

Château Mouton Rothschild 1986

CSPC#753651

750mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety Appellation General Info

80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot
Pauillac

Château Mouton Rothschild, owned by Baroness Philippine de Rothschild and her children, is regarded as one of the world's greatest wines. The story of Mouton Rothschild is that of a magical combination of soil, climate and devotion of one man, Baron Philippe de Rothschild (1902-1988), Baroness Philippine's father. In 1853, Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild, from the English branch of the family, bought Château Brane-Mouton and immediately renamed it in Mouton Rothschild. Baron Philippe de Rothschild, when he took over the estate in 1922, decided to devote his life to it and to make Mouton unique, producing the very best wine. In 1924, he was the first to introduce entire chateau bottling. In 1926, he built the majestic 100-metre barrel hall. In 1945, to celebrate the liberation of France, he had the idea of crowning the label of that year's vintage with a V for Victory. Since then, a different label is created for each vintage by famous painters. In 1962, he opened the Museum of Wine in Art. In 1973, he obtained the revision of the 1855 classification so that Mouton would be officially recognized as a First Growth.

Vineyards

The Mouton vineyards incorporate 75 hectares of typical gravelly soil over a base of sand, clay, marl and limestone. They are situated on a mound or *motte* at an altitude of approximately 40 metres, dizzying heights for the flat and undulating land of the Medoc. It is widely thought that *motte* is the origin of the name Mouton, the local Bordeaux dialect providing us with as many words for mound, hill or hillock as there are perhaps fish in the *Gironde*. It does not derive, as some rather unkind individuals have postulated (I say unkind because the accusation brings rural, rustic tones), from the French for sheep, *mouton*, although this might be suggested by the grazing pasture that abuts the estate. The vines are 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc, 8% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot, planted at a density of 8500 hectares, with an admirable average age of around 50 years.

Maturation

Once harvested, fermentation is in 225-hectolitre vats of wood, with a maceration of 15 to 25 days. Then 20 months in new oak before bottling.

Tasting Notes

The wine has an intense, dark colour with lovely ruby highlights and an ample nose, powerful and substantial, on aromas of nut, kirsch, prune, caramel, spice and mocha, testifying to refined oak in perfect harmony with generous fruit. Dense on the palate, its forward, compact tannins combine with generous flavours of jammy fruit, blackcurrant liqueur, toast, vanilla and chocolate. All the concentration and distinctive character of the vintage are displayed in an opulent, succulent finish that marries creamy tannins with great richness of flavour.

Production

? cases made

Cellaring

Drink now-2040

Scores/Awards

- 99 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - June 30, 2001
- 97 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - May 15, 1991
- 93 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - May 31, 1989
- 100 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #106 - August 1996
- 100 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #95 - October 1994
- 100 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #88 - August 1993
- 100 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate in Asia - May 2009
- 97 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2011
- 97+ points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - July 2008
- 99 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2009
- 98-100 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - September 2005



Scores/Awards **18.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - October 2005
17+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - February 2008
98+ points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - Jul/Aug 2011
95+ points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - Jul/Aug 2002
94 points - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2010

Reviews *"Ageless, yet balanced. Black color. Mint, mineral, berry and cherry. Full-bodied, chewy and tight. Long, long finish. A great, great wine. --Bordeaux retrospective. Drink now."*
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Defines Mouton's greatness with incredibly rich, concentrated fruit, layers of cedar, currant, cassis, cherry and plum that go on and on. The rich tannins promise a long life in the bottle. Best to give it until 1999, but it could easily last through 2010."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"A superb claret. This is a huge, well-structured wine, packed with tons of vanilla and chocolate notes that play against a background of concentrated berry flavors. So powerful that it stole the show in this flight. Tasted like a barrel sample; try around 2000. --Mouton-Rothschild vertical. Best after 2000."
- JS, Wine Spectator

*"After stumbling over some wines, I thought were high class Bordeaux, I nailed this wine in one of the blind tastings for this article. In most tastings where a great Bordeaux is inserted with California Cabernets, the Bordeaux comes across as drier, more austere, and not nearly as rich and concentrated (California wines are inevitably fruitier and more massive). To put it mildly, the 1986 Mouton-Rothschild held its own (and then some), in a flight that included the Caymus Special Selection, Stags Leap Wine Cellars Cask 23, Dunn Howell Mountain, and Joseph Phelps Eisele Vineyard. Clearly the youngest looking, most opaque and concentrated wine of the group, it tastes as if it has not budged in development since I first tasted it out of barrel in March 1987. An enormously concentrated, massive Mouton-Rothschild, comparable in quality, but not style, to the 1982, 1959, and 1945, this impeccably made wine is still in its infancy. Interestingly, when I was in Bordeaux several years ago, I had this wine served to me blind from a magnum that had been opened and decanted 48 hours previously. Even then, it still tasted like a barrel sample! I suspect the 1986 Mouton-Rothschild requires a minimum of 15-20 more years of cellaring; it has the potential to last for 50-100 years! Given the outrageously high prices being fetched by so many of the great 1982s and 1990s (and lest I forget, the 1995 Bordeaux futures), it appears this wine might still be one of the "relative bargains" in the fine wine marketplace. I wonder how many readers will be in shape to drink it when it does finally reach full maturity?
The tasting notes for this section are from two single blind tastings, one conducted in May, 1996, in California, and the other in June, 1996, in Baltimore."*
- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted 9 Times Since Bottling with Consistent Notes. In 1986, Mouton-Rothschild produced the most profound wine of a great northern Medoc vintage. The sensational opaque black/ruby color may be even denser than that of the 1982. It requires coaxing and extended airing to bring forth the subdued bouquet of minerals, celestial blackcurrants, smoky new oak, and spices. The wine possesses incredible concentration, full body, fabulous length, and is - well - perfect. At present, this exemplary effort is a huge, monolithic, totally unevolved wine. Anticipated maturity: 2005-2050."
- RP, Wine Advocate

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- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"Deep garnet-black colour. An incredible array of aromas on the nose: blackberry, black cherry, tobacco, espresso, leather, black olive and loam. The palate is absolutely seamless from first impression to finish, effortlessly building layers of complexity in the mouth and leading to a very long, earth and spice finish. I can't see how this could possibly be improvement so have no alternative but concede perfection. Drink now to 2045+. Tasted March 2009."

- LP-B, Wine Advocate

"Tasted at the Claret Club Mouton-Rothschild dinner. This is one of the finest bottles of Mouton-Rothschild of the decade. Stunning definition on the nose with a touch of mint and graphite, the palate imbued with an almost sorbet-like freshness and vitality. Wonderful symmetry and very classic and masculine towards the finish. Incredible persistency and yet still a long way to go. Tasted November 2010."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Certainly, a great Mouton, it has a very deep black/garnet core. The nose is fantastic, soaring from the glass with layer upon layer of blackberries, cassis, cedar, Alpine forest and a hint of limestone. Superb delineation. The palate is still stubbornly backward with a very tannic, uncompromising entry but that leads to a lovely pure palate imbued with an almost citrus-like freshness. It remains an obdurate Mouton and it will be a spectacular wine in 10-20 years. For those with patience. Drink 2018-2030+ Tasted November 2008."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Accompanying a spectacular lunch at Cordeillan Bages with Philippe Dhalluin who served it blind, I was duped into thinking this was the '82. This is the best bottle of Mouton '86 I have tasted, a spell-binding Pauillac. The nose is quite extraordinary with blooms of blackberry, cedar and cassis that fill the whole restaurant. The palate is full-bodied, finally loosening up just a little after two decades but still masculine and assertive. Brilliant definition though, so fresh and vibrant, with a purity that I have never appreciated before. It remains an uncompromising Mouton, but on this form, it will be leaving wine-lovers speechless for decades rather than years. Drink 2012-2040+ Tasted September 2008."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Like the Mouton 1982, a wine prone to taste different depending upon which side of the Channel you drink it. Two quite astoundingly backward bottles tasted in Bordeaux between 2001 and 2003 with think masculine tannins, less flamboyant but perhaps more focused and classical than the 1982. Brilliant wine that I scored an original perfect mark of 25. But subsequently overwhelmed at the Mouton vertical in September 2005. A very deep, almost opaque colour. The nose is reticent at first, then a rush of mint and cedar. Very powerful and intense, almost volatile with a faint hint of boot-polish. The palate is multi-layered with blackberry, cassis and mint. Thick chewy tannins. A more unruly 1986 than the bottle in Bordeaux, with a dark chocolate note on the finish. Seems to have mellowed just a little, but this still needs another 10 years."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Quite exceptional depth and youthfulness of colour - it looks younger than either the 1989 or 1990, and possibly even than the 1995! Still quite amazingly closed on the nose. There is obviously quite a bit of alcohol in this wine, perhaps a note of licorice again. Thick, deep, brooding, this wine hardly seems to have changed over the last 15 years. Very, very dry with lots of tannin on the finish which I am forced to wonder whether they will ever be resolved? This is like very dry blackcurrant essence with a note of menthol. Overall at the moment this is still a bit of a brute and I do wonder whether it will ever soften? Drink 2009-2025. Date tasted 19th Nov 04."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Cabernet Sauvignon 80%, Cabernet Franc 8%, Merlot 10%, Petit Verdot 2%. This is slightly more dense than the 1989, tasted alongside. This has a dense and stony nose, less perfumed than some other less mature examples, with a touch of calcareous rock and some reserved fruit. This isn't yet fully developed. Dense, firm, tight and rather straightforward in character on the palate. There is good acidity, and a firm core of tannin although not as much as I expected; perhaps the wines of this vintage are beginning to come around at last. It holds together very nicely on the finish although it doesn't linger as long as I thought it might. There is potential here; this wine needs time yet to show its best. 17+/20 (February 2008)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

Reviews

“(80% cabernet sauvignon, 10% merlot, 8% cabernet franc and 2% petit verdot; pH 3.54; IPT 66; 12.5% alcohol; 90% new oak; an 80% selection): Very deep, saturated ruby with only a hint of garnet at the rim. Ripe red and black fruits, mint, vanilla, minerals and delicate black pepper on the captivating nose. Very rich, big and deep, with a luscious texture and ripe flavors similar to the aromas. Finishes smoothly tannic and very long, with building sweetness. This gorgeous Mouton, though massively built, also reflects the long hang time of the berries, which led to a perfect polymerization of its tannins and a fleshy structure. Still very much an infant: I wouldn't touch a bottle for at least another ten years. I also like the fact that, although it's very sweet and creamy, strong acidity (note the lower-than-usual pH) is keeping it vibrant. This vintage is the first in which Mouton vinified its young vines separately and only used those vats judged to be of grand cru quality. Following a slowdown in physiological ripening during August, the late harvest (October 2-16) permitted a longer growing curve. Tourbier noted that "petit verdot needs its head in the sun and its feet in the water, and as it had been initially planted on one of the highest, coolest sites at Mouton, a mistake on our part, it rarely ripened enough to be included in the grand vin, and this explains why we hardly used it in the older vintages.”

- ST, International Wine Cellar

“Good medium ruby. Currant, currant leaf, cedar and dusty oak on the nose. Tightly wound and classic, with fabulous acids contributing to its powerful spine. Wonderfully pure and intense, with great verve and grip. But still quite locked up and hiding its density. Finishes firmly tannic and extremely long. I remember mistaking the '86 Mouton for such international stars as Sassicaia in the early '90s, when it showed greater sweetness, but this wine has been quite shut down for the past several years. The '86 and the '82 appear clearly to be the two greatest vintages for Mouton since the 1959.”

- ST, International Wine Cellar
