

Château Gruaud Larose 2008

CSPC# 742343

750mlx12

13% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot, 12% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Saint Julien

General Info

The prestigious Bordeaux property of Gruaud-Larose, a 2nd growth in the 1865 classification, lies in the commune of Saint-Julien, a single vineyard of 80 hectares composed of gravels from the Gironde estuary. The poor soils provide excellent drainage, especially as the vineyards are on the highest plateau of Saint-Julien - though that is a mere 18 metres above sea level.

Gruaud was one of the first Bordeaux estates to abandon synthetic pesticides and herbicides in the vineyard during the late nineties, turning to mechanical and organic solutions to protect and nourish the vines. Though not biodynamic, they do employ natural homeopathic treatments such as organic compost made from seaweed to protect against mildew and rot.

Vineyards

The Gruaud-Larose estate amounts to 150 hectares of the St Julien appellation, of which 82 hectares are planted to vines; the bulk of the estate lies around Baron Sarget's *château*, separated from the Gironde by the small village of Beychevelle, and sandwiched between the vineyards of Branaire-Ducru and Lagrange. The terroir is typical for the region, deep Quaternary gravel, planted with 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot and 2% Malbec. The vines average around 45 years of age and are planted at a density of 10000 vines/ha.

Maturation

The fruit is sorted then undergoes a cold soak prior to temperature controlled fermentation in a mixture of wooden and concrete vats, with pumping over of the fermenting must twice a day. Then up to a third of the vintage undergoes malolactic in oak barrels, before ageing the entire wine in *Alliers* and *Nevers* oak (up to 50% new) for 18 months, and there is a light fining and filtration before bottling.

Tasting Notes

David Launay, General Manager of Gruaud-Larose, felt that the ripeness of 2008 lends itself particularly to Merlot and altered the proportions of his 2008 accordingly: 54% Cabernet, 34% Merlot and 12% Petit Verdot. The concentrated, sweet ripe red fruit of the Merlot certainly comes across in this lean but dense wine. With the hallmark Gruaud notes of cedar and spice, this will be approachable earlier than some but would nonetheless be a rewarding buy for any cellar.

Production

10,462 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2013-2033

Scores/Awards

90 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 30, 2011
99-91 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2009
90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011
89-91+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #182- April 2009
90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2012
90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2011
90-92 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2009
90-92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - December 31, 2009
89 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - July/Aug 2011
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2009
17+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2010
15.5-16.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - April 2009
15.5 points/3 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010
90 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux
90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - October 3, 2011
90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - January 28, 2011



Reviews

"Roasted, with dark fig, plum and cocoa flavors. Extra black tea, bittersweet cocoa and anise notes linger through the finish. Shows solid depth. Drink now through 2017. 10,462 cases made."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Plummy and perfumed, with sweet spices and currants. Lovely subtle nose. Full- to medium-bodied, with fine tannins and lovely balance. Ripe and pretty fruit. Could get even better. Score range: 88-91."

- JS, Wine Spectator

"While the 2008 is not a blockbuster, it is a strong effort for the vintage. This dark plum/purple-hued wine reveals some background oak, licorice, earth, plum, black currant and cherry notes intertwined with a foresty/mossy component. Deep, polished and medium to full-bodied with sweet tannin, it builds incrementally on the palate. This impressive 2008 will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring and should drink well for two decades."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"While it is not the 2000 or 1990, the 2008 is the finest Gruaud Larose I have tasted in eight years. Not a blockbuster, it is more beefy and dense than other recent vintages, revealing notes of pine forest, smoke, herbs, licorice, black currants, and cedar. With high but ripe tannins, medium to full body, and a strong finish, it will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring, and should keep for 20 years thereafter."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted ex-chateau and single blind in Southwold. The Gruaud Larose 2008 has an austere, earthy, almost Saint Estephe like bouquet (consistent with previous bottles) with fine definition. The palate is medium bodied with sharp tannins and a little pinched at present. Fresh, almost tart in the mouth, although compared to its peers I feel that it cuts away abruptly on the finish. Still, this is pleasingly elegant and refined although it does not have the substance of the ensuing two vintages. Tasted January 2012."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted at the UGC 2008 tasting in London. Personally, I wish the Gruaud Larose -08 would muster a little more intensity on the nose. It comes across very tertiary at the moment and it would benefit from greater fruit expression: lots of tobacco and smoke aromas dominating but it unfurls nicely, revealing attractive gamey notes, hints of sage and bay leaf. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins, not a heavyweight or even top-tier Gruaud, but nicely balanced and natural, a dash of pepper lending the finish a little pep. This is a decent effort, although it is no match for the 2009. Drink 2012-2025. Tasted October 2010."

- NM, Wine Journal

"En primeur barrel sample. A blend of 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot and 9% Petit Verdot. Moderate intensity on the nose, black fruits, a touch of soot, tobacco and smoke. Good definition but needs to coalesce. The palate is medium-bodied, grainy tannins, nice weight and acidity. Fresh and as always, full of character. The finish has a touch of spice and cedar to it – more Cabernet than usual. This is a restrained but nicely focused Gruaud. Tasted April 2009."

- NM, Wine Journal

"90-92 Barrel sample. Good density here, structured, with some jammy sweet fruits as well as a dark layer of dense tannins. The potential is well for a well-balanced wine."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Good medium red. Plum, redcurrant, tobacco and a whiff of camphor on the nose, with a faint green quality building with air. Lush and supple, showing the slightly horsey, leathery quality typical of this property's wine. Nicely light on its feet, though. Finishes slightly dry, with a fine dusting of tannins."

- International Wine Cellar

"Mid crimson with a pale rim. Very sweet for a St-Julien. Almost right bank ripeness. Sweet start. Not as classical as most St-Julien. More forward and winning! Attractive drink for the medium term. Hint of chocolate even. Medium charge of tannins. Polished silky texture. Very beguiling."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews *"A warm fruit style here, very open, with some honeyed wood. The fruit has a sweet style with a furry, ripe and gamey warmth. Red fruits. Some of that crystalline character as well which is welcome. Well-judged on entry, showing a little more leanly in the midpalate though. Holding up nicely through to the finish, maintaining that open fresh fruit character, soft and supple, providing a good cover for the tannins. Nice acids too. Promising, with ripe tannin in the finish. A surprise considering it tasted quite incongruous in 2009. Very good. From a tasting of 2008 Bordeaux at two years of age. 17+/20 (October 2010)"*
- CK, The Wine Doctor

"This has a paler hue than the other wines of this commune, and the nose is more meaty and less fresh, with some chalky red fruits. It has a nice elegant entry though, wit supple red fruit, although it is leaner and harder than the other wines. Pretty but slightly chewy tannins; this wine is certainly rowing in a different stream to the rest of the commune in this vintage! From my 2008 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 15.5-16.5+/20 (April 2009)"
- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Deep purple-red, plummy and ripe blackcurrant fruit, but quite broad and jammy and seems to lack definition, pleasant but not persistent enough. Drink 2014-20."
- Decanter.com

"Maybe I'll just mention the colour if it's bad! All of these are lovely. Like the sweet, smoky, cedary nose, with some rich ripe black cherries and blackcurrants. Lovely aromatic nose. Good depth of fruit, although they could maybe have gone further, and the tannins need some more work to soften up, but of course there is time for that over the next year or so. Good length though (again I am noting how these wines take time to reveal themselves, and often the tasting note you start with is not necessarily the one you end up with). This is a thought-provoking wine, and I am starting to love it!"
- JA, The New Bordeaux

"With tobacco, smoke, cassis, licorice and spice aromatics, this polished style of St. Julien lacks the concentration found in the best years of Gruaud Larose. There is a minor hint of green flavors found in the cassis filled finish. From a blend of a blend of 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot and 9% Petit Verdot, for Gruaud Larose, this will drink well young."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Earth, cassis, truffle and cedar aromas lead into a full boded, beefy, cassis and black cherry filled wine."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
