



TASTING NOTES

A Gamayzing Decade of Château Moulin-à-Vent

© Linden Wilkie, June 2022

TASTING NOTES:

A GAMAYZING DECADE OF CHÂTEAU MOULIN-À-VENT

2010 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

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A fresh sunny vintage, cool and classic, harvested from 26th September, 26hl/ha, it was austere when young.

Still a fresh garnet with a touch of colour development at the rim; a sweet and spicy nose, pomegranate, good freshness and lift; ripe on the palate with concentration, a round texture of fruit and fine bright ripe acidity, this is bold and buoyant, with fine structure. There is a touch of gloss here coming from the high proportion of new oak masking some details I feel, but this is a delicious wine.

2011 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

89

A very hot and dry vintage that led to an early harvest from 29th August, 36hl/ha.

Clear, though a touch lighter than the 2010, fresh rim; fresh sappy fruit on the nose, a cool and bright tone, brush-herbal notes, this has some savour now; juicy on the palate, lighter weight than the '10, with an appetizing savoury flavour offsetting the lightweight fruit. A medium to lightweight Moulin-à-Vent for drinking now / drinking up. It doesn't have the length of the best of them, but it does still have nice fruit. A tasty finish with a crunchy edge. Pleasant, but not the richness, nor the complexity of the best.

2012 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

90

A wet vintage beset by problems with mildew, harvested from 13th September, double-sorting was required to avoid poor berries, 16hl/ha.

Garnet with a broad light rim showing full maturity; cool and savoury on the nose, an appetizing aroma, some florals too – complex; ripe, savoury, mid-weight, there is some austerity to the tannins, but with plenty of flavours. This is sapid, lip-smacking and layered in flavour. It demands food, but has satisfying sap and complexity. Ready to go now, drink up.

2013 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

91

A cool, windy spring led to late but even flowering, and a good summer led to a late harvest from 28th September, 25hl/ha. This was the first vintage in organic viticulture and marked the arrival of winemaker Brice Laffond.

Light garnet with a fresh rim; fresh and vibrant on the nose with some savouriness; plump and juicy on the palate, a touch of licorice and savour, moderate length, with a tight, more slender mouthfeel, drying a little perhaps. Nice, moderate weight and flesh, drinking well.

2014 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

90

North winds slowed development during spring, but summer was beautiful and regular. Harvested from 9th September, 27hl/ha.

Fresh clear colour of mid-depth; fruity, cool and savoury on the nose, a touch floral; a juicy, vibrant frame, though this has a distinct earthiness too; high acidity on the palate, some herbal flavours, starting to dry a touch on the finish. There is some complexity here, and it is quite savoury in style. Good length and fine tannin. Drink now.

2015 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

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Low rainfall in spring was followed by a very hot summer, with warm southerly winds keeping the vineyards clean, maturity came fast and harvest began on 27th August, 27hl/ha. This was the first vintage in which some proportion of whole bunches were included in the fermentation with the goal to slow down extraction and sugar release. 2015 saw the beginning of the estate's own massale vine selection programme.

Clear and with a fuller colour; bright and spicy nose with a licorice note and macerated fruits – this is a more solar year, clearly; rich fruit on the attack, this is concentrated and mouthfilling and at the same time with good acidity; there's a density of fruit here – some oomph for the long haul, though its great on its fruit right now. There is also some of that Moulin-à-Vent structure, there is tannin here, and it points to food for this vintage. It's not "glou-glou" wine. Licorice, spice and juicy fruit on the long finish.

2016 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

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A humid spring brings vigorous plant growth and leaf production, making trellising work key. Flowering was long and late, and there was some damage from hail. Until the end of July morning dew maintained moisture in the vineyards, August saw heat and drought, and winds kept things clean. Harvest from 20th September, 30hl/ha.

Fine clear ruby-garnet; lovely nose, fresh and fragrant, a floral edge, a complex aroma; beautiful fruit on the attack, there's a freshness in the expression, lovely fruit-acidity-sap tension, it melts gently on the palate and the texture is silky. This for me is the star wine in the vertical – the freshness, complexity, melting texture and juiciness, all with subtle details offered along the way. There is stuffing here too, and the fine tannins are well-covered by sappy fruit. Very good. Now – 2036.

2017 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

88

Bud-break and flowering were early. On 10th July, the first day of veraison (grape skin colour change from green toward purple) there was an almighty hailstorm – 120km/hr winds brought 1cm hailstones in to shred the vineyards in a matter of minutes. A hot dry July and August allowed for the beginning of elimination of damaged berries, some of which simply dried and fell off the vines. Double sorting at harvest, from 6th September, just 12hl/ha.

Mid-light colour, a weaker rim; nice fruit on the nose, pomegranate, a touch of leaf, floral, a lighter, less grand nose after the '16; fresh, lighter weight on the palate, but this is also spicy, herbal, quite 'amare' in that combination of bittersweet herb and orange rind fragrance on the palate. This is fully evolved now, attractive and ready. Just a touch of dryness on the finish where the fruity dries in tone too. Drinking well still but drink up.

2018 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

91

A very humid spring with mildew challenges, then 'la fleur a coulé' giving long, loose clusters with millerandage (berries of different sizes and ripening rates), giving the potential for extra concentration. A very hot summer with low rainfall lead to the loss of malic acid and the concentration of tartaric acids, the juice in 2018 is rich and powerful. Harvest from 31st August, 34hl/ha. Proportion of whole bunch fermentation increased this year.

A vibrant fresh colour, clear with a touch more blue in the tone of the ruby rim; a sweet nose, a bit more confit in the fruit expression; cooked fruits spice, sweetness on the nose; on the palate this '18 shows a bolder, denser fruit with licorice and dark fruit flavour, spice, and a leather note. Bold and spicy Moulin-à-Vent from a hot year. There is a little warmth and chewiness here too, with a licorice and dark fruit finish. A denser wine, with good acidity, aniseed bittersweetness. This is a hearty, food-friendly wine. Now – 2028.

2019 Château du Moulin-à-Vent

90

The sunniest vintage since 1990, yet August was cooler than average, a millerandage year that began a little later than usual, 11th September, 25hl/ha.

Fresh, a lighter colour, bright, with a lighter rim and less depth of colour than many of the vintages here; a cool and fresh aroma, crunchy fruit; lighter style on the palate, red fruits, a warm but not hot finish, there is lower acidity here too. Overall this is a lighter depth Moulin-à-Vent, it doesn't have the flavour depth or complexity of some vintages, but the red fruit and star anise profile to the palate expression is lingering, fresh and refreshing. This – the youngest wine today – is also one of the most open and ready to drink examples. It doesn't have the stuffing for long ageing that some vintages possess, but it has a nice balance, a melting low acid soft tannin texture and moderate length.





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