

EVERYTHING ABOUT WINE
Varieties and Blends

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF WINES FROM BORDEAUX LIES IN
CENTURIES-OLD MASTERY OF BLENDING NOBLE GRAPE VARIETIES.
THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS.



The spirit of Bordeaux wines

Each Bordeaux wine has its own personality, intimately related to the special touch of the master [winemaker](#) or estate owner. Blending permits the specific elements from each variety to mix and bind together to create new elements. In the case of [aromas](#), hundreds of active molecules in the wine interact during the blending process to create a new wine with a complexity, delicacy, and richness that surpass by far the simple addition of the characteristics of each of the assembled wines. It is easy to understand why the decision to plant a certain type of vine is of utmost importance since it has a direct impact on the quality and personality of the final product. This also influences food and wine combinations, and the [selecting, buying and storing of wine](#).

Blending is also a strategic act. It allows the major brands from Bordeaux to ensure a certain consistent flavour and overall quality of wines made from hundreds, if not thousands of litres of wine purchased from producers via specialized brokers.

Each new [vintage](#) gives rise to new blending possibilities, subject to evolving constraints and taste requirements.

Creating a better blend through separation

The grape [varieties](#) grown in Bordeaux produce very distinctive wines with individual qualities: aroma, colour and flavour. Grapes from young [Merlot](#) vines are not vinified with those from mature [Cabernet](#) vines. Vinegrowing on south-facing clay-limestone hillsides produce grapes that are much different than those situated on gravely terraces. The master winemaker thus endeavours to preserve the distinctiveness of each parcel right up until the end of the [vinification](#) process.

After the [harvest](#), vinification is undertaken separately for each variety, sometimes plot by plot, in order to retain this distinctiveness. Once this careful work is complete, the cellar master uses the resulting spectrum of wines to produce the final masterpiece, the blended wine.

Imagining the future

The alchemy of blending is a wager on the future, complete with its share of risk since the only way to judge the quality of a blend is to taste it years after its creation. Using

intuition and creativity, blending enables the creation of a wide variety of wines to satisfy different consumer tastes.

After sampling each variety, a team of experts begins the blending process, a creative, alchemist, almost intuitive undertaking. This practice was invented in Bordeaux long before any other region and has been perpetuated from generation to generation and refined over the centuries. The in-depth knowledge of how each variety will behave is key to creating blends and predicting how they will evolve.

Complementary varieties

In red Bordeaux wines, blending is always a subtle combination of Merlot, which imparts round, generous and complex aromas, of Cabernet Sauvignon, which imparts structure, bouquet and ageing potential to wines and sometimes of [Cabernet Franc](#), to add a touch of [suppleness](#) and elegance. [Petit Verdot](#) is also sometimes added, notably in the [Médoc](#), to impart [structure](#), as well as colour and aromatic richness. Of course, these proportions vary according to each appellation's dominant varieties, to the year, and to the sensitivity of each winemaker.

First and second wines



Prestigious Châteaux offer a specific blend for their "first" wines, which are made from the château's oldest vines. The aim is to produce a complex, aromatic, rich wine with a good [tannic](#) structure and a good [ageing](#) potential. These Châteaux produce another blend for their "second" wines, which are fruitier, more supple, more affordable, and may be consumed earlier.

Blending is also practiced by [négociants](#) and winemakers to produce [Today's Bordeaux](#), to procure the most pleasure at the best price.