

Château Fonplégade 2019

CSPC# 881221

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Saint-Emilion

Classification

Grand Cru Classé

Website

<https://www.fonplegade.com/Home>

Sustainability

Biodynamic

General Info

The name Fonplegade was inspired by the terroir. Fonplegade means full or bent fountain. It was derived from the natural fountain, located close to the center of the vineyard which supports numerous, small, running springs in various bent and twisted shapes that are located on the estate.

Skipping ahead about 1,500 years, in 1852, Jean-Pierre Beylot purchased Chateau Fonplegade. Beylot built the magnificent chateau that is still on the Fonplegade property today. In 1863, Chateau Fonplegade was sold to the Duke of Morny. Morny was the stepbrother of Napoleon the 3rd.

The Moueix family purchased the estate in 1953. Things changed again most recently in 2004 when Denise Adams and Stephen Adams bought the Right Bank vineyard of Chateau Fonplegade for 30 million Euros from Armand Moueix. After a complete and very, expensive renovation of the Chateau Fonplegade chateau, cellars and wine making facilities, they also replanted large portions of the vineyards. Next, the Adams family started taking a different approach with their vineyard management techniques.

They began a biodynamic, farming program starting with the 2009 vintage. They were certified organic in 2013. Michel Rolland was the first consultant they hired. In 2015, they also brought in the team of Stephane Derenoncourt to help consult in the vineyard management and winemaking along with Corinne Comme.

Winemakers

Corinne Comme winemaker. Stéphane Derenoncourt consults.

Sustainability

Certified organic in 2013.

Vintage

In 2019, early budding was followed by a sporadically wet and cool April, May, and June. This meant uneven flowering in early June, but from mid-June onwards the weather turned dry and hot, leading to successful fruit set.

July was mainly dry but with some storms. This meant the gravel terraces of the Médoc and limestone soils in general had no problems getting the right kind of hydric stress, but more water-logged soils found it tougher.

August and September were hot and dry, so ripening and harvest were successful, except for certain cases of extreme water stress on the driest soils, which saw some bunches shrivel in early September.

June right through to October saw higher temperatures than average. Rain from 20 September onwards allowed the Merlots to ripen, often with high alcohol, and Cabernet did particularly well because the rains meant their ripening could go on for longer, lowering alcohols and allowing for more 'normal' development after the hot weather.

Vineyards

Château Fonplegade represents the purest and most typical expression of our terroir. Enriched with a mosaic of ideal soils and a wonderful diversity of geology and geography, our vineyard is divided into 27 parcels on 45.5 acres. These hand-farmed blocks comprise the artist's palette of our terroir, providing a wealth of flavor components for the development of our wines.

Harvest

The harvest took place September 20 to October 5

Vinification/ Maturation

To produce the wine of Chateau Fonplégade, the fruit is whole berry fermented, following a cold maceration for 5 days. The wine is vinified in 6, thermo regulated, large, 95 hectoliter oak vats and 2, 55 hectoliter oak tanks. 5% of the wine is barrel fermented in 500-liter oak barrels using the micro vinification process. 30% of the wine is vinified in conical shaped, cement vats.

90% of the Malolactic fermentation takes place in 60% new, French oak barrels, with the remaining 10% going through malolactic in cement, egg shaped tanks.



The wine is aged 60% new, French oak barrels and the egg-shaped tanks for an average of 18 months, depending on the quality and character of the vintage.

Tasting Notes With an impeccable balance between fruit, complexity and aromatic length, this wine is characterized by a sophisticated minerality, consistent from year to year, with soft and supple tannins and a velvety texture. It is made from the estate's oldest vines, meticulously hand-farmed using organic and biodynamic practices to bring out the finest quality in each cluster. Predominantly Merlot, the blend includes just enough Cabernet Franc to imbue the wine with an elegant tannic structure.

Serve with Chateau Fonplegade is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau Fonplegade is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes.

Production 3,000 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2025 – 2040.

Scores/Awards **92 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022
91 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022
93-95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - June 2020
93 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - April 2022
95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2022
95-96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - June 2020
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - October 2022
91-93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2020
94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2022
95 points - Panos Kakaviatos, Decanter.com - April 2022
94 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022
87 points - Decanter World Wine Awards (score only) - January 2022
93-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 2020
92-94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - June 2020
95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2022
94 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2022
93-95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2020
90 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - February 2022
94 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - February 2022
94 points - Vert de Vin - February 2022

Reviews *"Shows the thickly textured dark fruit of the vintage, with steeped plum and blackberry notes cruising through slowly, carried by alder, loam, and tobacco threads. Gains nuance as it airs in the glass, showing light chalky minerality for energy and balance in the process. Approachable but no rush. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2036. 3,000 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Aromas of ripe cherries, licorice, crème de cassis, burning embers and loamy soil introduce the 2019 Fonplegade, a medium to full-bodied, muscular wine that's rich and powerful, reflecting its clay-rich soils. It's a fleshy, generous wine that represents a fine success in a more impactful style. (WK)"
- WK, Wine Advocate

"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2019 Fonplegade charges out of the gate with bold scents of crushed black cherries, mulberries, blueberry pie and violets with hints of dark chocolate, black olives, and cast-iron pan with a waft of woodsmoke. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has a solid structure of firm, finely grained tannins and tons of freshness supporting the densely packed, muscular black fruits, finishing long and energetic."
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Plums, dark cherries, blueberries, cedar, amber, dried herbs, and baking spices on the nose. Full-bodied with plush tannins. Structured, balanced, and intense. It has a polished, rich core of dark and blue fruit and a long, flavorful finish. Wait for the oak spice to integrate. Drink from 2025."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A very ripe and juicy red with lots of pure crushed berries, from raspberries to strawberries. It's full-bodied with round, soft tannins, and a long, creamy-textured finish. The purity of fruit is exceptional. From biodynamically farmed grapes."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

Reviews *"A fine texture with rich tannins and powerful structure gives this wine its richness. The wine, under the ownership of Californians Denise and Stephen Adams, is concentrated and juicy, super ripe, a sign of the high proportion of Merlot in the blend, and full-bodied. Organic and biodynamic."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"This is a rich and dense wine that shows the ripeness of the fruit of this vintage. It has structure to back up the ripe berry flavors, while the intense acidity promises aging over the long-term. (RV)"
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Silky, rich, juicy blueberry and raspberry fruits, this is good quality and will age. It's less immediately voluptuous than the 2018, acidity seems a little higher, giving elegance and balance, with a mint leaf edge that gives a lovely cooling finish from an estate that is going from strength to strength. A yield of 35hl/ha. Drinking Window 2027 – 2040"
- JA, Decanter.com

"Gorgeous aromatics include cherry, aniseed, and menthol freshness, in a medium-bodied palate evoking Burgundian refinement. There is a whiff of oak in the initial, powerful attack, but then the wine broadly coats the palate with violet, plum, cherry and lead pencil aspects, exhibiting fresh notes in its vinous palate. A long finish. Clearly of high caliber. (PK)"
- PK, Decanter.com

"Fragrant violet and peony floral notes that hug the palate from beginning to end, adding a lightness of touch to the density and flesh of the damson and raspberry fruits. I noted en Primeur that there is less generosity than in the 2018 vintage, and that is still true, but there is a ton of finesse and balance, and it effortlessly eats up the high alcohols. Love this. Derenoncourt consultant since 2015 with Michel Rolland, and since 2019 just Derenoncourt. 10% amphoras. Tasted twice." (11/2021)"
- JA, Inside Bordeaux

"Black raspberries, plums, flowers, smoke, crushed rocks, vanilla, and stones open the nose. On the palate, you find silky tannins, sweet red, polished, soft, ripe fruits that express purity over power. Medium-bodied and finesse in style, give this 6-8 years in the cellar before opening a bottle to allow for more nuances to develop. The wine was made from a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc and reached 14.5% alcohol. The harvest took place September 20 to October 5."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2019 Fonplégade is fabulous. Rich, deep and expansive on the palate, the 2019 possesses tremendous depth and resonance in every dimension. Inky dark fruit, chocolate, licorice, spice, new leather and dried flowers all build in a sumptuous, ripe, dense wine. The 2019 is exotically rich, yet not at all overdone. In 2019 Fonplégade is a real standout. This estate, owned by Denise and Stephen Adams, and now farmed biodynamically, is very clearly on the rise."
- NM, Vinous

"My sample of 2019 Fonplégade came direct from the property. There is a lot going on aromatically with high-toned black cherries intermingling with incense, kirsch, and desiccated orange peel aromas. Fortunately, it manages to maintain both focus and delineation. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins that lend this Saint-Émilien a corpulence that belies the structure that becomes tangible on the light grippy, quite spicy finish. This is a very well-crafted Fonplégade, less ostentatious than previous vintages and all the better for it."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2019 Fonplégade is elegant, refined, and full of character. Sweet dark cherry, chocolate, leather, spice, menthol, and licorice build effortlessly in the glass. Fonplégade is a Saint-Émilien that emphasizes elegance over sheer power. (AG)"
- AG, Vinous

Reviews

“From a great terroir on the south-facing hillside just outside of the village, the 2019 Château Fonplégade has pretty notes of ripe black cherries, cassis, spring flowers, sandalwood, and classy oak. I love the nose, and while it's still young and relatively unevolved, it already has hints of complexity and nuance, and the purity is spot on. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, with a great mid-palate and sweet, velvety tannins, it already offers pleasure yet will benefit from 4-6 years of bottle age, and I'd be shocked if it didn't evolve nicely for at least 15-20 years.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“The 2019 Château Fonplégade showed brilliantly, and I suspect will be one of the top vintages from this estate. Gorgeous black raspberry, spiced cherries, dried herbs, chocolate, and a touch of flowers all define the bouquet, followed by a full-bodied red with an elegant, seamless texture, silky tannins, and a great finish. It's going to benefit from 3-5 years of bottle age and drink beautifully for 10-15 years. Tasted twice.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Dark ruby garnet, violet reflections, delicate ocher rim lightening. A bit shy at first, ripe red cherries, subtle hints of wild berries, fine herbal spices, tangerine zest, mineral touch. Juicy, elegant, ripe cherries, fine fruit sweetness, silky tannins, a hint of nougat on the finish, balanced style, mineral and well developed, a multifaceted food accompaniment with future potential and a fruity-sweet finish.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“The nose is elegant, aromatic and offers power as well as intensity (finesse). It reveals notes of wild blackberry, pulpy / juicy cassis and small notes of crushed raspberry associated with touches of violet / lilac, juicy black plum as well as hints of black pepper, nutmeg, cocoa, and discreet hints of incense. The palate is fruity, elegant, racy and offers juiciness, gourmandise, a fine acidulous frame, finesse, a fine tension as well as freshness. In the mouth this wine expresses notes of pulpy / juicy cassis, pulpy / juicy raspberry and small notes of crunchy / acidulous red berries associated with hints of acidulous plum as well as hints of tonka beans, fresh blond tobacco, and very slight hints of spices. Tannins are elegant and well-built. Good length.”

- Vert de Vin
