

EAT * DRINK * SHOP * STAY * COOK

Bordeaux

World-class wines and Michelin-starred restaurants have made Bordeaux an attractive - but expensive - destination. Use **olive's** guide to discover the best bistros, bars and vineyards on a budget

Words and photographs CARLA CAPALBO



Chateau Lanessan in the Médoc

Bordeaux's recent makeover has turned it into one of France's most exciting cities – it was awarded UNESCO world heritage site status in June 2007. A provincial capital that's as sophisticated as Paris, Bordeaux's cultural centre is small enough to explore in a few days. Its stunning 18th-century buildings have been given a facelift and the River Garonne waterfront has been completely revamped, with old wine warehouses giving way to imaginative flower gardens, cycle paths and a new star attraction by the Bourse, the Miroir d'Eau. This reflecting pool has quickly become Bordeaux's equivalent to Rome's Spanish Steps – a popular hangout. From there, it's just a few minutes' walk to the monumental Esplanade des Quinconces, the elegant Golden Triangle or the pretty shopping streets between the Cours Clemenceau and the cathedral and museum quarter.

Bordeaux's suburbs are some of the world's greatest wine-producing areas. Médoc, Saint-Émilion, Entre deux Mers and Graves are as famous as Bordeaux itself, and they spread out around the city like extended gardens to north, east and south. Some of Pessac's vineyards are within the city centre, Margaux is just 30 minutes by car; in less than an hour you can be tasting wine in Pauillac, Pomerol or Sauternes.

At the Maison du Vin in the centre of town, wine culture is everywhere. The home of the Conseil Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bordeaux (CIVB) also has the stylish Bar à Vin that offers a vast selection of wines by the glass or bottle in all price ranges; above it is the École du Vin, where you can enrol for as little as a two-hour wine course in English or French, at beginner's level or beyond. The École organises tours of the wine châteaux, with tastings and lunch options (bordeaux.com).

For a gourmet picnic to eat by the river, go to the colourful Sunday morning market along the Quai des Chartrons for artisan breads and confit d'oie (goose), Bayonne ham, oysters and other shellfish from the nearby Atlantic coast.

Bordeaux's cuisine is closely affiliated to its wine – lamprey (a type of eel) is served à la bordelaise (with red wine and shallots) as is steak; foie gras is paired with Sauternes, and meats and fish are grilled over vine cuttings. Don't miss caviar d'Aquitaine, 'It's produced here in the Gironde on sustainable sturgeon farms,' says Jean-Marie Amat, one of Bordeaux's great chefs. 'It's delicious and a lot less expensive than its Russian counterparts.'

Restaurant Jean-Marie Amat is one of several Michelin-starred restaurants in and around Bordeaux to offer an affordable lunchtime prix fixe (fixed price) menu. Many restaurants also offer wines by the glass to accompany each course. Bordeaux has authentic bistros, wine bars and cafés in the little streets between the Rue Sainte-Catherine and the river. Don't miss the two pastry specialities – the small, golden-brown cannelés (also spelt canelés), which are baked in tiny copper moulds and have a crunchy exterior and chewy interior (see page 109), and Bordeaux's take on classic French macarons; indulge in a box that includes cassis with violet cream, and salty caramel.

To experience a completely different aspect of Bordeaux, drive to the coast, to Arcachon or one of the smaller ocean villages to the west of the Médoc. This is where the châteaux owners have weekend and summer houses, and there are plenty of places to eat, watch the sunset or take a walk along the beach.

EAT

LUNCH IN THE PARK

Restaurateur Colum Crichton Stewart's **Orangerie**, in Bordeaux's leafy Jardin Public, is open 7am-9pm for breakfast, lunch and snacks. In warm weather the glass doors open and tables are set out among flower and vegetable beds. The food ranges from salads and sandwiches to a small selection of cooked dishes each day. Great for families. Average meals costs €20; sandwiches €6.80 to take away or €10.80 to eat in. Use the Cours de Verdun entrance to the park (00 335 56 48 24 41).

GASTRONOMY FOR €30

Jean-Marie Amat has been setting trends in Bordeaux for 30 years. At his signature restaurant, **Jean-Marie Amat**, his passion for ingredients shines: pigeon grilled with Moroccan spices and served with herb salad; lobster roasted with potatoes and garlic; rabbit served pink with Lardo di Colonnata. €30 prix fixe lunch, book well in advance. Château du Prince Noir, 26 Rue Raymond Lis, Lormont (00 335 56 06 12 52; jm-amat.com)

MODERN FRENCH CUISINE

In a minimalist restaurant built out onto the pavement near the Jardin Public, Yves, of **Yves Gravelier**, cooks some of Bordeaux's most delicious food simply, but with great skill. The menu changes daily, rabbit is served cold with carrot and ginger salad; roast sea bass comes with



Jean-Marie Amat



potatoes mashed with olives and fennel. His wife, Anne-Marie, who runs the dining room, is the daughter of legendary Michelin-starred chef Pierre Troisgros, and a good person to guide you through the wine list. Book ahead. Three-course lunch menu €24. Three-course dinner menu €28; four courses for €39. 114 Cours du Verdun (00 335 56 48 17 15)

AT LAUTREC'S TABLE

Bordeaux's period-piece restaurant, **Le Chapon Fin** is in an Art-Nouveau setting complete with theatrical grottoes. Toulouse Lautrec and Sarah Bernhardt had their own tables here. Today it is in the hands of young chef Nicolas Frion, who steers a course between classical and modern cuisine, with elaborate preparations – liquorice-lacquered brill fillet comes with endive Charlotte scented with acacia honey. Frion also gives one-day cooking courses (bordeauxsaveurs.com). Six-course découverte menu €55. 50 Rue Montesquieu (00 335 56 79 10 10; chapon-fin.com)

AUTHENTIC MÉDOC

Jean-Paul Barbier's **Lion d'Or** is a Médoc classic, the kind of family-run country restaurant that's in danger of extinction – the kind where you'll find menus such as roast Pauillac lamb, coq au vin and stuffed duck written in chalk on the blackboard. This is where you'll run into the winery owners. The lunch menu – including a glass of wine – is a bargain at €13. Route des Châteaux, Arcins (00 33 5 56 58 96 79)



OYSTERS GALORE

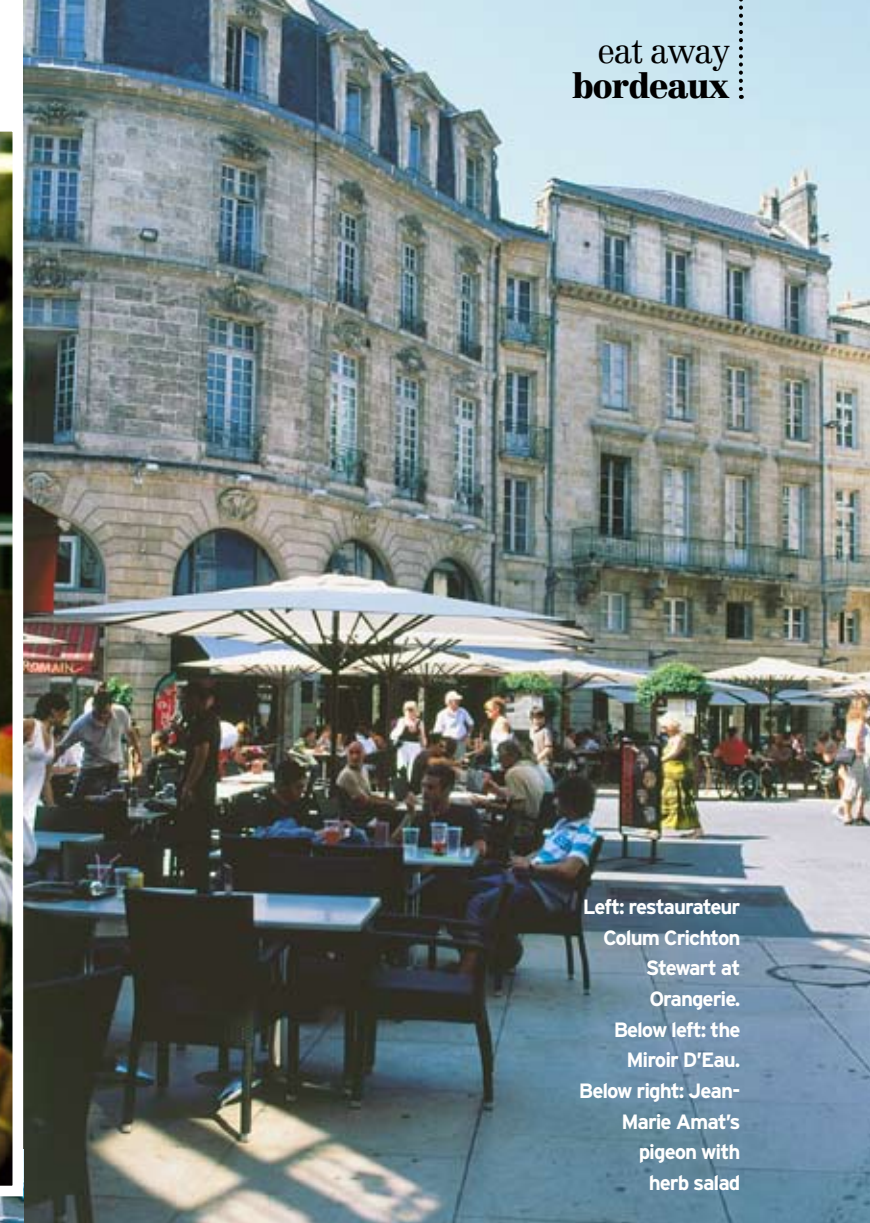
Chez Brunet is a slip of a restaurant behind the Tourist Office, with excellent oysters to go as well as plates of shellfish along with salads, foie gras and smoked salmon. Mixed oyster plates available in season. Twelve large Belon oysters, €25. 9 Rue de Condé (00 335 56 51 35 50)

SOUTHWESTERN HEARTY DINING

If you're into real meat and potatoes, **La Tupiña** is for you – it has an open fireplace for roasting huge cuts of beef, lamb or poultry. Lots of atmosphere and great wines. Go for the daily menus to get the best value. Lunch menu €16; dinner €32 and €48. 6 Rue Porte de la Monnaie (latupina.com; 00 335 56 91 56 37)

HIGH-TECH DISHES

Chef Thierry Marx's two-starred **Cordeillan-Bages** is a must if you're excited by molecular gastronomy.



Left: restaurateur Colum Crichton Stewart at Orangerie. Below left: the Miroir D'Eau. Below right: Jean-Marie Amat's pigeon with herb salad



DON'T MISS BOX OF 24 BALLARDRIN MACARONS, €28.80 * THREE-COURSE LUNCH AT GRAVELIER, €24 * TWO-HOUR WINE COURSE IN ▶

Here a Granny Smith becomes a green, herring-and-vodka-filled bubble; risotto is fashioned from bean sprouts and tossed with oyster juice and truffle oil. Spend the night, too. Multi-course menus €90 and €170. Route des Châteaux, Pauillac (00 335 56 59 24 24; cordeillanbages.com)

HIGH TABLE

Chef Philippe Etchebest's two Michelin-starred restaurant is set in the luxurious **Hostellerie de Plaisance**. His cuisine is modern, multi-sourced and fun. Lamb is rolled around Mediterranean seasonings and served with quinoa risotto, black olive paste and smoky Spanish peppers. Desserts come two at a time. Tasting menus at €55, €95 and €120. (00 335 57 55 07 55; hostelleriedeplaisance.com)

DOWN-TO-EARTH FOOD

L'envers du Décor is a relaxed bistro and wine bar on Saint-Émilion's main street. Serving fresh, light food from the seasonal basket, menus change daily, with a two-course special at €18 for lunch, or €29 for three courses. Lots of wines by the glass. 11 Rue du Clocher (00 33 5 57 74 48 31)

SAUTERNES WITH EVERYTHING

In the village of Sauternes, **Le Saprien** is the place to try the great dessert wine used as an ingredient – try it jellied with foie gras and frozen in desserts. Menus at €25 and €37. 14 Rue Principale (00 33 5 56 76 60 87)

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: **Maison du Vin**, which contains **Bar à Vin**; chef **Hugo Naon** at **Café Lavinal**; tuna salad at **Orangerie**; the village of **Saint Christoly Médoc**

DRINK

AFFORDABLE BORDEAUX

There's plenty of fine wine in Bordeaux that's easy on the pocket and a pleasure to drink. Beyond the top tier, dozens of estates produce lovely, inexpensive wines.

1 Second wine One way to stay close to the greats without having to sell your house is to buy the big estates' second vin. Almost all the top châteaux make them, and they usually cost less than one-third of the top cru's price but provide an idea of the house's style and can be excellent.

2 Taste first Always try to taste a wine before buying it. A good way is to visit one of the many well-stocked wine shops or wine bars in and around Bordeaux where you can sample wines by the glass. Make a note of the ones you like and try to visit the producers.

3 Choose your appellations carefully You'll find that some command lower prices: Entre-Deux-Mers is a good example. It's close to Saint-Émilion and Graves but often offers better value for money than its more famous neighbours.

4 Buy direct Due to Bordeaux's unique négociant system, not all châteaux sell directly to private clients. But most will sell a limited number of bottles to visitors. It's worth calling to find out if you are intent on buying directly.

THREE GREAT WINE BARS

Bar à Vin The quintessential Bordeaux wine bar is inside the CIVB's Maison du Vin – Bar à Vin offers hundreds of choices in a chic, central interior. Open 11am-10pm, Monday to Saturday. 3 Cours de XXX Juillet (00 335 56 00 43 47)

L'Essentiel Stop in at garagiste winemaker Jean-Luc Thunevin's flash new wine bar and shop where you can taste a flight of up to five wines, including top labels (priced accordingly). 6 Rue Guadet, Saint-Émilion (00 335 57 24 39 76)

La Winery Just outside Bordeaux, La Winery offers a new concept in wine – a modern space with a vast wine store with tastings, classes, films and exhibitions about wine. Its restaurant, La Wy, looks beyond the Médoc for inspiration. Three-course lunch €23. Arsac-en-Médoc (00 33 556 39 04 90; lawinery.fr).



LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Rent a car for a few days and travel the many Routes des Châteaux.

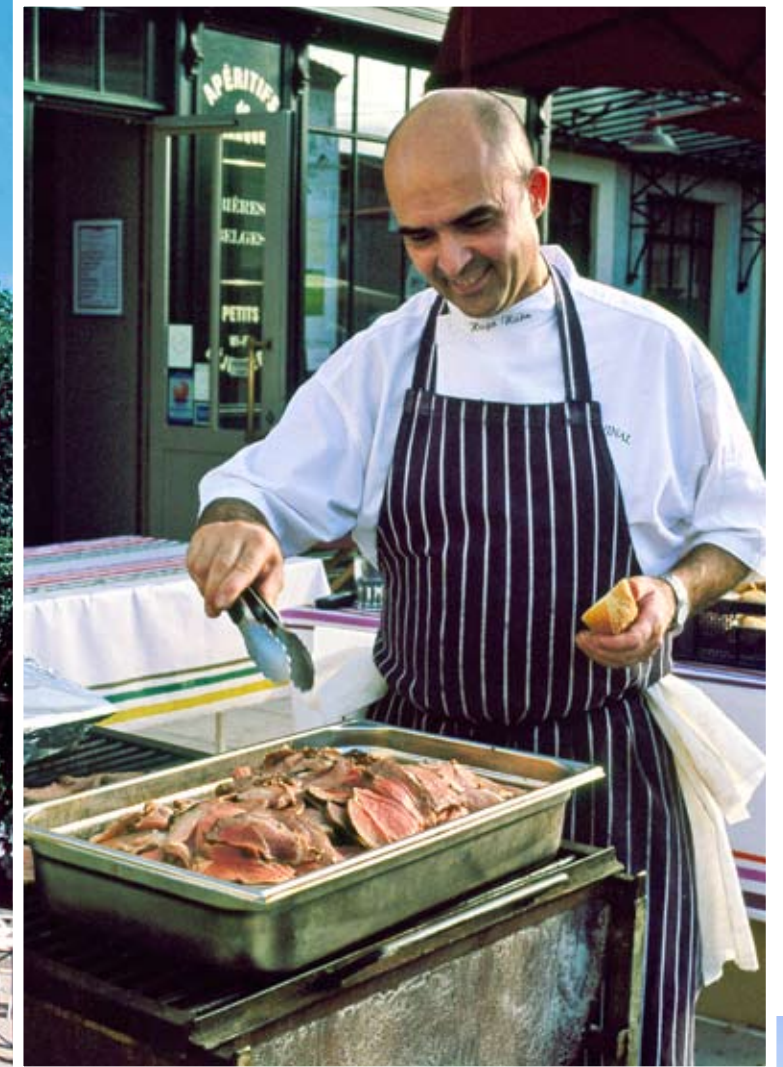
MÉDOC

The Médoc is home to some of the world's most iconic wines: Châteaux Margaux, Latour, Lafitte, Mouton Rothschild, Leoville-Barton... they're all here. If you plan in advance, it's possible to visit all of the great châteaux. Most will offer a guided tour of the cellars and a small taste of the wines, sometimes for a fee. If you prefer an English expert to organise and guide you, Wendy Narby's Insider Tasting (insider tasting.com) is a good choice. For more information about the top châteaux, contact Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux (ugcb.net).

SAINT-ÉMILION and POMEROL Saint-Émilion, on Bordeaux's right bank, makes a wonderful destination for wine enthusiasts. It's surrounded by some of the greatest names in wine – Châteaux Ausone, Pétrus, Cheval Blanc, Canon La Gaffelière – as well as many other excellent but less famous estates. The well-organised tourist office in Place des Créneaux doubles as a wine centre, shop and a school (saint-emilion-tourisme.com). For €29 you can join a daily class at the École de Vin de Saint-Émilion (00 335 57 24 61 01; vignobleschateaux.fr).

GRAVES AND SAUTERNES

Drive south from Bordeaux and you're quickly in the rural countryside that leads down to the Graves and then to Sauternes, where the dessert wine is produced. If the Graves are best known for their fine, mineral white wines, from châteaux such as Domaine du Chevalier, Haut-Brion, and Malartic Lagravière, they are also capable of producing great reds, as exemplified by Château Haut-Bailly, which is a lovely estate to visit (chateau-haut-bailly.com). Château Smith Haut Lafitte is now as well-known for its Caudalie spa, which launched grape-derived beauty treatments, as it is for its wines and restaurants (smith-haut-lafitte.com). In Sauternes, Château d'Yquem, the greatest name in dessert wine, reigns from its plateau. Other estates are more accessible, such as Renaissance Château de Malle, famous for its formal gardens (chateau-de-malle.fr) or Château Guiraud, Yquem's neighbour (chateau-guiraud.fr).



Orangerie in the Jardin Public



ENGLISH AT ECOLE DU VIN, €25 * GLASS OF SAINT-ÉMILION, FROM €3-€50 AT L'ESSENTIEL WINE BAR * TOMME DE BORDEAUX (AGED) ▶

SHOP

The city's most fascinating wine shop, **l'Intendant**, is built like a giant corkscrew – a spiral staircase whose walls house each of Bordeaux's appellations, from Graves and Sauternes to Médoc, from Saint-Émilion to the Côtes and Entre Deux Mers. Prices go from under €15 to well over €400 per bottle, so there's something for everyone, with charming and well-informed staff to advise you. 2 Allées de Tourny (00 335 56 48 01 29).

For chocoholics, **Saunion** is a must. It's a fourth-generation family business – the chocolates have been sold in this shop since 1927. Saunion specialises in chocolate bonbons, such as nougatine-filled Gallien de Bordeaux and la Girondine whose Cognac heart is surrounded by toasted almonds. Bring a box home. 56 Cours Clemenceau (00 335 56 48 05 75)

Genevieve Lethu sells French tableware and is a culinary treasure trove. 32 Cours Clémenceau (genevievelethu.net; 00 335 56 52 30 06)

Update your cooking knives at knife shop **Coutellerie Castant**. It stocks the whole range of cult-status Laguiole knives. 5 Rue Michel Montaigne (00 335 56 52 06 36; coutelleriecastant.com)

Librairie Mollat is the city's most important bookshop, and includes gardening, food and wine sections. 15 Rue Vital Carles (00 335 56 56 40 00)

Jean d'Alos selects and ages over 200 artisan cheeses from across France. 4 Rue Montesquieu (00 335 56 44 29 66)

You'll spot **Baillardran's** red boutiques all over Bordeaux (including the airport). They sell only two products – macarons in rainbow flavours and colours, and cannelés. Ten cannelés, €17. Baillardran at Galerie des Grands Hommes (00 335 56 79 05 89; baillardran.com)

At Margaux, **La Cave d'Ulysse** is a fine wine shop run by Château Rauzan-Ségla, which stocks books, gadgets and sky-blue boxes of uniquely Margaux chocolates, les sarments de Mademoiselle de Margaux. 2, Rue de la Tremoille, Margaux (00 335 57 88 79 94; caveulysse.com)

The pretty square in the village of Bages contains one of the region's best bakeries, a wine-themed gift shop and the bistro, **Café Lavinal**. Directly behind the Lynch-Bages estate. (bordeauxsaveurs.com)



l'Intendant, whose corkscrew walls house each of Bordeaux's appellations

SLEEP

Le Domaine de Valmont

Located in the centre of the charming village of Barsac, this 18th-century wine estate has been converted into modestly priced chambres d'hôte. €90 b&b. (00 335 56 27 02 69; domaine-valmont.fr)

Hotel de Normandie

Brilliantly located – it's at one end of the famous Place de Quinconces, opposite the Maison du Vin – this modest hotel has recently been refurbished and offers an affordable base for exploring the city centre. B&b from €130. 7 Cours du XXX Juillet (00 33 5 56 52 16 80; hotel-de-normandie-bordeaux.com)

Relais du Château d'Arche

Situated in a converted 18th-century charterhouse surrounded by vineyards, this is a comfortable small hotel. From €140 b&b. (00 335 56 76 67; chateaudarche-sauternes.com)

Hotel Le Seeko'o This architecturally impressive hotel is modelled on an igloo and has 45 modern and airy rooms. The hotel is situated just a few minutes' walk from the city centre, near the newly restructured and now very hip quays. B&b from €205. 54 Quai de Bacalan (00 335 56 39 07 07; seekoo-hotel.com)

La Maison Bordeaux Set in a converted

under
€100

under
€150

under
€150

Hôtellerie de
Plaisance in central
Saint-Emilion



18th-century stable block, this boutique hotel has only six rooms so it feels as if you're staying in a private house right in the centre of town. It has a wine bar and the staff can arrange visits to local cellars. B&b from €180. 113 Rue Albert Barraud (00 335 56 44 00 45; lamaisonbord-eaux.com)

Cordeillan-Bages This is one of Bordeaux's top relais, with 25 rooms and four suites. The 17th-century château is a pleasure palace, with its top restaurant and private pool. B&b €240. Route des Châteaux, Pauillac (00 335 56 59 24 24; cordeillanbages.com)

Château La Lagune Winemaker Caroline Frey has recently turned her 19th-century château into an exclusive relais, with six rooms. From €600 per double room, which includes cellar visit, wine tasting, bed and breakfast. If you would rather just go for a meal, her private chef will cook for you in the delightful kitchen-dining room. (00 335 57 88 82 77; chateau.lalagune.com)

Hôtellerie de Plaisance Located in central Saint-Émilion, the Hôtellerie offers surprisingly private, peaceful rooms with full services and a top restaurant. B&b from €374 (00 335 57 55 07 55; hostellerieplaisance.com)

Château Franc-Mayne Surrounded by its own vineyards, the château offers nine rooms, each in a different style. A fun location, well-placed for exploring Saint-Émilion and Pomerol. B&b from €195. (0033 557246261; chateau-francmayne.com)



COOK Cannelés

1 hour ■ Makes 30 ■ EASY

These are traditionally cooked in conical copper moulds with fluted sides. You can use regular muffin tins or brioche moulds instead.

butter for the moulds
milk 1 litre
eggs 5, 1 whole and 4 yolks
caster sugar 400g
plain flour 250g
rum 2 tbsp
oil (any flavourless oil) 2 tsp
vanilla extract 1 tsp

■ Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Butter the moulds well. Whisk the milk with the egg and the egg yolks, until smooth, in a medium saucepan. Put on the stove and slowly bring almost to the boil, beating all the time. Don't let the eggs curdle. Remove from the heat. Stir the sugar and flour together in a mixing bowl. Pour in the hot milk mixture, stirring well. Beat in the rum, oil and vanilla. ■ Spoon the mixture evenly into the moulds, filling them $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Bake for about 45 minutes, or until deeply golden or browned (many people prefer them well done). Remove from the moulds, and serve at room temperature.

■ PER CANNELÉ 129 kcal, protein 2.7g, carbohydrate 22.3g, fat 3.6g, saturated fat 1.7g, fibre 0.3g, salt 0.08g

€39 FROM L'INTENDANT*

MENU DECODER

Agneau de Pauillac comes from the marshes along the Gironde
à la bordelaise cooked with red wine and shallots
Axoa a dish made with peppers, usually veal
Bar sea bass
Brebis sheep
Garbure a thick cabbage and bean soup
Huitres oysters
Lamproie sea lamprey, usually prepared à la bordelaise
Lapin rabbit
Piperade eggs, onions and peppers cooked together
Poule-au-pot chicken stew

WINE SPEAK

Appellation a region where grapes are grown
Cave bottle cellar
Chai barrel cellar
Cru specific area or vineyard, and the wine that is made there
Cuve vat
Cuvée a batch of wine selected for its characteristics
Cuvier winemaking cellar
Degustation tasting
Enologue winemaker
Grand cru a vineyard with an excellent reputation

How to get there

British Airways (ba.com), Air France (airfrance.com) and easyJet (easyjet.com) fly daily to Bordeaux from around the UK.

Carla Capalbo would like to thank the Bordeaux tourist office for their help. For information about Bordeaux, visit bordeaux.com

Exchange rate as olive went to press 79p = €1

Raising a glass to life

The Co-operative's innovative Fairtrade work offers a lifeline to many across the globe

The Co-operative continues to be the leading supermarket advocate of Fairtrade, supporting growers and producers in developing countries.

It does this by offering the widest range of Fairtrade grocery products available and selling these in more stores than any other retailer. In fact, it was through The Co-operative's work with the Los Robles winery in Chile and Traidcraft in the UK, that the first fairly traded wines were introduced to the UK in 2001, leading to the creation of international Fairtrade standards for wine in 2004.

Since then, sales of The Co-operative Fairtrade wines have increased each year, improving the livelihoods of the many hundreds of families who depend on it. Workers' housing is upgraded and health insurance provided for them and their families, among other benefits. With such excellent quality wines, it's now easier than ever to choose Fairtrade and help create a better future.

THE CO-OPERATIVE FAIRTRADE CHILEAN RANGE INCLUDES:

■ Co-op Fairtrade Chilean Carmenère, £4.99 - winner of Best Fairtrade Wine at the UK Fairtrade Wine Awards 2007.

■ Co-op Fairtrade Chilean Merlot Rosé, £4.49.

■ Co-op Fairtrade Chilean Shiraz-Cabernet Merlot, £14.99 (three-litre box).



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