



## Palate over nose

Bordeaux wines like you've never seen them before! A unique 5-day program that will change your vision of red, dry white and sweet wines forever.

Designed and hosted by Jean-Marc Quarin, independent wine critic and Bordeaux wine specialist.

The aim is to offer a training course that has never been done before in Bordeaux. Nor has it ever been done in this way by the vintners to whom I have proposed it. It will therefore be unique and closely linked to what I know about Bordeaux wines through my 30 years of tasting experience. It's a true transfer of knowledge.

The course is divided into four parts and runs over five days from September 8 to 12, 2025.

### Part 1: Day 1

#### **Enhancing tasting skills**

This first part concerns the development of tasting skills through the understanding and application of my "Palate before Nose" tasting method. As a reminder, this method enables you to quickly establish the difference between a poorly made red wine and a well-made red wine, and among well-made wines, it enables you to identify great wines. All this in a matter of seconds. However, it takes many hours of work to obtain the right result in just a few seconds.

These are the tasting skills we've developed, without which there can be no great wine in the glass. What's more, we'll make the link between their presence or absence and the positive or negative work of the winemaker. This method, which I discovered while tasting red Bordeaux wines, is applicable to all the world's red wines. It is presented in my Bordeaux wine guide.

*Award-winning guide. This book was given the Nadine de Rothschild Prize in 2011 with the following comment: "On behalf of the jury, I would like to point out that the introduction was written in an extraordinary intelligent way, 50 pages which will remain in the history of the knowledge of Bordeaux wines".*

*« If there is a cartesian rigor to Quarin's thought process, cartesian doubt doesn't trouble him for a moment! his book is a tour de force of information, opinion, and clarity; a work of scholarship, scope, sensitivity, and innovation; a major contribution to the literature of bordeaux—a triumph, no less ». Michael Schuster, THE WORLD OF FINE WINE ISSUE 37 2012*

*"Jean-Marc Quarin and Robert Parker are the most influential experts, with a 10% increase in their scores leading to about 7% higher prices. Jean-Marc Quarin, though less known, has in-depth knowledge of the Bordeaux market, a region in which he lives, and is widely regarded as one of the most authoritative expert on Bordeaux wines in France." Journal of Wine Economics, 2015.*



What's more, each person has a unique taste, and the aim of this five-day experience is to discover your natural taste profile, your original taste identity. The one that conditions what you perceive, what

you like. It's important for each participant to know objectively what his or her thresholds of sensitivity are, his or her strengths and weaknesses in perceiving the stimuli triggered by wine. Based on this assessment, each participant can work on sharpening their perception thresholds to improve their innate taste identity, then move from the innate to the acquired stage. This will give everyone confidence in their judgments, and authority in their discussions and opinions about the taste of wine.

## Part 2: Day 2

This part is devoted to **understanding the red wines of Bordeaux on the left bank**, then on the right bank, starting with the presentation of examples.

**Left Bank: Château Margaux and Château Palmer in Margaux.**

### In the morning

We'll be welcomed at **Château Margaux** by the Technical Director, with whom I've been tasting for 25 years. My goal is to give you an intimate knowledge of this wine, which, apart from its price and reputation, few professionals know anything about. What you learn will become a reference. You'll be able to apply it to other Left Bank crus, as well as to all Bordeaux wines, and sometimes to wines from all over the world. How does Château Margaux manage to be and remain Château Margaux? How do people interpret this terroir, its location, the soil it's composed of, the Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot they've chosen to grow there? Why do they do things one way and not another in terms of vine cultivation, vinification, ageing, blending, selection, bottling and so on? For the first time, at Château Margaux, we'll be taking you into the vineyard to find out what they're looking for, what they want and what they don't want in their wines. It's intimate, profound and highly instructive. I should add that the short time we spent together during your preparation for the "left bank cup" leads me to believe that you will appreciate this approach and that you are worthy of it. The same goes for all the wines we'll be studying.

### Afternoon

We're off to **Château Palmer**. One of the topics will be how to make the transition from conventional to biodynamic viticulture. What are the human, technical, taste and financial consequences? What are the consequences in Bordeaux and for Bordeaux? Palmer also raises the question of the presence and use of Merlot in the Médoc. As it happens, on the great clayey-gravel terroirs, the expression of Merlot can resemble that of Cabernet Sauvignon. Château Palmer will explain the specifics of its intentions and strategies, the consequences of which can be seen in the taste of the wine.

## Part 2: Day 3

**The Right Bank, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Clay and Limestone.**

**L'église Clinet in Pomerol, Ausone in Saint Emilion.**

### In the morning

We'll meet Noémie Durantou at **Château l'Eglise Clinet in Pomerol**. Her father, Denis, was a friend and the greatest wine taster I've ever known. Noémie learned everything from him before he passed away. She has the advantage of producing Merlot-based wines on clay (Eglise Clinet, Les Cruzelles), but also



on limestone (Montlandrie). These wines are sometimes expensive, sometimes less so, requiring different strategies. Her winery is small, much like Burgundy. The wines are better known abroad than

in France. She worked with her father for three years before he passed away in 2020. She will share with us everything she has discovered in becoming number 1. We'll share my analysis of how these wines have subtly changed from those of the previous period.

For your information, when I proposed this training program to her, she would have loved to have been able to participate like you and with you for five days...

#### Afternoon

We'll go to **Château Ausone** to meet the Vauthier family. Ausone covers 7 hectares (17 acres) and is located on the limestone plateau and hillsides. However, the Vauthier family also owns 83 hectares (205 acres) of vines in Saint-Emilion on different terroirs that are interesting to taste because they are vinified with the same philosophy. Thanks to this meeting and extensive tasting, and visits to these different locations, you'll have access to a rapid and effective knowledge of Saint-Emilion wines, and their style according to soil type. For the record, Château Ausone, Saint-Emilion's premier grand cru classé A, is the Bordeaux wine that today has the highest percentage of Cabernet Franc planted on limestone in its blend. Why so much interest in this grape variety, which some prefer to call Bouchet since it comes from age-old massal selections? What are its taste characteristics compared with clone-derived Cabernet Franc?

#### Part 3: Day 4

**Dry white wines in Bordeaux. Château Smith Haut Lafitte and Larrivet Haut Brion in Pessac-Léognan.**

#### In the morning

The most famous and well-known are Haut Brion blanc and La Mission Haut Brion blanc, but they weren't always as good as they are today. The wine that has progressed the most in 20 years is **Château Smith Haut Lafitte white**. Until 2006, this white wine was a little heavy, woody, with an oxidative tendency. Then, it gradually changed and, since 2015, I've placed it in the top three dry white wines in Bordeaux. Fabien Teitgen, winemaker and technical director, is the man who has made these qualitative changes possible, even if it means challenging the owners to get things moving. He has agreed to receive us and talk about his journey to improve quality. As with Château Margaux and Eglise Clinet, this approach has never been taken at Smith Haut Lafitte. You'll learn all about winemaking techniques, detailed expressions of grape varieties, yeasts and the many types of soil. Through this approach and these tastings, what you learn will become a benchmark. You'll be on equal footing with the world's best professionals.

#### Afternoon

**Château Larrivet Haut Brion in Pessac Léognan.** In the same spirit as Smith Haut Lafitte, Larrivet Haut Brion has been undergoing change since 2016. This is more recent than at Smith Haut Lafitte, where the results have already been proven. You will therefore share with the technical team any questions related to these ongoing changes that we will find in the evolution of the taste of recent vintages. What's more, these changes concern white wines as much as reds. This will be an opportunity to apply the points we studied the day before, and to differentiate between Pessac Léognan and Médoc. In both cases, we'll be out in the field. The course will take place during the harvest period. You'll learn how to taste the grapes and relate them to the characteristics of future wines.



#### Part 4: Day 5

#### **The great sweet white wines. Château d'Yquem, Château Guiraud.**

##### In the morning

I'll take you to Yquem, king of Bordeaux sweet wines, for the same experience as with Château Margaux. If the essential subject of red wine tasting is the analysis of tannin quality, the essential subject of sweet wine tasting is the analysis of sweetness quality. Yes, there are different sweetnesses, and I'll help you identify them.

We'll spend an entire morning with the technical team, learning about the skills, considerations and techniques behind the consistent, exceptional quality of this wine. What's more, we'll be able to measure, through a vertical tasting, how the taste of Yquem changes after 15 to 20 years in bottle. How does the taste change, and how can we describe it? Why does it change? At this time, the estate will be harvesting, as will Smith Haut Lafitte and Larrivet Haut Brion. This will make it all the more important for you to be there to understand how the grapes are sorted and how noble rot contributes to the complexity of the taste. What's more, over lunch we'll be doing a practical exercise in food and wine pairing in collaboration with Château d'Yquem's private chef. This experience will serve as an example for all sweet wines, including those made worldwide with other grape varieties. Finally, we'll look at current changes in the production of Y d'Yquem, their dry white wine. The previous day's experience will serve as a framework for a professional exchange.

##### Afternoon

We'll go to **Château Guiraud**, a classified growth, to meet Mrs. Sandrine Garbay. Sandrine was winemaker at Château d'Yquem for 27 years. She has just taken over the management of Château Guiraud. How does she use the experience she gained at Yquem? Does it produce the same taste sensation? How do you explain any differences? What's at stake at this lesser-known estate? We'll be tasting the Guiraud wines she hasn't made versus those she's in the process of making. You'll understand what she rejects, what she favors and the reasons behind her choices. Finally, you'll be able to tell the difference between various sweetnesses in relation to climatic conditions and the work done in the vineyard. Never again will you confuse the effects of noble rot with those of partially raisined grapes on the taste of a wine. This knowledge can be extended to all the world's sweet wines. A fascinating and indispensable piece of knowledge!

Total amount per person for 5 days : 8320 euros excluding tax, i.e. **9984 euros including tax**

All included (my fees, a French-American translator, vehicle with driver, 5 lunches)

This program is dedicated to 5 people

-Method of payment by bank transfer.

50% on order. 50% 90 days before your arrival.

#### **Training follow-up**

I suggest that we meet for 3 days to taste the greatest Bordeaux wines of the 2025 vintage en primeur in May 2026. This is another level of training.



-Cancellation terms

If the client cancels the event:

- 60 days before the set date: compensation of 25 % of the agreed price
- 45 days before the set date: compensation of 40% of the agreed price
- 15 days before the set date: compensation of 75% of the agreed price
- 7 days before the set date: compensation of 90% of the agreed price
- Less than a week before the set date: the entire agreed price is due.

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