



A Major 2009 BORDEAUX Event

by Charles M. Bear Dalton



Houston often gets passed over on the wine events circuit. While Houston is the nation's fourth largest metropolitan area (and some marketers are already acting as if Houston has passed Chicago for third), other industries sometimes act

as if Houston is not even in the top ten. Some elements of the wine industry have long passed over Houston in favor of smaller markets on the east and west coasts and, most galling to Houston residents, Dallas and even Austin.

Not this time. Well, sort of not this time. In January of most years, the Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux (UGC) comes to the US and puts on a few Bordeaux tasting to show off the new vintage. This January will see six official tastings in five US cities: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, New York, and Chicago. Thanks to Spec's relationship with leading Bordeaux negociant Nathaniel Johnston, Houston will have a preview of the UGC tour. Brothers Archie and Ivanhoe Johnston (who along with their brother Denis own Nathaniel Johnston) are bringing thirty Bordeaux winemakers, directors, and chateau owners to Houston to show their 2009 wines at a grand tasting to be held in the Discovery Center of the InterContinental Hotel in Houston.

This is a great opportunity for Houston wine lovers. For those who love Bordeaux, it is a great way to get a quick exposure to the truly exceptional 2009 vintage. For those who are not familiar with the top quality wines of Bordeaux, this is a great opportunity to taste the wines. Everyone tasting will be able to visit with and ask questions of the people behind the wines. It is also a chance to show the wine world that Houston belongs on the itineraries of everyone who is traveling in the US to show great wines.

At \$65.00 per person (including Spec's famous 5% discount for cash), this is an event not to be missed.

2009 Cru Classé Bordeaux Tasting at the InterContinental Hotel

On January 19th, 2012, please join Spec's in welcoming thirty Bordeaux chateau owners, directors, and/or winemakers who will be presenting forty top-appellation Bordeaux wines all from the excellent 2009 vintage in a stand-up-and-walk-around tasting format. This is the first time Houston has ever hosted such a delegation from Bordeaux. The event will be held at the INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTEL. By appellation, the list of well-known and highly regarded wines to be tasted includes ...

RIGHT BANK

Pomerol: Chx. Gazin and Clinet

St. Emilion: Chx. Angelus, Canon La Gaffeliere, Clos l'Oratoire, and Daugay

Castillon: Ch. d'Aiguilhe

LEFT BANK

St. Estephe: Chx. Lafon Rochet and les Ormes de Pez

Pauillac: Chx. Pichon Baron, Pibran, Lynch Bages (with Echo de Lynch Bages and Lynch Bages Blanc as well), Grand Puy Lacoste, Haut Bataille, d'Armailhac, Clerc Milon, and Haut Bages Liberal

St. Julien: Chx. Branaire Ducru, Ch. Leoville Poyferrre, Talbot, Lagrange, and Gloria

Margaux: Chx. Brane Cantenac (along with Baron de Brane), Cantenac Brown, and Ferriere

Haut Medoc: Chx. Cantemerle, Chasse Spleen, Camensac, and Poujeaux

Pessac Leognan (Graves): Ch. Carbonnieux (both red & white), Domaine de Chevalier (both red & white), Smith Haut Lafitte (both red and white) and Clos Marsalette

Sauternes: Ch. Suduiraut

Other Coming Attractions

The Wine School at l'Alliance Française presents WINE 101: A Four-Week Course on Wine Basics

Please join Spec's corporate fine wine buyer Bear Dalton for this four-week Wine Basics course. "Wine 101" is designed both for those just developing their interest in wine and those who feel the need for a good review to help organize their tasting and thinking about wine. This class also would be a good place to start for a service professional looking to move more into the wine side of the restaurant business or anyone looking to move into the wholesale or retail wine trade. As wine from all over the world is now so readily available, the 40 wines we will taste over the four-week class will come from all over the world.

Week 1 (1/23/12): Why Taste? Starting at the beginning: The basics of tasting. Tasting wine versus drinking wine. Sensory Evaluation. Types of tasting. Blind tasting. Playing "The Options Game". Ten wines will be tasted. Additional topics will include proper glassware, wine tools, and the restaurant wine ritual.

Week 2 (1/30/12): White wine making and white wine varieties and styles. We will taste ten white wines including Chardonnay with and without oak, off-dry whites, and sweet dessert wine. Topics will include how grape growing and winemaking affect wine style and flavors and how the types of wine represented by those tasted pair with food. We also will talk about wine storage and wine preservation and the concept of terroir.

Week 3 (2/6/12): Red (and Rosé) wine making and red wine varieties. We will taste ten red wines representing a range of styles and varieties including new world versus old world comparisons. Topics will include how grape growing and winemaking affect wine style and flavors and how the types of wine represented by those tasted pair with food. We also will talk about age-ability and age-worthiness as well as wine keeping and wine collecting.

Week 4 (2/13/12): Sparkling Wines (ranging from the Charmat bulk process wines – such as Prosecco – to real French Champagne) and Fortified wines focusing mostly on Port. We will discuss grape varieties, styles, techniques and their impact on flavor. We will discuss decanting and decanters and pairing these unusual partners with food.

The four-week Wine 101 will cost \$220.00 total per person cash (\$231.58 regular) for all four sessions. The course will meet at 7pm on Monday January 23, January 30, February 6, and February 13 of 2012. To reserve your spot for this unique four-week class, please call 832-660-0250 or email amandahardy@specsonline.com. All sessions of this class will be held at l'Alliance Française, the French cultural center in Houston. Located at 427 Lovett Blvd., l'Alliance is on the southeast corner of Lovett and Whitney (one block south of Westheimer and two blocks east of Montrose).

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Rodeo Uncorked! Round Up and Best Bites

Save the evening of Sunday, February 19th for Houston's best annual wine and food event: The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Rodeo Uncorked Round Up and Best Bites Competition at Reliant Center. Sample over 200 award-winning wines from the Show's 9th annual International Wine Competition (that's the "Round Up" part along with food (that's the "Best Bites" part) from over 60 of Houston's best restaurants, caterers, and specialty shops. The fun starts at 6:30pm and runs through 9:pm. Advance individual tickets are \$125. Reserved tables for 10 start at \$1800. A limited number of premium tables for 10 are available for \$2,000. Table buyers and their guests get in 30 minutes early at 6:00pm. This event has sold out every year. Proceeds go to support the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's mission of Education, Agriculture, Entertainment, and Western Heritage.

Rodeo Uncorked! Champion Wine Auction and Dinner

This evening includes a reception with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction of champion wines and related items, a sumptuous seated dinner with winning wines served from the competition, and the excitement of live auction bidding for award-winning and champion wines.

Auction packages are available for \$6,000, \$9,000 and \$12,000 for tables of 10; the total table price may be used in the live auction. Limited tickets are available for \$300 per person or a table for \$3,000 (these dinner- only package purchasers may not apply any of the table or ticket price toward the live auction).

Details: Saturday, March 3, 2012 Reception: 6 p.m.; Dinner: 7 p.m.; Auction: 8 p.m.
2nd floor Reliant Center in the 600 series rooms.

