



2003 Bordeaux, Left Bank

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

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

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

Members' Fee: \$74; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$94

For many people September represents the end of summer, but luckily for the Toronto Vintners Club September means Bordeaux! And September will not disappoint as we indulge in a fantastic selection of second to fifth-growth wines from the 2003 vintage.

Producing on average 700 million bottles per vintage, Bordeaux is the largest producer of wines in France. If the region were its own country, it would rank 5th in wine production worldwide! Wines range from table wines to some of the most prestigious wines in the world. 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. The main grape used in these sub-regions is Cabernet Sauvignon, which results in wines that are fairly tannic and muscular. The Right Bank area which includes the sub-regions of Saint-Émilion, Pomerol, Bourg and Blaye produces more Merlot and Cabernet Franc-based wines. Merlot is typically used more in blends, therefore Right Bank wines are often slightly softer and rounder than those from the Left Bank.

Over the centuries, wine growers in the Bordeaux area observed that certain sites systematically produce wines of exceptional quality with specific characteristics. The reason for this is the influence of "terroir", the subtle interaction of soils, sub-soils, exposure to sun, altitude and the natural environment. The wines of the Medoc region are produced from gravelly soils where the vines work diligently to produce small, complex fruit. The wines of the Saint-Julien sub-region distinguish themselves for their natural finesse and successful balance. Their style creates a splendid link between the finesse of the Margaux wines and the power of the Pauillacs. These are enormously rich, incredibly pure, concentrated wines. Furthermore, they represent a confluence of Mother Nature providing ideal growing conditions, and a new generation of extraordinarily committed Bordelais that understand their legacy, realizing that they are the world's reference point for wines of richness, longevity, and complexity.

Summer in Europe in 2003 would best be described as a scorcher and has been said to be the hottest summer in the past 500 years. As a result, most of France's wine regions picked the grapes earlier than ever before, including Bordeaux. 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."

On September 20th, Toronto Vintners will focus on Bordeaux from the Left Bank from exceptional 2003 vintage - an excellent way to kick off the fall tasting season! Included in our line-up are wines from such esteemed châteaux as Leoville-Barton and its sister, Langoa-Barton; Duhart-Milon (formerly Duhart-Milon-Rothschild) part of the Domaines Baron de Rothschild (Lafite); Lafon-Rochet owned by the Tesseron family which also owns Château Pontet-Canet; Malescot St. Exupéry which dates back to 1697 and was acquired in 1827 by Count Jean Batiste St-Exupéry, great-great grandfather of the aviator and writer Antoine de St. Exupéry; Grand Puy Lacoste, Branaire Ducru and Pavillon Rouge, the second wine from Chateau Margaux.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent7>. 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 16th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, September 13th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday September 18th 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 torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca 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. *Wine Spectator*: 93/100.

2003 Malescot St. Exupéry, 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. *Wine Spectator*: 92/100.

2003 Duhart Milon, 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. *Wine Spectator*: 92/100.

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. *Wine Spectator*: 92/100.

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. Stephen Tanzer: 91/100

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. *Wine Spectator*: 92/100.

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. *Wine Spectator*: 92/100.

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 rivalling 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. *Wine Spectator*: 98/100.

NOTE: Prices shown are from time of purchase.