

Château La Gaffelière 2011

CSPC# 764172

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

Website

<http://www.chateau-la-gaffeliere.com/?lang=2>

Appellation

St. Emilion

General Info

With the Malet-Roquefort family at the helm for four centuries, Château La Gaffelière is one of the oldest family-owned chateaux in St Emilion. Nestled between the Ausone and Pavie hills, their south-orientated single vineyard has an average vine age of 35 years producing elegant wines with entrancing aromatics and pure fruit character. Historically La Gaffelière was a reference point for many of the great St Emilion chateaux. During the 1970s and 80s La Gaffelière lost some of its direction, but since consulting for the chateau Stephane Derenoncourt has woven his magic and Parker believes that the wine *"has gone from strength to strength over the last decade"* returning to past glory: *"one would have to go back to the 2005, 1947 or 1961 to find this level of quality"*.

Vintage

Springtime was exceptionally dry and warm, causing the Merlot to flower in mid-May, about one month sooner than usual, with no coulure. The vines developed rapidly in the early summer but cool and rainy weather in August slowed the cycle down, to the benefit of the vintage. Veraison began in late July, about 10 days earlier than usual. Late August saw a pattern of cool nights and warm days, with significant differences between the high and lows, continued through harvest time. This allowed the crop to attain optimal maturity and develop concentration while pre- serving the grapes' fruity acidity and aromatic intensity.

Vineyards

The Château La Gaffelière vineyard enlarges upon 25 hectares and gazes its 22 hectares vineyard all-in-one parcel between the Ausone hill and the Pavie one. The whole favourably south oriented, receives an ideal sunshine which benefits to the 35 years old vine.

Hillsides are clayey and calcareous, whereas hill-feet are more siliceous.

Harvest

Hand harvest, meticulous grapes picking and full destalk.

Vinification/

Maturation

The fragmented vinification (plot by plot) is made according to a method both modern and traditional.

- Some days of cold maceration then seeding and fermentation.
- Vats are pumped-over and the cap is punched.
- The vatting time in thermo-regulated tanks, then maceration at 28°C until the running off deadline determined thanks to tasting.
- The malolactic fermentation allows to reduce acidity and to soften the wine. It is carried out in new barrels and stainless-steel tanks.

Tasting Notes

Sweet, lush. Very fine. Trey: Big, ripe, dark nose, juicy palate with notes of mocha and chewy fruit. Ripe tannins and a sweet core.

Production

4,900 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2012-2032

Scores/Awards

88-91 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2012

91-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012

86-88 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - April 2012

91-92 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2012

91-93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 25, 2011

87-89 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2012

16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012

17 points/4 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2012

91+ points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2012

93 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)

91 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2012 (score only)



Scores/Awards **90-93 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 24, 2012
16.5-17.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2012
74 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 1, 2012
90 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - May 10, 2012
16 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

Reviews *"Rather ripe, flashy style, with a slightly gushy feel to the blackberry, plum and black cherry flavors, which are mashed together. Lots of perfumy mocha on the finish. A little more sizzle than steak in the end though. Score range: 88-91"*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"One of the oldest family-owned vineyards in St.-Emilion, La Gaffeliere has been owned by the same family since the 1400s. The 2011 performed slightly differently in multiple tastings, but overall, it appears to be an outstanding, elegant, restrained, somewhat austere, but impressively built wine. The final blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc produced nearly 5,000 cases from their 42+ acre vineyard. The wine exhibits lots of earthy, balsam, resinous notes interwoven with red and black currants, cedar and underbrush. This elegant, dense, medium to full-bodied St.-Emilion should drink nicely for 15-20 years."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"This has a plush, rather oaky bouquet with cassis and blueberry fruit. It is pure but there is not much depth and complexity. The palate is medium bodied with a very smooth entry, almost chocolaty in texture but the tannins seem a little dry and mealy towards the worked finish. Tasted April 2012."
- NM, Wine Journal

"This is well done with a lovely center palate of blueberries, chocolate, and orange peel. Full and round with polished tannins."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"91-93. Barrel sample. Lean and austere on the surface, this wine shows a bitter chocolate edge. It feels extracted, very dark and concentrated."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Opaque, glass-staining ruby. Oak notes and green bell pepper currently dominate aromas of black fruits and flowers. Then fairly big and rich in the mouth, with peppery black fruit flavors leading to mounting tannins at the back. Not the most charming 2011, but I think it has enough underlying fruit to develop more flesh and sweetness with some cellaring."
- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Fresh and elegant, as is the style. Less opulence than 2009 and 2010 but attractive fruit and plenty of charm and finesse. Chalky terroir evident. Drink 2020-2035."
- SS, Decanter.com

"Like this, there is clearly something to hang on to here, an intelligent extraction of good ripe fruits and restrained working. Lost a bit on the sharp finish, but promising."
- JA, The New Bordeaux

"From 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 13% alcohol. Stone, coffee, black cherry and earthy scents are found in the perfume, while round tannins and a ripe, sweet and long cherry personality are the hallmarks of this wine. 90-93 Pts"
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"2011 Deep looking; stones and wet rocks; serious and dense; lots of fruit on the palate and extract too; not too dry on the finish. Nice length. Good effort from La Gaffelière. Drink 2016-2026. 90+ UGC Oct '13 [Earlier note] Deep and saturated; lots of primary fruit; ripe and warm notes; some mealy hints; feels relatively simple; palate more gentle, fruit driven and nicely balanced; some spices and red fruits but overall straightforward. Good grip at the end. Good effort. 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 50% new oak. 89-91+ [Second] Deep and saturated colour; little redder than purple at rim; more olives and slightly heavier nose; thicker, more chocolate and mocha"

Reviews *notes; more earth; palate quite chunky, monolithic; some wet rock and a little dryness; not that bad but not the best. Chew and bite and a dry finish. Tasted blind at Groupement de Premiers Grands Crus Classes de Saint-Emilion at Chateau Canon 6/4/12. 87-89+”*
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

“This sample doesn't seem very expressive aromatically. There is some backward fruit, with a dark and rich character, but it is hard work getting to it. The palate shows a really supple and elegant style though, with a plum skin richness to the fruit character, and a firm and fully rounded velvety grip of tannins. There is a lot of structure here, but it feels ripe rather than over done. The freshness is there, and the fruit feels good too. Potentially a really lovely wine here. 16.5-17.5/20”
- CK, *The Wine Doctor*

“From 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 13% alcohol. Stone, coffee, black cherry and earthy scents are found in the perfume, while round tannins and a ripe, sweet and long cherry personality are the hallmarks of this wine. 90-93 Pts”
- JCL, asianpalate.com

“Deep crimson. The nose opens up to vanilla-infused notes with red fruit in the background. Fleshy, polished and fruit-forward attack framed by heat. A harmonious, silky wine in a powerful, well-integrated style. Harmonious across the palate.”
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
