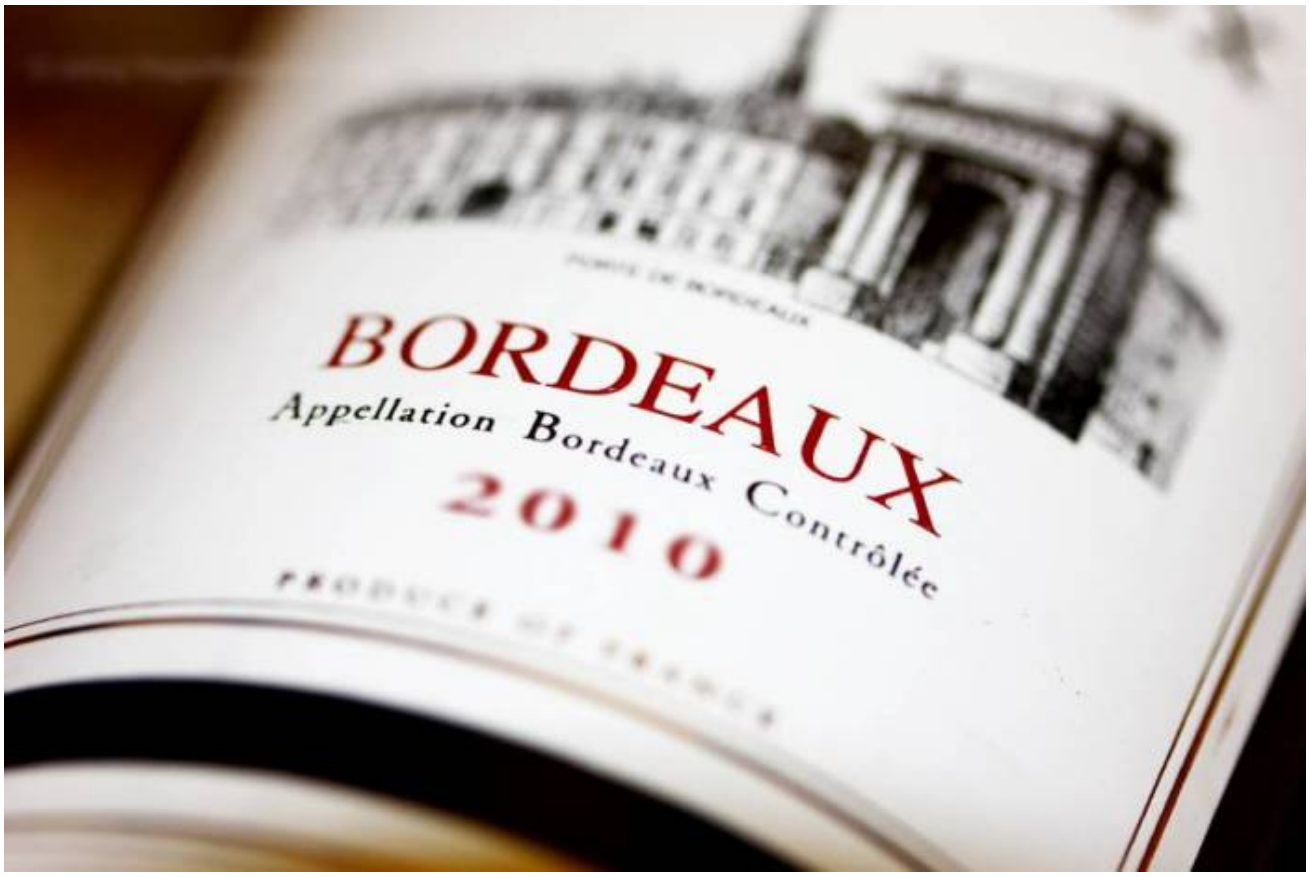
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Controversy Erupts Over New Cru Bourgeois Classification in Bordeaux

Low participation and financial group dominance raise concerns, highlighting tensions between financial interests and traditional winemaking practices.

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The recent announcement of the new Cru Bourgeois classification in Bordeaux has sparked controversy. French magazine Le Point highlighted issues surrounding the classification, which was unveiled at the Wine Paris trade exhibition. The magazine pointed out the low participation of Médoc estates and noted the absence of Franck Bijon, head of the Cru Bourgeois Alliance, from the announcement. Bijon manages four estates—Château Arnauld, Château Tour de Pez, Château Larose Perganson, and Château Larose Trintaudon—all part of the Larose Group, owned by Allianz. These estates have withdrawn from the classification and the Alliance, reportedly due to insufficient return on investment.

Le Point questioned how Bijon could support the classification while withdrawing his estates. The magazine also revisited past controversies, such as the legal issues following the 2003 classification and the 2020 ranking, where many top-ranked estates were owned by financial groups. An insider noted that eight of the 14 Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnels were owned by such groups, and their leaders were on the board of the Crus Bourgeois organization. This situation discouraged smaller properties, which, despite lacking lavish facilities, could still produce excellent wines.

The magazine suggested that the classification's structure might favor larger, financially-backed estates over smaller ones. This has led to criticism from within Bordeaux itself, with insiders acknowledging the region's ability to self-critique. The fallout from the classification highlights ongoing tensions in Bordeaux's wine industry, where financial interests and traditional winemaking practices often clash.