

Château Laroque 2020

CSPC# 847783

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

99% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Grand Cru Classé

Website

<https://www.chateau-laroque.com/en/wines/>

General Info

Chateau Laroque has a very long track record and history in the Saint Emilion appellation. Chateau Laroque dates back to the 12th century. In fact, a small remnant remains of the original tower built in the 12th century. The estate as we know it today, with its magnificent chateau, was constructed in the 17th century by Marquis de Rochefort-Lavie.

The property remained in the hands of the same family until the depression struck in 1929. Like many families and companies at the time, the owners did not have the funds to maintain the estate and the vineyards. Wine ceased to be produced at Chateau Laroque for several years.

The modern era for Chateau Laroque starts in 1935, when the property was purchased by the Beaumartin family from the descendants of the Marquis de Rochefort-Lavie.

In 1962, the vineyards of Chateau Laroque were completely replanted and the wine making facilities were updated as well. The situation remained about the same for close to 50 years.

By that time, the chateau was in need of repairs, the cellars demanded updating and the vineyards required extensive replanting. Positive changes began taking place starting with the 2015 vintage as you will see. Today, Chateau Laroque is probably better known for the architecturally stunning chateau and its perfectly manicured gardens.

The vines of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon are 40 years old on average and farmed using 100% *organic* techniques. They choose not to be certified organic, simply because they want the freedom to make a wider variety of choices. Château Laroque is also *HVE Certified*, which is a rigorous process granted to vineyards who focus on increasing biodiversity, decreasing the negative environmental impact of their vineyards, and improving water management. The wines at Château Laroque are known for their delicate, mineral-driven nuance. The 2018 vintage was their first entering the *en primeur* or *futures* marketplace, as they were previously distributed exclusively through one firm. At Laguna Cellar, we were one of the first to discover this and leapt at the opportunity to acquire this wine for our customers who were loyal fans of this producer. Given the excellence of their *grand vin*, it's fairly easy to see why

Winemakers

David Suire and Nicolas Thienpont

Vintage

The year 2020 had harsh weather conditions that disrupted vine growth. The year started off with heavy rainfall that were beyond historical averages. A combination of rain and cold temperatures led to the widespread outbreak of mildew. Fortunately, the effects of mildew subsided when temperatures rose in April and May. In fact, there were a few estates that reported losing a significant number of grapes due to mildew (unlike in 2018.) There was no rain between mid-June and mid-August, and most estates (like Saint Emilion and Margaux) reported dehydration on the Cabernet Sauvignon vines. Additionally, the grapes were smaller in size, and the yield was very low. The Merlot grapes were harvested around mid-September, while the Cabernet grapes were picked about a week later.

Vineyards

The 61-hectare vineyard of Chateau Laroque is planted with 87% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon. The terroir is clay with limestone soil. The vineyard is situated northeast of the Saint Emilion village in the commune of St. Christophe des Bardes. Chateau Laroque owns the largest vineyard in St. Emilion. However, only 40 hectares of vines are classified as Grand Cru Classe. The remaining 21 hectares vines are considered to be St. Emilion Grand Cru. Back to those 40 hectares, only 27 hectares of vines are used to produce their top wine, Chateau Laroque. As you can see, selection is important here, especially since it's such



Vineyards	a large vineyard. Their best 27 hectares are located in the deep, clay rich soils close to Chateau Troplong Mondot. They have another outstanding parcel of vines on clay, close to their neighbor, Chateau Rocheyron. The vines are on average 40 years of age. However, they have old vines. 14 hectares of vines are almost 55 years old. The vineyard of Chateau Laroque is planted to a vine density of 6,000 vines per hectare.
Harvest	Unknown.
Vinification/ Maturation	At Chateau Laroque, the vineyard is managed using 100% organic techniques. But they choose not to be certified organic, allowing them to make a wider variety of choices. They are also biodiverse, meaning they are HVE certified. To produce the wine of Chateau Laroque, the wine is fermented in traditional, temperature controlled, cobalt blue, cement vats that vary in size to help with parcel-by-parcel vinification. The wine is aged in 50%-55% new, French oak barrels for 12 months before bottling. About 11,000 cases of Chateau Laroque are produced in an average vintage.
Tasting Notes	More crimson/purple than garnet/purple at the core with a remarkably radiant shocking pink rim. Heather and hedgerow flowers on the floral nose with all the lift that comes from the <i>calcaire terroir</i> and lovely ripe plump blueberries. Succulent and savoury on the palate with the most remarkably accessible silky soft filigree tannins and then lovely sappy, juicy waves of fresh berry fruit rippling and intermingling with the grains in the <i>calcaire</i> tannins. The Chateau Laroque 2020 seduces with its intense floral and spicy aromas, its refreshing salinity and its silky feel.
Serve with	Chateau Laroque is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Laroque is also good when matched with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	11,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2023 - 2030
Scores/Awards	<p>89 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023</p> <p>93 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p>94-96 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p>97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023</p> <p>95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p>90 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p>96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>93-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p>95+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p>95-97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p>91 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p>91-93 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p>93 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021</p> <p>91-92 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Ripe and open-knit, with a modest structure letting damson plum and black cherry puree notes play out easily. Shows subtle tea and cedar hints on the finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2030. 11,000 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2020 Laroque has turned out nicely, bursting with aromas of cherries, minty blackberries, licorice and bay leaf. Medium to full-bodied, velvety, and layered, with good depth at the core, chalky but refined tannins and a saline finish, it's another strong performance for this rising star of Saint-Émilion."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2020 Laroque is a blend of 99% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc, aging for around 16 to 18 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. The alcohol is 14.5%. Displaying a deep purple-black color, it slowly unfurls in the glass to reveal fantastically opulent notes of Indian spices, rose oil, dark chocolate, and licorice, over a core of blueberry preserves, stewed plums and mulberries, plus a hint of dried mint. The medium to full-bodied palate is packed</i></p>

Reviews *with layers of black and blue fruits, accented by exotic spices, and supported by a racy backbone and velvety tannins, finishing long, and perfumed. Gorgeous.”*
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“A blend of 99% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc, the 2020 Laroque is deep garnet-purple in color. A little subdued to begin, offering subtle notes of crushed rocks and damp soil, it opens out to a core of ripe black and red plums and fresh blackberries, plus a fragrant waft of lilacs. The full-bodied palate is bursting with taut, muscular black fruits and amazing tension, framed by ripe, rounded tannins, and finishing with great length and depth.”
- LPB, Wine Independent

“Aromas of sweet berries with herbs, wet earth, and moss undertones as well as fresh mushrooms. Medium- to full-bodied with ultra-fine and creamy tannins and a lovely finish. It’s polished and refined. Drink after 2025, but already very pretty.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“The 2020 Laroque is really focused and linear with tight, minerally tannins that are polished and energetic. It’s medium-to full-bodied with dark and blue fruit in the center palate. Long and focused.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“Deep crimson but not impenetrable. Mellow, rather unflashy nose with well-integrated acidity and a certain mineral element. Really lively and fresh and rather sleeker than some of the more exhibitionistic St-Émilions. Obviously a long-term, and rather exciting, bet. Bone-dry finish and a fair amount of ripe tannin but not lean or drying, and with a persistent, silky finish. Rather sophisticated.”
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Plenty of sappy, well-defined juice running underneath the moody tannic frame, but you need to look away right now because this is closed and subdued. Blueberry purée and a limestone scrape helps build momentum through the mid-palate - give this time. David Suire manages the winemaking. Barrel Sample: 92.”
- JA, Decanter.com

“There is such incredible balance to this wine, with deftly expressed black and blue fruits, espresso, liquorice, and cocoa bean shavings, all delivered slowly but surely through the palate, held in by sculpted tannins, and wet stone texture. This is my biggest up score from En Primeur - I noted at the time that it was extremely closed, but it is now showing its incredible potential, and is a great value wine.”
- JA, janeanson.com

“Espresso, black cherry, licorice, coffee bean, chocolate and plum liqueur fill the perfume. The wine is rich, opulent, deep, and fresh on the palate with layers of lushly-textured, black plums, chocolate, blueberries, and blackberries. Perfectly balanced, hedonistic, concentrated, and vibrant, with a long, expansive finish, this is in contention for the best vintage produced at Laroque yet. Drink from 2023-2042.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Dark garnet in color with purple edges, the wine is lush, rich, and concentrated. Opulent in texture, with layers of velvety, red, black, and blue fruits, crushed rocks, chocolate and licorice, there is a gorgeous sense of purity, richness, length, and freshness here. The wine shows elegance and refinement as well as layers of fruit on the palate and in the finish.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2020 Laroque was cropped at 34hl/ha, picked September 21–30. It has a very composed bouquet of blackberry, wild strawberry, and crushed limestone scents, beautifully defined with very well integrated oak. You could just nose this all day. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy black fruit, blueberry, and a judicious pinch of black pepper. This is very harmonious and as fresh as a daisy. Possibly the best Laroque that winemaker David Suire has overseen to date.”
- NM, Vinous

Reviews

“The 2020 Laroque is even better than the en primeur sample. Dark and enveloping, with tons of class, Laroque is a winner. Succulent dark plum, gravel, spice, menthol, licorice, and pipe tobacco give the 2020 tons of nuance. Laroque is class personified. Winemaker David Suire is doing important work here.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2020 Laroque is silky, sensual, and polished right out of the gate. Crushed flowers, cedar, mint, and sweet pipe tobacco meld into a core of red/purplish berry fruit. What I like most about the 2020 is its incredible finesse and impeccable balance. This is another terrific effort from Laroque under the leadership of technical director David Suire. Tasted two times.”

- AG, Vinous

“From an estate that has been on an incredible run of late, largely due to the talents of director David Suire, the 2020 Chateau Laroque shows the cooler, limestone-driven style of the terroir beautifully and has a clean, focused style in its darker (almost blue) berry fruits as well as chalky minerality, violets, spice, and floral nuances. Medium-bodied on the palate, this focused, straight, remarkably pure Saint-Emilion has terrific mid-palate depth and a great finish. It needs to be hidden in the cellar for a solid 4-5 years if possible and is going to have 30 years of longevity. If drinking any time soon, give it an hour in a decanter. Best After 2027. Rating: 95+.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Possibly one of the best buys out there, the 2020 Château Laroque comes from a cooler, clay, and limestone terroir on the eastern side of the appellation, and this is exactly what you wanted in this vintage. Revealing a vivid purple hue as well as stunning notes of blueberries, cassis, liquid violets, and white truffle, it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, a seamless, elegant texture, and gorgeous length on the finish. It plays in the more nuanced, elegant end of the spectrum yet still brings ample fruit, richness, and texture. It’s a stunning bottle of wine all about finesse and elegance.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Deep ruby, opaque core, purple reflections at the very narrow rim. Fresh black berry fruit, a hint of liquorice, orange zest with a smoky touch. Juicy, elegant, red berry nuances, clear structure, fine tannins, mineral fresh finish.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“On the nose it is fruity finely tight and offers a small concentration as well as a certain fine freshness. It reveals notes of wild cassis pulpy, small black berries, small notes of black cherries associated with fine touches of violet, small red fruits as well as hints of racy minerality, graphite, fine hints of camphor and toasted. On the palate is fruity, balanced, finely tight and offer a juicy/ acidulous, a good tannic structure as well as an acidulous frame, a small concentration, a nice grain (limestone/ ground), a fine suavity, a small freshness, gourmandize. The wine expresses notes of pulpy/ juicy blackcurrant, pulpy wild small black fruits, small notes of crushed strawberry associated with small touches of cherry, small blue fruits as well as hints of limestone minerality, tonka bean, cardamom, discreet hints of grilled and camphor. Good length. Tannins are precise, structured, and racy. A persistence with fine hints of cacao.”

- Vert de Vin
