



“VINTAGE BORDEAUX” GALA

December 3, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Karen Taylor

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87 of Bordeaux's Top Châteaux Assemble Historic Collection for Wine Auction to Benefit the French-American Cultural Foundation

The auction block has never seen anything quite like this! For the first time ever, all 61 châteaux listed in the historic 1855 Médoc classification and all 26 châteaux listed in the 1855 Sauternes classification will donate a bottle of their wine to compose two rare and unique auction lots. All are from the remarkable 2003 vintage, making this the trophy collection par excellence! And to help the highest bidder celebrate, Sofitel Washington, DC, is offering a complimentary night in its luxurious Presidential Suite.

These unprecedented offerings will be auctioned on December 3, 2008, at an exclusive black-tie fundraising dinner at the French Ambassador's Residence in Washington, DC, featuring guest chef Thierry Marx of Pauillac's famous Château Cordeillan-Bages. In keeping with Bordeaux's long history of support for culture and the arts, proceeds will go to the French-American Cultural Foundation, which promotes French and American artistic endeavors and publishes France Magazine.

A silent auction will offer aficionados additional opportunities to enrich their cellars with some of the best wines in the world, including several 100-point first growths. Wine lovers will also have a chance to bid on such wonderful holiday gifts as a weekend at a Relais & Châteaux property, Baccarat crystal stemware, a Bordeaux vacation and catered dinners at private residences—including an intimate dinner with the French Ambassador.

The Chairman of this black-tie event is Mr. Tom Black, an avid wine collector who has staged wine auctions for charity for nearly two decades. The guests of honor will include Philippe Castéja, President of the Conseil des Grands Crus Classés en 1855; Jean-Michel Cazes, owner of Château Lynch-Bages and other famous estates; Jean-Paul Kauffmann, a renowned author and wine expert; and celebrated wine critic Robert Parker. This will be an extraordinary soirée that no serious wine enthusiast will want to miss! Tickets are \$1,000 per person; \$12,000 per table.

- Scroll down for:
- [A list of all wines in the 1855 Classification](#)
 - [Critics' notes on the 2003 Vintage](#)
 - [A profile of chef Thierry Marx](#)
 - [The F-ACF and France Magazine](#)
 - [Gala Sponsors](#)
 - [A reservation form](#)



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THE 1855 CLASSIFICATION

The 1855 classification of Médoc and Sauternes wines holds a unique place in the history of wine. Not only because it was the first, but because it is the most enduring. Commissioned by Napoleon III for the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris, this famous ranking was designed to demonstrate to visitors—who could not actually taste the wines—the superior quality represented by Bordeaux’s best production. The Chamber of Commerce entrusted the task of drawing up this list to the Brokers’ Union, which based its selection of the region’s top wines on decades of statistical information. To this day, the classification remains the ultimate reference for Bordeaux enthusiasts worldwide.

The châteaux featured in this historic ranking now belong to the **Conseil des Grands Crus Classés en 1855**, a professional organization that upholds and protects the classification and its prestigious image through joint economic, legal and promotional activities. Headed by President Philippe Castéja, the Conseil is making a remarkable contribution to the French-American Cultural Foundation’s fundraising gala through donations of acclaimed Bordeaux wines for both the dinner and the auction.

Médoc

PREMIERS CRUS

Château LAFITE-ROTHSCHILD • Château LATOUR • Château MARGAUX •
Château MOUTON ROTHSCHILD • Château HAUT-BRION

SECONDS CRUS

Château RAUZAN-SEGLA • Château RAUZAN-GASSIES • Château LEOVILLE
LAS CASES • Château LEOVILLE-POYFERRE • Château LEOVILLE BARTON •
Château DURFORT-VIVENS • Château GRUAUD LAROSE • Château LASCOMBES •
Château BRANE-CANTENAC • Château PICHON-LONGUEVILLE • Château
PICHON LONGUEVILLE COMTESSE DE LALANDE • Château DUCRU-
BEAUCAILLOU • Château COS D’ESTOURNEL • Château MONTROSE

TROISIÈMES CRUS

Château KIRWAN • Château D’ISSAN • Château LAGRANGE • Château LANGO
BARTON • Château GISCOURS • Château MALESCOT SAINT-EXUPERY • Châ-
teau BOYD-CANTENAC • Château CANTENAC BROWN • Château PALMER •
Château LA LAGUNE • Château DESMIRAIL • Château CALON SEGUR • Château
FERRIERE • Château MARQUIS D’ALESME BECKER

QUATRIÈMES CRUS

Château SAINT-PIERRE • Château TALBOT • Château BRANAIRE-DUCRU •
Château DUHART-MILON • Château POUGET • Château LA TOUR CARNET •
Château LAFON-ROCHET • Château BEYCHEVELLE • Château PRIEURE-
LICHINE • Château MARQUIS DE TERME

CINQUIÈMES CRUS

Château PONTET-CANET • Château BATAILLEY • Château HAUT-BATAILLEY •
Château GRAND-PUY-LACOSTE • Château GRAND-PUY DUCASSE • Château
LYNCH-BAGES • Château LYNCH-MOUSSAS • Château DAUZAC • Château
D’ARMAILHAC • Château DU TERTRE • Château HAUT-BAGES LIBERAL • Châ-
teau PEDESCLAUX • Château BELGRAVE • Château DE CAMENSAC • Château
COS LABORY • Château CLERC MILON • Château CROIZET-BAGES •
Château CANTEMERLE

Sauternes & Barsac

PREMIER CRU SUPÉRIEUR

Château d’YQUEM

PREMIERS CRUS

Château LA TOUR BLANCHE • Château LAFAURIE-PEYRAGUEY •
Château CLOS-HAUT-PEYRAGUEY • Château de RAYNE
VIGNEAU • Château SUDUIRAUT • Château COUTET • Château CLIMENS •
Château GUIRAUD • Château RIEUSSEC • Château RABAUD-PROMIS •
Château SIGALAS RABAUD

SECONDS CRUS

Château de MYRAT • Château DOISY DAENE • Château DOISY –DUBROCA •
Château DOISY-VEDRINES • Château D’ARCHE • Château FILHOT • Château
BROUSTET • Château NAIRAC • Château CAILLOU • Château SUAU •
Château de MALLE • Château ROMER DU HAYOT • Château ROMER •
Château LAMOTHE • Château LAMOTHE-GUIGNARD



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THE 2003 VINTAGE

Médoc and Sauternes

Winemakers are not the only ones who vividly remember the summer of 2003: The scorching heat that year made life unbearable in many areas throughout France, where few people have air conditioning because summers are typically mild.

In the vineyards, it was an extraordinarily challenging year, with extreme conditions leaving many without a playbook. As always, the best wines resulted from the optimum combinations of terroir, talent ... and luck. The châteaux belonging to the 1855 classification managed to shine brilliantly.

The bidders who win the auction of the entire collections of 2003 classified growths from the Médoc and Sauternes will thus enjoy an unprecedented opportunity not only to own a piece of Bordeaux’s legendary history but to experience the magic of time captured in a bottle and to gain unique insights into the winemaker’s art.

Here’s what the pros had to say about this distinctive vintage:

ROBERT PARKER

“After 25 years of tasting the newest Bordeaux vintage at approximately six months of age, I have never seen a year as irregular and fascinating as 2003. This is not surprising given the historic extremes of weather France endured in June, July and August. [...] But some profoundly great wines were produced, particularly in the most favored sector, the Médoc. [...]

The finest efforts are powerful, low-acid wines with sweet tannin and slightly higher than normal alcohol levels. However, this vintage differs from 1990 and 1982 where many wines possessed exceedingly ripe styles. Ripeness is obviously present in the top 2003s, but there is no hint of over-ripeness as the wines reveal surprising freshness and vigor. By and large, they are neither exotic nor flamboyant, but rather classic in structure.”

— “2003 Bordeaux – ‘Hey, Hey, My, My’ (The preliminary barrel tasting report),”
The Wine Advocate, April 26, 2004.

JACQUES DUPONT

"It was a truly great year for Sauternes and other *vins liquoreux*. When the first rains came in September, the grapes were in perfect health and already bursting with sugar. Botrytis cinerea, the famous "noble rot," concentrated the sugars very quickly. As one winemaker noted, "On the first day, we brought back grapes that had reached 18° potential alcohol; by the next day, they'd hit 22 °, and we said, it's time! Within nine days, it was all over. Such a thing hadn't been seen since 1928-29 or 1893."

— "Le Guide des primeurs 2003," *Le Point*.

ALAIN SARRAUTE

"Faced with unprecedented situations, winemakers had to improvise, invent, guess, try things without prior references or experience. There were those who were daring and those who were conservative; some were lucky, others unlucky. But once again, those who fared best were those who, day after day, watched their vineyards like milk on a stove. [...] All told, the year was easy only for makers of sweet wines—they could not have dreamed of better conditions, and 2003 will be a great year for Sauternes."

— "Une année hors normes," *Le Figaro*, June 3, 2004.

JAMES SUCKLING

"They may be slightly New World in style for their opulent fruit and ripe character, but the best 2003 Bordeaux remain classic clarets, displaying a richness and structure reminiscent of past great hot-weather vintages. You are going to love the wines—red, white and sweet. [...] I have rarely tasted young clarets with such muscle and concentration. Yet at the same time, the wines maintain a freshness and length of flavor that only Bordeaux can deliver, even in hot years. For the red wines of the Left Bank (Médoc and Pessac-Léognan), I rate the vintage 95 points.

— *The Wine Spectator*, March 2006.

THIERRY DESSEAUVE

"In Sauternes, there has never been a harvest so early and necessitating such speed. Only fans of very sweet wines will appreciate these wines young; others will find them too rich and heavy. But after 25 years, they will go down in legend alongside the mythical 1921s, with a better control of the vinification process yielding wines that have less acetic acid and are more pure and fruity."

— "Le Millésime 2003 à Bordeaux," *La Revue du Vin en France*, June 2004.

STEVEN SPURRIER

"The major successes were from Médoc, where the Merlot was picked after the refreshing early September rain, and the Cabernets were left to gain phenolic ripeness without losing acidity. The farther north, the finer the wines, with deep colors, superbly concentrated vineyard-specific fruit, great length, structure and the highest levels of tannin ever recorded. In more than a few cases, these wines are the greatest those châteaux have ever made."

— "Bordeaux: The Verdict," *Decanter*, June 2004.





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THIERRY MARX

Executive Chef, Château Cordeillan-Bages

“Anyone hoping to discover one of France’s rising star chefs would do well to reserve a table at Thierry Marx’s Château Cordeillan-Bages, just 54 kilometers from the wine capital of Bordeaux. With two Michelin stars already under his belt, the creative, energetic, thoughtful Marx was also recently named chef of the year by the French restaurant guide GaultMillau. In French food circles, his name comes up each time one discusses future three-star chefs.”

— Patricia Wells

In the 1980s, Jean-Michel Cazes, owner of Château Lynch-Bages in Pauillac, purchased and renovated a neighboring property: the stately 17th-century Château Cordeillan-Bages. Opened in 1989, this exclusive 18-room inn was soon accepted into the elite Relais & Châteaux group and has remained the leading address in the Médoc ever since. Sober, sophisticated and elegant, the décor artfully sets off but does not compete with the undisputed stars of the Cordeillan-Bages show: the spectacular food and fabulous wine.

Since 1996, chef Thierry Marx has reigned over the kitchen. Sporting a shaved head, this high-octane Bruce Willis look-alike trained under Joël Robuchon and Alain Chapel and has worked and traveled extensively in Asia, where he still spends several months of the year. “We tend to forget that French cooking has always been about fusion, about sophisticated interpretations of influences from around the world,” he says. During one voyage, he met a Japanese sushi master. “He taught me that you first look at food, then you contemplate it, then you eat it. I have never forgotten that lesson.” Indeed, Marx is now renowned for the painstaking artistry he puts into every presentation.

The chef says that his rarefied culinary creations are guided by an “almost cosmic” logic: there are always three elements, three textures, three flavors. His virtuoso take on Bordeaux’s classic *agneau de lait de Pauillac*, for example, consists of roasted, grilled and pan-cooked morsels of this milk-fed lamb with its characteristic nutty flavor. Fond of bringing new technologies into his kitchen, Marx turns out cuisine that has been called “wildly experimental,” “intoxicating” and “high-theater gastronomy.” The chef himself says that for all its sophistication, his work is simply about pleasing people. “If you don’t like people, you can’t cook well. Cuisine is an act of love for others.”

Thierry Marx will make his Washington, DC, début this December 3, 2008, when he takes over the kitchen at the French Ambassador’s Residence to prepare a dinner for 120 guests attending a fundraising gala to benefit the French-American Cultural Foundation. The meal will be underwritten by Cuisine Solutions, the Alexandria, Virginia company that has pioneered sous-vide cuisine in the United States.



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THE FRENCH-AMERICAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION

The F-ACF is a nonprofit organization that encourages cultural and educational exchanges between France and the United States. In addition to presenting performing and visual arts at the French Embassy, the F-ACF collaborates with major cultural institutions (the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery of Art) to bring French programming to the Washington area, and is the leading force behind the promotion of French culture in the mid-Atlantic region. The F-ACF also publishes France Magazine, an elegant and upscale quarterly magazine showcasing the best in French culture, travel and *art de vivre* to readers throughout the United States. Mr. Leonard Silverstein is the President of the F-ACF.



FRENCH-AMERICAN CULTURAL
FOUNDATION

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FRENCH-AMERICAN CULTURAL
F O U N D A T I O N

“VINTAGE BORDEAUX” GALA TO BENEFIT THE FRENCH-AMERICAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION

The Residence of French Ambassador Pierre Vimont
2221 Kalorama Road, NW - Washington, DC 20016

Wednesday, December 3, 2008, at 7:30pm

Name: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

E-mail: _____

Name of guest: _____

Please list names of multiple guests on the reverse.

Enclosed is my check payable to the French-American Cultural Foundation* reserving the following:

TABLES (of 12)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magnum Table | \$12,000 each (\$9,500 tax deductible) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marie-Jeanne Table | \$15,000 each (\$12,500 tax deductible) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jéroboam Table | \$ 20,000 each (\$17,500 tax deductible) |

INDIVIDUAL SEATS

- seats at \$1,000 each (Magnum Donor, \$750 tax deductible)
- seats at \$1,500 each (Marie-Jeanne Donor, \$1,250 tax deductible)
- seats at \$2,000 each (Jéroboam Donor, \$1,750 tax deductible)
- I / We are unable to attend but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Seating is limited and reservations will be honored as received.

** The French-American Cultural Foundation is an IRS-approved section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.*

Names of guests: _____



PLEASE RESPOND BY NOVEMBER 15, 2008.



Please send checks to: Meredith Davis
F-ACF "Vintage Bordeaux" Gala
4101 Reservoir Road, NW
Washington, DC 20007

To reserve a seat or a table, please call Meredith Davis at 202/944-6021
or email her at davismld@gmail.com.

For more information, please call Karen Taylor at 202/944-6042.

