

Château Cos d'Estournel 2012

CSPC# 772104

750mlx5

13.8% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Saint- Estèphe

Classification

Second Growth. Deuxieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

Website

<http://estournal.com/cos/cos-destournal-red/?lang=en>

General Info

In the old Gascon language, the word Cos means the hill of pebbles. Between Pauillac and Saint-Estèphe, separated from Château Lafite by the stream known as La Jalle du Breuil, the hill of Cos dominates the Gironde from the height of almost 65 feet. Born in 1762 during the reign of Louis XV and died in 1853 under Napoleon III, Louis Gaspard d'Estournel, who inherited a few vines near the village of Cos, had one sole passion: Cos. Louis Gaspard d'Estournel became known as the Maharajah of Saint-Estèphe. To celebrate his distant conquests, he had exotic pagodas erected over his cellar. In 1852, overwhelmed by debts he had accumulated in order to extend and beautify the estate, he was obliged to sell Cos to a London banker called Martyns. In 1855, the work of Louis Gaspard d'Estournel was consecrated by the imperial classification of 1855 placing Cos d'Estournel at the head of Saint-Estèphe. In 1869, the chateau was sold to the Errazu, an aristocratic Basque family, then to the Hostein brothers in 1886 and to Fernand Ginestet, one leading Bordeaux wine merchant, in 1917. The chateau has been belonging to Michel Reybier since 2000. In 2002 was constructed a new winery with a liquid CO2 cooling tunnel, small 19 to 115 hectoliter isothermal stainless-steel cone-shaped tanks and four 100 litre used to replace the traditional pumping over process. Cos d'Estournel has become, in the eyes of lovers of fine wines, the archetype of a certain style of masculine elegance in which immense power is combined with grace and smoothness. Impressive when young for the intensity of its structure and explosive fruit, Cos d'Estournel evolves slowly to arrive, when completely mature (after ten to thirty years) at an admirable smoothness and aromatic complexity. Great vintages can be exceptionally long living, exceeding a century.

Vintage

The winter of 2011-2012 saw a severe lack of rainfall and ended with mild weather with the first buds already on the vines. This mildness did not last long and temperatures were cool in the Bordeaux region from April onwards. It was far too early to be making any predictions, but this changeable spring weather had the effect of slowing down growth and causing an uneven bud break. The start of flowering was late. Mid-flowering was recorded on 12 June in Cos d'Estournel's vineyard.

From mid-July there was a dramatic change in the weather. As the old saying goes, *c'est août qui fait le moût* ("August makes the must")!

August 2012 will be remembered as being the hottest August since 2003, and also as being drier than the summer of 2010. Temperatures were particularly high during the second half of August.

We observed that despite a wet spring, there was a marked shortage of rain during the summer at Cos d'Estournel. However, our vineyard was able to cope very well with this situation as it enjoys a temperate, well-ventilated microclimate due to the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean and its position on the edge of a plateau.

The water stress during the summer of 2012 was accompanied by a substantial variation between day and night temperatures (around 13° between 15 August and 15 September), without excessively high temperatures when the grapes were ripening.

To some extent this was reminiscent of 2010. These conditions were very favourable for the synthesis of anthocyanins and the preservation of aromatic freshness. They also enabled the vines to do some catching up after the late flowering.

Regular and intensified work of the soil on the high-quality plots, the natural balance of the vines' vigour, and enhanced management of cover crop have enabled Cos



Vintage	d'Estournel's vines to be more resistant to extreme weather conditions due to a more developed root system. Our clay subsoil also played an important role as a "reservoir" of coolness and moisture. Cos d'Estournel's old vines did particularly well this year. Their deep roots enabled them to flourish without any checks during ripening.
Vineyards	The vineyard of Cos spreads around the château on 91 hectares. The Cabernet Sauvignon vines (60% of the vineyard) find the soil of their choice in the thin layers of gravely soil situated on the top and on the southern slopes of the hill. On the other hand, the Merlot vines (40% of the vineyard) excel on the eastern slopes and on the slopes where the Saint-Estephe limestone bed shows on the surface. The percentage of Cabernet and Merlot varies from one vintage to another according to the year weather conditions, benefiting successively to the one or the other. Plantation is extremely dense (8000 to 10000 vines per hectare) and the average age of the vineyard is high (35 years old on the average) in order to enable the roots to extend excessively and to obtain a very slender yield per vine that will create the "Grand Goût" Only the wines coming from over 20 years old vines will have the name of Château Cos d'Estournel.
Harvest	<p>Conditions for the harvests were excellent, and the water stress during the ripening period resulted in a good development of phenolic compounds. It was also the reason of the small size of the grapes. The disruption of the flowering ended up being an advantage. It meant that the grapes were relatively loosely spaced on the bunches, and therefore well-ventilated, and with low yields.</p> <p>The rain in September prevented any checks in the ripening process and enabled us to obtain a perfect synchronisation between the phenolic ripeness and the balance of acidity/potential alcohol. It should also be noted that these were the longest harvests in the last thirteen years, due to the substantial differences in the ripening of the Grands Merlots and the Grands Cabernets. The weather conditions for the harvests combined with careful management of the vineyard and low yields enabled us to obtain optimal degrees of ripeness</p>
Maturation	The grapes were small with thin yet robust skins. A rapid extraction of anthocyanins was noted during the pre-fermentation macerations. The use of the gravity proved to be even more useful this year for the merlots with a high tannic potential. It also enabled better control of components of the musts due to much gentler extractions, producing smoother tannins, while at the same time preserving the vintage's freshness and fruity character. Aged 70% in new barrels during 18 month/s
Tasting Notes	The 2012 Cos d'Estournel has an IPT of 95, higher than the wonderful 2010. Produced from 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, the bouquet is somewhat reserved with notes of Asian spice, smoke, coal and slatey, gravelly minerality. The palate is rich and lithe, exotic yet restrained and floral; there is no shortage of crème de cassis fruit. The finish is long, firm and sweet and is wrapped in large scale tannins.
Cellaring	Drink 2019-2044
Scores/Awards	<p>92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015</p> <p>93+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - February 2015</p> <p>92-95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013</p> <p>91-93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013</p> <p>92-93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013</p> <p>88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - July 2013</p> <p>17.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013</p> <p>18 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 15, 2015</p> <p>91-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 29, 2013</p> <p>90-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 23, 2013</p>
Scores/Awards	<p>93-95+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013</p> <p>17.5 points - Farr Vintner - April 2013</p> <p>91-93 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013</p> <p>92 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013</p>

17.8 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)

91-93 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)

17.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)

17 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

Reviews

"Juicy raspberry, blackberry and plum confiture notes roll along, while the bramble-edged structure and accents of roasted apple wood and spice fill in. The finish has a lightly firm plum skin edge, but overall there's drive, intensity and depth to the pure fruit. A solid effort. Best from 2017 through 2025."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2012 Cos d'Estournel is a classic expression of St.-Estèphe, with notes of graphite, crushed rock, blackberry, blackcurrant fruit, a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel, structured, but well-integrated tannins and a long finish of 35 seconds or more. This is a beauty and an undeniable top success in the Médoc for 2012. Give it 4-6 years of cellaring and drink it over the following two decades or more. The final blend, which achieved 13.8% alcohol, is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and the balance Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

Certainly, proprietor Michel Reybier has done fabulous work since acquiring Cos d'Estournel well over a decade ago. The investment in a state-of-the-art, space-age winemaking facility and intense work in the vineyard have all combined to produce a wine of true first-growth quality."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"It has a saturated purple color, a classic style, abundant tannin, slight austerity, superb concentration, huge fruit, a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel, and a structured, muscular, well-delineated finish. This impressive, full-bodied Cos will need time to round into shape. Give it 4-5 years of cellaring and drink it over the following two decades.

Proprietor Michel Reybier has produced an outstanding 2012 Cos d'Estournel from a blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and the rest tiny quantities of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. With a pH of 3.75 and alcohol level of 13.8% this is a ripe wine with the same tannin levels (IPH) as the 2009. The second wine, the 2012 Les Pagodes de Cos, represents 50% of the production.

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted as a barrel sample at the chateau. The Grand Vin is a blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot that is being raised in 70% new oak. It delivers 13.79% alcohol and represents half of the total crop. It is initially quite taciturn on the nose with blackberry and briary notes, the Cabernet component coming through strongly with hints of iodine. Returning after 10 minutes, the mineral aromas are more pronounced. The palate is medium bodied with grippy tannins. It is certainly well balanced, quite assertive at this stage with bold, dry tannins on the finish that is more concentrated than you would expect given the growing season. There is a pleasant salty note on the aftertaste that lingers long in the mouth. This is a steadfast, well-judged Cos d'Estournel, though it falls somewhat short of the mighty 2010. Tasted April 2013."

- NM, Wine Journal

"This is very tannic -- perhaps slightly too much -- but shows very pretty, intense fruit with blueberry and mineral character. Full and dense. Mineral and dried spices such as cloves under it all. Very muscular."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Bright, full ruby. Aromas of fresh blackcurrant, graphite and bitter chocolate are complicated by delicately smoky minerality and lifted by an enticing floral quality. Fine-grained, generous and sweet, with plenty of sound acidity giving noteworthy precision to the palate. Finishes dense and long, with soft, polished tannins and lingering notes of red and darker fruits. A lovely Cos, more refined and less exotic than some previous vintages. You can tell they are de-leafing a great deal less at Cos of late and vintages since 2009 have shown less "solar" personalities and more precision. Interestingly, this is the first year in a long time that I recall cabernet franc making it into the grand vin at Cos. Winemaker Dominique Arangoits told me it's from a one-hectare parcel of 35-year-old vines on clay that ripened well, and it no doubt contributed to this wine's bright perfume. The grand vin represents 50% of the total production in 2012"

- ST, International Wine Cellar

Reviews

"Very dark and purple. Very interesting, almost putty nose. Intriguing and not so flamboyant and flashy as in some years. Really rather like Lafite 2012 on the nose! Perhaps a little tiny bit bitter on the finish but no excess of sweetness nor alcohol. Very measured. Solid impact. Very dry finish. I absolutely love the nose but find it a bit austere on the finish - but at least it is classic St-Estèphe. Slightly hard work at this stage; the most youthful wine I have tasted so far. '100% gravity-fed cellar helped us to be restrained in extraction', explained the new director Aymeric de Gironde."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Superb colour, big black fruits, has the opulent smoothness of Cos with freshness and very classy length."

- SS, Decanter.com

"Cos has taken a particular stylistic route since 2009 and this follows the same path, even in a cooler vintage like 2012. It's a super concentrated, saturated style of wine with notes of plums and blueberries, lashings of new oak and considerable power. What Château Pavie is to the Right Bank, Cos is becoming to the Left. Not to everyone's taste, but certainly a well-made red. Drink: 2020-30"

- TA, timatkin.com

"They must have been doing something right in the little corner of Bordeaux, as I loved Mouton and Lafite also. Blend is 75% cabernet sauvignon, 22% merlot, 2% cabernet franc, 1% petit verdot. This is a lovely bullish primeur purple, shooting astringency and acidity, this is a brilliantly constructed tunnel of menthol, but then a whoosh of coffee comes in afterwards that is very seductive, this could develop well, good plum and rich cassis coulis fruits, good acidity. Imagine careful selection to get this quality. 95 / 18.5. Outstanding. Drink 2029-2032."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Deep in color, with Asian spice, licorice, espresso and wet earth scents open the wine. On the palate, the wine is polished, round and smooth, with cassis, licorice, cocoa, coffee bean and black cherries in the finish."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Spicy cherries and oak scents open to a fresh, cherry, herb, stone and fennel nose. Medium/full bodied, tannic, and filled with bright cassis flavors, this should be fun to drink while you're waiting for the 2009 and 2010 to come around. Drink this on the young side. 91-93 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Blending 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, the wine reached 13.79% alcohol, with a pH of 3.75 and will be aged in 70% new French oak. The first vintage produced with Aymeric de Gironde at the helm after the departure of Jean Guillaume Prats offers the estates' tell-tale Asian spice scents, complicated by boysenberry and jammy black cherry. Medium/full-bodied, this a lighter-bodied, firm style of Cos d'Estournel, when compared against other, more recently heralded, vintages. 90-93 Pts. "

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and saturated; colour tight to the rim; thick and dense in the glass; serious nose; layered; lots of fruit here; a seam of focused and precise fruit; freshness with some creamy notes; very consistent on the palate; tight seam of blackcurrant fruit again; very pure and nicely layered; quite big and lots of material and evidently ripe tannin. Gives the wine density and chew at the back. Cassis and blackcurrant tones linger. Pretty serious effort. 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. 70% new oak. 13.8% alc. TA 3.2, pH 3.75 IPT 95. Tasted at Cos Friday April 12, 2013. 93-95+ Drink 2018-2035"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Cos was good in the 1990's but since the 2001 vintage, the quality here has reached another level. The aim here is to make wine of First Growth quality at less than half the price. The stunning new winery is the most modern and sophisticated in all of Bordeaux, with the world's only 100% gravity cellar - no pumps used at all. Cos is now battling it out with Léoville Las Cases, Ducru Beaucaillou and Palmer as the Médoc's best non-First Growth. Following the departure of Jean-Guillaume Prats the new man at the helm is Aymeric de Gironde who has joined from Pichon Baron. 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot, this is dark, dense and intense. The opulent nose reveals chocolate, spice, cassis and blueberry fruit. it is powerful and rich on the palate with brooding intensity. An impressive texture with notes of spice tobacco and cedar. Certainly, in the style of a first growth, this is clearly one of the wines of the vintage on the left bank."

- Farr Vintners

Reviews *“The nose has fragrance, yet depth of fruit and the mix of blackcurrant, black cherry and bramble gives lots of complexity on the palate. The fruit feels ripe and although the tannins are firm structured, they do not overpower the fruit. The fresher feel towards the back gives a lighter and more elegant finish. 2020-40.”*
- Derek Smedley MW

“Tasted alongside the 2013 and 2011, the 2012 is more tannic and tighter knit. 13.6% alcohol which is similar to the 2011. Tannins are denser however, with darker flavours and more savoury notes. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (04-Jan-2014)
- JCL, asianpalate.com
