Carruades Lafite outshine the classified growths? With 40% of the vineyard being Merlot, will Cantemerle stand out?

**NOTE:** After checking in, join us at 6 PM for a glass of reception wine prior to the formal tasting which will begin at about 6:20. Remember the Ontario Club has a dress code of business casual – please **no jeans!**

Only paid-up members in good standing can attend at members' rates. As always, members have preference. First come basis; no telephone or e-mail reservations. **Deadline for reservations/cancellations without penalty is June 9, 2006.** To cancel, call 416-209-1442 or email [events@torontovintners.org](mailto:events@torontovintners.org). Cheques payable to Toronto Vintners Club.

Names:		
Bus Tel:		Home Tel:
Email:		
_____ Member's assessment -	<b>\$55.00 pp</b>	\$
_____ Guest / non-member assessment -	<b>\$65.00 pp</b>	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$
___ I would like to sit at the Newcomers' table with an experienced taster or to meet other members.		

**June 2006  
1996 Bordeaux**

**Mail to:**  
Toronto Vintners Club  
c/o S. Dorosh  
PO Box 1023  
TDC Postal Station  
77 King St. West,  
Toronto, ON  
M5K 1P2

I understand & accept my personal safety responsibilities when attending a Toronto Vintners Club event.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# TORONTO VINTNERS CLUB INC.

## THE BACK PAGE

### 1. 1996 Calon-Segur

Wine Advocate #122 (Apr 1999); Robert Parker: 92 points/100. 1996 may not be as profound as predicted from cask, but it is an exceptional wine. Dark ruby-colored, with a complex nose of dried herbs, Asian spices, and black cherry jam intermixed with cassis, outstanding purity, and considerable tannin in the finish. Classic, medium to full-bodied, traditionally-ade wine improves dramatically with airing, should have a very long life. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2028.

### 2. 1996 Lafon-Rochet

Wine Advocate #122 (Apr 1999); Parker: 90/100. One of the sleepers of the 1996 vintage, atypically powerful, rich, and concentrated wine bursting with black currant fruit. Opaque purple color gives way to a medium to full-bodied, tannic, backward wine with terrific purity, a sweet, concentrated mid-palate, and a long, blockbuster finish. Remains one of the finest values from the luxury-priced 1996 vintage; should keep for two decades. Anticipated maturity: 2005-2020.

### 3. 1996 Carruades de Lafite

Wine Advocate #115 (Feb 1998); Parker: 86-88/100. Parker: ". . . second wine of Lafite-Rothschild, Carruades de Lafite, has improved over recent years. The 1996, a blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon and 37% Merlot, may turn out to be the finest Carruades I have ever tasted. It possesses as much power, ripeness, and fleshy fruit (because of the high percentage of Merlot) as I have ever detected in this offering. While it does not quite have the characteristics of Lafite, being fleshier and more accessible, it is a beautifully made wine with a subtle dosage of toasty new oak, an appealing texture, and excellent length. Given its power, this second wine will need 2-4 years of cellaring, and keep for 15+ years

### 4. 1996 Cantemerle

Wine Advocate #122 (Apr 1999); Parker: 87/100. "I had hoped this wine would turn out closer to outstanding, but it is an excellent Cantemerle, if not quite as stunning as I had expected. The wine offers a dark ruby color, and a sweet nose of black raspberries, subtle new oak, and acacia smells. There is fine sweetness and solid tannin in this elegant, symmetrical wine. It is more forward and lighter than it was from cask, but it is a stylish example of Cantemerle." Anticipated maturity: 2003-2015.

### 5. 1996 Kirwan

Wine Advocate #122 (Apr 1999); Robert Parker: 88/100. Readers should note that this property has significantly improved the quality of its wines, and now deserves a serious look in nearly every vintage. The 1996 Kirwan is a highly-extracted, rich, medium-bodied wine with a deep ruby/purple color, and ripe cassis fruit intermixed with a touch of new oak, prunes, and spice. The wine has come together nicely since I first tasted it from cask. It appears to be an excellent, nearly outstanding effort. There is moderate tannin in the finish, so give this beefy, rich, muscular wine 6-7 years of cellaring. Anticipated maturity: 2006-2025.

### 6. 1996 Malescot St Expury

Wine Advocate #122 (Apr 1999); Parker: 90. Impressively constructed wine offers a saturated deep ruby/purple color, followed by elegant aromas of berry fruit intermixed with tobacco, flowers, and vanillin scents. Layered and medium to full-bodied, with outstanding purity and fruit extraction. Although deep, rich, and powerful for a wine from this estate, it hasn't lost any of its elegance or potential complexity. Anticipated maturity: 2006-2025.

### 7. 1996 du Tertre

Wine Advocate #115 (Feb 1998); Robert Parker: 88-90/100. A sleeper, Du Tertre's 1996 exhibits a black ruby/purple color, a sweet black fruit-scented nose, medium to full body, well-integrated tannin, and fine purity and depth. This wine should age nicely, yet have a degree of accessibility young. Anticipated maturity: 2004-2018.

### 8. 1996 Grand Pontet

Wine Advocate #122 (Apr 1999); Parker: 89. Up and coming St.-Emilion is somewhat underrated given the consistently high quality of recent vintages. 1996 is a flamboyant, dark ruby/purple-colored wine with a soaring bouquet of plum liqueur, toasty new oak, black cherries, smoke, and dried herbs. In the mouth, evidence of sur-maturite jamminess and richness emerge from this medium-bodied, rich, spicy, impressively-endowed wine. Tannin in the medium to full-bodied finish. Anticipated maturity: 2003-2014.

**"The Wines of Bordeaux give tone to the stomach, while leaving the mouth fresh and the head clear. More than one invalid abandoned by the doctors has been seen to drink the good old wine of Bordeaux and return to health. "**

*Comments by members of the Jury judging Bordeaux wines submitted under the new 1855 classification at the 1855 World's Fair in Paris, as noted in **1855: A History of the Bordeaux Classification***