
Château D'Issan 2018

CSPC# 749550

750mlx12

13.97% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot

Appellation

Margaux

Classification

Grand Cru Classé in 1855

Website

http://www.chateau-issan.com/en/vin_chateau_d_issan.html

General Info

There's evidence the property existed in the Middle Ages - then known as Teobon. The original *château* dated from at least the 15th century, and it has been suggested as the location of the English army's final stand following their defeat at the Battle of Castillon. But d'Issan's timeline really begins in the 17th century when the land was acquired by Bordeaux parliamentarian Chevalier d'Essenault - he christened the estate (later shortened to Issan) and built the splendid *château*. The knight's tenure ended abruptly (the Revolution again) and during the 19th century the Roy family began building an ever-improving reputation. That too ended rudely, as d'Issan was all-but ruined during the economic gloom of the 1930s.

Château d'Issan is a 3^{ème} Cru Classé Margaux property that produces richly aromatic and silky-textured clarets that are often amongst the best of the appellation. The beautiful 18th century *château* is surrounded by a moat and is frequently described as the most romantic in the Médoc. D'Issan has been owned by the Cruse family since 1945 and is presently owned and run by Emmanuel Cruse, his wife, and their son, Lionel.

Winemaker

Emmanuel Cruse. Consultant Eric Boissenot

Vintage

2018 Margaux is not as homogenous as the other top appellations in the Medoc. In part, of course it is due to the massive size and diversity of terroirs. But it is also important to note that while Margaux is not always consistent, 2 of the wines of the vintage came from Margaux! It is interesting to note that the top wines are located primarily on the top peak of the Cantenac plateau.

Some of the soils there had the ability to cope with the extremely wet, winter months. Still, mildew attack was an issue. Properties with the ability to attack the spread of mildew quickly managed to avoid losing large portions of their harvest. In fact, several properties lost from 20% to almost 75% of their harvest.

It was not only the wet winter and spring that was an issue. Growers here, as well as in all of the Left Bank needed enough water to survive the warm, sunny and parched summer months.

The date of the harvest was one of the crucial factors with 2018 Margaux. Some estates began picking their young vines as early as September 12. Harvesting finished as late as October 15. This long window of picking allowed many properties to obtain the desired level of ripeness they were looking for.

Styles and characteristics in the Margaux appellation are usually reflective of the desire of the winery, and with 2018 Margaux, that holds true. With 2018 Margaux, all the wines are deeply colored. There are opulent, sensual wines, powerful, full-bodied, richly textured wines and some that are light, fresh and crisp. And of course, wine lovers will experience the elegance the Margaux appellation is best known for.

Harvest

The 2018 d'Issan was picked September 24 to October 11.

Vineyards

The 44 hectare vineyard of Chateau d'Issan is planted to 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. This represents a shift in the vineyard plantings since the 1990's, as today, there is less Cabernet Sauvignon and more Merlot in the vineyard.

This new vineyard size shows a marked increase in the amount of hectares due to a ruling in 2007 by the INAO that allowed Chateau d'Issan to add 10 hectares of vines that were previously classed as Haut-Medoc. Those vines were upgraded and re-classified as part of the Margaux appellation.



Vineyards The vineyard has a terroir of gravel with clay and limestone soils on gentle, rolling, slopes. The vineyards of Chateau d'Issan are planted to a vine density of 9,000 vines per hectare with vines that are on average 35 years of age. They have old vines as well, some of which are close to 65 years of age.
The Cruse family also own 5 hectares of vines close to Margaux in the Haut Medoc appellation as well as in the Bordeaux Supérieur appellation, where they own 10 hectares of vines. The Haut Medoc wines are sold as Chateau de Candale. The vines in Bordeaux Supérieur are used to produce Chateau Moulin d'Issan.

Maturation The grapes are traditionally vinified, and the wine is then matured in oak casks (50% new) for 18 months. The wine is bottled unfiltered.

Tasting Notes The final blend took place in mid-January with an obvious, well-balanced selection. The 2018 vintage of Château d'Issan has intensity. The precision of the Merlot fruit is offering a great attack on the palate. It moves on to become more profound thanks to the Cabernet in this great vintage, reminiscent of 2016.

Serve with Chateau d'Issan is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.

Cellaring Drink 2025-2040

Scores/Awards **94-96 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019
96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021
95-96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019
17 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019
96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019
95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021
94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019
16.5 points - Farr Vintner - May 2019
92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021
92-94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019
92-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2019
95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019
93-95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021
18.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019
92-93 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021
17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019

Reviews *"The 2018 D'Issan is composed of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot, aging in 50% new and 50% second year barrels for an estimated 18 months. With 13.97% alcohol and a deep garnet-purple color, it features baked berries, warm cherries and cassis with spice box and fragrant earth plus tea hints. Medium to full-bodied, it has a great core of muscular fruit with firm, fine-grained tannins, with nice freshness, finishing layered with mineral notions."*
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Aromas of blackberry, plum, cocoa, iodine, clove and graphite. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, silky tannins. Tightly wound and mineral at the moment, with dusty gravel and graphite notes, yet with focus and precision. Such balance and harmony for the vintage. Try from 2025."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"The cashmere texture of the tannins is wonderful in this. They are ripe and precise. Dense at the same time, giving a slow drive and a long finish. Full-bodied with dark and pretty fruit. Persistent finish."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot. 50% new barrels. Barrel sample. Deep core and cherry rim, not quite as black-hearted as most Bordeaux 2018s. Intense ripe cassis that is pure Cabernet. Nicely savoury too. Chewy and quite oaky on the palate, the tannins thickened by the oak but very smooth. Dense and still fresh. Very good."
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"This is a vibrant ruby colour, with floral aromatics that are even more evident on the nose here than with the second wine, Blason. This is not always the case during En Primeur tastings, when it's the second wines that tend to be a little more open, but it's a feature of the 2018 vintage. This is a brilliant Issan with richness and poise joined by a delicate acidity that pulls the fruit along. The tannins are deceptive, as they are supple and

Reviews *appealing, but the density and power builds over the palate and clearly indicates long ageing. A wine that feels like it's rooted in its appellation. 50% new oak. 40hl/ha yield, with 53% of production going into this wine, higher than in both 2017 and 2016. Eric Boissenot consults. Drinking Window 2027 - 2042. Barrel Sample: 96.”*
- JA, Decanter.com

“Silky, fresh, floral and pure, this gorgeous vintage of d'Issan is just great. The violet and lilac bouquet, with accents of tobacco leaf, cedar, crème de cassis attracts you right off the bat. On the palate, the wine is refined, elegant and shows its purity, freshness, and silky textures with no effort. Give it 7-9 years in the bottle and enjoy it over the following 2-decades or more. The wine blends 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Cherry blossoms, smoke, forest floor, licorice and blackberry aromas open the wine. The wine is full-bodied, round, sweet, juicy and just a little bit spicy. You can feel the vitality in the ripe, red plums and black currants which accent the finish. From a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot, the wine reached 13.97% alcohol. The Grand Vin was produced using 53% of the harvest. The picking took place September 24 to October 11.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Deep purple in the glass, this is heavily perfumed on the nose with violets, cedar, black pepper and black cherries. The palate is rich and juicy, with soft and ripe tannins coating the mouth, providing ample structure for the blue and black fruits at the core. The fresh acidity adds wonderful lift, bringing harmony and precision whilst retaining the succulence of fruit. Long, pure and refined on the finish.”
- Farr Vintners

“The 2018 Château d'Issan offers fragrant blackberry, cedar and light peppermint scents on a nose that gently unfolds with aeration. This is charming and precise. The palate is medium bodied with sappy black fruit and fine intensity. A dusting of dark chocolate appears toward the finish, which needs some time to fully cohere; cellar it for 4–6 years. A very capable Margaux that should develop well in bottle. Drink 2024-2045.”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 d'Issan was picked September 24 to October 11 and matured in 50% new oak. The fragrant bouquet offers blackberry and bilberry fruit, smoke and pressed rose petals, fine definition, and well-integrated wood. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannins and fine acidity. This has very good structure considering how flamboyant and rich Margaux can be; it is stricter and more classic in style, with a slightly drier finish than some others. Stylish, and displays very good length. Drink 2024-2045.”
- NM, Vinous

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- AG, Vinous

“An explosive, dense wine, the 2018 d'Issan possesses off the charts richness and fabulous intensity. A rush of blue/black fruit, chocolate, smoke, spice, leather and tobacco builds in a potent Margaux endowed with tremendous concentration and pure, unbridled power. The 2018 is an unusually brooding, somber d'Issan that is likely to require a number of years to be at its best. Today, it is compelling, even in the early going. Tasted four times.”
- AG, Vinous

Reviews *"The top wine, the 2018 Château D'Issan is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot that spent 18 months in 50% new French oak. It offers a beautiful, singular bouquet of blackcurrants, new leather, smoked tobacco, scorched earth, and camphor. This carries to a medium to full-bodied, seamless Margaux with wonderful tannins, beautifully integrated acidity, and just a flawlessly balanced, elegant, layered style that's going to evolve for 20-25 years. It's one classy 2018 that has loads to love."*
- Jeb Dunnuck

"I was only able to taste the 2018 Château d'Issan once, but it showed beautifully, with a full-bodied, plump, sexy style as well as classic notes of cassis, fresh plums, licorice, and high-class cigar tobacco. Based on 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot that will see 18 months in 50% new oak, from a scant 53% selection of the total production, it's a brilliant, incredibly sexy Margaux that's already hard to resist, yet will keep for 2-3 decades."
- Jeb Dunnuck

"A richly proportioned d'Issan which is a few shades darker than I might have expected and the fruit is, accordingly, rather powerful and dry on the finish. The tannins are also quite fierce, but they do not damage the flow of the fruit and so I am happy to recommend this wine. Please make sure that you give it at least a decade to mellow."
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
