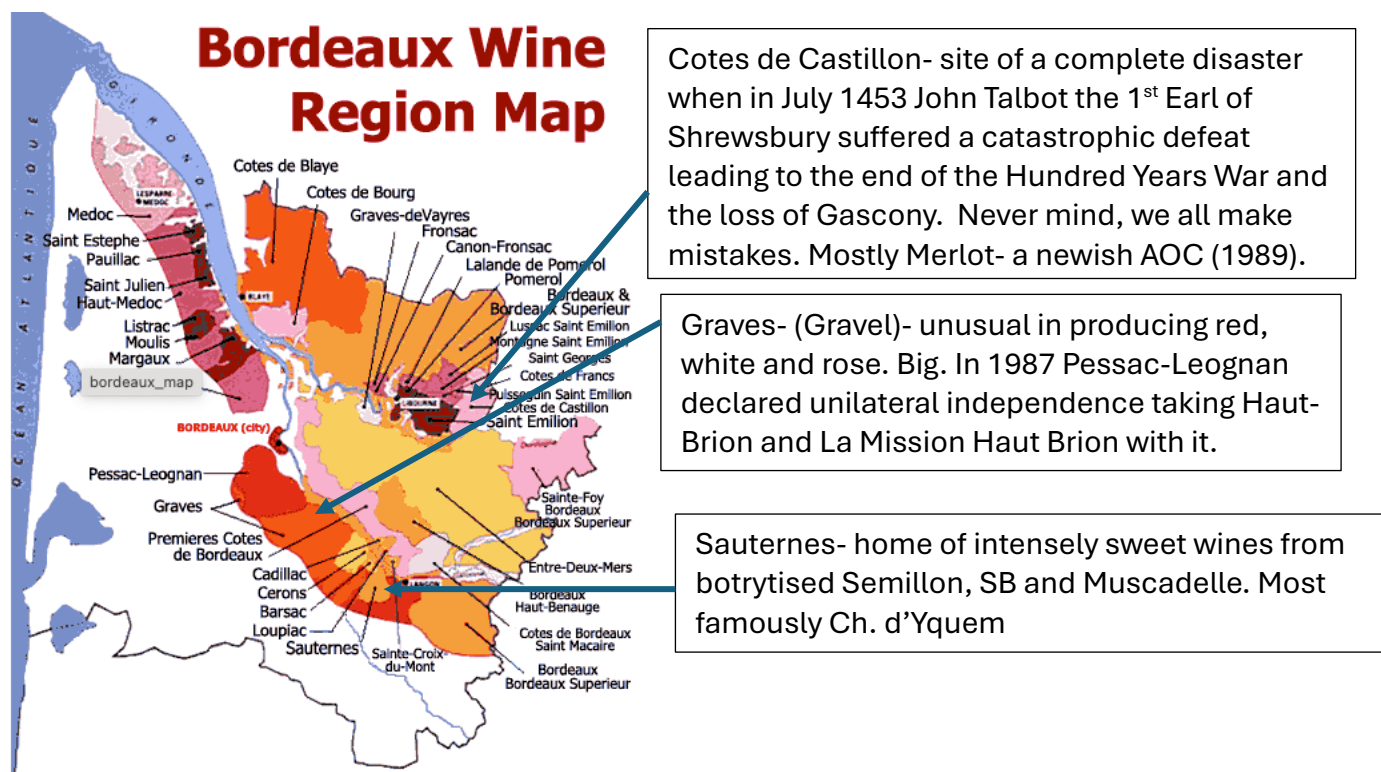


## THE TWENTY CLUB SESSION 116 MEETING 3 WINE NOTES

### The Wine Society- Bordeaux

I'd not expected to be putting Bordeaux on the table. But it's Christmas.



**White- The Wine Society's Generation Series Graves Blanc 2021 12.5% £14.95 Drink over about the next 3 minutes.** White Bordeaux isn't that fashionable. IDK why. It was 100 years ago. This is a blend of several Chateau's wines by negociant Dourthe (who also do a (usually) brilliant red- Dourthe 1). Most of the blend is from Ch Rahoul which makes some of the best white Graves and the rest from grapes in other villages. 54% Semillon- body and depth, 34% SB- freshness and aromatic intensity and 12% Muscadelle- grape(!?) Ch Rahoul itself approx £25. White peach, citrus. When I have white Bourdeaux I always get a bit confused and tell myself that I should 'do this more often'- but then I have a little lie down and forget about it for several years- which is a mistake(I make very few of these or lots you decide). A long creamy finish- hummm.

**Red- The Wine Society's Generation Series Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux 2020 14.5% £15.50 Drink now-2031/3** *'Nab this majestic, merlot-led claret from the rising right-bank star Castillon, part of the Society's Generation range, before everyone else does.'* The Times 06.07.2024 – OK it's from the Murdoch press and we are in Liverpool- sorry. Unlike the other wines all from one vineyard- Chateau Pitray. Jean de Boigne is the 23<sup>rd</sup> generation to run the estate- that's over 600 years, rather close to the battle of Castillon, so drinking this is near treasonous. If you'd like to stay you can rent the place for €13,000 a week sleeps 26. As for this wine- it was blended especially for The Wine Society's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. TWS has been buying Pitray for more than 40 years and is (I think) the world's biggest buyer of their 250,000 bottles. The many parcels of Merlot

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(65%), Carbernet Franc (30%) and Malbec (5%) are vinified separately- they ripen at different times, varying tannins, fruit etc. The buyer was given access to the best tanks and barrels to assemble this blend- this is superior to their normal superior blend 'Madame Pitray' (now £17.50 and which is usually offered en primeur). Damson, dark chocolate, liquorice, vanilla. Plummy.

**Dessert Wine- Ulysse Cazabonne Sauternes (3<sup>rd</sup> Release) 14.5% £21 Botrytised Semillon, some SB: Drink now-2035 'Buy, buy! Very Good Value'-** Jancis Robinson 04.11.2024 'Funny stuff'. Out of the back door from a major Chateau and sold with no name and no vintage through Chanel owned Bordeaux negociant Ulysse Cazabonne. They deal with the sales of many of Bordeaux's top stuff, not only the first and second wines but also surplus wine made by the best producers then sold anonymously. Most famously the Ulysse Cazabonne Pauillac- which is, unofficially, declassified Chateau Latour, but I didn't tell you that. Also -this. The first release of this wine was a very odd blend of the 2014-16 vintages. This is more anonymous. From TWS website when one member moaned about the absence of a year: *"The reason we that don't reveal the source of the Sauternes is that the chateau in question, which has an unparalleled reputation for quality, does not wish to reveal that it is selling the wine at prices that are a fraction of its main wine. All the top chateaux in Bordeaux make a very rigorous selection for the wines that are destined for their proprietary labels. Any barrels that don't make the cut are bottled separately and sold under separate labels that don't identify the provenance. If we want access to these amazing wines at superb prices we have to play by the producer's rules. Each year this wine is made from a different blend, and this year's release is from a single vintage (last year's was from three separate vintages). The producer prefers that this information is not communicated. Again, our hands are tied."* So we are paying for what's in the bottle and not what's on the label. Bright gold. Marmalade, dill pickle. Lucious and lingering. Sip and savour. I've not had this one, but I swear I could still taste the first one the next morning- and no- not because of that.

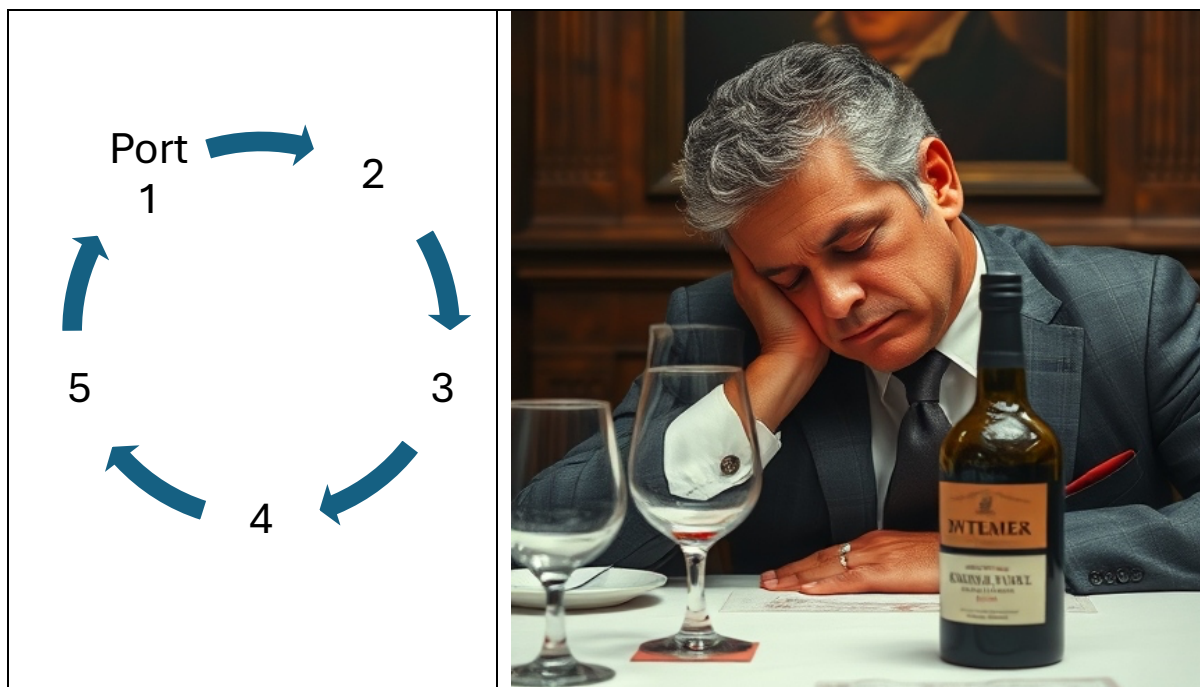
**Port- Quinta do Noval Silval Vintage Port 2005 20%- free or £45 (2 bottles) plus 1.**

Every now and then there is what is known as 'too much wine'. A bit like quantum theory, anion gaps and the first couple of pages of Einstein's Universe before I give up completely, it is a tricky concept. If you concentrate very hard, close your eyes and control your breathing it is just about possible to understand, at least for 2-3 minutes before you've lost it. I find a concrete example is best way to get to grips with weird ideas: Ariaraj goes to Majestic Wine Warehouse in West Kirkby. He buys 8 bottles of Muga Rioja Blanco (very tasty- thanks Lax), 8 bottles of Muga Rioja Reserva 2019 Red (excellent- and would be great to taste in another 5 years), 3 bottles of cheap as chips Chilean sweetie (nice one, top top bargain- thanks again) and then 3 bottles of Fonseca Bin 27 (good with chocolate- soo hard to pair, tasty- maybe I'll try with a bit of blue cheese as well, oh- and walnuts... I wonder what it's like with a Cox's Orange Pippin... so many ideas). Oops, I've digressed again- sorry Prof. Back in the room- The paper is read, questions asked, members and guests are seated. Food is eaten, drink is taken, by some more than others. In this example let's say that in total 21 bottles are drunk. Using something called 'adding up' this means that there are 2 bottles left over. So, boiling it

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down to the essentials – brace yourselves. What happens is that the sommelier goes and gets some wine, it gets delivered to the LMI, there is a meeting, and the members don't drink everything. Things can then get stranger still. If someone responsible is around, then the 'too much wine' might get put in the Twenty Club wine rack in the bowels of the LMI. All this happened! And rooting around like a hungry badger I found these. Obviously, I was drawn to the name, which isn't impossible given that mine's so common in Portugal. We have had wines from Casa Silva before (Session 111.4, a Chardonnay and a Merlot, and Session 111.1- a Viognier). So where / when is this wine from I hear you all think<sup>1</sup>? 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018- Session 110. 5. There is no price on the wine note- but now it is about £45 a bottle. Online tasting notes from 2024 - still quite dark, bouquet of dark berries and dark chocolate with a mature round body and attractive tannins. Vivino reviews have it being served at a 4 chefs 8 Michelin star diner. If Wile can let us know what the anthocyanins and tannin polymerisation will have been up to in the last 6 years, then that would be champion. Matures faster than their usual vintage port. Now- if it has sadly passed away - worry not. There is more port down there. Tonight there are 23 other bottles without these 9 white, 11 red and 3 dessert wines, and there is also emergency Cotes de Rhone – which would be great with cheese.

But – Do you know the Bishop of Norwich? Because I have no idea which one it was. I'm getting very confused. Alternatives seem to be a) Bagot b) Bathurst or c) Sheepshanks. A bit fishy. Wikipedia is no help. Oddly Sheepshanks was a parish priest in Anfield immediately before becoming the Bishop of Norwich. Bathurst used to nod off after diner and so the decanter got stuck. Nobody like that here, so that's ok.



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<sup>1</sup> A prize to anyone who can name this psychopathology

## Bordeaux

The world's most expensive and desirable wines. Obviously part of England since 1152 and should reconquered. The 1855 and other classifications cemented a hierarchy and price structure, there are exceptions e.g. Ch le Pin- a garargiste wine and now Liber Pater- €30k/bt -€600/bt, most at about 5k, in January Silva minor guzzled loads for free, his tasting notes below<sup>2</sup>. The region is unduly influenced Robert Parker. He says a wine's a 90+, boom! Price high- forever and availability low. Given the vast production some good value wines are to be found. Red wines known for extraction and oak ageing- with the increasing use of new barrels (because of Robert Parker).

| <b>Grapes and Compositions of Red Bordeaux Blends. NB</b><br>Marselan, Touriga Nacional, Castets and Arinarnoa now also allowed because of climate change.   | <b>Left Bank</b>               | <b>Right Bank</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Cabernet Sauvignon</b> - intense colour- inky, full body, tannic- aging. As well as 'black fruits' also bell peppers (pyrazines), violets, mint, cedar, graphite, cedar, vanilla. Takes to oak barrels very well. With age tertiary flavours, loses colour. Buds and ripens later- so not bad if frosty in spring- but suffers with late season rain. Interesting when less ripe- but not everyone likes this. Wins most fights. (Gives me rather tarry stools. I may have over shared) | Lots- likes the gravelly soils | Not so much       |
| <b>Merlot</b> - the most widely planted. Lighter and softer. More fruit (red and blue as well as black) less tannin. Early ripening and thin skinned- killed by frost and messed about with by rot as thin skinned. Less aging potential. Ends up bleeding heavily and on a trolley after even a slight altercation.   | A fair bit                     | Lots- likes clay  |
| <b>Cabernet Franc</b> - Complexity and bouquet. Pungent, spicy, minty. Neither fleshy like Merlot nor powerful like CS. A ringer.  | A fair bit                     | More              |
| <b>Petit Verdot</b> - Fickle- late ripening. Intensely colourful- pretty- but also tannic, lots of sugar- alcohol. Nasty and acidic if not ripe. Sharp nails and pointy shoes. Wins cat fights easily.   | Minor addition                 | Almost none       |
| <b>Malbec</b> - v little- killed off by frost in the '50's. Inky, tannic, plummy. Now more in the SW. Not a contender  | Very little                    | V little          |
| <b>Carmenere</b> - more medium bodied- Looks on from afar.   | Teeeny                         | Zilch             |

My favourites: Ch Tour Haut Caussan, les Carmes Haut-Brion, la Tour Haut-Brion (which is a pity because it has closed), Fourcas-Dupre (top bargain), any Margaux. Top bargain ever- Chevalier de Lascombes Margaux (second wine of Ch Lascombes) £10 at Lidl- got 3, Vivino av price £114! The Lidl St Emillion Grand Cru is a steal but put it in a decanter.

Bordeaux blends from South Africa are very 'French'- e.g Meerlust, Vergelegen, Warwick. From Australia and California more New World. New Zealand Gimblett Gravels- Craggy Range and Trinity Hill- excellent but now more than they were.

<sup>2</sup> "Different but not necessarily better than regular wine..." (ie Thunder Bird) "I can't really remember..."  
"The bottles we had were too young." (a 2019, a 2007 and a 2011- really?) Youth is wasted on the young.