

Château Gruaud Larose 2018

CSPC# 742343

750mlx12

14.2% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc
Appellation	Saint Julien
Classification	Second Cru Classé en 1855
Website	https://www.gruaud-larose.com/
General Info	<p>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.</p> <p>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. Currently undergoing Conversion to Organic Farming.</p>
Winemaker	Stéphanie Lebaron-Bouchonnea. Eric Boissenot consults.
Vintage	<p>The winter was very rainy, with temperatures in February and March below the last thirty-year averages. The spring was also rainy but was still in average temperatures. This wet weather continued until the end of June, causing heavy attacks of downy mildew on the vineyard. Fortunately, hot dry weather arrived in July and continued until the harvests which took place in optimal conditions. The abundant aquifers have favored the development of the vine allowing to have perfect conditions throughout the phenological stages. This explains the great wealth of the vintage and its opulence! A great vintage.</p>
Vineyards	<p>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 <i>château</i>, 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 61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot and 2% Malbec. The vines average around 46 years of age and are planted at a density of 10000 vines/ha.</p>
Vineyard Management	<p>Integrated Pest Control (mechanical work, organic fertilisation). Weather Station (phytosanitary protection), Prophylaxis (thinning out the leaves, removal of excess buds and shoots, green harvest). Heightening of the trellis. Manual harvesting, selection on a belt in the vineyard and double sorting at the harvest reception. Manual harvesting, a first selection on sorting table directly in the vineyard follow by a double selection at the reception of the harvest. New vineyard objective with 70% of the vines in bio-dynamism for this vintage! The rest is controlled in conventional agriculture. The vineyard is managed with agronomic methods totally respectful of the environment. (Establishment of hedges, grass growing, pastures by sheep</p>
Harvest	<p>Yields suffered slightly at Gruaud Larose in 2018. A part of the vineyard is now biodynamic. As they are only starting with biodynamics, the estate felt the vineyard wasn't prepared for the mildew, so this is where they took the biggest hit. In the end they averaged 32 hectoliters per hectare.</p> <p>The 2018 Gruaud Larose was picked from 20 September with the Merlot, finishing on 10 October with the Cabernet Sauvignon.</p>



Maturation	The fruit is sorted then undergoes a cold soak prior to temperature controlled fermentation in a mixture of 50% wooden and 50% 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 <i>Alliers</i> and <i>Nevers</i> oak (up to 80% new) for 18-24 months, and there is a light fining and filtration before bottling.
Tasting Notes	Black olive and tapenade on the nose. Ripe fruit to be sure, but also floral aspects, with a palate that shows depth and density with juicy plum notes, all delivered in a velvety texture.
Serve with	Gruaud Larose is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau Gruaud Larose is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Gruaud Larose is a perfect match with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta as well as cheese.
Production	12,133 cases made.
Cellaring	Best from 2023- 2036
Scores/Awards	<p>94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>94 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2021</p> <p>92-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2019</p> <p>16 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>15.5+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p>91 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>91-93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>89-92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>18+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>95-97 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p> <p>95 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>95 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2021</p> <p>17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This has a bit of polish to its mix of cassis, crushed plum and blackberry fruit flavors before a wave of bittersweet cocoa, tobacco, and iron score the finish. But while muscular and grippy in the end, there's ample freshness here throughout. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2023 through 2036. 12,133 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2018 Gruaud Larose is blended of 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.88 and 14.2% alcohol. Deep garnet-purple in color, it leaps from the glass with bold black cherries, mulberries, plum preserves, and blackcurrant cordial scents with hints of menthol, lilacs, licorice and cloves plus wafts of fallen leaves and tilled soil. Medium to full-bodied with a taut core of ripe, densely packed, muscular fruit, it has a firm line of ripe, grainy tannins and just enough freshness, finishing long and spicy. Very exotic Gruaud!"</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Aromas of currants, blackberries, dried flowers, dark chocolate and tobacco leaves. Citrus zest, too. It's full-bodied with firm, ultra-fine tannins. Complex and layered with a juicy core of ripe fruit. Silky and delicious. Very creamy and fine-tannined. Better from 2025."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p>

Reviews *"This is really generous and rolls off the tongue with ripe and velvety tannins and a fresh undertone. Full-bodied, firm and silky. Extremely long and flavorful. Very complex already."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"A densely textured and rich wine, this has power and concentration. Smoky tannins show strongly as well as juicy black-currant fruits that are still young. The wine, with its structure, is just starting on a journey to aging. Drink from 2027. *Cellar Selection*."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"From one of the more inland of the Saint-Julien estates, away from the Gironde estuary, this wine is generous in fruit, with soft tannins and lively acidity. It is finely structured and will age well over the medium-term."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc; 85% new oak. Barrel sample. Darkest, smudgy black cherry colour. Lifted cassis and a hint of tea leaf. Paper-fine layers of tannins but not a lot of juice on the palate. Savoury, dark but slightly flat finish."
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Here the tannins are pretty hefty, matched by deep brambly black cherry notes. Good-quality with slate, cigar, chocolate, earth, and black pepper spice through the mid-palate. Not as elegant at this stage as some St-Julien in the vintage but this has a long life ahead and is full of promise. Drinking Window 2026 – 2040."
- JA, Decanter.com

"This is good quality, not exactly generous but clearly carefully extracted - they kept the simultaneous alcoholic and malolactic fermentations to between 24°C and 26°C. It's packed full of flavour, with real precision to the fruit. Bramble and hedgerow scents suggest a firm acidity and a structure that's built to last, while still being appetising and full of pleasure. As it opens in the glass, liquorice and dark chocolate come to the fore. A wine that will age well without question. 85% new oak."
- JA, Decanter.com

"Round, plush, soft, and full-bodied, the wine offers good richness, layers of ripe, currants, cherries and plums. There is depth and complexity with a touch of stone in the elegant, luxurious finish. Clearly Gruaud Larose is back on target. The wine was made from blending 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Fleshy, juicy and creamy, this wine is bright, lifted, sweet and crisp. The Cabernet Sauvignon is accompanied by tobacco, cigar box, cedar and blackberries and there is a nice crunch to the earthy red fruits in the finish. Give this time in the cellar -- at least 7-8 years -- and it will come together nicely. This is the best vintage for Gruaud Larose in years! The wine was made from blending 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc, reaching 14.2% alcohol. Picking took place September 20-October 10."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Black fruited on the nose, with hints of coffee bean and liquorice. The palate is classically medocain, with firm but ripe tannins, bright acidity and cedar black fruit. Medium bodied, there are savoury tones of cigar box and peppers. The finish is bright and clean, cooler than many in this vintage, but it is a classically proportioned St Julien."
- Farr Vintners

Reviews

“The 2018 Gruaud Larose, which incidentally now comes with a red wax capsule, is initially tightly wound on the nose, offering blackberry, raspberry, touches of juniper berry and a light seaweed note that becomes accentuated with aeration. The palate is medium bodied with fine-grained tannin's, and a little lactic on the entry, with a smear of dark chocolate segueing into a balanced middle that will require time to absorb the oak. It needs a little more complexity to come through on the finish, so give it 3–4 years in bottle. Drinking window: 2024 – 2045.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 Gruaud Larose was picked from 20 September with the Merlot, finishing on 10 October with the Cabernet Sauvignon, with pumping over every two days and aged for 18 to 24 months in 80% new oak. It has a deep garnet colour. The nose is tightly wound, more so than expected, with blackberry, raspberry, briary and cedar aromas, a crisper Gruaud than I have seen aromatically compared to recent vintages. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannins: blackcurrant, mulberry, cedar, hints of clove developing with time. I appreciate how well the wood has integrated in the last few months. It does not possess the persistence of the 2016 Gruaud Larose, but it is very harmonious and less feral than some vintages have been. Great potential.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 Gruaud Larose is inky, jammy and full-bodied. Crème de cassis, blackberry jam, spice, lavender, and mint give the 2018 much of its extroverted personality. Gruaud Larose is one of the most extroverted wines on the Left Bank. The richness and elevated ripeness is evident in the 2018. It will be interesting to see what élevage brings. For my taste, Gruaud is on the edge of being too much. The blend is 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc.”

- AG, Vinous

“Based on 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc, the 2018 Château Gruaud Larose sports a dense purple hue as well as a stunning nose of pure crème de cassis, cedar pencil shavings, blackcurrants, smoked tobacco, and a liquid rock-like sense of minerality. This dense, almost broodingly backward, concentrated Saint-Julien has flawless balance, a remarkable sense of purity, masses of tannins, and one hell of a great finish. Seemingly almost from a more austere year (say 2000 or 2010), it's not going to hit maturity for at least a decade and should cruise in cold cellars for 20-30 years. It's a brilliant wine!”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“(67 Cabernet Sauvignon, 24 Merlot, 9 Cabernet Franc) | 90% new oak | 14.2% alc. With a superb nose and a detailed palate with red and black fruit notes in harmony, this is a well-balanced Gruaud and while it is long and complete, I felt that there was a little something missing and so while I was tempted to bump up the score to 18.5, in the end I stuck with a noble 18.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com
