

Clos Fourtet 2017

CSPC# 831127

750mlx6

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation
Classification
Website
General Info

86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc
St. Emilion
1st Grand Cru Classé
<http://www.closfourtet.com/en/index.html>

Thanks to the geology of the Saint-Emilion plateau (chalk overlaid with aeolian sand), its fine wines boast a unique reputation, and Clos Fourtet, occupying a prime site, is among one of Saint-Emilion's oldest and most renowned estates. Medium in size (20 ha of vineyard), Clos Fourtet is built around an authentic private residence dating from the end of the Ancien Regime and itself stands at the very gates of the medieval city. It was in fact built over magnificent underground quarries where its wines are aged both in barrel and in bottle. The site itself is one of those most frequently visited and greatly admired. Throughout the 18th century, the Rulleau and de Carles families contributed largely to its growing renown, fully exploiting the land's potential. Here, thanks to the thin layer of arable soil, vines root easily, yet yield little, this "stress" being a fundamental prerequisite for the production of great wines. An exceptional terroir, the primary condition for production of a very great wine, associated with judiciously selected grape varieties cultivated in the time-honored fashion, traditional winemaking controlled by the latest techniques and finally aging in new barrels, ensure that Clos Fourtet takes its rightful place among the most highly esteemed growths in the appellation and in the region. In 1949, the Lurton family bought the château. They helped the vineyard to progress particularly the last 10 years. In 2001, Clos Fourtet has been repurchased by Philippe Cuvelier who continues the modernisation.

Winemakers
Vintage

Jean-Claude Berrouet and Stéphane Deroncourt

Clearly, 2017 Saint Emilion will always be remembered as the year of the frost. The nights of April 27 and April 28 hit temperatures of below -4 Celsius. The Right Bank has not experienced this much damage from frost since 1991.

Second generation fruit, the grapes that start growing after the frost, was successful to varying degrees. The results depended on the vineyard, terroir and good luck. The problem with those grapes is, if they reached maturity, it was not at the same time as the main harvest, so the berries needed separate vinifications. It was a lot of work especially since the percentage of second-generation grapes used is quite low. Another difficulty, or opportunity, depending on the situation was that first-generation grapes are the product of a cooler, dry growing season and the second-generation grapes received more sun, inheriting riper characteristics and higher degrees of alcohol, giving you 2 different wine styles. This is where the magic of blending comes in.

Part of the reason the frost struck with such ferocity was that it hit just after bud-break, when the plants are at their most delicate stage of development. The vineyards which survived the frost were still looking for an early, and hopefully successful harvest.

The wines offer more red fruit character and less alcohol than you find in the more recently heralded, 2016 and 2015 vintages. Most 2017 Saint Emilion wines will also offer fairly early drinking windows.

Vineyards

Thanks to the spare no expense attitude of the new owners, Clos Fourtet is doing what it takes to make the best wine possible. This effort begins in the vineyards. They practice sustainable, vine-growing methods. Grass is seeded between the rows to help reduce excess water. The soil between the vine plants is ploughed. The vines are pruned keeping two long canes, which are later de-budded to the required number of buds. De-leafing is done on the east-facing side at the end of June, and on the south-



Vineyards	<p>facing side at the end of August. Crop thinning is carried out at the beginning of the grape-colour change. As a result, the bunches are evenly spread out and well ventilated for good ripening. The 20-hectare Bordeaux vineyard of Clos Fourtet, situated a stone's throw from the village of St. Emilion right on top of the limestone plateau. The vines are planted to 85 % Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon with vines that average 30 years of age. The wine is aged for 18 months in 60% new oak barrels. There is a second wine, Closerie de Fourtet.</p>
Harvest	<p>The harvest took place September 20th to October 4th</p>
Maturation	<p>The alcoholic fermentations began within 24 hours of the berries being sent into vat. During the fermentation process, we carried out 10 pigeages (punching down the cap) during the middle part of the process, so as to gain a good extraction. The vatting period lasted on average 28 days. The wine is vinified traditionally and is aged in oak barriques (80% new) for 18 months. It is bottled unfiltered.</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>Beautiful and delicately polished, the aromatic bouquet exudes intense minerality, the typical footprint of limestone terroirs. Fragrances of flowers and dried herbs appear when the wine is swirled, while the fruit displays its brilliance and purity through notes of black cherry and blackberry. Truly elegant, this Cru delivers a structured palate of great precision. Fine, ripe tannins glide across the palate, extending into a lingering finish that retains a minerality with savoury notes. A sublime expression of the great terroir of Saint-Émilion.</p>
Serve with	<p>Clos Fourtet is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes. Clos Fourtet is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms and pasta.</p>
Production	<p>3,333 cases made</p>
Cellaring	<p>Drink 2022-2038</p>
Scores/Awards	<p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2020 93-96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 2018 93+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2020 92-94 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate #236 - April 2018 94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2020 94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2018 96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2020 15.5 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2019 16 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2018 94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2018 95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2018 15.5 points - Farr Vintner - April 2018 89-91 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2018 93+ points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2020 92-94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2018 96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2020 92-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2018 96 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2020 17+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2018 93 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Very pure, with clearly defined plum, blackberry and black cherry preserve flavors gliding through, gently infused with anise and black tea details along the way. The fruit is so seductive you might miss the sneaky, graphite-edged grip that builds through the finish, promising solid cellaring potential. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2022 through 2038. 3,333 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Intense, with blackberry, cassis and boysenberry puree notes racing through, inlaid with subtle anise and black tea details. Offers a gorgeous feel, with a long, fine-grained chalky spine buried on the finish. A beauty. 3,333 cases made"</i> - JS, Wine Spectator</p>

- Reviews** *“Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2017 Clos Fourtet is profoundly scented of baked blackberries, plum preserves, mulberries and kirsch with hints of cedar chest, iron ore and tapenade plus a waft of smoked meats. Medium-bodied, the palate is laden with earthy/savory nuances, supported by finely grained tannins and loads of freshness, finishing long and earthy. The blend is 90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Franc. It was aged for 16 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. 2021-2041.”*
- LPB, Wine Advocate
- “Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2017 Clos Fourtet is scented of crème de cassis, blueberry compote and plum preserves with touches of hoisin, truffles and dark chocolate plus a waft of anise. Medium to full-bodied, the generous fruit is plushy textured with great freshness, finishing long and spicy.”*
- LPB, Wine Advocate
- “This has a level of composure and energetic fruit on the palate that sets it above the rest in 2017. The nose has fresh blue fruit and hints of graphite and slate. The palate is succulent and juicy, right through to the very long finish. Drink or hold.”*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “A very sexy young wine with a solid center palate and refined, integrated tannins. Medium body. Everything is in the right place.”*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “This dark, smoky wine comes from a vineyard close to the walls of Saint-Emilion. The smokiness goes with the impressive core of dry tannins and concentrated structure that supports the rich blackberry flavors. The wine is going to age well; drink from 2024.”*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- “86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc. Deep crimson. Not giving much away on the nose, just slightly dark and charry. Rocky and really dark. Firm and pretty chewy on the palate. Tannins are smooth and dense and build to overpower the fruit. Could do with a little more freshness and energy. (JH)”*
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- “Black core with purple rim. Sweet and a little charry on the nose. A little less fruit on the palate than I expected from the aroma. Tannins are chalky but hold a firm grip and this needs time. But there's fruit at the core. Drink 2024-2030”*
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- “Good quality with depth of complexity and layers. An excellent Clos Fourtet that really lives up to the success of recent vintages, if not quite at the level of its 2015 and 2016. Damson, dark chocolate and saline notes are bolstered by extremely dark fruits that have the juice to carry them through the mid-palate, the oak supporting rather than overwhelming. There's a slight austerity and savoury edge to the fruit that speaks of 2017, but this is easily hitting the heights of St-Émilion in this vintage. (JA)”*
- JA, Decanter
- “For a magnificent opening there is a crushed rock nature, followed by a mixed bouquet of flowers, licorice and red berries. With a lovely dense color, this is grand and ornate yet bright and zippy, the fruit flows along perfectly from the attack to the finish. The wine was made from blending 86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 4% Cabernet Sauvignon, reaching 14% alcohol”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

"Picked September 20th to October 4th. The blend is 86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Cabernet Franc. 30% of the crop was lost to frost, 10% to lower yields and 10% to selection so the final crop is half the normal amount with only 2500 cases to be produced. A deep, inky purple in the glass, this is very ripe on the nose with mocha and kirsch. The palate is quite heavily extracted with dense, chewy, mouthcoating tannins tempering the sweet, jammy, plush fruits. Though this is clearly a modern style that relies on ripeness and extraction, it has been done without harming the balance of the wine or seeming forced. A creamy, opulent, and perhaps international style of Bordeaux, but very well made."

- Farr Vintners

"The fruit feels ripe the nose is sweet with depth the palate a rich ripe mix of mainly black fruits. Lighter at the back bilberry and bramble balance and refresh but it fills out on the finish with depth of fruit. 2024-31"

- Derek Smedley MW

"The 2017 Clos Fourtet has a refined and very pure bouquet, perhaps one that is more discrete than recent vintages with finely tuned blackberry, raspberry, cassis and mineral scents. Light violet aromas surface with continued aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins that impart a satin-like texture. This is a seamless Saint-Émilion with a plush and seductive finish of blueberry and cassis fruit. It is very primal of course, so give it several years to evolve secondary aromas and flavours. The Cuvelier family have overseen a Saint-Émilion endowed with great potential. 93+"

- NM, Vinous

"The 2017 Clos Fourtet has a powerful, almost burly bouquet with upfront, quite bold blackberry, raspberry and strawberry fruit that maybe miss the precision of some of the appellation's more elegant offerings. There is just a touch of cassis and violet that emerges with continued aeration. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannin, more rounded in texture than its peers. There is impressive volume towards the finish that is uncommon in this vintage, but you have to just stand back and admire its persistence. Drink 2023-2045."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2017 Clos Fourtet is vivid, rich and super-expressive. Beams of salinity give the 2017 its energy and shape. In the glass, the 2017 is wonderfully vivid and nuanced. Lavender, mint, blue fruits and blood orange all build into the beautifully layered, exquisite finish. In 2017, Clos Fourtet is all class. This is a terrific showing from the Cuvelier family. (AG)"

- AG, Vinous

"The 2017 Clos Fourtet is very good, but also very tightly wound. Powerful and tannic, the 2017 is likely to require many years to come in its own. Today, the 2017 is certainly less charming than some recent vintages and other 2017 Saint-Émilions. There is certainly no lack of depth or concentration. The dark red/purplish berry fruit rose petal and lavender flavors are very nicely delineated. Clos Fourtet is one of the wines that improved over the two weeks I followed it. I won't be surprised if it is even better from bottle."

- AG, Vinous

"Checking in as a blend of 86% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Cabernet Franc, the 2017 Chateau Clos Fourtet comes all from the upper limestone plateau and spent 18 months in 60% new French oak. This deep ruby/purple-hued effort offers a rocking perfume of ripe black raspberries, cassis, crushed stone, chocolate, and flowery incense. Powerful, full-bodied, and concentrated on the palate, it's beautifully done, has ripe, present tannins, and a great finish. It ranks with the gems in this solid vintage and will benefit from just short-term cellaring and cruise for 20-25 years or more in cold cellars."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"A very aromatic and oaky wine, with a large volume of fruit, too, this is a slightly angular and tense creation, but it is certainly on the right track. The overall feel is of a dark and powerful wine and this doesn't quite fit with the 'shape' of the vintage, but there is some compromise here and this is a decent effort."

- MJ, matthewjukes.com
