

Château Phelan Ségur 2008

CSPC# 742352

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot

Appellation

Saint-Estephe

General Info

In 1805, Bernard Phelan, an Irish wine broker settled in Bordeaux, acquired le Clos de Garamey, located in Saint-Estèphe, followed in 1810 by the Ségur de Cabanac estate to complement his first acquisition. The whole was called Château Ségur de Garamey. He thus created a magnificent wine-producing domain that remains practically unchanged today, apart the sale in 2010 of 20 hectares to Château Montrose. The particularity of Château Phélan Ségur is its original architectural design: the neo-classical main residence is not separated from the agricultural buildings but is extended by them. Since 1985, the vineyard has been running by the Gardinier family who bought it from the Delon family, owner since 1924. With a wet and fairly cold spring, the flowering was uneven and stretched over about two weeks causing some coulure on the Merlot. July was very dry, with only just half the average rainfall over the past 30 years, and hence during this lack of water the growth cycle was slowed down early on. After an August with contrasting weather, a dry September and generally good weather in October, we were blessed with slow maturation (good for fruity aromatic expression) and full ripeness on both the Merlots and Cabernets.

Vineyards

70 hectares. Average vine age is 35 years. The sale reduced the Phelan-Ségur vineyard from 90 hectares to 70 hectares. These 70 hectares are spread over four locations, with one-quarter planted next to the *château* and *chai*, the remaining three more distant. The *terroir* underfoot is an alluvial gravel mixed with a sandy clay, over a deeper bedrock of chalk. The vines are 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot, and current replanting work is focusing on increasing the proportion of the former over the latter, although work in 2011 did include one small plot replanted to Merlot. The planting density is about 8500 vines per hectare

Harvest

The yields are controlled with pruning and bud removal, with some leaf-thinning in July to improve ripening and aeration, and some green harvesting as required. The moment of harvest is based on tasting and technical analysis, and once underway the pickers transport the fruit in small open trays, moved around on wheelbarrows and small trailers to avoid crushing. Harvest October 6th-18th.

Vinification/ Maturation

Once in the winery the fruit receives a high-tech treatment, with table-sorting, destemming, optical sorting, pressing and fermentation on a plot-by-plot basis in thermo-regulated stainless steel vats; these were replaced in 2011, reducing their capacity from 210 hectoliters down to 115 hectoliters, thereby allowing more precise plot-by-plot vinification. Subsequently the wines undergo malolactic in a warmed room and then *élevage*, all undertaken in oak barrels, 50% new, sourced from five coopers, the principal source being Taransaud. 60% in new barrels for 18 months.

Tasting Notes

Brilliant garnet red colour with tinges of violet. The nose is initially of red berries: morello cherry jam and blackcurrants. The nose then evolves to more floral aromas such as violet-flavoured sweets enriched by nutty hints of praline. The intensity and concentration evoke an outstanding raspberry eau de vie and evolves to discreet smoky notes. On the palate the wine is soft with crisp berries, slightly peaty and well defined. The structure is tannic and vegetal, endowed with beautiful firmness and length. The finish is grippy and full.

Production

15,830 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2011-2021

Scores/Awards

87 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2011

85-88 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2009



88 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011
88-90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #182 - April 2009
91 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2012
90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2011
88-90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - November 2009
88-90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2009
90 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2011
88-90 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - December 31, 2009
17.5 points - JH, JancisRobinson.com - November 11, 2010
15.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2011
15+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2010
15-16+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - April 2009

Reviews

"Offers good medium-bodied flesh, with mulled plum, smoked apple wood and tobacco leaf notes that give way a bit to a slightly taut structure on the finish. Drink now through 2013. 15,830 cases made."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Crushed blueberry on the nose. Full-bodied, with soft, polished tannins and a medium finish. Fruity, with fresh herbs and spices on the finish. Score range: 85-88"

- JS, Wine Spectator

"A sleeper of the vintage, the 2008 is the finest Phelan-Segur since the 1990. It possesses a dense ruby/purple color as well as loads of blueberry and cassis fruit intertwined with hints of charcoal and that unmistakable floral note that appears in many of the 2008s. Medium to full-bodied with abundant fruit, soft tannins, and obvious near-term appeal, it should last for 10-12 years. Drink 2009-2021"

- RP, Wine Advocate

"A distinctive earthy, spicy character along with hints of camphor, black currants and raspberries emerge from this medium-bodied 2008. Soft tannins, a seductive mouthfeel and surprising length suggest this wine can be drunk now and over the next decade."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted ex-chateau and single blind in Southwold. The 2008 is an excellent wine from this Saint Estephe estate. It has a clean, well-defined bouquet with blackberry, earth, black olive and crushed stone. This has great precision and clarity. The palate is medium bodied with well-integrated oak, very smooth in texture, caressing the mouth, with good weight on the finish. It needs more reserve and tension, but it has an attractive mouthfeel and impressive length. Tasted January 2012."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted at the UGC 2008 tasting in London. The Phelan has a very fine, slightly leafy bouquet with touches of tar, sandalwood and cedar inflecting the black fruits. Autumnal. The palate has a fresh, well-defined entry with spicy tinged black fruits, cedar and a dash of white pepper. Firm tannins, good backbone here and fine length. This certainly is at the top of my expectations from barrel. Drink 2012-2022. Tasted October 2010."

- NM, Wine Journal

"This has far more richness on the nose than the 2007, with aromas of macerated black cherries, damson, a touch of black coffee and chocolate. The palate has a sappy entry, quite fleshy and sweet, lacking some complexity, a little forced. Grippy, almost foursquare finish. It does not say much at the moment, but this does surprise after bottling e.g. 2005. Tasted September 2009."

- NM, Wine Journal

"En primeur barrel sample. Moderate intensity on the nose with blackberry, cigar box and a touch of dried herbs. Nice definition. The palate has a grainy entry, moderate weight, a little austere but well balanced with some fine, tertiary black fruits underneath. Foursquare, very "correct" on the finish. Good length. A good effort. Tasted March 2009."

- NM, Wine Journal

Reviews *"This is a woody, toasty wine, which seems to be the style here for the last several years. It has weight, but does need time for the wood to subside and bring out the elegant fruits"*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"As so often in past vintages, the new wood seems out of kilter with the fruit. It makes for a tight wine, toasty, and there is solid fruit there. But the wood comes through too strongly."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Gentle, soft dark fruit on the nose, then more structured on the palate. Rich, generous and savoury. Firm but velvety tannins. Surprisingly generous to the end. Long finish. Drink 2014-2028"
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"There is dark and liquorice-tinged fruit here, somewhat akin to that found on the nose of the 2010. The palate is supple and well composed, and it slowly builds into the midpalate showing structure, and then exits leaving a darker, structured finish. This is more textured, supple and integrated than knowledge of the vintage might suggest was likely. It has some really good potential as all the structure is all there. It is not a blockbuster vintage by any means, but this is certainly worth consideration. From a tasting of Recent Vintages at Phélan-Ségur. 15.5/20 (October 2011)"
- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Still a lot of winemaking evident on the nose here, aromas of coffee and smoke laid over some well-hidden fruit. Soft and supple on entry, nicely balanced, with some structure showing very nicely behind the fruit and middling texture. Still very oak-dominated in terms of flavour, with a very soft finish which fades quickly. Likely to make attractive drinking but I think there are better vintages of Phélan-Ségur out there. From a tasting of 2008 Bordeaux at two years of age. 15+/20 (October 2010)"
- CK, The Wine Doctor

"A big, feral, meaty style here, not showing much freshness. A big and bold palate textured and oily, overall rather foursquare. There is good fruit character though, although they have a rather sweet, cola-tinged edge. Certainly, an interesting mouthful! From my 2008 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 15-16+/20 (April 2009)"
- CK, The Wine Doctor
