

Château Clerc Milon 2005

CSPC# 750191

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot,
1% Carménère

Appellation Pauillac

General Info

Chateau Clerc Milon, classified a Fifth Growth in 1855, is located in an exceptionally favorable situation adjoining Lafite Rothschild and Mouton Rothschild, both First Growths. Now owned by Baroness Philippine de Rothschild and her children, Chateau Clerc Milon was bought in 1970 by her father, Baron Philippe de Rothschild, at a time when the estate had become

very much run down. The property was entirely reorganized and renovated and, under the expert guidance of its new owners, Chateau Clerc Milon has become one of the most sought-after wines both in Bordeaux and throughout the world. The Chateau Clerc Milon label is illustrated with a pair of dancing clowns made of precious stones (the work of a 16th century German goldsmith) from the Museum of Wine in Art at Chateau Mouton Rothschild.

When the Rothschilds purchased this Fifth Growth estate in 1970, they began pumping money into the property, and Clerc-Milon now consistently outperforms its rank. With its fairly substantial percentage of Merlot, the result of a recent gradual shift away from Cabernet, this Pauillac often displays an exotic aromatic character, with rich if sometimes rather medicinal-scented fruit and smooth tannins. These wines are ultimately closer in style to its big brother Mouton-Rothschild than to Armailhac, which is also owned by the Rothschild family.

Soils The soils are a mixture of two-thirds sandy gravel, with a deeper seam of clay-limestone. This clay comes to the surface towards the east, nearer the river, accounting for the remaining one-third. The slope of the land aids drainage, as well as improving the aspect of the vines.

Vineyards 43.6 hectares, with 8450 feet of vines per hectare. Average vine age 40 years.

Harvest The harvest is manual, naturally, with the fruit picked during several *tries* into small, 12kg baskets. The fruit undergoes hand-sorting twice, before moving to the winery in mobile bins.

**Vinification/
Maturation** Once at the new facilities optical sorting is a possibility, prior to pressing and then moving the fruit by gravity flow into the 40 new stainless steel, thermo-regulated fermentation vats. Once complete, the embryonic wine goes into oak barrels, of which 30% is new each vintage for 16 months.

Tasting Notes The wine has a deep colour with a violet tint. The nose opens on pleasant smoky notes, followed by intense and powerful ripe berry fruit aromas, especially cassis and wild strawberry. Full-bodied and expansive on the palate, it displays close-knit tannins and a range of generous, varied flavours including blackberry, cherry, spice and liquorice. The ample and well-balanced finish combines the solidity of a well-defined structure with the charm and fullness of rich flavours enfolded in refined and judicious oak.

Production 10,000 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2014-2030

Scores/Awards **95 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2008

#11 Top 100 - Wine Spectator - 2008

92-94 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - June 30, 2006

92 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #176 - April 2008

91-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #170 - April 2007

90-92 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #164 - April 2006

93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012

94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - July 2009



Scores/Awards **90-92 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - April 2006
91 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 1, 2008
90-92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 1, 2006
92 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2009
92 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2008
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2009
17.5-18+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - November 2009
17.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2007
17.5 points/4 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2006
16 points/3 stars - Decanter Magazine - July 2008
91 points - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2008
90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - January 20, 2008
93+ points - Jeremy Williams, Wine, Words and Videotape - October 2010
15 points - Jacque Dupont, Le Point - November 2008
91 points - Tom Cannavan, wine-pages.com
93 points - Wine & Spirits Magazine - 2008
90 points - Connoisseurs' Guide - 2008

Reviews *"Offers fabulous aromas of currant, tar, lead pencil and mineral. Full-bodied, with super soft tannins that caress the palate. Beautiful and impressive. A fabulous wine. The best Clerc in a very long time. Best after 2014. 10,000 cases made."*

- JS, Wine Spectator

"Loads of violets, berries and currants with hints of mineral and light vanilla. Full-bodied, with very silky tannins and a long, long finish. Is it better than 2003? Wait and see. Score range: 92-94"

- JS, Wine Spectator

"The wine has a deep color with a violet tint. The nose opens on pleasant smoky notes, followed by intense and powerful ripe berry fruit aromas, especially cassis and wild strawberry. Full-bodied and expansive on the palate, it displays close-knit tannins and a range of generous, varied flavors including blackberry, cherry, spice and licorice. The ample and well-balanced finish combines the solidity of a well-defined structure with the charm and fullness of rich flavours enfolded in refined and judicious oak. "

- Wine Spectator

"Clerc-Milon's 2005 has moved ahead of its stablemate, d'Armailhac. A blend of nearly equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon (48%) and Merlot (40%), and the rest Cabernet Franc, it exhibits plenty of charcoal, roasted coffee, smoke, blackberry, and cassis notes along with a meaty-like character to its flavors and texture. Full-bodied with surprisingly high tannin as well as gorgeous depth and a multidimensional mouthfeel, this stunning Pauillac should be at its finest between 2014-2030."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Administrator Philippe Dalhuin has turned out an atypically structured, tannic, less approachable Clerc-Milon that has put on weight since last year and now rivals its stablemate, d'Armailhac. Powerful notes of forest floor, black currants, cherries, graphite, and pain grille emerge from this fresh yet exceptionally powerful, intense effort. It also possesses surprisingly high alcohol for this vintage (13.5%). The final blend was 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2025+."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Medium to full-bodied, tannic, fresh, vibrant, and, as the French would say, croquant (crunchy), the 2005 deep ruby/purple-tinged Clerc-Milon reveals good acidity, a fresh, lively mouthfeel, surprisingly high alcohol (13.5%) that is at odds with the brightness/freshness found in the wine's power and richness. The final blend was 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, and a smidgen of Petit Verdot. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2020."

- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"Tasted at BBR's 2005/2009 tasting in London. The nose is tightly coiled with dark berried fruit, tobacco and graphite with good definition, but it seems to have gone into its shell since I last encountered it in 2009. The palate is medium bodied with tensile tannins, good acidity, quite angular at the moment with slightly aggressive tannins that require several years to soften. But there is good substance and sense of masculinity, fanning out beautifully on the finish. Tasted July 2011."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted single blind at Southwold. The Clerc-Milon '05 appears to have progressed leaps and bounds since barrel. There seems to have been a lot of skin-maceration on the nose: baked black cherries and damson jam. It would benefit from more definition, but its opulence is irresistible. The palate is ripe, good grip, furry, blackberry and graphite coming through, masculine and assertive towards the tannic finish. Good grip and depth here, persistent finish but brutish at the moment. Drink 2015-2030+ Tasted January 2009."

- NM, Wine Journal

"The nose is very closed. Cedar, black fruits and a touch of tobacco. Quite supple, bright black fruits, touch of cassis, a little more fleshy than others. Good weight on the finish, nice grip and persistency. Much better than d'Armailhac. Tasted April 2006."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Clerc-Milon continues on its rising path of quality with this rich and rounded magnificent 2005. Driven by rich, red jam fruits, and dominated by the dense, solid tannins, this wine is already approachable, but will develop over 8-12 years"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"90-92 Barrel sample. This is a finely crafted wine, packed with all the right tannins that blend easily into the wood and blackberry flavors. The fruit is very pure, intense and finely layered."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Full ruby-red. Super ripe, almost syrupy aromas of cassis, licorice, graphite and coffee. Full, seamless and sweet, with a ripeness verging on exotic; but this is fat with fruit. An outsized Clerc-Milon with a relatively high 13.2% alcohol but also very good energy in the mouth. Finishes with terrific breadth and substantial ripe tannins. "This was very restrained in the barrel but is really opening up in bottle," noted Dhalluin. A superb showing today."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Ruby-red. Plum, currant, graphite, cedar and smoky, nutty oak on the nose. Big, round and spicy, with lovely mid-palate fat and sweetness to the enticing currant and coffee flavors. This has very good breadth, although Dhalluin finds it "vertical" today and feels it has suffered more from the recent fining than either d'Armailhac or Mouton. But there's excellent supporting material here for the wine's tannins."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Very dark and very mineral on the nose. Then lots of sweetness on the front palate and finally a whack of still-dry tannins. Just a bit too dry and austere on the finish for a higher mark but this wine can certainly deliver pleasure"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"A touch more reticent and woody than the d'Armailhac, a little less expressive of fruit. The palate similarly shows less character, a firm texture wrapped up a fairly crunchy shell. There is little in the way of fruit-related flavour to balance it out, but there is certainly substance here, decent acidity and a well-hidden core of tannins which are ripe and well composed. There is potential here although it is difficult to judge with certainty when it is in such a reticent mood. From a 2005 Bordeaux tasting at four years of age. 17.5-18+?/20 (November 2009"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

Reviews

"This has very dark, nutty, oaky fruit on the nose, and yet has a very cool style on the palate, displaying a very bright, vigorous nature despite having a very dense structure. The fruit character helps, as it has a real crunchy, leafy, cranberry and redcurrant style. There is good grip and a firm acid backbone. A fine structure; rather a lot of tannin but it all balances out. This could end up a really classic, meaty, typically dense Clerc-Milon. From my tasting of 2005 Bordeaux at two years of age. 17.5+/20 (October 2007)"

- CK, *The Wine Doctor*

"Deep colour and fine leafy, fresh cassis fruit, fully ripe with good concentration with an attractive lift of coffee bean spice. Drink 2010-25."

- SS, *Decanter.com*

"Lifted, intense cassis, still very youthful. Beautifully refreshing glass of wine, decent length. Fruity, attractive, early drinking. Drink from 2013. Awarded 3 stars."

- *Decanter Magazine*

"Medium bodied and loaded with cassis and dark berries, this Pauillac will probably drink well young."

- JL, *thewinecellarinsider.com*

"Very similar black red; little more stern and unyielding at first; blackcurrants, some spice; a bit brooding initially compared to the others. Quite tannic palate initially and closed and feels like cabernet is ripe but hard at this stage. After an hour or so this softened out to reveal a layered wine, mid-weight with blackcurrants and spicy oak but with real density which was actually a joy. Savour and bite to the palate with good balance. Freshness – palate with grip and tannin but attractive. A wonderfully attractive wine that needs time in the bottle – or in a decanter if you're to drink it now. I sometimes underrate Clerc Milon because it is a little sulky to begin with, but wow just see how it opens up! 93+/100 Oct '10"

- JW, *Wine, Words and Videotape*

"Réglisse, fruits noirs, bouche volontaire marquée par des tannins virils mais présents. Une austérité très pauillacaise qui se gomme grâce à l'élevage". - LE POINT - 15/20"

"Licorice, black fruits, voluntary mouth marked by tannins present but manly. Austerity very Pauillac-like."

- JD, *Le Point*

"Much more ripe, blackberry and cassis nose, with a little earthy note too. Seems quite lean too, though there's a litheness and elegance about this. Good fruit and well-balanced. 91/100"

- TC, *wine-pages.com*

"If teasing with touches of dark chocolate and clearly showing the influence of the warm 2005 summer, Clerc Milon is not so outwardly fruity as some of its fellow Pauillacs, and it presently comes across as tough and a bit tight at its center. It follows a more classic Bordelaise course and counts structure in its favor, and its tannins argue for six to ten years of age."

- *Connoisseurs' Guide*

"On a 107-acre site between Mouton and Lafite, Clerc Milon is part of G.F.A. Baronne Philippine de Rothschild, a group of properties including Mouton and managed by the same team. In 2005, the team produced a great performance from this vineyard, a clean, pure wine with delicacy and energy rather than tannic overload. Not that it isn't laden with tannins, but the bright, wild cherry fruit flavor is a formidable partner, lasting for minutes through a buoyant finish. A supple, lovely wine that will go the distance with some of its more powerful neighbors."

- *Wine & Spirits Magazine*
