

Château Meyney 1996

CSPC# 749586

750mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot

Appellation

St.-Estèphe

Classification

Cru Bourgeois Supérieur.

Website

<http://www.meyney.fr/en/>

General Info

Château Meyney is located in St. Estèphe and is owned by Domaines Cordier. The 49-ha property produces on average 30,000 cases per year. Located in the east of the St. Estèphe appellation, next to Château Montrose, Meyney has a similar climate to that enjoyed by the Médoc: maritime, with the Gironde estuary and the Bay of Biscay combining to act as a climate regulator and the coastal pine forests sheltering the vines from the westerly and north-westerly winds.

Meyney is classified as a Cru Bourgeois.

The history of Château Meyney dates back to at least the 17th Century (although it is almost certainly much older) and was originally the site of a convent entitled the *Prieuré des Couleys*, occasionally also referred to as the *Couvent des Feuillants*.

For much of the 20th Century the estate was part of the Cordier portfolio, quietly turning out good value wines, many of which were of remarkably high quality. No doubt this was in part due to the skill of Georges Pauli, better known for his sterling work at Gruaud-Larose, another Cordier property, who from 1978 oversaw the activity in the *chai* at Meyney.

As such the estate eventually came under the umbrella of Cordier-Mestrezat when the two *négociants* amalgamated. Here it formed part of a small portfolio of top estates also including Grand-Puy-Ducasse and Rayne-Vigneau. Over the years there have been many interested parties, most recently including the Vignerons de Val d'Orbieu, a leading Languedoc co-operative, who held a significant share in the business. In 2004 the Mediterranean investors sold out, and Cordier-Mestrezat saw some fresh and seemingly much needed investment from the French bank Crédit Agricole. This famous French financial institution acquired more than 400 hectares of vineyards, including Meyney, in exchange for 95 million Euros, leaving Cordier-Mestrezat one of the few debt-free businesses in Bordeaux. Today Meyney is thus under the ownership of *Crédit Agricole Grands Crus*, alongside Ducasse, Rayne-Vigneau and a handful of Cru Bourgeois estates also acquired by the French bank.

Vineyards

The Meyney vineyard is in a single plot, covering an impressive 51 hectares of the St-Estèphe appellation, adjoining those of near neighbours Montrose and Phélan-Ségur. It enjoys an attractive position on gravel ridges overlooking the Gironde, beneath which is a mix of iron-rich blue clay and sand, over calcareous bedrock from a depth of about two metres. It is planted with 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot and 9% Cabernet Franc, although there has been a replanting scheme ongoing in recent years, replacing the oldest vines, aimed at reducing the percentage of Cabernet Franc. They have an average age of about 35 years although this may fall a little with the ongoing planting, with a density of up to 7500 vines/ha. Once intensively fertilised, this is no longer the case, the soil left un nourished and merely ploughed each quarter to aerate it, although some lesser sections are interplanted with grass and are thus left untouched. The estate is moving towards a system of minimum intervention viticulture.

Vinification/ Maturation

Following hand picking and meticulous sorting in the winery, the grapes are fermented in vats of varying capacities which allow us to adapt to the size of each batch. Fermentation is preceded by cool soaking. After fermentation, maceration continues for an average of 20 days before the wine is run off. Some of the wine is even fermented in new oak barrels. Then all the wine is aged in French oak barrels, between 30% and 40% of which are renewed each year, according to the potential of that vintage.



Tasting Notes One of the Medoc's oldest estates is Château Meyney in Saint-Estèphe. These are the wines that many of us sunk our first teeth into Bordeaux with and were a staple at many of New York's top restaurants and Bistros. It is one of the overachieving Cru Bourgeois that Americans have come to love because they are capable of producing classified-growth quality without the price. Meyney has a history dating back to the 17th century when the Château belonged to monks who planted the first vines not too far from where Château Montrose resides today. However, it was not until Bordeaux's well-respected Cordier family took over the Château in 1917 that the modern, and more serious, era of Meyney began. If you are looking for classic claret with approachable pricing, look no further than the fabled Chateau Meyney.

Production 15,250 cases made

Scores/Awards **86 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - January 31, 1999
85 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #122 - April 1999
85-87 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #110 - April 1997
85-87 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2000
15 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - September 2006
85 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)

Reviews *"Rich aromas of spices, berries, meat and earth. Medium-bodied, with velvety tannins and a fruity aftertaste. Slightly hollow midpalate. Best after 2000. 15,250 cases made."*
- JS, Wine Spectator

"A soft, easy-going, ripe, dried herb and red currant-scented wine, this 1996 is surprisingly open and evolved. It is made in a mainstream, consumer-friendly style that will have wide appeal, although it is neither concentrated nor complex. Drink it over the next decade."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"This reliable cru bourgeois estate has turned out a dense, smoky, herbal, and black-cherry-scented, spicy wine. While not as weighty and rich as some of Meyney's best vintages, it is well-made, medium-bodied, and surprisingly forward for the vintage. Solid tannin in the finish suggests this wine should last for another 10-15 years."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The nose, like other 96's, is closed now. Peppery black fruits on the palate with leather and faint light cherry notes. Balanced. Medium-bodied - a reliable easy-drinking wine. Tasted October 2001."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Fully mature rim. Light nose. Hint of oxidation. Lightweight and low key. Lots of acidity. Lunchtime claret. Tannins already melted. Drink 2000-08"
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
