Ch Peyrat 2004 and Ch Barreyres 2009

11 May 2012 by Jancis Robinson

From £45 a dozen in bond (£6.78 a bottle)

Find Ch Peyrat 2004
Find Ch Barreyres 2009

In a week when Ch Pontet-Canet 2011 at £720 a dozen bottles is being hailed as 'a bargain' (See Crus classés 20112–008 compared), I think it is worth reminding ourselves what genuine value there is at the bottom end of the Bordeaux status ladder. You don't even have to desert blue-chip wine merchants to find really delicious wine available for a song. And in the case of **Ch Peyrat 2004 Côtes de Castillon**, it is a fully mature wine benefiting from six or seven years' bottle age.

This is a second wine produced in Paul Valade's well-equipped winery in Belvès-de-Castillon east of St-Émilion and is far from the only evidence of just how good this land can be. Justerini & Brooks have been relying on him to supply Ch La Grande Maye for years. I loved its rather minerally (iron, bloody meat) bouquet and its lovely core of fully ripe fruit (which contrasts favourably with some 2011s). I'd say it's at its peak now and I'd drink it over the next three years or so. What a joy to come across a fully mature wine at a price, £45 a dozen in bond, that translates into just £6.78 a bottle according to J&B.

Valade sells so much to the UK that I have been unable to find Ch Peyrat 2004 outside the UK but I see that Ch La Grand Maye 2008 is available for little more than $150 a dozen in the US.

Another Bordeaux bargain came my way this week, nicely illustrating how the blue-chip merchants can often undercut the supermarkets when it comes to classic wines. **Ch Barreyres 2009 Haut-Médoc** is one of that army of delicious Cru Bourgeois 2009s Julia and I highlighted last September. The combination of that vintage and that quality level was hugely successful and there are dozens of delicious example to choose from.

For Brits, it is convenient that one of the biggest supermarkets, Sainsbury's, is selling this wine for £11.49 in 136 of its leading stores. They also supplied a virtual embarras of background information on it at their tasting for wine hacks earlier this week:

50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Merlot from a single estate made up of 109 ha of vineyards. The grapes are harvested by machines that select only the best grapes. The soil is made up of clay and sandy gravel which gives this Haut-Médoc Cru Bourgeois its distinctive soft, appealing character. Nestled between the hamlet of Arcins and the Gironde River, the location of the vineyard is ideal, perched on the gentle slopes leading down to the estuary. The winery uses the periodic déléstage (rack and return) method and a technique of turbo pigeage to allow a slow maceration. Selected yeasts are used and the wine is fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. Malolactic fermentation takes place in oak barrels for a few selected parcels. The wine is aged for 12 months in French oak barrels, a third of which are new. The wine undergoes electrodialysis and tangential filtration. Acquired by the Castel family in 1971, Château Barreyres has since undergone substantial modernisation and restructuring. Residual sugar: 2.2 g/l. Winemaker: Bruno Teyssier, who has been shaping the destiny of Ch Barreyres wines for the last 23 years.

Turbo-pigeaged claret, anyone?

You can also find Ch Barreyres 2009 in France and the Netherlands (and many examples of the different Ch Barreyre 2009 Bordeaux Supérieur in the US). If you can't find this specific recommendation, I would recommend trying virtually any Cru Bourgeois 2009 if you find one selling at a reasonable price, under $12 or $20 a bottle for example. Check out our tasting notes on 187 of them in Cru Bourgeois 2009s.

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