

FAMILY WINE MERCHANTS SINCE 1906



BORDEAUX - AN OVERVIEW

The 2017 vintage is already the source of much discussion in the wine trade. There is plenty to agree and disagree upon, with highs and lows, surprises and disappointments.

The last few vintages in Bordeaux show that the years of Robert Parker are over. For the true Claret lover, this will be music to the ears. There is now a trend that shows the wines being produced are less extracted and lower in alcohol, with a return to the more traditional, classic style of Claret.

What makes Bordeaux so fascinating is that each vintage possesses its own different personality. Wine makers often regard their wines as their children, so woe betide anyone who dares to criticise! So often, it is not the most immediately attractive that is actually the most interesting.

We visited Bordeaux in early April to see for ourselves how well the Bordelais had fared in 2017. We tasted wines that one would normally associate with a great vintage, Château Leoville Barton springs to mind. There will no doubt be high demand for this wine as it performed to First Growth level this vintage. However there were others that would normally be in our En Primeur offer that didn't impress, and some that are also excluded due to a mindless pricing policy. Some Château owners seem to have no understanding of the market!

This is a vintage where the tasters will have the final say – where experience counts. Even after so many years of tasting the wines of Bordeaux at this early stage, we are never left with anything other than admiration for what Mother Nature, and a few thousand people in one small corner of France, can produce.



Left to right Neil Goldie, David Archibald, John Townend

THE GROWING SEASON

The winter of 2016/2017 was rather mild with the natural consequence being an early start to the growing season, with bud-burst taking place towards the end of March.

The advanced state of the vines, due to warm weather earlier in the year, meant that the vines were in an advanced state when a catastrophic frost hit hard on the 27th April. We received an e-mail from François Nony of Château Caronne St Gemme on Friday 28th April advising that "Last night we have had severe frosts (the worst since 1991) with 85% of the vineyard damaged." He normally produces 23,000 cases. In 2017 he only produced 3,000! There isn't much to go around but what there is, is rather good!

As a side note, the big difference between the frost of 1991 and the frost of 2017 was that the former had not experienced an early start to the growing season. As the vines weren't in advance, the damage was not so severe.

Château Angludet was also very badly hit, the damage exacerbated it is believed, by the felling of trees by a neighbour that created a cool corridor of air into the vineyards. The vintage was wiped out in just a few hours. No wine was produced at Angludet in 2017. Interestingly, their near neighbour Château Kirwan, only lost a fraction of their crop. How cruel and random Mother Nature can be.

Those properties that are situated close to the Gironde estuary were spared the frost, the warmer air circulating and providing a welcome shield. Further inland the frost bit hard with the likes of Moulis and areas of Margaux hit particularly hard.

Over on the right bank, the great terroirs of Pomerol and St Emilion were largely spared, which is why, I guess, they are great terroirs. Damage by the frosts was very localised. One vineyard owner would look at his damaged vines and then glance across to his immediate neighbour who had not suffered at all.

After the frosts the weather was very dry, although the temperatures were not too high. The lack of rain was becoming a real problem with some vines beginning to stress. The much needed rain arrived in early September; however by now it was too late for the Merlot, many of which were fully ripe. They were picked ten days after the rains and many were dilute which explains the lower proportion of Merlot in many of the top Châteaux this year.

For the Cabernet Sauvignon, it was a godsend. The ripening process was still in full swing and the thirsty vines were rejuvenated. When picked later in the month, the grapes were in perfect condition.

At harvest time, there were winners and losers. Some Châteaux lost a large part, if not all, of their crop. It had been a disastrous vintage. Others were more fortunate, enjoying a near normal harvest. The grapes were in excellent condition, ripe with good acidity levels. The wines produced were balanced and polished, with relatively low alcohol levels compared to previous years.



THE WINES

Following an exceptionally dry summer, the early September rains were very welcome, especially for the Cabernet Sauvignon. If they had not arrived it is likely that 2017 could have resembled 1975, which yielded harsh and dry tannins and wines that never seemed to come around.

There was still time for the Cabernet Sauvignon variety to ripen. However the Merlots were pretty close to picking time. With no option but to pick, the Merlots entered the wineries in a rather dilute state.

Following our tastings in early April, it was clear to see that in the Médoc, 2017 is very much a Cabernet Sauvignon vintage. The wines were well structured, expressive, polished and, dare I say, classic.

A particular characteristic of this vintage is the lower level of alcohol in the wines. 13 degrees was quite common. The wines were laden with beautifully fresh and ripe black fruits and supported by well integrated tannins.

For Merlot dominated wines, there was a greater variability. Some were excellent, some not so good with dry tannins and lacking in underbelly. However whilst there were some dry tannins, there was no trace of green, unripe flavours.

The right bank Merlots (St Emilion and Pomerol) seemed to fair a little better, particularly Pomerol which showed has plenty of ripe fruit and chocolate richness. The wines are quite enchanting. Every vintage is difficult. It is often forgotten that wine is, after all, an agricultural product, at the hands of Mother Nature and the rapidly changing climate that we now face. Each vintage provides wines with its own individual character.

So where does 2017 sit? Well it is certainly the "King of the 7's". Although 1977, 1987, 1997 and 2007 are hardly the greatest competition! It is a vintage that will be enjoyed in the years to come for its individuality. It will not have the superstar status of its immediate predecessors, 2015 and 2016. It may not have the tight, defined structure of 2014, but 2017 will stand its corner when compared to the likes of 2012 and 2001. In recent months we have enjoyed several wines from the 2001 vintage, which have been stonkingly good! Vintages like 2017 really must not be ignored.

"In banal terms, I like this vintage. I am not saying it is the best, but they were mostly a pleasure to taste and fascinating to learn about" - Neal Martin, The Wine Advocate.

WHY BUY EN PRIMEUR?

There is no doubt that this has become a very contentious question in recent years, particularly when it comes to Bordeaux. What was once meant to be a system that benefited everyone, from Château owner through to the end consumer, has fallen victim to the greed of the Château owners who seem to think that no one should benefit from any value appreciation other than themselves. We must point out that this accusation is directed in particular towards the 1st Growths and 'Super Seconds', although there are others who have followed suit at the first opportunity.

Historically, there are a number of reasons for buying 'En Primeur', the most obvious being that you are buying your wine at the initial release price from the Château. The wines of Bordeaux take many years to develop before they are ready to drink by which time they may not be commercially available, and even if they are the price becomes prohibitive.

Also by buying En Primeur you can be sure of the provenance of your wine, knowing where and how it has been stored. When buying mature wine on the open market there is always the danger that it has been around the world, stored in variable conditions, which may cause damage to the wine.

Finally, it is important to purchase from a traditional, established wine merchant in whom you can place your trust. The House of Townend celebrates 112 years in the hands of the same family and we pride ourselves in giving personal, considered advice.

If you have any questions about the En Primeur buying process then please call 01482 638888 or email sales@houseoftownend.co.uk



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BORDEAUX

This appellation covers an area of 51,000 hectares of which 44,000 hectares are devoted to the production of red wines. Maximum yields are 55hl/ha with alcohol levels of between 10% and 13% vol. There is a lot of sub-standard wine in this appellation; however with careful (sometimes tedious) selection it is the home of some wonderful wines that are great value for money for everyday drinking.

Château Moulin de Mallet, Bordeaux (6x75cl)

£20.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc

This super little Château situated on the plateau of Pujol, a rocky outcrop overlooking the Dordogne and facing the slopes of St Emilion. Owned and run by Serge Couderc and his son Julien who manage the estate, following "lutte raisonnée" principles, they always look to take low yields hence the intensity of concentrated fruits.

This property has been the source of our "House Claret" for a number of years and once again has delivered a super wine that is expressive, aromatic and fresh on the bouquet with a palate full of bilberry and plum fruits, supported by very well defined tannins.

Drink 2019 - 2022

Château Tour de Luchey, Bordeax (6x75cl)

£21.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 80% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon,

10% Cabernet Franc

This 25ha Château, situated in Moulon, to the south of St Emilion, is owned and run by the Massé family. Fermented and aged in cement and stainless steel tanks, with 5% aged in oak barrels this is a lovely soft and easy wine, with plenty of thick textured black fruits and carefully supporting tannins. This is a great surprise – excellent everyday drinking claret offering super value.

Drink 2019 - 2022

BORDEAUX SUPÉRIEUR

The Bordeaux Supérieur appellation covers the same geographical area as Bordeaux AOC, however the wines are produced from older vines and released 12 months later than Bordeaux AOC. Again, there are some fantastic wines to be found at this level.

Château d' Argadens, Bordeaux Supérieur (6x75cl)

£29.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 63% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc

This Château was purchased by the Sichel family (owners of Palmer and Angludet) in 2002. An ambitious programme of restoration began and the results have been fantastic.

This is a first class source of excellent, everyday drinking claret. It really is hard to find better. As usual it is succulent, with a rich mouth feel, ripe cassis fruits, soft and approachable tannins with a fine balancing acidity. On the finish there is a touch of sweet liquorice that gives an added dimension.



Château d' Argadens



CÔTES DE BOURG

This lesser known appellation, created in 1936, is a great source of well priced claret, especially in good vintages. Situated on the right bank just to the north of Fronsac and south of the Côtes de Blaye, the soil is composed of mainly clay and limestone with some gravel and sand.

Château Sauman, Côtes de Bourg

£45.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon

We have followed this little know Château for a number of years now, and it continually produces a luscious and supple modern style.

Owned by the Sinan-Braud family, Château Sauman is located in the north of the Côtes de Bourg appellation. It comprises a 25 hectare-estate located on the south facing hill outside the village of Villeneuve overlooking the Garonne. Véronique Braud is the fifth generation managing the estate. Traditional wine making techniques are used, and ageing is partly in oak. Brimming with ripe black fruit and soft tannins there is a delicious touch of caramel on the finish.

Drink 2019 - 2023



Côtes de Bourg

FRONSAC

This is also one of the lesser know appellations of Bordeaux. Situated to the north west of the town of Libourne near Pomerol and St Emilion, it produces wines dominated by Merlot grown on clay and limestone soils. The wines are often a little hard and tannic even though they are Merlot dominated but we have found a little gem here that just oozes richness.

Château La Vieille Cure

£168.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 75% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Franc,

3% Cabernet Sauvignon

Owned by Americans, Colin Ferenbach and Peter Sachs, who are advised by consultant oenologist, Michel Rolland, there is no surprise that this has a rich American feel.

This château is situated on an exceptional terroir with a high clay content. As usual it is a big, rich and ripe wine full of stewed plum and chocolate. Succulent and alluring, if you like Napa Valley Claret this is your stop!



Château La Vieille Cure

MÉDOC

The Médoc AOC covers approximately 5,700 ha which constitutes 34.5% of the Médoc in total. The soils are gravel and clay-limestone with frequent areas of heavy, clay rich moisture, retentive soils that come to the fore in dry vintages such as 2016. The Cabernet Sauvignon grape performed particularly well this year.

Château Tour St Bonnet

£90.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and Franc, 5% Petit Verdot

This 40 hectare estate, owned by Jacques Merlet, is situated in the north of the Médoc in the commune of St Christoly. Produced from 35 year old vines and aged for 18 months in large oak foudres, this is always a superb, value for money wine, with an overtly rich and ripe bouquet, well constructed and packed with raisin and blackcurrant fruits. The tannins are soft and well integrated and the finish is also impressive.

Drink 2021 - 2027

Château Potensac

£205.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 47% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

From the same stable as Léoville Las Cases, this property is run by Jean-Hubert Delon and is situated in the far north of the Médoc, close to Château Sociando Mallet, and it gets better every year. After hand harvesting the wine is aged in 33% new oak for 15 months.

Only 54% of the production was used in the Grand Vin this vintage, which emphasises the strict selection at this fine property. The bouquet is mighty impressive with aromas of fresh and crunchy black fruits and a slight hint of oak. The palate is finely poised, powerful with ripe cassis fruit, a hint of graphite and pencil lead and well tuned tannins. A super Claret!

HAUT-MÉDOC

Around the edges of the Médoc and between the specific communes lies the Haut-Médoc (Upper Médoc). It varies in quality from some of the finest wines, most notably Château La Lagune in Ludon in the south and Château Sociando-Mallet in the north, to the somewhat mediocre. In normal years, careful selection is required when choosing wines from the Haut-Médoc but value for money can be found here, which is hardly what Bordeaux is renowned for!

Château Semonlon

£66.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon

This property is located in Avensan, a small commune not far from Margaux. Its vineyards border those of Château Citran. Owned by the Dumora family, whose patrimony spans several generations, its 7 hectares are planted with 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 60% Merlot, while the average age of the vines is 35 years. The soil is comprised of muddy gravel, large stones and small amounts of clay. Aged in 1 and 2 year old barrels sourced from the 4th Growth Grand Cru Classé, Château Prieuré-Lichine, there is a high proportion of Merlot in the blend for a Médoc, providing an added plumpness to the palate, which is beautifully textured with a lovely soft and velvety mouthfeel.

Drink 2021 - 2027

Château Caronne Ste Gemme

£106.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot,

10% Petit Verdot

Situated 500 metres from St Julien, adjacent to Château Gruaud Larose and Château Lascombes, this property is blessed with some very fine vineyards producing fruit worthy of Classés Growth status, delivering outstanding value for money. In 2013 Francois Nony installed a new winemaking team, including Olivier Seze and Bruno Sausquet (previously at Montrose) to take this Château to the next level. This has proved to be a great decision. The grapes are destemmed and then slightly crushed, before fermentation in thermo-regulated stainless steel fermentation vats. The wine is aged for 12 months in 35% new oak barrels.

Deep purple in the glass, this is a fine Caronne. The bouquet is ripe and fresh, the palate brimming with intense black fruits, rich and sweet, compact with succulent tannins and a hint of spice. Soft and round on the finish. After losing 85% of the crop, there isn't much of this wine, yields of only 8hl/ha!, but it is a great effort this vintage.



HAUT-MÉDOC

Château Beaumont

£105.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 48% Merlot,

2% Petit Verdot

This is a highly regarded Château under the same ownership as Château Beychevelle. This property lost 50% of its production this vintage due to the severe April frosts giving a yield of only 25hl/ha. Brooding with rich and intense cassis, coupled with some liquorice notes, the tannins are firm but stylish and an appealing freshness gives balance. This will give plenty of pleasure in the future.

Drink 2022 - 2032

Château Lagune Haut Médoc 3ème Cru Haut-Médoc

£378.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot,

5% Petit Verdot

Situated just below the village of Margaux and next to Château Cantemerle, this has long been a very popular château. Since 2000 La Lagune has been in the hands of the talented Jean-Jacques Frey who is producing excellent wines year after year.

Yields of only 31hl/ha, this Lagune is aged in 50% new barrels. A floral, aromatic bouquet, slightly herbaceous. The palate is showing good grip, perhaps a little more masculine than usual, wild black fruits and refreshing raspberry characters are supported by firm tannins and a little cedar wood and forest floor.

Drink 2022 - 2035

Château Cantemerle 5ème Cru Classé Haut-Médoc

£246.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot

Situated just below the village of Margaux and next to Château La Lagune, this is one of the finest value Growth Clarets. 20% of the vineyards were damaged by frost and so there is no Cabernet Franc included in the blend this vintage. The nose is brooding with ripe cassis, cedar wood and a little tobacco. The palate is sturdy and intense, dominated by flavours of cassis and mulberry and a touch of kirsch. The tannins are fine and there is a subtle elegance on the finish. A fine Cantemerle.

LISTRAC

This is the smallest appellation in the Médoc, with just 567 hectares in production and only 4% of Médoc's vineyards. The limestone plateau that cuts through Listrac is part of the oldest geological layer in the Médoc and sits at the highest point of the peninsula, at 43 metres above sea level. Fourcas Hosten is without doubt the star property.

Château Fourcas-Hosten Cru Bourgeois

£148.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot,

3% Cabernet Franc

This Château is the finest producer in Listrac, one of the six appellations of the Haut-Médoc. Purchased in 2006 by two brothers, Laurent and Renaud Mommeja, members of the Hermès luxury-goods family, the 47 hectares of vines are planted on clay and limestone, as well as a gravel plot nearby hamlet in Fourcas.

This is a chunky and muscular claret, with ripe cassis and a touch of sweet raisin. A bit boisterous at the moment but there is plenty going on and this will develop into a very enjoyable wine.



MOULIS

Along with Listrac, this applellation tends to be less familiar to buyers than the four major appellations, but does produce some outstanding Cru Bourgeois. The area is situated to the north west of Margaux on a gravelly plain.

The best soils are on the great dune of gravel, stretching from Grand Poujeaux in Moulis, inland through Listrac. It is here where the likes of Château Chasse-Spleen and Château Poujeaux are situated.

Château Chasse-Spleen Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnel

£258.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc

This renowned property was included in the new Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnel classification in 2003, and rightly so as many think it worthy of Cru Classé status. It is always extremely popular with our En Primeur buyers as it provides terrific drinking at a relatively sensible price.

A good attack of redcurrants on the bouquet, fresh and aromatic. A classic palate, rustic and overt with ripe cassis, plums and firm chunky tannins. Once again this Château has performed exceptionally well.



Château Chasse-Spleen



ST-ESTEPHE

St-Estèphe is the largest producer of the Haut-Médoc appellations, situated at the northern limit of the appellation. It is closest to the mouth of the river Gironde, joining the Atlantic Ocean. Here the richer soil with higher clay content retains moisture well during summer, so this appellation is well suited to the dryness encountered in 2016. Wines from the St-Estèphe commune take time to develop but are also very long lived and at their best rival the finest wines of any of the Médoc communes.

Château Les Ormes-de-Pez

£225.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 51% Merlot, 42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc. 1% Petit Verdot

This Château is owned by the Cazes family who also own the very popular and top performing Château Lynch Bages. Very impressive, this is a well made attractive wine.

Big, structured and unyielding, with impressive packed black fruits and firm tannins. There is a creamy richness with undertones of plum and cassis and a fine polished finish. This Château punches well above its weight.

Drink 2024 - 2032

Château Montrose 2ème Cru Classé

£1,180.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

Montrose is one of the great traditional names of Bordeaux, always sought-after by En Primeur fans. It was bought in 2006 by the Bouygues family and in recent years an astonishing investment programme has been carried out at the château. Now under the stewardship of Herve Berland, formerly at Mouton Rothschild, this château continues to compete at the very highest level.

This vintage saw 37% of production used in the Grand Vin, with a higher percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, the majority of the Merlot being used for the second wine. Cropped at 47hl/ha this Montrose is another classic, structured offering, multilayered with intense, tight cassis fruit, bags of energy, graphite, cracked pepper and a little cedar. Refined and fresh, this is a very focused wine that will certainly meet its potential.



The name of Pauillac is assured from the reflected glory of its three First Growths - Lafite, Mouton-Rothschild and Latour, not to mention the other fifteen Cru Classé Châteaux situated in the commune. The wines, grown on a generally heavy gravel soil with varying sub-soils, are among the most powerful and well structured in the whole of the Bordeaux region.

After tasting all of the great wines of the Médoc, it is our view that Pauillac is the star performing commune of the 2017 vintage.

Château Duhart-Milon 4ème Cru Classé

£565.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot

Another Rothschild property produced by the team that makes Lafite. Duhart is always a high achiever.

This 46-hectare estate is ever increasing its reputation for excellent and consistent quality, producing great wines over recent vintages. A classic, smouldering bouquet, fresh whiffs of blackcurrant and cherries with a touch of tobacco and pencil lead. The palate is robust and sturdy, with tight cassis fruit and a hint of vanilla sweetness. The tannins are ripe and support well.

Drink 2025 - 2037

Château Clerc Milon 5ème Cru Classé

£650.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot,

14% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot 1% Carmenere

Part of the Mouton Rothschild stable and made by the same winemaking team. This is a wine of great definition and is very much in the classic Pauillac mould. This vintage sees a reduction in the proportion of Merlot in the blend and an increase in Cabernet Franc. A tight bouquet with plum and ripe black fruits combined with a whiff of cedar. The palate is firm and structured, the chunky tannins enveloping the ripe cassis fruit, with a touch of pencil lead and lingering smokiness on the finish.



Château d'Armailhac 5ème Cru Classé

£390.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 51% Merlot, 42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

This Château is owned by the Cazes family who also own the very popular and top performing Château Lynch Bages. Very impressive, this is a well made attractive wine.

Big, structured and unyielding, with impressive packed black fruits and firm tannins. There is a creamy richness with undertones of plum and cassis and a fine polished finish. This Château punches well above its weight.

Drink 2025 - 2036

Château Grand Puy Lacoste 5ème Cru Classé

£648.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot

Owned by the Borie family, this 45-hectare property has a reputation for producing excellent, full-bodied Pauillac. A precise, fresh and aromatic bouquet. Aged in 75% new oak, this vintage has produced a classic, stylish and masculine GPL. Very appealing, with overt and fresh blackcurrant fruits, tobacco and cedar with a streak of minerality. A fine claret that will offer exceptionally good drinking in the years to come.

Drink 2025 - 2037

Château Lynch-Bages 5ème Cru Classé

£885.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot

Situated on the Bages plateau, one of the finest gravelly rises in the appellation, this Château, owned by the Caz family for nearly 100 years is always one of the most popular amongst Bordeaux drinkers.

Lynch Bages has lead the way this year with an excellent release price -22% less than last year! Why can't others be equally aggressive?

The wine itself is excellent. As such, we expect very high demand for this wine. Opaque in colour, the bouquet is brooding away with notes of cassis and cedar. The palate is powerful, dense and structured. Cassis fruits are infused with hints of pencil lead, cigar box and cedar, the tannins are polished and the finish lingers on.

Château Pontet Canet 5ème Cru Classé

£1015.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot

Alfred Tesseron has passionately built this estate over many years to the pinnacle of Bordeaux winemaking. Farmed organically, including working the vineyards by horse, Pontet Canet is punching up there with the very best.

This vintage is matured in 50% new oak. Deep ruby in colour, the bouquet is a very stylish melange of black cherries and wild flowers. The palate is full of energy with fresh cassis and tight minerality, a little vanilla and nutmeg. The tannins are well tuned and the finish ever so fine.

Drink 2026 - 2040

Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande 2ème Cru Classé

£1116.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

This is one of the great Châteaux of Bordeaux and is rightly one of the most sought after Second Growths, with a reputation for producing wines that are typically Pauillac. Now owned by the Champagne house Louis Roederer, the new, recently installed winery is guite magnificent.

One of the wines of the vintage. A classic Pauillac, big and powerful and laden with cassis, liquorice and a little note of coffee. As well as power there is also charm which gives an added dimension. The tannins are polished and refined and tune in perfectly, with overtones of cedar and tobacco smoke lingering beneath. There is a luxurious subtlety to this wine.

Drink 2027 - 2042

Château Pichon Longueville, Baron 2ème Cru Classé

£1176.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 79% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot

Another of the great Châteaux that is in the ownership of the AXA Millésimes Group. Produced solely from fruit grown in the original vineyards of this château next to Leoville Las Cases and opposite those of Latour.

Inky black, the bouquet is very aristocratic, showing a stunning purity of fruit, with whiffs of wild black fruits and fresh spice. Intense and rich this is a powerful wine, classic and stylish and very typically Pauillac. Aged in 80% new oak, it is very broad with layer upon layer of succulent black fruits, finely woven tannins and a sturdy backbone. A great wine this vintage.

Château Lafite-Rothschild 1er Cru Classé (6x75cl)

£2490.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 96% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3.5% Merlot,

0.5% Petit Verdot

One of the original "First Growth" Clarets, Château Lafite is one of the most famous names in the world of wine. It has been particularly popular in China in recent years which has seen the value of its wines soar. The grapes are hand-harvested, and each parcel is vinified separately. The fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, after which the wine is run off into 100% new barrels for 22 months ageing.

A very high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon this vintage – 96%! A classic Lafite, the aromas are pure and refined and the palate is complex and structured. The wine has a smouldering and brooding personality, intensely layered black fruits with polished tannins and overtones of cedar and graphite. Lafite is very much on form **Drink 2027 - 2042**

Château Mouton Rothschild 1er Cru Classé

£4,320.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot,

1% Petit Verdot

Upgraded to First Growth status back in 1973, Mouton Rothschild was more famous for the annual appointment of famous artists to design the label. During the 1990's its form dipped, however since the arrival of Philippe Dallhuin in 2003, Mouton is on top form and fully justifies its position at the altar of the Bordeaux hierarchy.

The grapes are hand-picked, and the juice is fermented in barrels, not in vat, followed by ageing in 100% new oak for 22 months. Aged in 100% new oak, this is a deeply coloured Mouton with a bouquet that is both elegant yet complex, with aromas of ripe cassis and a touch of coffee. The palate is masculine, well defined and unctuous, laden with expressive dark fruits, pencil lead and finely woven tannins. The high level of Cabernet Sauvignon enhances the masculine side of this classic First Growth Pauillac.

The smallest producer of the four main Haut-Médoc communes but one that boasts some of the finest châteaux, including several Cru Bourgeois that perform to the 1855 Classification standard. The soil is gravel with a subsoil of sandstone and clay. Drainage is very good, which allows the appellation to perform well even in wetter years. The wines tend to be a little smoother and more elegant than their Pauillac neighbours, drinking a little earlier, while at the same time offering that classic Bordeaux typicity.

Château Lalande-Borie, St Julien

£222.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 66% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon

This Château was created in the 1970's when the Borie family, owners of Ducru Beaucaillou, Grand Puy Lacoste and Haut Batailley, purchased the Lalande terroir in St Julien and then added their family name to the property. The vineyards are situated to the west of Ducru on a single plot of 25ha, surrounded by well-known Crus Classés and beautifully expresses the qualities of St Julien – finesse, power, elegance and richness. The vineyards were badly hit by the frost, losing 50% of the grapes. Nevertheless, this is a wine with bags of finesse, tightly knit with blackcurrant fruits and a little cocoa. A very charming claret.

Drink 2024 - 2032

Sarget de Gruaud Larose, St Julien

£198.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

This second wine of Gruaud Larose is always good to include in your cellar and offers good early drinking. At a reasonable price you get a wine that gives a really good glimpse of what a second growth Claret is. Vibrant, fresh and appealing this is always a very popular and impressive second wine.

Drink 2024 - 2030

Château Les Fiefs de Lagrange

£215.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot,

4% Petit Verdot

One of the most popular second wines, this wine always offers good value and gives a good insight into the Grand Vin of this property. With an average vine age of 35 years, the quality of grapes is exceptional. A charming claret.



Clos du Marquis, St Julien

£426.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot,

1% Cabernet Franc

Clos du Marquis is one of those wines that carries a little confusion. It is not, in fact, the second wine of Leoville Las Cases, but a wine produced from the said property's vineyards close to Leoville Poyferré, a more St Julien-like terroir. Léoville Las Cases tends to be more Pauillac-like given that it sits alongside Château Latour.

A yield of only 37 hl/ha and aged in 55% new oak, this is a tightly knit, dense wine that is worthy of Classed Growth status in its own right. A very powerful bouquet full of ripe cassis and new cut cedar oak. The palate is multilayered, showing cassis concentrate, black cherries and liquorice with fine supporting tannins and a long, freshly balanced finish.

Drink 2025 - 2035

Château Gloria, St Julien

£315.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot,

8% Petit Verdot, 5% Cabernet Franc

This Château is somewhat of an anomaly in Bordeaux. It is made up of small plots purchased from neighbouring Classed Growth properties, including Château Léoville-Poyferré, Château Gruaud- Larose and Château Duhart-Milon (who owned a small plot in St-Julien). However, once they were sold to the creator of Château Gloria, Monsieur Henri Martin, the vineyards ceased to possess their Classed Growth status. It is, however, Growth Claret in all but name. 45 hectares of vines with an average age of 45 years old, it continually performs year in year out to the highest level.

A very typical St Julien, it is medium bodied and stylish with sweet, concentrated black fruit and a touch of coffee. The tannins are soft and succulent offering good support and a balancing freshness completes the palate.

Drink 2025 - 2035

Château Talbot 4ème Cru Classé

£456.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot,

4% Petit Verdot

This is always a very popular Château, delivering a consistently high level every year. This vintage is another classic Talbot; a light, fresh and floral bouquet with blackberry fruit, a little clove and tobacco. A grand wine in all senses – rich and powerful with good structure and length. There is a purity about the rich creamy black fruits – they seem a tad sweeter and more refined than others. A splendid lush structure, firming all the way to a dense and muscular finish, yet underlying all this there is real elegance and a freshness that balances with the notes of minerality and spice.



Château Gruaud Larose 2ème Cru Classé

£615.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31.5% Merlot,

1.5% Cabernet Franc

This is one of the most famous and historic Saint Julien 2nd growth properties and has also been one of the most popular for many years, that consistently delivers exceptional claret.

Beautifully crafted there is a stunning elegance to this wine that provides great balance. The palate offers tight and fresh crunchy cassis fruits, pencil lead character and a little cedar oak. A very refined claret with great precision and finesse.

Drink 2025 - 2037

Château Beychevelle 4ème Cru Classé

£650.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot

Beychevelle, extremely popular throughout the world, is also one of the most beautiful châteaux of the Médoc.

This is the second vintage to be produced at Beychevelle's fabulous new winery, which was also the venue for this year's St Julien UGC tasting. The yield was 54hl/ ha and the wine is aged in 60% new oak barrels. The bouquet is stunning with overtones of fresh blueberries. The palate is finely crafted, sweet cassis and black cherries fill the mouth and characters of wood smoke, cedar wood and vanilla provide extra dimensions. Soft and succulent this is another super Beychevelle.

Drink 2024 - 2036

Château Langoa Barton 3ème Cru Classé

£390.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot,

8% Cabernet Franc

This 20 hectare estate is the 'sister' to Léoville Barton and is also very fairly priced for the consistency of its quality. The grape varieties and wine-making methods are similar to these of Léoville Barton.

A classic Langoa, this property is no longer in the shadow of the more illustrious sister. Deep purple in colour and full of cassis aromas with a smattering of cedar oak. The palate is tight and a little angular at the moment, but will soften with age. Medium to full bodied with ripe cassis, finely integrated tannins and a touch of pencil lead.

Château Léoville-Barton 2ème Cru Classé

£654.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot

This Château is always one of the best selling wines, due to its consistent high quality and the long standing commitment by the Barton family to maintain a sensible pricing policy. The vineyards are intensely planted with 9,100 vines per ha.

Leoville Barton was one of our favourite wines this vintage. A real star performer. The Cabernet Sauvignon makes up 93% of the blend producing a big and powerful wine aged in 60% new oak. Muscular and intense with highly concentrated cassis fruit, super suave tannins and underlying cedar. A very sophisticated wine, this is classic claret at its very best.

Drink 2026 - 2040

"One of the few truly exceptional left bank wines of the vintage.....simply fabulous" - Antonio Galloni

"Seriously, this is nudging the 2016 in terms of quality and there are just a handful of properties where I can state that this year." **Neal Martin**

Château Léoville-Poyerré 2ème Cru Classé

£666.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot

Owned by the Cuvelier family since 1921, the third of the Léoville properties has been regarded as the most lightweight for decades. That changed when Didier Cuvelier took charge in the 1970's, and a period of continuous improvement now sees this château amongst the finest châteaux of St-Julien.

Immediately impressive with a pure, overt bouquet that screams black cherries and damson fruits. The palate is stylish and alluring, rich in cassis fruits with a fine minerality, a little graphite and touch of cedar oak. There is opulence and harmony, characteristics synonymous with this wine over the years. A wine of great finesse.



Château Ducru Beaucaillou 2ème Cru Classé

£1,488.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot

This 49 hectare estate has recently been in outstanding form to maintain its reputation as a 'Super Second Growth'. This vintage sees a whopping 90% Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. Aged in 100% new barrels for a period of 18 months, this is a super polished wine, classic in style and described by Bruno Borie as a cross between the 2014 and 2015 vintages. Impressive then!

Opaque in colour, the bouquet is fresh with notes of violets, black fruits and spice. This powerful and structured wine is softened by an elegant and harmonious fruit construct, with ripe and silky tannins, a hint of vanilla and touch of chocolate. There is also a lovely balancing freshness, whilst the finish is masterful.



Château Gruaud Larose

MARGAUX

This is the largest commune in the Médoc. The lighter, gravelly soils yield some of the most sensual and elegant wines of the Médoc, the complete opposite of Pauillac. The commune is the most southerly of Médoc's appellations and encompasses the neighbouring villages of Cantenac, Arsac, Labarde and Soussans. The 1855 classification includes more wines from Margaux than from any other appellation.

Château Rauzan-Ségla 2ème Cru Classé

£648.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot

This 43 hectare château has made major strides since its purchase by Chanel in 1994. It is fair to say that it now punches fully to its 1855 classification and is one of the great Super-Seconds.

This is winemaker Nicolas Audebert's second vintage. Matured in 60% new oak, it has a charming bouquet full of violet flowers and blackberry fruit. Medium bodied, there is a lovely elegance to this wine, more feminine in style. Silky with a delicious purity of red and black fruits and polished tannins.

Drink 2025 - 2038

Château Giscours 3ème Cru Classé

£510.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot

This Château is very much on top form, under the watchful eye of Alexander Van Beek. Aged in 45% new oak for 18 months, this is another sublime wine produced by Alexander Van Beek and his team.

A very popular château renowned for producing a rich and powerful style of wine. Aged in 50% new oak, the bouquet is smouldering, rich and intense. The mouthfeel is dominated by rich cassis fruit and laced with a streak of chocolate. Finely textured, compact and supple, there is a harmonious finely grained tannin structure and lively fresh finish.

MARGAUX

Château Brane-Cantenac 2ème Cru Classé

£575.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Carmenere

The vineyards of this château are located to the west of the village of Cantenac. Proprietor Henri Lurton has improved the quality in the vines, regrafting previously planted Merlot to high quality Cabernet Sauvignon.

A smouldering and smoky rich bouquet with hints of cedar oak. The palate is intense and moreish with chocolate notes enveloping the ripe blackcurrent fruit. Once again this château has produced a plump and fat Margaux, classic in style with fine supporting tannins.

Drink 2022 - 2035+

Château Cantenac Brown 2ème Cru Classé

£428.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot

This château has historically been overlooked as a source of top claret. That all changed back in 1989 when it was acquired by AXA Millésimes, also owners of Pichon Baron and Lynch Bages. Since then it has been on a constant upward trajectory and is now producing excellent wine with great consistency.

One of the lucky properties that was not badly hit by the frost. Its popularity has gained traction over the last few years, offering some good value drinking. Aged in 60% new oak, the colour is very dark, almost opaque. Aromatic aromas of violet on the bouquet, the palate is silky, finely textured with black fruits and liquorice. A delicious, well constructed wine with silky tannins and beautifully fresh finish.

Drink 2025 - 2032+

Alter Ego de Palmer (6x75cl)

£293.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 41% Cabernet Sauvignon, 53% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot

The blend of Alter Ego is actually very close to the blend of the Grand Vin this vintage. Aged in 30% new oak; a fresh, floral and aromatic bouquet of blackcurrants leads to a super palate, full of fresh black fruits, finely poised with excellent supporting tannins. Alter Ego is always so moreish and will offer excellent early drinking.

MARGAUX

Château Palmer 3ème Cru Classé (6x75cl)

£1,175.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 54% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot

After the First Growths this is traditionally one of the highest performing Châteaux and is always in high demand. Winemaker Thomas Duroux has overseen the Château's first 100% biodynamic wine this vintage following a journey that began back in 2008.

The devastating frosts missed Palmer, apart from a few inland plots which are usually designated to Alter Ego. A yield of 38hl/ha. A very impressive Palmer, deep purple in colour with a bouquet that fills the glass with aromas of violet and dark ripe black fruit. The palate is rich with layer upon layer of ripe blackcurrants, blueberries and creamy well integrated oak. This a beautifully poised and balanced wine with a very long and intense finish.

Drink 2026 - 2050

Château Margaux 1er Cru Classé

£4,320.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

Château Margaux, a Premier Grand Cru Classé Bordeaux, is one of the most famous wines in the world. Care has been lavished on the property by a line of owners with an abiding concern for the reputation of the estate. For more than five hundred years, season after season, generations of vineyard-workers, grape harvesters, cellar-workers, coopers and many other craftsmen have all played a part in making Château Margaux what it is today: a wine with an incomparable personality, reflected in the elegant Palladian building which adorns its label.

Only 37% of the chateau's harvest was used in the Grand Vin this vintage. Aged in 100% new oak for 22 months. A very aristocratic bouquet, perfumed and pure with violet aromas dominant. The mouthfeel is sensational, creamy and harmonious, filled with ripe cassis, a little vanilla and hints of graphite. The tannins are elegant and finely integrated and the finish is very long. Superb!

PESSAC-LÉOGNAN

Geographically this region is a continuation to the south-east of Haut-Médoc. Many vineyards in the north have disappeared as the city of Bordeaux has extended outwards. The area produces notable red and white wines, but the trend has been towards more red over the past two decades. The whole region was formerly known as Graves, but since 1996 it has been divided into two appellations, Pessac-Léognan and Graves. Pessac-Léognan is the most northerly and best part, where most of the Grands Crus are situated.

Château Olivier £250.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot,

2% Petit Verdot

Classified for its red and white wines, Château Olivier is surrounded by forest that not only influences the property's micro-climate, but which has given it 8 hectares of prime vineyard, already in the Pessac-Léognan AOC. A detailed geological survey in 2003 revealed the forest was planted on a croupe of compact gravel, perfect for Cabernet Sauvignon.

A fine example of the quality produced in the Pessac appellation. Aged in 30% new oak, this is an impressive, broad wine with oodles of ripe cassis fruits, soft and measured tannins and a lovely earthy minerality. A wine that will give great pleasure.

Drink 2023 - 2030

Château Haut-Brion 1er Cru Classé

£4,055.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 53 % Merlot, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon,

6% Cabernet Franc

The creeping urbanization of Bordeaux has reached the vineyards at this great Château – no sooner are you out of the city, you are in the vineyards of one of the greatest estates in Bordeaux. Haut-Brion always produces truly great claret.

The harvest took place between the 31st August and the 29th September – the longest on record. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, after which the wine will spend 22 months, in 69% new oak barrels before being bottled unfiltered. It is deep purple in colour, the bouquet smoulders with black fruit aromas and earthy overtones. The palate is masculine, deeply textured with black cherry, cassis and a hint of clove. The tannins are firm but ripe and envelope the palate, there are exotic spice characteristics and the finish is long and lingering. Another great wine from this iconic property.



ST EMILION

On the right bank of Bordeaux, this is a large appellation where the Merlot grape dominates on the clay and limestone soils. Here the wines are rich and sumptuous. For those who like ballet dancing, head for the Médoc. For those who like belly dancing, this is the place for you!

St Emilion wines were not included in the 1855 Bordeaux classification with the first classification made in 1954. Unlike the 1855 classification, the St Emilion classification is regularly revised.

Château Fonplegade, Grand Cru St Emilion

£280.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

The impressive 18.5ha property, situated close to the famous Château Angélus, belongs to Americans Denise and Stephen Adams who, with the advice of Michel Rolland and Stéphane Derenoncourt are now producing one of the best value for money Grand Crus in St.Emilion.

A full, aromatic bouquet, plummy with a little spice as well. The palate is luxurious with a ripe attack of sweet cassis, a touch of minerality and carefully crafted cedar oak. Certified organic since 2013, this château is now attracting serious attention. A very well made wine.



POMEROL

Pomerol is the smallest of the major Bordeaux appellations. It is only 3 kilometers by 4 kilometers in dimension, with only 800 hectares under vine and around 150 châteaux. Whilst Pomerol is the home to some of the most sought after wines in the world, unlike other Bordeaux regions, it has no official wine classification. With soils of blue clay, the wines produced are sensual, rich and alluring.

Château Bonalgue

£240.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 100% Merlot

Originally built by one of Napoleon's officers on his return from the Egyptian campaign over 200 years ago this property covers 7 hectares with an ideal exposure.

Produced from 100% Merlot and aged in 50% new oak barrels, this is perfect for lovers of 'Right Bank' wines. Rich and moreish, with intense plum and cassis fruits, the tannins are soft and well balanced and there is also a delightful freshness that balances the wine perfectly. Soft, round and plump this a super Bonalgue!

Drink 2023 - 2032

Clos du Clocher

£396.00 per case IB

Grape Mix: 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc

A great little 4.6ha property in the ownership of Audy. The exposure of this property is perfect. Located in front of the chapel, only 200m from Vieux Château Certan and 300m from Château Pétrus. Integral Vinification, a method of full berry ferment inside wooden barrels which remain open to increase ferment oxidization, is used at this château.

A rich and ripe, moreish bouquet draws you into the glass. The palate is so complex. A higher proportion of Cabernet Franc this vintage, and it certainly plays its part well, providing a savoury balance to the beautifully ripe Merlot.

		Cases Req'd	Cost IB	Total
Prices given are per case, in bond Melton (ex VAT & Duty)				
Bordeaux	Château Moulin de Mallet, Bordeaux (6x75cl)		20.00	
	Château Tour de Luchey, Bordeaux (6x75cl)		21.00	
Bordeaux Supérieur	Château d'Argadens, Bordeaux Supérieur (6x75cl)		29.00	
Côtes de Bourg	Château Sauman, Côtes de Bourg		45.00	
Fronsac	Château La Vieille Cure		168.00	
Médoc	Château Tour St Bonnet		90.00	
	Château Potensac		205.00	
Haut-Médoc	Château Semonlon		66.00	
	Château Caronne Ste Gemme		106.00	
	Château Beaumont		105.00	
	Château Lagune Haut Médoc 3ème Cru Haut-Médoc		378.00	
	Château Cantemerle 5ème Cru Classé Haut-Médoc		246.00	

		Cases Req'd	Cost IB	Total
Prices given are per	case, in bond Melton (ex VAT & Duty)			
Listrac	Château Fourcas-Hosten Cru Bourgeois		148.00	
Moulis	Château Chasse-Spleen Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnel		258.00	
St-Estèphe	Château Les Ormes-de-Pez		225.00	
	Château Montrose 2ème Cru Classé		1180.00	
Pauillac	Château Duhart-Milon 4ème Cru Classé		565.00	
	Château Clerc Milon 5ème Cru Classé		650.00	
	Château d'Armailhac 5ème Cru Classé		390.00	
	Château Grand Puy Lacoste 5ème Cru Classé		648.00	
	Château Lynch-Bages 5ème Cru Classé		885.00	
	Château Pontet Canet 5ème Cru Classé		1015.00	
	Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande 2ème Cru Classé		1116.00	
	Château Pichon Longueville, Baron 2ème Cru Classé		1176.00	
	Château Lafite-Rothschild 1er Cru Classé (6x75cl)		2490.00	
	Château Mouton Rothschild 1er Cru Classé		4320.00	

		Cases Req'd	Cost IB	Total
Prices given are per case, in bond Melton (ex VAT & Duty)				
St-Julien	Château Lalande-Borie, St Julien		222.00	
	Sarget de Gruaud Larose, St Julien		198.00	
	Château Les Fiefs de Lagrange		215.00	
	Clos du Marquis, St Julien		426.00	
	Château Gloria, St Julien		315.00	
	Château Talbot 4ème Cru Classé		456.00	
	Château Gruaud Larose 2ème Cru Classé		615.00	
	Château Beychevelle 4ème Cru Classé		650.00	
	Château Langoa Barton 3ème Cru Classé		390.00	
	Château Léoville-Barton 2ème Cru Classé		654.00	
	Château Léoville-Poyerré 2ème Cru Classé		666.00	
	Château Ducru Beaucaillou 2ème Cru Classé		1700.00	

		Cases Req'd	Cost IB	Total
Prices given are per case, in bond Melton (ex VAT & Duty)				
Margaux	Château Rauzan-Ségla 2ème Cru Classé		648.00	
	Château Giscours 3ème Cru Classé		510.00	
	Château Brane-Cantenac 2ème Cru Classé		575.00	
	Château Cantenac Brown 2ème Cru Classé		428.00	
	Alter Ego de Palmer (6x75cl)		293.00	
	Château Palmer 3ème Cru Classé (6x75cl)		1175.00	
	Château Margaux 1er Cru Classé		4320.00	
Pessac-Léognan	Château Olivier		250.00	
	Château Haut-Brion 1er Cru Classé		4055.00	
St Emilion	Château Fonplegade, Grand Cru St Emilion		280.00	
Pomerol	Château Bonalgue		240.00	
	Clos du Clocher		396.00	

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