



# RARE WINE DINNERS

*El provenientia suprema*

Est. 2009



## *Commanderie de Bordeaux Dinner*

### *Bentley Restaurant*

### *10th October 2023*





## 1996 Ch. Laville Haut-Brion Blanc, Graves

Laville Haut-Brion is arguably the greatest dry white wine in Bordeaux. No more than 1,000 cases per year are produced from a tiny 3.7 hectare vineyard with an average vine age of over 50 years. It is typically a blend of around 79% Sémillon and 21% Sauvignon Blanc - the grapes are barrel-fermented and the wine is matured in 100% new oak barriques for 15-18 months before being bottled. Aromatically complex on the nose and almost lusciously rich on the palate, with strong mineral overtones and a long finish, the wine demands extended cellaring and should rarely be approached before its 10th birthday.

Laville Haut Brion was originally acquired in 1611 by Marie de Laville and the estate has kept Mme Laville's name throughout the centuries (until 2010). The decision to plant white grape varieties was made in 1923 due to the clay and gravel in the vineyard being more suitable for white wines. Starting with the 2009 vintage, the wine is now labelled Château La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc.

*1996 (Bordeaux) - A mild spring, then July was cool, but soon warmed up, although Graves was troubled by August rains. Dry weather returned in late August, but temperatures were moderate, conserving acidity as well as helping the ripening process. Many outstanding whites from Graves, with firm acidity. A Five Star Vintage (Decanter)*

Notes : \_\_\_\_\_



## 1999 Ch. Laville Haut-Brion Blanc

*1999 (Bordeaux) - Careful vineyard practices & selection in the vineyard, bunches were ripe and reasonably healthy. White Graves were picked at high sugar levels and are very attractive. A Four Star Vintage (Decanter)*

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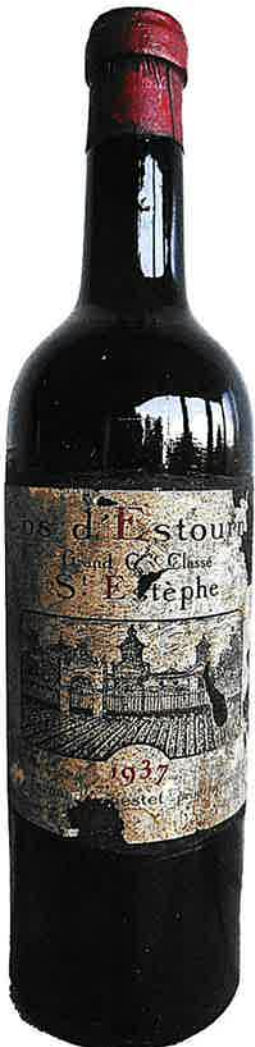
## 1937 Château Cos d'Estournel, St Estèphe

Château Cos d'Estournel is named after its 19th century owner, Louis-Gaspard d'Estournel, and it was he who built the unusual eastern styled building that is now a landmark for many tourists in the Médoc. It's a leading 2ème Cru Classé estate in St-Estèphe, located in the south of the appellation on the border with Pauillac and its vineyards are superbly sited on a south-facing gravel ridge with a high clay content, just north of Lafite. Typically a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot and 2% Cabernet Franc, the relatively high Merlot content is of note, these are full-bodied, dark, tannic wines when young which develop a complexity & intensity that can rival many top growths from Pauillac.



*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 have lately turned out quite attractive and charming. It goes to show that the hard tannic wines of Bordeaux will often come around if one only has the patience to wait. (Paulson Rare Wine)*

Notes : \_\_\_\_\_





## 1969 Ch. Canon la Gaffeliere, St Émilion

Château Canon la Gaffeliere started out life in the 19th century with two separate names, Canon Boitard and La Gaffeliere-Boitard. In time this double naming was made easier for consumers by combining the names into what it is now.

The move to sustainable farming and a less 'modern' style of Bordeaux was adopted around 2000 by Stephan von Neipperg who had been managing the estate since 1985. Now the vineyards are farmed using organic methods and only organic compost from their own making, naturally low in nitrogen is used, and even then, only ever in tiny amounts. In 2014, Chateau Canon la Gaffeliere was certified as being 100% organic.

*1969 was not a great year in Bordeaux. But it did mark the final year for negociants to buy "sur souche." While most negociants and chateaux had stopped buying and selling sur souche, after their poorly received gamble with the 1961 harvest, a few deals were still being cut using that system of dealmaking. Sur souche is the practice of selling the grapes off the vine, before the harvest takes place, let alone prior to the start of the vinification. This year also coincided with the changes in the St. Emilion AOC law stating all chateau from that point forward, must bottle their wine. The same rule became AOC law in the Medoc as well as in the rest of Bordeaux, only a few years later.*

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## 1975 Château Cheval Blanc, St Émilion

Archives show that vines have been grown at Cheval Blanc at least as far back as the 15th century. Formerly known as vin de Figeac, the wine was first sold under the name Cheval Blanc in 1852. The same cellarmaster was in charge at Cheval Blanc from 1943 to 1988 – Gaston Vaissière poured his talent, energy, and enthusiasm into making the most of a terroir he considered "magical". Cheval Blanc obtained the highest possible distinction in the first classification of Saint-Émilion wines in 1954: Premier Grand Cru Classé "A". This exalted rank was confirmed in every classification in each subsequent decade and Cheval Blanc became a member of the exclusive "Club of 9" comprising the first growths of Bordeaux. Their modern winemaking facility opened in 2011 (pictured) and is a state of the art affair, with 52 concrete vats ranging in size, each one devoted to grapes from a different plot to aid in the blending process.



*1975 came after a series of difficult vintages, including the heavy rains during the 1974 harvest. Having been put off by these challenges, many estates picked too early in 1975, which led to austere wines that did not develop well in bottle. However, Cheval Blanc's early-maturing microclimate, & the decision to wait for the Cabernet Franc grapes to ripen fully, resulted one of the most beautiful wines produced in Bordeaux that year. The bouquet features complex aromas of Virginia tobacco, candied fruit, dried banana, & candied orange that blend elegantly with roasted coffee notes. It is very tannic, but not at all dry. Intensely spicy and concentrated, it is rich, powerful, and aromatic, with hints of cinnamon and gingerbread, as well as chocolate and truffle. A long, rich aftertaste (with overtones of coriander that one finds in certain great vintages of Cheval Blanc) completes this highly exceptional wine. 1975 Cheval-Blanc is a great success, combining finesse & sumptuousness. (Cheval Blanc - Winemakers notes)*

Notes : \_\_\_\_\_



## 1950 Château La Fleur-Pétrus, Pomerol

Across the road from Pétrus and adjacent to Lafleur sits one of the best placed châteaux in Pomerol. La Fleur-Pétrus is so named because of its proximity to two great neighbours and is part of the Moueix stable, who own Trotanoy and Hosanna among others in Pomerol, and several in St-Émilion. It was acquired by the Moueix family in 1950 and although it had a rocky start with a severe frost decimating the vineyards, several decades of expansion, replanting and investment have paid dividends with a run of superb vintages. La Fleur-Pétrus absorbed a parcel of vines from Château Le Gay in the early 1990s, bringing its total area to just shy of 19 hectares, the majority of which is Merlot with a little Cabernet Franc & Petit Verdot planted on its iron-rich, clay and gravel soils.

*1950 (Bordeaux) - A hot, dry summer. June was perfect with warm days that reached up to 38 degrees, cool nights and no rain. July and August were also close to perfect with little rain and average temps around 22C spiking up as high as 33C. September was cooler. Everything was in place for a strong 1950 Bordeaux vintage, until the rains came during harvest, affecting some left bank producers who had delayed their picking. Those conditions created a large harvest for most vintners. As a comparison, 1950 Bordeaux yielded twice as much fruit as was produced the year before. Quality was mostly very high and the resulting wines, whilst very rare today, have stood the test of time with impressive resilience.*

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## 1962 Château Canon, Saint-Émilion

Originally a small vineyard planted around the Church of St-Martin by Jean Biès in the early 18th Century, the estate was named Clos St-Martin, sold in 1760 to Jacques Kanon, probably the source of the name Canon. A true clos, the original 12 hectare vineyard was encircled by a wall, which Kanon expanded by acquiring seven small surrounding vineyards.

He sold it on in 1770 with great profit to Raymond Fontémoing, a leading Libournais négociant. Still named Clos St-Martin, the name was not altered until 1853, when the modern name was taken. Purchased by André Fournier in 1919, the estate remained in the Fournier family with success until vine disease problems arose in the early 1990s, and it was sold on to the Wertheimer family in 1996.

*1962 (Bordeaux) - Conditions were cold and rainy from winter onwards right through to the end of May. June's good weather developed into an extremely hot summer, although a reasonable degree of rainfall prevented drought from developing. Good weather continued throughout the late harvest, which began on 9 October.*

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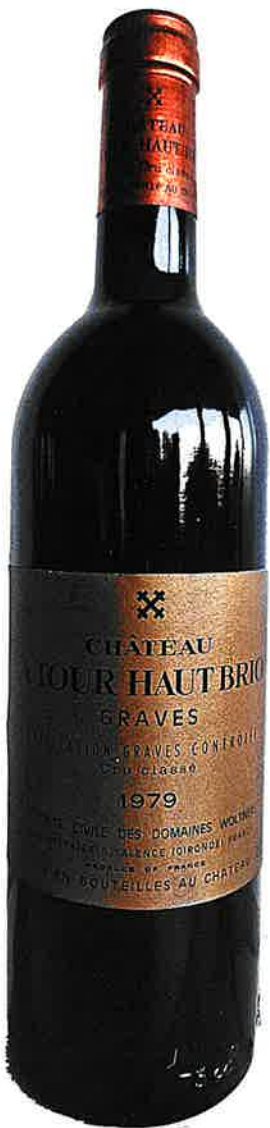
## 1966 Château Lynch Bages, Pauillac

Lynch Bages has a long history in Bordeaux and takes its name from the local area where the chateau is located in Bages. In 1749, vineyard owner Drouillard bequeathed the estate to his daughter, Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Lynch. This is how the estate came to belong to the Lynch family, where it remained for seventy-five years and inspired the name Lynch Bages. However, when the estate was Classified as a 5th Growth in the 1855 Classification of the Medoc, the wines were selling under the name of Chateau Jurine Bages. That is because the property was owned at the time by a Swiss wine merchant, Sebastien Jurine. In 1862, the property was sold to the Cayrou brothers who restored the estate's name to Chateau Lynch Bages in honour of the Lynch family.

*1966 (Bordeaux) — Most of summer was cool & dry, although July saw some rains. August was mostly dry, but saw little sun. This was compensated for by a return to sunny, hot weather in Sept, then October saw the start of the harvest take place in perfect conditions. Across the region this was the best & most consistent year between '61 and '70. Pauillac produced classic wines which have lasted well. A Four Star Vintage.*

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## 1979 Château La Tour Haut-Brion, Graves

Located in the Pessac-Léognan appellation within Graves, the vineyards of La Tour Haut-Brion were planted for the first time in the 16th century by the Rostaing family. When the wines of the Graves appellation were classified in 1959, Château La Tour Haut-Brion was the smallest of all the classed growths of red Graves, before the final 2005 vintage, when its vineyards were merged into the neighbouring estate, Château La Mission Haut-Brion, also owned by Domaine Clarence Dillon. During the Woltner ownership (1925-1982), this wine was known for a very particular style, with very firm and powerful tannins, which made it difficult to appreciate when young, but conferred remarkable aging potential. When the Dillon family acquired the property in 1983, the style immediately changed & La Tour Haut-Brion became more accessible, more likable as a young wine. A significant proportion of Cabernet Franc in most vintages gives this wine impressive structure. The unique characteristics of its terroir are consistently in evidence, with typical empyreumatic notes (Havana cigar box, chocolate, roasted coffee, cedar etc.).

*1979 - A fairly wet season led to slow ripening conditions, giving less tannins but good quality fruit overall. A good vintage with an abundant harvest. A 4 Star Vintage (Decanter).*

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## 1945 Château Latour, Pauillac

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. In 1331, 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 Château Latour is famous for today. The tower no longer exists, but around 1620 a round tower named La Tour de Saint-Lambert was built on the estate



(pictured). The name of the winery is derived from this,

but the old tower is depicted on the label. Cassis, earth, truffle, spice & tobacco flavours, Latour require decades to mature, the results are usually very special.

*1945 Bordeaux wine deserves its well earned fame. Of course, the fact that it's the victory vintage only adds to its legendary status. The deep, winter freeze helped reduce yields naturally which added immense concentration and intensity to the resulting wines. Growing conditions were close to perfect from start to finish. The wines began life with massive levels of tannin and took decades to develop. Due to the high tannin levels many of the wines still show well today.*

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## 1975 Château Latour, Pauillac (en Magnum)

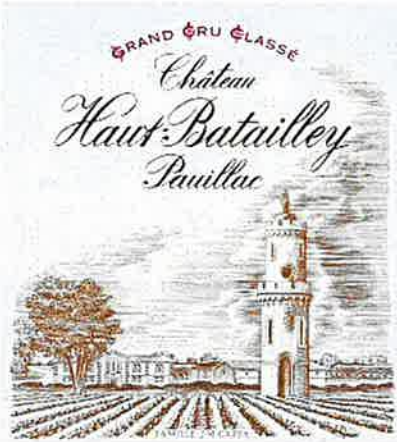
*1975 (Bordeaux) - Overall, the harvest was small but intense, producing wines with high tannins that were sometimes overbearing in relation to the fruit. The most harmonious wines tended to be from the Left Bank, particularly Pauillac, Saint-Julien and Margaux.*

Notes : \_\_\_\_\_



## 1967 Château Haut-Batailley, Pauillac (en Magnum)

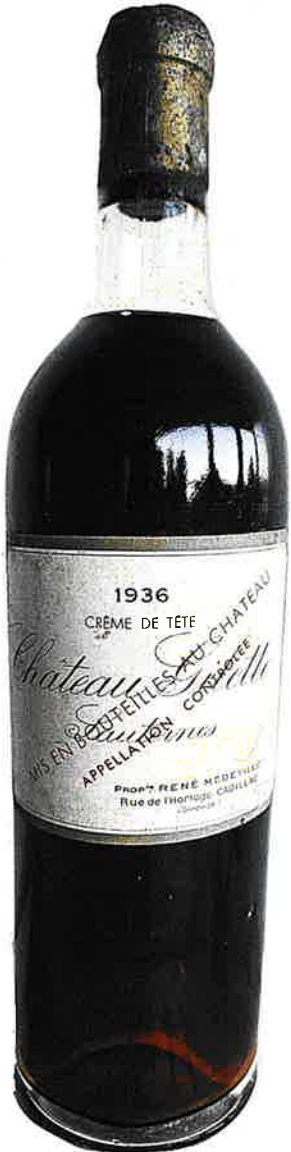
Historically this estate was part of Château Batailley until its purchase by the brothers François and Marcel Borie in 1932, and subsequent division into two properties in 1942, in order to prevent inheritance difficulties. The smaller part which did not include the Batailley château became the property of François Borie who added to its vineyards with land acquisitions from Château Duhart-Milon while also running Château Ducru-Beaucaillou. Following his death in 1953, the property passed on to his daughter Françoise de Brest-Borie, while being administered by her brother & Ducru-Beaucaillou owner Jean-Eugène Borie. In 2017, the Cazes family of Château Lynch-Bages acquired the Château Haut-Batailley estate.



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## 1936 Château Gilette Crème de Tête, Sauternes

With the outbreak of World War II, Réne Médeville joined the French army, leaving a number of vintages from the 1930's unbottled and stored in concrete tanks. Returning after the war he found them fresh and youthful in aspect and aroma, the wines preserved from oxidisation by the form of maturation. He bottled the 1934 which became the first vintage of the new style Château Gilette. The vineyard forms a walled-in clos in the centre of the village of Preignac. This wall helps harbour moisture, which can be beneficial for botrytis in dry years, but can sometimes be a handicap in wetter years too. Like all top Sauternes, this is a vin de vendage, and this system of selective picking is as important here as anywhere else. Réne initially made a number of different styles of Château Gilette : Demi-Sec, Demi-Doux, Doux, and the top of the line Crème de Tête. The latter has been the unique offering since 1963 but is not made every year. The property has been in the Médeville family hands since 1710 and is currently run by Réne's grand-daughter Julie Gonet-Médeville and her husband Xavier. The Gonet-Médeville enterprise owns several other estates across Bordeaux, Sauternes & Champagne. The vineyards are planted to 90% Semillon, 9% Sauvignon Blanc and 1% Muscadelle. About 5,000 bottles are produced annually. The estate is an anomaly, notes Robert Parker Jr., because of its practice of not releasing wine for 15-25 years. Parker notes that "Gilette has a special place because of its high quality and remarkable longevity."



Notes : \_\_\_\_\_



Miroir d'eau (Water Mirror), Place de la Bourse, Bordeaux