



FIRST GROWTH and more about Bordeaux ranking

(article from the Wine Cellar Insider)

The First Growth [Bordeaux](#) wines are among the world's most expensive and famous wines. The 1st Growths of [Bordeaux](#) are now, more than ever, in a class by themselves. Currently, even the newest vintages being sold as futures cost on average \$1,000 or more per bottle! How did Chateau [Lafite Rothschild](#), Chateau [Latour](#), Chateau [Margaux](#), Chateau [Haut Brion](#) and Chateau [Mouton Rothschild](#) earn their coveted First Growth status? This article is a complete guide to the First Growth wines, wineries and chateau of Bordeaux.

Each of the properties were famous all over the world for their Bordeaux wine, long before they were classified as First Growth Bordeaux producers. The wines were known to be extraordinary in quality and it was agreed by most people at the time, that they occupied perhaps the finest [terroir and soil in Bordeaux](#).

The wines were the most expensive in the Bordeaux wine region. In large part, that is what made them First Growth Bordeaux wines, or the wine buyers of the day were well aware of their quality and value.

In unofficial classifications, Lafite Rothschild, Latour, Margaux and Haut Brion were listed as the finest and most costly wines of Bordeaux. They were thought of as First Growth Bordeaux wine, decades before the term became widely used. Thomas Jefferson during his visit to Bordeaux in 1787 came up with his list of the best wines from the area as well. The list created by Thomas Jefferson also placed the First Growth Bordeaux wine producers at the top of his rankings.

Some of the other famous tasters of the day put together unofficial ranks of Bordeaux wines after Jefferson were: Andre Simon in 1800, Lawton of Tastet and Lawton in 1815, Wilhelm Franck in 1845 and most notably, Cocks and Feret in 1850.

The official Classification took place at The Exposition Universelle de Paris. The event was seen as the perfect opportunity for France to display the best it had to offer for the entire world to see. This was what Napoléon III wanted to accomplish in [1855](#) with French culture and of course, the wines of France and Bordeaux..

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To create the list, Emperor Napoleon requested the top Bordeaux [negociants](#) of the day to rank the best wines of Bordeaux in five different ranking categories. The ranking categories were called Growths. A wine with the ranking of First Growth was considered the best wine in Bordeaux. While the rankings were in theory about quality, the selling price factored heavily into which wines were ranked into their respective categories and of course, the most expensive wines were The First Growth Bordeaux Wines. Another way to look at this is, a First Growth is an A+, a [Second Growth](#) is an A-, a [Third Growth](#) is a B+, a [Fourth Growth](#) is a B and a [Fifth Growth](#) is a C+.

With the exception of an A+ for the First Growths, the grades may or may not be applicable. But they provide you with a good idea on what the term First Growth means in relationship to the other Classified Growths of Bordeaux.

What we know of as the First Growth Bordeaux wines today, all share a long, colorful and sometimes connected history. The First Growths share histories dating back hundreds of years.

In fact, for the majority of the 18th century, two families owned Lafite, Latour, Margaux and Haut Brion. Even more amazing is, during a 2 year period, the same 2 families added Mouton to their holdings from 1718 to 1720. That means that for that short period of time, all 5 First Growths were owned by just two families!

In total, for the official 1855 Classification of the [Medoc](#), they came up with 5 levels of classification which covered 61 different chateaux in all. Following on the heels of the First Growths, the remaining levels of classification are: Second Growth, Third Growth, Fourth Growth and Fifth Growth.

First Growths ([Premiers Crus](#)) Commune (All LEFT Bank)

Château [Lafite-Rothschild](#) ([Pauillac](#))

Château [Latour](#) (Pauillac)

Château [Margaux](#) (Margaux)

Château [Haut-Brion Pessac Leognan](#) (Graves)

Château [Mouton Rothschild](#) (Pauillac) (Elevated from 2nd to 1st in 1973)

Right Bank : In [St. Emilion](#), with their ever changing Classification, in the official, 2012 St. Emilion Classification, Chateau [Ausone](#) and Chateau [Cheval Blanc](#) were no longer the only two Premier Cru Classe A Chateau. Chateau [Angelus](#) and Chateau [Pavie](#) joined the exclusive club. All 4 chateaux are now as Premier Cru Classe A. [Guide to Premier Cru Classe A St. Emilion Chateaux](#)

There are two other casual terms for the First Growths used in Bordeaux. "The Big 8", which includes all the wines classified in 1855, red and white, plus the Cheval Blanc and Ausone from St. Emilion. There is also "The Club of 9" which counts the members of "The Big 8" and [Petrus](#) from [Pomerol](#). "The Club of 9" meets at least once a year to [taste](#) and share their wines from every new vintage. While the club of 9 still exists and tastes together, in theory, with the new 2012 Saint Emilion Classification, the club of 9 should be renamed the club of 11. That has not happened yet and from the look of things today, that is not likely to take place at any time in the near [future](#). Things move slowly in Bordeaux, as you might expect, in an appellation where the wines can often take decades to develop.

It's also important to keep in mind that along with the 1855 classification of the red wines of Bordeaux, the wines from the commune of [Sauternes](#) and [Barsac](#) were also rated. Only one wine earned the coveted status of Premier Cru [Superieur](#), First Growth, Chateau d'[Yquem](#). While many tasters, critics, consumers and wine makers can spend hours debating which is the best First Growth producer in the Medoc, there is no argument about Chateau d'Yquem.

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In fact, Chateau d'Yquem is the only Bordeaux wine without peer. In fact, many people have the opinion that Chateau d'Yquem is the best wine of all the First Growths! Chateau d'Yquem has been held in this high regard for hundreds of years. When Thomas Jefferson visited Bordeaux, he wrote in his diary that d'Yquem "is the best white wine of France".

Read more: <http://www.thewinecellarinsider.com/wine-topics/bordeaux-growth-wine-guide/#ixzz3lkxFRMqQ>

Bordeaux Wine Official Classification of 1855

Classed Growths of <u>Médoc</u>	
<i>Premiers Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lafite Rothschild• Latour• Margaux<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Haut-Brion (Graves)• Mouton Rothschild (1973)
<i>Deuxièmes Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rauzan-Ségla• Rauzan-Gassies• Léoville-Las Cases• Léoville-Poyferré• Léoville-Barton• Durfort-Vivens• Gruaud-Larose• Lascombes• Brane-Cantenac• Pichon Longueville Baron• Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande• Ducru-Beaucaillou• Cos d'Estournel• Montrose
<i>Troisièmes Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kirwan• d'Issan<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lagrange• Langoa-Barton• Giscours• Malescot St. Exupéry• Boyd-Cantenac• Cantenac-Brown• Palmer• La Lagune• Desmirail• Calon-Séguir• Ferrière• Marquis d'Alesme Becker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saint-Pierre• Talbot• Branais-Ducru• Dubart-Milon

<i>Quatrièmes Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talbot • Branaille-Ducru • Duhart-Milon • Pouget • La Tour Carnet • Lafon-Rochet • Beychevelle • Prieuré-Lichine • Marquis de Terme
<i>Cinquièmes Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontet-Canet • Batailley • Haut-Batailley • Grand-Puy-Lacoste • Grand-Puy-Ducasse • Lynch-Bages • Lynch-Moussas • Dauzac • d'Armailhac • du Tertre • Haut-Bages-Libéral • Pédesclaux • Belgrave • de Camensac • Cos Labory • Clerc Milon • Croizet Bages • Cantemerle (1856)

Classed Growths of Sauternes and Barsac	
<i>Premier Cru Supérieur</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • d'Yquem
<i>Premiers Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La Tour Blanche • Lafaurie-Peyraguey • Clos Haut-Peyraguey • Rayne-Vigneau • Suduiraut • Coutet • Climens • Guiraud • Rieussec • Rabaud-Promis • Sigalas-Rabaud
<i>Deuxièmes Crus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • de Myrat • Doisy Daëne • Doisy-Dubroca • Doisy-Védrines • d'Arche • Filhot • Broustet • Nairac • Caillou • Suau • de Malle

- [Caillou](#)
- [Suau](#)
- [de Malle](#)
- [Romer du Hayot](#)
- [Romer](#)
- [Lamothe](#)
- [Lamothe-Guignard](#)