

Château D'Issan 2014

CSPC# 749550

750mlx12

13.24% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

77% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot

Appellation

Margaux

Classification

Grand Cru Classé in 1855

Website

http://www.chateau-issan.com/en/vin_chateau_d_issan.html

General Info

There's evidence the property existed in the Middle Ages - then known as Teobon. The original *château* dated from at least the 15th century, and it has been suggested as the location of the English army's final stand following their defeat at the Battle of Castillon. But d'Issan's timeline really begins in the 17th century when the land was acquired by Bordeaux parliamentarian Chevalier d'Essenault - he christened the estate (later shortened to Issan) and built the splendid *château*. The knight's tenure ended abruptly (the Revolution again) and during the 19th century the Roy family began building an ever-improving reputation. That too ended rudely, as d'Issan was all-but ruined during the economic gloom of the 1930s.

Château d'Issan is a 3^{ème} Cru Classé Margaux property that produces richly aromatic and silky-textured clarets that are often amongst the best of the appellation. The beautiful 18th century *château* is surrounded by a moat and is frequently described as the most romantic in the Médoc. D'Issan has been owned by the Cruse family since 1945 and is presently owned and run by Emmanuel Cruse, his wife, and their son, Lionel.

Winemaker

Emmanuel Cruse. Consultant Eric Boissenot

Vintage

Summer was cool and humid, bringing mid-veraison around August 8th. From August 21st until the end of November, Margaux enjoyed a long Indian summer with continuous warm and dry weather.

Harvest

Merlot harvest: September 25th until October 3rd / Cabernet harvest: October 6th until October 15th. Hand-picked harvest. The splendid weather permitted rigorous plot by plot selection, allowing both of our two grape varieties to achieve progressive and optimal ripeness. The harvested berries were plump and juicy, with generous fruit and tight skins, yet silky and elegant tannins.

Vineyards

The 44 hectare vineyard of Chateau d'Issan is planted to 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. This represents a shift in the vineyard plantings since the 1990's, as today, there is less Cabernet Sauvignon and more Merlot in the vineyard.

This new vineyard size shows a marked increase in the amount of hectares due to a ruling in 2007 by the INAO that allowed Chateau d'Issan to add 10 hectares of vines that were previously classed as Haut-Medoc. Those vines were upgraded and re-classified as part of the Margaux appellation.

Vineyards

The vineyard has a terroir of gravel with clay and limestone soils on gentle, rolling, slopes. The vineyards of Chateau d'Issan are planted to a vine density of 9,000 vines per hectare with vines that are on average 35 years of age. They have old vines as well, some of which are close to 65 years of age.

The Cruse family also own 5 hectares of vines close to Margaux in the Haut Medoc appellation as well as in the Bordeaux Supérieur appellation, where they own 10 hectares of vines. The Haut Medoc wines are sold as Chateau de Candale. The vines in Bordeaux Supérieur are used to produce Chateau Moulin d'Issan.

Vinification

Fermentations are done traditionally with very soft pumping-over to respect the lively character and structure of the fruit. After three weeks of maceration followed by malolactic fermentation, the wine was put in French oak barrels in mid-November. The final blend took place mid-January. The selection was obvious, with the marvelously ripe Cabernet Sauvignon contributing 77% to the blend, and 23% of voluptuous Merlot rounding it out to a harmonious and well-integrated whole.

Chateau d'Issan 2014 is difficult to compare to other vintages due to the unique growing conditions, yet its singular terroir remains clearly identifiable.



Maturation	The grapes are traditionally vinified, and the wine is then matured in oak casks (50% new) for 18 months. The wine is bottled unfiltered.
Tasting Notes	Ch. d'Issan has increasingly impressed us over recent years. There is a wonderful explosion of fruit on the nose, with strong, black fruit and soft, creamy notes. The combination of weight and polish is particularly pleasing. There is some grip, crunchy tannins, and a feeling of composure on the palate. The nose has excellent intensity. The palate has a real density of fruit and impressive length. The typical cooling freshness of this vintage is apparent on the finish, and the fruit is wonderfully pure, juicy, and ripe. This is one of the best wines from the Margaux appellation this year.
Serve with	Chateau d'Issan is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Production	7,917 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2020-2040
Scores/Awards	<p>89 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2017</p> <p>86-89 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2015</p> <p>91+ points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - March 2017</p> <p>89-91 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2017</p> <p>92-93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2015</p> <p>93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 2015</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2018</p> <p>17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2015</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017</p> <p>90 points - Steven Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2015</p> <p>92 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 2017</p> <p>90-92 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2015</p> <p>91 points - Farr Vintner - March 2015</p> <p>86-89 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2015</p> <p>91 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2018</p> <p>91 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2017</p> <p>88-91 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2015</p> <p>92 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2017</p> <p>17+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - May 2015</p> <p>90 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2015</p> <p>16 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2018</p> <p>18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2017</p> <p>18 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - June 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"A charming style, featuring a light singed sandalwood edge to the mix of plum, bitter cherry and savory notes. Shows a flash of gunpowder tea on the finish, with a twinge of iron. Best from 2019 through 2024. 7,917 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Elegant, with lacy yet persistent tannins carrying pretty plum, anise and savory hints. Lacks some stuffing on the finish. Score Range: 86-89"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2014 D'Issan has a crisp, pure bouquet, quite tight and reticent like the 2014 Marquis d'Alesme Becker, eventually offering blackberry, soy and cedar scents, almost Saint Julien in style. The palate is medium-bodied with a touch of herbaceousness on the entry, but there is plenty of fruit behind it. I like the classic style of this d'Issan, the pepperiness of the Cabernet driving the structured and quite masculine (for Margaux) finish. This is beginning to show the class that I thought it would and it may merit a higher score in the future."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The Château d'Issan 2014 is a blend of 77% Cabernet Sauvignon and 23% Merlot picked between 25 September and 15 October and matured in 50% new oak. It has a very precise, quite minerally bouquet that has that trademark violet touch that pins down the appellation. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins and good acidity, appreciable depth with chewy black tarry fruit towards the finish. This is a gutsier d'Issan that will probably be one of the longer lasting Margaux crus of the vintage. I've been smitten by recent vintages from this glorious Margaux estate, but I detected just a mote of greenness on a couple of samples that I hope will vanish by the time of bottling. If it does then it will merit a higher score. Tasted three times."

- NM, Wine Advocate

"Complex aromas of sweet tobacco, chocolate, cedar and plums. Undertones of blackcurrants and dark chocolate. Dense and tight with a beautifully and tightly knit palate, yet this shows so much intensity and length. Love the wet-earth and berry character on the finish. Give this three to four years to soften even if it's fantastic already to taste."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A dense and tight wine with cedar, berry, light chocolate and nut character. Full body, compacted center palate with muscular tannins."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is a serious wine, with dense tannins and concentrated structure. It has strong wood and smoky bacon notes that need to harmonize with the dark plum flavor and ample acidity. Barrel Sample: 93-95 Points"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Tasted blind. Sweet and rich on the nose. Very lively and toasty but a bit tart. Lean. Drink 2021-2032"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Mid crimson. Correct and well balanced. Spreads right across the palate. Really very impressive balance with lots of useful elements. Good drive and interest quotient. Complex and satisfying. Quite persistent. Really very impressive even if not a very long-term wine. Drink 2018-2030."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Still feels very much on the primary fruit. Oh, this should really develop beautifully – high and tight tannins, good acidity, good fruit, maybe lacks a little luxurious texture but seems to be quivering on the leash, ready to spring out of the box. Dark fruit on the nose, blackberry, with liquorice and even hints of tar. A young, big wine with ambition, and definite promise. Chewier tannins than many on display."

- JA, Decanter.com

"Lovely floral fruit, elegant freshness and natural depth – a true taste of Margaux from this historic château."

- SS, Decanter.com

"Smoke, tobacco, cigar box, cassis and floral aromatics can be picked up with ease. Forward and approachable, the medium/full bodied, dark, red fruit filled wine can be enjoyed in its youth, while you wait for the 2015 and 2016 to mature."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"A quickly detected aura of flowers, licorice, cherries and black raspberries, this wine is medium/full-bodied, elegant in style and replete with nectarous cherries and silky tannins. From a blend of 77% Cabernet Sauvignon and 23% Merlot, the wine reached 13.24% alcohol, with a pH of 3.83."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

“This Margaux property is planted with 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot, and the wine is aged in 50% new oak. The 2014 blend represents the vineyard plantings. A deep ruby colour with an opulent nose of black cherry and creamy vanilla. A lovely floral bouquet, open and intense. Medium weight with an elegant, pure style. Fresh, polished tannins complement the floral, red fruit core which is delicate and vibrant. Fresh and pure, true to the terroir and not forced or over extracted.”

- Farr Vintners

“Sweet and ripe on the nose the palate is fresh quite light at the start slightly richer in the middle with more depth at the back. The mix of fruits gives complexity the red fruits giving brightness on the finish. 2025-37.”

- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2014 d’Issan has a comparatively simple and straightforward bouquet relative to its peers, a light marine influence evolving with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin, well-judged acidity, harmonious and precise with a sustained finish. But it does not want to put a foot wrong and consequently there is an air of conservatism about this Margaux playing safe. Tasted blind at the annual Southwold tasting. 2020 – 2045.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2014 d’Issan is an open, forward wine that should drink well pretty much upon release as it already shows quite a bit of immediacy. Black cherry, plum, spice, new leather and licorice are some of the notes that meld together in the glass. The 2014 is juicy and not especially complex, but it does offer plenty of up-front appeal.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2014 d’Issan is plump, juicy and delicious. Torrefaction, smoke, licorice, plum, grilled herbs, leather and tobacco give the 2014 its racy, exuberant personality and considerable near-term appeal. This is an especially bold, rich Margaux, but it works nicely. Tasted two times.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2014 Château d’Issan is a step back from the 2015 yet is still a beautiful and elegant wine from this estate. Its ruby/purple-tinged color is followed by a gorgeous set of aromatics including currants, cedar, lead pencil, and flowers. With an herbal edge, medium to full-bodied richness, terrific concentration, and a focused, chiseled finish, this is pure class all the way. It’s already approachable but should be at its best from 2020-2040.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Rather chocolaty and full, with decent depth and nice black fruit but the only slight problem I detect are the tannins which are raw and rather sour at present. The oak is quite pungent, but this is a good wine and one which is true to its appellation.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com
