France, Bordeaux: 2005 Bordeaux Retrospective
Revisiting A Great Vintage At Age Ten
June 30, 2015

All of the following wines were tasted in May of 2015. It may sound like déjà vu all over again, as Yogi Berra, the famous New York Yankee baseball player once said, but looking through my notes before my tastings of the 2005s in barrel, there were comparisons coming out of Bordeaux to 1949, 1959, 1961, 1982, etc. It was certainly a very dry, warm year, but unlike many famous vintages, there was no scorching heat wave during the growing season. The vineyards were stressed not by high temperatures, but rather by the drought-like conditions that generally persisted throughout the summer, although approximately an inch of rain fell in mid-August on the Right Bank; particularly in Pomerol, St.-Emilion and Graves. Lighter rainfall of less than half an inch fell on the Médoc a week later. While September was less than perfect weather-wise, temperatures were reasonable, and there were only a few days of light showers. The most important development was that an Indian summer unfolded through the first two weeks of October, giving producers plenty of time to essentially pick whenever they wanted, as they enjoyed cool nights and warm days, preserving healthy levels of acidity in the grapes. The result was a brilliant vintage, highly praised and applauded by the Bordelais as well as the wine media. At the time, the 2005 red Bordeaux had the highest levels ever measured for tannins, dry extract and concentration, and natural alcohol, but all of those components were allied to relatively fresh, lively acidities and modest pHs. Of course, the alcohol levels were exceeded in 2009 and 2010, both vintages that certainly equal - and on occasion have the potential to eclipse - the concentration levels of the 2005s.

From the beginning, I thought this was a vintage surrounded by excessive and unprecedented hype. At the same time, I considered it a vintage that would require considerable patience for the wines to evolve. As I said back in issue 164 (April 2006), "It is risky to conclude ... that the finest wines of 2005 are superior to the best of 2003, especially the northern Médocas, or the best wines of 2000, 1998 (for Pomerol and St.-Emilion), 1950, or the most profound 1985s and 1982s." That said, lasting the wines ten years later, I would tend to agree with those early comments. The vintage does have fabulous peaks of quality in Pomerol, St.-Emilion, Graves and Margaux (probably one of the best sets of wines of any appellation), but while St.-Julien, Pauillac and St.-Estèphe have produced many outstanding wines, for some reason, those wines seem to lack the "wow" factor. Nevertheless, this vintage locks strong and impressive at age ten. I do believe it is eclipsed in quality and consistency by both the 2009s and 2010s, but only by a relatively minor margin.

Of course, Bordeaux has taken a public relations beating with their high prices and image of greed. Nevertheless, the truth remains that intelligent wine enthusiasts continue to recognize that Bordeaux wines are the most cherished, respected and consistently high-quality wines in the world for both longevity and elegance. The fact is even if the younger generations and much of the wine media still chip away at that image, it is a reality of the wine world. No other region in the world makes more consistent and better wines. In terms of Bordeaux varietals, however, California has certainly come of age over the last 20-25 years and routinely challenges Bordeaux for supremacy with their Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlots, and blends of those two grapes in addition to Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Anyone who has 2005s in their cellar may want to try some of those wines that are coming into their adolescence and showing extremely well. And forgetting the luxury prices of the top hundred or so châteaux, 2005 was a vintage that produced many sensational cru bourgeois and smaller generic appellation wines that were sold for a song when released in 2007.

2005 Pressac

Pressac is a Bordeaux Blend Dry Red Table wine from France, St.Emilion, Bordeaux, France

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Reviewer</th>
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<th>Current (Release) Cost</th>
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<td>eRobertParker.com</td>
<td>Robert M. Parker, Jr.</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Drink 2015 - 2035</td>
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A blend of 72% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Carmenère and Malbec, this wine comes from the most beautiful fortified château in all of Bordeaux. The 2005 De Pressac was strutting its stuff in my horizontal tasting. Loads of cassis, cherry liqueur, plum, licorice and forest floor are present in this inky purple wine. Youthful, with some background minerality and moderately high tannin, it is stunningly rich, full, and again, a candidate for another two decades of cellaring.