

## Bordeaux Primeurs 2016: first results

(March 12, 2017)

### **The outstanding greatness of Bordeaux reds 2016 and their differences with 2005, 2009 and 2010.**

*This vintage has something genius, unusual and inexplicable about it. A fabulous and very rare combination perfectly balanced between a fantastic quality of tannin, moderate alcohol degrees and sustained but imperceptible acidity.*

-When you live in Bordeaux and have been observing the summer weather daily for years and find the weather of 2016 continuously favourable from July to October and very dry.

-When you go round the estates during harvest time and have tasted the grapes for years and notice that in 2016 everyone harvests quietly according to the ripeness of each plot and the harvest time has never been more spread out. Then there is good reason to believe that during the winemaking something different and even unimaginable will occur in the taste of these wines.

-When for years you can enter the cellars freely and taste during both the alcoholic and malolactic fermentations and still afterwards, incessantly in 2016, because you are dazzled by the result and you need to pinch yourself to know you are not dreaming.

-When, as a result, you run from one bank to another, to all terroirs and grape varieties to check.

Then yes, I can tell you that after 3 months at this pace and more than 300 samples tasted, Bordeaux currently holds in its cellars the greatest vintage ever made since 1982 (I was there for the primeurs).

### **This vintage has something genius, unusual, fantastic and inexplicable about it.**

The red wines are dense, very fragrant, rich, full, with a soft touch on the palate, velvety and a great depth of flavours. Everything is so flavourful, such bright fruit, such a refined tannin grain, with such a strong note of pleasure that 2016 will make the 2010, which I love, look rustic.

Difficult to believe, isn't it. And yet!

## **1/ Perfect colours.**

The colours are superb, very dark, (sign of the wine's density) purple, deep and bright.

## **2/ Perfect fruity quality**

The quality of the fruit is excellent, on the nose as on the palate, very ripe, but not overripe, with lots of éclat and no vegetal notes, apart from the vines that suffered from drought. But generally speaking, these plots have not been used for the blending of the great wine.

## **3 / Fantastic structure of the mouth**

And here are the three reasons.

### **-Lower alcohol degrees!**

This is where the genius starts. How to ripen tannins without increasing the alcohol degree and thus weighing down the wine? And even if Bordeaux, thanks to its geographical position, is advantaged in this process, this balance has never been as perfect as in 2016. The alcohol degrees are good but lesser than in 2009, 2010 and 2015. And on both banks! As a consequence, there is no heat effect in the finish. On the contrary, a precise sensation appears that leaves the mouth fresh and encourages the desire to swallow.

### **-Fantastic quality of tannins**

They are so perfectly ripe that they never appear as harsh or tannic. On the contrary, they induce a velvety, silky particularly strong sensation. However the 2016 offer a dense powerful body, but it all shows to be particularly melting. This association of power and refinement is extremely rare in such young wines except in 1982. It is the huge difference with 2005 and 2010!

### **-But there is better still! Even more original, magic, inexplicable: low Ph levels.**

Bordeaux 2016 ph levels are low and well below average. Low ph means high acidity. And a high acidity should reinforce the tannins' harshness. And yet, no one can say why there is no such thing. This is the huge difference with 2005. The advantage of this acidity, that cannot be felt, which does not harden the tannins, is to make it greatly sapid, fresh, drinkable, with rich structures but without being heavy, non-solar where the fruitiness shines and even bursts out. Thus, the pleasure note of these wines is very strong, even though they are very powerful, but this power is particularly harmonious. This fleshy but fresh substance is the huge difference with 2009 and 2015!

### **This quality is not only for the production elite.**

Even stronger and more original! It's the entire production that benefits from the greatness of the vintage.

This cheerful pulpy sensation is found on all kinds of soil (less on sandy soils with young vines). And this is what's so fantastic. Usually the less quality soils are those with an important water supply. However, with the drought of the summer 2016, these soils protected the vine from blocking the ripening process. Thus, there are great success on

terroirs of average reputation, even on the same estates where the hierarchy of terroirs can be reversed.

What is surprising is that the result is just as great on the grand, traditional, rather warm terroirs, mainly those with a clayey-limestone subsoil. Thus, it is the entire production that benefits from the greatness of the vintage.

So regarding the general level of satisfaction, the whole region will drive to enhance the outcome of these wines.

The only weak and contrasted points concern, either the young vines especially on sandy soils, or the estates which were very affected by downy mildew (although it played a role in reducing yield) and above all a surplus in production. Indeed, the 2016 vintage is the most productive one since 2004. After the low volumes of 2013, there is no doubt that some producers will like to catch up on volume with 2016, favouring quantity to quality in their first wine.

Within some days, with the official opening of the tastings, I predict a shockwave will go through the vineyards, palates, cellars and merchants. And rightly so, all minds will be inflamed and all excess are to be feared. So, book, book, book! Never have I tasted such grand wines, rich, noble, complex, juicy and yet unspittable in Bordeaux, apart from 1982. Bordeaux will be flooded with extraordinary scores.

Given this situation, a warning message will be sent whenever a score reaches 100 (already 4 Crus are concerned) or that the Cru will come out greater than ever.

**To receive my notes and comments:**

**The subscription in order to receive the 2016 Primeur results is 30 euros. (500 wines)**

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The ratings will be published on 100 and 20 which is comprehensible in all languages. Comments will only be in French.

**Jean-Marc Quarin**

Bordeaux wine critic

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