



OPENING OFFER

BORDEAUX 2012

IN BOND



AN OPENING OFFER OF THE TOP WINES

OUR PICK OF THE TOP WINES

2012 Bordeaux has both surprised and delighted us. There are some delicious wines, with real freshness and poise, and, at the time of going to print, release prices so far are down compared with 2011, sometimes significantly. If on the eve of the campaign we were unsure how much interest we might expect (and should be encouraging) in Bordeaux's latest vintage our view now is positive on both counts.

Our hesitation before we tasted the 2012s was due to a combination of another complicated year in the vineyards (different from 2011 but equally challenging) and the lack of noise coming out of Bordeaux. Not usually shy about coming forward, the Bordelais cleverly kept their counsel this year and allowed visiting tasters to make up their own minds.

PRICES DOWN

Thankfully prices are generally being released earlier than we had anticipated and lower than expected too. Mouton Rothschild has set a positive line for hopefully others to follow with a drop in its release price of over 30%, considerably more than we expected. And the wine is very good.

Prices of some wines have already been released and these are listed in our offer. Certain wines will attract high demand early on and we encourage you to act quickly if you are interested as the wines will be allocated shortly.

CHARM AND FINESSE

2012 has produced a Bordeaux vintage full of surprises: some properties clearly made better wine this year than last, and there are some wonderful cabernet-dominated wines that stood out in this generally more merlot-orientated vintage. What we did not find this year was consistent quality, either by appellation or commune, or by grape variety. In that, and in style, 2012 is different from 2005, 2009 and 2010. Christian Seely at Pichon Baron summed it up well: '...surprising irregularity... (but) some delicious wines.' The best are easily as good as 2011 and 2008, and some, especially on the right bank, are certainly the match of 2001. Given the nature of the vintage we have been particularly careful with our selection; some châteaux have not made the cut while others that we have not featured for a while, such as Cos d'Estournel, are included.

WHAT MADE 2012?

'To be at the vine's service' was essential in 2012 according to Alfred Tesseron at Pontet-Canet, and the best wines were made by producers who put in a lot of extra work in the vineyards and were willing and able to sacrifice more of their crop in an already small vintage. Grapes did not ripen evenly and even those that appeared ripe were not necessarily so, making grape selection at harvest more difficult than usual. Unglamorous though they may sound, those with the latest optical sorting machines, and even machine harvesters, had something of an advantage this year, as technology was able to make up for the inadequacies of the too easily deceived human eye.

The growing season started late; spring was wet – sometimes very wet – as was early summer, which disrupted flowering. Summer was then very dry but the harvest period was unsettled, almost the reverse of 2011. Enormous variability was the end result and as well as a strict selection in the vineyard, grapes required careful handling in the cellar to avoid over extraction and unripe tannins. Thus the great successes of 2012 have come from good vigneron with a sensitive approach in the cellar.

In such a year it is impossible to generalise about the style of the wines. Fine merlot produced some excellent St-Emilions and Pomerols and certainly made Châteaux Haut-Brion, Palmer and Vieux Château Certan stars of the vintage. However, great vineyards produced great cabernets too, with Margaux, Mouton and Pichon Baron all vying for the 2012 cabernet crown. In the words of Bruno Borie of Ducru Beaucaillou, 2012 is a vintage 'enriched by diversity!'

Please note that Châteaux Léoville Barton and Tertre Rôteboeuf will appear in our main offer which we expect to be available in June. Château Latour and second wine Les Forts de Latour are not being released en primeur for the first time this year and will be released by the château in a few years' time.

**Pre-orders by telephone and website only will be accepted.
To pre-order wines, please telephone Member Services on 01438 741177, or visit thewinesociety.com/bordeauxtopwines**



HOW THIS OPENING OFFER WORKS

Pre-order offer of the top wines

The Society is offering a selection of the most sought-after wines of the vintage in the same way as for the 2011 vintage, requiring members to pre-order. The process for our main opening offer, which will contain all the other, mostly lower-priced, wines will remain unchanged and this will be available from June or early July as normal.

- At this stage, members wanting to purchase the wines in this offer need to place a pre-order. The pre-order will be based on the guide price range that we have specified. Members may, however, indicate a maximum price which they would be willing to pay within this price range. As mentioned before some prices have already been released*, in which case members should place their pre-order as soon as possible by visiting our website thewinesociety.com/bordeauxtopwines or by telephoning **01438 741177**.
- When the remaining actual prices are released by the châteaux (The Society has no control over when this will be) members will be notified whether they have been successful in their pre-orders for these particular wines. Should the actual price exceed the guide price on release, we will contact members to ask whether they would still like to order the wine.
- If your pre-order is successful, we will debit your card for the wine once the offer has closed. This will be once all the prices have been released and we anticipate this to be at the end of June or the beginning of July.

THE WINES

		Price or guide price range per six
1.	CS8811 Château Ausone, Saint-Emilion A wine of great precision, elegance and length from Alain and Pauline Vauthier. The blend remains the same, 55% cabernet franc and 45% merlot, with fine tannins gently handled and lovely fruit freshness. Just 18,000 of one of Bordeaux's loveliest bottles produced once again. 2018–2040.	£1900 to £2800
2.	CS8821 Château Bélair-Monange, Saint-Emilion Bélair now incorporates the Magdelaine vineyard but even so, fewer than 17,000 bottles were made in 2012, and long-term restructuring of the vineyard will mean this is the case for some years to come. The wine is characteristically refined, with ripe, red fruit gently handled to produce a wine of freshness, finesse and restraint. 2018–2032.	*£375
3.	CM16691 Château Calon Ségur, Saint-Estèphe A similar blend to the 2011, with 78% cabernet sauvignon, 2% petit verdot and the balance merlot. Elegant and refined as ever, with the cabernet providing a solid backbone. It's a wine of purity and precision. 2022–2035.	£190 to £250
4.	CS8831 Château Canon, Saint-Emilion One of the latest-ever harvests at Canon, with grapes picked from 3rd to 15th October. Cabernet franc has grown in importance here and this year represents 30% of the blend once again, bringing freshness, structure and perfume to the beautifully ripe merlot. 2018–2032.	*£213
5.	CM16521 Carruades de Lafite, Pauillac Charming flavours of red and black fruits combine with fine-grained tannins to make a very elegant Carruades. 53% cabernet sauvignon and 42% merlot seasoned with a little cabernet franc and petit verdot. 2018–2025.	*£525
6.	CS8841 Château Cheval Blanc, Saint-Emilion A model of restraint and refinement, with a little more merlot this year (54%) contributing suave, silky texture. Beautifully balanced and with fine backbone and length, promising a long future. 2020–2040.	£1500 to £2400
7.	CM16701 Le Clarence de Haut Brion, Pessac-Léognan With roughly equal proportions of cabernet sauvignon and merlot, plus 14% cabernet franc and a touch of petit verdot, Haut-Brion's second wine is a well-constituted claret offering spicy flavour, typical minerality and plenty of substance. 2020–2037.	£250 to £410
8.	CS8851 Clos Fourtet, Saint-Emilion Likened by the régisseur to the fine 2001, Clos Fourtet has produced a star in 2012. The harvest continued until 23rd October here. The fruit was clearly beautifully healthy and ripe, the tannins are refined reflecting the quality of this fine vineyard on the limestone plateau. 85% merlot. 2018–2030.	£200 to £290
9.	CS8921 Château La Conseillante, Pomerol A very fine and harmonious Conseillante, pure in its expression of sweetly perfumed fruit. All silky charm in delivery, with exquisite freshness on the palate. A beautiful wine likely to be in high demand. 2019–2037.	£250 to £410
10.	CM16711 Château Cos d'Estournel, Saint-Estèphe Concentrated and impressive but not the massive wine we have seen in the last few vintages from the state-of-the-art 100% gravity-fed cellar here. 75% cabernet sauvignon provides the backbone to support rich, opulent fruit. 2022–2040.	£350 to £550
11.	CM16531 Château Ducru-Beaucaillou, Saint-Julien Great purity and lovely fragrance are the hallmarks of the vintage here, the second in a row with challengingly low yields. A fine and classically proportioned left-bank claret with modest 13% alcohol and elegant structure. 91% cabernet sauvignon, 9% merlot. 2022–2040.	£300 to £410

12.	CMI654I	Château Duhart-Milon, Pauillac	*£288
		More charm than usual in its youth and a credit to the Rothschild team's approach in the cellar this year. Dense in colour and rich with mulberry and fresh damson fruit. There is nevertheless a solid structure on which to base a long future. 2020–2035.	
13.	CS886I	Château L'Évangile, Pomerol	*£550
		One of the wines of the vintage for us this year: seductive but less opulent than in some years, with perfectly ripe, black-cherry flavour. 93% merlot refreshed with cabernet franc. Beautifully balanced, elegant and long. 2020–2037.	
14.	CS891I	Château-Figeac, Saint-Émilion	£310 to £400
		Looking very good this year. A property unusual for its high proportion of cabernet sauvignon, making this atypical Saint-Émilion but classic claret, combining freshness and elegance. 2022–2034.	
15.	CS887I	Château La Fleur-Pétrus, Pomerol	*£490
		Production was down a massive 40% this year, a combination of cruel nature and a perfectionist approach in the vineyards. A firm structure of finely wrought tannins overlaid with smoky spicy flavours. 2018–2035.	
16.	CMI655I	Château Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan	£210 to £310
		Another triumph from Véronique Sanders, this year a blend of 60% cabernet, 40% merlot. Beautiful perfume, very refined, very poised. Elegance itself. 2018–2030.	
17.	CMI656I	Château Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan	£1300 to £2000
		A star among the first growths in a stellar line-up this vintage. An unusually high proportion of merlot this year (65.5%) brings a slightly more generous profile than usual at this early stage, but set in an exquisitely well-managed whole. Very fine indeed. 2020–2045.	
18.	CS888I	Château Hosanna, Pomerol	*£425
		Severe selection in 2012 means an average yield of 22 hectolitres per hectare across the JP Moueix estate and even less wine for us this year. Hosanna fans will love it, however. Vibrant but gently rounded black-fruit flavour and lovely freshness. 2016–2030.	
19.	CMI657I	Château La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan	£700 to £1300
		A high proportion of merlot (62%), as in 2004 and 2005, picked by the end of September. Classically styled nevertheless with solid structure enveloped in lush fruit. 2022–2042.	
20.	CMI658I	Château Lafite, Pauillac	*£1900
		91% cabernet with just a drop of petit verdot and the balance merlot. A dense and spicy Lafite with hints of liquorice and good backbone but great elegance too. 2025–2045.	
21.	CMI659I	Château Léoville Poyferré, Saint-Julien	£210 to £300
		This is a muscular and impressive Poyferré, dense in colour and fruit but still only 13.5% alcohol. Unusually no cabernet franc in the blend this year. Ripe, black fruits and red-cherry freshness are balanced by fine-grained tannins. 2024–2040.	
22.	CMI660I	Château Lynch-Bages, Pauillac	*£335
		A similar blend to the 2011, 71% cabernet sauvignon with their highest proportion of merlot ever at 26%, with dense ripe, but not overripe fruit and finely judged tannins. Plenty of concentration for the long haul. 2022–2037.	
23.	CMI661I	Château Margaux, Margaux	*£1400
		Just 34% of the small 2012 crop made the grand vin this year, a textbook, finely hewn Margaux with lovely fragrance and great length on the palate. 87% cabernet sauvignon, with merlot and splashes of cabernet franc and petit verdot. 2024–2042.	
24.	CMI662I	Château Montrose, Saint-Estèphe	£250 to £410
		An unusually high proportion of merlot this year (37%), picked from 24th September, adds density of fruit but without losing any of the mineral freshness of the vintage. Finely balanced and very elegant. 2022–2037.	
25.	CMI664I	Château Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac	*£1400
		A polished and elegant Mouton with sleek palate and wonderful balance between gently handled fruit and finely hewn core. 90% cabernet sauvignon, just 2% cabernet franc, with the balance merlot. 2022–2045.	
26.	CMI665I	Château Palmer, Margaux	£600 to £910
		A joy to behold, to taste, and to anticipate, this is surely one of the stars of the vintage. Roughly equal parts merlot and cabernet sauvignon with 6% petit verdot, with great purity and the finest possible tannins. 2025–2045.	
27.	CMI663I	Pavillon Rouge, Margaux	*£425
		With similar density and tannin levels to the very good 2011, this is an unexpectedly charming wine, generous and smooth on the palate, which Paul Pontallier believes will be delicious young and throughout its long life. 2016–2030.	

28.	CM1666I	Château Pichon-Longueville Baron, Pauillac	£290 to £410
At 80% cabernet sauvignon this year, almost as high as last year's record 82%, this is an impressive and muscular Baron, dense in colour and concentration. Benchmark cru classé claret and very fine indeed. 2025–2045.			
29.	CM1667I	Château Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, Pauillac	£290 to £410
A charming vintage blended by Nicolas Glumineau, formerly of Montrose. Silky and refined, it embodies, he says, the 'estate's potential for great merlot' (28% of the blend this year). 2020–2035.			
30.	CM1668I	Château Pontet-Canet, Pauillac	£310 to £390
Pristine perfume of black and red fruits and a touch of spice, set in a more solid structure than in recent vintages. Established biodynamic practices proved their worth once again. Very fine tannins. 2022–2040.			
31.	CS890I	Château Troplong Mondot, Saint-Emilion	£240 to £330
Exquisite of its type – dense, ripe, opulent and seductive – with velvety caressing tannins and heady, black-fruit perfume. 90% merlot and well-ripened, late-picked cabernets. 2024–2042.			
32.	CS889I	Vieux Château Certan, Pomerol	£430 to £570
An unusually late harvest here began 1st October, and the finished blend has a high percentage of merlot (87%) not seen since the 1985 which the Thienpoints recalled was 'a glass of perfume' in its early years. As ever, a wine of great breeding reflecting not only its great terroir but the thoughtful approach of the people who make it. 2018–2035.			

We encourage members to place their order as soon as possible as, with the exception of those wines whose prices are already released, once a particular wine's price has been established, no more pre-orders will be taken for that wine.

IF DEMAND EXCEEDS SUPPLY

Although pre-ordering reduces the likelihood, there is still a chance that some wines may be oversubscribed. In the event of this occurring, we will share out (as far as is practical) the available stock equally amongst ordering members. If this still does not allow every member to have some wine, then as a final resort we divide members into groups depending on their level of support for The Society (quantity of wine bought, spend, orders placed, etc). Members who have given greater support to The Society will have a better chance (but no certainty) of being allocated wine, and those who have given less support will have a lesser chance (but still a chance).

MEMBERS' RESERVES

The Society's Members' Reserves is a purpose-built, temperature-controlled facility offering members access to optimum storage conditions. The annual rental charge (currently £7.92 per dozen if paid by direct debit, £9.12 if not) includes VAT and insurance at replacement value. Any wine bought from The Society, by the unmixed or pre-mixed dozen, may be added or removed at any time. Members using the facility receive an annual account which lists wines held, along with The Society's recommended drinking dates for each.

WHAT THE PRICE INCLUDES:

- Prices shown include delivery to a UK address but exclude excise duty and VAT which is payable, at the prevailing rate when the wines arrive at Stevenage. Please note that VAT is payable on the sum of the en primeur price paid plus excise duty.
- The wine is expected to arrive in the UK in the summer of 2015. This is when duty and VAT is payable. If a particular wine is unexpectedly delayed beyond this time, we will advise members with a revised anticipated arrival date. Duty and VAT will not be charged until the wine has arrived at Stevenage.
- Once the wines arrive at Stevenage, members may opt to have them delivered within the UK or stored in duty-paid Members' Reserves.

NOTES

- Wines are offered in cases of six bottles as indicated.
- Please note that these wines cannot be collected from our showroom in Montreuil.

For information regarding this offer please contact The Society on

☎ 01438 740222, or 📧 memberservices@thewinesociety.com



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THE SOCIETY'S PROMISE

Uncork with confidence

As a mutual organisation, members' pleasure is paramount. If, for any reason, you haven't enjoyed a wine we want to hear about it and will happily offer a credit, a replacement or a refund as appropriate. For conditions please see thewinesociety.com/promise