



BORDEAUX SHIPPERS

**THE GREAT BORDEAUX SALE
JULY 2010 - SYDNEY & MELBOURNE**

PRESS RELEASE

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'There can be no question that the romance, if not mysticism, of opening a bottle of Bordeaux from a famous chateau has a grip and allure that are hard to resist.' Robert Parker

John Baker of Bordeaux Shippers spins a good yarn and none better than the trail of mystery that surrounds his acquisition of 750 cases of fine Bordeaux wines that he is about to release on the Australian marketplace.

It started in May 2009 in Bordeaux, France when a chap who plots the daily weather of the vineyards informed John that Diageo's Chateau & Estates Bordeaux business was closing in the US due to the GFC, which meant that app \$300 million worth of fine Bordeaux were suddenly on the market.

When John tried to ascertain from the weatherman and various other associates in Bordeaux how to purchase, there was suddenly no information available as it was rumoured that most of the Chateau's wished to purchase the wines back at discounted prices.

Being a lateral thinker, John did a little sleuthing on Google and found a rather unlikely email address in Sonoma, California, and after firing off an email ended up with the right contact in New York. In a short time an extraordinary list arrived with 160 wines on the list. John was interested in 40 including some of which Bordeaux Shippers was already importing from France.

After much discussion with the Diageo people in New York, samples of 25 wines that particularly interested John arrived from the US and as John always does, he blind tasted them and chose 9. All up 18 were chosen of varying quantities. The other 8 that made up the 17 were wines that John knew well and very much liked already.

Realising this is a one off which will never be repeated John bought 750 cases (one container load – the minimum spend was meant to be 100 cases of any one wine, but this was waived to allow John to make an interesting selection and fill his container), which arrived in mid-May.

The wines and the quality are excellent and are in perfect condition. The samples were pristine.

All wine will be retailing for under \$100, the price John said the wines should ideally be sold at in Australia, but due to the government incredible tax of 48% on imported wines it is not the case. Some will be half their normal retail price, some even less than half.

There is one fabulous wine that does break the \$100 mark, a unique 1909 Rivesaltes (Vin de Liqueur), which often retails for over \$500 and is available at \$195.

One year after the chat with the Bordeaux weatherman, Bordeaux Shippers took delivery of the wines, which are now resting in a warehouse ready for a series of tastings in Sydney and Melbourne.

"Australians have become very knowledgeable about wine, particularly in the last 15 years as they have travelled extensively developing a more global view. Some of these savvy drinkers are looking for the classical style of wines often coming from Europe," notes John.

"So I am excited about finding these wines and look forward to the tastings where wine lovers can sample a range of very good Bordeaux at affordable prices."

Interestingly these heavily discounted prices are closer to the correct prices that consumers would pay if the government did not impose such heavy taxes.

John's selection criteria is for the classic style of Bordeaux, not the big and woody alcoholic wines that are produced in too many regions of the world, including some Chateaux in Bordeaux. The wines selected are refined wines with alcohol levels of 12.5% - 13.5% maximum, hence a perfect match with food.

The particular wines chosen are wines of finesse, balance and complexity, qualities that make one eager to reach for the bottle and enjoy a second glass.

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Bordeaux Shippers is Australia's leading supplier of fine French Bordeaux and supplies to the most discerning restaurants of Australia.

The principal John Baker is well known wine and Bordeaux lover and vocal expert, travelling regularly to Europe to carefully select his broad range of quality wines.

His 25 years experience includes wine retailing, importing and vineyard management. Operating retail stores has been the largest part of his experience and includes building and establishing Quaffers at Double Bay, prior to the Vintage Cellars acquisition to be the flagship fine wine store of their group. Other stores include The Newport Bottler at Newport Beach, Grapefellas, Epping and The Lambton Fridge at Newcastle.

The wines that John selects to bring to Australia represent an interesting cross-section of Bordeaux. He focuses on the good vintages and look for Chateaux which are performing well, and avoids wines that he feels are overpriced or where the Chateau is resting on past glories.

John's contacts are highly reputable and have become quite familiar with his fastidious selection criteria. Thankfully John usually purchases whole cases in their original wooden boxes.

His wines come out of cold European cellars and are in pristine condition. Once landed in Australia they immediately go into professional storage.

All wine comes from cold European cellars and all are in pristine condition.

"These nuances set Bordeaux Shippers apart from much of the Bordeaux that is available in Australia - the source and cellaring conditions make a huge difference to the taste of the wine," notes Baker.

Bordeaux Shippers also hosts an on-line facility that sells directly to the consumer (www.bordeauxshippers.com.au) as well as host fine wine tastings and dinners.

BORDEAUX

Bordeaux, probably with Champagne, is the most famous wine region in the world. Most wine drinkers, and even non-wine drinkers have heard of Chateau Lafite Rothschild or Chateau Mouton Rothschild or Chateau Margaux or Chateau Latour.

The history of Bordeaux wine spans almost 2000 years to Roman times when the first vineyards were planted. In the Middle Ages, the marriage of Henry Plantagenet and Eleanor of Aquitaine opened the Bordeaux region to the English market and eventually to the world's stage.

The name Bordeaux derives from the French *au bord de l'eau* which means "along the waters" and makes reference to the Gironde estuary and its tributaries, the Garonne and the Dordogne rivers which play a pivotal role in the history and success of this region.

Due to the lucrative nature of the wine business, other areas in France began growing their own wines and labeling them as Bordeaux products. As profits in the Aquitaine region declined, the vignerons demanded that the government impose a law declaring that only produce from Bordeaux could be labeled with that name. The INAO or Institut National des Appellations d'Origine was created for this purpose. In 1936, the government responded to the appeals from the winemakers and stated that all regions in France had to name their wines by the place in which they had been produced. Labeled with the AOC approved stamp, products were officially confirmed to be from the region that it stated.

Bordeaux alone represents 65% of the global secondary wine market and produces some 850 million bottles a year, almost as much as the whole Australian industry.

BORDEAUX SHIPPERS



BORDEAUX & FOOD

Sometimes in books about Bordeaux I encounter the word 'digestible'. It doesn't make much sense, yet I think I know exactly what is meant by the term. It includes modest degrees of alcohol – classic Bordeaux ranges from 12° of alcohol to 13.5°. It includes balance and freshness, qualities that make one eager to reach for the bottle and enjoy a second glass. But Bordeaux has more than elegance and balance. I also find in good Bordeaux what I call force. Bordeaux exudes strength of personality that can be described as virile. It's a mixture of robustness and vigour. It has a punch." Stephen Brook in 'The Complete Bordeaux'

The theme that runs through this quote is the digestibility of Bordeaux, how well it matches food. The role of wine in past centuries was to accompany food – it was the acid and tannins in wine that cleansed the palate before each mouthful of food. Labels and names only began in 1672 with Chateau Haut Brion of Bordeaux being the first to sell a branded wine.

Brands have of course developed over the centuries but wine's fundamental role has not changed. And it is this accompaniment with food that Bordeaux has always focused on. And why it works. With the Bordeaux Shippers Dinners that John Baker stages, he often works with the chefs of Australia's best restaurants to match the wine and food.

In 2009 Guillaume Brahim teamed up with Bordeaux Shippers for an extraordinary Pétrus dinner, where, for the 1st time in Australia, 5 vintages were served. The food was relatively simple but of exceptional quality and masterly executed. For a Bordeaux Lunch at Vue de Monde, Shannon Bennett served dishes using truffles and foie gras to match the more mature Bordeaux.

At The Adelaide Club in February 2010, the highlight was the exceptional 1985 Chateau Margaux directly from the Chateau cellars, which was served in a bracket of 3 wines and with rare beef.

Bordeaux often looks best with uncomplicated food. Good cuts of meat, mushrooms etc. seafood for the Bordeaux Blanc although the classic indulgent Bordeaux meal is when you start with foie gras and a good Sauternes, and then serve the same Sauternes with the dessert.