

If you've never bought 'en primeur' before (or would like to know how we do it at Taurus Wines) then this guide is for you. The much praised 2016 vintage in Bordeaux is surrounded by media hype that needs careful unravelling to make the most of what is undoubtedly a good year. It could well be as good, if not better than, 2015's vintage; and it has been compared to 2009 and 2010 too. However, the châteaux offering their wines are also aware of its quality, so the prices may well be higher than last year as the wineries trade on the buzz surrounding another great vintage.

What is 'en primeur'?

En primeur is a method for buying wine in the year following the vintage - before it is bottled and long before it is ready to drink - in exchange for a greatly reduced price. It also means you can get your hands on rarer wines that are in high demand (especially in a year like 2016) that will be unobtainable/prohibitively expensive once bottled, shipped and ready to drink.

How does en primeur work in Bordeaux?

Following the en primeur tastings at the beginning of April, there is a carefully choreographed sequence of releases, starting with the most modest wines and terminating with the 1er Grand Cru Classés (Latour, Lafite etc.) and their right bank equivalents (Cheval Blanc, Ausone, Petrus). It is only at the point of release that quantity and price are revealed. Furthermore, the quantity released is rarely the full quantity available. It is the first *tranche* (slice) and depending on the take-up the 2nd *tranche* is normally significantly more expensive, the 3rd *tranche* a step up again etc.

In a much-fancied year like 2016 you need to react fast when the wine comes out. To really confuse things further, some chateaux have drastically reduced the amount of wine they are releasing en primeur preferring instead to age it themselves until it is ready. They will of course charge a very significant premium for this.

For example the Margaux wine, Château d'Angludet, well enough considered, but not top-of-the-tree stuff, was released at about 9am one morning by its owners Famile Sichel. The entire allocation was sold by 9.30am and the family have no plans to release a second *tranche*. Leading British merchants had their allocations of certain châteaux reserved for customers before the prices were even known!

All of this means that if you want to buy the more famous wines en primeur, you should let us have your 'wish list' before the wines are released so that we can make our bid in time. There will, however, be ample opportunity to buy beautiful, less sought-after wines at sensible prices.

How does payment and delivery work?

Payment is made in two parts. You pay for the actual wines purchased en primeur at the time of ordering (preferably by online bank transfer as margins are very low). The VAT and duty is then charged at the prevailing rate when the wines are ready for delivery (around spring/summer 2018, or for some spring 2019).

Please note:- The wines will be shipped directly to Taurus Wines where they will land duty paid so I am afraid we can't offer delivery to a bonded warehouse. Our prices include local delivery.

Let's use one of our favourite Saint Emilion wines, Cap St George, as an illustration of how the process works...

As a direct shipper we were lucky to get a preferential rate on this excellent wine at its first release, so we're offering it at £85 per six bottle wooden case. If, for instance, you were to order two cases (12 bottles) you would be invoiced for £170 now which would be payable immediately. The wine will be shipped in spring/summer 2018, at which point roughly speaking the duty might be £30 on 12 bottles (the exact duty figure will undoubtedly change by the time it is shipped), so you're at £200 in total (with £170 already paid). Assuming VAT stays at 20% that would be £40 for your dozen. And yes, sadly, you do pay VAT on goods PLUS their duty i.e. tax on tax!

So your bill would be roughly £170 now + £70 in taxes in 2018 meaning you end up paying around £20 per bottle in total. The Cap St George from 2014 is currently on our shelves at £29.99, so you've already made a saving on what is perhaps going to be a much superior vintage. The 2016 has been scored at 90-91/100 by James Suckling and will probably be on our shelves at more like £35 a bottle - so buying en primeur you've potentially saved yourself about £15 per bottle on this excellent wine.

Obviously when the 2016 arrives in 2018 it might need a couple more years of bottle aging before it is ready, but as you can see the cost saving is pretty immense.

WELCOME TO THE TAURUS WINES

EN PRIMEUR 2016 OFFERING

Wines are by the wooden case of six OR twelve and the price includes free local delivery (duty paid) in spring/summer 2018. Our prices also include insurance, as there has been known to be many a slip 'twixt cup and lip as they say. We buy as many of our wines as possible from the wineries themselves, rather than through negociants. Unlike some other merchants, your purchase from Taurus Wines will be fully insured.

Journalists charge merchants to use their scores for any commercial advertising. Since this private document is in a 'grey' area we are using them merely for you to get a full appreciation of the wines. So, for any legal beagles out there... when we mention 'RP' points, we of course mean Rupert Pritchett points, and are not referring to any other famous point giver with the same initials... Plus, our thanks to Matthew Jukes for his notes and points (out of a possible 20).

JOURNO POINTS KEY (NUMBER IN BRACKETS IS BEST POSSIBLE SCORE)

MJ = Matthew Jukes (20)	WS = Wine Spectator (100)
JS = James Suckling (100)	RP = definitely <i>not</i> Robert Parker (100)
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<p>Château Croix Mouton (St Emilion)</p>	<p>A pure Merlot from a cult St Emilion producer this wine will be almost ready on arrival. A replanting program in 2016 meant they only produced half of their normal production of this wine in 2016 and that was followed by the crop being wiped by frost in 2017. As a result the only way to secure stock at all was to buy en primeur.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2018+</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 20 cases of 12</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 15 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £95</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 15.5 (JR) 88-89 (RP)</p>
<p>Château Mauvesin Barton (Moulis en Medoc)</p>	<p>From a branch of the Leoville-Barton family, this is a great-value Bordeaux.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2020-2027</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 20 cases of 6</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 8 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £70</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 91-92 (JS) 91-93 (WE) 16.5 (MJ)</p>
<p>Château Haut-Beau-séjour (St Estephe)</p>	<p>'Dark purple colour to the rim. Open, lovely scent of ripe red and black fruits leads to a finely balanced palate. The supple texture of silky tannins and appealing sweet fruit with a hint of spice will make attractive drinking as it matures over three to five years.' Mark Bingley, MW.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2019-2026</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 40 cases of 6</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 40 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £85</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 92-93 (JS) 88-90 (WA)</p>
<p>Cap St George (St Emilion)</p>	<p>The terroirs of Cap St George, and the second wine of the estate, Cap d'Or, were some of the first to ever be planted with vines, by the Romans. A really solid wine and one of our personal favourites here at TW.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2021-2032</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 80 cases of 6</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 69 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £85</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 91 (JS)</p>

TAURUS WINES EN PRIMEUR 2016 OFFERING CONTINUED...

<p>Château D'Aiguilhe (Côtes de Castillon)</p>	<p>I was blown away by the level of dark mineral and graphite aromas on the nose followed by a huge concentration of brambly dark fruit (blueberry/sloe) on the palate. I've asked for a large allocation as I don't think a pallet of this will last long on our shelves when it comes of drinking age. Ranked 5th in Matthew Jukes' best value list.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2022-2027+</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 50 cases of 12</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 47 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £190</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 17.5 (MJ) 91 (D) 16+ (JR)</p>
<p>Château Lagrange (St Julien)</p>	<p>Ripe and balanced with acidity and fruit as prominent as the tannins, meaning that this will develop into a beautifully balanced wine. Rumoured to be as good if not better than the 2005 vintage - making this surely one of the top wines of the vintage.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2028-2045</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 10 cases of 6</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 2 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £210</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 92-95 (WS) 95-96 (JS) 94-96 (WA) 95 (D)</p>
<p>Château Cantemerle (Haut Medoc) 5th Growth</p>	<p>This wine came 4th in Matthew Jukes' Top Ten By Value list for the 2016 en primeurs.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2027-2040</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 20 cases of 6</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 16 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £130</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 94-95 (JS) 90-92 (WA) 93 (D) 17.5 (MJ)</p>
<p>Château Sacre Coeur (Pomerol)</p>	<p>The wine maker Jean Philippe Jannoueix owns numerous Right Bank estates including Chateau La Croix St. Georges in Pomerol and La Confession in St. Emilion. Only 6.900 bottles are produced each vintage - making this a very sought-after wine, even in vintages nothing like as good as 2016.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2022-2032</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 10 cases of 12</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 8 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £280</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u></p>
<p>Château Pez (St Estephe)</p>	<p>'Sometimes referred to as the Pomerols of St Estephe, the wines of Pez are round and smooth. Dark purple, with aromas of sweet black fruits especially cassis. The palate has density from ripe tannins and a fine long finish. The concentrated fruit character and serious structure will ensure a long life and reward long term maturation.' Mark Bingley, MW.</p> <p>Drinking dates: 2024-2031</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 10 cases of 6</p> <p><u>REMAINING</u> 10 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £140</p> <p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 93-94 (JS) 92-94 (WA) 91 (D)</p>

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TAURUS WINES EN PRIMEUR 2016 OFFERING CONTINUED...

<p>Château La Confession (St Emilion)</p>	<p>Rec and black fruit with a touch of cedar wood, thanks to the Cabernet Franc. A medium-bodied wine with light spice on the palate. Will be a very good dinner party pleaser in a few years time.</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 15 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £300</p>
<p>Drinking dates: 2021-2031</p>		<p><u>REMAINING</u> 15 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 93 (JS) 88-90 (RP) 16 (JR)</p>
<p>Château Talbot (St Julien) 4th Growth</p>	<p>So popular we were only successful in securing half the allocation of Talbot we asked for this year and that was only because we purchased the wine in 2015! Universally loved by the critics: Jancis Robinson says of it "If I had to choose one wine to represent the vintage in typical style I might well choose this one."</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 5 cases of 6</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £250</p>
<p>Drinking dates: 2025-2045 (JR)</p>		<p><u>REMAINING</u> 1 case of 6</p>	<p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 17 (JR) 90-92 (WA) 93-94 (JS) 93-96 (WS)</p>
<p>Château Pontet Canet (Pauillac) 5th Growth</p>	<p>The 'wine of the vintage' if you ask me - and many others. Purple-black in colour, generous nose of graphite and mineral aromas. Massive amounts of seriously dark sweet and juicy red fruit and liquorice flavours on the palate with an amazing length. As I tasted it, Serena Sutcliffe MW declared 'Oh Alfred, c'est magnifique!'</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 5 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £1,380</p>
<p>Drinking dates: 2022-2035+</p>		<p><u>REMAINING</u> 5 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 99 (JS) 19.5 (MJ) 18 (JR) 97 (D)</p>
<p>Château Pichon Longueville, Comtesse de La- lande (Pauillac) 2nd Growth</p>	<p>Very deep colour and intense dark fruits aromas. On the palate silky tannins surround sweet pure dark fruit flavours with mouth-filling and complex spicy notes. The darkly fruited finish has great length and a brilliant freshness. A wine of superb elegance and power.</p>	<p><u>ALLOCATION</u> 5 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>CASE PRICE</u> £1,400</p>
<p>Drinking dates: 2026-2040</p>		<p><u>REMAINING</u> 5 cases of 12</p>	<p><u>JOURNO POINTS</u> 96-97 (JS) 95-98 (WS) 96-98 (WE)</p>

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