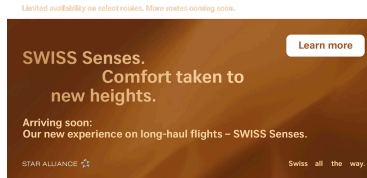


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10 Red Bordeaux That Prove Great Bottles Don't Have to Cost a Fortune

There's never been a better time to buy Bordeaux.

By **Ray Isle** | Published on September 25, 2026

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Credit: Food & Wine / Photo by Greg DuPree / Food Styling by Margaret Dickey / Prop Styling by Claire Spollen

Somehow, somewhere, people got it into their heads that all [Bordeaux](#) is pricey. Or, maybe, fancy. Perhaps it shouldn't come as a surprise. The great classified growths of the [Médoc](#) (so-called because of an 1855 ranking of top châteaux that still holds enormous power today), the super-pricey superstar châteaux of Pomerol and Saint-Émilion, with names like Château Mouton Rothschild, Château Cheval Blanc, and Pétrus, have held great sway over the pocketbooks of collectors and the image of the entire region. Good in many ways; not so good in others.

Bordeaux is [big](#). It spans 78 miles east to west and 63 miles north to south and has about 4,000 châteaux producing wine from some 250,000 acres of vineyards (a château is not a castle in Bordeaux terminology; it's a wine-producing estate). The top names are a tiny fraction of that. As a result, many very good Cabernet- and Merlot-based wines come from this storied place that don't cost anywhere near the multi-hundred-dollar prices the first growths command. Add the fact that there has been a string of

ly good vintages – 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2022 (2021 was fine, – that are all on shelves now. Simply put, if you love red

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2022 Château de Fontenille Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux (\$25)

Cadillac is one of the five subappellations within the broader appellation of Côtes de Bordeaux; it's also a source for underrated Bordeaux reds that won't damage your wallet, like this one. A 50/50 blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, it has a creamy black currant nose, with full, plush tannins and a little citrus peel acidity to wrap things up.

2023 Madame de Beaucaillou Haut-Médoc (\$28)

This violet-scented Haut-Médoc red is firmly structured, with chewy tannins supporting its fresh red- and black-currant flavors. In this vintage, it's a blend of 59% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 4% Petit Verdot.

2019 Château Biac Félix de Biac (\$29)

Château Biac, in the Premières Côtes de Bordeaux appellation, has one of the prettiest views in Bordeaux, of vineyards sloping down to the Garonne River. Plus, its wines are superb, both the grand vin and this second wine, which is supple, plummy, and a pleasure to drink.

2019 Château Roc de Candale Saint-Émilion Grand Cru (\$30)

Sought-after consultant Stéphane Derenoncourt weighs in on the winemaking for this spicy, cedary red. A blend of 92% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, it comes from a 10-acre vineyard planted with organically farmed vines.

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2022 was a terrific Bordeaux vintage, and this red shows why. It has plenty of spicy red fruit and supple tannins, ending on an intriguing herbal-minty note. Connétable is the second wine of Château Talbot, a fourth growth in the 1855 classification. If you can spring for the grand vin (about \$95), then do it – it's a stellar vintage for this château.

2021 Château Respide-Médeville Graves Rouge (\$40)

Coming from the heart of the Graves appellation, this blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot lures you with blueberry and black currant aromas into a svelte, medium-bodied red that ends on a hint of toastiness.

2021 Château de **Pez** Saint-Estèphe (\$41)

A surprisingly affordable wine from the prestigious Saint-Estèphe appellation, **Pez** in 2021 has classic aromas of graphite (think shaved pencil lead), oak toast, and blackberries – the same notes follow through on the palate. In this vintage, it's 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, and 2% Cabernet Franc.

2018 Château de Bel-Air Lalande-de-Pomerol (\$50)

Known as one of the top wines of Lalande-de-Pomerol since the 1920s, Bel-Air offers fragrant red currant and cherry notes, its flavors soft and lingering with an alluring, kirsch-like character. (Be sure you get this specific Bel-Air, as there are innumerable wine estates with similar names throughout France.)

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CHATEAU PUYBLANQUET (\$64)

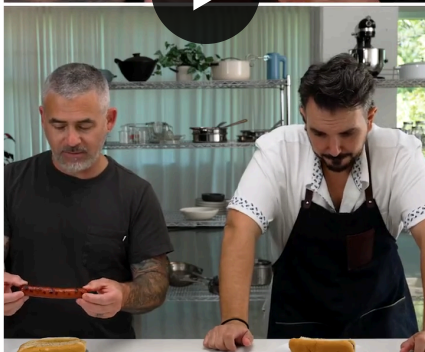
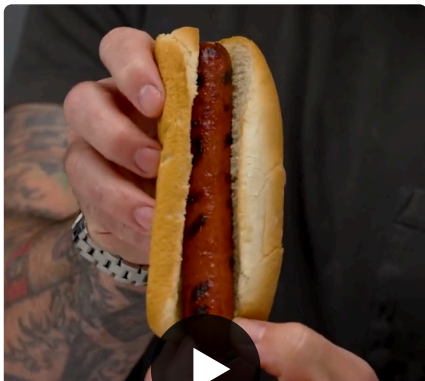
One of several properties owned by the Milhade family, Boutisse was elevated to Grand Cru Classé status in 2022. Based on this wine, it's a well-deserved honor: The 2022 is plush and polished, with a lot of succulence and rich purple fruit followed by enveloping tannins. There's a lot of power and presence here.

2020 Château Puyblanquet Saint-Émilion Grand Cru (\$64)

The first vintage since the Malet Roquefort family bought the property in 2020 – or regained it, as the family previously owned it from the late 1700s until 1959 – this luscious Merlot-driven red has generous black fruit, soft tannins, and a light hint of cured tobacco.

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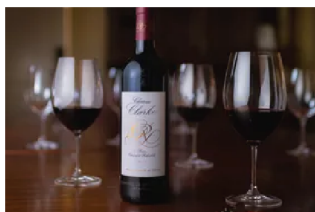
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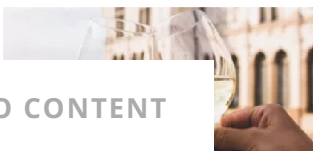
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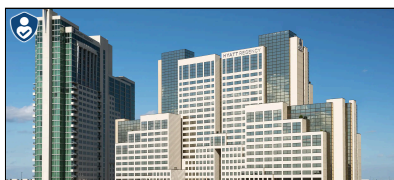
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