
Clos de l'Oratoire 2018

CSPC# 848135

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St Emilion

Classification

Grand Cru Classe in 2006

Website

<http://www.neipperg.com/index.php?act=1,10,3>

Sustainability

Sustainable viticulture and a biodynamic approach characterize vineyard management hereby Stephan Von Neipperg. This means no herbicides, pesticides, or insecticides are used.

General Info

Clos de l'Oratoire is located on Saint-Emilion's north-east slope.

The origins of Clos de l'Oratoire lie in the Peyraud estate, which was established by the Beylot family, a firm of *négociants* based in Libourne, in the middle years of the 19th century. This was a substantial estate which required extensive planting by the proprietors, who were also responsible for the construction of the *château* which still graces the vineyards today. Its division, in which some of the best parcels were cleaved off to create Clos de l'Oratoire, occurred following the first classification of the St Emilion vineyards in 1955. The Beylot family made the split in good time for the 1969 reclassification, seeing the smaller of the two classed as *Grand Cru Classé*. The larger part, by then known as Château Peyreau, remained unclassified, and both parts stayed under the tenure of the family.

Just a few years later, however, came a significant change in ownership with the arrival of the Neipperg dynasty. Today the property is owned by Stephan von Neipperg, although it was in fact his father, Joseph-Hubert, Graf von Neipperg, a descendant of Franconian nobility, who acquired the property. Joseph-Hubert was one in a long line of successful winemakers in his homeland, Württemberg, which is now part of Baden-Württemberg, a southwest German state. He had made his first investment in Bordeaux in 1971, with the purchase of Canon-la-Gaffelière, and it was only the following year that he added Clos de l'Oratoire to his portfolio. Nevertheless, it is Stephan, his son, who is today the driving force behind Clos de l'Oratoire, as well as Château Peyreau, which also came under the direction of the Neipperg family. Contrary to what is sometimes said, the plots comprising Clos l'Oratoire were not acquired in 1991, but in 1971 (at the same time as the von Neipperg's four first vineyards in Saint-Emilion).

During the 2nd revision of the Saint-Emilion classification, in 1969, the owner at the time had already selected the best plots of Château Peyreau and submitted them for classification. His request was accepted, and Clos de l'Oratoire was born in that year. However, major efforts undertaken to achieve Clos de l'Oratoire's full potential date from 1991.

Winemaker

Stephane Derenoncourt consults

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; vigneronns were able to pick at their chosen level of maturity. Harvesting took place from mid-September to mid-October.

Vineyards

The 10.32 hectares of vines grow on Fronsac molasse covering a layer of sand with a clay subsoil. Average vine age is 35 years. This terroir is ideally suited to the blend of Merlot (90%), Cabernet Franc (5%), and Cabernet Sauvignon (5%) grapes. Merlot

Vineyards

contributes roundness and opulence to the wine, whereas Cabernet Franc is responsible for power, aromatic complexity, and length.



Harvest	21/09 to 04/10/2018
Vinification/ Maturation	In wooden vats for 30 days. Extraction by pneumatic pigeage (punching down the cap). Malolactic fermentation and barrel ageing: In new oak barrels (45%) on the lees for 16 months. No fining
Tasting Notes	Clos de l'Oratoire is round, smooth, and very seductive. It has a beautiful deep crimson color and powerful fruity aromas. Merlot provides roundness and opulence, whereas Cabernet Franc contributes power, aromatic complexity, and a long aftertaste. Although Clos de l'Oratoire can be enjoyed seven years after the vintage, it is, above all, a wine with fine aging potential.
Serve with	Best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes.
Production	4,000 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2022-2032
Scores/Awards	<p>93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021</p> <p>94-97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>93 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>16 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>92-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>90 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>92-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p>95+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p>15.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"A mix of dried herb, floral and steeped cherry and damson plum notes is layered tightly together, while mouthwatering sanguine and iron hints run alongside. Sandalwood edge to the finish. A long, very precise, mineral-driven style. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2022 through 2032. 4,000 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Features seamlessly layered dark currant, fig, and boysenberry fruit, infused liberally with a tobacco note and backed by a long, smoldering finish. Latent energy keeps this going. An impressive young wine. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. 4,000 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2018 Clos de l'Oratoire sports a deep garnet-purple color and rock-star nose of plum preserves, chocolate-covered cherries, and mulberries, plus hints of candied violets, licorice and Sichuan pepper with a waft of tapenade. The medium to full-bodied palate is laden with juicy black fruits plus loads of exotic spice and earthy accents, supported by very ripe, soft tannins and seamless freshness, finishing long and fragrant.:"</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Aromas of fresh blackberries, dried leaves, bitter chocolate, lemon zest and walnuts. Some wet earth, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins. Tight, focused layers. Rather juicy wine. Better from 2025"</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"A tangy and tight red with blackberry and black-olive character. Hint of dark chocolate. Medium to full body and firm, tight tannins. Fresh and energetic dark fruit."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc. Barrel sample. Black core, narrow purple rim. Rich, ripe sweet blackberry, and blueberry fruit with some oak spice on the nose. Lots of spice on the palate, too. Very chewy tannins and, again, not quite fresh enough to balance the density of fruit, alcohol, and tannin. Big, bold, and tannic. (JH)"</i> - JH, JancisRobinson.com</p>

Reviews *“Deep plum colour, this has the rich texture and multi-layered dried herbs and spice feel that you often get with Clos de l’Oratoire. Juicy damson fruits come in through the mid palate and this is big and confident, and well balanced by slate minerality through the finish.”*

- JA, Decanter.com

“Truffle, flowers, licorice, mint, and red fruits are all over the place here. Silky, soft, and refined with a salty top note to the tannins that rides along nicely with all the ripe, fresh, red fruits. The wine blends 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Medium bodied, elegant, fresh, and charming! At the core of this wine, you'll find licorice, smoke, cherry, flowers, wet earth, soft tannins, and a dried, red pit fruit finish. The wine was made from blending 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2018 Clos de l’Oratoire, matured in 45% new oak, has an open and generous bouquet of blueberry and light cassis scents. I think this has become more refined during its barrel maturation, as I hoped it would. The palate is medium-bodied with a smooth texture, offering blackberry and boysenberry flavors plus tobacco and a sprinkling of white pepper. There is a little compactness toward the finish, so afford this 3–5 years to fully open.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 Clos de l’Oratoire is an absolutely gorgeous wine that needs quite some time to release all of its aromatic intensity, nuance and energy. Bright floral notes soar over a core of dense, red-toned fruit as the 2018 gradually shows off its considerable allure. The 2018 is vivid and striking, with character to burn.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2018 Clos de l’Oratoire is another stunning wine in Stephan von Neipperg’s range. The greater presence of Cabernet Franc, along with a move towards earlier picking, no SO2 at crush and less oak influence are some of the factors that have completely transformed Clos de l’Oratoire from the powerhouse it often was to a wine of total and exquisite finesse. Inky dark fruit, lavender, sage, and mint give the 2018 striking aromatic depth, but it is the wine’s total sense of harmony that impresses most. The 2018 is fabulous. That’s all there is to it. Tasted two times.”

- AG, Vinous

“The team of Stephan von Neipperg knocked it out of the park in 2018, producing a brilliant lineup of wines. The 2018 Clos De L’Oratoire checks in as 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc that was brought up in 45% new French oak. As with most of the new releases here, it has a crunchy, vibrant style in its blue fruits, scorched earth, violets, cedarwood, and dried flower-like aromas and flavors. Beautifully balanced, pure, elegant, and seamless, this incredibly classy Saint-Emilion is going to benefit from 4-5 years of bottle age (if not longer) and evolve for 30 years in cold cellars. It’s certainly in the running for the finest vintage I’ve tasted. 95+”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“From the stable of Stephan von Neipperg, the 2018 Clos De L’Oratoire is a ripe, sexy blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc aging in 45% new oak, that offers an upfront bouquet of blueberries, violets, spice box, and incense and has notable complexity. With a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel, a seamless texture, and excellent length, it’s a classic wine from this estate, offering both opulence and elegance. It will keep for 20+ years.”

- Jeb Dunnuck