

The sensual pleasures of BORDEAUX

By Manny Gonzalez

ONE: DRINK SOME WINE.

But not just any wine. These wines.

Look carefully at the picture of a wine bar dispenser, and you will understand the reason Bordeaux is on the map. Those prices are in euros –

from left, Off (meaning Sold Out), 15 Euro, 25, Off, 35, Off, 25 and 25. That much money will get you, not a glass, but 1/5 of a glass, or say 1/30 of a bottle (two sips).

That makes the Angelus (second from left) worth 450 euros (that's



€25,000) for the bottle, the Haut-Brion 750 euros, and so on. Though they are not from mature vintages, this dispenser holds five of the best red wines of Bordeaux – Chateaus Haut-Brion, Latour, Lafite, Mouton and Margaux.

Up until about 40 years ago, these were widely accepted as the top five red wines in the world, with Chateaus Ausone and Cheval Blanc close behind. There are even more stratospheric wines from Bordeaux, called Le Pin and Petrus, but they were not in this wine-dispenser, probably because there weren't enough digits on the LED display.

Since then, lots of great wines have sprung up all over – Napa Valley, Tuscany, Penedes, South Australia, etc., and it no longer makes any sense at all to talk about which wines in the world are “best.” But in Bordeaux, these are the best.

When you can sell wines for those kinds of prices, it is bound to generate a little prosperity around town – a practical example of trickle-down economics.

Bordeaux looks a bit like Paris, only cleaner and without an Eiffel Tower. (Thank goodness it has no Centre George Pompidou.) It does have a river. Plus, it has a nice, human-scale town center, beside a large park area which often has temporary attractions like fairs.

As far back as Eleanor of Aquitaine (1100 AD or so), the vineyards made Bordeaux (town and region) a pretty flush place, and the merchants of Bordeaux among the fattest in Europe.

In the 1700s and 1800s, Bordeaux got a further boost, which you will understand better if you look at the map.

Bordeaux is more or less the western-most part of France, very close to Spain, and on the sea (“au Bord d’Eau”), i.e. the Atlantic Ocean. When France acquired overseas colonies, especially in the West Indies and Africa, Bordeaux became the major port of transshipment for the colonial trade, which by the way was largely composed of slaves in one direction, and sugar in the other.

And that’s all that ever happened in Bordeaux.

The wine dispenser displays prices for some of the best wines of Bordeaux – some going for 25 euros for 1/5 of a glass (top). The modern (above) and antique (right) pissoirs found around the city.



Two: FIND AND USE A PISSOIR

Once upon a time, there were *pissoirs* (piss-wahr) all over Paris.

The function of a pissoir, in case it is not immediately evident, is to hide a person who is pissing. It is a kind of public bathroom for the unself-conscious, available to both men and women, but for some reason women never liked them much.

The pissoirs are gone from Paris, and they have been replaced by electrically-operated monstrosities which let you do both #1 and #2. Unlike the old models, which could turn over one pisser every 30 seconds or so, the new-fangled ones were designed by imbeciles: After the previous occupant leaves, the next in line has to wait five minutes while the machine washes itself; queues build up very quickly.

The practical Bordelais (people of Bordeaux) do not go for the effete electric doodads of their Parisian confreres, and have come up with a minimalist approach to the subject.

A Bordeaux pissoir, elegant in its simplicity, can accommodate two users at a time, and has a customer-throughput capacity many times greater than a Paris public toilet.

Try one; you’ll find it functional and esthetically pleasing, a genuine sensual delight.

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Time to say "thank you"

Sadly the year that passed was marred by tragic disasters, violence and even murders. But amid all these, we have had a considerably good year, brought about by family, friends and associates who made 2014 memorable. And so it is time to say "thank you" to those who stood by us, supported us, cared for us, made our life easy and fulfilling.

In the course of our continuous market research there are many who, year after year, attended to our needs. There is Jo of the Makati Supermarket, who would come down from her perch to get us some rare food stuff from their store room. There is Becs of Mercury Drug, inside the supermarket, who has been steadily assisting us. At Puregold in the Molito Lifestyle Mall in Alabang is Lina, who graciously welcomes us every time we would go there.

There is Susan at the South Supermarket who never failed to assist us. In the same outlet, at the seafood section, there is Venus, who we could always trust with providing us with their fresh catch.

The butchery staff of Rustan's is Evia who would readily accommodate our request for chicken weighing 1.5 kgs-plus. There is Lea of Shopwise in Alabang, always extending a helping hand.

The PR ladies – Nana, Millie and Joy, for providing us with interesting topics to write about. Toni and her Bridges ladies, who always make us feel excited about their many projects.

In My Basket



Lydia D. Castillo

It is time to say "thank you" to those who stood by us, supported us, cared for us, made our life easy and fulfilling.

There are Choy and Tess, our boy and girl Fridays, who have been willing assistants in our quest for column materials. Our *kasambahays* Buding and Loren, who did all the cutting and slicing in our kitchen,

And there is our editor, dear Doreen, and her assistants, Alpha and Rosal, who week after week patiently go through our copy.

There are my friends (you know who you are), who always shared my ups and downs through all the years of our togetherness.

Last, but not least, my family, whose support and caring always give me strength to carry on.

To all of you, I extend my heartfelt thanks, with a wish that 2015 will be kind to us, that it will give us fulfillment of our dreams and hopes!

E-mail me at lydiadolores34@gmail.com.

The sensual pleasures...

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THREE: APPRECIATE FINE ART

And on the subject of esthetically pleasing...

It is true that Paris has the Louvre, the Rodin, the Orangerie, the Orsay and the Marmottan. Bordeaux's answer to all of those is its Museum of Fine Arts (Beaux Arts). This worthy municipal museum has no *Winged Victory*, no *Soleil Levant*, no *Thinker*, no *Water Lilies*.

But Bordeaux has many fine examples of Impressionist and neo-Classical works, and Bordeaux has – Rolla.

Technically, Rolla is owned by the Musee d'Orsay in Paris, but for reasons unexplained it is on apparently permanent loan to the Bordeaux Beaux



Arts. So, if you want to see what, in my humble opinion, is The Most Erotic Work of Art, in Any Medium, by Any Artist, of Any Era, in Any Museum in the World, you have to go to Bordeaux, as I did.

This 1878 work is by Henri Gervex, whom you've probably never heard of. Rolla is the guy by the window. He is supposedly about to commit suicide. Marion, on the bed, is not about to commit suicide. In fact, Mar-



Paintings from Bordeaux's Museum of Fine Arts include Impressionist (above) and Neo-Classical (top) works and Henri Gervex's controversial piece, Rolla (left).

ion looks pretty darn satisfied with life. This is all from some poem, written 50 years before Gervex did the painting. Conclusion: Rolla is an idiot.

In 1878 Gervex submitted the painting for inclusion in the Paris Salon (an annual event which artists fought tooth and nail to get into), and it was brutally rejected by the Salon Selection Committee on the grounds that it was "immoral."

As the committee reportedly elaborated, it is not the painting itself but the story it tells that is immoral. Perhaps

most true connoisseurs of Fine Art will agree with the Salon Committee that this picture is immoral. All of Paris seemed to have agreed, too: when Gervex found a private gallery to display it in, the lines went around the block, and lasted months. And, immoral though it may be, it is nonetheless fine art. 🇫🇷

The Sensual Pleasures of Bordeaux

by Manny Gonzalez, Plantation Bay Resort & Spa



The reason for Bordeaux's prosperity.

One: Drink Some Wine.

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That makes the Angelus (second from left) worth 450 Euros (that's ₱ 25,000) for the bottle, the Haut-Brion 750 Euros, and so on. *A bottle.* Though they are not from mature vintages, this dispenser holds five of the best red wines of Bordeaux, namely Chateaus Haut-Brion,

Latour, Lafite, Mouton, and Margaux. Up until about 40 years ago, these were widely accepted as the top five red wines in the world, with Chateaus Ausone and Cheval Blanc close behind. (There are even more stratospheric wines from Bordeaux, called Le Pin and Petrus, but they were not in this wine-dispenser, probably because there weren't enough digits on the LED display.) Since then, lots of great wines have sprung up all over – Napa Valley, Tuscany, Penedes, South Australia, etc., and it no longer makes any sense at all to talk about which wines in the world are “best”. But in Bordeaux, these are the best.

When you can sell wines for those kinds of prices, it is bound to generate a little prosperity around town –a living practical example of “trickle-down” economics.

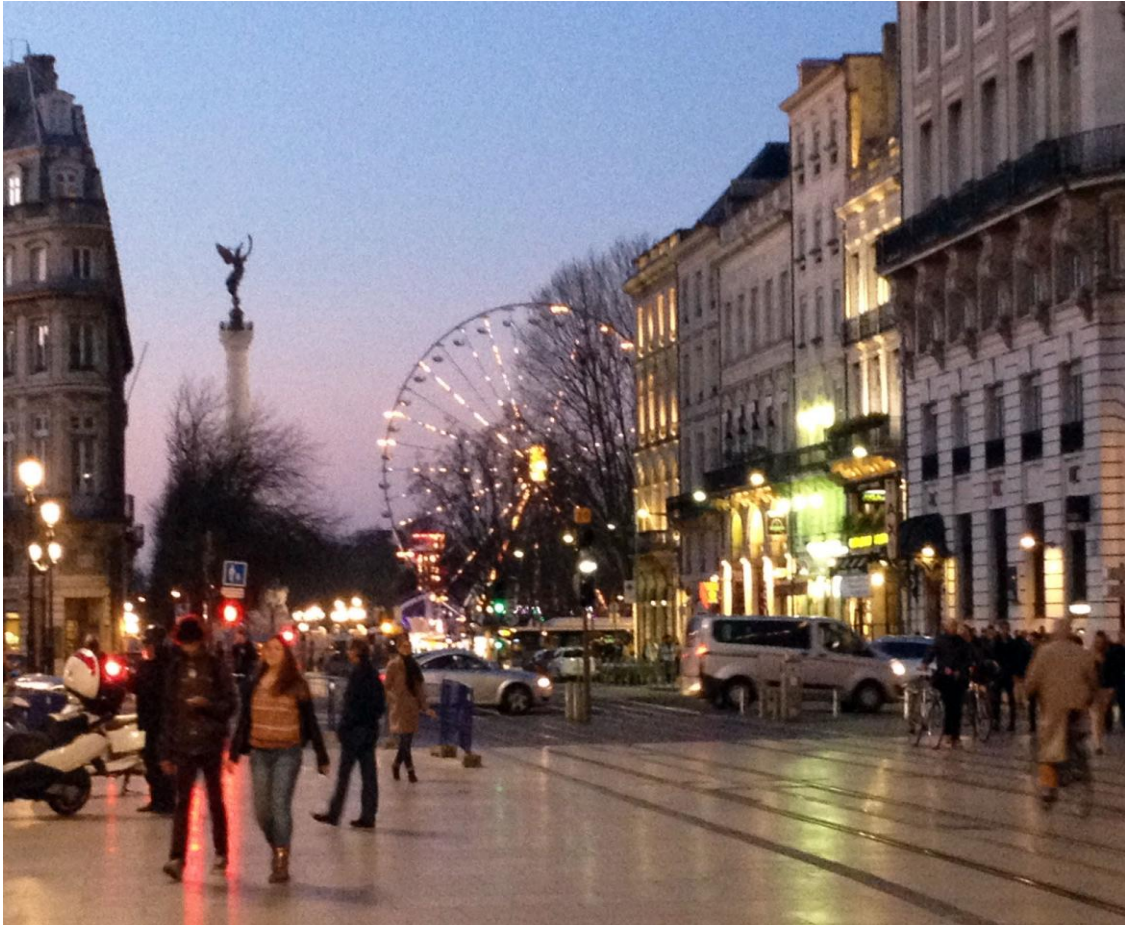
And now, a little history.

Bordeaux looks a bit like Paris, only cleaner and without an Eiffel Tower. (Thank goodness it has no Centre George Pompidou.) It does have a river. Plus, it has a nice, human-scale town center, beside a large park area which often has temporary attractions like fairs.

As far back as Eleanor of Aquitaine (1100 AD or so), the vineyards made Bordeaux (town and region) a pretty flush place, and the merchants of Bordeaux among the fattest in Europe.

In the 1700s and 1800s, Bordeaux got a further boost, which you will understand better if you look at the map. Bordeaux is more or less the western-most part of France, very close to Spain. And on the sea (“au Bord d’Eau”), i.e. the Atlantic Ocean. When France acquired overseas colonies, especially in the West Indies and Africa, Bordeaux became the major port of transshipment for the colonial trade, which by the way was largely composed of slaves in one direction, and sugar in the other.

And that’s all that ever happened in Bordeaux. (See? That wasn’t so bad.)



Bordeaux's lively but uncrowded downtown area.

Two: Find and Use a Pissoir (see picture)

Once upon a time, there were pissoirs (piss-wahr) all over Paris. They looked like this:



A Paris pissoir of bygone days. Really, really old friends of the author will recognize his car in the background left.

The function of a *pissoir*, in case it is not immediately evident, is to hide a person who is pissing. It is a kind of public bathroom for the unself-conscious, available to both men and women. Everyone could see your legs and your face, but not in between. For some reason they never caught on with women (who were welcome to use them though – see, no sexism here).

The *pissoirs* are gone from Paris, and they have been replaced by electrically-operated monstrosities which let you do both #1 and #2. Unlike the old models, which could turn over one pisser every 30 seconds or so, the new-fangled ones were designed by imbeciles: after the previous occupant leaves, the next in line has to wait another 5 minutes while the machine washes itself; queues build up very quickly.

The practical Bordelais (people of Bordeaux) do not go in for the effete electric doodads of their Parisian confreres, and have come up with this minimalist approach to the subject:



The Bordeaux Model.

A Bordeaux pissoir, elegant in its simplicity, can accommodate two users at a time, and has a customer-throughput capacity many times greater than a Paris public toilet.

Try one; you'll find it functional and esthetically pleasing, a genuine sensual delight.

Three: Appreciate Fine Art

And on the subject of esthetically pleasing. . .

It is true that Paris has the Louvre, the Rodin, the Orangerie, the Orsay, and the Marmottan. Bordeaux's answer to all of those is its Museum of Fine Arts (Beaux Arts). This worthy municipal museum has no *Winged Victory*, no *Soleil Levant*, no *Thinker*, no *Water Lilies*.

Instead, it has this:



An Impressionist work by someone whose name I forgot.

And this:



A neo-Classical work, by someone whose name I forgot, depicting a reasonably-attractive naked woman with a something-symbol between her thighs.

And, finally, Bordeaux has – *Rolla*.

Technically, *Rolla* is owned by the Musee d'Orsay in Paris, but for reasons unexplained it is on apparently permanent loan to the Bordeaux Beaux Arts. So, if you want to see *The Most*

Erotic Work of Art, in Any Medium, by any Artist, Of Any Era, in Any Museum in the World (it's not officially called that, but this is my humble opinion) you have to go to Bordeaux, as I did. Ladies and gentlemen, I give to you – *Rolla*.



What Fine Art is all about.

This 1878 work is by Henri Gervex, whom you've probably never heard of, but was – as you see – a genius. Rolla is the partly-dressed guy by the window. He is about to commit suicide. Marion, on the bed, is not about to commit suicide. In fact, Marion looks pretty darn satisfied with life. Conclusion: Rolla is an idiot. (This is all from some poem, written 50 years before Gervex did the painting.)

In 1878 Gervex submitted the painting for inclusion in the Paris Salon (an annual event which artists fought tooth and nail to get into), and it was brutally rejected by the Salon Selection Committee on the grounds that it was "Immoral". *By golly, I agree.*

The Painting Tells a Story

As the Committee reportedly elaborated, it is not the painting itself but the Story it tells that is Immoral. Although the suicide part is a little speculative, here is my version of the Story, as suggested by the visual evidence:

The day before, Marion has a full Brazilian wax, leaving not even a runway. Then she puts on a loose corset, dresses in a fine satin skirt with silk blouse, and goes out with Rolla, splendid in his evening wear and top hat. Throughout the evening, Marion inflames Rolla by telling him what she is wearing beneath the corset, which is Nothing. And Nothing. And still Nothing. When they finally get back to Rolla's pad, Marion goes straight to the bedroom, and slowly, teasingly, removes her blouse, revealing her smooth, creamy flesh. Then she slides out of her lower garments, exposing her plump, peach-smooth [5-letter word deleted by Editor]. Rolla goes wild. Still in full evening attire, he rips off the corset, leaving her totally naked. He presses hot kisses all over her, then uses his walking stick to stroke her slim thighs and smooth bottom. He strikes her lightly with the stick, making her squirm with pleasure and pain. Finally she is panting and ready for him. Tossing his top hat and stick over her discarded clothes, Rolla roughly pushes her down on the bed. For the next several hours, he makes love to every part of her body, over and over, until she is totally satisfied, and limp with sweet exhaustion. Rolla rises and gets partly dressed (maybe to go for a baguette, it now being 5 am). He gazes down at her sweet mouth and her lush, spent body. . .

And it is at this point that I develop serious reservations about the suicide angle.

But I think most true connoisseurs of Fine Art will agree with my version of what Story Rolla tells, and will agree with the Salon Committee that this picture is *Immoral*. (All of Paris agreed, too: when Gervex found a private gallery to display it in, the lines went around the block, and lasted months.) And, immoral though it may be, it is nonetheless Fine Art, so you can look at it, and re-read my Story, as much as you like. Enjoy.

Boost for Bordeaux

So there you are. Bordeaux has *Shockingly-Expensive Wine*. Bordeaux has *The Minimalist Stainless Steel Pissoir*.

And Bordeaux has an Immoral painting which in my opinion is *The Most Erotic Work of Art, in Any Medium, by any Artist, Of Any Era, in Any Museum in the World*.