

Bordeaux 2022 En Primeur – my overview of the vintage; Paul Liversedge MW

I travelled to Bordeaux at the end of April for this year's round of 2022 vintage "en primeur" tastings with a certain degree of cynicism. The Bordeaux "marketing machine" had been in full swing for several weeks already and I had been bombarded daily with e mails already proclaiming the vintage to be "great", "amazing", "a miracle" ...!

But I remember clearly how hot and dry it was last summer in France, having holidayed there in late July, and I knew these conditions persisted for much of the summer. So how could this vintage's wines retain enough freshness and not be too high in alcohol? I also detest receiving glowing press scores and reports from journalists around the world – all of whom seem to compete with one another to publicise their scores first – weeks BEFORE the chateaux release their selling prices. Without any doubt, this press "circus" gives the chateaux even more motivation to increase their prices further, as if in Bordeaux this was ever needed!

But I can honestly say that from my very first sip of a Bordeaux 2022 wine – it happened to be the phenomenal Phélan Ségur – my reservations about this vintage's quality rapidly disappeared!

This is without doubt **the most immediately appealing vintage I have tried**, with beautifully rich, ripe red and/or black fruit flavours, often intermingled with a beguiling scent of violets. **The tannins are perfectly ripe and silky smooth in texture**, which makes the wines incredibly easy to appreciate in their youth. Yet - particularly from the northern Medoc appellations of Pauillac, St Julien and St Estèphe - these tannins are deceptively firm. Many of the "grands vins" from these appellations have an exceedingly long life ahead! The wines are fairly high in alcohol, with alcohols generally ranging from 13.5 to 14.5%, but rarely do they taste too overpowering or "hot". Despite the summer of 2022 being the hottest growing season on record, with 44 days measuring 30C or more, night time temperatures for the latter half of the summer remained cool. These cool nights, combined with extremely careful vineyard management techniques and ample water reserves in the soils at the start of the growing season (left over from the wet 2021 season), have enabled most wines to retain **surprising freshness and balance. And it is this freshness which makes Bordeaux's 2022 reds so amazingly delicious!**



2022 is a vintage in which each of Bordeaux's three key grape varieties – Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot – was able to achieve perfect ripeness. There are therefore many excellent wines from both the Left and Right Banks, although as always, quality was not consistently high from all producers, so you do need to choose wisely.

Although the prices of the most famous chateaux' wines are very likely to increase again this year – a result of their excellent quality, high press scores and likely intense international demand - **2022 is a vintage which has produced many delicious wines at all price levels.** I tasted several excellent wines from smaller chateaux and second wines from the big-name chateaux which should offer great value this year!



Should you buy 2022 Bordeaux en primeur?

Yes, as long as the prices are reasonable in relation to wine quality. I will only recommend wines which I believe have a fair quality:price ratio and are worthy of buying 2 years before you will actually receive them!

Yes, if there are specific chateaux you love and you want to be sure of securing a case or two of at their release price.

Yes, if you would like half bottles or large-sized bottles, which are very difficult to buy in the future.

I will send out my Bordeaux 2022 En Primeur offer towards the end of June, once all wines have been released for sale, and I have had the opportunity to select my best buys of the vintage.

Please let me know if you would like to receive our Top 40 Bordeaux 2022 offer in June. [E mail paul@realwines.ch](mailto:paul@realwines.ch)