

Château Gruaud Larose 2009

CSPC# 742343

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot

Appellation

Saint Julien

General Info

The prestigious Bordeaux property of Gruaud-Larose, a 2nd growth in the 1865 classification, lies in the commune of Saint-Julien, a single vineyard of 80 hectares composed of gravels from the Gironde estuary. The poor soils provide excellent drainage, especially as the vineyards are on the highest plateau of Saint-Julien - though that is a mere 18 metres above sea level.

Gruaud was one of the first Bordeaux estates to abandon synthetic pesticides and herbicides in the vineyard during the late nineties, turning to mechanical and organic solutions to protect and nourish the vines. Though not biodynamic, they do employ natural homeopathic treatments such as organic compost made from seaweed to protect against mildew and rot.

Vineyards

The Gruaud-Larose estate amounts to 150 hectares of the St Julien appellation, of which 82 hectares are planted to vines; the bulk of the estate lies around Baron Sarget's *château*, separated from the Gironde by the small village of Beychevelle, and sandwiched between the vineyards of Branaire-Ducru and Lagrange. The terroir is typical for the region, deep Quaternary gravel, planted with 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot and 2% Malbec. The vines average around 45 years of age and are planted at a density of 10000 vines/ha.

Maturation

The fruit is sorted then undergoes a cold soak prior to temperature controlled fermentation in a mixture of wooden and concrete vats, with pumping over of the fermenting must twice a day. Then up to a third of the vintage undergoes malolactic in oak barrels, before ageing the entire wine in *Alliers* and *Nevers* oak (up to 50% new) for 18 months, and there is a light fining and filtration before bottling.

Tasting Notes

There is an earthy complexity on the nose of the 2009 Gruaud Larose that adds immediate interest to the massive intensity of dense blackcurrant fruit lying underneath. The cassis-driven palate is pure, subtle and gentle with a beautiful, balancing freshness and ripe tannins which just disappear on the palate. This is a very generous, rewarding wine.

Production

14,500 cases made

Cellaring

30-40 years

Scores/Awards

92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012

94-97 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010

95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012

92-94+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010

95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012

92-95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010

93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2012

93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010

92-95 points - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010

17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010

18 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2011

17.5-18.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010

17.5 points/4 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010



Reviews *"This has good density, with fleshy blackberry and blueberry cobbler flavors laced with anise, sweet spice and smoldering maduro tobacco notes. Long and well-structured, with fresh, embedded acidity. Best from 2013 through 2023. 14,500 cases made."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Beautiful aromas of currant, black licorice and blueberry follow through to a full body, with chewy tannins and a long, juicy finish. Big wine. Could be better than the classic 2000. Score range: 94-97"

- JS, Wine Spectator

"As I wrote in my barrel tasting note, the 2009 appears to be the finest Gruaud Larose since their 1990. Some of my concerns about too much Brett in previous vintages are long gone as the purity of the 2009 jumps out. Copious notes of sagebrush, cedar, cigar box, licorice, incense, blackberries and lead pencil shavings suggest a big Pauillac rather than a St.-Julien. Broad, rich and full-bodied with good balance and abundant, but sweet, well-integrated tannin, this big, masculine Gruaud Larose reveals remarkable finesse, richness, extract, density and a cascade of fruit that nearly hides the lofty tannins. This beauty should be at its best between 2020-2045."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"This is the finest Gruaud Larose since the 1990. Without a hint of Brett in the 2009, it exhibits an opaque purple color along with a big, sweet nose of creme de cassis, new saddle leather, spice box, and boysenberries. Made in a rich, broad, savory, juicy style with lots of succulence, but none of the masculinity and ruggedness often found in this offering, this wine is loaded with concentration and extract. The tannins are largely concealed by the remarkable intensity of fruit and density. It should be drinkable in 7-8 years, and last for 30-40. (Tasted two times.)"

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted at the Union de Grand Cru in London. The Gruaud '09 has a splendid nose instantly seduces the senses: wonderful delineation with crisp blackberry, wild hedgerow, cigar box and graphite. Very composed and focused. The palate is fresh and vibrant on the entry with tensile tannins, superb balanced and great precision on the finish. One of the most sophisticated Gruaud Larose wines in recent years. Better than my high expectations. Tasted October 2011"

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted at the chateau and the UGC. The crop was picked between 23rd September and 29th September for the Merlot and 2nd October to 17th October for the Cabernet Sauvignon. A blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Merlot, this Gruaud has a tightly wound nose of black cherries, a touch of black plum and black truffle, good definition and with time some more exotic aromas: hints of honey and a little espresso. The palate is medium-bodied, very linear on the entry but displaying very good definition, with notes of blackberry, a touch of raspberry, espresso, a little white pepper and a meaty character. It expands very well towards the finish, maintaining excellent definition and clarity, very good poise, a biscuit element inflecting the pure black fruits, an insistent but gentle grip and great persistency. Somehow the 1982 is coming to mind, and that is a great thing. Tasted March 2010."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Initially wood dominates, but this is a stage after bottling. Because then the ripe, smooth fruit comes in, pouring through with black fruits, very ripe and juicy. As this wine develops, this rich fruit will be its main character."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"93-95 Barrel sample. Vanilla new wood aromas followed by sweet wood and sweet fruit. There is certainly enough weight here, with ripe, smooth texture and fresh blackcurrants"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

Reviews

"(a blend of 65% cabernet sauvignon and 35% merlot; 13.35% alcohol; pH 3.85; 76 IPT; 40% selection) Deep ruby. A very classic nose of cassis, cedar and smoky graphite is devoid of animal and earthy scents and conveys a sense of refinement rare for this wine. Then very smooth in the mouth, with excellent palate presence and sneaky concentration to its sweet, ripe black fruit and smoky peppery flavors. Lively, harmonious acidity leaves an impression of freshness on the long, dense finish, which features a touch of dried herbs and oaky torrefaction along with a trace of heat. As ripe and spicy as this is, it's an unusually graceful Gruaud Larose, one of this estate's most successful wines in memory. Call me fixated, but I can't help but think that making the grand vin from just 40% of the total crop has everything to do with the quality of this wine. It cannot be a coincidence that almost all of the best wines in '09 have this in common."

- ID, International Wine Cellar

"Dark crimson. Interesting leathery, almost Syrah-like notes. Very neat and satisfying. Savoury. Just a little austere on the finish. Drying tannins on the end. Very sweet."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"A really perfumed, spicy, earthy intensity here, lifted with notes of sandalwood, no doubt oak-influenced to some extent. Gentle and elegant on the palate, supple, with a savoury and earthy edge to it matching that found on the nose. Overall, I find the character of the wine very attractive, especially as it provides a respite from the sweet flesh of the vintage. A really strong wine for Gruaud, I've got a feeling this will settle out into a supple, elegant rather than very weighty wine, with lovely expression and finesse. If that is your style, then go for it. From a tasting of 2009 Bordeaux at two years of age. 17.5/20 (October 2011)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Another wonderfully vibrant youthful hue here. Well-framed fruit on the nose, dark, a touch smoky, with nice concentration suggested. Also, some spicy fruit complexity. The palate has some good well-defined fruit, although in a slightly lush style. Very well integrated though, velvety tannins, but overall bright, vigorous and concentrated. Good sappy flavours on the finish. Fair length. Really good promise here, and possibly good value too. From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 17-18+/20 (March 2010)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Dense purple red, rich, robust warm autumn fruits, smooth and succulent, a touch of exotic spice, fine balance and length."

- SS, Decanter.com
