

Château Canon 2018

CSPC# 814289

750mlx6

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

72% Merlot, 28% Cabernet-Franc

Appellation

Saint Emilion

Classification

First Growth B. Premier Grand Cru Classe B.

Website

<http://www.chateaucanon.com/>

General Info

Chateau Canon is a highly esteemed wine production estate in the Saint Emilion appellation of Bordeaux, France. Originally referred to as Clos St-Martin, this top Bordeaux fine wine is ranked among the Premier Grand Crus Classe B, as designated by the classification of Saint Emilion wine.

Chateau Canon, located in the southwest of Saint Emilion, is a neighbor to other renowned wine estates like Chateau Magdelaine, Chateau La Gaffeliere and Chateau Ausone. The vineyard surface measures around 21.5 hectares, with a grape selection of 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc.

Since the early 20th century, Chateau Canon has been rated as one of the best Saint Emilion wines; in total, around 7,500 – 9,000 cases are produced each year, of both the first wine Chateau Canon as well as the second wine Clos de Canon.

Winemakers

Nicolas Audebert. Thomas Duclot consultant.

Vintage

2018 Saint Emilion was not an easy vintage for producers. The winter months were easy, but the spring is one of the wettest in history. Depending on where you located in St. Emilion, during the initial 6 months of the year, between 550 mm to 600 mm (21"-24") of rain soaked your soils. This is more than the normal amount of rain the region experiences in a year!

From there growers fended off violent attacks of mildew, which struck fast and furious. 2018 Saint Emilion was saved by the hottest, driest, sunniest vintage conditions since 2003. Barely any rain fell from July to harvest.

Picking took place under warm, sunny, and dry conditions. On average, production was down 10-20% for many vineyards. Conditions were so good between late September and mid-October; vigneron were able to pick at their chosen level of maturity.

Harvesting took place from mid-September to mid-October.

"Everybody got mildew this year. Everybody," Nicolas Audebert, Technical Director for Château Canon (and Rauzan-Ségla), told me. "We had mildew problems like any other estate. But when Château Canon was bought 20 years ago, it needed replanting. That has all been done now and it is very healthy. Here, there are no sick or dying vines—everything is producing. If we wanted to, we could get 100 hectoliters per hectare in a normal year! We got 42 hectoliters per hectare here this year. This year, we dropped all the bunches affected by the mildew." I don't need to tell followers of this estate that Château Canon is on an upward trajectory. The level of intensity achieved this year is truly impressive. Audebert agreed with my reference to this point. "The level of density this year is probably higher than we have ever had," he said. "In my point of view, the best tanks of the year were Merlot, even at Rauzan. The density of the fruit was incredible." When I asked him about how he maintained such freshness among all that richness of the 2018 Canon and its neighbors, Croix Canon and Berliquet, he replied, "The type of soil we have, it is quite easy to get freshness. It is something extremely important to us; we want ripeness and maturity, but we also always want vibrancy and freshness." The soil he refers to is the coveted clay and limestone of Saint-Émilion's plateau, which has produced some of the greatest wines of this vintage. In 2018, the Merlot came in between September 7 and 27, and Cabernet Franc was harvested October 2-5. The harvest started and finished at Canon with Croix Canon and Berliquet in between. Audebert's strategy was to pick some fruit fresh and bright and harvest other fruit at the riper end. Sound strategy, impressive results.



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| Vineyards | Chateau Canon owns 34 hectares of vines. 24 of those hectares are used to produce Chateau Canon. The vineyard of Chateau Canon is located in the heart of the St. Emilion, on the top of the limestone plateau. The terroir is clay and limestone soils. Their best parcels are close to the chateau, near the cemetery and in front of the chateau, with views of the St. Emilion village. This shows a marked increase in the amount of Cabernet Franc in the vines. There has been a slow, on-going program to add more Cabernet Franc to the vineyard, which took over 15 years. And it is still ongoing! The vineyard is planted to a vine density that ranges from 5,500 to 6,500 vines per hectare. The newer plantings are all at the higher levels of density |
| Harvest | Merlot: from September 7th to 27th Cabernet Franc: from October 2nd to 5th |
| Vinification/ Maturation | Separate vinification, vatting using gravity, into conical shaped stainless-steel vats with a double walled system for temperature control. Malolactic: 1/3 in new barrels and 2/3 in stainless steel vats. The wine is aged for 18 months in 52% new, French oak barrels. |
| Tasting Notes | 2018 is vibrant from the first nose thanks to its brilliant fruit. An aromatic explosion that mingles aromas of cherries with delicious notes of marzipan. Minty notes of cedar and rose provide a burst of freshness. Carried by this ethereal balance, the wine then reveals its depth and density. It is full-blooded and full-bodied, yet always elegant. The palate is broad, the tannins refined and silky. It possesses the delectable tangy sweetness of a Bakewell tart. This 2018 shows all the power and grace of a prima ballerina, lost in her art. |
| Serve with | Chateau Canon is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. |
| Cellaring | Drink 2024-2038 |
| Score/Awards | <p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2021</p> <p>96-99 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>97+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>97-99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>96 points/Cellar selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019</p> <p>17++ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - May 2019</p> <p>17++ points - Julia Harding JancisRobinson.com - October 2020</p> <p>17.5 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>91 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>89-91 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>17.5+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p>96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>96-99 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p>18+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>96 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2019</p> <p>18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2021</p> <p>18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine - June 2019</p> |
| Reviews | <p><i>"Ripe and focused, with a core of plum, black cherry and raspberry compote notes that are still a bit coiled up, though inlaid with a racy chalky spine and notes of black tea and tobacco that should all meld as it stretches out in the cellar. A restrained, refined, lengthy wine that drips with class. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2024 through 2038."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> |

Reviews *“Features a gorgeous core of plum and black currant fruit, deeply inlaid with tobacco notes and chalky minerality. Everything melds wonderfully through the finish, which is refined in feel. Merlot and Cabernet Franc.”*
- JM, Wine Spectator

“A blend of 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Franc, the 2018 Canon has a pH of 3.69 and 14% alcohol. Deep garnet-purple in color, it tumbles effortlessly out of the glass with a gorgeous perfume of candied violets, preserved plums, black cherry compote and Ceylon tea with hints of kirsch, powdered cinnamon, chocolate box and fertile loam. The medium to full-bodied palate is packed with juicy black fruit layers, supported by plush, oh-so-soft tannins and well-knit freshness, finishing long and fragrant.”

LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2018 Canon is blended of 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.69 and 14% alcohol. Deep purple black in color, it comes sashaying out of the glass with glamorous notes of cinnamon stick, baked blackberries, black cherry compote and licorice plus an undercurrent of plum preserves and smoked meats and, with coaxing, reveals a lovely floral signature of candied violets and red roses. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is wonderfully soft-spoken, whispering of fragrant floral and earthy scents beneath a core of profound, mouth-coating black and blue fruits, draped in a high level of super ripe, plush tannins, finishing with amazing freshness and perfume with loads of mineral sparks emerging.”

LPB, Wine Advocate

“Blackberries and tar with wet-earth and dark-bark aromas. Dark-chocolate and brownie notes, too. It’s full-bodied with creamy tannins and a round, caressing finish. Lovely focus and intensity, though dense and layered. Extremely creamy and polished. Really precise and bespoke. It already opens beautifully on the palate. Drink after 2025.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This is a dense and focused Canon with beautiful blackberry, almond and hazelnut character. Vivid and lifted. It’s compact and complete with tannins that melt into the center palate and then build at the end. Full-bodied yet reserved and driven. A superb and focused wine. Classy all the way. New 1955?”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This estate owned by the Chanel luxury group continues its winning streak with this latest release. Dark and firm at this stage but with obviously powerful, rich black fruits, the wine is destined for a long aging. Tannins and structure pour through dense blackberry and damson flavors, leaving room for a succulent aftertaste. Drink from 2026. *Cellar Selection* (RV)”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“This is an elegant, structured wine that is sculpted by rich fruit. Its bright acidity and great fruitiness are as important as the powerful structure. It obviously will age well and for many years. Barrel Sample: 95-97.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Mid bright crimson. Pure, intense, super-clean, fresh nose. Good, frank, unfiddled-about-with aromas though there’s still a slight sweet-oak imprint. The main feature is its freshness – and sweet floral nature. Particularly fine tannins. A lovely counterpoint to St-Émilion caricatures. Admirably long.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“50% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Certified organic. 16 months in 50% new oak, no fining. Black almost to the rim. Smells as dark as the Berliquet but immediately more refined in its lightly spiced and intense but not overly sweet cassis. Dry tannic finesse adds to the freshness. Finest grain to the tannins even though they are deep and compact. Totally embryonic and much less approachable than the Pessac’s just tasted but lovely harmony for a long future. (JH)”

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

"72% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Franc. One-third of the wine goes through malo in new oak, the rest in tank, before ageing 18 months in French oak, 52% new. pH 3.69. Barrel sample. Deep purple with bright rim. Lovely Cabernet Franc fragrance of stony/mineral pure black fruit, both restrained in character and yet aromatic. Juicy and fresh on the palate, full of energy and great finesse in the tannins. Dark, refined beauty with a tiny hint of dark chocolate on the finish. Great persistence and cool subtlety. So fresh and juicy, pure and precise. Lightly chalky tannins on the finish, no sign of the alcohol and the tannins have an underlying power. 'Les tannins reactifs', as technical director Nicolas Audebert calls them (I didn't know what he meant either), give a mouth-watering finish. Silky freshness and elegance. (JH)"
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"A beautiful Canon that performs the 360-degree trick in your mouth of expanding up, down and out. Of course, a little austere right now at this young age, but already walking the tightrope towards richness; the creaminess in the texture becomes clear after 20 minutes in the glass. This has salinity, purity, precision, and grip, showing its distinct personality and its ability to draw juice and mouthwatering expression from the fruits. Drinking Window 2026 – 2048"
- JA, Decanter.com

"Pretty closed up right now, this is full of latent energy. It's extremely powerful and precise, with poise and tension but also with generosity and density, yet it errs on the side of not giving much away rather than giving too much. You have to give it time in the glass for those cool blueberry, bilberry and tightly spiced notes to come to the fore. The stunning texture is clear, but the aromatics take their time. This is a wine that carries its finesse with great skill, and they have done a brilliant job of allowing this aspect to shine amongst the heat of the vintage, allowing the density to inch deeper with every minute in the glass. This wine just gets better and better, Harvest ran from 7 September to 9 October, the longest ever here, with no pressure of rot. 42hl/ha yield. Thomas Duclos consults."
- JA, Decanter.com

"Medium bodied, fresh, refined, sweet, soft textured red fruits provide a good entry in the Grand Vin. You can drink this now while waiting for its big brother to age and evolve."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Medium bodied, elegant, forward, soft and fresh, with ample ripe, red fruits and licorice to keep you busy, waiting for its big brother to mature."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep ruby in the glass with an opulent, perfumed nose of mocha, sweet red cherries and bramble. The palate is thick and glossy, with rounded fruits cut by fresh and vibrant acidity. The supremely refined, polished tannins bring a velveteen texture, allowing the glossy fruit and notes of milk chocolate to flesh out the palate. The finish is creamy and supple, but lifted and floral in equal measure thanks to the lift of acidity. A wine of pure cashmere and sweetness, this will drink well early and then continue to improve for decades."
- Farr Vintners

"The 2018 Canon was picked starting on September 7 and finishing on October 9. Given a two-hour decant, it reveals a surprisingly precocious bouquet, more exuberant than I recall from barrel, offering predominantly black fruit, though the floral element is now amplified and masks the crushed limestone I observed previously (for how long?) The palate delivers multilayered black cherry and blueberry fruit, wrapped up in supple tannins and such a cashmere texture that it feels deceptively approachable when in truth, it has the substance and persistence to merit long-term aging. I wagered that it is the best Canon since the watershed 2015. Don't expect me to alter that view."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2018 Canon was picked from 7 September and finished 9 October. It has an immediate bouquet with intense black fruit, crushed limestone, pressed iris flower and a soupçon of crème de cassis. It retains the freshness and delineation one seeks from this Saint-Émilien. The palate is beautifully textured on the entry: velvety tannin, fine acidity, a wine that evokes that oft used "iron fist in a velvet glove" phrase. It fans out wonderfully on the finish. This is a deeply impressive Canon that might be the best since the 2015. Brilliant. 2024 – 2055"
- NM, Vinous

Reviews

"The 2018 Canon bristles with energy, tension and explosive, vertical lift. Dark, powerful, and full of personality, Canon is magnificent in 2018. Time in the glass brings out a range of dark fruit, mineral, floral and saline notes, but readers will have to be patient in order to enjoy the 2018 at its fullest splendor. Most importantly, I am blown away by how much precision and persistence there is given the wine's concentration and overall richness. The 2018 Canon is magnificent. That's pretty much all there is to it. The blend is 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Sauvignon. Technical Director Nicolas Audebert added that he and his team left more leaf cover to protect the fruit from the extreme heat and dryness of the summer. Once in the cellar, extractions were done as gently as possible, Audebert explained. Tasted four times."

- AG, Vinous

"The Grand Vin is the 2018 Château Canon, which is based on 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Franc brought up in 52% new French oak. Its incredible bouquet delivers richness paired with amazing freshness and precision, offering loads of crème de cassis and darker berry fruits intermixed with classic Saint-Emilion chalky minerality, graphite, scorched earth, and spring flowers. Gorgeous on the palate as well, with medium to full-bodied richness, ultra-fine tannins, flawless balance, and again, this wonderful sense of freshness paired with ample richness, it needs 4-5 years of bottle age and will evolve for 30+ years. The 2009 and 2015 are still my favorite vintages of this wine, but this is up there with the best of them."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"Reminding me of a slightly fresher, more focused version of the 2009, the 2018 Château Canon boasts a deep ruby/purple color as well as awesome minerality in its smoked red and black fruits, graphite, cocoa, scorched earth, and spice box driven aromas and flavors. Deep, full-bodied, beautifully concentrated, and structured, this is a powerful Canon that's going to benefit from 4-5 years of bottle age and keep for decades. The 2018 is a blend of 72% Merlot and 28% Cabernet Franc that hit 14% natural alcohol (the pH is 3.66) and is still aging in 52% new French oak. Tasted twice."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"A very detailed Canon with super-ripe fruit but also flashes of greenness and beautiful complexity, too. The oak is under control and the length is minutes long. Concentrated and also quite closed right now, this will open beautifully over 20-30 years and I expect it to gather pace as it goes."

- MJ, matthewjukes.com