

Château D'Armailhac 2012

CSPC# 749548

750mlx12

13.4% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot
Appellation	Pauillac
Classification	Fifth Growth. Cinquieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855
Website	http://www.chateau-darmailhac.com/
General Info	Château d'Armailhac, previously named Château Mouton-d'Armailhacq (historical name from inception, 1750–1955), Château Mouton-Baron Philippe (1956–1973), Mouton Baronne (1974–1978) and Château Mouton-Baronne-Philippe (1979–1988), is a winery in the Pauillac appellation of the Bordeaux region of France. The wine produced here was classified as one of eighteen <i>Cinquièmes Crus</i> (Fifth Growths) in the Bordeaux Wine Official Classification of 1855. Since 1989 its original identity has been restored and it is now known as Château d'Armailhac. Baron Philippe de Rothschild bought the estate in 1933 and it remains in the hands of his daughter, Baroness Philippine de Rothschild.
Vintage	2012 was a year of contrasts. The winter was cold and very dry. The average temperature in February was the lowest for fifty years. April brought cool weather and abundant rainfall, while the weather in May and June was in-between. The flowering and veraison dates were the same to the day as the average dates for all the vintages since 1962. Exceptionally dry conditions prevailed from 20 July to 20 September, concentrating sugar and tannins in the grapes. The month of August was the fifth driest in the last fifty years. By the end of September, the aggregate amount of rainfall was 26% lower than the average since 1962 (435 mm compared with 589 mm). Picking at Château d'Armailhac began on 1 October and ended on 15 October. Moderate yields have given Château d'Armailhac a powerful, full-bodied wine that expresses all the character of the estate.
Vineyards	Today the property comprises 50 ha of land under vine, with more being planted, so the expansion of the late 20th century continues. There are three principle vineyards, including the 26 hectare <i>Plateau des Levantines et de L'Obélisque</i> , an extension of the Carruades croupe, where gravel reigns supreme, the 19 hectare <i>Plateau de Petit Pibran</i> , which has soils of sand and chalk over a limestone base, and <i>Le Croupe de Béhéré</i> , 5 hectares of light gravel up to three metres deep in places. They are planted at a density of 8500 vines/ha, with 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, with an average age of 47 years, although some sections of the vineyard are easily a century old.
Harvest	Harvest 1-15 October
Maturation	Fermentation temperatures are allowed to rise quite high, blending follows malolactic fermentation, and the wine spends 16 months <i>en barrique</i> , of which about 30% are new, the remainder being old Mouton barrels.
Tasting Notes	An attractively intense, deep and dark red. The intense nose offers a subtle combination of red fruit and attractive oak, giving way to denser aromas of roast coffee and some slightly spicy notes. The palate is well-structured, on expressive, velvety tannins mingled with a host of ripe fruit and toasted flavours. A long and silky finish reveals excellent balance and fine expression of the terroir.
Cellaring	Drink 2015-2040
Scores/Awards	89 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015 90-93 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013 91 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015 89-91 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013 86-88 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013 90-91 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013



Scores/Awards **91 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2015
90-92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2013
88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - April 2013
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013
17 points - Decanter.com - April 2013
89 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 11, 2015
90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 11, 2015
89-91 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 18, 2013
86-88 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013
92 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013
88-89 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013
15.5+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2013
89-92 points - Derek Smedley, MW - May 2013
89-91 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - January 4, 2013
93-95 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 26, 2013
15 points - Fergus Stewart, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2014
16.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)
16.3 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)
15 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)
89-91 points - Falstaff Magazine - April 2013 (score only)

Reviews *"There's a lightly dusty, singed sandalwood feel to this red, with plum and blackberry fruit laced with toasted vanilla and loam hints. Features a light twinge of plum skin on the finish but remains approachable overall, presenting a lingering tobacco whiff. Drink now through 2021."*
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Features a solid core of anise and plum, with a briary frame and light tobacco shading that should emerge with time. Shows good substance and weight. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 90-93"
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Part of the empire of the Chateau Mouton Rothschild, this estate was once known as Mouton Baronne Philippe. This impressive, deep, opaque ruby/purple wine, with loads of charcoal, crème de cassis and a flowery-ness, this is rich, medium to full-bodied, beautifully textured, quite pure, and avoids any of the astringency or hollowness that some Médoc's possess in this vintage. The wine is complete and finishes authoritatively. The tannins are there, but ripe, integrated and velvety. This is a very impressive d'Armailhac to drink over the next 20-25 years."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"A stronger effort than its stablemate, Clerc-Milon, the 2012 d'Armailhac is an intriguing blend of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. Complex notes of menthol, coffee beans, black cherries and black currants are followed by a rich, medium-bodied wine with copious tannin as well as sufficient fat and flesh to cover the structure. The harvest took place during the first ten days of October, most of the grapes being brought in prior to the deluge that began on October 7 and lasted until October 9. This excellent Pauillac is a successful Medoc in this challenging vintage for this region."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted twice en primeur at Mouton-Rothschild. The Chateau d'Armailhac is a blend of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. The nose is rather muted at the moment - usually at this stage it is more flamboyant and vivacious. A second sample one week later (under low pressure) accentuated the aromatic leanness. The palate is medium bodied with crisp tannins, controlled blackberry fruit infused with tobacco and graphite. It is harmonious and precise, although the fresh finish is missing just a little depth, with the Cabernet Franc imparting herbaceousness on the aftertaste. I hope this will muster more vigour and depth during élevage. Tasted April 2013."
- NM, Wine Journal

"This is a very attractive young wine. Medium-to-full body, with creamy tannins and a fresh finish. Refined for the vintage."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

Reviews

"Fruity and rich, this wine is developing fast. It is full of black currant fruits, with an impressive background of solid, structured tannins. The wine is linear, fresh, showing how well this property is developing its quality. It's a wine for medium-term aging, so drink from 2018."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"This fruity wine is soft and open with flavors of ripe red-berry fruits and fresh acidity. It's expressive with immediately attractive tannins."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"(54% cabernet sauvignon, 29% merlot, 14% cabernet franc and 3% petit verdot): Good medium ruby-red. Enticing, pure aromas of blackcurrant, raspberry, red licorice, violet and crushed stone on the knockout nose. Fresh, dense and suave; a step up in intensity from most Pauillacs in this vintage, with brisk acidity framing the perfumed flavors of dark berries, sweet spices and minerals. Finishes very long and smooth, with sneaky aromatic persistence. As usual, Armailhac is heavily dominated on the nose by its cabernet franc component, giving it amazingly refined violet and cocoa aromas. If you are surprised by the 3% petit verdot in a vintage characterized by a very wet late season (which is normally when the late-ripening petit verdot needs sunlight and warmth), the 18-year-old petit verdot vines at Armailhac are of particularly high quality, according to general director Philippe Dhalluin. "Petit verdot likes to have its head in the sun and its feet in the water," said Dhalluin. "The best vines we own are located in the Behère area at the southwestern tip of our estate near the river, so these vines have lots of heat and water, which allowed them to weather the difficult conditions of 2012." Superb wine in the making."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Heady and fragrant. No trace of under ripeness on the nose but a slight lack of generosity on the palate. Peppery! (Unusual.) Dry and neat but not scrawny. Lots of complexity and pleasure with the bracing signature of the vintage only on the very end. This has some St-Estèphe mineral notes on the finish. An attractive whole with a cool, confident finish."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Elegant, slightly spicy fruit with good vineyard ripeness and grip, good future."

- Decanter.com

"Soft, round, forward, medium bodied with a fresh cassis and tobacco filled personality. The bottle was decanted about one hour in advance of the tasting."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Soft, round, forward, medium bodied with a fresh cassis filled personality."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"From a blend of 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, the wine reached 13.4% alcohol. Tobacco, stone, pepper and black cherry notes open to a soft, forward, medium-bodied Pauillac that ends with fresh black plums. 89-91 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Even in a lighter vintage, this is still a crowd-pleasing wine, with sweet coffee bean and mocha oak, abundant rose petal perfume and leafy, refreshing fruit flavours. We're in Loire Cabernet Franc meets the Médoc territory here, with good minerality and appealing green pepper and cut grass notes. Drink: 2020-28"

- TA, timatkin.com

Reviews

"Cabernet sauvignon at 54%, down from 57% last year, blended with 14% merlot, 3% petit verdot (which generally did well in 2012). They managed to hold on through the October rains here, as harvest dates were October 1-15 at both Armailhac and Mouton, with things finishing up on 16th October at Clerc Milon. Attractive bright nose, good plum, no sign of over ripeness. Good freshness, but things are a touch short compared to recent years of this wine. This has a very pleasant fruit, maceration 21-22 days, no cold soak. They practised very little green harvesting because already so few grapes, just on young plots under 20 years. Here 10% less yield than last year. Good fruit palate, there is complexity and attractive smoky oak, and you'd be happy to open this in the medium term, but this is far from their best Armailhac. 88-89 /16.5-16.75. Recommended. Drink 2018-2030."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Mid depth; deep core; stalky berry fruits; some red fruit tones; softer palate than previous UGC sample; more mid-palate richness to this. Chewy finish. Tasted UGC April 11, 2013. 87-89 [Earlier note] Mid depth; more perfume; blackcurrant tones; some cassis; more elegant and a fraction softer than the UGC samples. Nice length. Tasted at Mouton, Tuesday April 9, 2013. 88-90 [Earlier note] Mid-depth; deep core; some perfume, blackcurrants; some oak influence but a little disjointed; settled with some aeration; blackcurrant fruit on the palate with oak influence; little drying on the finish. Feels quite tannic and disjointed [cold samples?] though there appears to be good fruit. Tasted UGC Tuesday April 9, 2013. 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot. 86-88"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"This good value classed growth Pauillac was formerly known as Mouton Baronne Philippe and is made by the same team as Mouton Rothschild. This year the encepagement is 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. A toasty nose reveals notes of roasted almonds, white chocolate, ice cream and cherries. There is creamy black fruit on the palate of this medium-weight wine with soft, ripe tannins and blueberry fruit. Harmonious and fine."

- Farr Vintners

"The fruit on the nose is sweet and ripe with the black fruits tending to dominate. The rounded tannins help the fleshiness on the mid palate some lovely black plum concentration but towards the back bramble and bilberry refresh and lighten the finish. 2018-28"

- Derek Smedley MW

"Soft, open and balanced with silky tannins and subtle cassis and cedar flavours. Open, accessible now even at this young stage. A wine to enjoy fairly young. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (04-Jan-2014)"

- JCL, asianpalate.com

"Very compelling, fruity nose intermixing redcurrant and blackcurrant. Well-structured palate with refined tannins, wonderful texture and ripe, evident fruit. A real success for the vintage. (16-Apr-2013)"

- en.gilbertgaillard.com

"Situated next to Ch. Mouton-Rothschild, Ch. d'Armailhac showcases all of the hallmarks of its big brother. Glossy, perfumed red fruit and some sweet spice from the oak all combine with a weave of creamy fruit on the palate, framed by the supple tannins. Aged in 50% new oak and 50% from one-year-old barrels formerly used for Mouton itself, this will benefit from five years in the cellar before being appreciated anytime over the following 10+ years

- FS, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants
