

## 2016 Bordeaux Barrel Tasting: Top-Scoring Reds

Tasting notes and scores for 43 red Bordeaux barrel samples that showed best

Editor's note: Wine Spectator senior editor James Molesworth is in Bordeaux to taste the 2016 vintage from barrel to determine the quality and character of the young wines, in order to inform wine lovers who may be considering buying them en primeur, or as futures. New notes will be posted regularly throughout the tastings.

While spending a few weeks in the region, Molesworth visits numerous châteaux, interviews many vintners and evaluates hundreds of wines. These visits are crucial to understanding the character and quality of the vintage. However, all official wine ratings come from our own independent blind tastings. Châteaux that decline to submit samples to these blind tastings are not reviewed for this report. This list contains the highest-rated Bordeaux reds reviewed in his latest tastings.

As these are unfinished wines, they are scored in 4-point ranges (e.g., 93–96 points) to indicate that the ratings are still preliminary. When the wines are released in bottle, they will be reviewed with their peers in blind tastings and given a final score.

### Top 2016 Bordeaux Reds

#### CHÂTEAU DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU St.-Julien 2016 Score: 97-100

Offers a scintillating display of roasted apple wood, incense and warm ganache before the core of cassis, plum preserves and raspberry reduction starts to step forward. The finish, loaded with grip but remarkably polished, pulls everything together. A huge, undeniable wine, overt in style.—J.M.

#### CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES St.-Julien 2016 Score: 97-100

A brick house, with layers of cold charcoal, smoldering tobacco, warm cassis, dark plum and blueberry reduction flavors all working seamlessly together. The charcoal edge underscores the entire finish, which is focused and ridiculously long.—J.M.

#### LA MONDOTTE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 97-100

This is a towering display of purity, with unadulterated cassis and raspberry fruit coursing along live-wire acidity while light chalk, anise and black tea notes fill in. Has serious grip, but it's buried in that jaw-dropping core of fruit. And this has minerality to burn. A stunner.—J.M.

#### CHÂTEAU PAVIE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 97-100

This is a head-turner, with intense raspberry, cassis and boysenberry reduction notes pumping along, inlaid with a graphite edge and backed by waves of roasted apple wood, anise and fruitcake. Yet as large-scale as this is, it's still harnessed by a fine, chalky minerality through the finish. "Wow" wine.—J.M.

#### CLOS FOURTET St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 96-99

Gorgeous from the get-go, with plum sauce, cassis and violet notes streaming through, showing ample richness yet relying more on cut, while anise, black tea and chalky mineral flavors persist on the finish. A beauty in the making.—J.M.

#### CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE BARTON St.-Julien 2016 Score: 96-99

This packs some serious punch and drive, with a terrific core of blueberry, açai and plum reduction notes, backed by waves of graphite and roasted apple wood. Has the pleasantly chewy feel typical of St.-Julien, along with an extra-racy graphite edge.—J.M.

#### CHÂTEAU LYNCH BAGES Pauillac 2016 Score: 96-99

This flashes some sporty flavors of ripe cassis, plum and blackberry compote, but quickly pulls everything together with the terrific graphite spine. Alluring tobacco and anise notes line the finish. Delivers fruit, power and cut. A great showing.—J.M.

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**SOURCE :** Wine Spectator

**CATEGORIE :** On parle de vous

**TAGS :** beausejour, berliquet, larcis ducasse, pavier macquin, Primeurs 2

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**CHÂTEAU PICHON BARON Pauillac 2016 Score: 96-99**

Has the pure, fresh, racy feel of the vintage, which is even more admirable considering the depth of the red currant, plum and cherry preserve flavors at the core and the power of the structure on the back end, pulling in accents of graphite and loam. A thumper of a Pauillac.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU TROTANOY Pomerol 2016 Score: 96-99**

This is loaded for the long haul, with lots of loam- and graphite-edged grip, and it's a bit backward still. But the core of fruit is prodigious, with layers of warm fig, blackberry confiture and plum sauce flavors still sorting themselves out. The finish ripples with muscle and energy.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU VALANDRAUD St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 96-99**

This has a display of drop-dead gorgeous raspberry, boysenberry and blackberry confiture flavors unfurling from its core, backed by flamboyant anise and black tea notes. It's rich, polished and seriously long. And then there's a light twinge of chalky finesse at the very, very end to keep it grounded.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU BÉLAIR-MONANGE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 95-98**

This is about as pure a beam of unadulterated cassis and cherry sauce as you can get, beautifully silky in feel and carrying through a very long, refined finish. The chalky echo is there, but it's really tucked away for now. Lifting incense hint in the background too.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU CANON-LA GAFFELIÈRE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 95-98**

This pulls a lot of red and black currant, fig and boysenberry pâte de fruit notes together, wraps them with a brambly thread and then drives them through an anise- and apple wood-edged finish. It's all tightly wound, but it's all there for the long haul. Really, really solid.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU CANON St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 95-98**

Vivacious and integrated already, with plum, raspberry and cassis notes matched by a bright floral hint and a flash of rooibos tea. Refined minerality through the finish. Ample depth, but it is defined by its purity and drive.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU FIGEAC St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 95-98**

Tight and backward, with a wall of cocoa and loam out front, but the core of cassis and blackberry fruit is prodigious, and the mix of charcoal, tobacco and warm paving stone notes making up the finish cuts a seriously wide swath. This needs to be tamed by its élevage though.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR-PÉTRUS Pomerol 2016 Score: 95-98**

This has seamless layers of cassis, plum sauce and raspberry reduction notes carried by remarkably velvety structure through a long, graphite-fueled finish. The minerality is there, buried for now. The fruit is gorgeous.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ St.-Julien 2016 Score: 95-98**

The deep well of gorgeous cassis, blueberry paste and blackberry puree flavors will carry this for the long haul. Shows a terrific graphite underpinning and a flash of cold charcoal. This is a big one.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU PICHON LONGUEVILLE LALANDE Pauillac 2016 Score: 95-98**

Light savory and tobacco notes peek out from the core, but a ball of cassis and blackberry fruit is still coiled up with the strong iron spine. This is to be expected. Very pure, with a long finish. Risk-free cellaring.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE Pessac-Léognan 2016 Score: 95-98**

Seductively fleshy and creamy in feel, with alluring dark plum and fig notes laced with singed bay, black tea and dark earth hints. The broad finish has the grip and cut for definition. A beautiful wine in the making.—J.M.

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**CHÂTEAU BEAUSÉJOUR DUFFAU-LAGAROSSE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 94-97**

On the exotic side, with loganberry, acai and crushed plum notes forming the core, laced with singed mesquite and alder flavors and backed by a long, juicy, dark-profiled finish.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU BRANAIRE-DUCRU St.-Julien 2016 Score: 94-97**

A fresh bay leaf note leads off, followed quickly by pure, enticing layers of cassis, blackberry and black cherry fruit that emerge steadily through the long finish. Offers lovely mouthfeel and purity. A very pretty expression of St.-Julien.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU CALON-SÉGUR St.-Estèphe 2016 Score: 94-97**

This sports a dark fruit core, a mouthwatering iron edge and a long, tobacco-accented finish. The broad and racy feel gives this a distinctive profile. This should put on some weight.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU CLINET Pomerol 2016 Score: 94-97**

Dark in profile, with plum, blackberry and black currant fruit melded together, while wood spice and bramble hints run along the edges. Plenty of depth and length here, with lively tobacco and tar notes on the finish. This fleshes out with air too. Impressive, in the richer style.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU L'ÉGLISE CLINET Pomerol 2016 Score: 94-97**

A flash of spearmint gives this a fresh feel, while the core of raspberry and boysenberry fruit follows up quickly, carried by lively acidity. The long, fruitcake-filled finish keeps a sense of elegance. Very enticing.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU GRAND-PUY-LACOSTE Pauillac 2016 Score: 94-97**

Ripe, but sleek and very focused, featuring racy iron and savory notes coursing alongside the core of black currant and black cherry fruit. The fresh finish keeps everything in lockstep. Well-built.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LARCIS DUCASSE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 94-97**

This is really flattering, offering crushed raspberry, boysenberry and plum fruit stitched with dried anise, bramble and chalky threads. Long, elegant, spice-infused finish.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU PAPE CLÉMENT Pessac-Léognan 2016 Score: 94-97**

Intense, with vivacious cassis, blueberry and boysenberry confiture notes, while tar, anise and warm fruitcake flavors pulse underneath. Offers seriously flashy toast at the end, but has the density to soak it up. A big wine.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU PAVIE MACQUIN St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 94-97**

Juicy and alluring, with dark fig, cherry and currant fruit that has melded together, while lively minerality and anise notes course underneath. The long, refined finish has a gorgeous yin-yang between cashmere and chalky threads.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU TROPLONG MONDOT St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 94-97**

Beautifully pure and expressive, with creamy-textured cassis, raspberry and boysenberry puree notes streaming through, gilded by a violet note and backed by refined minerality on the finish. There's a backdrop of alluring spice-infused toast, but the fruit takes center stage here.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU BEYCHEVELLE St.-Julien 2016 Score: 93-96**

A textbook St.-Julien in the making, with crushed plum and warm cassis notes inlaid with anise and graphite accents. The muscular, driven finish is just a touch chewy in feel but gets soaked up quickly on the finish by the pure fruit. Really solid.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LES CARMES HAUT-BRION Pessac-Léognan 2016 Score: 93-96**

This has the grippy, licorice-accented edge typical of the AOC, along with sappy kirsch and cherry paste flavors. Good energy supplies lift

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and cut through the finish, putting this half a step ahead of the pack.—J.M.

**DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER Pessac-Léognan 2016 Score: 93-96**

Intense raspberry and boysenberry fruit drives along, flecked with anise hints and scored with roasted apple wood details. A touch toothy on the finish, with a loamy note, but the fruit takes an encore, which is a great sign for the future.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU CLERC MILON Pauillac 2016 Score: 93-96**

Very fresh in feel, with bright cassis and cherry fruit racing along an iron edge. Shows a good sleek feel through the finish and a light tug of earth at the very end. A vivacious and delicious wine in the making.—J.M.

**CLOS DU MARQUIS St.-Julien 2016 Score: 93-96**

This is stacked, with dark plum, cassis and blueberry reduction notes forming the core. The serious spine of graphite and tar is thoroughly embedded, so the finish is long and polished. A beauty.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LA CONSEILLANTE Pomerol 2016 Score: 93-96**

Bright raspberry and blackberry confiture flavors fill out nicely as they move along, followed by a well-buried graphite edge and a flash of cocoa at the very end. Has a vivid display of fruit and the buried spine to back it up.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU GLORIA St.-Julien 2016 Score: 93-96**

Shows a flash of mint before giving way to a torrent of blueberry, blackberry and cassis flavors, pushed by energetic acidity and juicy, brambly grip. Plum cake and anise line the finish, along with a flash of tobacco. Lots going on here.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU HOSANNA Pomerol 2016 Score: 93-96**

Delightfully ripe and pure, with cassis, cherry puree and creamed raspberry notes gliding through, carried by a polished structure and ending with a floral hint. Remarkably integrated already.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LANGOA BARTON St.-Julien 2016 Score: 93-96**

The fresh blueberry, cherry and black currant flavors give this a wide range, while racy graphite and a mouthwatering anise streak drive the finish. The fruit is so enticing that you lose track of how solidly built this is through the finish.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU LATOUR À POMEROL Pomerol 2016 Score: 93-96**

Rich, polished and suave, this lets its plum and cassis fruit flow liberally, while keeping a graphite edge in reserve on the finish. Gorgeous feel, with fruit to burn. And it will burn for a while, because the acidity is well-embedded and the ample tannins are supple and long.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU MONBOUSQUET St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 93-96**

This is packed with fig, boysenberry and raspberry fruit flavors that keep cascading over one another while enticing anise and plum cake notes fill in throughout. Gorgeous mouthfeel, with a creamy, rounded edge, yet never giving up a generally racy and focused feel.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU PAVIE-DECESSE St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 93-96**

Vibrant raspberry, boysenberry and plum notes stream along, flecked with anise and floral notes and carried by a wonderfully racy and well-embedded chalky spine. Fruit-driven, but grounded in terroir.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU PEBY FAUGÈRES St.-Emilion 2016 Score: 93-96**

Vivid, with racy acidity from the start that allows the copious raspberry and plum confiture flavors to pump along with energy. Very enticing spice treatment on the finish. Has a lavish edge, but its energy offsets that nicely.—J.M.

**CHÂTEAU TALBOT St.-Julien 2016 Score: 93-96**

Pure, with a core of cassis and blueberry fruit streaming through, carried by ample yet embedded graphite-edged grip. Keeps a fresh feel through the finish. Lovely.—J.M.

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CHÂTEAU LA VIOLETTE Pomerol 2016 Score: 93-96

Warm and inviting, delivering plum and blackberry compote notes infused with anise and backed by a smoldering alder hint. Suave, exotic juice.—J.M.