

Château LaGrange 2008

CSPC# 742346

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation
General Info

72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot
Saint-Julien

The vast vineyard of Lagrange spreads over 117 uninterrupted hectares in the Saint-Julien-appellation. In 1855, its passionate and visionary owner, the Count Duchâtel, ex-Home Secretary to King Louis-Philippe, who had introduced a drainage system in the vineyard, contributed to its classification as a third growth. The beginning of the 20th century was much less glorious as the economic conditions deteriorated. Despite several changes in ownership, the decline in business meant the estate had to be broken up: from 280 hectares in 1840, the domain had been reduced to 57 hectares by December 1983, when the Japanese group Suntory bought it from the Cendoya family, owners since 1925. By dint of more than twenty years of major efforts and investments, Château Lagrange is universally acknowledged as being back in excellent form after this restructuration which is considered as the most spectacular of the Medoc. In May 2007, Bruno Eyraud succeeded to Marcel Ducasse (1984-2007) as Director of Château Lagrange. In 2008 was realised a new refurbishing of the vinification room. In 2009, Château Lagrange innovated with the optical sort-out of the berries in order to face the great volume of berries to sort out in this big estate. The great care taken to the vineyard (yield control, harvest by hand) and the vinification plot by plot give birth each year to a rich and elegant wine, with a long ageing potential.

Vintage

The spring is marked by important rainfall and cooler temperatures than usual. The morning frost of April 7th caused some flower shatter on some plots. The month of July is hot and dry, but never over-hot. Cool temperatures and rainfall come back again in August. The Bordeaux miracle happened again from September 15th onwards. The hot days allowed thus ripening, drying the bunches and avoiding botrytis or sunburn. The nights were cool, finishing off the ripening of the polyphenols. The exceptional sunshine destroyed any molecules potentially responsible for a vegetal taste in the wine. Despite forecasts of low yields, about 25 hectares were thinned out in July. Thanks to all this painstaking work, the vines were all evened out and the grapes could ripen beautifully for the harvest. The blending: 2008 is a vintage where the Cabernet Sauvignon dominates mostly to the detriment of the Petit Verdot. Global warming, thinning out and vine-care techniques are few of the numerous and complex reasons for this. The blending consists of 72% CS, 26% merlot and 2% Petit Verdot.

Vineyards

Located entirely within the appellation of Saint-Julien, our vineyard stretches in a single block over two North-South rises of Gunzian gravelly soil. In parts large and coarse and in others finer, this gravel is combined with sand or iron-rich clay depending on the plots. With an altitude of 24 metres, the centre of the domain marks the highest point of Saint-Julien. The estate covers 157 hectares (390 acres), of which 115 hectares (284 acres) are under vine. Most of the plots benefit from a drainage system. The red grape varieties planted are those that typically thrive on the Médoc terroir, with 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot and 7% Petit Verdot. The Cabernet Sauvignon contributes structure and ageing potential, the Merlot roundness and body, and the Petit Verdot fruit and complexity. As for the white wine, our Sauvignon (60%), Sémillon (30%) and Muscadelle (10%) are planted over 4 hectares (10 acres).

Harvest

The harvest dates were probably the latest chateau LaGrange ever experienced: from October 6th to the 22nd. There was a deliberate new choice to wait for the optimum picking date.



Maturation	The investment in new vats allows a separate vinification of certain plots whose potential was not hitherto exploited to the full, through lack of small capacity vats. The estate has continued the technique of co-inoculation allowing to conduct the alcoholic and malolactic fermentations simultaneously. This offers the advantage of economizing considerable amounts of heating energy and reducing the risk of Brettanomyces in the wine. 21 months in French oak - 60% new barrels
Tasting Notes	The nose of 2008 vintage reveals subtle hints of gooseberry and blackcurrant. In the mouth the fruit is ripe with powerful tannins. Maturation in barrels allow this great wine to be round. A great Saint Julien at the height of his reputation!
Production	25,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2015-2025
Scores/Awards	<p>91 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 30, 2011</p> <p>88-91 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2009</p> <p>89+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011</p> <p>90-92 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #182 - April 2009</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2012</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2011</p> <p>92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - November 2009</p> <p>92-95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2009</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 10, 2010</p> <p>91 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - December 31, 2009</p> <p>90-92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2011</p> <p>89 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - Jul/Aug 2011</p> <p>17.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2010</p> <p>16.5-17.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - April 2009</p> <p>16.5 points - Decanter Magazine 2008 Primeurs - April 2009</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This dense red exhibits a tangy damson plum note that leads the way for iron and lilted black tea flavors, all followed by darker charcoal and fig character. There's a nice ying-yang of velvet and iron on the finish. Drink now through 2019. 25,000 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Subtle and perfumed, with currant and cassis. Full and chewy, with a solid core of fruit and tannins. Long and caressing. Very well done for the vintage. Score range: 88-91"</i> - JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The dark ruby/purple-hued 2008 reveals an angular, austere personality along with medium to full-bodied, deep, concentrated fruit. An unusually backward and highly tannic 2008, it will benefit from 3-4 years of cellaring and should keep for 20 years. It is a very good wine, but it is not pleasant to drink at present."</i> - RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The rather overt oak often found in this cuvee seems to have been considerably tamed in the 2008. It is more charming, displaying a plush texture along with sweet cassis and black cherry fruit intertwined with intriguing notes of Christmas fruitcake, spice box, and herbs. There is plenty of sweet tannin in this medium-bodied effort, but unlike the tannins in the right bank wines, the tannins in most of the northern Medocs are more prominent, largely because these wines possess high percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon. Five to eight years of patience will be required, and the 2008 Lagrange should last for 25 years. Drink 2009-2034"</i> - RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Tasted ex-chateau and single blind in Southwold. With yet another strong performance under blind conditions, the Lagrange 2008 continues as one of the most consistent performers in this consistent commune. It has a slightly bretty nose that subdues the fruit, notes of iodine and violets emerging with time. The palate is medium bodied with firm, ripe tannins, well balanced with a much cleaner entry than the nose suggest. It improves all the time in the glass, but those tannins will take years to melt. Impressive. Tasted January 2012."</i> - NM, Wine Journal</p>

Reviews *"Tasted at the UGC 2008 tasting in London. The Lagrange has a more fruit-driven nose when compared to the Gruaud Larose with notes of blackberry, wild hedgerow, a touch of wet sand and a gourmand element that may become more pronounced with time. The palate is medium bodied with fine tannins, a very good sense of cohesion and depth with juicy blackberry and boysenberry infused with pencil shavings and cedar towards the long, masculine finish. Lagrange is so consistent at the moment. Impressive. Drink 2013-2030. Tasted October 2010."*

- NM, Wine Journal

"Good fruit concentration on the nose, but it has clammed up a little since primeur. Notes of cigar box develop with aeration. The palate is masculine, fine structure, good density and balance with a structure, almost foursquare finish that displays impressive persistency. Excellent. Tasted September 2009."

- NM, Wine Journal

"En primeur barrel sample. A blend of 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot with just 40% of the Grand Vin. Harvest: 6th October finished 23rd October. The nose is far more introverted than in previous years but well defined with blackberry, cassis, just a touch of mocha and cedar. Tightly coiled. The palate has it all going on: beautifully fine tannins, wonderful balance and purity, this is an exquisite Lagrange that is bursting with energy. Bon vin! Tasted twice with consistent notes. Tasted April 2009."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Sweet and rich and chocolaty. Quite a lot of energy. Rich and flattering. Thick."

"Crimson. Sweet and aromatic on the nose. Very flattering. Fine tannins and lots of flesh without being specious. A bit forward but attractive in the short term."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"A little severe at first, not letting the fruit show through the tannins. However, the black currant fruit is there, and it's possible to discern that it will become delicious and for medium-term aging"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"90-92 Barrel sample. With its severe edge, this is obviously a wine likely to age well. The fruit is firm, concentrated, maybe a little extracted, but it is supported by fresh acidity"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Dark red-ruby. Aromas of cassis, cherry, blueberry, menthol, chocolate and black pepper. Quite dry and uncompromising, with a lightly peppery/herbal element carrying through the wine. No easy sweetness here. Finishes with dusty tannins."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"A sweet, modern style of fruit here, fresh and bright, red and black summer fruit compote. It seems to possess polish and substance although on entry it has its texture tightly reined in. Through the midpalate it expands though, becoming more like the nose suggests, more polished and very lightly creamy. Well judged, with rather a firm tannic substance to it although it works well with the fruit and acids. With time in the cellar this could be very good. From a tasting of 2008 Bordeaux at two years of age. 17.5+/20 (October 2010)."

- CK, Wine Doctor

"Dense, sweet, with concentrated ripe fruit. The palate has a very ripe and detached style, mineral and fresh. Fairly bright and lively, with good vivacity. Less supple than some, but with good substance, nice acidity and appropriate tannins. Very good potential. From my 2008 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 16.5-17.5+/20."

- CK, Wine Doctor

"Fine, concentrated blackcurrant fruit, smoky, supple, ripe, pure, harmonious and elegant. 2014-22"

- Decanter Magazine