

12 Bordeaux Under \$20

New reviews of appealing 2010 reds that won't break the bank

James Molesworth

Posted: January 25, 2013



7

Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

The superb 2010 vintage promises an abundance of terrific wines from all across France's largest wine region. And despite Bordeaux's reputation for high prices, there are many values to be had.

Under the ownership of Martine Cazeneuve, Château Paloumey has steadily improved in recent years, and the '10 is the estate's first bottling to score outstanding on the *Wine Spectator* 100-point scale. The Cazeneuve family bought the estate in 1990 and replanted its vineyards, located in the southern Médoc near Cantemerle and La Lagune. As the vineyards have matured, and a second wine has helped strengthen the selection for the *grand vin*, the estate has grown into a standout producer in the under-\$20 category.

Elsewhere, the husband-and-wife team of Frédéric and Hélène Soual have taken over her father's estate, [Château du Retout](#), located in Cussac-Fort-Médoc. The 84 acres of vines planted there in the 1950s produce an ample supply of grapes, and the estate's typically robust style takes on extra cut and definition in the racy '10 vintage.

[Château Féret-Lambert](#) is a relative newcomer. Henri and Valérie Féret bought a sheep pasture situated on a limestone plateau in the town of Grézillac, just across the river from St.-Emilion. The wine debuted in the '01 vintage, and has come into its own in recent years, offering plush, friendly texture and tasty plum and blackberry fruit, all at buy-by-the-case prices.

There's a solid group of bargains here, ranging from burly, stone-tinged wines to those with a more modern profile, such as the blueberry-filled Château de Gironville. When it comes to Bordeaux, it doesn't have to be a *cru classé* to be a classy wine.

CHÂTEAU PALOUMEY Haut-Médoc 2010 Score: 91 | \$17

Dark, grippy and very tarry, with lots of pebbly tannins driving underneath the layers of boysenberry, steeped fig and blackberry fruit. Ample baker's chocolate and dark tobacco fill in the remaining space. This will need a little cellaring to round into form, but remains a very solid, muscular version. Best from 2015 through 2022. 350 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DU RETOUT Haut-Médoc 2010 Score: 91 / \$18

Very ripe, fresh and lively, offering plum, cassis and black cherry compote notes mixed with lightly singed sandalwood and warm stone accents. Shows excellent cut on the finish, with the stony edge hanging on. A wine with character. Best from 2014 through 2024. 3,300 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU L'ARGENTEYRE Médoc 2010 Score: 90 / \$19

Dense, with deliciously dark cocoa, graphite and roasted spice notes imbedded in a core of dark, fleshy plum sauce, currant paste and blackberry confiture. The long, racy finish smolders with dark fruit. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2020. 700 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU POITEVIN Médoc 2010 Score: 90 / \$15

Alluring, with a polished structure that lets the smoldering bay, anise, steeped plum and warm paving stone notes play out. Shows latent grip and solid depth. Best from 2014 through 2022. 20,000 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU BEL-ORME TRONQUOY DE LALANDE Haut-Médoc 2010 Score: 89 / \$18

Shows a gutsy feel, with lightly mulled plum and steeped cassis fruit melded with singed apple wood and smoldering charcoal. The long, fleshy finish lets the roasted wood edge play out. Needs a little cellaring. Best from 2014 through 2024. 500 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU BELLEVUE PEYCHARNEAU Bordeaux Supérieur 2010 Score: 89 / \$18

This has nice dark mocha and espresso notes leading the way and melded to the core of plush plum, blackberry paste and fig fruit. The roasted, smoky finish has enough of a graphite edge to stay honest. A bit revved up, but still enjoyable. Drink now through 2014. 1,500 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU FÉRET-LAMBERT Bordeaux Supérieur 2010 Score: 89 / \$19

Ripe and solid, with a dark core of plum and blackberry laced with toasted anise, singed apple wood and graphite. Shows good drive through the finish. Drink now through 2015. 1,000 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE GIRONVILLE Haut-Médoc 2010 Score: 89 / \$18

Features unbridled fruit, with blueberry coulis, loganberry and blackberry notes mixed together and stitched with toasted anise and fruitcake accents. A touch toasty on the finish, but the exotic profile will win some fans. Drink now through 2015. 1,000 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU GROMEL BEL AIR Bordeaux Supérieur Cuvée Eva 2010 Score: 89 / \$12

A grippy style, with a graphite edge from start to finish that pushes the muscular core of dark currant, blackberry and espresso along. A loamy hint shows on the finish. Drink now through 2015. 1,250 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU LANGLET Graves 2010 Score: 89 / \$18

Features dark fruit, with crushed plum and blackberry coulis, carried by velvety tannins and backed by a long finish of black tea, tar and smoke. Drink now through 2017. 200 cases imported. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE PAILLET-QUANCARD Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux 2010 Score: 89 / \$15

Sleek, with fresh damson plum, Campari liqueur and red currant notes inlaid with singed savory and a twinge of iron. Features a long, pure finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2017. 7,800 cases made. —*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU PONTOISE CABARRUS Haut-Médoc 2010 *Score: 89 / \$19*

Solid, with black currant and plum notes that show flecks of tar and black licorice. A strong graphite edge drives the finish. Drink now through 2018. 400 cases imported. —*J.M.*