

TASTING REPORT: 2012 WHITE BORDEAUX

It's difficult to get excited about whites from Bordeaux in 2012 following the amazing 2011 vintage, which made some legendary dry and sweet wines. However, 2012 shouldn't be completely forgotten for Bordeaux whites – especially the dry ones.

I tasted close to 100 whites this year, and there were some exceptional dry white examples in 2012 for Bordeaux. For example, the formidable dry white from Château Margaux, Pavillon Blanc du Margaux, shows incredible clarity and freshness with a racy underpinning of acidity and fruit that unfolds to fabulous aromas and flavors of minerals and tropical fruits. Indeed, it's much better than the first growth's red in 2012.

Or open a bottle of the 2012 Château Smith Haut Lafitte and rejoice in this flamboyant white's cooked apple and cream character with bright acidity and a crisp finish. SHL makes outstanding dry whites year in, year out. The excellent whites of La Mission Haut-Brion, Haut-Brion and Domaine de Chevalier were equally compelling in 2012.

And don't forget to try a bottle of the dry white from Cos d'Estournel, the famous second growth of St.-Estèphe. The sauvignon blanc and sémillon blend is hard to find due to its limited production but it's dense and layered like any of the top wines of Pessac-Léognan listed above.

The new white from the owners of Pomerol's Château Lafleur is another outstanding label to find. Only about 2,000 bottles of the rich and layered Les Champs Libres were produced in 2012.

I wish I could say great wine was made in Sauternes in 2012, but the weather was just too difficult and there was more gray, bad rot than noble rot that year. "It was a very difficult year to say the least," says Charles Chevallier, the head of Château Rieussec, which didn't make its top wine in 2012. The great Château d'Yquem also decided to not make a sweet wine.

Even so, a few outstanding Sauternes were made in 2012 despite the difficult harvest including the châteaux of de Malle, Guiraud and Doisy Daëne. They are fresh and delicate sweet whites that give immediate pleasure to drink.

CHÂTEAU DE MALLE SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *91*

TASTING NOTES

There's a brightness and beauty to this Sauternes in an otherwise disappointing vintage. Medium-bodied, lightly sweet, crisp and fruity with plenty of pineapple and pear character. Drink now.

[Click for Price](#)

CHÂTEAU DOISY-DAËNE BARSAC

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *91*

TASTING NOTES

Very pretty and clean sticky white for the vintage that doesn't try to do too much. Medium-bodied, lightly sweet and showing an apple skin, honey and pineapple character. Drink now.

[Click for Price](#)

CHÂTEAU GUIRAUD SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *91*

TASTING NOTES

This is the wine of this very difficult vintage for Sauternes with slice pear, honey and citrus undertones. Medium body, a dense center palate and a sweet and pretty aftertaste. Very fine. Drink now or hold.

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CHÂTEAU DOISY-VÉDRINES SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *90*

TASTING NOTES

Very attractive aromas of dried apricots, crème brûlée and honey follow through to a medium body, light sweetness and a flavorful finish. Well done in this difficult vintage. Drink now.

[Click for Price](#)

CHÂTEAU LAFAURIE-PEYRAGUEY SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *90*

TASTING NOTES

Elegant and harmonious with sliced apple, honey and pear character. Medium body, light sweetness and a fresh finish. Drink or hold.

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CHÂTEAU NAIRAC BARSAC

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *90*

TASTING NOTES

A fresh and clean Sauternes with delicate mineral, apricot and honey character. Medium body, light sweetness and a crisp finish. Delicious now.

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CLOS HAUT-PEYRAGUEY SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *90*

TASTING NOTES

Outstanding density for the vintage with dried apricot and pineapple character plus hints of vanilla. Medium body, light sweetness and a fresh finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU COUTET SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *89*

TASTING NOTES

Dense for the vintage with phenolic, apple skin and honey character. Full body, light sweetness and an apple puree aftertaste. A little simple. Drink now.

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LIONS DE SUDIRAUT SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *89*

TASTING NOTES

Pleasant sliced apple pie with hints of vanilla. Medium body, light sweetness and a clean finish. Pleasing second wine of Suduiraut. Drink now.

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CARMES DE RIEUSSEC SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *88*

TASTING NOTES

This is a pretty, fresh white with light sweetness and brightness. Medium body and good fruit. As the winemaker said at Rieussec: 'It's a good quality wine to show what we can do in a difficult year'. Second wine of Rieussec. First wine now made in 2012.

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CHÂTEAU DE MYRAT SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *88*

TASTING NOTES

Pretty golden color with sliced pear and apple aromas as well as honey and tarte Tartin. Medium body, medium sweetness, cooked apples, light butter and a medium finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU DE RAYNE-VIGNEAU SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *88*

TASTING NOTES

A firm and fruity Sauternes with a sliced pear and apple character. Medium to full body, light sweetness and a long finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU LA TOUR BLANCHE SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *88*

TASTING NOTES

A fresh and clean wine with sliced apple, pineapple and honey character. Medium body, light sweetness and a medium finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU SIGALAS-RABAUD SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *88*

TASTING NOTES

A white with dried pineapple, nut and light honey character. Medium body, sweet fruit and a medium finish. Nicely crafted for the vintage. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU FILHOT SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *87*

TASTING NOTES

Delicate and attractive with sliced apple and pear character and hints of honey. Medium body, light sweetness and a good, fruity finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU LA TOUR BLANCHE SAUTERNES LES CHARMILLES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *87*

TASTING NOTES

Some good fruit with dried pineapple and pear character. Medium body, light sweetness and a simple finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU LAMOTHE-GUIGNARD SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *87*

TASTING NOTES

A young Sauternes with aromas and flavors of cider, brushed apple and light honey. Medium body, light sweetness and a clean finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU ROMER DU HAYOT SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *87*

TASTING NOTES

Straightforward dried pear and apple character, a medium body, light sweetness and a simple finish. Drink now.

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SYMPHONIE HAUT-PEYRAGUEY SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *87*

TASTING NOTES

Light and fruity with a mineral, dried apple, light clove and honey character. Medium body and a simple finish. Drink now.

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CASTELNAU DE SUDUIRAUT SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *86*

TASTING NOTES

Light and fruity with sliced apple, pear and honey character. Medium body, light sweetness and a fresh finish. Drink now.

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CHÂTEAU BROUSTET SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *85*

TASTING NOTES

A lightly dusty Sauternes with some honey and sliced apple character. Medium body, light sweetness and a dried mushroom aftertaste. Drink now.

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PETIT GUIRAUD SAUTERNES

COUNTRY *France*
REGION *Bordeaux*
VINTAGE *2012*
SCORE *85*

TASTING NOTES

A pleasant and fruity second wine from Guiraud with sliced apple and pear character, light honey and a simple finish. Drink now.

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