

DOMAINE de BELLEVUE TASTING NOTES by Michael Schuster

Tasting with Tim Griffiths, Jean François Boras and Cristian Bruseghini

4th October 2011, at South Street London W1K 1DJ

[Young vines, vineyard replanted in 2002. Approx 2/3 Merlot, 1/3 Cabernet Sauvignon.]

2010 Les Ancres de Bellevue AOC Bordeaux Clairet. 13%

A fine rose colour; light red fruit nose; fullish, fresh, easy, supple textured light red style with good length. Nice lesser red.

2008 Les Ancres de Bellevue AOC Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux; 'Second' wine. 14.5%

Mid red; lightly oaky nose and light mineral character; light to medium bodied wine, fresh, fragrant, with just a touch of tannin and an attractive persistence. Clean, sapid, vital.

2009 Domaine de Bellevue Le Grand Cuvée, Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux. 13%, 100% new wood, Medium depth, dark red; young, fairly closed nose, spicy, fresh, minerally; richly fruited, medium bodied, supple textured, elegant wine with a particularly fine grained tannin; warm, gently spicy flavour with both length and finesse on the palate, and excellent aromatic persistence. 2014-24+. 17 / 92

2008 Domaine de Bellevue Le Grand Cuvée, Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux

Medium depth, dark red; a nose of minerals and spice rather than fruit as such; gentle, refined harmony to taste, long, easy, elegant, gently fresh fruited and subtly mineral in flavour, with fine, light length. Obviously less rich than the 2009, but still very good. 2013-22+. 16.5 / 90

2006 Domaine de Bellevue Le Grand Cuvée

Dark, pale rimmed red; a gentle minerality, warm, roasted, a touch of early maturity on the nose here; lovely wine, supple, gently dry-edged in tannin but without coarseness; fresh, crisp and easy with good light length. The least of the Domaine de Bellevue quartet here, but still very pleasing. (The 08 is denser and more complete; the 09 is sweeter cored, longer and richer). Now to 2016+. 16 / 89

2005 Domaine de Bellevue Le Grand Cuvée, The Renaissance Millésime

Dark, pale rimmed red; a ripe, early bouquet to smell, a rich, finely tannic wine to taste; relatively dense, long across the palate, quite complex, with a sweet fruit core, and with excellent fruit-fragrant length. Ripe and fleshy within the group, a fine complete wine, a remarkable first year and, for the moment the star of the group. Now to 2018+. 17+ / 92-3

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Wines that are easy and *digèste* in character, appealing very much to the sense of smell. When tasting these I found it difficult not to be reminded of Ausone, not in terms of Ausone's depth, scope, class, but in a similarity of 'fine limestone' impression. They are the antithesis of the currently fashionable fruit-bomb style, and none the worse for that. They don't impress immediately if what you are looking for is an abundance of fruit (though there is ample in evidence in the 2005 and 2009) instead they are almost Burgundian in their delicacy and emphasis on scent and aroma rather than fruit core. But the fruit is there, and they are not weak. Give them time and attention, and you will find they are subtle, fragrant beauties. Given how good they are with such young vines, maturity in the vineyard will likely produce more flesh, greater density and aromatic volume. But I hope their essential character remains the same. They will not be to everybody's taste – in any case there is precious little made - but they certainly are to mine. They seem to drink well young because there is nothing coarse or forbidding in their texture, but they appear to have the matter and scope to keep and improve over a good 10-15 years.