

Right as Rain

Cold, wet weather meant the 2008 growing season was a challenge in Bordeaux. A spell of warm, dry conditions in July and an Indian summer in September saved the season from being a write-off, and some outstanding wines were made. **James Suckling** attended a small tasting of the 2008 Bordeaux vintage during Vinexpo Hong Kong in May. Here are his top 10, including two exciting whites

CHÂTEAU LA CONSEILLANTE POMEROL

The sweetness of fruit and the balance are really impressive. Medium to full body, fine tannins, and a light milk chocolate, blueberry and spice character. Bright acidity gives it verve. Drink or hold. ● 93 points



CHÂTEAU MONTROSE SAINT-ESTÈPHE

The purity and precision in this wine is exciting. Medium to full body, firm and chewy tannins, and a long finish of currant and spice. Black tea and bark too. Better in 2020 but beautiful now. Decant before serving. ● 95 points



CHÂTEAU SMITH HAUT LAFITTE PESSAC-LÉOGNAN

Decadent and rich on the nose with lots of ripe fruit and meaty undertones. Almost truffle-like. Full body, lots of ripe tannins and plenty of fruit. Still needs time to soften. Big and juicy for the vintage. Better in 2018 but impressive now. ● 95 points



CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE BARTON SAINT-JULIEN

This was always one of the wines of the vintage, with currant, cassis and chocolate aromas and flavours. Full body, chewy and polished tannins, and a fresh and fine finish. Tight now but so beautiful. Decant a couple of hours before serving. ● 94 points



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CHÂTEAU CANON SAINT-ÉMILION
A tight and firm Canon with blueberry, chalk and cedar aromas. Full to medium body, firm and racy. A salty undertone in the aftertaste. Better in 2019 but already fascinating. ● 93 points

DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER PESSAC-LÉOGNAN BLANC

Very attractive aromas of grapefruit, sliced apple and lemon. Some lanolin. Full body, intense dried fruit and hints of vanilla bean. Crazy finish. This is a unique white that shows incredible depth and power. Drink or hold. ● 95 points



CHÂTEAU PONTET-CANET PAUILLAC

The minerality and floral character is really impressive, with lots of bark, currant and dried rose character. Full body, chewy yet polished tannins and a mouthwatering finish. Made from biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold. ● 94 points



CHÂTEAU COS D'ESTOURNEL SAINT-ESTÈPHE

A very decadent wine on the nose with so much meat, spice and ripe fruit character. Sea shell as well. Full body, tight and structured, with silky tannins and lots of intense fruit. Vibrant wine. Better in 2020 but already fascinating to drink. ● 94 points



CHÂTEAU SMITH HAUT LAFITTE PESSAC-LÉOGNAN BLANC

Lots of dried fruit, such as apple and pear, mineral and lanolin. Medium to full body, dense and flavourful. Bright acidity. Waxy finish. Very serious structure. Drink now. ● 94 points



CHÂTEAU PICHON-LONGUEVILLE BARON PAUILLAC

Wow. So much bright fruit in this, with orange peel and blackcurrant character. Floral and lively. Full body, silky tannins, and a long and flavourful finish. Hard not to drink now. ● 94 points

