Château Figeac 2020

CSPC# 813879

750mlx6

Grape Variety Appellation Classification Website General Info 37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon St. Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé http://www.chateau-figeac.com/index_en.php

13.9% alc./vol.

Figeac is a very ancient estate, going back at least as far as the 2nd century AD, during the Gallo-Roman period, when a certain Figeacus gave his name to a villa he built on this location. The site has been continually inhabited ever since then, as proved by vestiges: a water-supply system dating from the Gallo-Roman period, foundations of buildings from the Middle Ages with defensive walls, and the remains of a Renaissance chateau reflected in the present-day chateau's great door and tower. Figeac belonged to the same family for more than 500 years and was nearly 200 hectares by the late 18th century. Unfortunately, the estate was sold a number of times in the 19th century. Successive owners sold numerous plots, which explains the birth of various chateaux that amended the name Figeac to their own. However, Figeac continues to be the largest estate in the commune of Saint-Emilion, with 40 hectares of vines. The central part of the chateau, built in a very pure, classical architectural style, dates from the late 18th century.

One of the great names and terroirs of Saint Emilion whose wines exude class and sophistication rather than raw power. There have been some serious improvements here recently under winemaker Frédéric Faye. Michel Rolland has been brought in to consult - but not to change the unique Figeac style. Modern techniques such as vibrating sorting tables, destemming and an optical laser sorting line are being used, as well as 100% new oak barrels from 7 different coopers. As a consequence, the wines produced now seem a little riper and more polished than before but are still fine, pure and classic. Unusually for the right bank there is only 30% Merlot in the vineyard with 35% Cabernet Franc and - rare on the right bank - 35% Cabernet Sauvignon. Valmy Nicolas from La Conseillante has been brought in to sort out the commercial side. A sizeable part of production is relegated to the second label - Petit Figeac. After two stunning vintages in 2015 and 2016 Figeac is one of the hottest properties in Bordeaux. The 2018 harvest lasted nearly a month from the picking of the first Merlot to the last Cabernet. The blend is 37% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 33% Cabernet Sauvignon with a yield of 39 hl/ha and 100% new oak. 14 degrees. 10,000 cases with 4500 of Petit Figeac. Frederic compares this wine to his magnificent 2016 but describes it as being "more crystalline and focused".





Winemakers

Vintage

After a remarkably rainy autumn, the winter months were warm and dry. Mild temperatures continued throughout a wet spring which replenished the water reserves necessary for the vines during the summer months. These conditions were conducive to early budding and shooting in the vines, which elevated the danger posed by frost on a number of nights— but all damage was avoided thanks to the expert management by the team. Bud-break took place between March 15th and 21st, some two weeks ahead of normal schedule. Subsequent cool, rainy spells in April and May increased fungal disease pressure. Constant work by our vineyard team to ward off the threat maintained the vineyard in perfect health without departing from our environmental commitments.

Flowering took place in optimal conditions in hot, dry weather around May 14th, two weeks ahead of the tenyear average, making 2020 one of the most precocious vine cycles on record.

Despite cooler temperatures in June, the vines maintained their pace, and the veraison process began in mid-July during very hot weather and drought conditions.

A heatwave without water-deficit stress: making strategic choices

Frédéric Faye. Michel Rolland consults.

The summer was hot and several heatwaves; highs reached over 40°C on August 7th.



Vintage Over 54 days, between June 19th and August 11th, only 6.5mm (a quarter of an inch) of rain was recorded. Good canopy management choices (a light de-leafing, superficial ploughing, and green harvesting adapted to the potential of each individual vine) enabled each plot to advance comfortably through its own vegetative cycle.

By the beginning of August, all the bunches had undergone véraison. Despite bouts of sweltering heat, the vines did not show any obvious signs of water stress. The vines' deep root systems ensured a constant supply of water, which allowed the grapes to continue ripening uninterrupted.

The ripening process in August took place in ideal weather conditions: high temperatures, long periods of sunshine and cooler nights than in July. This sped up the accumulation of sugars in the pulp and anthocyanins in the skins, while at the same time slowing the decomposition of acids. Surprisingly, the pips were ripe from the month of August.

Harvest began on September 4th and took place over four weeks, with the effect of their choices on the final wine always in mind. The aromatic freshness of the berries was preserved by harvesting certain plots of each variety early, while other parcels were given more time on the vine to bring flesh and texture to the wine.

Vineyards Figeac is owned by Thierry Manoncourt and is located in the north-west of the appellation with its vineyards adjoining those of Cheval Blanc. Its 40 hectares of vineyards (Cabernet Sauvignon 35%, Merlot 30%, Cabernet Franc 35%) lie on a deep, Médoc-like gravel topsoil ('Graves') over a flinty, iron-rich subsoil. with the vines averaging about 35 years of age and sitting at a density of 6000 vines/ha. Evidence for this selection of varieties comes not from mere opinion, but from the work of Thierry Manoncourt who, for many decades, would bottle some of the Figeac wines unblended so that he could assess how wines from different grape varieties and different portions of the vineyard matured in bottle.

Harvest From September 4th to October 1st

Vinification/ In the vat room, a gentle, sulphur-free vinification was carried out according to the phenolic ripeness of the grapes. Each vat had its own vinification itinerary in order to bring out the best in this great vintage. The raw material was treated with great respect and never forced.

- Tasting NotesFigeac: a name that shines brightly and echoes among lovers of fine Saint-Emilion wines all over the world. Two
syllables which tell the story of one of the brightest stars in the wine firmament. As it slides into the glass, Figeac
murmurs like the most outstanding voice of its appellation, with exactly the right tessitura if you know how to
pitch it, and a touch of graphite to give it an edge; the energy infused with elegance becomes persistent,
reflecting Figeac's desire to be enjoyed again and again. The true dimension of the wine appears with time, as
notes of subtly spiced cedarwood offer the absolute quintessence of what a great wine is all about.
Château-Figeac 2020: the symphony continues. The 2020 vintage will be long remembered as a year of strategic
choices and adaptation to difficult weather conditions: a long spell of mild temperatures in winter, summer
heat-waves, and unusually variable rainfall. The 2020 growing cycle at Château-Figeac was two to three weeks
precocious from budding through harvest.
- Serve with Chateau Figeac is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Figeac is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.

Production 12,480 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2030-2065

Scores/Awards

96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023 100 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023 96-98+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021 99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023 **100 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023 97-98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021 97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021 **17.5+ points** - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021 98 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023 98 points - PK, Decanter.com - January 2023 96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021 98 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023 **99 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023 97-99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021 95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021 95-97 points - Farr Vintners - May 2021 97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023

Scores/Awards96-98 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 202196 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - December 202295-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 202198 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 202396-98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 202196 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 202196-98 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 202197-98 points - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021

Reviews

"A broad-shouldered wine that captures the vintage's heat well in a core of cassis and blackberry fruit flavors, which are dotted with lively savory, tobacco leaf and warm earth accents. Reveals a tarry, grippy edge as well as polish as this pulls deeply from its terroir, leaving an echo of warm paving stone at the very end. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2030 through 2040. 12,480 cases made."
JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2020 Figeac is the finest wine that has been bottled to date at this estate since its renaissance began a decade ago. Wafting from the glass with aromas of blackberries and raspberries mingled with cigar wrapper, pencil shavings, licorice and black truffles, it's medium to full-bodied, deep and concentrated, with a suave, harmonious profile, vibrant acids, and beautifully refined structuring tannins. This sapid, complex wine represents the essence of this great terroir. Two years after extensive soil studies of the estate were carried out, and the first growing season to see cover crops used in the vineyards year-round, the 2020 benefited from more coherently demarcated parcels and more precise élevage, which taken together help to account for its edge over the excellent 2019.

Director of Château Figeac since 2013, Frédéric Faye emphasizes precision and timing when he characterizes the estate's evolution over the last decade. Harvest now lasts three or four weeks, stopping and starting, so each parcel of this 41-hectare vineyard can be picked at optimal maturity. Farming is similarly adapted parcel by parcel, with year-round cover crops and cultivation by horse to minimize soil compaction. And a brand new winery triples the team's working space, with small tanks so each parcel can be vinified separately. Yet the objective is, to perfect Figeac, not to change it. If the estate's wines are now suppler and fuller, their classically Cabernet-rich assemblage hasn't altered. Old-fashioned approaches such as submerged cap fermentation for fruit growing on gravel soils have been retained. And of course, the estate's distinctive and complex terroir hasn't changed."

- WK, Wine Advocate

"The 2020 Figeac is a blend of 37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc and 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, weighing in with an alcohol of 13.9% and a pH of 3.7. Opaque purple-black colored, it bursts from the glass with a beautifully vibrant initial wave of pure, pristine black fruits: fresh black cherries, juicy black plums, and ripe blackcurrants. With swirling, a whole array of floral and spice notes is unleashed: lavender, ground cloves, cumin seed, cardamom and rose oil. The medium-bodied palate is surprisingly graceful for the intensity of aromas, featuring ethereal, perfumed black berry notes, framed by a seamless line of freshness and ripe, grainy tannins, finishing on a lingering fragrant earth note. Far more cerebral and quietly introspective than it is hedonic, this could only be Figeac.

So, I caught up with Frédéric Faye on a Zoom call from his Paris hotel room, where he was participating in very detailed (and, no doubt, extremely heated) discussions surrounding the forthcoming Saint-Émilion reclassification. As a reminder, Figeac has been ranked Premier Grand Cru Classé B since the very first classification, in 1955. But given recent changes—30% of the vineyard replanted since 2009 and a whole new winery—and its clear upward trajectory in quality in recent years, all eyes are now pointed toward the realm of Premier Grand Cru Classé A for this estate. I got stressed just imagining how stressed Faye must have been. If he was about to spontaneously combust, it certainly didn't show. "Everyone thinks that if you have a drought, it must be bad for Figeac," Faye began. "But we have a lot of clay in our soils, and we have a lot of older vines. Still, this vintage was not really easy. The weather conditions were extreme. The Cabernet Franc started to suffer—but then the little bit of rain in August finally pushed the Cabernet Franc through veraison. It was one of our longest harvests ever. We harvested over five weeks! We started on 4th September with just one plot of Merlot—to maintain that freshness. Then we waited. I knew what I wanted. We are a large estate, and we have a lot of plots, so I need to begin to do the blending in the vineyard. In the end, it was a vintage of terroir and of

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Reviews decisions—human decisions." As a reminder, Figeac is a little unique in its blend, being composed of nearly equal parts Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. This year, the blend has a plush, juiciness from the Merlot, a brightness from the Cabernet Franc and a taut, structural element from the Cabernet Sauvignon, all knitted together beautifully and truly singing, "FIGEAC!," loud and clear. Deliciousness aside, it's a wine I highly recommend for this evocative attribute alone.

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"The 2020 Figeac has a deep garnet-purple color. It is completely shut-down and silent to begin, requiring a vigorous shake to release nuances of boysenberries, Morello cherries, fresh, crunchy plums, and sassafras, followed by an emerging waft of plum preserves, licorice, chargrill, and violets. The medium-bodied palate is so, so tightly knit, delivering a millefeuille of black and red berries, minerals, earth, and floral notes, with electric tension and very fine-grained, exquisitely ripe tannins, finishing long, long, long. Atomic!"

"A mesmerizing nose here with flowers such as violets and red roses, then shows cherries and currants with some mineral and black truffles. Full-bodied yet so refined and harmonized with ultra-fine tannins that run the length of the wine. Flavors of perfectly ripened fruit (al dente) with a hazelnut character that comes from the seeds. Incredibly transparent young red. Breathtaking. Drink after 2028 and onwards. Magnificent." - JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is a really sophisticated young wine with tobacco, crushed stone, currants and dark chocolate on the nose, following through to a medium to full body with intense yet linear tannins and a spicy, fresh finish. Some cloves and black pepper. Graphite at the end. Very long." - JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Fantastic black currant aromas from the Cabernet Sauvignon feed into perfumed Cabernet Franc. The result is a wine that is structured with powerful tannins under the joyous floral fruits. This is a wine with considerable potential while at the same time showing a fresh finish." - RV, Wine Enthusiast

"37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon. 77% of production. Cask sample. Gentle, juicy, and pure with nothing overdone. Merlot provides the broad-brush sweetness on attack, the Cabernet the fresh, minerally notes on the finish. Fine grain of tannin and aromatic complexity on the nose and palate; the finesse is there. (JL) Drink 2028 – 2045."

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

"A ripe, herbal-edged nose full of Cabernet Franc perfumed florality; violets, plums, black cherries, and figs. Compelling weight on the palate, this has density and drive from the first sip with tannins that are really well integrated but have more of a juicy, high-acid edge than overtly plush, with a soft chalkiness and real mineral vein - the graphite, wet stone edges giving clear terroir markers. Lots of tension here, direct, and focused; you can feel the sculpting but there's lots of energy too – such liveliness underpinning the serious core and wide, firm structure. Poised, layered and complex, a lot is going on with cinnamon, clove, and cedar on the finish. A total knock-out where each sip gives a slightly different facet building to an impressive whole. Such is Figeac's power of seduction, this makes you want to sit with it for a while marveling at the complexity with a smile on your face. A Figeac that you're going to have to wait for, and just have lots of the excellent Petit Figeac in the meantime!" - GH, Decanter.com

"The finesse, elegance and density counted among the top 2020s tasted, at a horizontal for the vintage by Millésima in Bordeaux. Glorious and bright, with amazing depth and focus, this wine blends 37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc and 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, revealing wonderful primary plum, blackberry, juicy black cherry and spring flowers, leafy tobacco and cardamon and cedar spice. At once full bodied and elegant, with smooth tannin and a very long finish, it seamlessly combines Merlot driven juicy opulence with structure and freshness from the Cabernets."

- PK, Decanter.com

"This delivers concentration and intensity, a ton of black fruits, definitely Cabernet dominant in terms of fruit, and its slightly serious character, with a whoosh of juice on the finish. An extremely elegant and controlled wine, with savoury bilberry and loganberry, then peony and tobacco leaf as it opens. Tannins are finely layered but there are a lot of them. Not an exuberant Figeac, but this is rarely a wine that rushes out to seduce, it takes its **Reviews** time and has ageing potential in spades. The gravel soils in the drought of the summer meant the grapes slowed their ripening process, although only the youngest vines suffered blockages, and that combined with the high Cabernet content of Figeac means lower alcohols than the past few years, giving a classic balance and a feeling of effortless success. 75% of the production went into the first wine. Harvest September 4 to October 1, a full five weeks. Their final yield here was around 37hl/ha, (higher than in 2019 at Figeac, which was 34hl/ha). As with on the Left Bank, the Cabernet Sauvignons were the lowest yield (30hl/ha), with tiny berries so had to be careful with the extraction. First vintage in the new cellars. Drinking Window 2029 – 2046." - JA, Decanter.com

"The first vintage that can have the new Premier Grand Cru Classé A on the label, and it's a confident showing straight out of the gate. Barely puts a foot wrong as the concentrated nature of this wine En Primeur begin to melt into a creamier expression of raspberry, blackberry, and cassis fruits, studded with turmeric, cardamon, white pepper, peony, tobacco leaf, pomegranate, liquorice, and smoked earth. 75% of the production in the 1st wine, harvest a long and leisurely five weeks from September 4 to October 1. 37hl/ha. An up score." - JA, janeanson.com

"The purity, elegance, refinement, and walls of perfectly ripe, sweet, sensuous fruits are almost off the charts here! Aromatically, the floral bouquet with accents of espresso, black plums, cherries, black raspberries, spice, licorice, and wet earth can keep any taster busy for ages. But the magic really hits you when the wine begins caressing your palate with its opulent, luscious, silky, velvet-drenched layers of fruit, and freshness which steals the show. The seamless, 60-second plus finish is riveting, inspiring you to go back for another sniff, swirl, and sip for the pleasure of it. I do not often drink when tasting. But we finished every drop of this bottle. This is a serious candidate for triple-digit perfection after a decade of aging. Drink from 2027-2065." - JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Roses, tobacco leaf, oak, black raspberries, spice, black currants, and plum aromas are all over the place. Incredibly silky on the palate, the wine is fresh and focused on its purity and precision. Elegant, gentle, and refined, the sweet, ripe cherries come in waves, building in length and intensity from the mid-palate through the finish, which lasts almost 50 seconds. The wine is effortless to drink. This should age and evolve for decades. The wine blends 37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc and 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13.9% ABV, 3.7 pH. Picking took place September 4, October1, making it one of the longest harvests in the history of the estate." - JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep ruby-purple colour. Intense blue and black fruit with smoky, rich spices underneath. The palate is muscular and driven, with real vertical power and intense, vibrant blue fruit at the core. There is a lithe juiciness about the fruit, with mineral, savoury depth. Dried herbs, toasted spices and exotic spices add richness and further power through the mid palate before a long, complex, and harmonious finish. This is a wonderfully proportioned, age worthy Figeac."

- Farr Vintners

"The 2020 Figeac was bottled in mid-July. It has an exquisite bouquet that unfolds effortlessly in the glass with blackberry, crushed stone, graphite, and fresh fig scents. It blossoms with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with slightly edgy tannins on the entry that frame the pure black fruit. It's very harmonious and silky smooth in texture that almost disguises what Frédéric Faye terms the "verticality" of the wine. Fresh and saline on the finish with just a light black pepper touch on the aftertaste. An absolute treat. Drink 2030-2065." - NM, Vinous

"The 2020 Figeac was picked from September 4 to October 1 and underwent vinification free of SO2. Deep purple in color, it is initially backward and sultry on the nose, necessitating 60 minutes before it really opens. It then reveals intense scents of cranberry, raspberry, and touches of cassis intermingling with white pepper. Given that the Cabernets comprise 63% of the blend, this has a typical Left Bank personality but with Right Bank precocity. The palate conveys a sense of vibrancy and vigor on the entry, a dash of black pepper and allspice mingling with the mélange of red and black fruit. The tannins are satin-like in texture, and there's dark berry fruit and hints of pencil lead and black truffle shavings toward the Pomerol-like finish. This is a magnificent Figeac from head



Reviews winemaker Frédéric Faye and his team. This sample really came into its own 2–3 hours after opening. 2030 – 2065."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2020 Figeac is incredibly polished and refined. Bright saline underpinnings and lively acids shape the 2020 beautifully, lending notable energy throughout. This is the last vintage made in the transitional cellar before the new winery became operational with the 2021 vintage. My only question mark is the slightly gritty quality in the tannins that lurk beneath. There's terrific purity and drive, though. Figeac is a wine of saline tension and energy more than size. The 2020 will need a number of years in bottle to be at its best." - AG, Vinous

"A super-classic wine, the 2020 Figeac sizzles with vertical energy. The château has made a number of tremendous wines in recent vintages, but I don't remember a Figeac with this much saline-drenched intensity and mineral drive. The 2020 is superb, but it won't be ready to drink anytime soon. The mixture of soil types and varieties, with the high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, that is such a signature here, was a huge help in maintaining balance and energy in the wine. Technical Director Frédéric Faye certainly seems to have gotten the most out of the vintage."

- AG, Vinous

"The Grand Vin 2020 Château Figeac checks in as 37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc, and 31% Cabernet Sauvignon that spent 18 months in new barrels. They also utilize plenty of press wine, and the 2020 has 8% in the blend. Straight-up awesome aromatics of crème de cassis, ripe black cherries, iron, spring flowers, and an almost bloody, salty character emerge from the glass, and it's full-bodied, with a seamless mouthfeel, gorgeous tannins, plenty of mid-palate depth, and absolutely perfectly integrated oak. It's still tight and reserved, which is certainly the vintage, so do your best to hide these in the cellar. It should hit the early stages of its prime drinking window in 8-10 years and will have 30+ of overall longevity. It will unquestionably flirt with perfection at maturity. 98+." - Jeb Dunnuck

"I loved the 2020 Château Figeac, and this beauty offers everything you could want from this site, revealing a dense purple/ruby color to go with gorgeous notes of cassis, tobacco, sappy herbs, and spring flowers as well as an almost Pauillac lead pencil note that develops with time in the glass. A blend of 37% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Franc, and 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, it's full-bodied and has perfect balance, ultra-fine tannins, and a great, great finish. It brings ample power yet has a weightless elegance and riveting precision reminiscent of the 2016. Don't miss it."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"Deep ruby colour with opaque core, purple reflections. On the nose subtle hints of spicy oak, tobacco cedar, dark berry fruit, a hint of liquorice and cassis. The palate is complex and shows juicy, ripe cherries and wellintegrated tannins, nougat, and pepper. Very lasting, salty finish, great ageing potential." - PM, Falstaff Magazine

"Ripe but fresh fruit, gentle extraction, great richness of tannin, almost a hint of smokiness, stony with graphite, good nuance between red and dark fruit from the three varieties. Very dense and concentrated with immense but ripe tannin adding a lot of freshness, delicate fruit and good oak intake followed by an impressively long and powerful finish."

- AL, Tasted.com

"(37% M, 32% CF, 31% CS; 77% harvest; 13.9% ABV; 100% new)

Dense, richly blackcurrant-ripe and mineral-saturated, rich, ripe, and fresh to smell; concentrated, vigorous, firmly but finely tannic, a superb balance; a dense, compact, vivid wine, sweet, vital, racy, and mineral, beautifully sustained and carried across a very long palate, and with an aroma and fruit finish that mirrors all that has gone before. Figeac's roughly one-third-each blend here is a clear Right Bank bonus in the current climate, so here there is Cabernet Franc floral subtlety, Cabernet Sauvignon tension and complexity, and, of course, that core Merlot flesh. This is the third great wine in a magnificent trio, brimming with class, scope, and finesse. Great, glorious, beautiful Figeac. Should already be lovely within the decade, and then for three more and beyond. 2030–60+."

- MS, The World of Fine Wine