

# The Communes of Bordeaux Over Four Decades

We are without the guidance of the all knowing, all sniffing, Robert Parker and his American team on this month's wines. There are no Parker or Wine Spectator scores; just a few notes on vintage by the venerable Michael Broadbent and the British contingent to lead us by the nose. This June, our cellar gives up an intriguing mix of vintages and communes. Summer is often not considered a red wine lovers season, but these are not the over-ripe Zins of California. We are featuring wines from Margaux, St. Julien, Pauillac, St. Estephe and Pomerol from 1955, 1961, 1966, 1970, 1976, 1978 and 1981. All of these vintages rank at least 4 stars from Broadbent. The first thing you must know is that these will **not** be fruit bombs with gobs of black cherry, chocolate and cassis fruit. You must expect these aged treasures to be more on the feminine side (think Burgundy), delicate, light in colour, fragrant, spicy, earthy, cedary and soft on the palate. These are wines created in an era before global warming, of minimal technological intervention and of extended bottle aging. Fermented in cool concrete tanks and aged *en barrique*, these wines were made from the best fruit in the best terroir.

Is it a coincidence that our first wine is from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1855 classification of Bordeaux? The 1955 vintage was regarded as one of the best of the decade and some properties produced better wine than in the often-touted 1953. We are pouring a rare 2<sup>nd</sup> Growth Chateau Rauzan Gassis from the commune of Margaux. We tumble straight into the legendary 1961 vintage for our next wine. 1961 can be compared to 2007 in Ontario, no rain, hot, and very concentrated grapes. High alcohol and tannins mean that wines from this vintage took 20 years to start coming around. Michael Broadbent insists that "The best are supreme examples of the best wines in the world." From an appellation and chateau whose wines have a history of great longevity, we will pour the 1961 Chateau Lafon Rochet from St. Estephe. 1966 is a year of firm tannins and great patience. It is another vintage that did not start to show well until its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Considered a classic Claret vintage, the best wines are considered glorious. We are featuring the Merlot dominated 1966 Chateau Gazin from Pomerol.

...over

**As always with our tastings, this event will be strictly non-smoking, and we request your cooperation in not wearing any scented after-shave or perfume.**

Date: Wednesday, June 8, 2011  
 Time: 6:30 p.m.  
 Limit: 122 people

North York Memorial Community Hall  
 5110 Yonge St. (under library)  
 North York Centre Subway

Cancellations accepted up to June 3, 2011 — David Hutchison (416-690-0281 **evenings**). **No reservations by phone, please.** No confirmations will be issued — you will be contacted only if we are sold out. First come basis. Non-members may attend at guest rates, but preference will be given to members.

**You can register online using a credit card at [www.winetasters.ca](http://www.winetasters.ca), or send in this form with a cheque.**

Tear and Enclose \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque payable to:  
 Winetasters Society of Toronto  
 c/o Dave Hutchison  
 270 Glen Manor Drive West  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M4E 2Y2

Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ W (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque Enclosed for: The Communes of Bordeaux

\_\_\_\_\_ Members @ 66.00 each \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Guests @ 82.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I wish to sit at a New Members Table  
 with an expert to answer my questions.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Next, we have an opportunity to compare and contrast the communes of Margaux and St. Julien in the excellent 1970 vintage. It is a rare vintage in which Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot reached physiological ripeness concurrently. We will pour the Chateau D'Angludet from Margaux and the Chateau Ducru-Beaucaillou from St. Julien. We visit the great Chateau of Palmer in Margaux in the 1976 vintage. 1976 was a complete contrast to the tough and tannic 1975's. The wines were supple, fragrant and feminine. Our next commune hop takes us to Pauillac and the wine of 1978 Chateau Clerc-Millon. Harry Waugh, often referred to as "the man with the million-dollar palate", considered 1978 the "year of the miracle!" Our line-up finishes with a return to Chateau Ducru-Beaucaillou in 1981, a vintage, upstaged by the super-ripe and expensive 1982's. It is a vintage that has been underrated and undervalued, full of lighter, delicious, elegant wines. Please join us for the other side of Cabernet: fragrant, feminine and fine..