

Château Dalem 2011

CSPC# 763543

750mlx12

15% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

Website

<http://www.chateaudalem.com/>

Appellation

Fronsac

General Info

Chateau Dalem is one of the oldest properties in Bordeaux. The estate originated all the way back in 1610. Chateau Dalem remained in the same family until it was purchased by Michel Rullier in 1955. Today, Chateau Dalem is managed by Brigitte Rullier-Loussert, who took over managing the property in 2002. The Rullier family has long ties in the Bordeaux appellation. They own other estates aside from Chateau Dalem in the Right Bank, including another vineyard in the Fronsac appellation, Chateau de la Huste, which has been in the families hands since 1860.

Vintage

A satisfactory vintage albeit less rich and concentrated than 2008, 2009 and 2010. The clay and limestone soils dealt admirably with the heat and drought of the year and the Merlot has produced some fresh, aromatic wines. Colours are deep and there is enough fruit to match the relatively high acidity. Then instance of drying tannins is less marked and, in general, producers have not tried to over extract. The structure of the wines will permit some mid-term ageing. While there are no high-scoring wines, as usual, there will be some good-value wines for enjoyable drinking here.

Vineyards

The 14 hectare vineyard of Chateau Dalem is planted to 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Previously, the estate had devoted 10% of the vineyard of Chateau Dalem to Cabernet Sauvignon. Those vines have been removed and those parcels have been replaced. The terroir is a mix of clay and limestone soils with a south, by south east facing exposure. The vines are old. On average, the vines are 40 years of age. The vineyard is planted to a vine density that ranges from 6,000 vine per hectare to 6,600 vines per hectare.

Harvest

Grapes picked by hand when they are fully ripe and put in baskets. Sorted minutely before and after full destemming.

Vinification/ Maturation

Fermentation in concrete tanks with built-in thermoregulation which guarantees better control of the fermentation process. Long vatting period (3 to 4 weeks) for a slow and gentle extraction of the phenolic agents. Immediate running off into new oak barrels for the malolactic fermentation stage. 18 months in new barrels (having matured 1 or 2 wines). 40% of the barrels are replaced every year and toasting levels are selected for optimum enhancement of our wines' fruit flavors.

Tasting Notes

The wines are predominately Merlot based and are matured in oak barriques, a third of which are renewed annually. These are deeply coloured, well-structured clarets that are rich in dense, black fruits, often accompanied by spicy, and sometimes chocolate, nuances. They can be drunk young, though tend to show their best with around 5 years of bottle ageing.

Production

4,000 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2015-2020

Scores/Awards

90 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 30, 2014
89-92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2012
87+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #212 - April 2014
88-90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012
86-88 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2012
15.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012
16 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2012
Recommended - Decanter.com - April 2012
88 points - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2012 (score only)
87-89 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 16, 2012
15.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2012 (score only)
86 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 24, 2011



- Reviews** *“Offers a racy feel, with dark plum and currant fruit inlaid with charcoal and graphite notes, carrying through an iron-tinged finish. Features a backdrop of chestnut and tobacco nuances. Should age well. Best from 2015 through 2020. 4,000 cases made.”*
- JM, Wine Spectator
- “This has nice stuffing, with a dark, smoldering tobacco leaf note running underneath the ripe plum, black currant and fig flavors. Has some muscle too, but stays pure. Latent length. Score range: 89-92”*
- JM, Wine Spectator
- “Founded in 1610, this well-known estate has consistently made good value wines for as long as I have been tasting in Bordeaux (36 years). Run by Brigitte Rullier, the 2011, a crisp, vibrant blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, is a tasty, expansively flavored Fronsac exhibiting good acidity, lots of raspberry and blueberry fruit, as well as a noticeable floral component, and excellent depth and richness. Moderate tannins suggest the wine will be even better with 1-2 years of bottle age. It should last for 10-12 years.”*
- RP, Wine Advocate
- “This 33-acre vineyard sits atop the Fronsac plateau, and the final blend at Dalem tends to be around 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Made under the administration of the gregarious Brigitte Rullier, who inherited the position from her father (he runs one of the most important farm equipment businesses of the region), yields were a modest 34 hectoliters per hectare, and the wine hit 14% natural alcohol, which is pretty significant for a Fronsac. The supple-textured 2011, a sleeper of the vintage, reveals plenty of mocha, black cherry and black currant fruit intermixed with hints of crushed rocks and spring flowers. The texture is endearing, the wine is pure, and the finish is long. Like most vintages of Dalem, it is meant to be drunk in its first decade of life, although these wines are certainly capable of lasting a lot longer.”*
- RP, Wine Advocate
- “Medium ruby. Subdued aromas of black cherry, dark chocolate and flowers. Juicy and intense but youthfully bound-up, with fresh acidity perking up the concentrated, chewy cassis and flint flavors. Finishes with a hint of creamy red fruits and good length. “*
- ST, International Wine Cellar
- “Very dark crimson. Some freshness & saltiness, but quite demanding in terms of acid & tannins. Admirable attempts to make the fruit as opulent as possible.*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Pure, expressive fruit. Tannins have been handled with kid gloves and it has a long, fine finish. Drink 2016-2022.”*
- SS, Decanter.com
- “The estate is taking off in view of my tastings of the later vintages. This opinion is confirmed by the success of the 2011 vintage with a great colour, and a fruity if not creamy nose. It has a juicy mouthfeel, is round and hedonistic. Lovely Merlot with impeccable wood. A very pleasant wine with greater personality than in the past.”*
- J-MQ
- “Fennel, earth, plums and oak scents, medium bodied, fresh, bright red and black plums are found in the finish. 87-89 Pts”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Beautiful young colour bordering on black. Attractive nose of ripe black fruits, mild spices and quality oak. Velvety attack showing wonderful fullness, firmer mid-palate and finish tinged with a hint of sourness. Very promising. Needs more time to melt.”*
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
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