



# Bordeaux 2020 Vintage Report



■ Writing a vintage report for Bordeaux en primeur can be a challenge. As a buyer, you are constantly hearing that ‘this vintage is the vintage of the decade’, ‘the wines are excellent’, ‘the rain came at the perfect time’ etc. It’s important to look past the mist and view the vintage in clear sight, examining weather conditions, vintage dates and the success of each variety in that year. Above all, it’s the tasting that holds the answer.

Last year, thanks to Covid, we only tasted a handful of wines for our report. This year, again thanks to Covid, we’re tasting from small test tubes on Irish soil. Not ideal, but it has given a better insight into vintage 2020.

## Weatherwise

A mild winter and precocious spring meant the vines came to life early with budburst in mid March before the last of the frosts. Like 2016, 18 and 19 it was a wet spring, mildew was not uncommon, this has affected yields at some properties.

## Full summer

Came with the associated water stress. It didn’t rain from 18th June to 11th August, a prolonged period for Bordeaux. Rain did arrive at the end of August, refreshing the vines. What’s important to note is the erratic incidences of thunderstorms, mostly localised meaning contrasts between communes on rainfall measurements.

## Harvest

Harvest was early, luckily as October turned out to be exceptionally wet. September was warmer than usual with temperatures sitting in the mid 30s, concentrating berries and reducing yields. Bruno Borie owner of Ducru-Beaucaillou in St. Julien pointed out the longevity of the ripening period. They picked the Cabernet Sauvignon 125 days post flowering (the norm is around 100). Their Merlot was picked at 113 days post flowering, a style choice, looking for elegance over power. This longevity will have assisted in flavour development, something that is confirmed upon tasting many of the wines.

What’s extraordinary about the 2020 Vintage is that the rainfall over that year was well above the 5 year average, thanks to a very wet winter 2019 and Spring of 2020. It has also been classified as a drought year. Extremes continue to dominate Bordeaux, each year bringing us another ‘unique’ vintage.

There are plenty of murmurings that this is a right bank vintage, but I think, as precluded to in the weather conditions that generalisations are impossible to imply. Top Chateaux will have used only their best fruit and quality will be excellent as ever. Pichon Baron stands out for me as an extraordinary wine. Leoville Barton has an alluring quality

that’s intriguing and elegant. Both left bank, both excellent.

Right bank is however, shining. The wines are lively and focussed with a precision and concentration that leaves many



Pichon Baron Estate in Pauillac, Bordeaux

of the top examples brooding, like dragons in their caves, waiting to emerge in all their glory. It is easier to generalise on this side of the river. This is an excellent Merlot vintage.

We will be publishing our tasting report soon, it won’t be the catalogue of notes that we manage in normal years, but a scaled down version covering wines that stand out and we would recommend. This is set to be a fast moving campaign.

To ensure that you don’t miss out please sign up to our WhatsApp ‘Release Broadcast List’ or Register your interest in certain Chateaux.

Both can be done by emailing either:

Jeff Corbett at the Shop: [shop@searsons.com](mailto:shop@searsons.com) or

Harriet Tindal MW on [htindal@tindalwine.com](mailto:htindal@tindalwine.com)