



BORDEAUX 2019 EN PRIMEUR

Vintage Report 2019



Whether you're looking to drink or invest, 2019 is an exciting opportunity to buy en-primeur!

BORDEAUX 2019

The campaign that will be remembered for much more than wine. Like 2008, the wines of 2019 are being thrust into a market in turmoil. Covid 19 has left the World in financial uncertainty, similar to those tender months early in 2008 when the last financial crisis was making itself heard. But this year is different, this year members of the trade have not made their annual pilgrimage to Bordeaux. Lock-down measures mean that we are relying on a number of high profile critics and the recommendations of various negociants, eager to sell plenty of wine this vintage.



Personally, I was hoping for a delayed tasting that could give us the opportunity to taste the wines when they were in bottle, rather than barrel. But the long-term uncertainty pushed the decision and the 2019 campaign started with a bang in May. Heads turned when the esteemed biodynamic estate Pontet-Canet released at a 30% reduction on 2018. The first tranche sold out in 3 hours, breathing life into the 2019 campaign and creating a buzz that hasn't been felt for some time. Other Châteaux are following suit, despite an increasing flow of scores that are equal to if not higher than 2018.



Comparisons have been made to the 2008 vintage, not only in timing, but also pricing. The drops in prices were welcomed in 2008, but not, at the time recognised for the value that they present on today's market. Those who invested in 2008 have seen a far greater return on their investment than any vintage since then. Is 2019 a 2008? Notes and scores suggest that 2019 is a better vintage, the small berries, prolonged harvest, well into October and overall weather conditions

point to an excellent year, which will certainly age better than the lighter wines of 2008. Is it superior to 2018? Tasting will tell, but that does seem to be the message coming from Bordeaux for many of the wines. Would I advise investing? In a word 'yes'. There are some bargains out there at all levels and if you're looking to invest the first growths and popular others are literally flying out. If you can gain access to these wines don't hold back. Whether you're looking to drink or invest, 2019 is an exciting opportunity to buy en-primeur.



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HARVEST REPORT -2019

February 2019 was memorable for me especially as I received the call that informing me that I was a Master of Wine. We were on the slopes in France, and enjoyed a celebratory lunch in the sunshine that day. This is relevant to the vintage as this period of warmth (26°C was recorded at the end of February) brought the vines to life earlier than usual, with budburst in Bordeaux up to 2 weeks early in parts. This did not bode well for expectations of a superior vintage.

In April however, cool nights prevailed, slowing the progress of the precocious shoots. There were a number of frost risks mid April and early May, but these didn't provide widespread disruption. May 2019 was the fourth coolest recorded in 30 years. It wasn't until mid June that normal service resumed and cascades of warm sunshine basked over the vines. African air wafted over the continent at the end of the month bringing temperatures of over 35°C, stressing the vines and damaging any vineyards that had leaf plucked in the cooler weather. While tourists swam in deep blue seas, winemakers watched their vines anxiously, hoping for some rain.

July was one of the sunniest for 30 years, mid July brought some respite from the dry with a spell of heavy rain, just enough to nourish the vines and assuage any stress. The rain seemed to know exactly when to arrive in this vintage, with another bought in August and a small sprinkling just before the Merlot was picked mid September, effectively reducing alcohol levels by a degree and rehydrating the ripe fruit. The harvest was slightly smaller than 2018, but had none of the rot pressure of that year, meaning there was no pressure to pick. 2019 was a prolonged harvest, starting with the whites at the end of August and finishing with the Cabernet Sauvignon and sweet whites mid October.

It seems that there is no normal when it comes to a vintage season anymore. The balancing of extremes is the new norm.

Rather like stars aligning, the sun, warmth and rain need to work together to create the perfect wine. Early insight into this vintage suggests that despite the ups and downs 2019 has yielded fantastically healthy, ripe fruit. 2019 is the first vintage since 1998 that has seen such perfect ripeness for the three major varieties; Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

