

Château Clerc Milon 1996

CSPC# 756593

750mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Pauillac

General Info

Chateau Clerc Milon, classified a Fifth Growth in 1855, is located in an exceptionally favorable situation adjoining Lafite Rothschild and Mouton Rothschild, both First Growths. Now owned by Baroness Philippine de Rothschild and her children, Chateau Clerc Milon was bought in 1970 by her father, Baron Philippe de Rothschild, at a time when the estate had become

very much run down. The property was entirely reorganized and renovated and, under the expert guidance of its new owners, Chateau Clerc Milon has become one of the most sought-after wines both in Bordeaux and throughout the world. The Chateau Clerc Milon label is illustrated with a pair of dancing clowns made of precious stones (the work of a 16th century German goldsmith) from the Museum of Wine in Art at Chateau Mouton Rothschild.

When the Rothschilds purchased this Fifth Growth estate in 1970, they began pumping money into the property, and Clerc-Milon now consistently outperforms its rank. With its fairly substantial percentage of Merlot, the result of a recent gradual shift away from Cabernet, this Pauillac often displays an exotic aromatic character, with rich if sometimes rather medicinal-scented fruit and smooth tannins. These wines are ultimately closer in style to its big brother Mouton-Rothschild than to Armailhac, which is also owned by the Rothschild family.

Soils

The soils are a mixture of two-thirds sandy gravel, with a deeper seam of clay-limestone. This clay comes to the surface towards the east, nearer the river, accounting for the remaining one-third. The slope of the land aids drainage, as well as improving the aspect of the vines.

Vineyards

43.6 hectares, with 8450 feet of vines per hectare. Average vine age 40 years.

Harvest

The harvest is manual, naturally, with the fruit picked during several *tries* into small, 12kg baskets. The fruit undergoes hand-sorting twice, before moving to the winery in mobile bins.

Vinification/

Maturation

Once at the new facilities optical sorting is a possibility, prior to pressing and then moving the fruit by gravity flow into the 40 new stainless steel, thermo-regulated fermentation vats. Once complete, the embryonic wine goes into oak barrels, of which 30% is new each vintage for 16 months.

Tasting Notes

The wine has a rather deep colour with a garnet tint and an open, generous bouquet displaying vanilla and wild berry aromas together with a spicier note reminiscent of nutmeg. The solid and powerful body, typical of the vintage, builds on forward but well-rounded tannins which give a rich structure combined with dense and varied flavours, including well-integrated oak. The expansive finish expresses all the character, generosity and size of a great Pauillac.

Production

11,000 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2010-2030

Scores/Awards

88 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 1997

88 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - January 31, 1999

90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #122 - April 1999

89-90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #115 - February 1998

87-88 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #110 - April 1997

90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - September 2006

88-90 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 1998

17.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com

17.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - January 2005

4 stars - Decanter



Scores/Awards **4 stars** - Decanter

87 points - Jean Marc Quarin

89 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 16, 2011

87 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 15, 2011

89 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 1, 2010

Reviews *"Fresh currant and hints of sweet tobacco on the nose. Medium- to full-bodied, with fine tannins and a vanilla, cigar box and fruit aftertaste. Just beginning to drink well. --'95/'96 Bordeaux retrospective. Drink now."*
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Shows pretty floral and berry aromas and flavors. Medium-bodied, with firm tannins and a fruity, mineral aftertaste. A very good Clerc, but rather lean for this fine estate. Best after 2001."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"This is among the finest wines I have ever tasted from this estate. Lavishly oaked, with gobs of pain grille and rich fruit, it is massive and concentrated. The color is dense ruby/purple. The bouquet offers notes of roasted coffee, tobacco, and jammy cassis. Although surprisingly soft and opulent on the attack, the mid-section and finish reveal the wine's full body, high flavor extraction, and moderate tannin. This complete, large-scaled Clerc-Milon will be at its finest between 2005-2018."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"A 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, and 12% Cabernet Franc blend, this is a fleshy, atypically succulent, voluptuously-textured Pauillac that will offer delicious drinking at a young age. The wine possesses plenty of volume and punch on the palate, with gobs of fruit, as well as a subtle dosage of new oak (about 35% new oak barrels are utilized at this estate). Low acidity and rich fruit conceal much of the wine's tannin, which is present but unobtrusive. Anticipated maturity: 2000-2012. A sleeper."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 1996 Clerc-Milon, an interesting blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Cabernet Franc, and 25% Merlot, reveals a distinctive blueberry-scented nose with spicy, lead pencil, cedar, and toasty oak aromas. The wine is pure, with surprisingly tart, crisp acidity, more of a compact, tighter style than previous vintages, and moderate tannin in the finish. Usually a supple, plush, easy to understand and drink wine when young, the 1996 is more backward and structured, thus patience will be required. Anticipated maturity: 2003-2015."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted blind at Farr's horizontal and impressive it was too. Very little on the nose. Quite herbaceous, dried leaves and lacking lift. More fruit concentration on the palate. Cedar, blackberry, tobacco. Good definition. Structured but well-balanced. Quite stern - again this will need time but good potential. Tasted September 2006."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Very good red-ruby. Redcurrant, blueberry, and lead pencil on the aromatic nose. Tighter in the mouth than the Armailhac; gives an impression of higher acidity and more aggressive structure. But opened nicely to show good black cherry and cassis fruit. Finer and more delineated than the above."
- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Very youthful hue. Dense, classic, dark, slightly sooty nose. A little roasted even. Lovely tannins pervading through the palate. Big, very structured, youthful, pure concentrated and intense. The tannins come to dominate at the finish though. A lovely wine destined for greatness. Needs five to ten years cellar time. 17.5+/20 (January 2005)"
- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Rich dense and powerful. Very good fruit, long. 5-10 years."
- Decanter.com

Reviews *"Rich, dense and powerful. Very good fruit, quite powerful tones - good length. Drink -10 years."*
- Decanter.com

"From a blend of 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, and 12% Cabernet Franc, this fully mature Pauillac displayed cassis, tobacco and truffle in the aromas. With a medium body, this Pauillac ended with sweet, black cherries and spice flavors. This Bordeaux wine is fully mature. There is no reason to age it any longer as it will not improve."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Cassis, plum and hints of earth make up the perfume. Medium bodied and uncomplicated, the wine finishes with fresh strawberry and plum flavors."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Cassis, blackberry, olives and herbal notes made up the perfume. Already mature, this easy drinking Pauillac ended with bitter chocolate and blackberry flavors."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
