

# B ORDEAUX: THE SOUTHERN MEDOC TERROIR

## GRAVEL TERRACES OF MARGAUX AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

This map centres on Margaux, the southernmost of the great Médoc appellations – and what lies beneath the vineyards and châteaux, for the first time revealing the bone structure that underpins the quality of the wines.

Margaux is unique in having châteaux from all five classes of the 1855 Classification. The leader in terms of status and quality is Château Margaux – though its neighbours such as Rauzan-Ségla (Second) and Palmer (Third) run it close, and there are good numbers of Crus Bourgeois and unclassified estates to discover here too.

This is also the only appellation to have all six of the gravel ‘terraces’ that soil scientists have identified. Each has different sizes and grades of gravel; each swept down from mountains inland of Bordeaux by mighty rivers during the Ice Ages.

In the Margaux AOC, the oldest – Terraces 1, 2 and 3 – are mostly found on the western side of the appellation, away from the river Gironde: of this group, Terrace 3 has the most classed growths. Terraces 4, 5 and 6 are lower, and closer to the river; Terrace 4 has the greatest number of classified estates of all the terraces, while 6, the lowest, has few vines.

North, west and south of Margaux lie areas of Haut-Médoc land: here, too, the gravel terraces provide some excellent vineyard sites. Away from the river, to the north-west, are the appellations of Moulis-en-Médoc and Listrac: most soils here tend towards clay on a clay-limestone subsoil, and they have some tracts of quality gravel, such as the Grand Poujeaux plateau (Terrace 3) in Moulis.

The map also plots the boundaries of the appellations: AOC Margaux covers selected land in five communes, Arsac, Cantenac, Labarde, Margaux and Soussans. Other vineyards, of lesser status, have the Haut-Médoc AOC or the broader Bordeaux appellation. From the contour lines, and the terraces colours, you see that the Margaux AOC land is slightly higher, and more likely to be on the best gravel terraces, than land in the other appellations.

This map stems from two in my book, *Inside Bordeaux*. At book scale, these are presented as a gatefold pair: the topography, châteaux and AOC borders on one side, with the underlying geology opposite. Now with the production of this large-scale map, we have worked hard to combine, add to and enhance the two, and are now able to show you the whole picture for the first time. I hope you find this as exciting as we do.

**Jane Anson**, November 2024

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