

Chateau Laforge

APPELLATION

Saint Emilion Grand Cru

VINEYARD

Total of 5.7 hectares

GRAPE VARIETIES

Merlot : 92%; Cabernet Franc : 08%

SOIL TYPES

Grand Pontet and Gaste Bourse are situated at the western entrance to Saint Emilion and have a clay/limestone topsoil over pure limestone. Mauvinon is situated to the east of the town of Saint Sulpice in an area noted for its gravel soils. Rouchonne benefits from sand and clay soil over a layer of Crasse de Fer at a depth of 60cm.

VITICULTURE

Château Laforge, along with the initial hectares at Mauvinon, was purchased in 1998. The other parcels were purchased only as a result of their provenance. For instance, a parcel was purchased in 2000 from Château Canon. The vines are pruned on the double guyot system. The secondary shoots are removed and two runs of green harvesting completed in order to achieve no more than four bunches of grapes per vine, about thirty hectolitres per hectare. The grapes are handpicked into small trays before transfer to the winery.

VINIFICATION

On arrival at the winery the trays are emptied onto the first vibrating sorting table where grapes that do not attain normal fruit set are automatically removed through grilles. Six sorters remove any bunches that do not conform to an acceptable standard. After de-stemming a second vibrating sorting table, manned by up to four additional sorters, removes any un-heterogeneous berries and any other extraneous matter. No must-pumps are used – with all transfers being made by conveyors. The fruit that arrives in the modern wooden vats is, therefore, excellent material to work with. Pre-fermentation maceration under gas and at a cool temperature is effected. Fermentation is conducted at relatively high temperatures. The wine, once primary fermentation is completed, is worked through the skins using pigeage and classic pumping over methods.

AGEING

Malolactic fermentation is achieved in new French oak. Once completed, fifty percent of the wine is removed from its barrels and poured into another set of new French oak for ageing. At the same time, lees are re-injected for six months during which time bâtonnage is effected. To combat reduction microbulage – or diffused air – is undertaken. Ageing in barrel lasts for a period ranging between fourteen to eighteen months depending on the vintage.

BOTTLING

The wines are bottled in traditional Bordeaux bottles with their name embossed on the base of each bottle to combat fraud. They are packed in wooden cases of twelve.

PRODUCTION

An annual production of between 1,500 to 2,000 cases is made of Château Laforge. The first vintage of the wine by the new team was made in 1998.

Reviews

“Bought from the daughter of the blacksmith of St-Sulpice-de-Faleyrens in ‘98, Laforge has caused quite a stir. It consists of a big, chocolaty richness and tannic structure, yet preserving a lovely freshness. The wine gets the full avant-garde treatment - malolactic in 100 per cent oak and no fining or filtration - so if you cellar it for any length of time, look out for the deposit!”

Wines of Bordeaux - David Peppercorn – 2002

“From the same Jonathan Maltus stable as Le Dome, this is ripe, juicy and very plummy with good complexity and more mineral character than has been apparent in some previous vintages”.

Robert Joseph, Wine Magazine, 2002

“Very deep velvety purple-black colour, concentrated blackcurrant and tobacco leaf nose, a gamey almost Syrah fruit with a rich Pomerol-y texture as well as a firm backbone. A very successful characterful wine”.

Steven Spurrier, Decanter, 2002

“Saturated dark red-purple hue. Crisp, dark fruited aromas follow through with very fresh berryish flavors on a moderately full-bodied palate that finishes with mineraly, fine-grained tannins. This looks to have great cellaring potential”.

Tastings/Beverage Testing Institute, Chicago, 2002

“The three soil types of St. Emilion give this wine a balance and harmony found in few others from the appellation. A ‘palate’ of St. Emilion. Wonderfully ripe juicy fruit aromas of blueberry, blackberry and tobacco, very pure and stylish. The same fruit expands and explodes on the palate, tannins are sweet and fine and sumptuous. Laforge has grown in quality and stature with the 2000 vintage and shakes off any vestiges of being a garage wine. With a production of 2000 cases however, it will not get any larger.”

Justerini & Brooks, 2001

“From the same stable as Le Dôme and almost on the same level. 92% Merlot and from 3 different terroirs. Irony and yet very spicy, oriental nose. Big and chocolatey. Tannin and acidity. Mouth coating with a wonderful toasty, leathery finish. Old vines and meticulous wine-making have done it again.”

Serena Sutcliffe, Decanter Magazine, April 2001

“Exceptional. 90-95. Opaque purple-red hue. Fantastically-developed sweet black fruit aromas. Concentrated and rich on the attack with a medium body and a long, smooth finish. Should be a solid mid-term cellaring candidate.”

Tastings/Beverage Testing Institute, Chicago, 2001



Wine Profile

“From three different terroirs in Saint-Emilion: sand, gravel and clay over limestone: 5 different parcels. 92% Merlot. Good colour. Laid-back, complex, gently oaky nose. This just gets better and better. Medium-full body. Very rich and concentrated. Excellent acidity. Long and classy. Very good indeed.”

Clive Coates, *The Vine*, 2001

“Toasty, sandalwood aromas with floral perfume. Seductive red fruit and banana, with toffeed oak. Savoury. Forward and appealing.”

Wine Magazine, 2001