

Clos Fourtet 2012

CSPC# 753467

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

First Growth B. Premier Grand Cru Classe B in 2006

Website

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

General Info

Thanks to the geology of the Saint-Emilion plateau (chalk overlaid with aeolian sand), its fine wines boast a unique reputation, and Clos Fourtet, occupying a prime site, is among one of Saint-Emilion's oldest and most renowned estates. Medium in size (20 ha of vineyard), Clos Fourtet is built around an authentic private residence dating from the end of the Ancien Regime and itself stands at the very gates of the medieval city. It was in fact built over magnificent underground quarries where its wines are aged both in barrel and in bottle. The site itself is one of those most frequently visited and greatly admired. Throughout the 18th century, the Rulleau and de Carles families contributed largely to its growing renown, fully exploiting the land's potential. Here, thanks to the thin layer of arable soil, vines root easily, yet yield little, this "stress" being a fundamental prerequisite for the production of great wines. An exceptional terroir, the primary condition for production of a very great wine, associated with judiciously selected grape varieties cultivated in the time-honored fashion, traditional winemaking controlled by the latest techniques and finally aging in new barrels, ensure that Clos Fourtet takes its rightful place among the most highly esteemed growths in the appellation and in the region. In 1949, the Lurton family bought the chateau. They helped the vineyard to progress particularly the last 10 years. In 2001, Clos Fourtet has been repurchased by Philippe Cuvelier who continues the modernisation.

Vintage

Cool, rainy weather during spring caused the vines to bud quite late. Until July, rain and damp were constantly present in the atmosphere. Excess water made the vines shoot very quickly, and vineyard work was difficult to carry out. The threat of an outbreak of downy mildew was very high. Summer arrived after a slightly difficult flowering, which resulted in a significant but reasonable amount of coulure (shot berries).

Fortunately for the vines, the summer was hot and particularly dry, so much so that in some soils vines suffered at the end of August. The veraison process was long and uneven. Cutting away slow-ripening pink punches was necessary before the last stage of the ripening process.

Grape skins were thick, and the ripening was slow. It was turning out to be an autumn vintage and picking would have to be late.

Rain in September was fatal for a number of vineyards as botrytis began to set in.

Generally speaking, however, the grapes were picked at satisfactory levels of ripeness.

Clay soils are often better suited to this type of year. It added up to an uneven vintage with wines of different levels of power according to soil-types and exposures. Merlot, being an early-ripening variety, performed pretty well.

No rule therefore in this vintage, which will nevertheless produce one or two superb bottles.

At Clos Fourtet, we crop-thinned 3 times, the last one being at the end of the veraison process, enabling us to get rid of any green or pink bunches still on the vines and to have a homogeneously ripening crop.

Our clay soil and limestone subsoil helped the vines get through summer without suffering any water deficit stress.

In spite of the rain that fell in September, our grass cover-crop and clay soils enabled the vines to stay in good health until the harvest.



Vineyards Thanks to the spare no expense attitude of the new owners, Clos Fourtet is doing what it takes to make the best wine possible. This effort begins in the vineyards. They practice sustainable, vine-growing methods. Grass is seeded between the rows to help reduce excess water. The soil between the vine plants is ploughed. The vines are pruned keeping two long canes, which are later de-budded to the required number of buds. De-leafing is done on the east-facing side at the end of June, and on the south-facing side at the end of August. Crop thinning is carried out at the beginning of the grape-colour change. As a result, the bunches are evenly spread out and well ventilated for good ripening. The 20-hectare Bordeaux vineyard of Clos Fourtet, situated a stone's throw from the village of St. Emilion right on top of the limestone plateau. The vines are planted to 85 % Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon with vines that average 30 years of age. The wine is aged for 18 months in 80% new oak barrels. There is a second wine, Closerie de Fourtet.

Harvest 9th to 17th October

Maturation The alcoholic fermentations began within 24 hours of the berries being sent into vat. During the fermentation process we carried out 10 pigeages (punching down the cap) during the middle part of the process, so as to gain a good extraction. The vatting period lasted on average 28 days. The wine is vinified traditionally and is aged in oak barriques (60% new) for 18 months. It is bottled unfiltered.

Tasting Notes The Merlot at Clos Fourtet put in a great performance in this 2012 vintage, as it did in 1998. The wine was produced from fresh, healthy grapes at full ripeness. Clos Fourtet 2012 has a deep vermilion hue, an intense, already complex nose with notes of black fruits and spices coming through together with floral touches of violets and lilies. The palate is coated, silky, slightly liquorice and with a long, mineral finish.

Production 3,500 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2019-2039

Scores/Awards **94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015
91-94 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013
95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015
93-95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013
92-93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013
93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 9, 2013
90-92 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - April 2013
15.5 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013
17.5 points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2013
92 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013
95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013
94 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 11, 2015
92-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 26, 2013
92-94+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 10, 2013
16 points - Farr Vintner - March 2013
91-95 points - Derek Smedley, MW - May 2013
88 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013
92-94 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 24, 2013 (score only)
17-18+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010
88-90 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)
16.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)
17.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)
18 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

Reviews *"Gorgeous, with a pure, unadorned violet aroma giving way to very ripe and stylish plum, boysenberry and blackberry fruit. Offers a suave mouthfeel, with anise and tobacco hints filling the background. A finely stitched chalk note extends the finish. Not shy on depth, and sneakily long. Best from 2017 through 2030. 3,500 cases made."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

Reviews *"Juicy and open, with a bright mix of strawberry, pomegranate and cherry fruit laced with a pleasantly firm structure. Shows more flesh and dark fruit with aeration, releasing a pleasant graphite note and hinting at buried perfume. Should be solid with some aging. Score range: 91-94"*

- JS, Wine Spectator

"Having just had the 2003 and 2005 from my cellar, I can attest to the magnificent turnaround in quality this famous estate on the eastern side of St.-Emilion has achieved. All of it is attributable to its dynamic proprietor, Philippe Cuvelier. The 2012 Clos Fourtet (usually 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc) has beautiful blackberry and blueberry fruit and an inky purple color. With flawless integration of acidity, tannin, wood and alcohol, a full-bodied mouthfeel and stunning richness, this is impressive and certainly one of the vintage's top wines. It should evolve beautifully for 15-20 years and be drinkable in 3-4. Yields were a modest 32 hectoliters per hectare with the alcohol at 14%."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 2012 Clos Fourtet was cropped at 32 hectoliters per hectare and achieved 14% natural alcohol. The final blend was 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. It offers an opaque dense purple color along with attractive blackberry, licorice, truffle and cassis fruit notes. It is full-bodied and dense with an authoritative mid-palate, sweet tannin and a layered mouthfeel that builds incrementally into a stunningly long finish. Precocious and charming already, it will drink better at an earlier age than the massive, prodigious 2009. Drink this killer St.-Emilion over the next 15+ years.

One can't say enough about proprietor Cuvelier's 50-acre vineyard that has witnessed a profound transformation of quality over the last decade or more. Moreover, Cuvelier recently purchased three neighboring estates that are consistently reviewed positively in this publication, Les Grandes Murailles, Clos St.-Martin and Cote Baleau. These were previously owned by Sophie Fourcade. Interestingly, since these three properties are adjacent or close to Clos Fourtet, I would not be surprised if over the next decade they become incorporated into Clos Fourtet. Another great success for Cuvelier and his estate manager, Tony Ballu."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"This is a wine with layers of fruit and firm yet polished tannins. Full body, juicy and rich. It shows outstanding depth for the vintage."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"93–95. Barrel sample. Powerful and concentrated, this is a firmly textured wine with a dark, solid, dense character. The palate balances fine acidity and fruit with a dark, brooding structure."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Ruby-red. Expressive aromas of raspberry, dark chocolate and sexy oak. Lush on entry, then rich, vinous and deep, displaying very good balance and rich dark fruit and herb flavors. Finishes with serious but even tannins and very good persistence. This brooding wine has real potential in the context of a tough vintage."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Inky with purple rim. Rich, ripe and spicy. More damson than cassis but fresh. Chewy, some oak char, fruit not as rich on the palate as on the nose so finishes a touch too dry/stringy. (JH)"

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Expressive red and dark fruit nose. Palate plush, ripe and harmonious. Fresh and long on the finish. Fine grained tannins. Gets the nod over 2011."

- JL, Decanter.com

"Deep, dark, rich ruby-purple, still not those bright anthocyanins of the best 2010s, but a pleasing en primeur colour. Again nose is hugely subdued, and again here alcohol is masking much of the fruit, although it does make it through after a tiny struggle on the attack, and there is no bitterness to the tannins. This is a long hauler, there are good tannins, plenty of fleshy black fruits and warm harvest markers. Seems to overshoot the vintage, it's a good wine with lots of potential. 92 / 17.75. Highly recommended. Drink 2019-2032."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

Reviews

"This château's high (for St Emilion) percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon is usually a boon in warmer years, but it doesn't seem to have done the wine any harm in cooler 2012 either. Rich, sensuous and profound, this is very well balanced by acidity, minerality and freshness, reflecting its clay and limestone terroir. One of the three best wines of the appellation in 2012. Drink: 2020-40"

- TA, timatkin.com

"Smoke, truffle black cherries and licorice scents catch your attention and the smooth, soft, silky, polished, sweet, ripe fruits on the palate keep you focused on what's in your glass. The long, supple, chocolate coated, black cherry finish is a treat."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"With 86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 14% alcohol with a pH of 3.7. The wine will be aged in 60%, new French oak barrels for 18 months. Deep in color with floral, licorice, dark red berries and earth in the nose, the wine is rich, lush and deep with soft tannins. The wine ends with sweet licorice and chocolate-covered berries. To produce the wine in this difficult vintage, Chateau Clos Fourtet performed 3 green harvests during the growing season. 92-94 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and dense; lush and ripe nose; very pretty; really very pure and enticing; oak on the palate but largely soaked up by the lovely plump Merlot in evidence; very linear through aroma to palate; feels very good potentially. Little chewy on the finish. 92-94+ [second tasting] Deep and dense; lots of plums, jam and black fruits; palate has soaked up the oak; lashings of fruit, material and density. Here the vintage comparison is with 1998. 86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc. 92-94+ UGC Wednesday April 10, 2013"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Situated in the heart of Saint Emilion, close to Canon, this is one of the great vineyards of the appellation. The 19 hectares of vines are planted with 87% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Cabernet Franc. 70% new oak. Stephane Derenoncourt consults here. This wine has a lovely texture, full of cream and sweet fruit. Finely polished with summer berries and good balance. A fine Saint Emilion that is neither too old-school nor overly new wave. Lovely."

- Farr Vintners

"The nose is firm with a mix of fresh red fruits and sweeter black. The palate has depth of flavour with a powerful mix of flavours all supported by firm but ripe tannins. Layers of flavour give complexity and the ripeness of the fruit gives a supple richness. There are red fruits at the back refreshing. 2017-26"

- Derek Smedley MW

"Wonderful freshness and energy in this wine. Layered, complex with complex layers of fruit and good intensity and lift. Wine should age/evolve well. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (07-Apr-2013)"

- JCL, asianpalate.com

"Profound nose showing a smoky, mineral nose with black fruit. Dense, powerful, mineral and fruity palate with supple tannins. Harmony still needs to be defined. (16-Apr-2013)"

- en.gilbertgaillard.com
