

Bordeaux & Bordeaux Superieur 2011

Report by Jane Anson, *Decanter's* Bordeaux correspondent

Bordeaux is the largest quality wine-making region in France, stretching 132 miles from north to south, and 80 miles east to west. There are over 60 appellations found across the area but if you keep things simple and look out for the two names of AOC Bordeaux or AOC Bordeaux Superieur on your bottle, you'll be rewarded with a range of easy-drinking styles that are packed with the expertise and centuries of history that make Bordeaux the world's wine capital.

More than 4,000 winemakers bottle under these two appellations, from large producers crafting modern-styles branded wines to small family-run estates that follow traditions handed down over the centuries. All styles are produced, from a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes, sometimes with a touch of Malbec, carmanere or petit verdot. The range means you can easily find a match for a quick apéritif, a mid-week pizza, a romantic dinner, or to indulge in with your favourite dessert.

Every 13 seconds, a bottle of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur is consumed somewhere in the world – these are wines made to be enjoyed with friends, while relaxing, enjoying food, taking a moment to unwind. Often thought of as 'catch-all' appellations, it is worth seeking out the high spots that offer superb value-for-money.

For this tasting, we assembled red wines from the recent 2011 and 2012 vintages – both easy-drinking years that will offer plenty of enjoyment without having to wait too long to be ready to drink. The vintage most likely to be found on shelves right now is the 2011, while the 2012s are only just trickling into the shops, and will be seen more and more over the next six to 12 months.

2011 was one of those weird years

when Summer started in Spring, Autumn in Summer and Spring got a look in around Harvest time. 2012, on the other hand, started off wet and rainy, followed by an extreme period of drought in August and most of September, bookended by another period of rain around harvest time.

Certainly the vintages are not as uniform as 2010, but there are some excellent quality wines, with silky tannins and gentle fresh fruits. Both years were excellent vintage for the dry white wines, and 2011 particularly good for the sweet wines of Bordeaux. But there are some excellent reds also, if you use a little caution, and if you do your research. The difficulty comes often on the finish, where tannins can be a little drying, and green flavours dominate. The best wines have stayed away from over-extraction, and some have employed a clever use of oak – just enough to add complexity and round out the flavours, but not enough to drown out the delicate fruits.

Many of these wines are widely available in your local area, but the best way to get to know the wines and winemakers better is by visiting Bordeaux itself. When you come, pay a visit to Planet Bordeaux, the home of these wines located 15 minutes from the city centre of Bordeaux. There you'll find a well-stocked boutique, an award-winning wine museum, and regular events from art exhibitions to cookery and wine classes. And the location of Planet Bordeaux makes it a perfect launch for getting out into the towns, villages, and vineyards that surround the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bordeaux. Set alongside the two main rivers of the Dordogne and the Garonne, the winemakers of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur are ready to offer tastings to visitors, and are happy to spend the time to share their knowledge and passion for the grape.

2011s

Grand Vin de Reignac, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 17/20pts (90/100pts)

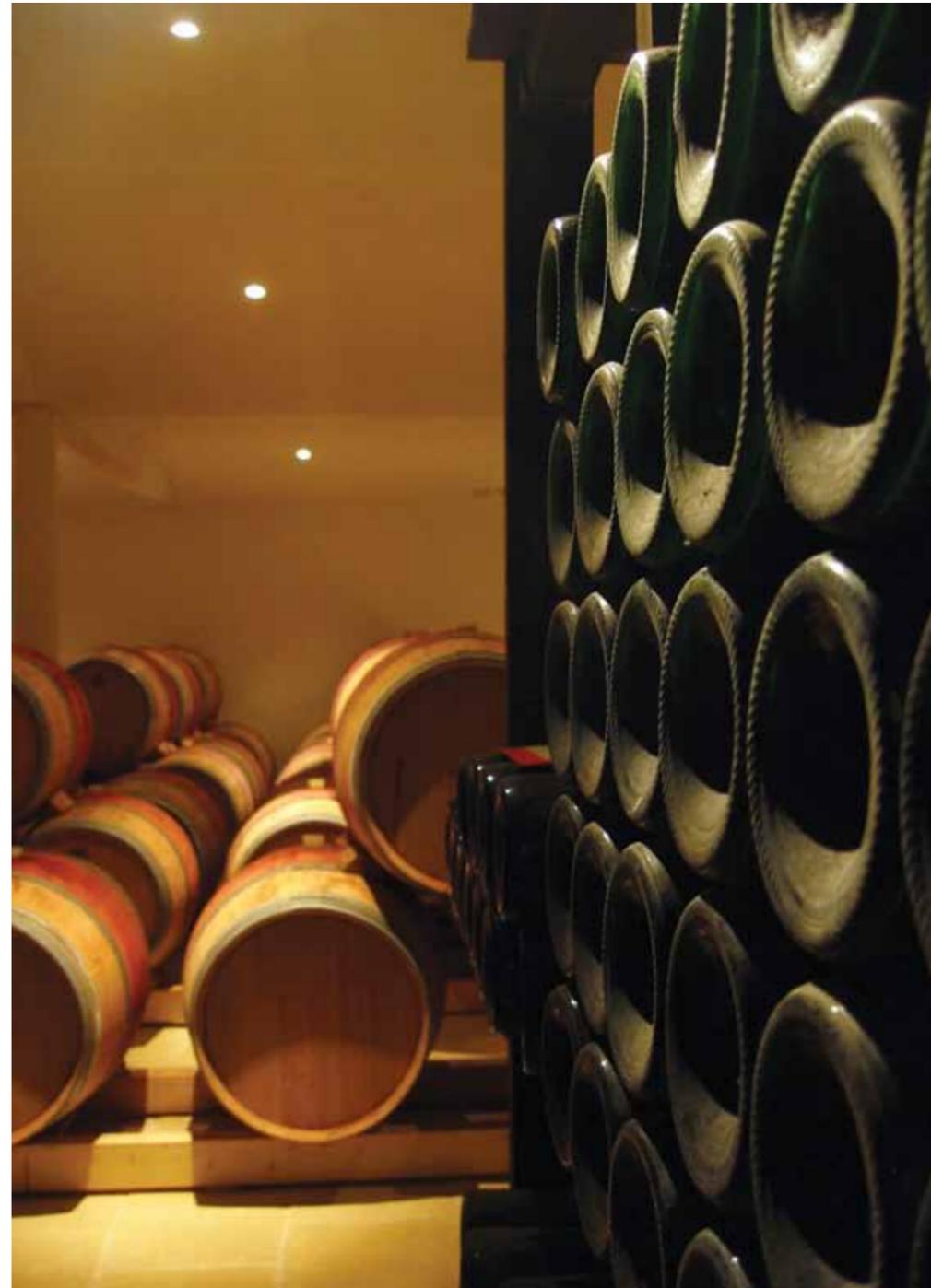
Highly recommended
£83 (by case of six, 2010 available)
Fine and Rare, www.frw.co.uk
A regular in these tastings, always reliable, proving why we keep going back to the big names, particularly in smaller appellations where there is so much variation. Yves and Stephane Vatelot have turned out an excellent quality 2011, full of cassis, damson, succulent dark coulis fruits, some oak evident but tight and well handled, giving coffee-edged toast but not too sweet. This estate was given the Prix d'Excellence 2012 by the Ministry of Agriculture for the reliability of their production, one of 34 winemakers across France to receive the prize.
Drink 2013-2019.

Château Tour de Mirambeau, Cuvée Passion, AOC Bordeaux 2011

17 (90) Highly recommended
£10 Ellis of Richmond, www.ellisofrichmond.co.uk
A successfully silky, fruity, well textured 2011, with rich dark fruits, well worked tannins, and a good shot of acidity, excellent quality from the Despaigne family. A blend of 80% Merlot, with 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, aged with 12 months in oak and six months in cement vats. Really enjoyable.
Drink 2013-2019. **Alcohol** 13% abv.

Château Landereau, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.75 (89) Recommended

www.vignoblesbaylet.com
Excellent wine from Vignobles Baylet in Sadirac. A reliable name that I often look for in this category of wines, and for me one of the most successful in the tasting. Stands out for having plummy fruit, feels well worked and well fleshed out. Black



fruits on the flavour spectrum, dark plum, damson and fig. Really like this, very good winemaking in a challenging year from Bruno Baylet. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Alc** 14% abv

Chateau Bonnet Réserve, AOC Bordeaux 2011 16.5 (88) Recommended
Approx £11. The Cardinals Cellar, www.thecardinalscellar.com
(2008 vintage currently in stock)

In the Lurton family since the 1890s, this is delicious, a real testament to the quality of the winemaking, as large quantities are produced without sacrificing personality in the wine. A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Merlot, with soft tannins that offer structure to the autumnal fruits without getting in the way. An estate that was hard hit by hail in 2013 also, so stock up. **Drink** 2013-2017.

Château Croix Mouton, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.5 (88) Recommended jjp@jppdomaines.com

£5.83 (to buy as case of 12 for £70)
Bordeaux Index,
Owned by Jean Philippe Janoueix, this is a reliable wine from great young producer. He has expanded production rapidly over past few years, with lots of newly bought or leased vines included in the wine, but the quality is still here. Expect rich cherry and plum on the nose, a little subdued, but on the palate things really open up. Not overly extracted, as Janoueix has smartly held back to ensure that what juice comes out is refreshing. An attractive swirl of tobacco makes it modern in style. Blend of 92% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, with alcohol at 13.5% abv.
Drink 2013-2018.

Grand Classique de Château de l'Orangerie, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.5 (88) Recommended

www.chateau-orangerie.com
A strong team of owner Jean-Christophe Icard and winemaker Felix de Foncaude, with Dominique Omnes as consultant. This is a medium weight wine of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Fairly restrained at 13% alcohol, with no dip in the mid palate, a light grilling of oak that gives toasted undertones but nothing too overpowering. Fairly modern in character, with some vanilla spice giving a confident finish.
Drink 2013-2019.

Château du Lort, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.5 (88) Recommended

Approx £11 Nicolas, www.nicolas.co.uk
Redcurrant, gooseberry, Cabernet Franc-style floral aromas, offering elegance and finesse. Not overly oaked, quite a charming style. The Castel family run this estate, and clearly they know something about producing low cost wine to a good standard. Blend here is Merlot and the two Cabernets. Could keep hold of this for a few more years, but it's definitely good to go now. **Drink** 2013-2017.

L'Esprit du Château de Brandy, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011

16.5 (88) Recommended
jchevillard@orange.fr
This is a warming, wintery wine, perfect for being sat in front of the fire on a Saturday night. Good control of the

tannins and oak extraction from owner Jacques Chevillard, from 100% Merlot grapes. Somehow this feels cheery and confident, good ruby colour, a classic claret. **Drink** 2013-2020. **Aic** 13% abv

Château Sainte Barbe, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.5 (88) Recommended www.chateausaintebarbe.com
Dark fruits, with intense extraction and more obvious tannins than many in the tasting. The fruit switches to the autumnal, black variety, with blackberries, damsons, rich mouth-staining stewed fruits, 80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Made by Antione Touton. A well-known Bordeaux Superieur estate, and with reason. **Drink** 2013-2020.

Château Lestrille Capmartin, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.25 (87) Recommended www.lestrille.com (online store)
Winemaker JL Roumage makes this fairly meaty wine from vines around the pretty village of Saint Germain du Puch. At 14% abv it is weighty but well balanced, with good medium intensity cherry and rich red plum, restrained use of oak allowing the fruit to really shine. 82% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château de Costis, Cuvée Passion, AOC Bordeaux 2011, 16.25 (87) Recommended www.costis.fr

Some lovely redcurrant, blackcurrant bud nuances on the palate, rounded out with oak ageing but subtly so, good freshness, highly enjoyable from winemakers Mazeau-Bergstrom, in the village of Targon. A popular choice. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Aic** 13% abv

Grand Vin Lurton, AOC Bordeaux 2011 16.25 (87) Recommended £9 (the Château Camarsac range), The Wine Society, www.thewinesociety.co.uk
The elements are all here for an excellent wine. There is a slight bitterness on the finish, but this is well balanced, and there is some lovely fruit. It really rounds out after five minutes in the glass, and would reward perhaps a quick decant an hour before drinking. Some good blackcurrant, black cherry, lively acidity that picks up the final few moments.

Château Lauduc Prestige, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.25 (87) Recommended £8.75, Oddbins, www.oddbins.com (2009 vintage)
Owner Hervé Grandeau is the new president of the Bordeaux/Bordeaux Superieur appellation, and is doing a good job leading the way with this wine, which once again proves how those reliable names have earned their stripes. Lauduc dates back to 1930, and today counts 128 acres of vines, with winemaker François le Tonturier and wine consultant Emmanuel Villega (who also works with Cheval Blanc). Excellent value for money here, with lovely ripe fruit, well textured, firm but with no bitterness. Horses used to plough the vinyard. **Drink** 2013-2016. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château Vieux Dominique Reserve, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.25 (87) Recommended www.vignobles-gregoire.fr
Smooth and seductive, well-controlled wine from Peggy and Cyrille Gregoire, whose family own some excellent estates such as Fronsac's Château La Riviere, making this a good wine to know about. 100% Merlot, which explains the rather high 14% alcohol, but there is some weight of fruit to act as a counterbalance, so you are not overwhelmed, and this is silky smooth, bursting with flavour. **Drink** 2013-2020.

Château de Lugagnac AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16.25 (87) Recommended £14, Bibendum, www.bibendum-wine.co.uk (2008 vintage)
Dark plum colour, some herbal, softly spicy notes on the nose, thyme, hazlenut, slightly smoky hearth, gently smouldering cold ash. I like this very much, it is soft, not overpowering. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and touch of petit verdot, on limestone fossils and iron-ore clay soils in the village of Pellegrue. A good job from owners the Bon family. **Drink** 2013-2017,

Château de Bel la Capitane, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended £10.99 (2010 vintage in stock) Averys, www.averys.com
Like the name and label here, very simple black and white lettering on good quality paper stock. The wine itself has a

profound ruby purple colour, and is well worked, fairly smooth on the attack, and things deepen out in the mid-palate, with smooth tannins holding up the firm black cherries, with some elderflower and floral notes to lighten things out on the finish. Good value for money from winemaker Olivier Cazenave.

Château Beau Rivage, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended www.chateau-beau-rivage.fr
Vines in the Médoc, near village of Macau, owned by Christine Nadalié of Nadalié barrel-makers. You clearly see the judicious use of oak flavour spectrum very much on the tight black fruits, very heavily cassis. This feels a little more polished than in some years, seems to be gaining in confidence. 14%abv. Blend is 60 % Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Petit Verdot, 5% Malbec, 5% Cabernet Franc.

Château Pierrail, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended £9.99, Booths, www.booths.co.uk
Good texture and colour, looks velvety, dark ruby red, and feels silky on the attack. Could be from the roundness lent by the 14% alcohol of course, or the 12 months in oak, but neither is overpowering, and both feel well counterbalanced by the fruit. Can't quite hide slight under-ripe fruit on final furlong, but this has a lot to enjoy about it, and would be a great choice with a slow-cooked lamb, or equally hearty winter meat dish. 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château Haut Domingue, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended www.vignoblesacker.fr
Vignobles Acker has produced a bright cherry red, medium intensity wine with a refreshing 12.5% alcohol. This is bright and cheerful on the nose and palate also, some soft chocolate truffle, dusted almond notes, but the dominant flavour is of firm red cherry fruits. Not over extracted, with a lovely soft texture. Blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot. **Drink** 2013-2017.

Château le Grand Verdus, Cuvée Generation, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended www.chateaulegrandverdus.com

Philippe and Antoine le Grix de la Salle are father and son working together on the family estate (in fact three generations are working together, hence the name of the wine). The careful family-led approach extends to the viticulture, as they work according to sustainable agriculture with a limited use of pesticides. The blend here is 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, aged 13 months in small oak barrels. The result is good, fresh and fruity. No need to wait, should be perfect in the next few years. **Drink** 2013-2016. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château Malbat l'Authentique, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended www.chateaumalbat.com
Quite unusual, dark fruit, closed on the nose, spicy cinnamon swirled through with the toasted oak from 12 months of barrel ageing. The blend here is 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, from the 6th generation of the Rochet family, down in south Entre deux Mers near La Reole. Interesting. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château Couronneau, Cuvée Pierre de Cartier Premier Vin, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011, 16 (86) Recommended £13.95, Vintage Roots www.vintageroots.co.uk
Pretty high in alcohol at 14.5%, this still manages to offer an excellent balance of fruit. Made from 100% Merlot, farmed organically. Very good on the nose, some clean fruity aromatics, raspberry and dark cherry, with some clear oak impact also, vanilla and brioche flavours, the sweeter end of the spectrum. The flavours hold though on the palate, with a good persistency that doesn't trail to bitterness as so many can in this vintage. **Drink** 2013-2020.

Château Pey La Tour, AOC Bordeaux 2011 16 (86) Recommended
The Réserve, Bordeaux Superieur version is available from Majestic (www.majestic.co.uk), Enotria (www.enotria.co.uk), Winestore (winestore.co.uk) for around £15, and expect to pay around £10 for the AOC Bordeaux version.
You can often tell the state of a vintage by the quality of this widely-distributed wine from Vignobles Dourthe (I would probably add André Lurton's Château Bonnet into the same category). And

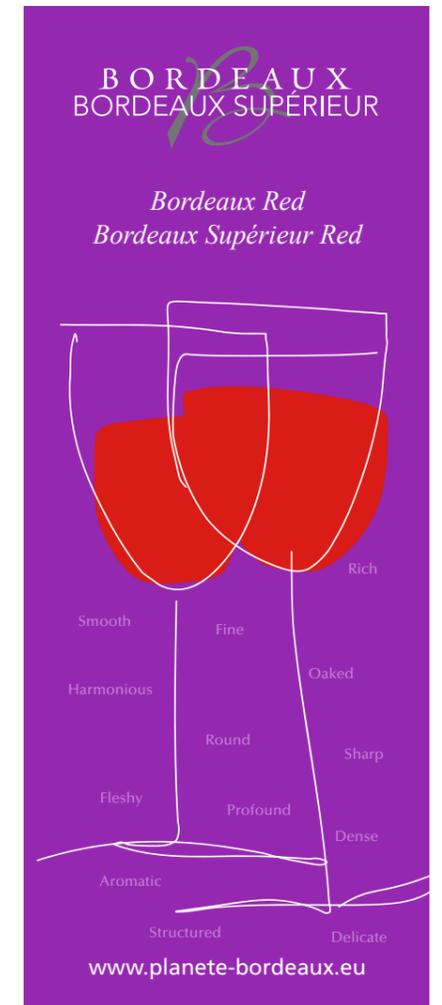
clearly 2011 has plenty to like, as this has complexity, and real characteristics of classic Bordeaux. There are tannins, varietal character of some red fruits. 13%abv. 90% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. **Drink** 2013-2018. Recommended.

Château des Moines Menodin, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended €39.60 for case of six, Online purchase from chateau www.instantsdelugon.fr
Aged in oak, and you can tell from the first nose, with fairly overt liquorice and smoky character. Not unappealing for that, gives a lovely layer of grilled complexity, with some methol notes also. There's some ambition going on here, from a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Catherine Mas is the owner of this Cadillac property. **Drink** 2013-2020. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Passeport Barton & Guestier Bordeaux, AOC Bordeaux 2011 16 (86) Recommended £9.99, Morrisons, www.morrisons.co.uk
A blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, not too much artifice, elegant, very commercial from Bordeaux négociant house Barton & Guestier, this is designed to be fault free, and is easy drinking, good quality wine. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13%

Château Trocard, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended £5.00 for half bottle (2009 vintage) Tanners Wine Merchant, www.tanners-wines.co.uk
Jean Louis Trocard is a highly reliable name to look out for, making wine from his vineyard near Lussac St-Emilion, so just missing out on the Lussac appellation. The blend here is 70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, and offers a good firm but not overly intense colour. Sweet edge to the palate, vanilla bean, crème patissiere, clear Merlot influence on the fruit spectrum, ripe cherries and wild strawberries. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château de Crain, AOC Bordeaux 2011 16 (86) Recommended www.chateau-de-crain.com
Fairly complete for an expensive Bordeaux, not huge length, but good fine tannins, well balanced fruit, would be a



very nice food wine or inexpensive restaurant wine. 13% abv. A château to look out for, with winemaking origins dating back to the 13th century and today owned by Michel Fougere, with his two daughters Anne and Marie-Cécile working alongside him. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château les Gravières de la Brandille, Cuvée Prestige, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 16 (86) Recommended £9.75 (2009 vintage), Stone, Vine & Sun, www.stonevine.co.uk
This is not a name that a supermarket buyer is going to jump up and down over, as they like things short and punch so I'm not surprised to see that it took a small independent importer to take a chance. But the supermarkets are missing out – this tastes very good. Rich cassis, blackcurrant fruit, dark in colour, spicy overtones. A flush of heat from the 90% Merlot vines perhaps, but elegance and backbone from the 10% Cabernet

Sauvignon, with a touch of vanilla, and finely-worked tannins. The fifth generation of the Borderie family is at the helm today, with vines near to St-Emilion. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.7% abv.

Château Penin, Cuvée Les Cailloux, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
£13.95, Terra Wines, www.terrawines.co.uk
The name means 'the stones' so it's maybe a little surprising that this wine is 100% Merlot, a grape that usually prefers a more clayey soil. At 14% alcohol is a touch big, but this is smooth, and there are good firm fruits balancing out the heat. Not my favourite of the Penin wines, but this is a Château with very high standards that I often select in these tastings, and I would be happy to open this bottle (also worth trying is Penin's Natur bottling, a no-added-sulphur wine that is lighter and fresher than Les Cailloux). **Drink** 2013-2017.

Château du Bois Chantant, Cuvée Laurence H, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
Approx £9-£10, (HT White and Co), www.amazon.co.uk (2007 vintage), €13.99, O-Briens, www.obrienswine.ie
The vineyard covers 41 hectares that are located close to St-Emilion, with an average age of vines of 20 years. Winemaker Vincent Cachau has blended here 72% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Cabernet Franc, with a resulting brambly, medium-weighted wine. Laurence Helfrich is owner. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château de la Cour d'Argent, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
Approx £10 (2008 vintage), Wine & Co. www.wineandco.co.uk
Oak a tiny bit too intrusive on the first nose, but this is attractive with potential from Vignobles Denis Barraud in Saint Sulpice de Faleyrens. Good juicy texture from the mainly black fruits. Tannins are evident, but not bitter, could see this going a good five years at this firm consistency. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château de Goëlane, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
www.chateau-castel.com
A 76-hectare estate, the wine consultant

here is Olivier Dauga (named Gault et Millau's winemaker of the year in 2008). Not entirely escaping the limitations of the vintage, yet here the earthy notes on the nose are charming, and there is a real sweetness and interest to the fruit on the palate. From a blend of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Malbec. A good easy-drinker. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Aic** 13% abv.

Château Frachet Grand Vin, Cuvée Prestige, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
www.chateau-frachet.com
Jocelyne and Bernard Frachet have done a good job with this blend of 72% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. The attack has sweet fruit that clearly reveals some vanilla oak influence. Clever back label, telling us that since 2004 this wine has won six gold medals – useful information that would definitely sway me when deciding whether or not to buy. The château itself is in the village of Cenac, on gravelly terraces overlooking the river Garonne. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château la France, Cuvée Gallus, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
£8.75, can buy direct www.chateaulafrance.com
If you like percolating coffee, you're going to like the use of oak here, which is charred to 'double shot to go' level. Plenty of promise here, with well structured spicy black fruit from a blend of 72% Merlot, 19% Malbec, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc – those little dashes of spicy grapes really show through in the blend. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château Grossombre de Saint Joseph, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
www.andrelurton.com
A lesser-known Beatrice Lurton wine (daughter of André Lurton of Château Bonnet and Château Rochemorin, among many others). A touch thin on finish, but overall this is a good fresh, juicy expression of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot fruit, very well handled on the extraction so there is no bitterness. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 12.5% abv

Château Laubes, AOC Bordeaux 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
£7.99, Morrisons, www.morrisons.co.uk

This has some oak influence, but it's well integrated, not intrusive, gently smoky, some good firm fruits, reasonable balance. For the vintage, a good low cost buy. A blend of 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon giving dark brambly fruits and excellent Bordeaux character without the price tag. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château de Camarsac, Selection Vieilles Vignes, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.5 (85) Recommended
£8.95, The Wine Society (2009 currently in stock), www.thewinesociety.com
A medieval fortress that celebrated its 700th anniversary in 2012, Camarsac has been owned by the Lurton family – owners of Châteaux Durfort-Vivens and Brane-Cantenac – since 1973. Winemaker Thierry Lurton has bottled a fresh, easy-drinking wine that is light cherry red in colour, and similarly lightweight in texture, playing with rather than against the vintage. The nose has some green notes, but it opens up on the palate with smooth summer fruits from a blend of 65% Merlot and 35% Cabernet Sauvignon. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Thalie de Boutinet, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
£15, (distribution soon in UK), chateauboutinet@orange.fr
Owners Nathalie Escuredo and Jerome Depoizier make just 600 bottles of this 100% Merlot wine. Well-crafted cherry red in colour, this is one of the lightest on display but there is an elegance to the wine that is highly appealing, and they have avoided all bitterness by keeping such a delicate hand. Not one for those looking for a big, hefty bottle, but if you want something fresh and fruity, this is a good choice. Thalie is Greek for joyous, by the way. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Aic** 13% abv.

Château de Parenchere, Cuvée Raphael, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
www.parenchere.com, £15.54. Nicolas, www.nicolas.co.uk, www.spiritedwines.co.uk
This is the top cuvée at this château, named after original family owner Raphael Gazaniol, who bought the estate in 1958, returning to France after his family had spent 200 years as winemakers in North Africa. A fresh



attack, with rich plummy fruits and a well worked, enjoyable smooth texture. Tiny bit brittle on the very finish, where the high acidity lasts a touch longer than the fruits, but this is a good wine, great potential. No need to cellar this for too long. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Merlot de Sainte Barbe, AOC Bordeaux 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
www.chateausaintebarbe.com
This is big, ambitious wine, from Antoine Touton, 100% Merlot, lots of oak, lots of fruit, you would feel that you have spent money on a wine with personality here. I can see one glass working perfectly, would worry that after two you might start tiring. So, the moderate drinker's perfect choice... **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château Majoureau, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
familledelong@hotmail.com
Touch overly gourmet perhaps, but an exuberant expression of fruit, particularly for a vintage where the fruit can be on the light side. Owners Mathieu and Emeline Delong have made a good, fun, easy to drink, touch of oak evident, cherry and creme anglaise. **Drink** 2013-2016. **Aic** 13.5% abv.

Château de Seguin, Cuvée Carl, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
£10.95, French Wine People, www.frenchwinepeople.co.uk (2010 vintage)
A little heat on the attack, but the wine then moves into red cherry fruits, from the 100% Merlot grapes. This is rich, contemporary, and impactful, from a reliable château. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.5% abv

Château Malbec, AOC Bordeaux 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
£11, Nicolas, www.nicolas-wine.co.uk
Despite the name, this château, as I say each time I write about it, has almost no Malbec in it - just a touch that adds a spicy dark cherry edge. The rest of the blend is Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The resulting wine has some structure, some good fruit, all is fairly cohesive. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 14% abv.

Château La Paillette, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
£11, (due for distribution), dbrasseur33@orange.fr
Delphine Brasseur is owner of this estate in Libourne near to the appellation of St-Emilion. A little pinched on the nose,

but good silky texture to the wine. Smooth, with some clear redcurrant and bilberry overtones, attractive fruit. The aromatics are fairly high, and this is enjoyable. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Aic** 14% abv.

Château Saintongey Vieilles Vignes, AOC Bordeaux 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
www.zebordeaux.com
Some attractive dark well fleshed out fruit, there is a freshness here, combined with dark plummy fruits, plenty of potential. The oak gives a nice smoky edge, and it is well balanced with a fairly light 13% alcohol. Saintongey has won lots of medals in recent years, including a Decanter World Wine Awards bronze. **Drink** 2013-2017.

Château la Tuilerie du Puy Cuvée Grand Chêne, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15.25 (84) Recommended
www.tuileriedupuy.com
A little over-struck by the oak on the attack, but at least the name on the bottle gives you plenty of warning, with the 'cuvée Big Oak'. The winemaker and owner is the wonderfully named Michel Cornelius Regaud. Good confident cherry red, medium intensity, nose vanilla and smoky overtones, but fruit still there. Not bitter, not drying. **Drink** 2013-2017.

Château Barreyre, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15 (83) Recommended
Haynes Hanson & Clark, London/ Gloucestershire, www.hhandc.co.uk
Sense of personality and fun to this wine, one for pizza and friends, keeping things simple but with some attractive dark swirling cinamon spice to add interest. Blend of 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% petit verdot. Vineyards are located in the Médoc, near the pretty village of Macau. **Drink** 2013-2018. **Aic** 14% abv.

Château La Peyreyre du Tertre, Catherine Lucas, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15 (83) Recommended
www.catherine-lucas.com
Rich in colour and texture, aged in new oak for 12 months, from a blend of 60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon. 13.5%abv. Signed by Catherine on back of bottle, it would be nice to know a bit more about her on the label, as there is a nice story here of a wine lover turned boutique winemaker, making small cuvées from key >

appellations. The nose has the rich complexities of the oak, some good patisserie smells going on, and although things are very tight at first, there is plush fruit here if you are patient. Just 3,600 bottles are produced and as yet no UK distribution. **Drink** 2014-2018,

Le Grand Rossignol Les Crus, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15 (83)

Recommended
www.lamothe-vincent.com
Well, it's big and ambitious, certainly, with 100% Merlot fruit, and a whack of damson, plumy coulis fruit on the attack. Worth investigating, but be ready for 14.5% alcohol. The vines come from a single plot of clay soil that cover 7 acres, and produce just 6,000 bottles annually. Everything is done by hand, with ageing in 100% new French oak barrels for 16 months. Big and bold. **Drink** 2013-2020.

Mouton Cadet AOC, Bordeaux 2011

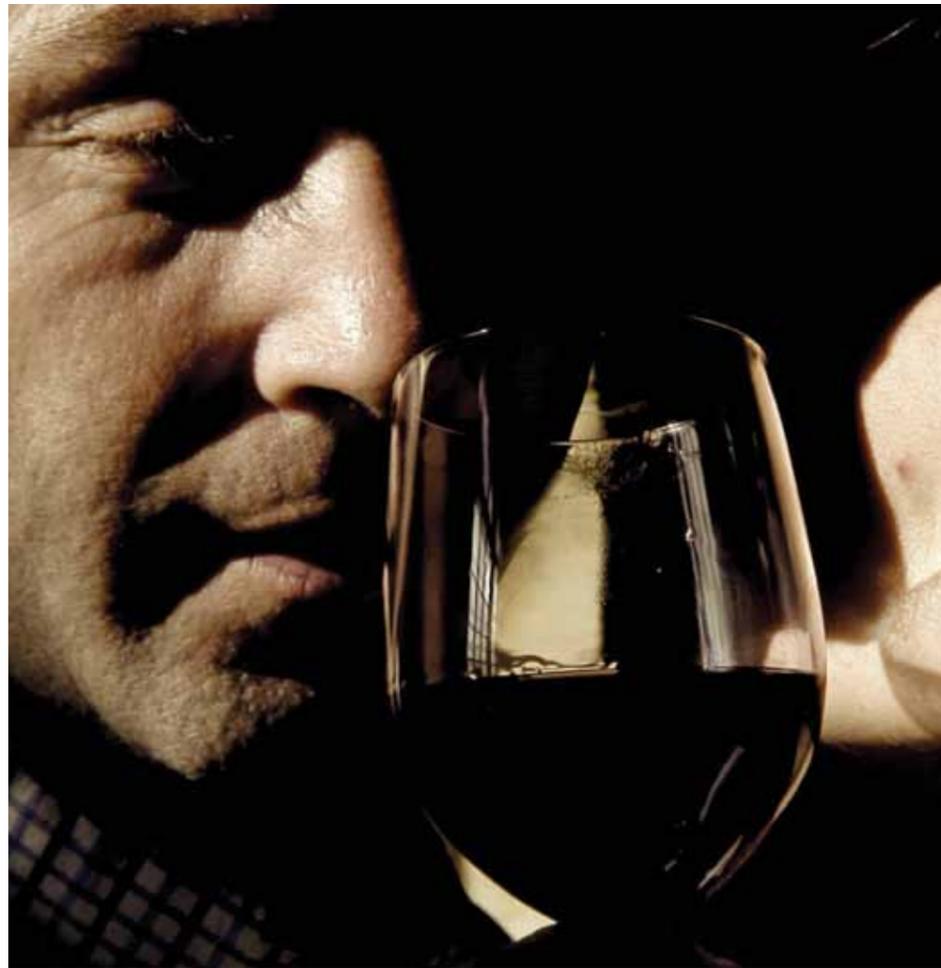
15 (83) Recommended
Approx £10. Also Sainsburys (www.sainsburys.co.uk), Morrisons (www.morrisons.co.uk), www.drinksdirect.co.uk
One of the most widely available AOC Bordeaux on the international market, this is a good wine, with firm fruit, well chosen use of oak, and a classic blend of 65% Merlot together with 35% between the two Cabernets of Sauvignon and Franc. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.5% abv.

7 hectares de Château Lisennes, AOC Bordeaux 2011 15 (83) Recommended

£7, Heritage Wines, www.heritagewine.co.uk
Organic wine, made from seven hectares of vines that are vinified separately, and also treated separately through the year in the vineyard, as you would expect from the name. Soft tannins, wild strawberries on the palate. Lightweight, at 11.5%, but it's very easy to drink.

Château Lescalle, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15 (83) Recommended

£11.99 (2008 vintage), Ellis of Richmond, www.ellisofrichmond.co.uk, The Wine Reserve, www.thewinereserve.co.uk
A good job for the vintage, although green notes slightly shorten the finish. Blend of 65% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 10% petit verdot, with some toasted almonds from gentle oak ageing. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 14% abv.



Château Motte Maucourt, "Elevé en Fûts de Chêne", AOC Bordeaux 2011 15 (83) Recommended

www.chateaumottemaucourt.fr
An impressive attack for an inexpensive Bordeaux, you get lots of contemporary coffee and mocha flavours, with a reasonable freshness and no bitterness from the tannins. The label is dreadful, so much crammed on there that it's almost impossible to decipher, but if you get past there, there is real promise. Matured in oak barrels, but balanced by gently stewed plum flavoured. Owners Villeneuve et fils. **Drink** 2013-2016. **Aic** 13.5% abv.

Château Haut Nadeau, Reserve du Proprietaire, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 15 (83) Recommended

Approx £12, Vinatis, www.vinatis.co.uk
A good tasting wine, smooth and elegant, and not trying too hard. Summer red fruits, the cherry to redcurrant range. A subtle Madagascar vanilla bean and white pepper spice suggests there is

some oak-ageing going on, but nothing overpowering. Enjoyable blend of 85% Merlot noir, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Malbec. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.5% abv.

Château Lajarre, Cuvée Eleonore, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011

15 (83) Recommended
www.chateau-lajarre.com
A lighter expression of the vintage at 13% abv, made from a blend of 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. Owner Gregory Lovato (a doctor as well as a winemaker) has produced a delicate, floral wine dusted with redcurrant fruit aromas. **Drink** 2013-2016.

Château Bossuet, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 14.75 (82) Fair

www.chateaux-dubost.com
Pretty restrained all round, with a good handling of the vintage. Vines in Saint Denis de Pile owned by Laurent Dubost, who also has vines in Pomerol. This spent 18 months in oak before bottling, giving it

smooth tannins, not drying. Fruits here are bilberry, a little chalky on the tannins, not quite cohesive, but a good wine, would work well with food. **Drink** 2013-2017.

Château Turcaud, Cuvée Majeure, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 14.75 (82) Fair

www.chateaturcaud.com
Not quite up to the standard of some years of this wine, but still proving that it's a reliable name, good quality from Vignobles Robert. 13% abv, vines near to La Sauve Majeure. Good well worked tannins, round. Just a little underpowered compared to their 2010 (which was in itself a lighter style of the powerful 2010 vintage).

Château Miller La Cerda, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 14.75 (82) Fair

www.chateau-millerlaserda.com
A 100% Merlot wine, that has a Russian and French back label, a reflection of the fact that this property is owned by Anne and Alexandre Miller la Cerda, former Russian consul in Biarritz. One of the family ancestors married into the Tolstoy family, so this must be an interesting property to visit if you are ever in Bordeaux. This is a little held back by the vintage, as I get some unripe fruit on the attack, but once it has relaxed into itself, there are charming wild cherry flavours, and a softly floral finish. **Drink** 2013-2016.

Château la Favière, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2011 14.75 (82) Fair

www.lafaviere.com
Alcohol high at 14%, and for me that throws off what would otherwise be a pretty wine. I often like this estate, but this vintage is not as good as some I have tasted. A blend of Merlot and the two Cabernet grapes, nice colour, good aromatics, but alcohol makes it too short on the finish.

Château Le Sèpe, Cuvée Initiale, AOC Bordeaux 2011,

14.75 (82) Fair
www.chateausepe.com
Catherine and Dominique Guffon have bottled an attractive blend of Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, 13.5% alcohol. With 12 months in French oak barrels, this in easy drinking wine that would work perfectly with a relaxed evening meal with friends. Vines located on slopes facing St-Emilion. **Drink** 2013-2016.

Château Thieuley, AOC Bordeaux 2011 14.75 (82) Fair

Laithwaites, www.laithwaites.co.uk (has their Cuvée Francis Courselle for £15.99), Davis Bell McCraith has this wine, but 2005 vintage, for £9.75, www.dbmwines.co.uk
Good ripe cherry colour, with a light, well defined sour cherry fruit on the palate. A blend of 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon from the excellent Courselle family, but this is a little underpowered for a family that always manages to deliver. **Drink** 2013-2016.

2012s

Château Leroy-Bauval, AOC Bordeaux 2012 16.25 (87) Recommended

pfricard@chateauleroybauval.com
Enjoyable, with good restrained oak flavours and elegant damson plum jam, not overly sweet, with an impressive length to the palate. 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon blend from a 52 hectare estate that has been undergoing redevelopment over the past few years. Unoaked. **Drink** 2013-2018.

Château Lesparre, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2012 16 (86) Recommended

www.gonet.fr
I enjoyed the fresh, light touch with the fruit here, from winemaker Michel Gonet, working in organic winemaking. One of the very few 2012s that have already been bottled in the Bordeaux Superieur range (there are more AOC Bordeaux 2012 in bottle, as you would expect), and it's impressive. Soft red fruits, brambly juicy, with a very light touch that comes from stainless steel being favoured over oak during the vinification process. Blend is 60% Merlot, and 20% each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. **Drink** 2014-2018.

Château la Rose du Pin, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2012 15.5 (85) Recommended

www.ducourt.com
A wine that majors on coffee flavours, more cappuccino than espresso in this particular

vintage. Again, this feels recently bottled and in need of a few months in bottle to settle down, but there is good fig and black cherry fruit here from a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. Fairly chunky in structure. **Drink** 2014-2020.

Château de Brandey, AOC Bordeaux 2012 15.5 (85) Recommended

jchevillard@orange.fr
A touch of heat on the attack, but this has some lovely fleshy fruit coming through in the mid-palate. Fairly smooth in texture, and not drying on the finish, and overall a well balanced wine. **Drink** 2013-2017. **Aic** 13.5% abv.

Château de la Vieille Chapelle, AOC Bordeaux Superieur 2012 15.5 (85)

Recommended
www.chateau-de-la-vieille-chapelle.com
Frederic and Fabienne Mallier have bottled a wine that is full of brambly, firm fruit, a little stewed with some gooseberry cinnamon hints. Things are not quite cohesive yet, but there is time for the knots to ease out, and plenty of potential. Blend 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc. In organic conversion. **Drink** 2014-2019.

Château Lamothe, Vincent AOC Bordeaux 2012 15.25 (84) Recommended

www.lamothe-vincent.com
Some traces of animal aromas on the first nose, but that clears quickly, and this is a good wine, some firm dark cherry fruits, a touch of smokiness, a little short, but enjoyable. **Drink** 2013-2017.

Leo de la Gaffeliere, AOC Bordeaux 2012 14.75 (82) Fair

www.maletroquefort.com
Some pretty cherry and redcurrant fruits, with a little dip in the mid palate. A low cost choice from Maison Malet Roquefort of Château La Gaffeliere. Simple, easy drinking, no need to wait to open this, some crunchy fruit although perhaps another six months in bottle would be better to let it really settle down.

BORDEAUX
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