

Château Dalem 2012

CSPC#763543

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Fronsac

Classification

Grand Vin de Bordeaux

Website

<http://www.chateaudalem.com/>

General Info

Chateau Dalem is one of the oldest properties in Bordeaux. The estate originated all the way back in 1610. Chateau Dalem remained in the same family until it was purchased by Michel Rullier in 1955. Today, Chateau Dalem is managed by Brigitte Rullier-Loussert, who took over managing the property in 2002. The Rullier family has long ties in the Bordeaux appellation. They own other estates aside from Chateau Dalem in the Right Bank, including another vineyard in the Fronsac appellation, Chateau de la Huste, which has been in the families hands since 1860.

Vintage

After cool, wet weather in spring and early summer the sun returned in earnest as the season progressed and became hot and dry with temperatures peaking on 17 and 18 August. Rainfall was seriously lacking, totalling 120 mm less than the 30-year average. September and October were milder and close to more usual seasonal values (27-28°C on 5 October).

- Flowering was reasonably early at the end of May, similar to 2010, and spread out. The fruit began to change colour slowly at the beginning of August over a quite extended period.
- Spells of very hot weather contributed to the concentration of aromas, which were then locked up in the grape skins
- Harvesting began at the end of September and continued in sunny weather until the end of October.

The winegrowers had to react quickly to the changes in the weather from one month to the next as cool, rainy spells were followed by hot, dry periods. The vines had to be closely observed and preventive measures taken, such as the removal of secondary shoots and leaves as well as thinning out the fruit as appropriate, while balancing fruit production on vines with over-heavy bunches or "hens and chickens". Everything was done to enable the vines to thrive, even if they were sometimes challenged by severe weather, and ensure optimal ripening of the grapes. Grapes ripen early on the Saint-Emilion – Pomerol – Fronsac terroirs, so it was possible to harvest the Merlot before the weather deteriorated at the end of October.

Vineyards

The 14 hectare vineyard of Chateau Dalem is planted to 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Previously, the estate had devoted 10% of the vineyard of Chateau Dalem to Cabernet Sauvignon. Those vines have been removed and those parcels have been replaced. The terroir is a mix of clay and limestone soils with a south, by south east facing exposure. The vines are old. On average, the vines are 40 years of age. The vineyard is planted to a vine density that ranges from 6,000 vine per hectare to 6,600 vines per hectare.

Harvest

Grapes picked by hand when they are fully ripe and put in baskets. Sorted minutely before and after full destemming.

**Vinification/
Maturation**

Fermentation in concrete tanks with built-in thermoregulation which guarantees better control of the fermentation process. Long vatting period (3 to 4 weeks) for a slow and gentle extraction of the phenolic agents. Immediate running off into new oak barrels for the malolactic fermentation stage. 18 months in new barrels (having matured 1 or 2 wines). 40% of the barrels are replaced every year and toasting levels are selected for optimum enhancement of our wines' fruit flavors.



Tasting Notes	The wines are predominately Merlot based and are matured in oak barriques, a third of which are renewed annually. These are deeply coloured, well-structured clarets that are rich in dense, black fruits, often accompanied by spicy, and sometimes chocolate, nuances. They can be drunk young, though tend to show their best with around 5 years of bottle ageing.
Production	3,750 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2017-2022
Scores/Awards	<p>90 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 30, 2015</p> <p>90-93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013</p> <p>90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015</p> <p>87-89 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013</p> <p>89-90 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com (score only)</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013</p> <p>15.5 points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2013</p> <p>88 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)</p> <p>87-89 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 26, 2013</p> <p>87-89 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013</p> <p>14.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This is solidly ripe, with plum, boysenberry and blackberry p�ate de fruit notes forming the core, while black licorice and fruitcake details fill in on the finish. Has a good dose of roasted wood for spine, melding nicely with the fruit. Drink now through 2020. 3,750 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"This is solid, with a range of cherry, black currant and lightly mulled plum fruit laced with smoldering tobacco and charcoal hints. Stays focused through the chalky finish. Don't overlook this one. Score range: 90-93"</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"From one of my favorite properties owned by the Rullier family (now run by Brigitte Rullier), this blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc is a big-time winner in 2012. Inky ruby/purple to the rim, with beautifully sweet red and black fruits, some crushed rock and spring flowers, it is medium to full-bodied and concentrated, with no hard edges. This is an opulent, fleshy, top-flight Fronsac to drink over the next 10-15 years. Sleeper!"</i> - RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2012 is a delicious, hedonistic effort displaying lots of spring flower, crushed rock, blueberry and raspberry notes. A sleeper of the vintage, this medium-bodied, up-front wine is made in a style that consumers will find both hedonistically and intellectually attractive. It is not meant for long-term aging, so enjoy it during its first 5-7 years of life. Owned by the Rullier family, this 33-acre vineyard situated high on the Fronsac plateau, overlooking the beautiful Dordogne Valley consistently produces fruity, exuberant, hedonistic wines. The charming daughter of the family, Brigitte, has taken over for her father and has improved Dalem to the point where it is one of the finest half dozen or so Fronsacs. The 2012 Dalem, which was harvested between October 10 and 16, was made from yields of 30 hectoliters per hectare. The final blend was 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc that reached 14% natural alcohol."</i> - RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Dark fruit with well integrated oak. Lively and fresh with a saline note on the finish. Firm if slightly chewy tannins."</i> - JL, Decanter.com</p> <p><i>"Medium-bodied with a crisp red berry and anise-filled personality, this will drink well on release. 87-89 Pts"</i> - JL, thewinecellarinsider.com</p> <p><i>"Saturated but earthy purple edge; quite deep; fresh, slightly earthy and black cherry note; guts and grip; works quite well. Length and ambition here. Some tannin and fresh acid but works. 87-89+"</i> - JW, winewordsandvideotape.com</p>
