

Château La Gaffeliere 2015

CSPC# 764172

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

1er Grand Cru Classé

Website

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

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

2015 can be characterised as a hot and dry vintage, which perfectly suits our clay-limestone terroir. March and April were mild and dry, offering the ideal conditions for bud burst. Flowering was rather early (23/05) and took place quickly and without any problem (low rainfall, mild temperatures). The limited summer rainfall (70 mm, like in 2010) allowed a marked water stress to set in gradually around the time of véraison (05/08), favouring the concentration of the grapes. The few rainy spells in August allowed it to "make the must" and to guarantee a crop of good quality. Overall, the pressure on health was very moderate and the grapes were able to ripen calmly with an ideal end to the season, without any mishap in the weather. By the time of the harvest, the Merlots and Cabernet Francs showed high alcohol levels (14.5 to 15.5 % vol.), characteristic of dry years, and good levels of acidity (around pH 3.6 for the clay-limestone terroirs, pH 3.9 for the sandier foot of the slopes). The very fine temperatures in September proved very favourable, an unhoped-for Indian summer after a gloomy summer...

Vineyards

Ripening progressed, and the state of health in the vineyard was remarkable. 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. Area: 38 hectares, of which 22 hectares of 1er Grand Cru Classé
Soil: limestone plateau, clay-limestone hillsides, more siliceous at the foot of the slopes
75% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc

Harvest

Pruning in single and double Guyot, grass cover between rows, leaf removal and green harvest. Integrated farming. Handpicked into small crates. Merlot: from 28 September to 15 October; Cabernet Franc: from 8 October to 15 October

Vinification/ Maturation

The grapes are kept for 12 hours in a cold room at 7°C before passing through the optical sorter.
Vinification by parcel in stainless-steel temperature-controlled tanks, filled by gravity
- alcoholic fermentation with pumping over and punching down
- malolactic fermentation in tanks (75%) and barrels (25%)
15 months in barrel. 50% in new barrels (French oak). Racking from barrel to barrel

Production

6,665 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2012-2032

Scores/Awards

95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018

90-93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016

94+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018

92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016



Scores/Awards **93 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018
94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018
94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016
17 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017
16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016
94 points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2016
94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017
93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2018
93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016
91-93+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2016
93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016 (score only)
90 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016
97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018
94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016 (score only)
93+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018
93-95 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016
18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016
18 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016
17.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - June 2016

Reviews *"Enticing warm plum, fig and blackberry compote notes roll through, inlaid with singed alder and tobacco accents. There's a light tug of warm cast iron and another wave of fruit after that, all supported by well-buried chalky minerality. This is a very strong showing and has put on some weight since the barrel tasting. Best from 2020 through 2040. 6,665 cases made."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

"A textbook modern St.-Emilion, with a core bursting with ripe plum and raspberry fruit, and a long finish that pumps out licorice and bramble accents. The fruit is matched by the energy. Score range: 90-93"

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Medium to deep garnet-purple colored, the 2015 La Gaffeliere has a slightly reticent, broody nose of black truffles, fertile loam and mossy bark over a core of warm plums, crushed black berries and black cherries plus a touch of iron ore. Medium to full-bodied with firm and very finely grained tannins with layers of softly spoken fruit and great freshness, it finishes long."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"The 2015 La Gaffeliere is a blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc. It offers attractive black cherries, boysenberry and mulberry fruit on the nose. Maybe it would benefit from a little more delineation, but the aromatics are focused and in sync with the oak. The palate is medium bodied with fine grain tannin. The acidity is pitched nicely here lending ample freshness and poise. Energetic and vivacious, this is one of the best barrel samples that I have tasted from an estate that was revered during the 1960s. Time for a comeback?"

- NM, Wine Advocate

"The 2015 La Gaffeliere, so impressive from barrel, here has an elegant bouquet with pure red currants, wild strawberry and black truffle scents that gain intensity with aeration but never slip into fifth gear. The palate is medium bodied with crisp tannin, focused and tensile with impressive mineralité toward the finish. This is an intellectual Saint-Émilion that will have more to give with five to six years on the clock."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Impressive deep-set dark cherries, blueberries and dark plums here with neatly fitted spicy oak, which adds immediate complexity. Deep, long and fresh with vibrant acidity, underpinning ripe blackberries, plums and hints of chocolate. Superb wine. Try from 2022"

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This structured wine also offers juicy, elegant fruit. Full of black plums, spice from judicious wood aging and acidity, its core remains to develop. The wine needs to age so drink after 2024."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

- Reviews** *“94–96. Barrel Sample. The superrich wine has fine acidity that shows through the velvety tannins. It is a wine that is already finely balanced, with elegant and perfumed blackberry fruits.”*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- “Mid to deep crimson. Subtle and dark-fruited on the nose, oak and fruit spice. Fine, chalky tannins and notable freshness. Supple and long. (JH)”*
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- “A Stéphane Derenoncourt wine. Meaty nose. Sweet and a tiny bit blowsy. A bit dry on the end. Pretty dramatic. If you seek impact, head for this hedonistic wine. I may have underscored it.”*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Cool elegance from St-Emilion. Refined, fragrant nose with lovely purity of fruit. The palate is fresh and finely etched. Shows balance and harmony.”*
- JL, Decanter.com
- “Malet Roquefort is here reaping the benefits of years of careful work in the vineyard and cellar. The chewy tannins almost pull you up as the sense of retraction on the palate is so marked. It's bright and tight, with thrilling black fruit and good balance, showing how alcohol levels are a guide and not a flag in the sand. Drinking Window 2023-2040. (JA)”*
- JA, Decanter.com
- “Silky tannins, soft, polished, ripe sweet, red fruits, flowers, smoke, black licorice, espresso and wet earth are found easily. There is richness, character and length, with time in the cellar, this should add more complexity and nuance.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Softly-textured, with polished, tannins and a spicy core of dark red fruits, flowers, licorice, earth, juicy, fresh plums and minerality.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Deep and saturated colour; ripe plums and black fruits; certain purity; with some coffee at the back; quite pent-up; intense and tight on the palate; lots of extract; bit drying currently but will settle. Long term La Gaffeliere and will probably be very good down the track. Lots of chewy fruit but some freshness to the fruit. 91-93+”*
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com
- “A well-made, approachable St Emilion red with medium body and ripe plummy flavors. A delicious red that will be enjoyable young and should age well over the next 7-10 years.”*
- JCL, asianpalate.com
- “The 2015 La Gaffelière is a wine of total finesse. Much less obvious and overt than most Saint-Émilions in this vintage, La Gaffelière makes its case on harmony and grace above all else. Bright, lifted Cabernet Franc-infused aromatics give the 2015 striking freshness and aromatic presence. The flavors are bright and nuanced to the core, with plenty of red cherry, espresso and floral notes. But back to the basics. In 2015 La Gaffelière is a wine that stands out because of its impeccable balance and sense of proportion. I loved it. Tasted two times. (AG)”*
- AG, Vinous
- “From further up the slope from Canon-la-Gaffelière, the 2015 Château La Gaffelière is terrific, and more than worth your time and money. A blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc that's loaded with notions of cassis, toasted spices, classy oak, and licorice, it hits the palate with a full-bodied, tight, focused texture carrying good acidity and plenty of tannins. With terrific mid-palate depth, impeccable balance, and a great finish, it's nowhere near primetime but is a gorgeous bottle of wine. Forget bottles for 4-5 years and enjoy over the following two decades. 93+”*
- Jeb Dunnuck