

1995 Bordeaux wines

1995 is a very fine vintage after a string of poor ones. The spring was mild and fair, the summer was hot and dry, thickening the skins and blocking the maturity in some areas. Enough rain fell in September, however, to allow the vines to finish their work, and the overall result was impressive. The wines are tannic and rich, with plenty of substance and concentration. These continue to show well 22 years after the vintage. The top wines are still not ready, but one has the sense that when they are that they will be magnificent.

Pauillac 1995, Château Pichon-Lalande

Open and accessible, this shows a rich curranty fruit with an edge of pepper and spice. On the palate it is firmly tannic and well-structured, with nice density and a powerful if somewhat truncated finish. Drinking now, this can certainly hold. **** In Atlanta with friends, March 2017.

Pessac-Léognan 1995, Château Haut-Brion

A lighter style, this is silky and very elegant with marvelous balance and freshness. There is a well-developed currant and floral nose underpinned by a hint of gravel and earth. The wine is structured but not heavy. Nonetheless, it should age well for another twenty years. **** In Atlanta with friends, March 2017.

Margaux 1995, Château Margaux

Unrestrainedly delicious. This shows a luscious dark blackberry and cassis with a hint of licorice and spice, and the beginnings of some Cuban cigar leaf aromas. The palate shows firm tannins that are very solid but certainly not intimidating. The wine is approachable but not too forward. In my view one should wait, but assuredly it will be worth it. Twenty to thirty more years upside in a good cellar. ***** In Atlanta with friends, March 2017.

Saint-Julien 1995, Château Ducru-Beaucaillou

Slightly closed on the initial attack, this has all the bits in the right places but it lacks the punch and concentration of the top wines. There is nothing to disappoint, but nothing to make one swoon. The texture is silky and soft and the finish lingers attractively on the palate. **** In Atlanta with friends, March 2017.

Pomerol 1995, Château l'Évangile

Superb. This wine was my favorite of the flight, and the favorite wine of our tasting group collectively as compared to some pretty strong competition. There is a rich plum and fig fruit here with notes of chocolate and ground coffee; a sweetly concentrated aroma with just a suggestion of brown sugar, and an impressive finesse and length on the palate. This is drinking well now, but will continue to open up, and there is at least 20 – 30 more years of improvement to anticipate. ***** In Atlanta with friends, March 2017.

Saint-Estèphe 1995, Château Cos d'Estournel

Smoky and rich, this is still marked a bit by its passage in cask, yet the wine is well-balanced and very elegant, with a blackcurrant fruit and a suggestion of forest floor. On the palate the wine is a bit soft, but the density and concentration is there, held together by a very silken texture. Wonderful, still youthful – you can wait another twenty years if you have the patience. **** In Atlanta with friends, March 2017