

# Chateau Le Puy, Emilien

Chateau Le Puy is a rarity in modern Bordeaux. In continuous ownership by the Amoreau family since 1610, Le Puy has never fallen prey to chemical-farming shortcuts or technological cellar trickery, instead remaining ultra-traditional even when such an approach was out of fashion. Situated on the same plane of astérie limestone as its storied neighbors Pomerol and Saint-Emilion, Le Puy remains proudly outside the appellation system, thereby preserving its independence and allowing its wines to deliver real value—free from the commodity pricing that accompanies many of Bordeaux’s loftiest locales. Le Puy’s main-production workhorse “Emilien” gained surprise global fame after being featured in the wine-themed manga and hit show Drops of God, a spotlight that speaks to the winery’s unique crossover appeal. There exists at Le Puy a deep sense of classicism and terroir expression that resonates with lovers of traditional Bordeaux, as well as a non-sculpted exuberance (all too rare in Bordeaux) that connects with lovers of natural wine.

“ Le Puy is head and shoulders above anything produced in that area. The quality and consistency mirrors exactly what we built our company on. It is one of those domaines that perfectly aligns with our value system. Head and shoulders above the crowd. Really shows mastery of their craft. ”

Neal Rosenthal

## Winery

In, of all places, Bordeaux—a region that fell especially hard for the oak-and-muscles approach favored by certain critics and point-chasers over the past few decades—there exists a sizable and historic estate that is making wines true to this region’s all too often misrepresented terroir. The sheer existence of an estate like Le Puy boggles the mind: in continuous operation by the same family since 1610; biodynamic since the 1960s, with no chemical treatments ever used in the estate’s history; plowing by horse; natural fermentations with no human interference, just a burbling submerged cap; aging in 100+ year old foudres; and often no sulfur at all added at any point. Throw in the cromlech in the backyard (think Stonehenge), and Le Puy is hauntingly evocative in the weight and living presence of its long history. Located in the commune of Saint-Cibard—geographically part of the Francs-Côtes de Bordeaux appellation (though Le Puy chooses to remain outside the appellation system)—the estate sits on the second highest point in the Gironde at 110 meters (approximately 350 feet) above sea level. Of its almost 100 hectares (247 acres), only 54 are planted to the vine, the rest preserved as fields, forests, and ponds to maintain a natural ecological equilibrium.

## Winemaking

Manual harvest; full destemming; spontaneous fermentation with submerged-cap in concrete with no thermoregulation; first year of aging spent in 50-hectoliter oak foudres of up to 100 years of age; second year in old 225-liter barriques; bottling with the lightest dose of sulfur dioxide a vintage will allow (frequently zero).



## Wine

Le Puy’s main-production wine “Emilien” is comprised of 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 1% Carmenère. There is a harmony of elements in the wines of Le Puy—a weaving together of acid, fruit, tannin, mineral and earth—that is spellbinding. The “Emilien” offers a succulence of sappy red fruit as well as a driving, tunneling palate of remarkable energy. A subtle but irresistible umami pervades the palate and grounds some of the wine’s higher tones with its savory pull.

## Vineyards

**Region:** Bordeaux

**Appellation:** Francs-Côtes de Bordeaux

**Soil:** Astérie limestone

**Age:** 50 year-old vines, trained in Guyot, planted at 5,500 vines/ha.

**Vine Yields:** 30 hl/ha

**Eco-Practices:** Certified biodynamic by Demeter, certified organic by Ecocert

## Winemaking

**Varietals:** 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 1% Carmenère

**Aging:** 12 months in 50-hl neutral oak foudres followed by 12 months in very old 225-liter barriques