

## A really lovely bordeaux 2001

24 Nov 2004 by JR

Ch Berliquet was a wine that stood out for me in the St Emilion tastings this year - the sophisticated quality of the wine, rather than the connection with Patrick Valette who made my recent luxurious Chilean wine of the week El Principal 1999 which, needless to say, I had completely forgotten.

[Ballantynes](#) of Cowbridge in Wales are offering it at £198 a case in bond (Farr Vintners at £195), but before I buy it all myself I am very generously prepared to pass on their notes to you:

'One of our finds in the 2000 vintage has again performed heriocrally in 2001 and much credit must go to the owner Vicomte Patrick de Lesquen, who had the vision to hire, from the 1997 vintage, the highly talented Patrick Valette, ex Chateau Pavie. Patrick Valette's style of winemaking I admire enormously and he has the most delicate touch which reflects in all the wines he makes.

Berliquet, prior to 1997 was not realising its potential on the escarpement of St Emilion surrounded by the *1er Grand Cru Classés*. However, in the past, ie, the 18th and 19th century it was recognised by the brokers as one of the five best estates in the appellation: indeed in 1784 Gaston Jeune a well known broker of the period wrote of the record-breaking price paid for a future from Berliquet.

Soil will out, and if for the last fifty years this estate has slumbered, it is certainly not asleep now and the quality is that of a top *1er Grand Cru Classé* and demand for the wine exceeds supply (only 25,000 bottles of the *Grand Vin*). When tasting the 2001 at the Chateau Patrick Valette told me that they have to stop taking new customers!

Well what of the 2001? Not a huge colour, as they seek style and not heavy extraction: a very fine nose which leads to a silky palate with lovely elegant fruit, very fine and long: intensely ripe and delightful. The 2001 was 85 per cent Merlot, 10 per cent Cabernet Franc and 5 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon.'

Ballantynes of Cowbridge  
3 Westgate  
Cowbridge CF71 7AQ  
UK  
(tel +44 1446 774840, fax +44 1446 775253, web [www.ballantynes.co.uk](http://www.ballantynes.co.uk))

Côte de Baleau has also just come out, and a very good buy it is too, at just £85 a case from Farr Vintners. It's from the Clos St Martin stable and is a well made big wine in the modern idiom, rather less subtle than the Berliquet but very winning.