

Clos Fourtet 2018

CSPC# 848137

750mlx6

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

1st Grand Cru Classé

Website

<http://www.closfourtet.com/en/index.html>

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.

Winemakers

Jean-Claude Berrouet and Stéphane Deroncourt

Vintage

2018 Saint Emilion was not an easy vintage for producers. The winter months were easy, but the spring is one of the wettest in history. Depending on where you located in St. Emilion, during the initial 6 months of the year, between 550 mm to 600 mm (21"-24") of rain soaked your soils. This is more than the normal amount of rain the region experiences in a year!

From there growers fended off violent attacks of mildew, which struck fast and furious. 2018 Saint Emilion was saved by the hottest, driest, sunniest vintage conditions since 2003. Barely any rain fell from July to harvest.

Picking took place under warm, sunny, and dry conditions. On average, production was down 10-20% for many vineyards. Conditions were so good between late September and mid-October; vigneron were able to pick at their chosen level of maturity. Harvesting took place from mid-September to mid-October.

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 60% new oak barrels. There is a second wine, Closserie de Fourtet.

Harvest

Unknown dates



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, 40% used) for 16 months. It is bottled unfiltered.
Tasting Notes	The wines of Clos Fourtet, Premier Grand Cru Classé, embody the finest of Saint-Émilion. Smooth, intriguing, and seductive, their pure natural aromas are delicately woven together in a charming display of the unparalleled potential of our terroir. Our wines mark the culmination of all of our efforts, unveiling themselves as time passes - alive, developing and maturing.
Serve with	Best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Clos Fourtet is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	2,900 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2024-2038
Scores/Awards	<p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021</p> <p>96-99 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>96-97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>97 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019</p> <p>16.5+ points - Tom Parker, JancisRobinson.com - October 2020</p> <p>16 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>16 points - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p>95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p>16.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>98 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Juicy, winey and very compact in feel, with racy acidity and chalky minerality imbedded deeply in the core of sleek cassis, bitter cherry and damson plum flavors. Nice flecks of savory and dried anise dot the finish, where everything echoes nicely. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2024 through 2038."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Dark plum and boysenberry fruit is laced with tobacco and chalk notes, while the fleshy grip slowly builds through the finish. This is seriously long, and though the fruit is gorgeous, the minerality steals the show in the end. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. 2,900 cases made."</i> - JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Clos Fourtet opens with wonderfully pure, intense black fruit notes of ripe blackberries, crushed black cherries and warm plums, leading to suggestions of pencil lead, clove oil, black olives and aniseed. The medium to full-bodied palate is chock-full of muscular black fruits, delivering compelling vivacity and tension, framed by velvety tannins, and finishing epically long and perfumed. The intense, bright, energetic fruit on this 2018 has been impeccably preserved. Stunning!"</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Clos Fourtet is a little youthfully mute to begin. With coaxing, it opens out to notes of crushed blackberries, warm black plums, and wild blueberries plus suggestions of forest floor, lavender, baking spices and potpourri. Full-bodied, the palate has an amazing texture of soft, plush tannins and</i></p>

Reviews *oodles of freshness supporting the layer upon layer of berries and spices, finishing long and fragrant. Total time in barrel should run 16 months in 60% new and 40% one-year old barriques."*

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Beautiful blueberries and black cherries with crushed-stone and limestone notes. Juniper, too. It's full-bodied, yet so linear and energetic with focused, fine tannins. Fresh acidity. Really fine-grained tannins here. Drink after 2025."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is one of the best wines I have had from here. Full-bodied yet focused and super dynamic. Tight and linear with fantastic length and energy at the end. Exciting."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"This impressive estate has produced another fine wine. Structured, powered by tannins as much as by great fruit, this wine is set for a long aging process. The fruit shows massive concentration, enhanced by succulent acidity and bolstered by those tannins that show so strongly. It's a wine for great patience, so wait to drink until 2027. *Cellar Selection*."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"This is a beautifully structured wine with smooth tannins and supple acidity. Its hidden power is masked by the vivid Merlot fruit. With the fresh acidity and the fine tannins, this is a wine that will age well."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Black with almost no rim. Very ripe, sunbaked but not raisined black fruit. A touch spicity on the nose. Creamy, deep but some freshness here, though the whole is not yet meshed. Chewy on the finish. Big but should even out in the bottle."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Deep ruby. Incense, cedar, and brambles on the nose – quite deep and brooding. Dark cherries and plums with a hint of cocoa on the palate, the structure is built firmly with grippy but ripe tannins persisting through to the finish. The sweet oak is balanced by the depth of fruit weight. A little warming on the finish but this is a serious effort that manages to find the limit of extraction and ripeness while retaining balance."

- TP, JancisRobinson.com

"Extremely concentrated blueberry and blackberry fruit, with a powerful core of freshness. This is an excellent Clos Fourtet that lives up to its promise en primeur. Will need a good decade to soften. A yield of 33hl/ha. 60% new oak."

- JA, Decanter

"Easily as good as the 2015 at this estate, the 2018 may even prove to be better after some ageing. There is depth and concentration to the berry fruits, but also a fine quality to the tannins and a softness overall that suggests nothing was pushed, that all of this power is simply what was naturally given by the vintage. It's very good quality, true to the confidence of the estate, pulsating with rich raspberry and damson notes and playing between a seductive gourmet edge and maintaining its limestone freshness. I have enjoyed a number of older vintages of this wine recently, and I feel pretty sure that this will grow into one of those wines that you are so happy to open after a few decades of ageing. 33hl/ha yield. 60% new oak. Drinking Window 2027 – 2043."

- JA, Decanter

"Inky in color, the wine is quite floral in nature, which adds to all the beautifully ripe, red and black fruits, spice, dark chocolate, licorice, espresso and crushed rock character. Full-bodied, concentrated and with a serious depth of flavor, the long finish focuses on you its freshness, rich, voluptuous textures and purity."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Inky in color, the wine is almost opaque. The fruits are ripe, dark, and deep. There is a touch of fig, black cherry, dark chocolate, flowers, and licorice. Full-bodied, concentrated, intense, dense, and yet with ample lift keeping

Reviews *the wine energized on your palate. The finish hangs in there with multiple shadings of ready pit fruits, luscious textures, and purity. The yields are quite small for 2018 at only 33 hectoliters per hectare.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“A deep, inky colour in the glass, this is sweet and powerful in aroma, with ripe blue fruits and a touch of sweet vanilla from the oak. With a dense, rich core of cassis, damson, and sweet spices, this is a modern take but still finds harmony as it is fleshy rather than extracted. The tannins are ripe and supple, giving an opulent mouthfeel and added richness to the fruit. The finish is long and seductive, all damson, nutmeg and clove.”
- Farr Vintners

“The 2018 Clos Fourtet has a wonderful bouquet of mixed red and black fruit mingled with graphite and melted tar, all very focused and well delineated. The well-proportioned palate delivers fine-grained tannins, a perfect bead of acidity and very pure black fruit laced with tobacco toward the finish. I maintain that it is less flamboyant than recent vintages, which suits its well. This is going to age beautifully.”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 Clos Fourtet has a very pure and intense bouquet with ripe wild strawberry and raspberry aromas, the oak beautifully integrated, perhaps a little less flamboyant than recent vintages? The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins, good acidity, fresh and vibrant with firm structure towards the truffle and black pepper-tinged finish. This is a wonderful Clos Fourtet from the Cuvelier family. Drink 2024-2044.”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 Clos Fourtet is one of the most elegant, refined wines of the vintage. Silky and aromatically expressive, Clos Fourtet is all grace. Blue/purplish fruit, lavender, spice, menthol, and sage all lift from the glass. Even with all of the natural richness of the year, Clos Fourtet sizzles with tension and delineation. Then again, that is the magic of the Saint-Émilion plateau. Clos Fourtet is easy to look past in 2018. It is neither exuberant nor exotically ripe. Instead, everything is in reserve. The 2018 is a magical wine, that's all there is to it. Don't miss it.”
- AG, Vinous

“One of the wines of the vintage, the 2018 Clos Fourtet is positively stunning. In the glass, the 2018 sizzles with tension and energy. A whole range of floral, mineral, and red berry notes develop, but it is the wine's exceptional sense of harmony that leaves the deepest impression. Don't miss it. Tasted three times.”
- AG, Vinous

“Beautiful all the way, the deep purple hued 2018 Château Clos Fourtet comes from one of the prized terroirs on the upper limestone plateau, just outside the village of Saint-Emilion. The blend is 90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, and the balance Cabernet Sauvignon, brought up in 60% new French oak. Gorgeous minerality as well as cassis and ripe black cherry fruits emerge from this full-bodied 2018 that has lots of tobacco and spice-driven aromatics, again, an almost searing minerality, beautiful overall balance, and ripe, building tannins. It benefits from air if opening bottles anytime soon, and it's going to benefit from 3-5 years of bottle age and cruise for two decades in cold cellars.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“Tasted on two separate occasions, the 2018 Château Clos Fourtet is a beauty, offering a ripe, powerful style in its crème de cassis, spice box, liquid rock, and incense aromas and flavors. Checking in as a blend of 90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon that will see 16 months in 60% new oak, it hits the palate with full-bodied richness, loads of flesh, ripe tannins, and a great finish. It's slightly more approachable and sexier than the Canon, which shares a similar terroir on the upper plateau, but it's going to evolve beautifully for at least 20-25 years. It's a beautiful wine very much in the style of the vintage.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“(90 Merlot, 7 Cabernet Sauvignon, 3 Cabernet Franc) | 60% new oak | 14% alc. Always a tough wine in its youth, this is a structured, earthy vintage and the tannins are rather aggressive and raw. There is decent depth of fruit, but it is quite one-dimensional, and the finish is shorter than hoped for.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
