

# CELLAR MASTER WINE CLUB

December 2023

## 2020 Le Petit Ducru Saint-Julien

Bordeaux, France

An icon of balance and tradition, St. Julien boasts the highest proportion of classed growths in the Médoc. What it lacks in any first growths, it makes up in the rest: five amazing second growth chateaux, two superb third growths and four well-reputed fourth growths. While the actual class rankings set in 1855 (first, second, and so on the fifth) today do not necessarily indicate a score of quality, the classification system is important to understand in the context of Bordeaux history. Today rivalry among the classed chateaux only serves to elevate the appellation overall.

Chateau Ducru Beaucaillou is named after the beautiful, large stones found in its unique wine-growing terroir. This exceptional ecosystem produces fine, elegant, tasty wines with a long finish - in short, archetypical Saint-Julien wines.

Perched on an exceptional site with incomparable views over the Gironde estuary, in the center of a hundred-year-old park, Ducru-Beaucaillou is a majestic, Victorian-style castle, which has, over time, become one of the great symbols of the Médoc. Unusual for Bordeaux, it is built directly above the barrel cellars, enveloping its owners, who have lived here for over sixty years.

Today, the estate is managed by the company Jean Eugène Borie SA, which is owned by Mrs Borie, her daughter Sabine Coiffe and her son Bruno-Eugène, CEO since 2003, the third generation of the Borie family to head the estate. There are very close links between this estate and the five families who have been its successive owners.

Ducru-Beaucaillou's third-label, the 2020 Le Petit Ducru, is a blend of 78% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Petit Verdot. It has an alcohol of 13.75% and the pH is 3.74. It is set to age for 12 months in French oak barrels, 30% new.

[www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com)



*"The 2020 Le Petit Ducru offers up aromas of sweet plums, cassis, raw cocoa, pencil shavings and creamy new oak, followed by a medium to full-bodied, fleshy and layered palate framed by powdery tannins that assert themselves on the finish. Drink 2023 - 2040."* **Wine Advocate 90**

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## 2019 Chateau La Grande Roche Cabernet Napa Valley, California

Ric Forman is one of Napa Valley's most celebrated and established winemakers having worked over fifty harvests here. His resume includes some of our most iconic wineries including Stony Hill in 1967, Robert Mondavi in 1968 and shortly after becoming the first winemaker at Sterling Vineyards making the inaugural vintage in 1969. After Sterling Vineyards was sold to Coca-Cola in 1975, the original owner of Sterling, Peter Newton with Forman's help, established his own winery under the Newton label on a piece of land above David Abreu's Madrona Vineyard in Saint Helena. Around that same time, Forman had found and purchased his own piece of property across the valley floor on Howell Mountain in 1978. Forman made the wines at Newton for four years then left to focus solely on his own project and in 1983 he released his first wine under his own label of Forman. The winery is situated on Big Rock Road perched on a ridge at the base of Howell Mountain overlooking the town of St. Helena.

Chateau La Grande Roche, meaning Chateau of the "big rock", is the second label of Forman Vineyard. Named after the massive pink and grey boulders on which winery was built, Ric established this second label to assure that the Forman Cabernet will always be created from only the very best lots each year. The vineyard is composed entirely of unconsolidated river gravel very much like the vineyards of Medoc in Bordeaux and unlike any other known vineyards in Napa. You could say that Forman is the 'Reserve' and Chateau La Grande Roche is made up of those lots that didn't make the cut for the Forman label. This is no after-thought however, it is still made with all of the same care and dedication as Forman and sourced from the same estate hillside vines surrounding the winery. Think Pavillon Rouge from Chateaux Margaux, Pauillac de Château Latour from Chateaux Latour, or Overture from Opus One. There is one huge difference however, and only more stunning than the quality, is the price! This wine is an absolute steal from one of Napa's veteran winemakers and an incredible estate vineyard!

100% Forman Estate Vineyard sourced, composed of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot, and 3% Merlot. The wine was aged for 21 months in once used French oak barrels. A wonderfully deep color leads into expectations of an impressive wine. Aromas of blueberry, flint, currant, licorice, and pomegranate are backed by a dusty, herbal bouquet. The palate shows ripe black plum, blackberry cordial, tobacco and cedar. Firm tannins and healthy acidity set the stage for this shining example of power and persistence. This wine is released a year earlier than the 'Forman' bottling and made in the same classic style at a fraction of the price.

Notes from [www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com)



*"Forman's second wine, the 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon Chateau La Grande Roche is absolutely gorgeous. Effusive aromatics and vibrant fruit make a very strong opening statement. Readers will find all the Forman signatures in this mid-weight, classically-built Cabernet Sauvignon. Rose petal, cinnamon and sweet red plum fruit flow across the palate effortlessly, lifted by bright floral accents that lend freshness. This is beautifully done, and a real charmer. Don't miss it. Best After 2024."* **Vinous 93**

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