



Press Kit

Publication of the Official Selection 2008 of The Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

In the early thirteenth century, France was under the rule of King John of England, known by the nickname of John Lackland (Jean sans Terre). In 1203, the English king exempted the merchants of Bordeaux from the main export tax or «Grande Coutume». In return, the «bourgeois» of the principal regions in the south-west pledged to support him against the King of France, Philippe Auguste.

This measure gave the merchants of Gascony a monopoly on the English market, and enabled the birth of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc.



The Official Selection 2008 of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

Today we unveil the Official Selection of Crus Bourgeois du Médoc from the 2008 vintage. The Official Selection comprises **243** wines, about 30% of which are available to taste, being a representative sample of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc 2008 standard across the different Médoc appellations.

2008 is the first vintage to be judged under the new "Reconnaissance" system set up this year by the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois du Médoc with the help of Bureau Véritas.

The release of the Official Selection of Crus Bourgeois du Médoc 2008 is a significant development step for the region as the "Reconnaissance" system, which will be an annual process, judges bottled wine of the vintage under scrutiny, on both quality and production facilities.

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Revival and Reconnaissance of the Crus Bourgeois

Inter-ministerial ratification

- Following the unparalleled mobilisation of Médoc wine producers in the formation of the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois du Médoc, the traditional centuries-old "Cru Bourgeois" term was reborn with "**Cru Bourgeois**" Reconnaissance.
- A totally innovative approach for the wine industry, the procedure gained government support in late 2009 with official approval in the Decree of 20 October 2009 and the Order of 16 November 2009.
- For this first year, 243 wines were recognized and form the **Official Selection 2008**.
- In September of every year the new official selection for the new vintage will be unveiled: the 2009 selection will thus be published in September 2011, "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance taking place two years after the harvest. The official announcement will be made in France and internationally every year.

Main Principles & Innovations

- The "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance is an annual examination open to all properties in the Médoc.
- The "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance judges the wines two years after the harvest (the 2008 vintage was assessed in 2010, the 2009 vintage will be done in 2011 . . .).
- The "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance involves the verification through an audit of the facilities of each property applying, and of the quality of its wine by an annual blind tasting.
- The "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance judges the wine's quality in the context of the volume produced and guarantees this to the consumer.
- The "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance is based on a Schedule of Requirements which is complemented by a Procedure of Verification.
- Observance of the Schedule of Requirements and the Procedure of Verification by each property is audited by an independent organisation.

Independence and Intransigence The secrets of the "Cru Bourgeois" quality

Each step required to acquire « Cru Bourgeois » status is controlled by an independent organisation. The independent organisation selected by the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois du Médoc is Bureau VERITAS, whose primary occupation is the evaluation of standards compliance. It brings to the "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance process a fresh perspective and an assurance of impartiality at each stage.

1st Stage: Eligibility of producers

- "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance is open to all Médoc vineyards that are authorized to produce wine in one of the eight Médoc AOCs: Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Listrac-Médoc, Moulis en Médoc, Margaux, Saint Julien, Pauillac and Saint Estèphe.
- The systematic auditing of each property applying for the "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance is carried out to check their production facilities. It is valid for several years and refers to specific standards. The eligibility of a property is controlled by the Bureau Veritas at least once every 5 years.
- Once a property is notified of its eligibility, it can submit its wines for the Reconnaissance « Crus Bourgeois » tasting.

2nd Stage: Setting the basic level of quality

- Each year, the Alliance sets that vintage's basic level of required quality to qualify as « Cru Bourgeois ».
Two representative selections are used and serve as the standards for that vintage: one for the appellations Médoc/Haut-Médoc, and another for the communal appellations, each made up of 10 wines.
- A new selection of representative samples is made every year to establish the character of each vintage.
Each of the two representative selections is rated by professional tasters according to the same procedure used in judging applicants for the "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance.
- The score of each representative selection establish the basic quality necessary to qualify for the "Cru Bourgeois".

3rd Stage: Attainment of "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance

- The eligible producer presents their vintage N at a tasting taking place in year N +2, in accordance with the schedule of tastings determined by the Alliance.
A representative sample of the vintage before bottling is taken by a qualified agent. This sample remains anonymous by the independent organisation, Bureau Veritas.
- The examination of the wine consists of a blind tasting of samples, carried out by an expert panel of professional tasters recognized by the industry and approved every year by Bureau Veritas.
- The organization of the tasting, revealing of the identity of the wines and the results of the organoleptic assessment are the responsibility of an independent body. The tasting is on an individual basis, with no conferring.
- Attribution of the "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance is based on an arithmetical average of the scores from each taster on a panel. The score given is compared to that of the representative sample of the AOC group for the given vintage. If the wine obtains a score that is higher or equal to the representative sample it is qualified « Cru Bourgeois ».

The Crus Bourgeois. Deep historical roots. The Crus Bourgeois, a legacy that dates back to the Middle Ages.

The “bourgeois” were inhabitants of the “bourg” of Bordeaux, a town of merchants and artisans. During the period of English rule, they had acquired rights and privileges, notably an exoneration of taxes on the sales of wines from their vineyards both locally (Guyenne) and abroad.

By the 15th century, enriched by their activity in international trade and navigation, the bourgeois of Bordeaux were able to acquire the finest lands in the region, which were referred to as “**Crus des Bourgeois**”, then “**Crus Bourgeois**”. Over the centuries, they played an essential role in the development of the Médoc’s vineyards in major foreign markets.

- A text dating from **1740** contains the first selection specifying the prices of wines of the Médoc. Under the French Revolution the privileges granted to the Bourgeois were cancelled and the Crus des Bourgeois suffered during this period of social turmoil.
- By the **early nineteenth century**, the Crus Bourgeois (about 300) had re-established themselves with prices that were already above those of the Crus Artisans and Paysans.
- After **1855**, the authorities planned to create additional classes within the already famous existing classification with a view to incorporating certain Crus Bourgeois.
- At that time, it appears that 248 Crus Bourgeois were listed. M. Armailhac's book, published in **1858**, lists 34 bourgeois supérieurs, 64 bons bourgeois and 150 bourgeois ordinaires.
- In the **early twentieth century**, the Crus Bourgeois developed and occupied an important place in the export markets, notably to Germany and Russia.
- The First World War brought an abrupt halt to this growth, and the situation was further aggravated by the recession of 1929. While the number of properties decreased, there were enough producers to keep the term “Cru Bourgeois” alive and for trade in the wines to be re-established after the recession.
- In **1932**, the Bordeaux wine brokers, under the double authority of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Gironde Chamber of Agriculture, designated 444 châteaux in the Médoc as Crus Bourgeois. This list however never achieves official status as it is not submitted for ministerial ratification. It nevertheless serves as the reference for the use of the term for 70 years.
- In **1962** the Official Association of the Crus Bourgeois is created. It organises on two occasions an internal ranking to stimulate competition among the Crus Bourgeois.
- In **1979**, the European Community labelling regulations approve the use of the traditional term “Cru Bourgeois” provided that the conditions for its use are specified by French laws.



The Official Selection 2008 of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

- The ministerial decree of June 17th **2003** ratifies the first Official Classification of the Crus Bourgeois. It is awarded to 247 châteaux out of 490 candidates.

Some châteaux who were not included in this classification, denounced it as unfair: the panel of experts consisted of eighteen professionals including the President of the Syndicat des Crus Bourgeois du Médoc at the time (in accordance with the procedure stated in the Decree of 30 November 2000).

- **In 2007**, the Administrative Court of Appeal of Bordeaux annulled the Decree of 17 June 2003 that approved the classification of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc. This decision was made on the basis that one cannot judge something in which one has an interest.

The Crus Bourgeois. A great family of wines.

- The Crus Bourgeois have existed for many years and are part of Bordeaux's wine heritage. Some properties existed long before the creation of the 1855 classification and many are still here today in a demonstration of the strength of the traditional "Cru Bourgeois" classification.

- The Crus Bourgeois form a big family that brings together vineyards with widely differing profiles, and very varied terroirs (eight AOCs), led by men and women who often have their origins in the Médoc, but who also come from other regions and countries, bringing dynamism and new ideas.

- This is the strength of this family: **diversity in unity**.

The vineyards share the same region and history, but each has its own character and offers the consumer something different.

- This diversity can be found at every level: winemaking techniques, flavour, price, reputation, marketing, approaches to wine tourism, communication, presence on social media, etc...

- Ultimately, the members of this great family, one of the largest in the region, share the same ambition: the defence of the traditional "Cru Bourgeois" classification, in a world in which the preservation of traditions and expertise has become a symbol of luxury.

- As a result of their selection criteria and positioning in terms of price, Crus Bourgeois are well-suited to contemporary markets and the requirements of increasingly demanding consumers.

A new selection and a new Look

To mark the revival of «Cru Bourgeois», the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois has created a new logo and a campaign to launch and perpetuate its new look.



This new logo and new positioning of the term «Cru Bourgeois» are unveiled at the publication of the Official Selection 2008.

- Several press conferences in France and abroad will reinforce the launch and transmit the publication of the Official Selection 2008.

- The rebirth of the “Cru Bourgeois” classification is also being launched on the Internet and via social media such as Facebook. An online Big Quiz has been organized and started on 1 September 2010.

- A real test of your knowledge, the Big Quiz is a chance to learn more about wine and to challenge your friends to find out who deserves to win a Crus Bourgeois prize. By replying to questions on the Médoc and the Crus Bourgeois every day and passing on the quiz via their Facebook profiles, participants will be able to accumulate points and win a collection of 180 Crus Bourgeois and many other prizes. A temporary site has been created to host the game that can be reached via the Alliance des Crus Bourgeois du Médoc site or by going directly to the dedicated address:
www.grand-jeu.crus-bourgeois.com.

- Wine bloggers will also be participating.

An information pack has been specially designed to encourage bloggers to help spread the online quiz and to share the “Cru Bourgeois” classification with wine lovers everywhere on the web.

- The communication campaign is based on one meaningful and committed message:

«Recognition as a Cru Bourgeois is something to be earned»

This message was developed and based on values that the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc is attached to:

Innovation / Human / Accessible

Demanding / Impartial / Authentic

Key figures for the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

290 candidate châteaux

243 châteaux recognised for the 2008 vintage

96 crus bourgeois in Médoc, or 40%

81 crus bourgeois in Haut-Médoc, or 33%

12 crus bourgeois in Listrac, or 5%

12 crus bourgeois in Moulis, or 5%

13 crus bourgeois in Margaux, or 5%

2 crus bourgeois in Saint-Julien, or 1%

5 crus bourgeois in Pauillac, or 2%

22 crus bourgeois in Saint-Estèphe, or 9%

Covering about **3,500 hectares**, or 22 % of the Médoc's vineyards.

Producing over **25 million bottles** for the 2008 vintage, or 30% of the Médoc's production.

166 Crus Bourgeois 2008 were also classified in 2003.

119 Crus Bourgeois 2008 were part of the list established in 1932.

96 Crus Bourgeois 2008 were classified in 1932 and in 2003.

Key dates for the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

1203: John Lackland (Jean sans Terre), the king of England, exempts the merchants of Bordeaux from the main export tax or "Grande Coutume". In return, the bourgeois pledge to support him against the Capetians.

1789: The French Revolution sounds the death knell for the privileges granted to the bourgeois of Bordeaux.

1914-1929: The First World War and then the first global financial recession deprive the Crus Bourgeois of their main export markets.

1932: The Bordeaux wine brokers designate 444 châteaux in the Médoc as Crus Bourgeois to boost the wines of the Médoc. It is not submitted for ministerial ratification but nevertheless serves as the reference for the use of the term « cru bourgeois » for 70 years.

1962: Creation of the Official Association of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc, today known as « Alliance des Crus Bourgeois du Médoc ».

2003: The ministerial decree of June 17th ratifies the first Official Classification of the Crus Bourgeois du Médoc. It is awarded to 247 châteaux out of 490 candidates.

2007: On February 27th, the decree of June 17th 2003 is cancelled by the Administrative Court of Bordeaux.

2008: The risk of losing the use of the term "Cru Bourgeois" forever motivates the wine producers of the Médoc to come together to find a harmonious solution. "Cru Bourgeois Reconnaissance" is created to bring back the traditional term with protection from the European Community regulations.

2009: Ratification of the process for the "Cru Bourgeois" Reconnaissance by an inter-ministerial decree dated November 16, 2009. Applications received from 290 chateaux that are each visited for eligibility, followed by notification of eligibility.

2010: First year of the renewal for the Crus Bourgeois Reconnaissance with blind tastings.
23 September 2010: **The Official Selection 2008 is published listing all the chateaux able to use the term Cru Bourgeois on the 2008 vintage bottles.**