

7th January Unbelievably Unclassified: Chateau de Fargues



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With all classification systems there are always some anomalies and the Bordeaux 1855 classification system is no exception. Whether or not it's time to revise, or scrap it all together is not for me to say and the fact that it is based on price and, not necessarily quality means that although it is still highly respected in these parts of the world, it must be taken with a pinch of salt.

One wine that has always struck me as excellent but unclassified is the luscious sweet wine of Chateau de Fargues. Although the first vintage from this Chateau was not until 1943, I see no reason why, as with the promotion of Chateau Mouton-Rothschild in 1973, there is no inclusion of this wine into the classification to sit alongside Chateau Giuraud as a Premier Cru Sauternes.

The property itself is still under the ownership of the Lur Saluces family, the family that also own the only Premier Cru Superiore classe Chateau d'Yquem. The family has owned the property since at Chateau de Fargues since 1472.



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Chateau de Fargues is arguably one of the best sweet wines made in Sauternes and, with the knowledge and expertise of hundreds of years of winemaking at Chateau d'Yquem backing them, it is no surprise that their wines are so highly rated and that they are, even though unclassified, one of the most expensive wines made in Sauternes.

In his book "Liquid Gold", Stephen Brook notes that. "Certain properties are now glorying as Premier Crus are not worthy of that honour, and there are Deuxieme Crus and even unclassified properties such as Chateau de Fargues that make wine of premier cru standard".

Chateau de Fargues is one of a handful of top French Bordeaux wineries that have a representative in the region (Shanghai) and for Fargues it is none other than Philippe De Lur Saluces, the son of Chateau d'Yquem owner Alex De Lur Saluces.



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We were fortunate to taste a range of his wines from Chateau de Fargues recently and there is no doubting that that they are some of the finest Sauternes we have ever tried. Tasting alongside one of the Lur Saluces family makes the wines even more special and we were lucky enough to taste the 1990, 1998, 2005 and 2007 vintages. It was a great opportunity for Philippe to prove to us just how well the wines from Fargues age and how it is certainly worth the wait to give the wines some age before drinking (that is, if you are patient enough)!

Mr. De Lur Saluces enlightened us with the knowledge that the vintage 2011 is going to be another superb one, just that if you want to drink it at its best, you'd better wait until the year 2020 has passed (our view). Fortunately, according to Mr. De Lur Saluces, the Asian markets are slowly warming to sweet wines as they find them more acceptable on the palate and that is a good thing as there will be more available to us in the region (it may also mean that prices could go up all across the board)!

Mr. De Lur Saluces is very optimistic about the future of Chateau de Fargues in Hong Kong and mainland China as he believes these styles of wines are not just suited well to Chinese styles of food, but to all foods in general. This is a positive outlook for the wine as more and more food and wine pairing exercises take place in emerging wine markets such as here and in big cities such as Shanghai and Beijing.



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According to Mr. De Lur Saluces, wines from Chateau de Fargues are best when the year ends in a "7". Obviously this is not true for 1977 (my and Philippe's year) as this was a bad year all round in wine making, but the 2007, 1997, 1967 and 1947's are fantastic.

The 2007 vintage is currently available from One Red Dot Fine wines in Hong Kong (<http://www.onereddot.com/list.asp?offset=70> [<http://www.onereddot.com/list.asp?offset=70>]) and other back vintages are available too such as the 1997 (another great vintage and aged well enough by now to drink as soon as you purchase it!), the 1990 and the 1989 are also available too.

For more information on the wines and how to purchase them for your own consumption then contact One Red Dot wines here in Hong Kong and they will be able to help you further ([sales@onereddot.com](mailto:sales@onereddot.com) [<mailto:sales@onereddot.com>])

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