

1989 Bordeaux

I sometimes wonder (as I am sure most of our members do) how those highly touted 1989 Bordeaux reds are aging. The large 1989 crop produced rich, fleshy wines that typically possess soft, silky tannins and high alcohol levels. It was the warmest summer since 1949 and the picking began very early on August 28th, the earliest since 1893. In our world of instant gratification and custom vinted wines for immediate consumption, this tasting is what may be best described as an extraordinary event. We will explore the subtleties and complexities of well aged Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Twenty years of bottle age does wonders for Bordeaux wines. The alcohol levels appear suppressed; the tannins turn from burlap to silk; boisterous, youthful fruit aromas evolve and acquire complexities that are often described as cigar-box, black currant and forest floor. Crisp acidity and chalky finishes are replaced by harmonious acids and a creamy mouthfeel.

If we start tasting geographically south to north, we first discover **Chateau Haut Bailly** in the Pessac Leognan region next to Graves and the closest of all to the city of Bordeaux. In 1989 the vintage was overseen by the famous oenologist Emile Peynaud. The cépage is 65% Cabernet Sauvignon with 30% merlot and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. The high degree of Cabernet will provide our signature Bordeaux flavour profile. Of note at this property is a block of 4 hectares of vines that may date from the pre-Phylloxera era. Three varieties are present in tiny quantities Carmenère, Petit Verdot and Malbec, all planted before 1907.

As we move slightly north (and east over the Gironde River) we find **Chateau La Pointe** in Pomerol where Cabernet is less favoured. A predominantly Merlot cépage is evident here and new oak is used with a delicate hand. This is a large estate by Pomerol standards and it is sited next to the famous Chateau Nenin.

The next wine's geography is a flip back to the left bank of the Gironde where we find the famous **Ch. Prieuré Lichine** in the commune of Margaux. Alexis-Lichine and Prieuré-Lichine are effectively synonymous. The famous author purchased the run down Chateau Cantenac-Prieuré in 1951, expanded it and restored the chais and chateau and greatly improved the wines. He acquired vineyard land from many famous chateaux, including d'Issan, Palmer, Brane Cantenac and Giscours to expand the estate to 58 hectares. Alex Lichine died in 1989, so we are pouring his last vintage. Its cépage is about 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and the usual suspects make up the rest. It is a wine of sound proportions and great reputation.

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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 9, 2010
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 4, 2010 — 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, 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: **1989 Bordeaux**

_____ Members @ 36.00 each _____
_____ Guests @ 56.00 each _____

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

Total _____

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Our next wine, **Chateau Saint Pierre** is just a short ride north to the commune of St. Julien. A great Bordelais character owned St. Pierre. Henri Martin, owner of Chateau Gloria, bought Chateau St. Pierre at the tender age of 78. The old-vine dominated vineyards of this estate lie near the boundary of the [St Julien](#) appellation, surrounded by [Beychevelle](#), [Branaire-Ducru](#) and [Gruaud-Larose](#). The cépage is 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and the wine is actually made and aged at Chateau Gloria.

From the famous commune of Pauillac, we are pouring the ever popular **Chateau Ponte Canet**. Its famous neighbours include many of the Rothschild properties, Clerc-Milon, Duhart-Milon, d'Armailhac as well as the premier crus of Mouton and Lafite Rothschild. Its cépage usually contains about 60% Cabernet Sauvignon. Innovations beginning in the early 90s have led to some outstanding wines in recent years.

As we move north into St. Estèphe, the estate of **Haut-Marbuzet** is apparent. It is unique in St. Estèphe where blends are very cabernet heavy because the cépage is 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. Clive Coates has been known to be a great fan and has ranked Haut-Marbuzet third, behind the two great estates of St. Estèphe, Montrose and Cos d'Estournel.

Venturing just west into the commune of Haut-Medoc, we find **Chateau Liversan**. This wine features a cépage of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 49% Merlot. It is considered great value Bordeaux and though it will likely never get elevated into the 1855 classification, it represents fine wine.

For those of you who have been paying attention, and read this far down in our write ups, you may have noticed that there is no St. Emillion in this tasting. We are guilty of this erratum and once noticed in 2008, we had enormous difficulty in securing a 1989 wine for this tasting in a timely fashion and at a reasonable cost. Instead, we are giving you something to puzzle over by inserting a "ringer" - a second mature Bordeaux from one these communes.