

Bordeaux 2012 - St-Émilion and satellites

26 Apr 2013 by Julia Harding MW

The current market for higher-end Bordeaux has strongly influenced perceptions of this heterogeneous vintage, one in which intra-appellation differences are sometimes as marked as those among appellations. As one pragmatic (but shy) eye-witness said to me: 'Nobody wants to push too much the 2012 vintage: the négociants because they absolutely need the prices to go down; the producers are aware of that fact and know that it may be counterproductive to say that the vintage is better than 2011 and then sell it for a lower price; the consumers because their cellars are full of great 2009 and 2010 and they don't need another great vintage. They need affordable Bordeaux.'

The well-documented climatic difficulties - late and heterogeneous flowering leading to drawn out veraison and uneven ripening plus conditions conducive to fungal diseases in the early summer, for example - did not improve expectations. The temptation, as ever, is to overgeneralise in the interests of simplicity and brevity. There are some very good wines on the right bank, with fine Merlot and, very occasionally, excellent Cabernet Franc, but in this vintage I found it more difficult than ever to come up with a summary of wine quality and style.

Ch de Pressac 2012 St-Émilion 16.5 Drink 2017-2025

Inky with black core but bright. There's a brightness to the aroma too, and lots of toasty oak. Sweet fruit, moreish, generous, the tannins already smooth though quite dense. Malted chocolate finish. Fruit almost wins out over the oak but the origins are obscured. (JH)