

Château Clerc Milon 2010

CSPC# 742339

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% 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.

Vintage 2010 was a dry but relatively cool year, with no summer heatwave. A generally cold winter gave way to a dry and cool spring that ended with some rainfall in mid-June. Temperatures started rising on 21st June and the summer weather continued through a particularly sunny July. The fine conditions of July were followed by a cloudier, slightly cooler and very dry August. Summer weather returned on 21st August with high temperatures (reaching 38°C on the 25th and 26th) and cool nights, getting the ripening process off to a good start. A welcome spell of rain between 6th and 8th September helped the grapes to mature. Acidity levels fell and phenolic maturation was slow, but the crop remained in excellent condition. The fine weather returned, still accompanied by cool night, encouraging the quality and synthesis of anthocyanins and flavour until the harvest.

These factors - dry conditions without drought, an exceptional amount of sunshine, cool nights and rainfall that arrived just at the right time - give the 2010 vintage a remarkable identity. A splendid sequel to 2009, it is sure to become an outstanding year in the long history of fine Bordeaux wine.

Soil 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 After showers on 26th September, picking started on 28th September in very good conditions and ended on 13th October. Naturally concentrated, the grapes were small and their juice, rich and highly coloured, displayed good acidity.

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 Very dark ruby, bordering on purple at the core. The bouquet gives off complex notes of red and black fruit, coffee, dark chocolate and cigar. Medium to full bodied, this Pauillac is silky and refined on the palate, with tannins that are quite integrated for such a young wine. Classic notes of black olive, cedar, cherry and roasted coffee persist over a long finish.

Cellaring 20-25 years

Scores/Awards **94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2013
93-96 points - James Molesworth Wine Spectator - Web Only 2011
94 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #205 - February 2013
91-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011
95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - November 2012
91-93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2011
94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2013
95-96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2011
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2013
93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 25, 2011
90-93 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2011
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 17, 2013
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2011
17.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - November 2012
17.5-18.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - April 2011
18 points/5 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2011
93 points - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2011 (score only)
94-95+ points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2011
91-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 30, 2011
91-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 20, 2011
90-92 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2011
90 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2011 (score only)
16.5 points - Simon Staples, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2011
16.5+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2011
89-93 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2011

Reviews *"Rock-solid, with layers of baker's chocolate and espresso lining the steeped plum and blackberry fruit flavors while intense charcoal fills in on the hefty finish. Backward now, but showing excellent intensity and dark fruit, with a tug of singed iron on the finish. Best from 2018 through 2030. Tasted twice, with consistent notes."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Offers a more rounded feel, with cassis, black licorice and plum sauce carried by very supple but substantial tannins and terrific acidity. The long finish has a solid tarry edge. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 93-96."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"One the finest Clerc Milons I have ever tasted, and showing better from bottle than from barrel, this blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc and the rest a tiny bit of Carménère and Petit Verdot has a complex nose of cedar wood, red and black fruits, white chocolate and creme de cassis. A very powerful wine at 14.5% natural alcohol (quite high for a Medoc), this wine has impressive purity and texture, a full-bodied mouthfeel, relatively sweet tannin, but an already endearing complexity, length and richness that are hard to ignore. This is a superb effort and one of the wines that is usually reasonably priced among the classified growths."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"...An intense purple color is followed by notes of incense, creme de cassis and flowers and a broad, rich wine with superb purity, concentration and depth. This layered, expansive effort could turn out to be one of the finest this estate has ever made. Give it 3-5 years of cellaring and drink it over the following two decades."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot and 1% Carménère is a little reticent at first, but after 2 minutes of rigorous coaxing evolves a very pure nose of macerated black cherries, blueberry and cassis with very fine delineation. The palate is medium bodied with a compact entry

Reviews *that seems to expand as it remains in the mouth. The tannins are a little more prominent than the d'Armailhac with a citrus-like freshness on the finish. It has a little more alcohol (14.5%) thanks to the Merlot compared to the others, but there it is what you might describe as a joyous Clerc-Milon. Drink 2015- Tasted April 2011."*

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted at the UGC in London and at Mouton-Rothschild. The Clerc-Milon has an explosive bouquet of wild strawberry, dark cherries and cassis that is beautifully defined and to be honest, puts the d'Armailhac '10 in the shade. Philippe Dhalluin believes this is perhaps the finest vintage ever made. The palate is medium bodied with ripe blackberry and minerals on the entry. It is beautifully balanced and more expressive than d'Armailhac, fanning out towards the finish with precocious, sweet black fruit balanced by a citric thread of acidity. Outstanding."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Gorgeous currants and spices with licorice on the nose. Full body, with super integrated tannins and a long, long finish. The texture and beautiful fruit just want you to drink this. Give it time but hard to wait. Try in 2016."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"I can't remember tasting a young Clerc as exciting as this since the 1980s. Fascinating aromas of blackberries and currant jam. Very deep. Tar too. Full and very dense. It just tickles the tip of your tongue. So much there."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Confirming its place in the firmament of Pauillac greats, Clerc Milon's 2010 has huge density, and is packed with dark tannins and blackberry flavor. It has a delicious freshness that cuts right through, lifting the concentration. With its tannins, this promises long-term aging."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"93-95 A wine that seems complete. With the tannins integrated into the sweet berry fruits, laced with great acidity, it has structure, concentration and extreme freshness."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Deep ruby-purple. Dense, rich nose redolent of cassis, dried herbs and violet, with a refreshing note of mint emerging with air. Smooth, full and rich on entry, with pure, precise black fruit and herbal flavors. Big, strapping tannins are silky and sweet. A very big, expressive Clerc Milon that manages to deploy its considerable power with uncommon charm and refinement. Call me crazy, but I thought I could pick up the green pepper note given by the Carménère. Jean-Emmanuel Danjoy, who was previously at Opus One for ten years, has worked for the past two years at Clerc Milon with Philippe Dhalluin (the technical director and general manager of the Mouton estates), and his involvement is starting to show in a string of ever-improving wines from Clerc Milon. And the greater attention to detail can't be a bad thing either, given the difficulties presented by working with such a high-quality but complex site (230 different parcels of vines!). This 2010 struck me as much better than the 2009."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Rich blackcurrant fruit with some dry herbs/coffee spice nose, very good middle fruit and a firm, elegant structure and class, a château on top form."

- SS, Decanter.com

"Mid crimson. Pale rim. Very ripe nose. Very thick, ripe and dramatic. Loose and a bit formless with a dry finish. There's a little tart note in there which some people might find a bit much. Drying finish. Fades rather fast. But overall there is succulence. It is clear that a lot of work has gone into this. (Score: 17 18-30)"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

"Lighter on nose than Armailhac. Tea-leaves freshness – more attenuated than Armailhac. Very crude and raw. Very, very young! The last vat finished its malolactic only very recently apparently. Will settle down. Tasted 8 Apr: Mid purplish crimson. Serious dry tobacco/leather spectrum notes on the nose. And then ripe black fruits. Really quite sweet and opulent on the palate. Those Cabernets seem just a tiny bit struggling up the hill to full ripeness... Bone-dry finish. (Score: 17 20-33)."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Aromatically this has some ripe fruit, but it does not express it very well today, as it loses out somewhat in a battle with some overt oak lactones. The palate is remarkably creamy and broad, with lots of dark fruit character, black berries, cherries, with some high-toned notes and the same oaky notes showing through here too. Like its stablemate d'Armailhac it allows the grainy tannins to show through rather more than some wines in the middle. A wine of structure rather than pleasure at the moment. There is plenty of potential here though. From my Bordeaux 2010 assessment at two years. 17.5/20 (November 2012)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

"... - a little less Merlot and a lot more Cabernet Franc compared to 2009. The alcohol is 14.5%, reflecting Merlot's higher contribution here. A dark, glossy, dark crimson hue in the glass. Really seductive fruit character here, very expressive and open, far more so than d'Armailhac. There are dried fruits with a darker twist here, notes of black cherry and black raspberry. The palate is polished, quite creamy in terms of composition, seductive and yet relaxed and composed. The tannins have a lightly grainy feel to them, the acidity is firm, but together the whole seems very relaxed despite its flattering flesh. It is the frame of acid and tannin matched with the fruit texture that does this, I think. Long finish, the tannins a touch more chewy here - the Merlot? Nevertheless, overall very attractive indeed. 17.5-18.5/20 (April 2011)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

"For my money, Clerc Milon is looking wonderful this year. Full of power, this has the minty edge, the tannins and the freshness to really lift you up and carry you through. About 30% down on volume from last year. 94-95+/100. Drink 2020-2040."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Clerc Milon 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot and 1% Carménère make up the blend for the darkest color I recall seeing in Clerc Milon. Complex aromas of fresh herbs, cassis, forest scents, cedar wood and mocha open to smooth tannins, fleshy textures, brightness and a clean, cassis filled finish. 91-93 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deeply colored, the wine opens with cassis, earth, forest floor and plum aromas. Round and elegant in nature, this Pauillac ends with polished black and red fruits. 91-93 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Very deep and intense; fresh looking; little more evocative than the d'Armailhac – very pure, very fresh tasting; fresh blackcurrants again; summer fruit pudding; good structure, acid and tannin here; bit less evolved on the palate than on the nose; feels leaner and meaner but good chew and density and good length on the finish suggests more than enough fruit is here. Excellent length in fact 90-92+/100 Tasted 4 April at Mouton. [Second tasting] Deep core, legs, purple rim; ripe blackcurrant nose; cassis, some grip, leaf and density on the palate; feels that it's quite infant; tannin and acid very present and lots of material; sample a trifle disjointed; Good length and grip on the finish. 90-92 Tasted 5 April 2011 UGC [Third tasting] Deep and saturated; some summer fruit pudding; ripe and rich; deep and attractive; dense blackcurrant, quite grippy and fresh. Good length. Very good. 90-92/100 Tasted 7 April 2011 UGC"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"The nose has a chocolate richness with lots of black fruits towards the back. The tannins although firm are not aggressive giving it backbone. There are layers of flavours the fruit underpinned by black truffles."

- Derek Smedley MW
