

# Château L'Eglise-Clinet 2020

CSPC# 866172

750mlx3

14.4% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

## Appellation

Pomerol

## Website

<https://www.denis-durantou.com/leglise-clinet/>

## Sustainability

In the vineyard of Chateau L'Eglise Clinet Bordelaise and Single, Guyot pruning techniques are used to tend the vines. Denis Durantou started a program using organic compost every 5 years. The vineyard is planted to a density of 6,500 vines per hectare for the old vines. However, the newer plantings are as high as 8,000 vines per hectare.

## General Info

L'Eglise Clinet is considered by many to be one of the truly great offerings from Pomerol. The name of this producer is often brought up in conjunction with icons of the Right Bank like Château Pétrus and Château La Fleur. Yet despite the greatness of this estate, the wine is still among the less exorbitantly priced Pomerol producers out there today. Robert Parker Jr himself once referred to this estate as a "sleeping château of the century."

The history of this estate dates to 1803, when a gentleman named Jean Rouchut purchased some vines near a small cemetery. In 1882, the family purchased some plots from a neighboring vineyard, Domaine de Clinet. They decided to partner, and thus L'Eglise Clinet was born. The property's rise to stardom began when it was inherited by one of the legends in the wine industry, Denis Durantou.

The Durantou family was a family of farmers, and most of their income did not come from winemaking. Denis Durantou took over operations in 1983 and he certainly had his work cut out for him. There were no cellar floors, only dirt. The vats were old and unclean, and they were not temperature controlled. He made sweeping changes to the vat room and relined cement tanks with epoxy and replanted much of the 5.5-hectare vineyard. It took him only two years before he began to see the fruits of his labor. There's a mixture of opulence, concentration, and body in each bottle of L'Eglise Clinet and these traits began to evolve and shine during his tenure. During the 1990s, each vintage received mounting critical acclaim and today, this opulent and lush wine is now considered one of the true stars of Pomerol.

Denis Durantou was known as, "a winemaker's winemaker." He valued precision when approaching his wines and was a master at handling the Merlot grape. Durantou's authenticity was refreshing, and he was the epitome of a humble *vigneron* who did most of his winemaking in the vineyard. He was described by some as, "a man of the soil," whose purposes and motivation for crafting wine was simple: bringing integrity to *terroir*. There was no pretense or ego that came through in his winemaking. This is especially rare in a region where exorbitant prices continue to inflate, and a great wine is more and more difficult to purchase. Denis Durantou's contributions were important ones because he devoted a significant portion of his time to creating value oriented Pomerol that leveled the playing field. In an interview with Jane Anson, he said he wanted to translate *terroir*, "as honestly as possible." Unfortunately, he passed away in 2020 after a long illness. It was truly a great loss for the wine industry in all of Bordeaux.

Denis Durantou's legacy lives on in those thirty-seven vintages he produced. One can still always experience his technique, his precision, and his unique style in these wines. His daughters are now in charge of the property with the winemaking team headed by Olivier Gautrat who worked for Durantou family for the past 20 years.

## Winemakers

Olivier Gautrat

## Vintage

The 2020 growing season was marked by the striking contrast between an incredibly rainy winter and a durably dry and often hot summer. A homogeneous and rather thin flowering began in mid-May and led to an early harvest that produced a low crop yield.

The old vines, their vigor favourably slowed by this drought, produced wonderfully deep colored,



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| <b>Vineyards</b>                    | <p>concentrated and balanced wines. Merlot is intensely aromatic, dense, full and with breed. It rolls over the tongue. It's the Merlot that marks this vintage. The Cabernet Franc, with its small, concentrated berries, produced a smooth-textured wine of amazing complexity; It is flavoursome and has good length of flavour. The 4.4-hectare, cross-shaped, Pomerol vineyard of Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is planted to 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Malbec. The Malbec is part of the grape field blend and not something the estate purposely planted. It is seldom added to the blend.</p> <p>It is the goal of Chateau L'Eglise Clinet to slowly increase the amount of Cabernet Franc in the vineyard and remove more of the Malbec. This will be done by planting Cabernet Franc clones selected from the oldest Cabernet Franc vines planted in the vineyard using a massal selection program.</p> <p>The terroir of Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is deep clay and gravel soils without excess water, thanks to the century-old drainage network and natural slopes which rise to 29 meters at their peak. However, in this unique case, perhaps plots are the wrong word to use as this Right Bank property abuts the Pomerol cemetery.</p> <p>On average, the Chateau L'Eglise Clinet has old vines that are an impressive 40 years of age. But because a good portion of the Chateau L'Eglise Clinet vineyard was spared from the frost of 1956, the estate has old Cabernet Franc vines that date back to the 1930s.</p> <p>The oldest vines are Cabernet Franc that are more than 80 years of age, as they were planted in 1935! Those old vines are located in two plots: La Buzette and Les Grands Vignes. Both those parcels are situated less than five hundred meters far from the cellar and close to the cemetery.</p> <p>Chateau L'Eglise Clinet maintains a lot of old vines. In fact, 25% of the Chateau L'Eglise Clinet vineyard is more than 75 years old.</p> <p>The vineyard can be divided into 4 sections for age. 25% of the vines are more than 75 years old, 25% of the vines are more than 50 years old, 25% are more than 20 years of age and the remaining 25% is more than 7 years old. In total, Chateau L'Eglise Clinet has one of the largest amounts of old vines in the entire Pomerol appellation! That old vine concentration can be tasted in the wines. Perhaps their best parcels are Clinet Bas and Chene, which were planted in 1935.</p> |
| <b>Harvest</b>                      | <p>For the harvest at Chateau L'Eglise Clinet, Denis Durantou employs a team of 30 pickers who manage this quickly, due to leaf-stripping and crop thinning done in August and September. Total destemming and gentle crushing are always done.</p> <p>The Merlot was picked between the 11th and the 14th of September, and the Cabernet Franc was picked on the 16th of September.</p>  |
| <b>Vinification/<br/>Maturation</b> | <p>To produce the wine of L'Eglise Clinet, vinification takes place in 14 small, temperature-controlled, stainless-steel vats ranging in size from 20 hectoliters all the way up to 72 hectoliters.</p> <p>This allows for very precise vinification on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Malolactic fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats. According to Denis Durantou, the reason is for better control of yeast and bacteria.</p> <p>The 2019 Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is aged in 70% new, French oak barrels for between 15 to 18 months. The wines are racked every 3 to 5 months. On average, the property produces between 1,000 and 1,500 cases of Chateau L'Eglise Clinet every year.</p>  |
| <b>Tasting Notes</b>                | <p>The 2020 vintage, signed by his daughters Noémie and Constance, perpetuates the characteristic style designed and desired by Denis Durantou. Freshness remains the key word. Even in a scorching vintage, the wine suggests more red fruit than black. The tannins are so finely coated that you almost forget to feel them, while the wine is built for an evolution over several decades. There is a particular genius in the finesse of the texture, in this fruit sheath where the seams are imperceptible. As in 2019, La Petite Eglise, the second high-class wine, is similar to the first in spirit and charm.</p>   |
| <b>Serve with</b>                   | <p>Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.</p>  |
| <b>Production<br/>Cellaring</b>     | <p>Approx. 1000 cases made<br/>Drink 2029-2065</p>  |
| <b>Scores/Awards</b>                | <p><b>97 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023<br/> <b>97-99 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021<br/> <b>99 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023<br/> <b>98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023<br/> <b>98-99 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021<br/> <b>17.5+ points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021<br/> <b>97 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023<br/> <b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021<br/> <b>97 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023</p>   |

**Scores/Awards** **99 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023  
**98-100 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021  
**94 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021  
**96-98 points** - Farr Vintners - May 2021  
**98 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023  
**96-98 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021  
**98 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023  
**96-98 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021  
**97+ points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023  
**96-98 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021  
**97 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023  
**96-98 points** - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021  
**94-95 points** - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021  
**96-98 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022  
**96-97 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021

**Reviews** *"A blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, the 2020 L'Eglise Clinet wafts from the glass with aromas of dark berries, mulberries, cherries, and cassis mingled with notions of espresso roast, loamy soil, violets and truffle framed by creamy new oak. Full-bodied, layered, and concentrated, it's a rich, youthfully firm, muscularly constructed young Pomerol that will richly reward bottle age."*  
 - WK, Wine Advocate

*"The 2020 L'Eglise Clinet is a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. The Merlot was picked between the 11th and the 14th of September, and the Cabernet Franc was picked on the 16th of September. It has an alcohol of 14.4% and is aging in French oak barrels, 80% new. Displaying an opaque purple-black color, it needs a bit of swirling to reveal a fascinating array of earthy notes—black truffles, charcoal, mossy tree bark and fallen leaves—over a profound core of preserved plums, blackberry preserves and violets, with a waft of tapenade. The medium to full-bodied palate has exquisitely ripe tannins and bold freshness supporting the seductively ripe, black fruit layers, finishing on a lingering fragrant earth note."*  
 - LPB, Wine Advocate

*"The 2020 L'Eglise-Cliet, made from 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, is deep garnet-purple in color. It opens with wonderfully fragrant notes of violets, dark chocolate, aniseed, and forest floor, leading to a core of preserved plums and black cherry preserves, plus a touch of cast-iron pan. The medium to full-bodied palate explodes with tons of juicy black fruit layers, supported by velvety tannins and seamless freshness, finishing long with a whole array of baking spice, black berry, and mineral accents."*  
 - LPB, Wine Independent

*"A linear and transparent red with violets and dark fruits with sliced tangerines. Full- to medium-bodied with firm and racy tannins. Brightness and energy. Hints of chocolate and malted milk. Lovely purity to it. Drink after 2026 and onwards."*  
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Wonderfully bright, floral aromas with so much violet character. Such purity and focus. Ethereal on the nose already. Full-bodied, but very polished and deep with finesse and beauty. Incredible structure that fills the mouth."*  
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. Cask sample. Dense and profound, the fruit savoury and pure. Profuse on attack, the fruit bursting on the palate with layered, fine-grain tannins in support. Purity and precision, the detail spot-on, the tannins of the finest weave. Great potential. (JL) 14.4%. Drink 2028 – 2045."*  
 - JL, JancisRobinson.com

## Reviews

*“Smooth and silky, rich for sure, you know you're in Pomerol in a ripe vintage with just-chewy tannins but that also have a cooling, crisp edge. Lots of herbal nuances and some bitterness in the coffee, black chocolate, clove, and tobacco nuances but there's good acidity and vibrancy overall. Really well controlled and delivered, retaining a sense of punchy classicism balancing richness, freshness, delicacy, and plushness.”*  
- GH, Decanter.com

*“Noémie Durantou has taken over from her late father Denis with this vintage and has produced a L'Eglise Clinet that is dark ruby in colour and needs time in the glass as it is built and muscular. You need a little patience for the cassis, bilberry, and raspberry fruits to arrange, enjoy instead the silky, velvety texture that stops the tannins being too restrictive and allows the palate to slowly expand. Not as expressive as in some vintages, but still exudes quiet confidence. A yield of 42hl/ha. Harvest from September 8.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com

*“So much depth, character, and density. Hugely rich in its dark damson, bilberry, and chocolate character, sliced off pieces of dark slate, pumice stone and crushed rock. Hard not to smile at the pleasure contained in this bottle. It is both very much rooted in Pomerol and yet not at all Pomerol, both brooding and fabulous. Secure your bottle. 50% new oak, harvest September 9 to 16.”*  
- JA, janeanson.com

*“A clear candidate for wine of the vintage, this show stopping gem kicks off with a vivid perfume packed with flowers, plums, truffles, chocolate, smoke, cigar wrapper, and cherry liqueur scents. The wine delivers intensity, finesse, concentration, richness, purity, and complexity. The finish, with its layers of dark chocolate covered ripe plums, velvety textures, and sensuality is completely seamless, holding your palate hostage for at least 60 seconds. Give it some time and this could easily hit 100 Pts down the road, it is that good. Drink from 2027-2060.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Everything you would expect from L'Eglise Clinet is here in spades. The nose shoots from the glass with its truffle, spicy plum, wet earth, herb, smoke, tobacco, cocoa, and cherry liqueur scents. Full-bodied, concentrated, focused and fresh, the wine perches on the border between opulence and classic. From a blend that mirrors the vineyard at 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, the wine packs layers of dark chocolate covered ripe plums that coat your palate, linger, and expand. This will age gracefully for 3 decades easily. It is great to see so much continuity here from the Durantou family. 98-100.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“The 2020 is a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc that will be aged in 80% new oak. The Merlot was harvested between 11th and 14th September, and Cabernet Franc on 16th September. Deep purple colour. The nose is dense and brooding at first. With air, this reveals layer upon layer of blue and black fruit, cedar, vanilla, and game. The palate is full bodied and impressive, the ripe Merlot fruit bringing a fleshy, full complement of cherries, plums, and blackberries. There is superb cut from a cedary, graphite notes and bright acidity to cut through the flesh. The tannins, though mouthcoating, are ripe and very fine, adding to the moreish nature of the fruit. The finish is intense and vibrant, with persistent structure confirming a superb potential to age.”*  
- Farr Vintners

*“The 2020 L'Eglise-Clinet takes time to open up in the glass, so I afford it 15-20 minutes to aerate. It's definitely worth a bit of patience. It delivers exquisite, ineffably pure aromas of black fruit, pressed violet, hints of marmalade and truffle. Amazing focus and precision. The palate is medium-bodied with finely-chiseled tannins, crisp and taut, just a very slight creaminess in terms of texture towards the second half with a long, peppery tail on the aftertaste. This is a quite fabulous Pomerol that will give 20+ years of drinking pleasure. Noemie Durantou feels this has more depth than the 2019 and she may well be right.”*  
- NM, Vinous

## Reviews

*"The 2020 L'Eglise-Clinet is very deep in color. It has an intense nose featuring blackberry, wild strawberry, touches of Japanese nori and light basalt aromas, gaining in intensity and clarity over the 60 minutes I spent analyzing the sample. The palate has exquisite balance and a silver bead of acidity that slices through the pure black fruit with effortless ease. This is a very harmonious and focused L'Eglise-Clinet, and as always, it is not an immediately crowd-pleasing Pomerol. You have to sit with it and examine its facets, including those that require unlocking with aeration. There is wonderful salinity on the finish, and awe-inspiring persistence. A magnificent testament to a great winemaker."*

- NM, Vinous

*"The 2020 L'Eglise-Clinet is a wine of pure and total sophistication. Dark and racy, with remarkable depth, the 2020 is so exceptionally polished. The 2020 is not a huge Eglise-Clinet, but rather a wine that speaks in a soft, gentle voice. I love its elegance and refinement. All the 2020 needs is time in the bottle to be fully expressive, as it is quite embryonic today. Look for this to be a brilliant Pomerol in another handful of years. Best after 2030."*

- AG, Vinous

*"The 2020 L'Eglise-Clinet is a towering wine. I am not sure what else to say. After having tasted hundreds of 2020s, L'Eglise-Clinet very clearly claims a stake for itself among the wines of the vintage. L'Eglise-Clinet can be a brute in its youth, but the 2020 is all finesse. Sweet red/purplish fruit, rose petal, blood orange and pomegranate are some of the nuances that emerge over time. Perhaps keeping the temperatures, a bit cooler in fermentation explains the extraordinary finesse here. The 2020 simply can't be denied."*

- AG, Vinous

*"There's a clear jump from the second wine to the 2020 Château L'Eglise Clinet, a riveting Pomerol that checks in as 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc that spent 18 months in 80% new French oak. Offering a restrained, yet concentrated, structured style, it reveals classic notes of red and black currants, leafy tobacco, loamy earth, and chocolate. This carries to a full-bodied, powerful, tannic 2020 that needs a solid 7-8 years of bottle age. It's going to be long-lived but is not for those seeking instant gratification. Rating: 97+."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"Always up with the crème de la crème of the vintage, the 2020 Château L'Eglise Clinet is no exception. It boasts a rich, powerful, opulent style that packs loads of ripe black cherries as well as notes of chocolate, earth, tobacco, and graphite. Possessing the pure, elegant, more focused style of the vintage, it still has plenty of mid-palate depth, gorgeous tannins, and one heck of a great finish."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"Floral, dextrose, cherries, also cocktail cherry. Creamy on the palate, très souple, juicy, very round, very fine tannin, which nevertheless has contour, plus a naturally integrated acidity, long homogeneous, clear, and fresh finish. Chewy, but this in the soft sense. Chocolatey finish with length, accompanied by mineral power. A wine full of richness, delicacy, and unforced harmony."*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*"(90% M, 10% CF; 14.4% ABV; 80% new). Dense, fine, and scented to smell, freshly black-fruit ripe, subtle, and persistent; rich, fairly full, fresh to lively, very finely tannic, a lovely restrained yet ample balance; deep, subtly oaky sweet, a dark ripe fruit, creamy and fresh at once, very long across the palate, very long to finish; aromatic and complex, effortlessly graceful, refined and complete. There is more structure here than in the Petite Eglise, less immediate charm, but there is a superb fruit core and wonderful scope. A beautiful expression of the terroir and of the year. 2032–50+."*

- MS, The World of Fine Wine