

Wine Spectator

The World's Richest Vintage: Tasting Report: 2005 Bordeaux

By James Suckling

From Wine Spectator magazine, March 31, 2008 issue

The 2005 vintage in Bordeaux will go down in the history books alongside other great modern classics for the region, including 2003, 2000, 1995, 1990, 1989 and 1982. Yet there has not been a vintage since 1989 in which the area's reds, whites and sweeties have all been of such high quality. This may be why many producers compare 2005 to that earlier year, which I rate 98 points on the Wine Spectator 100-point scale.

But I think 2005 is actually superior to 1989. The wines are not only better made, they were better born. They were produced in one of the best periods in the history of Bordeaux winemaking; even compared with only a few years ago, wine producers are paying closer attention to just about every aspect of viticulture and enology.

Is 2005, though, better than the postmodern classic 2000? On the Right Bank (centered around St.-Emilion and Pomerol), the answer is yes. I rate 2005 99 points for this region (compared with 97 points for 2000), thanks largely to the mind-blowing quality in Pomerol. On the Left Bank, which includes the Médoc and Pessac-Léognan, not quite. I give 2005 98 points in this region (compared with 99 points for 2000) because some of the big names in the Médoc underperformed slightly. Yet the extraordinary success of 2005 is underscored by the total number of wines that earned perfect 100-point scores—eight overall, with seven reds and one dry white—the most I've ever given in a tasting of young Bordeaux.

The 2005 reds show complex aromas of ripe fruits, tobacco and minerals, intensely flavored palates, and seamless textures of powerful yet ultrafine tannins and fresh acidity. They are in total harmony in their structure as young clarets. The dry and sweet whites are equally impressive, with the '05 Sauternes bridging the gap between the structured 2001s and the superripe 2003s.

With all the interest over 2005 in terms of style and quality, the vintage should be a benchmark for a very long time. The fact that many of its wines sold at record-breaking prices only adds to the notoriety. Try some and see what the excitement is about.

CHÂTEAU LE JURAT

St.-Emilion 2005

89

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