

Ch Belgrave 2005 Haut- Médoc

20 Nov 2007 by JR

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This is a modest fifth growth in the Haut- Médoc hinterland around St- Laurent inland from Pauillac, now managed by the enterprising Bordeaux negociant Dourthe, which really has produced the goods in 2005. As I will be reporting in detail with 123 tasting notes tomorrow and an overview on Saturday, the 2005 vintage may be ridiculously expensive at the top end but can offer a host of bargains lower down the ranks. This is just one of them so don't despair if you can't track this particular one down.

I was impressed by this wine en primeur and Julia, who tasted this wine in London three weeks ago scored it 16.5+, thought it should drink well between 2010 and 2016 and this was her tasting note: 'Sweet, spicy oak and bright cassis aromas. Well balanced, a blend of classic and modern, cool fine tannins leaving an overall impression of freshness. A bargain?'

To find a reasonably well- distributed classed growth from the most glamorous vintage in living memory at this sort of price is quite an achievement, but it does highlight the fact that although prices of the most famous wines have escalated to previously undreamt- of levels, the prices of many of the lesser wines remain relatively reasonable – especially when you consider just how good the quality is. In my article on Saturday I pick out some other wines, several of them red Pessac- Léognans, that struck me as particular bargains but purple pagers may be able to spot some immediately from looking at our tasting notes tomorrow.

In general it's much easier for Americans than British wine lovers to take advantage of this because fine wine stores in the US tend to offer a wide range of such wines by the single bottle whereas most British stockists of smart red bordeaux tend to insist that you buy at least one case of a dozen bottles – hence the difference in how the prices of this wine are expressed.

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