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INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780



FRANÇOIS AND LOUIS MITJAVILE
TERTRE ROTEBOEUF,
ROC DE CAMBES & L'AURAGE

2017 VINTAGE, EN PRIMEUR

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK, HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE



TERRE ROTHEBOEUF

*“How to judge these
wines? It is a crunchy
vintage – aromatic, fresh
and dynamic, in the heart
of confit fruit.”*

FRANÇOIS MITJAVILE
April 2018



2017 VINTAGE NOTES

In François Mitjavile's words,
"This is a strange vintage, but one of very fine quality."

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The paradox – or strangeness – is that 2017 was an early ripening year, yet the summer was relatively cool and rainy.

The precocious season begins to be explained by the 2016-17 winter, which was remarkably warm. Although January was cold (in fact, the coldest in 30 years), warmth returned in February and March, with average temperatures nearly 3°C above normal. By mid-March, it became clear that the year would get off to an extremely early start.

16th March saw daytime temperatures of 24°C, way above normal, prompting budding to start with a vengeance, swiftly followed by budburst. The vines were tinged with young green leaves by the end of March.

Temperatures returned to normal in the first week of April, putting a brake on vigour and allaying fears of a spring frost somewhat, but the unseasonal warmth (in the high 20s) returned a few days later, causing another growth spurt in the vineyards.

On 21st April, in the midst of a forest fire over in the Médoc, the humidity hit a 65-year low of 10%. The frost that ravaged much of the right bank of Bordeaux in late April spared both Tertre Roteboeuf and Roc de Cambes, in part aided by this very low humidity.

"I am pleased to say that Tertre Roteboeuf and Roc de Cambes were not frosted at all."

FRANÇOIS MITJAVILE
 April 2018

However, at Louis Mitjavile's L'Aurage, in Castillon, it was a different story. The frost hit hard, meaning Louis has made a mere quarter of his normal production in 2017. The severity of the frost left no possibility of a second budding.



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The previous warmth resumed in May, which ended as the warmest since 1950. June was even hotter, with a totally dry fortnight mid-month, in the high 20s. May and June edged over the 30°C mark on several occasions. Unsurprisingly, flowering was quick and uncomplicated.

Persistent rain in the last five days of June primed the vines with just enough moisture to counter the coming heat spikes of July. Temperatures peaked at 37°C on 18th July, although the month averaged out cooler than the norm. The most important factor in July was the drought, with only 28mm of rainfall placing just enough hydric stress on the vines to ensure good thick skins. *Véraison* (colour change) started from 20th July.

In August, there began a pattern of cool periods in the low 20s, followed by hot ones comfortably in the 30s. Showers at month-end were not strictly needed, given the water reserves already in the soil thanks to the July rains. Heat returned from 21st to 29th August, rounding off the phenolic (tannin) ripeness.

The heat of late August conspired to eradicate all pyzarines from the grapes. Some light rain fell from 27th to 30th August, leading into a damper period in the first half of September. In François' words, this "tenderised the tannins, making for a particularly graceful year, very expressive and with density." Ideal dry conditions set in from 18th September, heralding an uncomplicated harvest at the end

of the month. Picking at L'Aurage was 1-2 weeks earlier than normal, starting in early October.

As always, François sees the year from the perspective of fruit maturation. "If August proved to be moderately hot, September was rainy and fairly cold...with, let us not forget, a precocious maturity (due to the warm spring). Our surprise, and the very individual flavour of the fruit and character of the vintage, stems from this: it is ripe without being jammy, and, better still, it is very bright...like Vivaldi's Spring!"

And so what of the wines? François alludes to their open nature, which appears unlikely to shut down, as can be the way in more rigorously tannic vintages: "This is a vintage of obvious charm that will probably not go into its shell." Louis is very happy with the results at L'Aurage, tiny crop notwithstanding. He refers to the vintage's combination of weight and approachability, calling 2017 a year "defined by its freshness, with a crispness of fruit – quiet music, but with a dense tempo..."

GUY SEDDON
 May 2018





THE WINES

TERTRE ROTEBOEUF Saint-Émilion Grand Cru

The best vantage point from which to survey Tertre Roteboeuf is the wall at the bottom of François' garden, which is directly above this hallowed plot. One of Saint-Émilion's greatest vineyards, Tertre Roteboeuf is a sweeping six hectare amphitheatre of vines planted on cool, clay-limestone soils. The limestone, from which the subterranean cellars are hewn, is one of the keys to Tertre Roteboeuf.

François' and his winemaker daughter Nina's trademark late picking finds a counterbalance in the naturally cool soil. This safeguards the wines' characteristic upbeat freshness alongside François' beloved "degraded" structure. Only one wine is made at the property; the blend reflects the vineyard plantings of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. The average vine age is over 40 years.

ROC DE CAMBES Bourg-Côtes de Bordeaux

Roc de Cambes, in the Bourg-Côtes de Bordeaux appellation, lies some 45 minutes to the north-west of Saint-Émilion, on the banks of the Dordogne. It is over twice the size of its 'big brother' Tertre Roteboeuf, comprising 14 hectares of old vines, with an average age of over 40 years. Here too, the vines are planted in a natural amphitheatre, overlooking the Gironde estuary.

Roc de Cambes lies on the 'Les Croutes' slope, where the heat of the sun is tempered by the adjacent river. Cool clay-limestone soils take time to warm up in the spring so that late ripening is the norm. As at Tertre Roteboeuf, François makes just one wine here. The plantings are 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon.

L'AURAGE Castillon-Côtes de Bordeaux

Louis Mitjavile is the owner and winemaker of L'Aurage, which is located due east of Saint-Émilion. Louis, known as Loulou, is François Mitjavile's son. The vineyards of Castillon-Côtes de Bordeaux lie on an outcrop of the Saint-Émilion limestone ridge and represent some of the best value in Bordeaux. This is a beautiful part of the region, whose wooded hillsides make it feel like less of a vine-dominated monoculture.

The plantings at L'Aurage are 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, although the percentage of Cabernet Franc is diminishing, as all Louis' replantings are now Merlot. The oldest vines here are now 16 years old. Pruning is crucial at all the Mitjavile properties – Louis places great importance on "couture-like" winter and early-spring work in the vineyard, which perhaps goes some way to explain the consistent success of his wines, regardless of the renown of the vintage.

In the cellar, Louis is experimenting with a new micro-oxygenation system, which delivers less oxygen than previously, but in a more precise manner. From the 2017 vintage, Louis has also installed a new temperature control system in the cellars, maintaining a minimum 15-16°C. He has found that this enables him to achieve roundness and richness more easily in his wines. L'Aurage spends 18-20 months in oak, which is 100% new, from the Radoux cooperage.

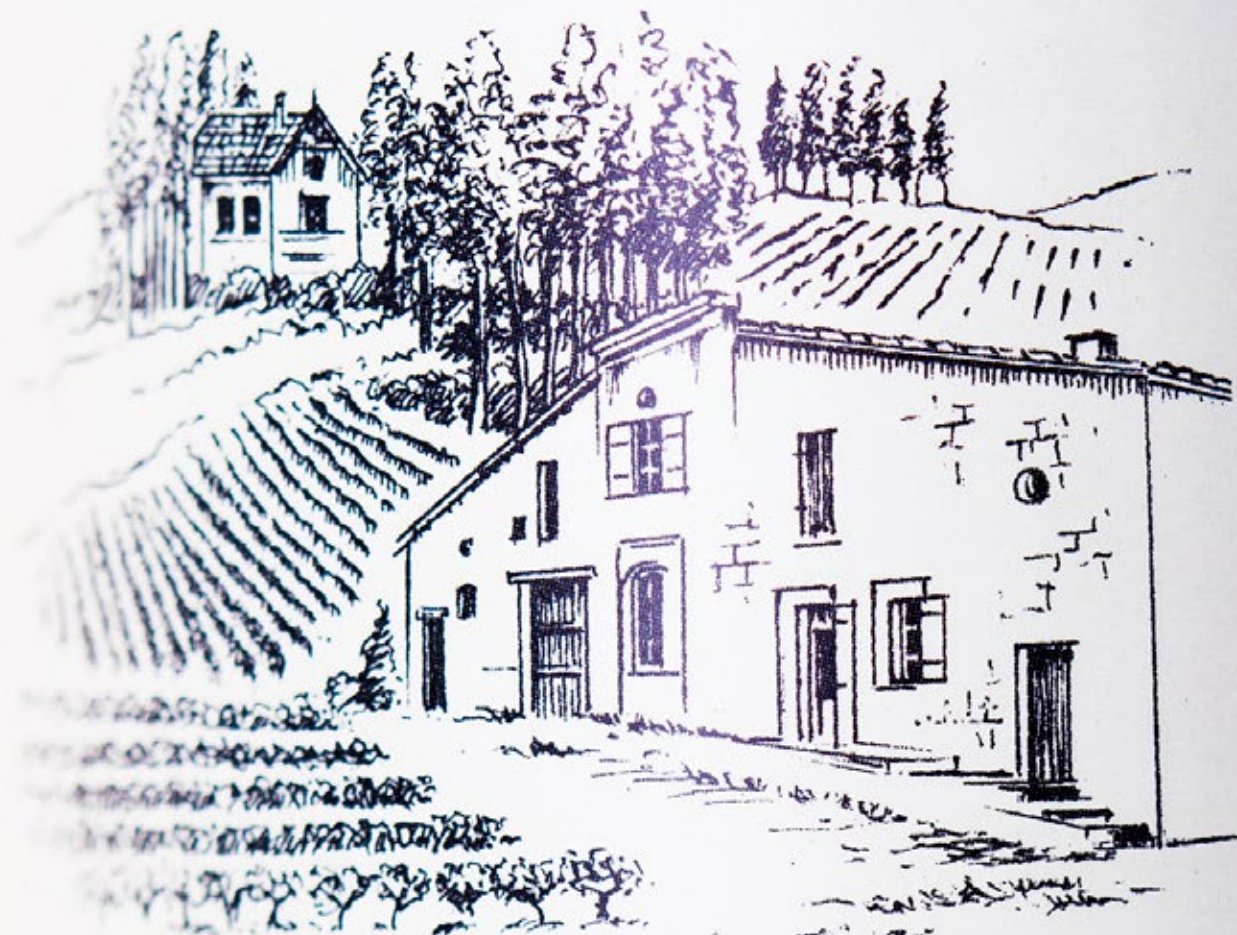


Watch Video

[Click here to watch our recent video with François Mitjavile](#)



L'AURAGE



2017

CASTILLON CÔTES DE BORDEAUX

Caroline et Loulou Mitjavile



2017 TASTING NOTES

Tertre Roteboeuf

Saint-Émilion Grand Cru

This is a blend of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, reflecting the vineyard plantings. Violets and that trademark degraded red berry fruit on the nose, detailed by thyme, rosemary and sweet spices, then dark rocky minerality and bitter chocolate. The palate is brightly red-fruited, dense and impressively charged, with fine chalky nuance emerging as it progresses.

The initial sense of fruit-driven power recedes towards the back-palate, which has a quiet focus at its core and a mineral bedrock which speaks of the vineyard's cool clay-limestone soils. This is being aged in 100% new oak but as always, it is quite beautifully, harmoniously integrated.

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5
Recommended drinking from 2025 - 2045

£750/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£760/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK
£525/case of 1 double magnum in bond UK

Roc de Cambes

Bourg-Côtes De Bordeaux

As at Tertre Roteboeuf, Roc de Cambes has 80% Merlot, but with the remaining 20% being Cabernet Sauvignon rather than Franc. The 2017 Roc de Cambes has a drop-dead gorgeous nose of violets, crushed rose petals, sandalwood, cassis and cedar.

The palate is juicy and rather delectable, with a crunchy verve and then a profound depth of blueberry, ripe raspberry and dark chocolate. The tannins constitute an impressive chassis, substantial but wonderfully fine, fruit-coated and ushering the fruit through to a long, peppery finish. 100% new oak, which is all but imperceptible.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 - 18
Recommended drinking from 2020 - 2035

£250/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£260/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK
£190/case of 1 double magnum in bond UK

Tasting Guide

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection. For the benefit of simplicity, wines are scored out of 20. We will often use a range of scores (e.g. 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a '+' is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine. A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.

L'Aurage

Castillon-Côtes de Bordeaux

L'Aurage is a blend of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, mirroring the vineyard plantings. It displays dark berries on the nose, above which dance top notes of violets and purple fruit, with some white flower aromatic lift and spicy, cedary piquancy.

The palate resonates with energy and is firmly textured, with deftly defined acidity lending a crunchiness and precision to the fruit. Dark forest fruits and *sous-bois* notes emerge as the palate progresses, underpinned by fine but reassuringly structured tannins and with flashes of grapefruited zestiness. 100% new oak, which is integrating nicely.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2020 - 2028

£275/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£295/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

“In 2017, the characteristic that the English would describe as “pretty” comes with great intensity in the fruit itself.”

FRANÇOIS MITJAVILE

April 2018

THE CELLARS AT L'AURAGE



To Order

LONDON

020 7265 2430

EDINBURGH

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+852 2537 3325

SINGAPORE

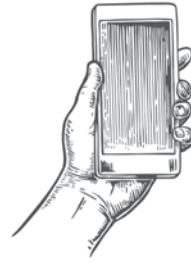
+65 6221 8530

EMAIL

sales@corneyandbarrow.com

PLEASE NOTE

These wines are released en primeur. Delivery dates to be confirmed. All prices are quoted in bond UK.



CONTACT US

We have offices and sales outlets in England, Scotland, Hong Kong and Singapore.
Please see below for details

Our Locations

LONDON

1 Thomas More Street
London E1W 1YZ
T +44 (0)20 7265 2400
F +44 (0)20 7265 2444
sales@corneyandbarrow.com

NORTH OF ENGLAND

Sedbury Stables
Sedbury Hall, Richmond
North Yorkshire DL10 5LQ
T +44 (0)1748 828 640
F +44 (0)1748 821 928
sedburyorders@corneyandbarrow.com

HONG KONG

Unit D, 6th Floor
9 Queen's Road Central
Hong Kong
T +852 25 37 33 25
hongkong@corneyandbarrow.com

EAST ANGLIA

Belvoir House
High Street, Newmarket
Suffolk CB8 8DH
T +44 (0)1638 600 000
F +44 (0)1638 600 860
newmarket@corneyandbarrow.com

EDINBURGH

Oxenfoord Castle by Pathhead
Midlothian
Scotland EH37 5UB
T +44 (0)1875 321 921
F +44 (0)1875 321 922
edinburgh@corneyandbarrow.com

SINGAPORE

101 Cecil Street,
#16-07 Tong Eng Building,
Singapore, 069533
T +65 6221 8530
singapore@corneyandbarrow.com

AYR

8 Academy Street, Ayr
Ayrshire, Scotland KA7 1HT
T +44 (0)1292 267 000
F +44 (0)1292 265 903
ayr@corneyandbarrow.com

Online



FACEBOOK
@corneyandbarrow



TWITTER
@corneyandbarrow



INSTAGRAM
@corneyandbarrow

www.corneyandbarrow.com



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