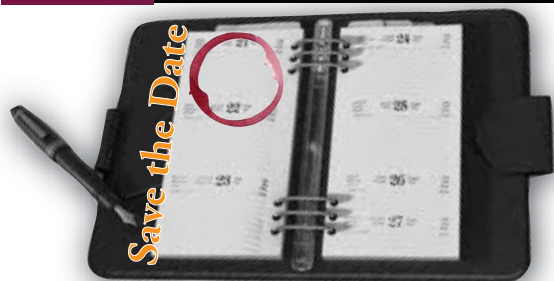




# Save the Date(s)

by Charles M. Bear Dalton



I get a lot of Save-the-Date cards in the mail. Most of them are things I am not interested in but occasionally they are useful. Please consider this to be your Save-the-Date card for four unique wine events. Just trying to be of service.

## Save-The-Date I:

### **BIG 2009 Bordeaux Tasting**

On January 19th, 2012, Spec's will host over thirty Bordeaux chateau owners, directors, and/or winemakers presenting forty top-appellation Bordeaux wines all from the excellent 2009 vintage in a standup-and-walk-around tasting format. We are still finalizing details as to the place (it will be in a venerable and respected old Houston venue) but the list of well-known and highly regarded wineries has come together. By appellation, they include ...

Pomerol: Chx. Gazin and Clinet

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

Castillon: Ch. d'Aiguilhe

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 Batailley, 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

As we are planning it, the tasting will open at 4:30pm and run until 8:30pm, giving people ample time to taste the wines and visit with our guests from Bordeaux. This is the first time Houston has ever hosted such a delegation from Bordeaux. Stay tuned for more information but go ahead and mark that date – January 19th - on your calendar.

## Save-The-Date II:

### **Spec's Trip to Champagne and Bordeaux**

In May of 2012, I will be leading a trip for Spec's customers to Champagne and Bordeaux. The trip will include two days and nights in Champagne (visiting both Grand Marques and Growers) and five days and nights in Bordeaux as well as two nights and a full day in

Paris. The way this will work is you will get yourself to Paris any way you wish (your choice of airline, route, when you get there, when you leave, whether you use miles.) Your job is to meet up with the group in Paris on the morning of May 18th (that's a Friday). Once you connect with the group, everything else is covered. From Paris we'll take the train (TGV) to Champagne and start our tour. On Sunday, we'll transfer (also by TGV) to Bordeaux. We'll stay in Bordeaux through Friday and then transfer back to Paris for dinner Friday evening, a full day of free time in Paris on Saturday, and a final dinner in Paris on Saturday night. After breakfast on Sunday, your job is then to either get yourself back home or extend your trip in Europe.

The plan is to visit three to five producers per day. Champagne properties I plan to visit include: Moët & Chandon, Lancelot Royer, Jean Laurent, Krug, and Roederer ... and a couple of surprises. Bordeaux properties I plan to visit include Chx. Latour, Pontet Canet, Batailley, Leoville Poyferre and Leoville Barton, Gruaud Larose, Branaire Ducru, Margaux, Rauzan Segla, Pontac Lynch, Canon la Gaffeliere, Vieux Ch. Certan, Haut Brion, and Smith Haut Lafitte. There will be a couple of off-beat and value stops as well. Lunches and dinners will be split between good restaurants and the chateaux. Excellent wines will be drunk.

I am beginning to schedule appointments now and will have the itinerary and budget completed by October. I'll schedule a meeting of those interested in coming in October to go over the details. Initial deposits (to hold your place) will be due in November and final payments will be due in March of 2012. We will accept up to 25 travelers. If you are interested, please send an email with "France Trip" in the subject to Bear@specsonline.com and we'll put you on the update list.

## Save-The-Date III:

### **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 9pm. 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 6pm. 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.

## Save-The-Date IV:

### **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. ✨

