

# CHÂTEAU LA GRÂCE DIEU

St.-Emilion

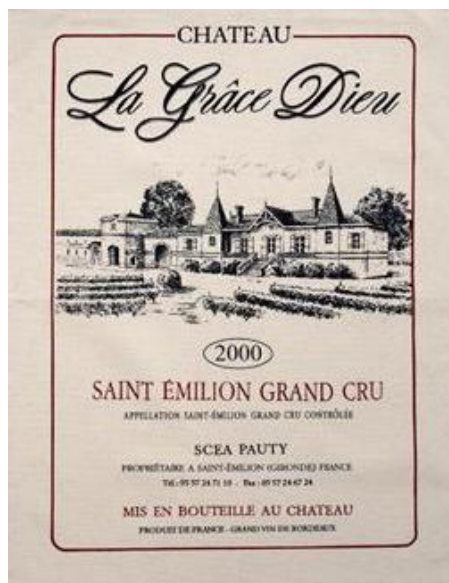
On those numerous occasions when the St.-Emilion properties have been subjected to classification, the gently sloping land south of this small but famous city has usually come out at the low end. On the one hand the high, chalky hills on which the city is situated and on the other the clay-rich plateau extending northward toward Pomerol are the choicest real estate.

That being said, if you take a look at the southern, “low” end of even a recent classification, you’ll notice a funny thing. Names like Canon la Gaffeliere, Pavie Macquin, Monbousquet, and Ferrand Lartigue are on Robert Parker’s “hit list” of St.-Emilion’s “hottest” properties. And not just *his*. How is this? No doubt in part it’s a victory of man (and his money) over terroir: the southern “hinterlands” are the playpen of the talented and moneyed who didn’t inherit top-end real estate but whose ambition drives them to try harder. Still, the dirt has to be pretty good for all that!

Chateau La Grace Dieu too is located in this outlying southern belt. But some of their vines are in the really “high rent” district of great chalk hills within spitting distance of the city walls. This split between higher and lower vineyards is a feature Grace Dieu shares with the hottest, fastest racer in today’s St.-Emilion’s circuit, Valandraud.

If, however, you are looking for a wine in the modern, ultra-fashionable (and ultra-expensive!) mode, one given cold maceration and fed on a diet of stirred lees and “200%” new oak, then look elsewhere! La Grace Dieu is a wine made with gentleness, sensitivity, respect for tradition and above all restraint. Professor Guimberteau, the consulting oenologist, also works with Leoville las Cases so he knows a thing or two about wine ... *and* about restraint.

Technical improvements have been made of late, but not of the showy kind. Careful sorting, gentle pressing and controlled fermentation



are the venues for “progress” here.

La Grace Dieu is marked by two further, consumer-friendly peculiarities whose theme is also restraint: the price has remained modest, and the wine is not released until it has rested for at least one full year in bottle. In this day and age when no wine is sold before its time and the bank says “It’s time!”, we must be thankful for every tasty exception that manages to arrive in our markets at a respectable, or at least not an indecent age.

Saint-Emilion

## Château La Grace Dieu

Varieties: Merlot (80%), Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon

Acreage: 14 hectare (around 31 acres): nine on gentle slopes a mile and a half south of St.-Emilion; five in steep vineyards immediately adjacent to the city.

Production: Under 6,000 cases.

Soil: 9 of 13 hectare represent sandy glaucis with iron subsoil. Four are very chalky clay of the classic Montagne de St.-Emilion.