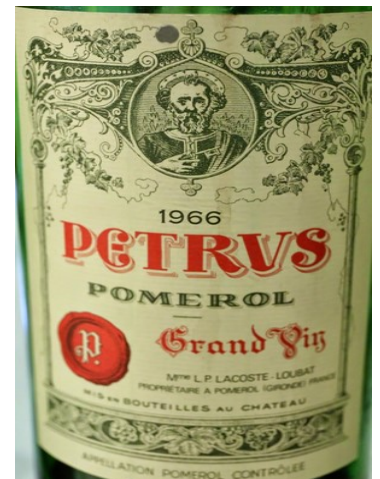




# Commanderie de Bordeaux Dinner Bentley Restaurant

8th May 2018



## 1982 Moët & Chandon, Dom Pérignon



“It was Dom Grossard, the last cellar master at the Benedictine Abbey of Hautvillers, who started the persistent rumour that one of his predecessors, Dom Pérignon, had invented Champagne. But although Dom Pérignon is still occasionally and erroneously credited in the popular press as the inventor of Champagne, today no well-researched writer or historian believes Grossard's fabrication. The Dom Pérignon brand was originally owned by Champagne Mercier, but it had never been used, and it came into Moët's possession as part of Francine Durand-Mercier's dowry when she married Comte Paul Chandon-Moët in 1927. Curiously, the first vintage of Dom Pérignon was 1921, harvested six years prior to the acquisition of the brand. Cellarmaster Richard Geoffroy believes that great Champagne slowly evolves through three levels of plénitude (literally "fullness," but think of "degree of depth, length, mellowness and complexity". In his own words, the first plénitude occurs when a Champagne is newly released (typically brioche, citrus fruit, honey, and mild spices); the second plénitude happens at approximately 12-15 years of age when toast, nuts, biscuit, chocolate, and spices come into play and the third plénitude materializes after 20 years or more (when it yields a deeper, more powerful flavour of leather, spices, cigars, and blossoms, with nuances of sandalwood, musk, new leather, truffles, and spices.

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## 1969 Pavillon Blanc du Château Margaux



White wine production at Château Margaux goes back to the end of the 17th century. The cellar master at that time recounts how he was one of the first to separate the white grapes from the red during the vinification. Sold in the 19th century with the name ‘Château Margaux vin de sauvignon’, it has existed under the brand name ‘Pavillon Blanc du Château Margaux’ since 1920 and its label has not changed since that date. The 11ha vineyard is composed almost entirely of Sauvignon Blanc. There are a few vines of Semillon in the vineyard, but these are rarely included in the Pavillon Blanc, perhaps a minor portion once every ten vintages on average. The vineyard is situated on a very old plot west of the Château that had long since been planted with red vines and then been dug up because of the high risk of spring frosts. Recent changes in production techniques and selection have been completely reviewed since the years 2009/2010 in order to reach a higher level of excellence; only 1/3 of the harvest is now bottled while the remaining 2/3 is sold loose, reducing production even further to below a thousand cases.

Because the wine is sold as a generic Bordeaux Blanc, the rules are much more lax than you find with the red wines of Margaux. The terroir for the white wine is prone to problems from frost. So, to protect the white wine vines used for Pavillon Blanc, Château Margaux uses a frost protection system that sprinkles water on the vines during potential frost inducing weather. The grapes are whole cluster pressed, with no skin contact. There is no malolactic fermentation. The wine is aged on its lees with stirring in 33% new French oak barrels for 7-8 months before bottling.

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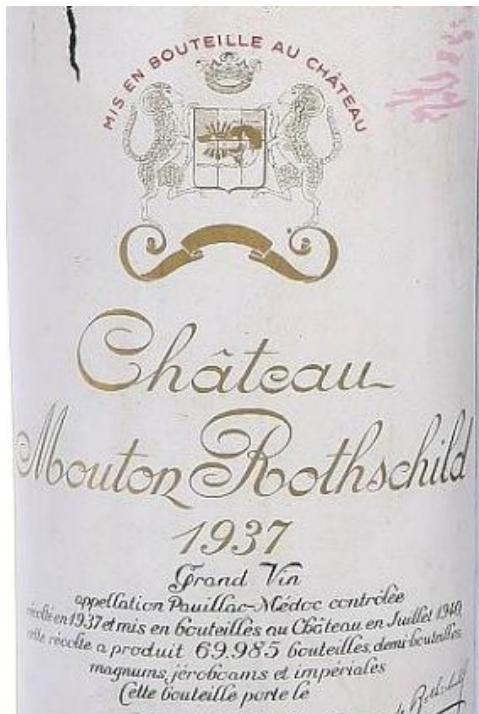
## 1918 Château Margaux



The Margaux property has been occupied since at least the 12th Century, and known for its wines under names such as Margou, Margous & Margose since the 15th Century. In 1879 the winery was bought by Parisian banker Count Frédéric Pillet-Will and the wines for a time were labelled either with the newly designed Chateau label or the Pillet-Will version. The period 1880 to 1910 was a particularly difficult time as recession and phylloxera took their toll and a 2nd wine was introduced using the less superior fruit. In 1977 Andre Mentzelopoulos controversially bought the winery for \$16 million and the notion of a Greek in charge of one of France's greatest wineries was difficult for many to accept. The worries were groundless as Mentzelopoulos set about restoring its grandeur and to making the best wines possible. When Mentzelopoulos died in 1980 at only 65 years of age, his daughter Corrine took over as the head of Margaux, and in 1983 Paul Pontallier was hired as winery Director. In 2003, after some corporate restructuring, Corrine took over full control. The property is ~ 260ha, with 80ha of red vineyards – 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 2-3% each Cab Franc & Petit Verdot – plus 11 ha of Sauvignon Blanc for their dry white Pavillon Blanc. The spectacular Château was completed in 1812.

*1918 (Bordeaux) - A beautiful spring & very good summer without extreme temperatures. Good rains arrived during an otherwise mostly fine August. Harvest began at the end of September, and the wines were powerful, tannic and often hard when young; but have aged impressively well.*

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## 1937 Château Mouton Rothschild

Despite the market prices for their vineyard's wines equalling that of Château Lafite Rothschild, Château Mouton Rothschild was excluded from First Great Growth status in 1855, an act that Baron Philippe de Rothschild referred to as "the monstrous injustice". It is widely believed that the exception was made because the vineyard had recently been purchased by an Englishman and was no longer in French ownership. But in 1973, Mouton was elevated to "first growth" status after decades of intense lobbying by its powerful and influential owner, the only change in the original 1855 classification (excepting the 1856 addition of Château Cantemerle). This prompted a change of motto: previously, the motto of the wine was (translated) "First, I cannot be. Second, I do not deign to be. Mouton I am.", and it was changed to "First, I am. Second, I used to be. Mouton does not change.". Mouton Rothschild has its famous vineyards in Pauillac, on slopes leading down to the Gironde Estuary. The vineyard is currently made up of Cabernet Sauvignon (77%), Merlot (11%), Cabernet Franc (10%) and Petit Verdot (2%). Their wine is fermented in oak vats (they are one of the last châteaux in the Médoc to still use them) and then matured in new oak casks.

*1937 (Bordeaux) - A very hot year with average rainfall, A vintage that is often described as too tannic and hard, and in many cases this is true, however a number of wines that lately have turned out quite attractive and charming, I have been particularly impressed with Mouton & Latour. It goes to show that the hard tannic wines of Bordeaux often will come around if one only has the patience to wait. (Paulson Rare Wine)*

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# 1964 Château Margaux



There are many interesting facts relating to Château Margaux, such as the infamous accidentally broken bottle of 1787 Margaux that was insured for \$225,000. Or the stories of President Richard Nixon offering run-of-the-mill wine to his guests while servers poured Chateau Margaux into his glass from a bottle wrapped with a towel or napkins to hide the label. At least he had good taste in wine !

*1964 - Bordeaux - A very good Four Star vintage. Heavy, but localised rain in the middle of the harvest, mainly in Pauillac & St-Estephe, caught out some Châteaux. The best 64's were made to the south of the Médoc, and in Graves. (Broadbent)*

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# 1966 Château Petrus (Magnum)



Around the 1850's, the vineyards of Petrus were not even thought of as being worthy of making great wine! It was considered a luncheon claret, not fit for the dinner table. It is now one of the most desirable labels on the planet. The Romans gave the hard button of clay on which the estate's vines now grow the name Petrus, which means stone or rock. A form of this word, Peter, is also the new name Jesus gave to Simon, the leader of his apostles, when he declared, "On this rock I will build my church.". The Latin name for Peter is Petrus, so the wine is more correctly spelt without an acute é. Around 1925, hotel owner, the widow Mme. Edmond Loubat began to buy shares in the estate and continued the acquisition progressively until 1949 when she became the sole owner. It was she who commissioned a new label showing St. Peter holding the keys to heaven and a few years later, a statue of the saint, which takes pride of place on the estate. At the end of WW2, the superb 1945 vintage began "the great age of Petrus", and international reputation began to grow. Mme. Loubat, who also owned Château Latour à Pomerol remained an active vigneronne throughout her life. She is known for her meticulous dedication to detail & quality, and strong determination that her wine deserved to be priced equal to the great crus. In a shrewd stroke of marketing she donated 2 magnums of 1938 Petrus to be served at the 1947 wedding of Princess Elizabeth & Prince Philip. The vines are 95% Merlot & 5% Cab Franc although today the wine is usually pure Merlot. In the 1960s and earlier, Cabernet Franc may have played a much greater role, as much as 20%. The vines are trained low and many are very old, with an average age of 45+ years. There is no 2nd wine, entire production is ~2500 cases.

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Petrus country house



Petrus 2nd year barrel cellar

## 1966 Château Latour



The legendary First Growth estate of Château Latour lies at the very south-eastern tip of the commune of Pauillac in the Médoc region to the north-west of Bordeaux, at its border with Saint-Julien, and only a few hundred metres from the banks of the Gironde estuary. The estate produces just three red wines, the Grand Vin is the focus, plus since 1966 there has been a second wine 'Les Forts de Latour', and a third wine released every year since 1990 simply named "Pauillac". The estate has 78ha of vineyard, of which 47 hectares near the château are termed l'Enclos. The Grand Vin of Château Latour is typically 75% Cabernet Sauvignon & 20% Merlot, with the balance being Petit Verdot & Cabernet Franc, with a typical annual

production of 18,000 cases. The rich and complex history of the estate dates from 1331, when Pons, the Seigneur of Castillon, allowed one of the most prosperous families in the Medoc to create a fortress in the area of Saint-Lambert. That design included the original (now gone) landmark tower that Chateau Latour is famous for today. As for the wine.... It's full bodied, powerful, tannic, pure, and sophisticated in its style. Filled with cassis, earth, truffle, spice & tobacco flavours, Latour require decades to fully develop, the results are usually very special.

*1966 (Bordeaux) — The mild conditions of winter and early spring were followed by fine weather in late spring, producing a good flowering. Most of summer was cool and dry, although July saw some rains. August was mostly dry, but the sun failed to shine. This was compensated for by a return to hot, sunny weather in September. Despite intermittent rain just before the harvest, the crop survived intact, with no rot. Early October saw the start of the harvest take place in perfect conditions. Across the region this was the best and most consistent year between '61 and '70. Pauillac produced classic wines which have lasted well. St Julien: again very consistent and fine. Margaux: some fine long-maturing wines. St Estephe produced some classically long-lived, powerful wines. Graves produced outstanding wines from its best vineyards.. A Four Star Vintage (Decanter)*

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## 1966 Château Haut-Brion

Haut-Brion is the only First Growth not from Haut-Médoc. It's situated just opposite La Mission Haut-Brion in Pessac, falling under the Graves A.C. Documents dated Sept 1426 show that Johanna Faure grew vines at Haut Mont near Haut-Brion. This was for a local chapel that was founded in Bordeaux by the Menuts Monks. The earliest documents that show Haut-Brion was producing wine every year date back to 1521, when the estate was known as Aubrion. This makes Haut-Brion the oldest, continuously working winery and luxury brand in Bordeaux. On April 10, 1663 Samuel Pepys (The Parker of his day) wrote probably the worlds' first professional wine review after tasting the Bordeaux wine at

London's Royal Oak Tavern, "There I drank a sort of French wine called Ho-Bryan that hath a good and most particular taste I never met with." In 1666, the owner of Château Haut-Brion opened a tavern in England for the express purpose of selling & promoting their wines. They were the first Bordeaux chateau producing truly ageworthy wine and did this by introducing longer periods of aging in barrel, as well as being the first to continuously add wine to top off the barrels, reducing the amount of oxygen exposure. They were also among the first estates to take the wine off its lees and do pumpovers. Haut-Brion's distinctive bottle, emulating designs of old decanter models, arrived with the 1958 vintage which was released in 1960. Haut-Brion is famous for its consistency, uniqueness of character, its innovation and of course its excellence. Haut-Brion devotes 48ha to red grape varieties, with 45% Merlot, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot.

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## 1959 Château Léoville Las Cases (Magnum)

The 'super 2nd' (Second Growth) left bank estate of Léoville-Las Cases was once part of a much larger estate until the time of the French Revolution when a portion of this estate was separated into what is today Château Léoville-Barton. In 1840, the estate was again divided and land that would eventually become Château Léoville-Poyferré was split off. Today the vineyard area in total extends 97 hectares planted with 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. The vineyard underwent major replanting during the 1950s, and today the vines average 30 years of age. Léoville-Las Cases produces two wines, its grand vin, and a second wine called Clos du Marquis in production since 1902. Since the mid 20th century the Delon family have been owners of this estate, also owners of châteaux Potensac and Nénin.

*1959 - Médoc - The first of the modern day years to be designated 'vintage of the century' by the négociants and journalists. The wines are among the most massive and richest ever made in Bordeaux, often compared to 45, 47, 49 and more recently 82 and 89.*

*The 1959's have evolved at a glacial pace and display the effects of a classic hot, dry year, with just enough rain to keep the vineyards from being stressed. Their colours have remained impressively opaque and dark, notable in comparison to the more brown and orange displayed in many aged 1961's. The wines are full bodied, high in alcohol and opulent, with lower acidity and high degrees of tannins and extract. The vintage was considered to be drinkable on release by consumers in the early 60's, while 1961, due to its concentrated, tannic style, was laid down in cellars as collectors knew those wines required patience. That's why 1961 is easier to find, while 1959 Bordeaux remains elusive.*

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## 1929 Château Filhot, Sauternes

Romain de Filhot, whom the property was named after, completed construction of the chateau in 1709. The chateau and grounds of Chateau Filhot are today among the most beautiful and attractive sites in all of Bordeaux. With less than 20% of their land cultivated to vines, the remainder is devoted to forests, parkland & lakes.

Following the French revolution, Chateau Filhot was managed by Lur-Saluces family, best known for owning Chateau d'Yquem & de Fargues. They inherited the vineyard & winery from Josephine de Filhot. Following the 1855 classification, the wines were sold under the name of Chateau Sauternes but by 1901, the estate once again began selling their wine as Chateau Filhot. In 1974, Count Henri de Vaucelles took over managing the property. During the 1980's, Chateau Filhot was one of the few Sauternes estates to experiment with making an Ice Wine, Vin de Grande Gelee. In 1990, Chateau Filhot added a high end cuvee to their wines, Filhot Creme de Tete. Today, his son Gabriel de Vaucelles is in charge of managing Chateau Filhot and is a direct descendant of Romain de Filhot, making Chateau Filhot one of the few remaining Bordeaux vineyards that is still in the hands of the same family that owned the estate before the French Revolution.

Chateau Filhot is planted to 60% Semillon, 36% Sauvignon Blanc and 4% Muscadelle. The terroir is gravel, clay, sand and limestone soils with a southwest exposure.

*1929 - Sauternes - "Magnificent. The finest Sauternes vintage between 1921 & 1937. As in these other excellent vintages, the wine were deep in colour" (Broadbent)*

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*Thank You for attending this RareWineDinners event, we look forward to seeing you again.*