$40 Tasting Notes

**Château Petit Freylon, Cuvée Sarah (Bordeaux Supérieur), 2017**

Château Petit-Freylon is located in the small Aquitaine village of Saint-Genis-du-Bois, a tiny village boasting less than 100 inhabitants. The estate belonged to the Lagrange family for generations until 2011, when it was purchased by La Société PESA. Since that time, the new owners have invested heavily in the château’s wine-making facilities and have installed such improvements such as new tanks, barrels, and thermo-vinification systems. This attention to detail has earned the wines several medals at prestigious competitions, such as the Concours Agricolein Paris and the Concours de Bordeaux.

TERROIR

The vineyard at Château Petit-Freylon covers 30 hectares (75 acres) of rich potential, 20 of which are within the Bordeaux Supérieur appellation. The soils are clay and limestone are well lined, giving way to high caliber wines. Growing on 30 year old vines, the Château produces a grand assortment of grape varieties, including Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with average yields of 50 hectoliters per hectare.

**ABOUT BORDEAUX-STYLE RED BLEND**

The phrase “Bordeaux-style red blend” may be used informally to describe red wines produced from a combination of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and to a lesser extent Carmenère and Malbec.

All the red wines of [Bordeaux](https://www.winemag.com/region/bordeaux/) can naturally be described as such, though it is also an appropriate term for wines made outside of the region, including those from California, Washington, Argentina and beyond.

*Appellation d’Origine Protegée* (AOP) laws and other protections of origin mean that only wine made in the Bordeaux area can, according to strict regulations, be officially labelled as Bordeaux.

The success of the Bordeaux-style red blend has seen it exported to other regions, notably the United States, though also in some of the fine wines of South America. To understand the Bordeaux style red blend better, it is worthwhile to establish some facts about each of its composite parts and what they bring to the overall blend.

## **Wines used in a Red Bordeaux-style Blend**

**Cabernet Sauvignon**

Cabernet Sauvignon produces deeply colored, highly structured and full-bodied wines with ample acidity. The Cabernet Sauvignon grape is naturally high in tannin and is thus capable of aging for decades, sometimes in fact requiring it to be approachable and enjoyable. In youth, Cabernet Sauvignon shows black fruit aromas and flavors, particularly of blackcurrant, that over time give way to subtle, nuanced tertiary aromas.

**Merlot**

Merlot is a softer and rounder grape variety, with more obvious fruit than the Cabernet Sauvignon. Though capable of producing superb wines by itself, its job as a counterbalance to the austerity and astringency of the Cabernet Sauvignon should not be overlooked.

The grape is widely grown and produces wines from entry-level to some of the world’s finest, with Pomerol’s Pétrus and Château Le Pin the standard-bearers.

**Cabernet Franc**

Cabernet Franc is a parent of Cabernet Sauvignon, though is considerably lighter in color, body and tannin. It offers a Bordeaux-style red blend more obvious fruit than Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as a pleasant herbaceous note. Its lighter body can be welcome when blended with its more robust progeny, offering crispness to the wines.

**Petit Verdot**

Petit Verdot remains a small but important part of many quality Bordeaux-style red blends. Single varietal wines are powerful, deeply colored and tannic. In blends, it boosts tannins and deepens the color, and offers a distinctive spicy note.

**Malbec**

Malbec also plays a smaller supportive roll in Bordeaux and is more common in nearby Cahors and, notably, Argentina. At its best, it is deep-colored and fruit forward.

**Carmenère**

Carmenère is nearly extinct in Bordeaux today and is much more significant in Chile. It is a low-yielding grape that produces deep-colored, full-bodied wines.

Tasting Notes: The intense color of the Cuvée Sarah precedes a complex bouquet of dark fruit and spices. Blackberry and plum on the palate add to the wine’s rich and generous character, ripe fruit is restrained by the tannic structure. It's rich and spicy, with a juicy blackberry element and density.

Food Pairings: Beef and Venison

**Vina Robles, Jardine Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc, Paso Robles, 2019**

The Vina Robles Story

“I want Vina Robles to express a unique balance of European heritage and American opportunity. As individuals, we are rooted in the Old World. As viticulturists and winemakers, we are empowered by the New World.” - Founder Hans Nef

Vina Robles is the result of a unique personal trajectory, one that led founder Hans Nef from a rural village outside Zurich, Switzerland to the rugged terrain of California’s Central Coast.

As a child in Switzerland, Nef learned to appreciate his rural surroundings and the blessings of agriculture. It was this special appreciation that led him to expand his interests into agricultural land in the southern United States in the early 1990s. At the same time, he leveraged his passion for fine wine into his own wine import business, furthering his appreciation for California wines.

Each time Nef traveled to the U.S., his desire to grow his own wine became more intense. He discovered Paso Robles in the mid-1990s and quickly became enamored with the emergent wine country. Here, where the Pacific coastline unfolds into rugged ranchlands and cowboy ambiance, a new generation of California winemakers was turning Paso Robles into one of the world’s most dynamic winegrowing regions.

Nef was inspired to embark on his own idea for a Paso Robles winery, one that would honor his European roots while embracing the unique growing region to pursue his dream of producing world-class wines.

In 1996 Nef selected longtime friend and business associate Hans – R. Michel, a Swiss expatriate, as managing partner. A year later, the duo planted the first of what would later become six vineyards in Paso Robles, and soon thereafter Vina Robles was born. Winemaker Kevin Willenborg joined the team in 2012.

Vina Robles sources their Sauvignon Blanc fruit from a small lot on the Jardine Vineyard. Although vigorous on the vine, during fermentation the wine can be sensitive to degradation, so steps are taken to preserve the fragile varietal characteristics.  
  
The grapes for the 2019 vintage were picked and delivered to the winery in the cool morning hours. Gently handled, the fruit was left on the skins with judicious use of inert gas during pressing. The wine was then cold fermented in stainless steel tanks to limit oxidation and preserve the aromatics. Following fermentation, the wine was kept on the lees to further enhance the characteristics and mouthfeel.

Tasting Notes

Passion fruit and guava  -  hints of grapefruit  -  refreshing finish

**La Rousse, Malbec, France, 2019**

Malbec, a grape variety that is now almost synonymous with Argentinian wine, is originally from France. Though some people speculate that the grape variety originates from Burgundy, it was planted widely throughout France until the middle of the 20th century. Historically the grape is associated with Bordeaux, where it was commonly used as a blending grape. However, many people would agree that the most famous expression of the Malbec comes from Cahors, which requires a minimum of 70% Malbec in their wines. Though susceptible to frost, Malbec is a hearty grape variety that will grow almost anywhere, which is why it has been planted in so many different regions. Malbec is planted in climates ranging from the cool Loire to the heat of the Languedoc. As it has moved from place to place, Malbec has accumulated (some estimate) over 400 different names. The most common synonyms for Malbec are Auxerrois (not related to Pinot Auxerois Blanc) and Cot. Cot is still commonly used as a name for Malbec in the South of France. For the La Rousse Malbec, we teamed up with the talented oenologists Frederic Corpel, and Sebastien Giminez, to create a wine that is a balanced, and authentic expression of this extraordinary grape variety. About the Artist: The image on the label was painted by the Ohio artist Kate Morgan. Kate is an award winning, emerging artist based in Columbus, Ohio. She is best known for her figurative prints and paintings. If you would like to see more of her work, please visit:

<http://www.katemorganimagedesign.com/>

Technical Notes: Although today, Malbec is often associated with Argentina, historically Malbec was one of the principal grapes of Bordeaux, providing color and fruit to the blend. After a severe frost in 1956 killed significant portion of the Malbec vines in Bordeaux, the vineyards were replanted, principally in Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Today, Malbec has regained its status in France, as the principal grape of Cahors, along with new plantings in the Languedoc. This wine, after undergoing fermentation, is assembled, then allowed to rest on its lees in stainless steel tanks before a light filtration and bottling.

Tasting Notes: The La Rousse Malbec expresses the stony character of the terroir with its inky violet color, and spicy fruit aromas. Showing varietal character, this Malbec is full of blackberry, cassis, and espresso notes.

Food Pairing: While this wine is ideal with lean red meats like flank or skirt steak, it is also excellent with burgers, barbeque, or even pizza.