



An Exceptional Tasting of Wines of Chateau Cheval Blanc alongside Cheval des Andes

Description

Located in south of Saint Emilion and bordering Pomerol, **Château Cheval Blanc** has an exceptionally rich soil profile with an interplay of gravel, clay and sand. Cabernet Franc and Merlot flourish across 39 hectares of this historic estate.

As President of Wineglitz India & The Wine Club, **Mukul Manku** attended the **Tasting of the Wines of Château Cheval Blanc** along with **Chateau des Andes** on 3rd Feb 2026. *In this post Mukul talks about his experience of this premium tasting.*

It was an exceptional experience for me to attend this exclusive wine tasting. Put together by **Sanjay Menon** & Founder, Managing Director of **Sonarys**, the event included four wines from **Chateau Cheval Blanc** (Bordeaux France) and one from **Cheval des Andes** (Mendoza Argentina).

The tasting was conducted by **Carole André** & Maître De Chai Chateau Cheval Blanc in an engaging and interactive manner, in presence of **Mathieu Jullien** & Director General LVMH Vins d'Exception, who actively interacted with all present.

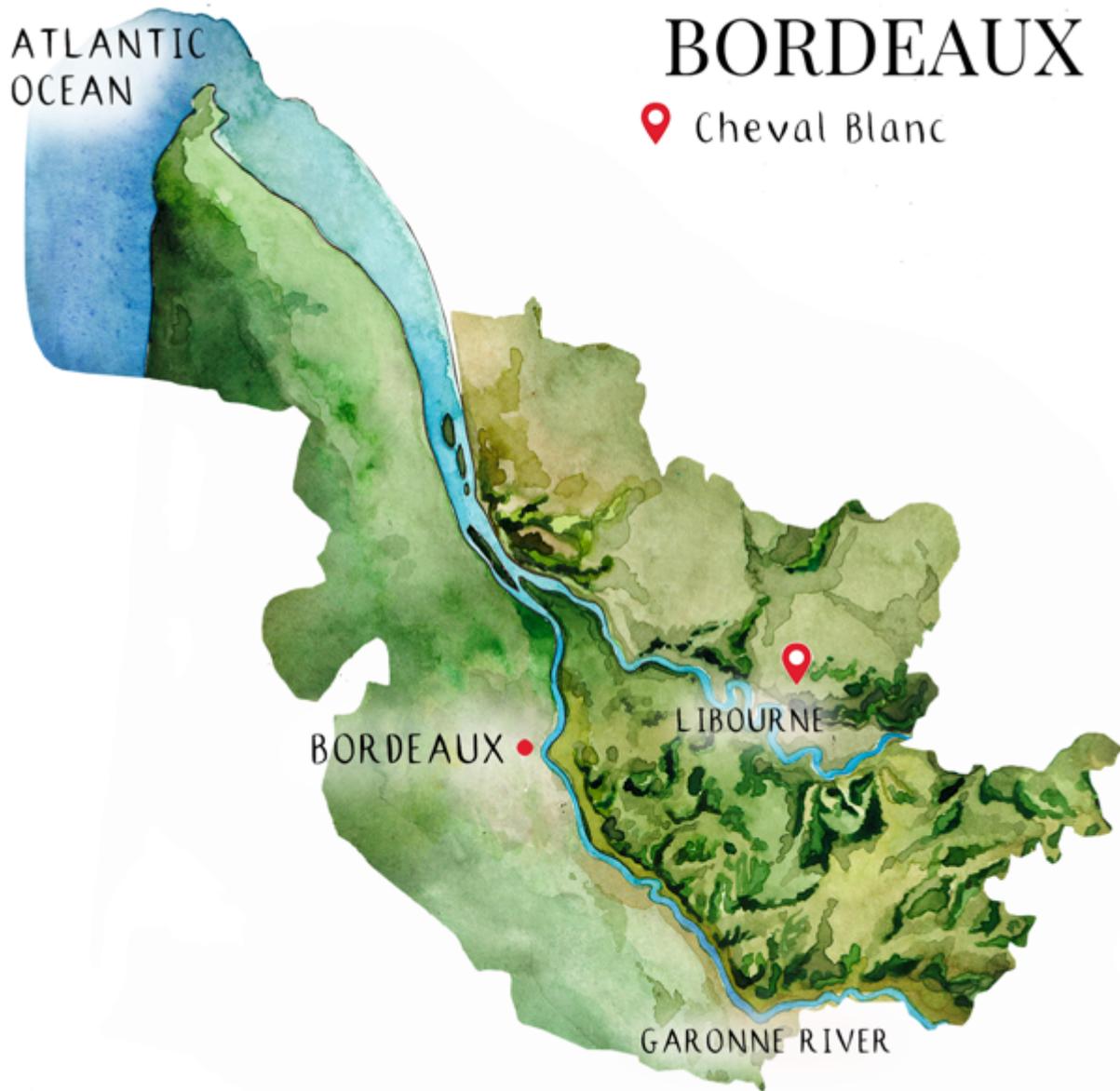
Chateau Cheval Blanc & Overview

Before talking about the venue, wines and the tasting here's something I researched about Château Cheval Blanc so as to go prepared for a better assimilation.



Chateau Cheval Blanc - the White Horse

Cheval Blanc which means **White Horse** lies in Saint Emilion in Bordeaux's Right Bank. Its origin goes back to the year 1832. Although it is not a part of the 1855 Classification (since that pertains to the Bordeaux Left Bank), however Cheval Blanc as a wine is equivalent in quality to any First Growth in the Left Bank - and that speaks a volume about its style and status.



Chateau Cheval Blanc location. Pic: Taste56.com

Within Saint Emilion the vineyards of Chateau Cheval Blanc are situated near to its illustrious neighbour- Pomerol. There are three types of soil found in Cheval Blanc – Gravel over Clay, Deep Gravel and Sand over Clay and this diversity in soil adds to the complexity to the wines.

The average age of vines here is 42 years although there are some Cabernet Franc vines which were planted around 120 years ago. This older vines help contribute to the depth and complexity of the wines.



Old Vines at Chateau Cheval Blanc. Image © Chateau Cheval Blanc

The entire area of the estate consisting primarily Cabernet Franc and Merlot, is sub divided into 45 individual parcels. Amongst these, grapes from selected parcels each year are vinified separately and are available to the winemaker at the blending stage, to craft the final expression of the wine.

Le Cirque © Venue for the Tasting



Tasting Venue at Le Cirque

I reached early at the tasting venue — the recently refurbished and reimagined restaurant called as **Le Cirque**. Located in the Hotel Leela Palace in the heart of Delhi, Le Cirque is known for its fine dining, and over decades it has been supporting the cause of promoting the fine wine culture in the city.

The Wines



Flight of Five Wines in the Tasting

Following wines formed the part of the tasting:

- Le Petit Cheval Blanc 2023
- Cheval des Andes 2022
- Chateau Cheval Blanc 2016
- Chateau Cheval 2009
- Chateau Cheval Blanc 2006

It is pertinent to mention that some of the wines fielded in this tasting were ***yet to be released***.

Preparing the Wines

An important step in any premium wine tasting is the prepare all the wines. For the Cheval Blanc wines especially of 2006, 2009 and even I would say for 2016, decanting is a must. This was religiously done prior to the event. For ease of pouring, these wines were again filled back into the bottles as seen in this clip.

Cheval Blanc 2026 being poured back in the bottle

The brief on each of the wines which featured in this tasting is given in succeeding paragraphs.

Le Petit Cheval Blanc 2023

For over a decade, Chateau Cheval Blanc has been producing a white wine from one of its smaller six hectare vineyard. It's called Le Petit Cheval Blanc and is made by blending 80% Sauvignon Blanc with 20% Sémillon. In the vineyard, careful morning leaf thinning is done which promotes even ripening and restrains overt varietal notes.



Le Petit Cheval Blanc – the only white in the tasting

During the tasting session estate's winemaker Carole Andre explained how the **blending for this wine is done in stages**. The Sauvignon Blanc plots are blended first and later the Semillon ones. The final wine is then produced by carrying out the blending from these two (already blended batches of wines) to give a precise, elegant white defined by floral, fruity, and mineral purity.

Cheval des Andes 2022

Cheval des Andes is a premium red wine from **Mendoza appellation** born from a partnership between Chateau Cheval Blanc and Terrazas de los Andes. Founded in 1999, this high-altitude, Malbec led blend is crafted for elegance and aging. This wine is often described as a *Grand Cru of the Andes*.



View-foil: Mendoza at the base of Andes mountains

During the tasting, curator Carole Andre noted that unusually heavy rainfall in Mendoza in 2022 led to a richer harvest – a rarity in this normally dry region dependent on Andean snowmelt. This resulted in a rich harvest which favoured more of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. As a result, the Cheval des Andes 2022 is Cabernet Sauvignon dominant (69%), supported by Malbec (30%) and Petit Verdot (5%).



Cheval des Andes 2022

While tasting I found this **yet-to-be-released** wine showing a lot of red fruit character. Even though it had more percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, I could easily pick the quintessential perfumed Malbec notes too. The Cabernet Sauvignon infused sturdiness was very evident on the palate.

Chateau Cheval Blanc 2016



Chateau Cheval Blanc 2016

The 2016 Chateau Cheval Blanc offered a refined bouquet with a well integrated oak. Personally I found the wine to be structured and dense on the palate. It displayed a **nuanced nascence** – a likely reflection on its youth. (Yes, a 10 years old Cheval Blanc can still be considered as young given its long ageing potential and longevity, and that’s so remarkable).



2016 in the glass

With 59.5% Merlot, 37.2% Cabernet Franc, 3.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, it is a finely balanced wine clearly built for long ageing.

Chateau Cheval Blanc 2009

To start with Cheval Blanc 2009 scored **100 Points Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate**.



Chateau Cheval Blanc 2009

A Medium bodied wine which displayed black fruits characteristics with a prominent note of **crÃ´me de cassis**. A sturdy wine with perfumed aromas, velvety tannins, and a long finish.



2009 in the glass

On record, this 2009 vintage is widely acclaimed as one of the greatest in recent St. Émilion history, and often considered as a benchmark vintage for Cheval Blanc. With 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc it displays richness and a long ageing potential.

Chateau Cheval Blanc 2006



Chateau Cheval Blanc 2006

Chateau Cheval Blanc 2006 was the last wine tasted during the session and also the oldest vintage amongst the fielded wines.

With a blend of 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Franc, the wine displayed a Cabernet Franc infused complexity and character with the Merlot making it more approachable.

Top-dog Saint Emilion? That's for sure. Wine Advocate in the Jan 2016 tasting of Chateau Cheval Blanc 2006.



2006 in the glass

Amongst all the wines taste that evening, I was most impressed by the Cheval Blanc 2006 which came across as wine which is still young and one with a long ageing potential.

Sustainable Practices at Chateau Cheval Blanc

Carole Andre also explained how Chateau Cheval Blanc is one of the quiet pioneers of practical sustainability in Bordeaux. Their approach isn't loud – rather it's hands-on, rooted in common sense, and deeply connected to the land. (All images under this section are credited to Chateau Cheval Blanc).

No Ploughing

Chateau Cheval Blanc farms with living, covered soils. Plants grow between the vine rows and later become natural green fertiliser. This plant cover acts like mulch, helping the soil retain moisture and

reducing the risk of drought.

“A living soil is stable and does not erode.” – Chateau Cheval Blanc



The organic matter also protects the soil from erosion. As Carole highlighted **“healthier soils can store more carbon from the atmosphere”**, which in turn improves the long-term fertility of the vineyard.

Animals in the Vineyards



Sheep are used in winter to control weeds naturally, limiting the need for machines or herbicides. Their light grazing avoids soil compaction. Natural sheep excreta serves as manure which enriches soils and supports microbial life.

Trees and Hedgerows

Trees and hedgerows enhance biodiversity by attracting birds and beneficial insects. They help regulate microclimates by buffering wind and heat. Their roots also improve soil structure and water balance.



However as Chateau Cheval Blanc cautions in its podcast *“The tree is at the heart of the plot, but it should not interfere with the production of the main crop.”* The estate always follows this guiding principle religiously.

Vegetable Gardens

Carole also mentioned about Vegetable gardens in the estate which supply the chateau and its staff, and reflect a self sustaining seasonal approach. While not directly part of winemaking, this practice does reflect the same respect for soil health with the aim to support a balanced, living vineyard ecosystem.

Address by Mathieu Jullien

Mathieu Jullien *“Director General LVMH Vins d’Exception”*, who was present in the event, was seen to be taking a deep interest in the proceedings throughout as the tasting session unfolded. Towards the culmination he took stage and addressed the audience and later interacted with each one of the participants personally.



Mathieu Jullien

The event thus ended on a high note of appreciation by all those who attended the tasting session and also by a word of thanks by the conducting team from Châteaux Cheval Blanc.

Author's Note

I do hope you liked reading this post as much as I loved writing it. With a hope to see more such tastings and events with the premium wines from Châteaux Cheval Blanc, I take your leave, to be with you again in my next post. Cheers !!

Mukul Manku- President Winegitz India, (Feb 2026)