

Château Gruaud Larose 1996

CSPC# 742343

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot
Appellation	Saint Julien
Classification	Second cru classé en 1855
Website	https://www.gruaud-larose.com/en/wines/gruaud-larose-1996/
Sustainability	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. 100% of the surface is managed according to the principles of Organic and Biodynamic Agriculture.
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 soil provides 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.</p>
Winemaker	Georges Pauli
Vintage	<p>Hot winter, especially January. Low temperatures in February and in the very beginning of March (late budburst).</p> <p>Negative temperatures early April. May was moderately hot and humid. Very quick flowering end of May.</p> <p>June and July: very hot and humid with storm rainfall. The storms continued in a relatively cool August. September was very cool and humid, abundant rainfall from the 24th. Otherwise, a lot of sunshine (great photosynthesis=>good accumulation of sugar).</p> <p>Temperatures relatively low (limited combustion of the malic acid). Very satisfactory sanitary state overall.</p>
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 <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 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.
Harvest	<p>Merlot: 9/20-9/28</p> <p>Cabernet Sauvignon: 9/28-10/10</p> <p>Cabernet Franc: 9/26-9/28</p> <p>Petit Verdot: 9/28</p>
Maturation	<p>Maceration: 21 - 35 days at adapted temperatures and according to the tasting</p> <p>Pressing: Pneumatic presses Immediate transfer of the press wine into barrels Tasting and selection of four press wines among the barrels</p> <p>Malolactic Fermentation: 50% in barrels in a thermostatically controlled cellar, the rest in wooden tanks</p> <p>Ageing: 16-18 months in French, fine grain, oak barrels, renewed by 30% every year to enhance the fruit Medium toast</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>The wine is full bodied, but elegant with lots of fruit when young. The wine ages very well and develops all the characteristics of a great Bordeaux.</p> <p>Gruaud-Larose can be tannic and ungainly in youth but with bottle ageing it becomes marvellously harmonious and develops complex and beguiling characteristics of concentrated black fruits, cedar, spices and liquorice</p>



Serve with	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	unknown
Cellaring	Drink now
Scores/Awards	<p>90 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2007</p> <p>90 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2005</p> <p>89 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #122 - April 1999</p> <p>88-91 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #115 - February 1998</p> <p>88-90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #110 - April 1997</p> <p>91+ points - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - April 2013</p> <p>17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2011</p> <p>17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - September 2006</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - November 2021</p> <p>85 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - October 2010</p> <p>89 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - December 2016</p> <p>91 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - April 2013</p> <p>95 points - Jamie Goode, wineanorak.com (score only) - November 2011</p> <p>90-92 points - Stephen Tanzer, Vinous - May/June 1999</p> <p>93 points - Tom Cannavan, wine-pages.com - October 2011</p> <p>93+ points - Richard Jennings, rjonwine.com - April 2001</p> <p>17 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2005</p> <p>16 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - March 1999</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Violet, blackberry, and flowers on the nose. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins and a medium finish. Ready."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Harmonious and pretty. Good color, with plenty of tobacco, berry and mushroom character, a hint of iodine. Full-bodied, with polished, silky tannins and a long aftertaste of tobacco, cedar, and vanilla. Best after 2001."</i> - JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"In the bottle, Gruaud Larose appears to have returned to the form it possessed when I first tasted it from cask - a stylish, surprisingly civilized, medium-bodied wine without the muscle and power expected from both this terroir and vintage. It still possesses excellent density, as well as roasted herbs, licorice, and black currant flavors intermixed with incense-like smells. The wine is medium to full-bodied, pure, rich, and forward. Anticipated maturity: 2004-2018."</i> - RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 1996 appears to be a potential sleeper of the vintage and may merit an outstanding score. It is a powerful, bulky style of Gruaud-Larose, with a dark ruby/purple color, and plenty of cassis, spicy new oak, and roasted herbs in the jammy nose. On the palate, the wine has lost much of the forward precociousness it was revealing last spring, now boasting loads of tannin in its powerful, muscular flavors. It seemed much softer when I first tasted it, but the wine has put on weight and gained considerable structure. It now appears this husky wine has the potential for long-term cellaring. Anticipated maturity: 2005-2020. Gruaud-Larose was purchased in 1997 by Jacques Merlaut, the well-known proprietor of many other chateaux, including Chasse-Spleen. Merlaut was not responsible for making the 1996 or 1995 but is responsible for their élevage and bottling."</i> - RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 1996 is a surprisingly forward, attractive, less muscular style of Gruaud-Larose. One-third of the production was declassified for a second wine, with one-third of the malolactic fermentation done in barrel. The result is a forward, deep, purple-colored wine with a sweet blueberry, kirsch, and jammy cherry-scented nose, medium body, more plushness and up-front fruit than most of the more serious wines of the vintage, and attractive fat and depth. This medium-bodied, moderately tannic wine is destined to evolve quickly, although it will last for 15 or more years. Critics of the old, muscular, super-powerful, full-bodied Gruaud-Larose's that often exhibited earthy, leathery, animal notes along with their layers of concentrated fruit, may be even more fond of this new style of wine."</i> - RP, Wine Journal</p>

Reviews *“Dark ruby. Deep, brooding nose hints at dark plum, blackcurrant, coffee and lavender accented by cinnamon and nutmeg. Enters bright and fresh, then turns richer in the middle, with accessible plum, herb and coffee flavors persisting nicely on the peppery finish, which features chewy tannins. This is at once more herbal and more forward than the 1995. It's also better than I remember it, and although still quite young it offers plenty of appeal. The wine's harmonious acidity makes it seem lighter-bodied than it is. About 40% of the malolactic fermentation was carried out in barriques, compared to a normal one-third. Note that the label states 12.5% alcohol, but the data given to me by the estate shows 13% alcohol.”*

- ID, International Wine Cellar

“Dark ruby with a blackish cast. Some very classical dry cedary notes on the nose – definitely tertiary. Sweet start and very round fruit with virtually no tannin in evidence. So sweet it only just has enough freshness, but this would be a very attractive plump wine to drink now. Good attack. 17/20 points.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Bright crimson. Hint of minerals, very well mannered. Mouth-filling, lots of fruit. Much richer than most 1996s. Long and powerful. I originally scored this wine even higher but, since all the other tasters consistently scored it lower, I have reduced my mark from 18 to 17 and note with due humility that I may have overscored this one. Unfortunately, there was no back-up bottle.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Decanted immediately on opening, because this remains firmly structured even at 25 years old and feels a good number of years younger than the 1995. Once the oxygen softens things up, the autumnal but still-juicy cassis and bilberry fruits begin to spiral out of the glass. There is tobacco and smoked earth here, alongside clear black truffles, olive tapenade, flavours that indicate a high-quality vintage that favoured Cabernet Sauvignon. Still fairly upright and strict, give it time in a carafe to ensure the tannins become supple enough to let the beauty of this wine out, but don't feel you need to wait too long - there is real beauty here. Harvest September 20 to October 10, 35% new oak. November 2021. - Jane Anson, Inside Bordeaux”

- JA, Inside Bordeaux

“Very good dark red-ruby. Explosive, perfumed, ripe cabernet aromas of cassis, coffee, leather and game; more precise and subtle than those of the '97. Sweet, intensely flavored, and strong in extract; enlivened by solid acidity. Finishes very long, with firm, tongue-coating tannins. Very strong wine, as precise and scented on the back half as on the front. "Like the '86 but with more finesse and aromatic complexity," says Pauli.”

- ST, Vinous

“Fresh, vital, very youthful nose with spice-flecked deep black fruits. There is a meaty, earthy depth to this, with that animal, quite sauvage note beneath the plush fruit and spice. The palate is in a fairly tough grip of the structure at this stage, with plenty of tight, sinewy tannin and an orangey grip to the acidity. The finish shows that this has harmony and all the components to age very gracefully. One to revisit in a few years.”

- TC, wine-pages.com

“Leather and tobacco nose; tasty, leather, maturing, plush red fruit palate; medium-plus finish.”

- RJ, rjonwine.com