Premier Wines of Southwest France

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Wine List

Introduction

Bordeaux has been known as a wine growing region since the Romans occupied the city (it was called Burgidala) around 60CE. It is a city renowned for its historical quarters as well as being in the center of the most important wine growing areas in France. The wine growing regions surround the city and each has its very special grapes and resulting wines.

For me, the most wonderful part of sampling the wines of the Bordeaux region is their variety, quality and price. Fortunately, many Bordeaux wines are imported into the US (though with the recently imposed tariff by the Trump Administration, they are not the bargains they have been).

I think the following wines represent a good selection of what you could find in a visit to Bordeaux. I have chosen five wines for their quality and their price. Because Bordeaux primarily produces red wines, four are red and one is a white.

Côtes de Bourg

Bourg-sur-Gironde is located 20 km (12 mi) north-west of Bordeaux, at the confluence of the rivers Dordogne and Garrone with an average altitude of 20 m above sea level. It is across the river from the famous wine growing region of the Medoc.

The red wine is made up of primarily Merlot grapes, blended with smaller quantities of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Some Chateaux still use Malbec as part of the blend. The wine from Chateau Hourtou, available in the US, is a very pleasant wine that goes with many foods. Expect to pay about $12-16 per bottle.

Les Hauts de Sainte Marie

Château Sainte-Marie is located in the middle of the region known as the Entre deux Mers. The literal translation of its name is “between two seas” (mers), but its actual name is “marée”, which means tide and refers to the area between the two tidal rivers. It is a well known label here and is generally easy to find. The Les Hauts de Sainte-Marie Rouge is a blend of 67% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. It is an easy to enjoy wine, pleasant to drink with all kinds of food. A bottle should cost between $13-16.

Sainte Marie: Entre-Deux-Mers

Like Les Hauts de Sainte Marie, this wine also is grown in the region known as the Entre deux Mers. Many of the wines from the Entre-Deux-Mers are white wines, and generally are composed primarily of Sauvignon Blanc with Semillon and Muscadelle. They are very popular with the people of Southwest France and are predominately drunk with seafood; especially with oysters, which are a speciality of the region. The Sainte-Marie white is usually enjoyed young. It is a very reasonable wine that should not cost more than about $12.
Chateau Haut Pommaréde

This chateau is located in the Graves region, on the left bank of the Garonne River south of the city of Bordeaux. The region takes its name from its gravel soil, the result of glacial deposition during the last glaciation. The wines, red and white, are renowned for their quality and many are extremely expensive. The Chateau Haut Pommaréde is a quality red wine at a reasonable price. The wine is predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon, blended with Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec. This interesting blend (in French, ‘mélange’) is typical of the wines of the Bordeaux region, which often are composed of a number of different grapes that are blended together to produce the final product. The price of a bottle has been around $14-16.