

Château Laroque 2018

CSPC# 847783

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

97% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Grand Cru Classé

Website

<https://www.chateau-laroque.com/en/wines/>

General Info

Chateau Laroque has a very long track record and history in the Saint Emilion appellation. Chateau Laroque dates back to the 12th century. In fact, a small remnant remains of the original tower built in the 12th century. The estate as we know it today, with its magnificent, chateau, was constructed in the 17th century by Marquis de Rochefort-Lavie.

The property remained in the hands of the same family until the depression struck in 1929. Like many families and companies at the time, the owners did not have the funds to maintain the estate and the vineyards. Wine ceased to be produced at Chateau Laroque for several years.

The modern era for Chateau Laroque starts in 1935, when the property was purchased by the Beaumartin family from the descendants of the Marquis de Rochefort-Lavie.

In 1962, the vineyards of Chateau Laroque were completely replanted and the wine making facilities were updated as well. The situation remained about the same for close to 50 years.

By that time, the chateau was in need of repairs, the cellars demanded updating and the vineyards required extensive replanting. Positive changes began taking place starting with the 2015 vintage as you will see. Today, Chateau Laroque is probably better known for the architecturally stunning, chateau and its perfectly manicured gardens.

The vines of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon are 40 years old on average and farmed using 100% *organic* techniques. They choose not to be certified organic, simply because they want the freedom to make a wider variety of choices. Château Laroque is also *HVE Certified*, which is a rigorous process granted to vineyards who focus on increasing biodiversity, decreasing the negative environmental impact of their vineyards, and improving water management. The wines at Château Laroque are known for their delicate, mineral-driven nuance. The 2018 vintage was their first entering the *en primeur* or *futures* marketplace, as they were previously distributed exclusively through one firm. At Laguna Cellar, we were one of the first to discover this and leapt at the opportunity to acquire this wine for our customers who were loyal fans of this producer. Given the excellence of their *grand vin*, it's fairly easy to see why

Winemakers

David Suire and Nicolas Thienpont

Vintage

2018 Saint Emilion was not an easy vintage for producers. The winter months were easy, but the spring is one of the wettest in history. Depending on where you located in St. Emilion, during the initial 6 months of the year, between 550 mm to 600 mm (21"-24") of rain soaked your soils. This is more than the normal amount of rain the region experiences in a year!

From there growers fended off violent attacks of mildew, which struck fast and furious. 2018 Saint Emilion was saved by the hottest, driest, sunniest vintage conditions since 2003. Barely any rain fell from July to harvest.

Picking took place under warm, sunny, and dry conditions. On average, production was down 10-20% for many vineyards. Conditions were so good between late September and mid October; vigneronns were able to pick at their chosen level of maturity. Harvesting took place from mid September to mid October.



Vineyards	<p>The 61-hectare vineyard of Chateau Laroque is planted to 87% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon. The terroir is clay with limestone soil. The vineyard is situated northeast of the Saint Emilion village in the commune of St. Christophe des Bardes. Chateau Laroque owns the largest vineyard in St. Emilion. However, only 40 hectares of vines are classified as Grand Cru Classe. The remaining 21 hectares vines are considered to be St. Emilion Grand Cru. Back to those 40 hectares, only 27 hectares of vines are used to produce their top wine, Chateau Laroque. As you can see, selection is important here, especially since it's such a large vineyard.</p> <p>Their best 27 hectares are located in the deep, clay rich soils close to Chateau Troplong Mondot. They have another outstanding parcel of vines on clay, close to their neighbor, Chateau Rocheyron.</p> <p>The vines are on average 40 years of age. However, they have old vines. 14 hectares of vines are almost 55 years old. The vineyard of Chateau Laroque is planted to a vine density of 6,000 vines per hectare.</p>
Harvest	Harvested 28 September to 12 October.
Vinification/ Maturation	<p>At Chateau Laroque, the vineyard is managed using 100% organic techniques. But they choose not to be certified organic, allowing them to make a wider variety of choices. They are also biodiverse, meaning they are HVE certified.</p> <p>To produce the wine of Chateau Laroque, the wine is fermented in traditional, temperature controlled, cobalt blue, cement vats that vary in size to help with parcel-by-parcel vinification. The wine is aged in 50%-55% new, French oak barrels for 12 months before bottling. About 11,000 cases of Chateau Laroque are produced in an average vintage.</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>Superbly located on one of the highest points of Saint-Emilion, Laroque's limestone terroirs have once again shone through brilliantly in this 2018. They have produced wines that are bright, floral, and spicy with fresh salinity and a noble texture, which are the hallmark traits of this this estate.</p> <p>Lovely deep and healthy colour; tight to the rim; beautifully pure fruit; really enticing perfumed aromatics; lovely and not at all jammy; fresh fruit on the palate with a savoury finish; black cherry; red fruits – very well-mannered overall; lovely texture to the tannins throughout. This is a beautiful wine with impressive length.</p>
Serve with	Chateau Laroque is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Laroque is also good when matched with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	11, 250 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2022 - 2032
Scores/Awards	<p>92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2021</p> <p>92-95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>91-94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p>96 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2019</p> <p>89 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2019</p> <p>94 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>16.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This has some frank ripeness with a mix of dark plum, loganberry and cherry paste flavors. They're integrated nicely though, with a sandalwood and dried anise spine for form through the refined finish. Best from 2022 through 2032. 11,250 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Well-proportioned, featuring cassis and blackberry fruit, balanced by brambly grip, juicy acidity and lively anise and black tea details. Very nicely put together. Barrel Sample: 92-95"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p>

Reviews

"The 2018 Laroque is composed of 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc, aged in 50% new barriques. The alcohol is 14.5% and the pH is 3.48. Deep garnet-purple colored, it bursts from the glass with flamboyant notes of stewed black plums, Black Forest cake and boysenberries, plus hints of candied violets, star anise and unsmoked cigars with a playful waft of sassafras. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is packed with juicy black fruits, supported by plush tannins and tons of freshness, finishing long and fragrant."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Laroque is a little closed to begin, slowly unfurling to reveal fragrant black cherries, wild blueberries and blackberry preserves scents with hints of crushed rocks, underbrush and violets plus a waft of Marmite toast. Full-bodied and jam-packed with bright, crunchy black and blue fruits, it has a firm line of ripe, fine-grained tannins and loads of freshness, finishing very long and layered. Impressive! Being aged in oak barriques, 50% new, the blend is 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Aromas of ripe blackcurrants, spiced cherries, cloves, praline, tea leaves and crushed gravel. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, tightly knit tannins and fresh acidity. Fleshy, chewy layers lead to a long, mineral finish. Late bottling helped here. Try from 2023."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is really delicious with so much dark-berry and stone character. Full to medium body and super, integrated tannins. Bright and generous. One of the best from here. We will see if it is better than 2016 and 2015."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A classically balanced wine, and a concentrated and darkly fruited take on the vintage. This has elegance by the bucketload and is going to reward another five to eight years in bottle. Excellent stuff."

- JA, Decanter.com

"Beautifully measured, elegant, and restrained, this has juiciness and hidden power. It's definitely less exuberant than some, giving tight black fruits and fine tannins alongside a limestone grip and a slate crawl across the palate, slowing you down and forcing you to pay attention as the floral character comes slowly winding out of the glass. Ageing on lees with just two rackings in both barrels and large oak casks. 3.8pH. Harvested 28 September to 12 October."

- JA, Decanter.com

"With a good depth of color, the fleshy wine is rich, full-bodied, luscious, and loaded with a myriad of dark red berries, black cherries and just a touch of blue fruit. Concentrated, opulent and silky, the finish really sticks with you, which is a good thing as all this fruit is not something you want to miss. The wine blends 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc, 14.5% ABV. Chateau Laroque remains a diamond in the rough selling for a song. This will change Laroque gains more popularity, buy it now if this is your style of wine."

JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Inky in hue, the wine looks like a dark gemstone with purple around the edge. With just one swirl, you get black and blue fruits, flowers, incense, licorice, dark chocolate, and smoke. Powerful, full-bodied, concentrated, and intense, this vintage is at an entirely new level for Laroque. The wine manages to remain balanced between its opulent nature, incredible level of density, silky palate feel and length. The wine was made with 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc, reaching 14.5 alcohol with a pH of 3.48. This is your hot tip of the day: Chateau Laroque is a diamond in the rough and the wine sells for a pittance despite the high level of quality. This will change as the wine gets discovered so buy it now if this reads like your style of wine."

JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2018 Laroque fulfills the promise it showed from barrel last year. It has an irresistible bouquet of layered black cherry and blueberry fruit, fresh and lively with beautifully integrated oak. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannin, a fine bead of acidity and a spicy, black-pepper-tinged finish that feels ever so slightly attenuated. Give this 3–4 years in bottle if you can."

- NM, Vinous

Reviews

“The 2018 Laroque is every bit as impressive as it was from barrel. Silky, polished, and refined, the 2018 marks a major step forward for the château. Lavender, spice, blueberry, cedar and mint all grace a Saint-Émilion built more on finesse than power. The long, persistent finish, with its saline accents, adds to the wine's pedigree. The 2018 is beautifully done. The blend is 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc. Technical Director David Suire gave the 2018 lots 26-29 days on the skins fermented in cement, with manual pump-overs and punch-downs. New oak is 55%.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2018 Laroque is a very pretty, pliant Saint-Émilion. Bright red raspberry, blood orange, mint and sweet floral notes give the 2018 striking energy to play off a core of radiant, supple fruit. Medium in body and gracious, Laroque has so much to offer in 2018. Although Laroque is not one of the most concentrated or structured Saint-Émilions, it is a wine of superb drinkability and pure pleasure. The blend is 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc. Technical Director David Suire gave the 2018 lots 26-29 days on the skins fermented in cement, with manual pump overs and punch downs. New oak is 55%. Suire, best known for his work alongside Nicolas Thienpont, is doing great things at Laroque. Tasted four times.”

- AG, Vinous

“This estate is in a cool, limestone terroir on the eastern side of Saint-Emilion, and it's been firing on all cylinders over the past decade, in no small part due to the talented director, David Suire. The 2018 Château Laroque checks in as almost all Merlot (there is 3% Cabernet Franc) that comes from an incredibly strict selection of just 41% of the total production. Brought up in a mix of new and used barrels, it's more about finesse than power, offering a gorgeous perfume of ripe black cherries, mulberries, cassis, violets, spring flowers, and chalky minerality. Medium to full-bodied, pure, and incredibly elegant on the palate, it builds nicely with time in the glass, has ultra-fine tannins, flawlessly integrated tannins, acidity and fruit, and a great finish. It's as classy as they come. Approachable today with a decant, it will drink nicely for 20 years or more. Readers looking for an impeccably made, classic, high-quality Saint-Emilion that doesn't break the bank should back up the truck for this beauty.”

- JD, JebDunnuk.com

“A blend of 97% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc representing just 41% of the total production, the 2018 Château Laroque is still resting in barrels and oak tanks. Its deep purple color is followed by a classy bouquet of ripe black cherries, cassis, graphite, licorice, and crushed rocks. Deep, medium to full-bodied, with beautiful mid-palate and ripe, silky tannins, it's a beautiful success for the estate, which appears to be firing on all cylinders today thanks to the talented team of David Suire and Nicolas Thienpont!”

- JD, JebDunnuk.com
