

Château Fonplégade 2017

CSPC# 831116

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Saint-Emilion

Classification

Grand Cru Classé

Website

<https://www.fonplegade.com/Home>

General Info

The name Fonplegade was inspired by the terroir. Fonplegade means full or bent fountain. It was derived from the natural fountain, located close to the center of the vineyard which supports numerous, small, running springs in various bent and twisted shapes that are located on the estate.

Skipping ahead about 1,500 years, in 1852, Jean-Pierre Beylot purchased Chateau Fonplegade. Beylot built the magnificent chateau that is still on the Fonplegade property today. In 1863, Chateau Fonplegade was sold to the Duke of Morny. Morny was the stepbrother of Napoleon the 3rd.

The Moueix family purchased the estate in 1953. Things changed again most recently in 2004 when Denise Adams and Stephen Adams bought the Right Bank vineyard of Chateau Fonplegade for 30 million Euros from Armand Moueix. After a complete and very, expensive renovation of the Chateau Fonplegade chateau, cellars and wine making facilities, they also replanted large portions of the vineyards. Next, the Adams family started taking a different approach with their vineyard management techniques.

They began a biodynamic, farming program starting with the 2009 vintage. They were certified organic in 2013. Michel Rolland was the first consultant they hired. In 2015, they also brought in the team of Stephane Derenoncourt to help consult in the vineyard management and winemaking along with Corinne Comme.

Winemakers

Corinne Comme winemaker. Michel Rolland and Stéphane Derenoncourt consult.

Sustainability

Certified organic in 2013.

Vintage

Clearly, 2017 Saint Emilion will always be remembered as the year of the frost. The nights of April 27 and April 28 hit temperatures of below -4 Celsius. The Right Bank has not experienced this much damage from frost since 1991.

Second generation fruit, the grapes that start growing after the frost, was successful to varying degrees. The results depended on the vineyard, terroir and good luck. The problem with those grapes is, if they reached maturity, it was not at the same time as the main harvest, so the berries needed separate vinifications. It was a lot of work especially since the percentage of second-generation grapes used is quite low.

Another difficulty, or opportunity, depending on the situation was that first-generation grapes are the product of a cooler, dry growing season and the second-generation grapes received more sun, inheriting riper characteristics and higher degrees of alcohol, giving you 2 different wine styles. This is where the magic of blending comes in.

Part of the reason the frost struck with such ferocity was that it hit just after bud-break, when the plants are at their most delicate stage of development. The vineyards which survived the frost were still looking for an early, and hopefully successful harvest.

Vineyards

Château Fonplegade represents the purest and most typical expression of our terroir. Enriched with a mosaic of ideal soils and a wonderful diversity of geology and geography, our vineyard is divided into 27 parcels on 45.5 acres. These hand-farmed blocks comprise the artist's palette of our terroir, providing a wealth of flavor components for the development of our wines.

Harvest

The harvest took place September 13 to September 29.

Vinification/

To produce the wine of Chateau Fonplégade, the fruit is whole berry fermented,

Maturation

following a cold maceration for 5 days. The wine is vinified in 6, thermo regulated, large, 95 hectoliter oak vats and 2, 55 hectoliter oak tanks. 5% of the wine is barrel



fermented in 500-liter oak barrels using the micro vinification process. 30% of the wine is vinified in conical shaped, cement vats.

90% of the Malolactic fermentation takes place in 60% new, French oak barrels, with the remaining 10% going through malolactic in cement, egg shaped tanks.

The wine is aged 60% new, French oak barrels and the egg-shaped tanks for an average of 18 months, depending on the quality and character of the vintage.

Tasting Notes With an impeccable balance between fruit, complexity and aromatic length, this wine is characterized by a sophisticated minerality, consistent from year to year, with soft and supple tannins and a velvety texture. It is made from the estate's oldest vines, meticulously hand-farmed using organic and biodynamic practices to bring out the finest quality in each cluster. Predominantly Merlot, the blend includes just enough Cabernet Franc to imbue the wine with an elegant tannic structure.

Serve with Chateau Fonplegade is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau Fonplegade is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes.

Production 4000 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2025 – 2042.

Scores/Awards **90-93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2018
93+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2020
93-95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate #236 - April 2018
93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2020
92-93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2018
92 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2018
94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2018
92-94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2018
94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2020
91 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2020
90-92 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2018

Reviews *"Open-knit, with light anise, tea and cinnamon hints leading off, followed by gently mulled cherry and plum fruit. Lively acidity is embedded on the finish. 4,000 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Blended of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, the deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Fonplegade rolls out of the glass with pronounced notes of plum preserves, baked black cherries and mulberries plus hints of damp soil, cedar chest, new leather and fried herbs. Medium-bodied, the palate is soft-spoken and elegantly played with soft, well-managed tannins and lovely freshness, finishing earthy. Rating: 93+"
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"The deep garnet-purple colored 2017 Fonplegade has quite a spicy nose sporting notes of anise, cloves, fenugreek and black pepper over a core of warm black plums and blackberries plus a waft of potpourri. Medium-bodied with a rock-solid frame of grainy tannins and wonderful freshness, it features bags of vibrant black fruits and a long, spicy finish. Barrel Sample: 93-95"
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Some smoky, graphite and gunflint notes, here with tobacco and light beef bouillon, as well as red plums and dark cherries. The palate has a very smooth and plush bed of ripe tannin, carrying rich red-plum flavors, amid a chalky, layered tannin bed. Drink or hold."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This shows a very pretty center palate with blueberries, blackberries and white pepper. Solid tannins and structure. Long and flavorful."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

Reviews *“Another great vintage from an estate that has been firing on all cylinders over the past few vintages, aided by consultants Michel Rolland and Stéphane Derenoncourt. There's a gorgeous vibrant colour here with violet reflections, and the firm tannins on the attack are well plumped up. The austerity of the vintage is there but extremely well-handled, and even turned to its advantage because it plays its hand slowly and carefully. It's really quite a serious and well-structured wine, with a freshness through the palate; I love it. 60% new oak. The estate has been organic since 2013 and undergoing biodynamic conversion since 2017. (JA)”*
- JA, Decanter.com

“An enjoyable and successful wine. Well-judged extraction and a good sense of balance in a vintage that can quickly run away towards over-austerity. Tannins acidity and fruit all here, interwoven with spice and herbs. Not the most open and seductive, but floral, fragranced and rather lovely. Drinking Window 2025 - 2042.”
- Decanter.com

“Floral in nature, you'll also find licorice, spice box, sandalwood and plummy aromatics on the nose. On the palate, the wine is fresh with an intense mineral character. Once past the rocks and stones, the red fruits are sweet, bright, quite fresh and finesse driven. The finish is long with ripe, salty, red berries and plenty of verve. Made from a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 14% alcohol with a pH of 3.45. The harvest took place September 13 to September 29.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2017 Fonplégade has a very classy bouquet with very pure blackberry and raspberry fruit, hints of cassis developing with aeration. The fruit is very well knitted with the oak. The palate is well balanced with fine tannin, crisp acidity, superb structure and delivers a really detailed and convincing finish. Bravo. This is an outstanding Saint-Émilion. Barrel Sample: 92-94”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2017 Fonplégade is classy, polished and simply impeccable in its balance. The Fonplégade is not a huge wine, but it has really gained in finesse over the course of its aging. Sweet red cherry, pomegranate, blood orange, mint and cinnamon add character to this racy, silky, exceptionally polished Saint-Émilion. Floral overtones add brightness to the finish. (AG)”
- AG, Vinous

“From a wonderful, hillside, limestone terroir and just about all Merlot (there's 5% Cabernet Franc), the 2017 Chateau Fonplegade sports a deep ruby/purple hue as well as a plump, fruit-forward, opulent style on the palate. Classic notes of blackcurrants, unsmoked tobacco, chocolate, and leafy herbs all emerge from the glass, and it's medium to full-bodied, has a soft, upfront texture, good mid-palate depth, and enough tannins to warrant 3-4 years of bottle age.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“The 2017 Château Fonplegade is 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc from a beautiful terroir not far from Pavié. It showed some aggressive tannins, but I suspect they'll soften and round out during the élevage. The color is deep purple, and it offers a terrific bouquet of cassis and currant fruits, licorice and graphite. Medium-bodied, with nicely integrated oak, a touch of minerality, and solid overall balance, it has plenty of length and oomph on the finish. I suspect 2-3 years of bottle age will be warranted and it will drink nicely for a decade or more. Barrel Sample: 90-92”
- Jeb Dunnuck
