

Château D'Armailhac 1996

CSPC# 756592

750mlx12

13.2% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 25% Cabernet

Appellation

Pauillac

General Info

Château d'Armailhac, previously named Château Mouton-d'Armailhacq (historical name from inception, 1750–1955), Château Mouton-Baron Philippe (1956–1973), Mouton Baronne (1974–1978) and Château Mouton-Baronne-Philippe (1979–1988), is a winery in the Pauillac appellation of the Bordeaux region of France. The wine produced here was classified as one of eighteen *Cinquièmes Crus* (Fifth Growths) in the Bordeaux Wine Official Classification of 1855.

The Chateau has 126 acres (0.51 km²) planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot with an average annual production of over 18,000 cases. Since 1989 its original identity has been restored and it is now known as Château d'Armailhac. Baron Philippe de Rothschild bought the estate in 1933 and it remains in the hands of his daughter, Baroness Philippine de Rothschild.

Vineyards

Today the property comprises 50 ha of land under vine, with more being planted, so the expansion of the late 20th century continues. There are three principle vineyards, including the 26 hectare *Plateau des Levantines et de L'Obélisque*, an extension of the Carruades croupe, where gravel reigns supreme, the 19 hectare *Plateau de Petit Pibran*, which has soils of sand and chalk over a limestone base, and *Le Croupe de Béhéré*, 5 hectares of light gravel up to three metres deep in places. They are planted at a density of 8500 vines/ha, with 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, with an average age of 47 years, although some sections of the vineyard are easily a century old. Tending the vineyards and making the wine is down to the team at Mouton-Rothschild.

Harvest

Wednesday, September 23, 2009 - Tuesday, October 06, 2009

Maturation

Fermentation temperatures are allowed to rise quite high, blending follows malolactic fermentation, and the wine spends 16 months *en barrique*, of which about 30% are new, the remainder being old Mouton barrels.

Tasting Notes

The wine still has a rather deep red colour and a bouquet which opens on wild berry fruit, blackcurrant and black cherry mingled with a subtle suggestion of mint. Full-bodied, it has a fine tannic structure, dense and rich, firm but not aggressive, combined with blackcurrant, vanilla, toast and a hint of smoke. Seductively complex, this is a very fine vintage.

Cellaring

Drink 2008-2018

Scores/Awards

88 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2007

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

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

87-88 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #115 - February 1998

85-87 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #110 - April 1997

89 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - September 2006

91-93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010

87-89 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 1998

16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com (no review)

18 points/4 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - September 2003

87points - Jean Marc Quarin – no review

84 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 21, 2011

Reviews

"Wonderful aromas of ripe fruit, spices, licorice and fresh herbs. Medium- to full-bodied, with fine tannins and a fresh, clean finish. Balanced and delicious. --'95/'96 Bordeaux retrospective. Drink now."

- JM, Wine Spectator



Reviews *"A good, sleek '96. Attractive aromas of raspberry and dried cherry. Medium-bodied, with firm tannins and a silky texture. Medium finish with a chalky, berry aftertaste. Best after 2000."*
- JS, Wine Spectator

"This is a successful and seductive wine. The saturated ruby color is followed by sweet, roasted herb, and black currant aromas with lush toasty oak notes. A blend of 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 25% Cabernet Franc, this medium-weight, elegant yet richly fruity wine possesses enough tannin to last two decades, but it will be one 1996 Medoc that will be drinkable at an early age. Anticipated maturity: 2004-2018."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The dense ruby/purple-colored 1996 reveals evolved aromas of licorice, Asian spices, cassis, and subtle toasty oak. A blend of 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Cabernet Franc, and 30% Merlot, this medium-weight wine possesses a surprising lushness, atypical for this vintage. It provides a sweet mid-palate, and a velvety-textured, long, lush finish. It is a hedonistic, user-friendly Pauillac that should age nicely. Anticipated maturity: 2001-2015."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"D'Armailhac's 1996 possesses a dark ruby color, and a sweet, elegant, up-front nose of berry fruit and toasty oak. In the mouth, the wine is medium-bodied, pretty and stylish, but neither deep nor long. It will require early drinking and should last for 10-12 years."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"An austere, Cabernet dominated, cedary nose. Touch of smoke. Still quite backward. Very good balanced on the tannic palate. High extraction, quite spicy but very good definition. Backward, broody but good potential. Very cedary finish. Tasted September 2006."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Good deep red. Spicy, cedary oak, graphite and a floral suggestion of cabernet franc on the nose. Supple and firm, with very good texture and fresh fruit. The floral quality repeats in the mouth. Finishes with very good length and tooth coating chewy, ripe tannins."
- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Quite deep. Lots of bold black fruit. Fine, firm structure and poise. Tight. 5-10 years+."
- Decanter.com

"Dark red tea in color, with strawberry and earthy aromas, this medium bodied Pauillac ends with green peppercorn and cherry flavors. This lighter style of Bordeaux wine is past fully mature."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
