

Château D'Armailhac 2018

CSPC# 749548

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot
Appellation	Pauillac
Classification	Fifth Growth. Cinquieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855
Website	http://www.chateau-darmailhac.com/
General Info	<p>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.</p>
Vintage	<p>The first half of 2018 was marked by heavy rainfall and severe hailstorms during the winter, followed by a much milder spring.</p> <p>Cool temperatures in March were followed by a warm spell in April which favoured vegetation growth and brought the vines into flower slightly earlier than usual. This trend was confirmed from June onwards as hot and sunny weather resulted in the vine cycle being 5 days ahead of average.</p> <p>In July, high humidity coupled with the summer heat made it difficult to keep the vines healthy, but constant care from our growers ensured that all the qualities of the vineyard were preserved. Fortunately, hot and dry weather then set in for three months, with temperatures sometimes reaching more than 30°C, ending the mildew attacks.</p> <p>Although conditions in the first half of the year did not herald a great harvest, the record-breaking temperatures, low rainfall, and relative drought that followed in the summer months rectified the situation. The grapes were small but outstandingly rich in sugar and tannins.</p> <p>The advance in the vine cycle and the hot, dry summer meant that the harvest began in late August for the white grapes and early September for the red grapes.</p> <p>At Château d'Armailhac, picking started with the Merlot on 12 September and ended with the Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot on 3 October.</p> <p>The wines are intensely coloured and have excellent tannic structures. They are remarkably dense and smooth, with a rare concentration of aroma and flavour. Yields were smaller because of the drought, but the vintage can already be reckoned one of the great successes.</p>
Vineyards	<p>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 principal 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.</p>
Harvest	From 12 September to 3 October.
Vinification/ 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	The wine has a deep colour with a garnet hue. The rich, packed nose opens on aromas of blackberry and marzipan. With airing, the initial fruit is complemented by an array of spice and dark chocolate notes. The powerful and well-structured attack reveals peppery and slightly minty flavours, leading into a mid-palate underpinned by elegant and dense tannins on roasted coffee-bean and liquorice notes. A long and smooth finish rounds off a remarkably harmonious wine.
Serve with	Chateau d'Armailhac is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau d'Armailhac is also good with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Cellaring	Drink 2022-2035
Scores/Awards	<p>93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2021</p> <p>91-94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>93+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown - March 2021</p> <p>91-93 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown - April 2019</p> <p>95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>92-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2019</p> <p>15+ points - Tom Parker, JancisRobinson.com - October 2020</p> <p>16.5+ points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>92-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>15.5+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2019</p> <p>91+ points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>91-93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>90-92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p>93+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>92-94 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p>17.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>94-95 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p> <p>17 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"The core of ripe cassis, plum sauce and raspberry purée flavors have a succulent feel, while licorice snap, graphite and singed alder notes play along the edges. Nice glycerin feel through the focused and fine-grained finish. Tempting now, but time will bring more nuance. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2022 through 2035"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Lively cassis and blackberry notes are liberally laced with briar, tobacco and smoky details. Reveals a serious chalky underpinning on the finish. A bit backward, but all the elements are here. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Score range: 91 – 94"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 D'Armailhac (a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot) hits the ground running with wonderfully open-knit, flamboyant scents of Morello cherries, black raspberries, blackcurrant jelly and rose oil, leading to an undercurrent of cinnamon toast, aniseed and mossy tree bark. The medium to full-bodied palate is charged with energy and expressiveness, delivering red and black berry layers with loads of spicy sparks, framed by plush tannins, finishing long and fragrant."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2018 D'Armailhac (14.5% alcohol) is composed of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot, harvested September 12 to October 3. Deep garnet-purple colored, it reveals a very fruity nose of crushed blackberries, warm black cherries, and mulberries plus hints of potpourri, spice cake and pencil shavings. Full-bodied, the decadent palate delivers loads of black berry layers and a firm, grainy frame with underlying freshness and an earthy finish. Wonderfully opulent D'Armailhac!"</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews *“Complex aromas of blackcurrant, black olive, clove, oyster shell, pencil lead and tobacco. It’s full-bodied with firm, tightly knit tannins. Concentrated and focused with a very long, spice and mineral finish. Fantastic bottle. Try from 2026.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“A soft and generous red with plum, tobacco and currant character and a delicious, full body and brightness. Juicy. Attractive, earthy aftertaste. Layered and dense.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“With over half Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a rich and juicy wine that is finely structured and shows a touch of integrated toasty spice. It shows a good balance of oak and fruit on the finish. (RV)”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. Deep ruby. Smoky ripe nose of dark cherry and cedar. Good middle fruit, quite chalky and austere tannins that are a little awkward against the overall structure. Good fresh acids but a hint of dried fruit on the back end. (TP)”

- TP, JancisRobinson.com

“55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot; 50% new oak. Barrel sample. Black core. Scented with cassis and cassis leaf, lightly cedary. (This last is, unusually, a rare descriptor in this vintage.) Aromatic but not as much as Duhart-Milon tasted just after. Very tannic and chewy, dense, compact and telling you to stay away but not lacking fruit in the middle and the aroma is extremely inviting. Needs time to unfurl.”

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

“Armailhac has held its success from en primeur and has further gained in weight during ageing. This is a wine that is changing a little in style, deepening in profile and upping the new oak for ageing from 30% to 50% (and staying in barrel for a little longer). Unusually high alcohols for this corner of Pauillac, likely from the concentration that happened in September on the Armailhac gravels (there is less clay in the soil at this spot). It comes through in a rich mouthfeel, chewy tannins, and chocolate-covered damson fruits. 5% Petit Verdot completes the blend. Bottled mid-May. New winery under way. Drinking Window 2026 – 2044.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“This is clearly one of the most concentrated d’Armailhac’s that has been produced in recent decades owing to the extremely small and concentrated berries, especially Cabernet Sauvignon, harvested at the end of the growing season. It’s also one of the best, with clear personality and power, and although still the least complex of the three Pauillac’s in the Mouton stable, it should offer the best value giving a ton of rich fruit and cigar box frisson. 5% Petit Verdot makes up the blend. 3.7pH. Tasted several times – always with the same impression.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“The darkest vintage of d’Armailhac I have ever seen, from the first swirl and sniff, you know it’s a new level for this chateau. On the nose you find smoke, tobacco leaf, blackberries, plums, wet earth and thyme. On the palate, the wine is lush, round, and deep with layers of sweet, dark, ripe fruits, soft, round tannins, herbs, pepper, dark chocolate, spice and a blast of black and dark red fruits in the finish. Give this a decade in the cellar and it will really start strutting its stuff. The wine is a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Richly textured, this is the darkest d’Armailhac I have ever seen, and the fruits are equally dark. The blackberries display a floral charm along with a touch of smoke black currant. On the palate, the wine is medium-full bodied, with good concentration of its dark, crème de cassis, a touch of cocoa and tobacco. The tannins are soft add the perfect backdrop to all the round juicy, deep fruits. The wine is a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot. The harvest took place from September 12 to September 3.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

“Medium-deep purple in the glass, with a mixture of sweet red and black fruits on the nose, layered with the toastiness of judicious new oak use. The palate is seductive, with polished and silky tannins gently framing the bright core of fruit. While ripe, there is good lift and vibrancy as the tannins build to give a crunchy, chalky finish that is savoury and long.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2018 d’Armailhac has retained its alluring floral bouquet, delivering layers of blackberry and boysenberry fruit, crushed violet petals and background scents of marjoram and sage, all beautifully defined. The palate is perhaps just a little oakier than I recollect from barrel [I subsequently found out that this spent 17 months in barrel, longer than in the past] but still very well balanced, with a fine bead of acidity. Harmonious and silky-smooth toward the finish, with a touch of graphite lingering on the aftertaste. It may merit a higher score with cellaring, but I will remain prudent with my score... for now. 2024 - 2045.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 d’Armailhac has a fragrant, floral bouquet of blackberry and boysenberry fruit infused with pressed iris flowers, the new oak (45%, which is higher than vintages six years ago) beautifully assimilated and allowing it to retain superb delineation. The palate is medium bodied with fine-grained tannins, a little more backbone and density than the 2017 tasted alongside, and conspicuous salinity toward the precise finish. This is a superb d’Armailhac in the making. (NM)”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 d’Armailhac is lifted, floral and nicely focused, although a touch closed today. Bright red cherry and floral notes add nuance throughout. Medium in body and fresh, the 2018 has quite a bit of aromatic depth from the Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, which helps hide the 14.5% alcohol nicely. Yields were just 32 hectoliters per hectare as opposed to 42-46, which is the norm. The blend is 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot. Tasted two times.”

- AG, Vinous

“Awesome notes of camphor, new leather, cedar pencil, chocolate, and cassis emerge from the 2018 Château D’Armailhac, a full-bodied, concentrated Pauillac that stays nicely focused on the palate, with firm yet ripe tannins, wonderful purity, and a great finish. In short, it’s a classic Pauillac that needs 4-6 years of bottle age and should have two decades of prime drinking. Rating: 93+.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Deeply colored, the 2018 Château D’Armailhac is a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and the rest Petit Verdot brought up in 40% new barrels. Cassis, hints of blue fruits, graphite, charcoal, and spicy oak notes all emerge from this deeply colored effort. Rich and full-bodied on the palate, it offers ripe, present tannins, terrific freshness, and a great finish.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“(55 Cabernet Sauvignon, 30 Merlot, 10 Cabernet Franc, 5 Petit Verdot) | 14.5% alc Very commanding and robustly fruited, this is a dense, velvety d’Armailhac with structure and layers of plum and chocolate fruit. Not overly complex but certainly luxurious and imposing this is a style of wine which will appeal to all palates thanks to its generosity and depth of flavour. There is certainly enough grip to allow this wine to expand in time and while the finish is quite tart, this will inevitably fade quickly.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com
