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## Château Louis 2012

CSPC# 771457

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

**Appellation**

St. Emilion

**Classification**

Grand Cru Classe

**Website**

<http://www.chateaulouis.fr/home.html>

**General Info**

Previously known as Rol de Fombrauge, this St. Emilion property was purchased in 2006 by Thierry de la Brosse, co-owner of the world's most revered and most expensive bistro, L'Ami Louis in Paris. It's easy to see where Chateau Louis found its new name. For the record, if anyone does not know, L'Ami Louis makes the world's finest roast chicken and even better than that, they have the only 100 Pt potato dish on the planet! But I digress.

De La Brosse hired Stéphane Derenoncourt's company, Vigneron Consultants, to help him transform Rol de Fombrauge into Château Louis. In 2008, Chateau Louis was increased in size to 3.8 hectares when they purchased additional land in the St. Emilion appellation.

Chateau Louis makes a second wine called La Reserve de Louis. Not much wine is made. Production of Chateau Louis is on average about 550 cases of St. Emilion wine each vintage.

**Vintage**

After the very cold and dry winter of 2011–2012, bud break lasted throughout April. The rains of April and May, coupled with mild temperatures, resulted insignificant mineralization and strong vegetative growth of the vines.

Flowering was late (29 May) and drawn out, with a delicate fruit set. The old Merlot plants have at times seen yields reduced due to coulure (shatter, a failure of the fruit to set) or millerandage (shot grapes, incomplete development).

There was settled summer weather from 15 July, with the hottest August since 2003, allowing partial recovery of the growth cycle. From mid-July onwards, 2012 was one of the driest vintages of recent years (along with 2005, 2009 and 2010), resulting in a significant water deficit (120mm lower than the thirty-year average). Ripening in early August was prolonged, with peaks of temperature from July to September and reduced rainfall. The biggest daily temperature difference recorded was 12.9°C, the highest in eight years, favoring a high level of anthocyanins and aromatic intensity. September and October were mild, close to the seasonal norm (27–28°C on 5 October).

**Vineyards**

The 5.2-hectare vineyard of Chateau Louis has old vines. On average, they are close to 43 years of age. The vines are planted to a typical St. Emilion vineyard cepage of 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. The north facing, sloping vineyards are planted in a mix of clay and limestone soils that are often found in this part of the appellation.

**Harvest**

Manual harvesting: 100%. The Merlot was picked on October 13 and the Cabernet Franc on October 16.

**Vinification/  
Maturation**

Serious vineyard management takes place at Chateau Louis. They never use any type of herbicides. Cover crops are planted, which helps add life to the St. Emilion soils. Harvesting remains entirely manual. Once sorted, the whole berries are fermented in small, open top, oak tanks with regular pigeages. The total maceration time runs 30 to 32 days. Malolactic fermentation takes place in oak barrels. The wine spends six to eight months on its lees with regular stirring. The wine of Chateau Louis is aged in up to 75% new, French oak barrels, depending on the character and quality of the vintage. Maturation period: 15-16 months

**Tasting Notes**

Beautiful fine nose, fruity and noble. A creamy, flavorful mouthfeel with good body and fine tannins. A powerful and long finish with a slight vanilla edge.

**Production**

665 cases made

**Cellaring**

Drink 2015-2030



**Scores/Awards** **87 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015

**91+ points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015

**92-94 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013

**88-90 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 26, 2013

**Reviews** *"Ripe and lively, with an anise streak adding energy to the core of plum, blueberry and blackberry compote flavors. Shows a coating of toasted vanilla on the finish, but the fruit holds sway. Drink now through 2018. 665 cases made."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Their top cuvée, the 2012 Chateau Louis (90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc), has a dense ruby/purple color, sweet black cherry and cassis notes, underlying minerality, a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel, ripe tannin, excellent depth and richness and a long finish. Produced from a late harvest October 16-19, and tiny yields of 19 hectoliters per hectare, this is a sleeper of the vintage and a noteworthy effort."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"Chateau Louis's 2012 may turn out to be the finest wine they have produced to date. A blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc cropped at a low 19 hectoliters per hectare, the Merlot was picked on October 13 and the Cabernet Franc on October 16. A wine of considerable intensity, its inky/purple color is accompanied by notes of lead pencil shavings, blackberries, cassis, vanillin and charcoal. This is a powerful, thick, rich, atypically unctuous 2012 displaying serious tannins in the finish. It hit 14% natural alcohol and should drink well for 15-20 years.*

*Stephane Derenoncourt is the consultant for this property (previously known as Rol de Fombrauge) that is owned by the Thierry de la Brosse family, who also owns my favorite bistro, L'Ami Louis in Paris."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc produced a wine with coffee, licorice and earth. There is a sense of minerality in the soft, red berry finish. 88-90 Pts"*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

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