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## Ákos Forczek: My Take on the Bordeaux 2024 Vintage

*I arrived in Bordeaux with low expectations - but I returned home genuinely and pleasantly surprised!*

### Conclusion

2024 turned out to be a vintage reminiscent of the classic wines of the '80s and '90s - the kind we love to drink today. It's definitely a step up from 2021, with more maturity and density. The wines are deeper, juicier, and backed by good tannins.

This was a technical vintage, and those who succeeded were the ones who put in serious work during the growing season. They carefully managed the vineyards, made extensive selection during harvest, and used gentle extractions in the cellar.

If prices come out right (a big *if*), this vintage is absolutely worth buying.

### Weather

It was one of the wettest years of the past century, with the lowest sunshine hours in the last 30 years. But a warm end to the season in late September and early October really helped rescue the vintage.

### Mildew

Mildew was the main challenge. Organic and biodynamic producers had to treat their vines 17–18 times - more than double the usual 7–8. That says it all.

### Yields

Yields were all over the place. Some estates had almost no wine - Latour, for example, harvested just 12 hl/ha instead of the usual 45. Others lost 30 - 40%, coming in around 25–30 hl/ha: such as Petrus, Palmer, Pontet Canet, Évangile, Cheval Blanc, Haut Brion (26 hl/ha), and Lafite (32 hl/ha). Then there were estates like Calon Ségur who got a full crop.

**Sorting** was the magic word. The best wines were made by those who sorted obsessively:

- In the vineyard
- Using laser sorting tables
- Manual sorting

- Density sorting (ripe berries float; unripe ones sink—they look identical, but behave differently in liquid)

## Alcohol

Alcohol levels came in between 12.5% and 13.5%. I love this. Honestly, I'm tired of the 14.5%–15.5% monsters from 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2023.

## White Wines

I expected better results overall for whites. Domaine de Chevalier really stood out for me - great quality and value. Haut Brion Blanc was just OK, but not at the price it commands. Pavillon Blanc, though, was a big miss. Too acidic and flat - lacking depth.

A fun new addition: 2024 marks the debut of Duhart Blanc from Lafite—a charming little wine.

## Sauternes

This was a tough year for Sauternes. Philippe de Lur Saluces made a strong statement in his first vintage at Chateau de Fargues after his father's passing - he chose not to make any wine in 2024. And honestly, I think he was right. I tried several Sauternes that *were* made, and frankly, I wish they hadn't been. Then I saw some high scores from critics and couldn't believe it. I guess our palates don't align.

## Quality

The usual big names mostly delivered solid wines. But many of the second wines disappointed—Petit Cheval especially.

Some top estates were underwhelming for me. The biggest letdown was Cheval Blanc. To be fair, this is just my impression from one tasting at one moment. I hope it evolves into something great—they clearly gave it everything. Sometimes you win, sometimes you don't.

## My Favourite Wines

Including the prices I think they should hit to consider buying.

Wine	Target Price
Château Petrus	£2,500
Château Palmer	£150–160
Alter Ego de Palmer	£45
Château Tertre Roteboeuf	£100
Château Canon	£70–75
Château Pontet Canet	£60

Château Lafite	£220–250
Château Haut Brion	£170
Château Ducru Beaucaillou	£95
Château Ausone	£295
Château Figeac	£100
Château Leoville Las Cases	£90
Château Mouton Rothschild	£200
Château Clerc Milon	£45
Domaine de Chevalier (white)	£70
Vieux Château Certan	£150
Château Évangile	£130
Château Margaux*	£210

*\* Note on Margaux: it's supposed to be great. I didn't enjoy it, and at that price, I liked it even less. Ch Palmer was miles better.*

### Estates That Made Good Wine

- Château Poujeaux
- Château Sociando-Mallet
- Château Haut-Bailly
- Château Brane-Cantenac
- Château Léoville Poyferré
- Château Léoville Barton
- Château Gazin
- Château Clinet

Many châteaux made well-executed wines—but too many were just unremarkable.