

Cool August nights proved crucial to successful dry white 2019 Bordeaux

Of some 2.64 million hectolitres of wine produced under the Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur AOC appellations, just over 10% was dry white in 2019. It is sometimes the case that a fine year for reds is not as good for dry whites – and vice versa. However, 2019, which looks to be outstanding for reds, is also quite good for dry white Bordeaux.

Certainly a solar vintage similar to 2018, the 2019 vintage however benefited more from cooler nights in August, leaving the impression of better balance as compared to 2018.

As long time vintage observer Gavin Quinney noted, the dry whites “show great promise”, which, based on this tasting, I think is fulfilled. While the wines lack the laser like focus of a vintage like 2014, 2019 has acidity to balance the richness. And the best wines reflect excellent viticulture and vat room work to maintain freshness, about which you can read in more detail in the ensuing tasting notes.

The owner of the famous Domaine de Chevalier, Olivier Bernard, also sells Bordeaux AOC whites, and over a recent tasting, he remarked how the whites have more “tension” in 2019 when compared to 2018: “Too much heat kills the whites, so thank goodness, we had a normal month of August with cool nights.”

Indeed, over lunch at Planète Bordeaux –

the regional wine syndicate for AOC Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur – a newly minted fine dry white AOC Bordeaux made with over 50% Sémillon called Le Loup de La Loubière exuded balance in its expression of citrus, candied lemon, white stone fruit and sage.

Crafted under the consultancy of Jean Claude Berrouet, for many years the director of Pétrus in Pomerol, the wine’s finesse is matched by inventive packaging to sell in challenging markets. It bore no mention of the word “Bordeaux” on the front label: the white label with a wolf (loup, in French) evokes non-traditional appeal, says co-owner Caroline Teycheney, for people who do not know “Bordeaux white”. Like Teycheney, other producers compete with varietal white wine in the £5 to £15 price range with what novel packaging approaches: “A needed strategy” among others to better meet such challenges, says Florian Reyne, general manager of Planète Bordeaux.

BEST BUYS Bordeaux Blanc 2019

Château Bel Air Perponcher, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 90

£10-15 **The Wine Society**
70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon. Just as this estate succeeds with fine reds, the white wine is oh so worthy of your time. The price is right and what you have is a balanced and fresh wine - aromas and flavours of fresh cut grass, sweet herb, orange clementine, lime -

with mid palate density and a satisfying finish. The juicy mid palate is not without complexity and it conjures a dish of seared scallops in a white wine and butter sauce, or a roasted free range chicken with lemon. One of the top whites assessed for this article. Bravo!

Chateau Des Antonins, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 90

Under £10 **Berry Bros & Rudd**
80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sémillon. For the price, a sure thing. The wine has a denser nature than some others here as the 20% Sémillon lends an almost apricot yoghurt feel, although the citrus of the Sauvignon Blanc balances the wine very nicely. I like the rich get vibrant palate, with a finish marked by juicy ripe pear and honey. Château des Antonins takes root on the left bank of the Garonne, at the gates of Graves and Sauternes. The vineyard includes five hectares of 80% Sauvignon Blanc 20% Sémillon vines on sandy loam soil. It is eco-friendly, and the entire estate obtained High Environmental Value Level 3 (HVE3) certification since the 2018 harvest. Another added plus: the estate also proposes bed and breakfast within the Antonins Abbey. 2020-2023

Château La Rame, AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 90

www.chateaularame.com/
85% Sauvignon Blanc, 15% Sémillon. Thoroughly bracing white wine, and even though the word “Rame” means paddle, this wine is certainly not close to water. Fresh and



brisk, and quite a feat coming from a solar vintage like 2019. The grapes for this cuvée come from a four hectare hillside parcel of clay and limestone soil with a full southern exposure that overlooks the Garonne River. The vines have an average age of nearly 25 years. After a manual harvest, the grapes are fermented in temperature-controlled vats and left on the fine lees for six months prior to bottling. You can enjoy on its own or with shrimp or cod filet. 2020-2022

Château Thieuley,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 90

Under £10 **The Wine Society, Charles Taylors Wines** 45% Sauvignon Blanc, 15% Sauvignon Gris, 40% Sémillon. Grand success for 2019, this well established estate has once again proven its mettle. Pale lemon hue and an expressive nose of lilac, passion fruit and lime. Sure, the palate is round and rich, but the citrus has freshness and lift to the wine. Very well balanced. Long finish : a wine that "punches above its weight" and thus offers a fine price/quality ratio. Can go toe to toe with roast turkey.

Château Tour De Mirambeau,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 90

£10-£15 **Ratcliffe and Brown** 75% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Sémillon. Another top wine among the whites, the Tour de Mirambeau is the flagship of the Despagne family, which also crafts the excellent Château Bel Air Perponcher. This one exudes ripe juicy pear and mango notes, echoed on the dense palate, which remains fresh despite the heat of the vintage. One of the most vivacious among the whites assessed for this article and it would be a perfect match to a wide variety of dishes; from fetticini alfredo to grilled sea bass, to a quiche lorraine.

Sec De Rayne Vigneau,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 90

£10-£15 **www.raynevigneau.fr** 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Made from the same talented team that crafts the Premier Cru Classé of Château Rayne Vigneau in Sauternes,

this is a superb dry white, that combines subtlety and richness. The sprightly nature of Sauvignon Blanc is present as expected but there is suave aspect to the wine that transcends the varietal. The wine is made from seven hectares of gravelly slopes planted with Sauvignon Blanc vines specially dedicated to its production. Vinified in 80hl wooden vats specially designed to allow a batonnage on the lees, which gives it a remarkable balance between freshness and velvet. 2020- 2026

Château De L'Aubrade,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 89

£10-£15 **www.vignobles-lobre.com** 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Muscadelle, 10% Sémillon. Very pronounced aromatically and quite floral with notes of magnolia especially. The palate then conveys fine ripe lemon and grapefruit, as the Sauvignon Blanc takes charge. Mid palate density comes thanks to the Sémillon. Quite a nice white! Can stand up to fish or poultry but why not try with a bacon and cheese quiche?

Château Du Carpia,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 89

www.lecarpia.com 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Subtle and elegant on the nose. Not at all "varietal" and rather refined. With acacia, white flower, herb and citrus. Aged in barrels with lees stirring. Certified organic since 2009. And I suppose it is no surprise that this wine is so successful, owned by Xavier Planty, who currently directs Château Guiraud 1er Grand Cru Classé in 1855 in Sauternes for 30 years. 2020-2023

Château Jean Faux,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 89

£15 **Jascot** 80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sémillon. A classy nose: here we have one of the better whites tasted for this article. And with reason. For one, the density of vine plantings - at 7,400 per hectare - is higher than most others in its Bordeaux AOC category. Straw yellow colour, with aromas of key lime pie, peach and a touch

of passion fruit all nicely integrating the 25% new oak used for aging. Probably even better in a vintage more ideal for whites, such as 2014, this 2019 however "punches above its weight". Almost substantial enough for lobster and butter; but an easy match for seafood as well as deli meats and goat cheeses. The property has 12 hectares of vines on ideally exposed clay-limestone soils. The vineyard has been certified organic since 2011.

Chateau La Verriere,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 89

£10-£15 **Jascot** 100% Sauvignon Blanc. A fine Sauvignon Blanc that is not varietal in character, as the overall impression combines white pepper, sweet herbs, ripe white apricots and grapefruit. It has earned international plaudits for good reason: Like many of the most successful wines assessed for this article, Château La Verrière takes careful attention to the winemaking with a bit of skin maceration that lends more fruitiness and volume, gentle and progressive pressing with a pneumatic press. The fermentation is carried out in vats at a temperature between 18 and 20°C. The wine obtained is then aged on fine lees a few months before the blends prior to bottling. Ideal for grilled sea bass with olive oil and lemon.

Château Lamothe-Vincent Heritage,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 89

£10-£15 **Terry Herbert** 55% Sauvignon Gris, 45% Sauvignon Blanc. Clearly ripe fruit, and the lovely maritime sea breeze saltiness is a pleasure! Harvesting at night and freshness-preserving vinification were important to bring about one of the better examples of white Bordeaux in 2019. No doubt the cooler clayey-siliceous rocky limestone helped, but let us give proper accolades to the fine winemaking, such as low temperature skin contact maceration and cold stabulation (6°C) on must deposits. Fermentation at 18-20°C and six months ageing on spent lees with stirring in French oak barrels. Highly recommended for its freshness and palate ➤



density. Ripe juicy pear aspects along with hints of toasted oak make this quite complex, too. I could enjoy this with lobster and butter.

**Château Tour De Goupin,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 89**

www.vignobles-deffarge.fr

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Muscadelle, 10% Sémillon. An excellent white for the vintage that should be considered for the UK market. Among the most vibrant of the wines tasted for this article, it brings forth bright Kiwi and lime on the nose and a tangy palate that includes some floral aspects and mid palate density from the Sémillon. Do not hesitate.

**Bdx Revolution,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

£10-£15 www.producta-vignobles.com

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Quite a nice wine for a machine harvest. Just as this estate excelled in 2018, it does again in 2019. Lime and Kiwi leap from the glass, but the palate has more of a white peach profile albeit it finishing on citrus acidity - very Bordeaux Sauvignon Blanc. In this solar vintage, the cold fermentation was essential to preserve freshness. 2020-2022

**Château Belle Garde,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

Under £10 **Lea & Sanderman**

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sémillon, 10% Sauvignon Gris. Medium lemon hue, peach aromas. A touch of oak? Smooth on the palate, a certain breed that transcends the varietal nature of the wine. Indeed, clays over a limestone base of the vineyards in the Génissac sector bring balance and class to this wine. Careful picking to avoid oxidization, carried out from 4am until 10am. The fermentation at 15° conserves fruity character. Try it with fish or even veal in a cream sauce. For the price, do not hesitate.

**Chateau Buisson Redon Blanc,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

<https://chateaumaynevieil.com/>

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Importers take note! The Château Buisson-Redon is part of Château Mayne-Vieil in Fronsac and is a lovely wine. Pale lemon hue. The nose comes across like the label: classic. Ripe grapefruit rind and lemon cake presage a medium bodied palate that brings forth some fine wet stone minerality. Fermentation at low temperature to maintain freshness and short maceration on the lees to obtain a bit of richness. This would be just fine with oysters on a half shell or goat cheese with herbs. Highly recommended for the price, which would be less than £10 in the UK.



**Château Cajus Blanc Tradition,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

www.chateau-cajus.bio

50% Sémillon, 50% Sauvignon Blanc. Aromatic and tangy, this certified organic wine would go down well as an aperitif: aromas and flavours include kiwi, lime and wet stone. I like the energy here!

**Château De La Vieille Tour,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

www.boissonneau.fr

40% Sémillon, 30% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sauvignon Gris, 10% Muscadelle. Certified organic and a pure aromatic expression that blends fresh cut grass and suggests lavender: quite herbal in fact, but not too ostentatious. A touch of ripe pear and lemon sneak through with aeration. The palate has much zest and energy but nonetheless expressed in a smooth texture leading to a fresh and pleasing finish; no doubt the Sémillon lends body. Should go nicely with smoked or grilled salmon.

**Château De Parenchère,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

£10-£15 **Peter Osborne Wines, Oxfordshire**

50% Sémillon, 30% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Muscadelle. A wine that has a touch of oak seasoning and hides the varietal nature well. And yet the three grapes used are recognised in the blend; the floral Muscadelle, the peachy Sémillon, the citrus Sauvignon Blanc. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A wine of polish given some excellent limestone soils. The estate carries out sustainable vine-growing, via "Agriculture Raisonnée" (Reasoned Farming), and it received in 2012 the HEV certification (High Environmental Value farm) – Level 3 – the highest level.

**Château Du Claouset,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

www.vignobles-siozard.com

60% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Muscadelle. Clean, crisp and smooth: you have to love the purity of fruit. Lemon and white stone fruit, at a juicy ripe stage, along with a touch of Kiwi for zing beckons further sipping (and drinking). And with 30,000 bottles, this should enjoy a share of the UK market. Careful attention to the winemaking brings results: pneumatic pressure with skin maceration. The alcoholic fermentation over 10 days at a low 15°C.

**Château Ferreyres,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

Under £10 **Bacchus Wine Cellar**

100% Sauvignon Blanc. A successful white with notes of grapefruit and kiwi. The palate conveys freshness and energy, in part thanks to cold skin maceration for six hours before pressing and cooler temperatures during alcoholic fermentation. Aging on the lees for four months lends richness, but in stainless steel tanks, so that the character is more fruit forward. Bring on the raw oysters!

**Château Grand Jean,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

www.vignobles-dulon.com

70% Sémillon, 30% Sauvignon Blanc. Château Grand Jean is one of the whites here that bursts with energy and fun. While some are more "cerebral", this wine packs bright citrus and ripe white stone fruit aromas and flavours in glass. The success of the wine depends on careful winemaking after careful harvesting: Pressing with selection of must, cold stabilization, racking of the must to extract the finest aromas, fermentation at a lower temperature (18-20° to preserve freshness), maturing on fine lees for three months to obtain aromas and rounded taste, fining, filtering, blending and bottling. The wine can be enjoyed alone but even better with hors d'oeuvres such as tapas or with a shrimp platter.

**Château Haut-Rian,
AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**

£10-£15 **Thorman Hunt**

60% Sémillon, 40% Sauvignon Blanc. The old vine Sémillon dominates here, especially on the palate, which is rich without being heavy or warm, given the vintage. The end result is a mouth watering wine, not without depth, and thus a white that can be considered both "serious" and delicious. Certainly would be good with charcuterie and cheeses, but it has the depth to match paella, for example. Bravo!

Château La Freynelle,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**£10-£15 **Tees Ltd**

60% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Sémillon, 20% Muscadelle. From the get go, this wine shows freshness for the vintage. The palate is rounded yet with vivacity. Apricot, lemon and white flower aromas and flavours enchant the palate, which is rather pleasingly creamy in texture, medium bodied and juicy. This would accompany very well a grilled salmon and even has enough oomph to match Pad Thai. White wines were historically a major part of the region's production, and now represent around 25% of the total surface of vines planted at La Freynelle. Love the easy-open screwcap!

Château Lauduc Classic,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**Under £10 **The Good Wine Shop**

75% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Sémillon. Among the last whites assessed for this article and the saying "last but not least" comes to mind: for the low price, one enjoys pomelo fruit, white peach, hints of litchi fruit and lemon. As much as I like the expressive aromatics, the palate is pleasingly dense and rich, with a finish that is just a touch bitter, like Indian Tonic. A wine that could easily be shared as an aperitif to open a party or to accompany of plate of cheese and ham.

Château Milord Les Calcaires,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**www.bordeauxlink.wine/

33% Sauvignon Blanc, 33% Sémillon, 34% Muscadelle. Engaging aromas suggest depth: wet stone, sweet herbs, prairie flowers. Indeed, this unique blend with more than one-third Muscadelle is charming. The palate has depth, too, with a Sémillon driven density that remains fresh and fun, with citrus overtones. A juicy wine that sadly is limited to 6,000 bottles. Highly recommended.

Château Pertignas Cuvée Priolet,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**£10-£15 **David Matheson (Guernesey)**

95% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Muscadelle. Not quite as good as the 2017, this 2019 nonetheless is a thoroughly pleasing wine: bright candied lemon aromas precede a palate that is both smoothly textured and bright. The finish has a grapefruit fresh lift to it, and the wine would be ideal with oysters on a half shell with a touch of lemon juice.

Château Pierrail,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88****Booths**

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sauvignon Gris.

Who needs New Zealand when you can get a less expensive Bordeaux that exudes bright citrus flavours and mid palate depth? The pale yellow robe presages an expressive nose combining multiple citrus aromas and flavours, from blood orange to grapefruit rind. A touch of mango adds more fun. The palate exudes pure and clean fruit expressions, balancing acidity with the natural richness of the 2019 vintage. Serve confidently with raw oysters and clams or with grilled squid soaked in lemon juice and olive oil.

Château Recogne,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**Under £10 **Majestic**

35% Sauvignon Blanc, 35% Sauvignon Gris, 30% Sémillon. Like other astute vintners, this estate's team harvest at daybreak to ensure freshness - a fact so important that they put it on their back label. In a solar vintage like 2019, that paid dividends: quite a bright wine, with vivid citrus aromas and flavours. It may lack the depth and density of some of the very top wines here, but it still earns plaudits for freshness and "drinkability". Bravo!

Loudenne Le Château,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**£15 **Hayward Bros**

85% Sauvignon Blanc, 15% Sémillon. "Bottled in late March at the northern Médoc estate, this is lovely white with a long history. Frank and fresh with mid palate density. Fermented and aged for eight months in oak barrels, it has been a symbol of Château Loudenne since ... 1880. Oak aging lends a certain "sheen" that transcends the varietal aspects and yet one gets the citrus from the Sauvignon Blanc and peach from the Sémillon. The palate density is such that it would pair well with pork chops for example, maybe with a mango sauce.

Michel Lynch,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**£10-£15 **AC Gallie**

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Crisp clean and vibrant, this is always a reliable Bordeaux white: Pale lemon hue, aromatics that combine citrus and white blossom and pineapple, Michel Lynch Blanc manages to provide a succulent and vibrant attack on the palate, given the challenges of the 2019 vintage. The white

grapes are sourced from both Graves and Entre-Deux-Mers and low-temperature vinification preserves freshness. The oak barrel aging bring about subtle creaminess to the mid palate. Michel Lynch Blanc should be drunk cool (around 12°C) as an aperitif or as the ideal accompaniment to seafood or roast chicken, even served cold with mustard.

Verso de Château Franc Baudron,**AOC Bordeaux Blanc 2019 88**www.chateau-franc-baudron.com

47% Sauvignon Blanc, 47% Sémillon, 6% Muscadelle. Medium lemon hue, this wine is a success: Certified organic, the purity of fruit engages the taster, as does the vivacity of the wine, which I enjoyed over a lunch with salmon, ham, sliced avocado, carrots and tomatoes. It would also go well with a shrimp platter or olive tapenade. And the label is hard to beat. Importers should take notice.

Crémant de Bordeaux 2019**Château Sainte Marie Brut Nature,****Crémant de Bordeaux 2019 88**£15 **Enotria**

48% Merlot, 52% Cabernet Franc. Assisted by star consultant oenologist Hubert de Bouard of Château Angéus in Saint Emilion. The vinification is indeed Brut Nature, and aged for six months in French oak barrels of which one third are new. A tad steely but kudos for crafting a bubbly to go very well with shellfish.

Les Fines Du Payre Blanc,**Crémant de Bordeaux 2019 88**£8 www.chateau-du-payre.fr

100% Sémillon. A zesty yet full bodied bubbly, balancing richness with Granny Smith green apple vivacity. Importers should take notice but you can buy online direct from the estate. Would go well with both salmon and goat cheese on crackers.

Perle De La Brande,**Crémant de Bordeaux 2019 88**www.chateau-labrande.fr

Based in Fronsac, this estate is making some fine bubbly: I like the verve on the palate, with aromas and flavours of red apple, wet stone and toasted almond. Exudes energy, density and... fun. Bravo!

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