

Tasting Notes

by Leslie Sbrocco for *epicurious.com*

WINE TOOLS



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The Affordable Bordeaux Buzz

One of today's hottest wine spots is also one of the most historic.

Located on France's Atlantic Ocean coastline, the classic wine-growing region of Bordeaux is home to some of the world's most coveted wines. Though famous names such as Chateaux Haut-Brion, Latour and Petrus command sky-high prices, Bordeaux offers a vinous paradise for bargain hunters, too.

According to Christian Delpuch, President of the Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux, "Nearly 85 percent of Bordeaux production falls into the \$8-25 price range. There's no doubt the highly-touted 2005 vintage will have a strong impact on sales, but you don't need to wait to experience delicious wines."

I couldn't agree more. What's exciting is the quality of these current releases along with the changing image of the region. A new generation of vintners are taking over and making tradition-bound Bordeaux hip. As youthful Sylvie Courselle of Chateau Thieuley says, "We want to show that Bordeaux can be affordable, approachable, and fun. Simply open it with pizza and enjoy."

Racy Whites

Crisp, mineral-laden whites hail from ocean-influenced Bordeaux regions such as Entre-Deux-Mers and Graves. Made from a blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Muscadelle, they are the ideal complement to shellfish.

2005 Chateau Lamothe de Haux, Bordeaux (\$12)

Overflowing with lemony freshness and orange blossom aromas, the expressive blend is a crowd pleaser.



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2003 Chateau Cadillac "Club" Merlot, Bordeaux (\$12)

With a cool name and modern label, this is as chic and sleek as Merlot gets. Cherry-scented and fresh, it's a warm-weather red.

2003 Mouton Cadet, Bordeaux (\$9)

Equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, this widely-available wine sports softness with structure. A top party pick with pedigree.

2002 Chateau Robin, Cotes de Castillon (\$18)

You can't beat the quality/price ratio on this one. An ultra-stylish, sexy wine that

2005 Chateau Tour de Mirambeau, Bordeaux (\$12)

Talk about hip. This zesty white, made primarily from Sauvignon Blanc, comes with a screwcap making it easy to open and sip poolside or with Chinese take-out.

2004 Chateau Bonnet, Entre-Deux-Mers (\$10)

A popular white with citrus zing and distinctive mineral notes. It's an oyster's best friend.

2004 Benjamin de Vieux Chateau Gaubert, Graves (\$16)

Dominated by Semillon, this tightly-wound white reverberates with vibrancy and freshness accented by a dash of honeyed complexity.

Stylish Reds

Elegance and food-friendliness are the hallmarks of red Bordeaux. In the affordable price range, many of these wines will be built upon Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc fleshing out the blend.

2002 Chateau Bonnet "Reserve," Bordeaux (\$15)

Earthy aromas are followed up by dark berry fruit flavors and a supple texture in an Old World wine with New World style.

2003 Chateau Thieuley, Bordeaux (\$14)

Pretty, classy wine with violet aromas and a silky mouthfeel that pairs with everything from salmon to pizza and steak.

has the complexity and depth to age but enough lushness to drink now.

2001 Chateau Larose-Trintaudon, Haut-Medoc (\$16)

Smoky, herbal aromas, cassis fruit and balanced tannins marry beautifully in this classic Bordeaux. Serve with grilled lamb.

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Leslie Sbrocco is author of the award-winning book *Wine for Women: A Guide to Buying, Pairing, and Sharing Wine* (William Morrow). She writes for national magazines and newspapers, and also appears regularly on television and radio shows. A sought-after speaker and wine judge, Sbrocco believes wine should not be feared or revered, simply enjoyed.