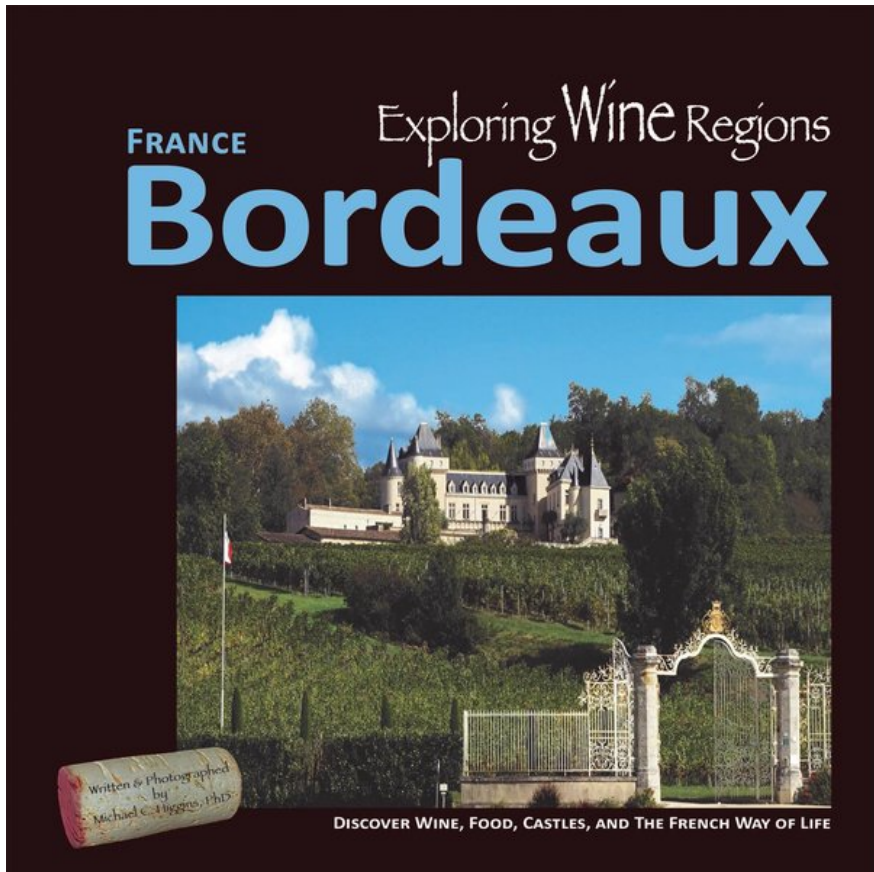


DEPARTURES

The Ultimate Book for Wine Lovers Is Being Released This Fall



Courtesy Michael C. Higgins

Wine writer and expert Michael C. Higgins takes readers on a journey through the famous region.

By Jordi Lippe-McGraw on August 05, 2020

For many wine lovers, Bordeaux is the go-to destination for all things vino. Sadly, trips to the region are on hold for some travelers, but that doesn't mean you still can't be inspired by the French hot spot. A new book is being released this October, *Exploring Wine Regions: Bordeaux*, and it promises to be part coffee table book, part wine geek guide, and mostly a travel guide.



Courtesy Michael C. Higgins



French-Asian fusion, an estate run by women delivering excellence in hospitality.

LOCATED IN MARGAUX VILLAGE

This is a special place for many reasons. First of all, they are located in the middle of the little Margaux village, right on the main road (D2). Entering their property is a promenade of beautiful architecture and gardens. It is a village in and of itself.

The property was completely rebuilt over a five-year period, opening in 2017. A stroll down the promenade leads to a brand new winery, many gardens of herbs, fruits and flowers, all designed for an educational experience. The promenade leads to the vineyards where a restored events building stands with views of the adjacent property (Chateau Margaux), the gently rolling hills of vineyards and the historic Margaux church.

At the entrance to the promenade is *Le Hameau* (Hamlet), their welcoming place of inspiration into the fine art of living. This is considered the soul of Marquis d'Alsème, a place to relax, shop, eat, drink wine, and it is the starting point for all their tours.

Le Hameau is an inspiration of Marie-Antoinette's pavilion at the Versailles, a beautiful French setup for refined living, a friendly spot that provides luxurious relaxation and delicious discoveries.

INVITING HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is most special here! An all-women team brings out the best of everything feminine. They have a focus on hospitality and family, nurturing the finest experiences possible. They are always welcoming, arms open, anytime May through October, even without an appointment.

To reflect the owner's heritage (French father and Chinese mother), Nathalie Perrodo chose classical French architecture throughout the pavilion exteriors. Inside, an elegant Asian feel is created by moon-shaped doorways into the barrel room (photo left), wavy brass panels resembling a stylized dragon tail (inside of the winery), and moon gates illustrated with Tao symbols. Countless aesthetic and technical details live together in the harmony of Yin and Yang. Perfect acoustics provides the wines with soft vibrations for exquisite aging. And the vintages live in their own space, maturing at their own pace, with odd and even years on separate floors to separate multiple vintages.

Numerous interesting and unique tours have been created for us to experience the wonder and magic of this special place.

MEDOC MARGAUX
Winery (Château) Light Foods
CHATEAU MARQUIS D'ALESMÉ

1855
Grand Cru Classé

Troisième Cru (Third-Growth)
Grand Cru Classé of 1855


7 Rue de la Trémolle
33460 Margaux, France

+33 (0)5 57 81 13 20
Contact@Marquis.wine

MarquisDAlsème.wine

English, French, Chinese

Open: May-October, Monday-Friday
By Appointment Preferred
Casual Drop-ins Are No Problem



Collection of Wines
Chateau Marquis d'Alsème
(First Label - Grand Cru)
Marquis d'Alsème
(Second Wine)

Exploring Wine Regions | Bordeaux | 89

"It is the only coffee table book that I know of dedicated exclusively to Bordeaux's extraordinary wine region," author Michael C. Higgins told Departures. "It is an insider's travel guide to the region, packed not only with technical details about its legendary wines and quality classifications, but also the nitty-gritty on how to navigate the extraordinary tourism experiences of the area, from its centuries-old castles to its best restaurants to the vineyards where you can spend the night."



Courtesy Michael C. Higgins

While the new book is undoubtedly the latest way for wine lovers to taste their favorite spot, it's not the only one. Wine travel specialists also developed a virtual wine road trip that takes wine enthusiasts to the châteaux of Bordeaux, following the company's on-ground itineraries.



Courtesy Michael C. Higgins



The magic of Cabernet Sauvignon comes alive here in the Médoc. Through centuries of tradition, passionate land caretakers, terroir of heavy gravel and sand, and notable winemakers mastering their blends... Bordeaux's Médoc has brought forth some of the finest, most powerful and complex wines the world has ever seen.

THE MÉDOC

Let's begin this journey through the Bordeaux wine regions by entering the Médoc first. Located just north of the city of Bordeaux, the closest point is only a 15-minute drive. The Médoc spans 60 kilometers (37 miles) of wine regions along the Left Bank of the Gironde Estuary, fed by the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers. It is arguably the most well known of the Bordeaux wine regions as a result of Napoléon's bestowment of the "first-growths" in 1855, and their subsequent high-profile wines. Here we find the notable Château Margaux, Château Lafite Rothschild, Château Latour, Château Haut-Brion, and Château Mouton Rothschild, among the many other high-profile Grand Cru Classés of 1855. The reason Cabernet Sauvignon is "king" here is because the soil composition is ideal for this grape variety. Gravel, from small pebbles to large stones, embraces the topsoil here. During the day, these

stones reflect the sun back onto the vines, giving them added sun for growth. Think of it like being in a pool and getting extra tanning. You get the sun directly plus you receive the reflection off the water, absorbed by your skin at a much quicker pace. This is the same for the vines. Cabernet Sauvignon needs warmer temperatures and a longer growing cycle than most grapes. The stones offer this through the benefits of reflection, as well as by absorbing the heat of the day and then releasing the warmth back into the vines in the evening, extending the day's warmth. The soil is a mix of gravel and sand. Sand also provides excellent water drainage ideal for Cabernet Sauvignon. Conversely, clay soil, more consistent with the Right Bank, keeps temperatures cool and moist, more conducive to Merlot vines. Pockets of clay can be found in the Médoc and the châteaux that are

fortunate to have some take full advantage of this soil to produce better Merlot grapes for their blends. This makes Cabernet Sauvignon the primary grape used on the Left Bank, while Merlot generally takes a second seat in the blend. The third Bordeaux varietal most commonly used in Médoc blends is Cabernet Franc, followed by Petit Verdot. Once in a while you will find Malbec or Carménère in the blends.



Exploring Wine Regions | Bordeaux | 59

Of course, once you're ready to hit the road again, the same company offers a Wine and Design Tour, which takes travelers on a trip around Bordeaux while highlighting vineyards and architectural treasures of the region. You could also plan your own journey with the help of Higgin's thoughtful and thorough new book.



Courtesy Michael C. Higgins

"My aim with this book was ultimate to 'uncomplicate' Bordeaux, which is an incredibly complex wine region, and to make it more accessible in some ways to all manner of wine lovers," added Higgins. "And until Americans can travel to Bordeaux again (which hopefully will be very soon), it's a great way for wine lovers to take a photographic tour of the region and gain inspiration for their next trip!"