



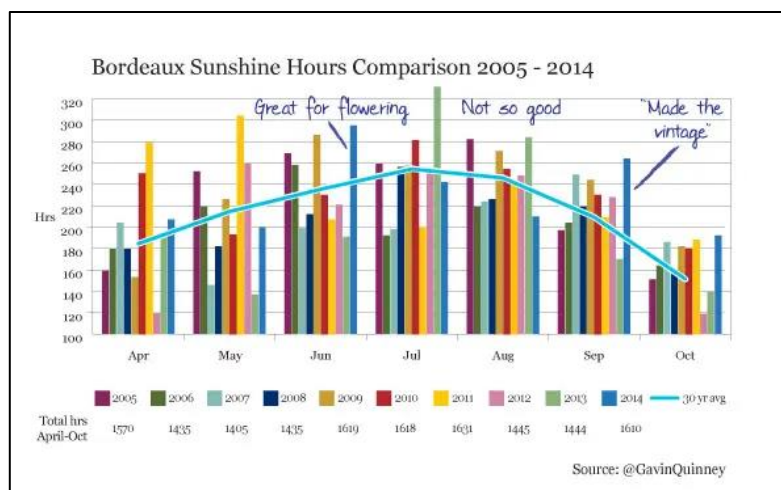
Bordeaux 2014 10-years on

This was our inaugural tasting of a newly launched series of 6-8 blind tastings per year ([Link](#)) where we announce the date and theme a few months in advance and invite wine lovers to bring a bottle to the theme. If someone hasn't got a bottle, we can provide one from our cellars. The goal is to discover, learn, discuss and spend a great time. We keep it deliberate, but informal. Our current event location is Smith & de Luma ([Link](#)), which provides a great atmosphere with its classical Tudor style deco.



©Smith and de Luma ([Link](#))

2014 ([Link](#)) is a typical second tier vintage in Bordeaux. Second tier, without any inflated marketing language, but also with no false modesty means: good, but not great. Vintages like 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012 are comparable. 2014 is clearly behind the great ones like 2005, 2009, 2010, 2016, 2019, but ahead of the third tier vintages like 2002, 2003, 2007 and of course the tail lights 2011, 2013. July/August in 2014 was too cold and wet for a great vintage but the Indian summer saved the day (see chart below). 2014s are more slender wines with medium tannins, refreshing acidity and good aromatics. Actually, a very attractive value proposition for something to drink earlier while you wait for the big years to come around.



Overall the 2014 Bordeaux vintage showed true to the vintage reputation. Medium bodied, fresh, very drinkable. No extraordinary peaks, but consistently good. The mid-tier wines and the ones with more Merlot are ready to drink. The big names from the Northern Medoc need another 5+ years in bottle.

Everytime I attend a Bordeaux horizontal I come to the conclusion that the the 50 or so big names in Bordeaux who are economically well off and cash rich, should shift to a Champagne like model where they keep their grand vins in their cellars for 10 years before releasing. This would really help the consumer. It is impossible to drink aged Bordeaux in a restaurant today. Their wine lists are full of 2015 to 2020 when it should be 2000-2009. Château Latour is the only one that does it, rightfully so, their wine is undrinkable in its youth and so are many classic Bordeaux. It is bad marketing when every new to Bordeaux consumer only drinks young - I call them unfinished - Bordeaux and therefore concludes this wine category is overrated. I agree with them, young Bordeaux are uninteresting, but aged Bordeaux from a great vintage are far ahead of almost any other wine, in my book only Burgundy and Hermitage can compete. It took me a 1982 horizontal, back to 1999, to convert me from a New World to an old World wine drinker. So, after 25+ years of wine experience, I can give this one tip to red wine drinkers. Make sure you have Bordeaux in you cellar and make sure not to touch them before they are at least 15 years old, top names in top vintages even 20.



The tasting

The wines were served blind after the bottles were either opened at least three hours before the event or even double decanted very carefully either in the afternoon or two hours before the tasting started. The event took place on the 22nd of February 2024.

Apéritif Wines

Château Lynch-Bages, Blanc de Lynch-Bages 2014

Unfortunately oxidized, not rated.

Château de Fieuzal Blanc 2014, Pessac-Léognan

After an oxidized 2014 Lynch Bages white, this wine puzzled as well. Not oxidative but little energy let and with a mute nose, some tertiary funk intermixed with stone fruit, aromatically uninteresting. **16.5/20** (87/100).

Château Malartic-Lagravière Blanc 2020, Pessac-Léognan

Here we go. Expressive nose, fresh lively with a touch of grass, lemon nose, mineral and maritime notes. Really nice. Good complexity, different profile than the New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs, more citrus and herbs, less grassy notes. On the palate quite light, cannot fully follow up from the great nose. Very good nevertheless. Compared to the two 2014 whites, it confirms that most white Bordeaux is to be consumed in the first five years after release. **17.75/20** (92/100).



FLIGHT 1

Château Montrose 2014, Saint-Estèphe

Discrete nose, needed swirling to express itself. Aromas of pine, pencil shavings, earthy elements, easy to identify as Northern Medoc. On the palate quite light, fine tannins. Surprisingly drinkable. Not a grand but a pleasant Montrose. **17.75/20** (92/100), Group Rank 6/15.

Château Rauzan-Ségla 2014, Margaux

The nose is dominated by cassis with still some oak to work through. Modern wine making, polished tannins, good mid mouth presence and finish. Still early in its drinking window. I liked this quite a bit more than the group. **17.75/20** (92/100), Group Rank 14/15.



Château Lynch-Bages 2014, Pauillac

Dark and brooding, earthy notes with dark fruit, with a touch of bell pepper. Clearly closed and not wanting to show anything. Medium+ palate, on the rustic side. Hard to assess today, definitely a wine to wait till 2030. **17-17.5/20** (89-91/100), Group Rank 12/15.

FLIGHT 2

Château Palmer 2014, Margaux

Ripe and expressive nose. Coffee, toast, dark fruit, underbrush. Generous palate, round lots of stuffing, but holding back and tannins need further integration. Overall, it felt still very young. Give it time till 2030. **18.25/20** (94/100), Group Rank 6/15.

Château Ducru-Beaucaillou 2014, Saint-Julien

Complex nose of forest floor; sweet spices, oak, dark fruit, complex. Succulent palate, elegant with very good aromatic complexity. Textbook Medoc. My personal WOTN (Wine of the Night) and also the group winner. **18.5/20** (95/100), Group Rank 1/15.



Château Léoville-Barton 2014, Saint-Julien

Hmm, the nose had a lot of prunes here, some farmyard funk, rum pot. Despite the ripeness the palate was a little thin with a bitter finish. The components felt disjointed to me. Maybe more bottle time will help. Not my cup of tea but the group liked it more. **17/20** (88/100). Group Rank 4/15.



FLIGHT 3

Clos Manou 2014, Médoc

A solid ongoing recommendation from Jean-Marc Quarin for more than a decade. Discrete nose with pencil shavings, dark cherries. The palate is relatively light and strict. I was guessing Pauillac or Saint-Julien. It did not get votes for being among the top wines but was liked for its drinkability. Ranked 14/15 by the group, I liked it quite a bit more, due to my preference for elegant Bordeaux. **18/20** (93/100).

Château Malartic-Lagravière 2014, Pessac-Léognan

Expressive nose with ripe, dark fruit, oak spices. Polished palate, not the last word on complexity, but hard to dislike. Dinking well already. **17.5/20** (91/100), Group Rank 12/15.

Château Ferrière 2014, Margaux

Expressive nose with cloves, blueberries, toast. Light but not thin on the palate, a pleasure to drink now. One of the wines that was most ready in my view. **18/20** (93/100), Group Rank 9/15.

FLIGHT 4

Château Grand-Puy Lacoste 2014, Pauillac

From MAG. Discrete nose, needed a bit of swirling, then forest berries and spices. The palate was well judged as well. A wine that does not want to be more than in can in 2014 and may be that is exactly its strength. Classic Claret. **18/20** (93/100), Group Rank 9/15.



Château Pontet-Canet 2014, Pauillac

The nose is ripe here with dark fruit and oak spices. Polished palate, again good ripeness and dark berries. Well-made, but aromatically a bit foursquare, but it did very well with the crowd. **18/20** (93/100), Group Rank 2/15.

Château Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande 2014, Pauillac

Lovely nose here with good ripeness, some oak spice, earthy notes. Charming palate, similar to Ducru, elegant and light, your typical elegant Medoc wine, could be Saint-Julien. One of my favorites tonight but only Group Rank 9/15. **18.5/20** (95/100).



Christian Raubach bereitet die Weine vor

FLIGHT 5

Château **Les Carmes Haut-Brion** 2014, Pessac-Léognan

Expressive nose with dark fruit, herbs, spices, lovely complexity. Well-judged palate keeping the ripe-ness and the structure in balance. Another good Pessac wine, **18.25/20** (94/100), Group Rank 4/15.

Château **Canon-La-Gaffelière** 2014, Saint-Emilion

Ripe nose with dark cherries, some prunes as well. Lots of power here up front but then bitter notes on the finish. Felt over-worked to my palate. I wished for more balance, but it was very popular at the table. **17/20** (89/100), Group Rank 2/15.

Château **Pape-Clément** 2014, Pessac- Léognan

Wonderful nose here with dark berries, good ripeness, intermixed with oak spices and farmyard funk. Well-judged palate. Among my favorites tonight. **18.5/20** (95/100), Group Rank 6/15.





Encore and Dessert Wine

Château Latour 2004, Pauillac

One of the encore wines. Despite a double decant, this was still closed, after 20 years. Good density, mineralic but with an austerity that needs to disappear. May be one of these 1986/88 wines that need 30 not 20 years. **17.75.18.25/20** (92-94/100).

Château Ducru-Beaucaillou 1994, Saint-Julien

One of the encore wines. I liked the forest floor nose here a lot, with tertiary aromas of a mature Claret. Elegant palate, tannins finally dissolved, dark berries, restraint and mineralic. Drink up, with food. **18.25+/20** (94+/100).

Château Climens 1988, Barsac

At the end of an extensive 2014 Bordeaux tasting, this was a welcome closure. Great nose here with apricot, smoke, orange rind. True to the Climens style, remains elegant within the liquoreux category. **18.5/20** (95/100).



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02.03.2024

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