



Bordeaux 2003 Vintage

Tuesday, September 17, 2013

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ. of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$80; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$100

As the end of summer approaches, TVC is gearing for the fall with our much anticipated September Bordeaux tasting. This year we revisit the controversial 2003 vintage. At a recent Bordeaux tasting of the 2003 vintage organized by fine wine merchant, Bordeaux Index, at its London, England offices in March 2013, Bordeaux authority Michael Schuster, who runs the wine school at the merchant, said the 2003 vintage was far from typical, but also noted that many of the wines were ready for imbibing and showing very nicely. Our wines have had an opportunity to benefit from a couple more years of cellaring so we expect this vintage to be at perfection now. As wine critic Jancis Robinson says of 2003 – DRINK UP!!!

As the largest wine producing region of France, Bordeaux is recognized the world over. If the region were its own country, it would rank 5th in wine production worldwide! The area is naturally divided by the Gironde River into a Left Bank area which includes the Médoc and the sub-regions of St-Estèphe, Pauillac, St-Julien, and Margaux and the Right Bank area which includes the subregions of Saint-Émilion, Pomerol, Bourg and Blaye. The summer of 2003 in Europe was characterized by the scorching heat. As a result of the hottest temperatures in 500 years, the wine producers of Bordeaux were forced to pick the grapes earlier than ever before. Due to extremely dry conditions, sugar levels were high but the grapes did not go through the typical ripening process, which resulted in wines with dried fruit flavours and relatively high tannins. According to James Suckling from Wine Spectator magazine: "Some people might call the 2003 reds slightly New World in style due to their opulence and ripe fruit character, but they remain Bordeaux through and through."

This month we will taste eight exceptional Left Bank reds from St. Julien, Margaux, Pauillac and St. Estephe. The St. Julien wines include second and third growth Grand Crus from Chateau Léoville Barton and a fourth growth Grand Cru from Chateau Branaire Decru. Chateau Léoville Barton is located on 116 acres of vineyards along the Gironde river. On average, the vines are 30 years old and grow in mostly gravel and clay soil. Chateau Branaire Decru, which sits upon 50 acres of vineyards, uses a unique gravity-flow style of wine production in order to minimize damage to the grapes. The vines average 35 years of age and the grapes are picked by hand. From Margaux we will be tasting a third growth Chateau Malescot St. Exupéry and a Pavillon Rouge-Chateau Margaux. The vineyards of Chateau Malescot St. Exupéry have been identified as unrivalled core areas for wine growing for over three hundred years because they meet the requirements for excellent natural drainage. Chateau Margaux, which extends 650 acres, produces both the Grand Vin and the Pavillon Rouge. The Pavillon Rouge goes through the same traditional techniques of vinification and ageing in barrels as the Grand Vin; however it's bottled three or four months earlier than Chateau Margaux because its finer structure doesn't require such a long barrel-ageing period. From Pauillac, we will taste a fourth growth Grand Cru from Chateau Duhard Milon and fifth growth Grand Cru from Chateau Grand Puy Lacoste. Both the 175 acres of vineyards of Chateau Duhard Milon and the 90 acres of Chateau Grand Puy Lacoste are located on deep gravel top soil on a limestone base, which is typical of the Pauillac region and lends to powerful mineral taste the typical of these wines. Last but not least, our tasting will include a fourth growth Chateau Lafon Rochet from the northernmost appellation of St. Estephe.

As usual, our event includes a reception wine to start and appetizers that accompany the wines

Please NO perfume or aftershave please!!

Tickets are very limited for this event so you are encouraged to register early to avoid disappointment!

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=vxghb4bab&oeidk=a07e824js2s331eeaa0>. You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received by Friday, September 13th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, September 10th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday September 15th or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact chris@torontovintners.org before trying to register again.



Tasting Notes and Information

2003 Branaire Ducru, 4e, St Julien \$65

"Even better than the 1982, the profound 2003 Branaire Ducru boasts a saturated plum/purple color as well as an extraordinarily complex nose of black currants, blackberries, espresso roast, white chocolate, minerals, and truffles. It displays amazing freshness and definition for such a complex, complete, and full-bodied wine... A brilliant wine!" 95 pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Malescot St Exupry, 3e, Margaux \$69

"Displaying low acidity and a forward style, the exotic 2003 is undeniably fragrant, complex, and sexy. Its dark ruby/purple color is followed by sumptuous aromas of truffles, underbrush, plums, cassis, and a hint of figs. The tannin is sweet, and the texture is multilayered. This full-bodied, chewy, round, sensual Margaux should evolve gracefully for 15+ years. Bravo!" 92 pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Duhart Milon, (formerly Duhart-Milon-Rothschild) 4e, Pauillac \$59

"The 2003 may be the finest Duhart-Milon made ... ever! A blend of 73% Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Merlot, it boasts a deep ruby/purple hue in addition to a big, sweet perfume of black fruits interwoven with roasted herbs and meat juice offered in a muscular, full-bodied style. Full-bodied, dense, and well-structured, this stunning cuvee is best consumed between 2010-2030." 92+ pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Grand Puy Lacoste, 5e, Pauillac \$86

"A deep ruby/purple-tinged color is followed by a moderately intense bouquet of black currants and underbrush. It hits the palate with good fruit and medium body, but tails off in the finish. It is an elegant, lighter-styled example of this generally high-class performer. It can be consumed over the next 10-12 years." 88 pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Lafon Rochet, 4e, St Estephe \$49

"A sleeper of the vintage, the dense blue/purple-colored 2003 Lafon-Rochet exhibits plenty of blackberry, cassis and graphite along with a touch of toasty new oak. The wine is more backward than expected, but it possesses full-bodied, concentrated flavors as well as good elegance, purity, and overall equilibrium. This is a long-distance runner. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2025." 90+ pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Pavillon Rouge-Chateau Margaux \$89

"A terrific, value-priced second wine, the 2003 Pavillon Rouge du Chateau Margaux (150,000 bottles produced) may be the finest example of this cuvee I have yet tasted. Its dense ruby/purple hue is followed by creamy aromas of cassis, vanilla, flowers, and licorice. Round, generous, savory, expansive, and amazingly long as well as concentrated, I even joked with Paul Pontallier that this could get him fired as perhaps the selection was too severe! This 2003 should drink well for 15+ years." 92 pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Langoa Barton, 3e, St Julien \$66

"The outstanding 2003, a softer version of the Leoville Barton, exhibits a deep ruby/purple color, sweet black cherries intermixed with subtle herbal notes, roasted meats, juices, and black currants. In the mouth, it is expansive, savory, round, and seemingly on a much faster evolutionary track than Leoville Barton. Give it 2-3 years of cellaring and drink it over the following 15-18 years." 90 pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

2003 Leoville Barton, 2e, St Julien \$109

"One cannot admire enough proprietor Anthony Barton and his classic, potentially long-lived wines that are models of power, elegance, and longevity – in short, these wines symbolize what makes Bordeaux so world-renowned! Probably capable of rivaling the 2000, the uncompromisingly made, formidably powerful, masculine, and highly extracted 2003 has an inky purple color to the rim, a big, deep personality with a tight but promising nose of forest floor, crème de cassis, smoke, charcoal, licorice, and perhaps even truffle." 95+ pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2006.

NOTE: Prices shown are from time of purchase.
(formerly Duhart-Milon-Rothschild)