



Written by Jancis Robinson, 8 Mar 2017

## Bordeaux 2005 12 years on – whites



See also these [tasting notes on the right bank](#) and [left bank](#) reds, this [overview of the tasting](#), and [this guide](#) to our considerable coverage of Bordeaux 2005 over the years.

The week before last 18 of us gathered in Farr Vintners offices to taste nearly 200 significant bordeaux from the famous 2005 vintage. Most of them were reds - pretty tannic, concentrated reds - about which I will report in detail tomorrow (right bank) and on Thursday (left bank) reds, all supplemented by an overview on Saturday. This was the usual 10-years-on tasting (see [this report](#) on one in 2014 devoted to the 2004 vintage) but with the early-maturing 2007s swapped with the obdurate 2005s which we therefore examined at 12, not 10, years old.

But we also had a chance to taste one flight of dry whites and two of sweet white bordeaux. The sweet wines were considerably more impressive than the dry ones - in fact they constituted two of the most pleasurable flights of the 17 we tackled over two days (including one dominated by Storm Doris who whipped up the Thames outside the offices to a frenzy previously unseen).



Some of the tasters photographed by Ben Browett are (clockwise round the table starting on the left) Aidan Bell of DMB Wines, Tim Sykes of The Wine Society, Neal Martin of The Wine Advocate, me, Charles Peterkin of Four Walls Wine, [Joss Fowler](#), Matthew Hemming MW of Averbys, Stephen Browett of Farr Vintners, Derek Smedley MW, Steven Spurrier, Hamish Wakes-Miller of Bordeaux and [Alex Hunt MW](#), late of this parish.

With one or two exceptions these 12-year-old dry white bordeaux were quite obviously past their best. But then probably only Domaine de Chevalier (which I frequently overlook in blind tastings) and Ch Smith Haut-Lafitte would have pretensions of such longevity. The wines for these tastings are generally made up of second bottles supplied for the so-called Southwold tastings of red bordeaux at four years old, and Stephen Browett of Farr Vintners seemed quite surprised to have unearthed these dry white specimens in the company cellar. That said, Bouscaut showed unusually well – as it often has recently.

The sweet whites were in great shape, and the best will presumably go marching on for many a long year, as is this style's wont. Bill Blatch who has the unenviable job of rounding up the sample bottles in the first place, could hardly be more enthusiastic about sweet white bordeaux (as witness his website [bordeauxgold.com](#) which seems to have taken a rest) so he was of course thrilled that these wines showed so well. He is famous for his detailed reports on each year's growing season and harvest in Bordeaux. You can read the relevant [2005 Blatch report](#), and if interested his much more recent report on [Bordeaux 2016](#).

This was his comment after he had analysed the results of this tasting and compared them with how the same wines were rated by more or less the same tasting group in 2009. 'In Sauternes, the top wines were about the same: Suduiraut, Fargues, Climens, Guiraud still on top, with Rieussec too (out of condition last time); but we demoted Yquem from 1st= to 6th and Tour Blanche from 5th to 10th; Nairac at 7th this time would probably have got the same position at Southwold if it had been in the first flight (it came top of the 2nd flight at Southwold).'

These 30 tasting notes are grouped by appellation and then listed alphabetically by producer. You can change the order using the drop-down box.

**PESSAC-LÉOGNAN**

**Ch Bouscalt 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Hint of botrytis on the nose and real vitality. Racy. Great stuff and the sort of green, rich, sappy, slightly oily wine you could only find in Bordeaux.

Drink 2010-2020 **17**

**Dom de Chevalier 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Fruit has oxidised. But on the palate there is the vestige of exciting fruit. Lots of acidity. Very distinctive.

Drink 2008-2012 **14**

**Ch de Fieuzal 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Lost the vital spark. Just acid and canned green vegetables on the end.

Drink 2008-2012 **13.5**

**Ch Larrivet Haut-Brion 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Strong, rich Sauvignon aroma. Very round and flattering and sumptuous. Good bitterness on the end makes up for low acid, but there's a bit of alcohol in evidence on the finish. Almost sweet. Falls apart a bit on the end. Sweet impression.

Drink 2010-2016 **16**

**Ch Latour-Martillac 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Deep, rich gold. Gingery, spicy and now oxidised. May have been quite exciting once.

Drink 2009-2013 **14.5**

**Ch La Louvière 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Lots of acidity is now dominating this but there is lots of life to it too – just not enough fruit.

Drink 2008-2013 **15.5**

**Ch Malartic Lagravière 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Definitely oxidised! But it could appeal to lovers of Viña Tondonia.

Drink ?? **?**

**Ch Pape Clément 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Very light nose. Rather hot beginning and then the acid comes through, but the fruit is fading fast. There's a flavour that reminds me of Mexico – tacos?

Drink 2008-2012 **15**

**Ch Smith Haut Lafitte 2005 Pessac-Léognan**

Tasted blind. Lightly oxidised, with the fruit sucked out somewhat, but I could enjoy this with food. Rich, oily and iodine. Bit hot on the end.

Drink 2009-2015 **16**