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# Chateau Phelan Segur

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CHÂTEAU  
Phélan Ségur

History It wasn't mere chance that led Bernard Phelan, a young Irish wine broker, to leave his homeland at the end of the 18th century and settle in Bordeaux. At that time, the city was a major trading centre with the British Isles. The families that did business together, buying and selling the wines produced in the region formed close ties. These relationships sometimes led to marriages and notably that of Bernard Phelan to one of the daughters of Daniel GÜestier, a well-known merchant in the market. With the benefit of his father-in-law's experience, he was able to start thinking about making his own wines. In order to do this, he acquired le Clos de Garaméy, located in Saint Estephe, in 1805, followed in 1810 by the Segur de Cabanac estate to complement his first acquisition. He thus created a magnificent wine-producing domain that remains practically unchanged today. When he died in 1841, Bernard Phelan left this vast estate, known from then on under the combined name of Chateau Phelan Segur de Garaméy, to his son Frank. The Terroir The terroir of Phelan Segur, situated in the eastern part of Saint Estephe bordering the estate, is composed of gravelly alluvial deposits produced when the Garonne was a torrential river 650,000 years ago. The deposits consist of pebbles, and above all gravel, coated with sandy clay. The variable thickness of these deposits is easily observable because it has created the undulating country that lies around most of Saint Estephe. The alluvial layers are underpinned by a chalky marine formation going back to the time when the Pointe du Medoc, near the ocean, was covered by the waves. These unusual sediments are known as "Saint Estephe" chalk, which serves to highlight their special local character. Each geological feature is the object of agronomic and viticultural management aimed at optimising its characteristics. On gravelly land, and especially on plateau with correspondingly gentle slopes, foremost priority is given to maintaining the structure of the soil to promote surface permeability. On chalky soils, especially in areas affected by erosion, the aim is to stabilise the soil structure by adding organic matter, lightly dug in, and by growing grass between the rows. The Vinification Having been separated from their stalks, the grapes are then gently crushed. Grouped batches of the harvest are transferred to stainless steel tanks. Built with double walls to increase their thermal inertia, the vats are connected to an automatic temperature control system that regulates the fermentation process. The marc formed by solid matter in the grapes fill the upper third of the vat. It is essential to enhance the contact between these two layers during alcoholic fermentation, because certain components in the skins impact the beautiful red colour to the juice that so sought after. Pumping over is carried out, the frequency and the length of which is decided daily. The juice is simply run off from the tank and sprayed all over the top of the marc. This way, as much color as possible, but also the finest tannins are extracted from the grape skins. The phase of the winemaking process starts immediately after harvesting and lasts 8 to 10 days during which time the sugars naturally turn into alcohol, under the influence of yeasts. Due to the effect of the heat and alcohol levels generated by this fermentation, the cells of the solid matter break down, become porous and release their components. Conditions are now right for extraction to proceed by osmosis, during the maceration period. Its length varies from 10 to 20 days depending on the particular requirements of the vintage and the type of wine to be made. The vatting period is punctuated with daily tastings to determine the points when the wine shows the required harmony between all its ingredients. The work carried out on each vat is routinely recorded to methodically monitor the history of each batch of wine. Using this objective data, the cellar master can decide the right moment when the wine should be separated from its marc. This de-vatting operation is more commonly called "running off". This "free run wine" is collected first from the vat. Link to : Web book