

# EXCELLENCE THROUGH BLENDING: A LOVING DECADE OF 'PASSIONNÉMENT'

by Jodie Morlet



## MORLET *Family Vineyards*

**D**URING lunch in elementary school, my friends and I would twist the stems of apples to discover the initials of boys who might like us. At recess, we also pulled the petals off of flowers to find out if they truly loved us or not. But, never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that I would marry a French winemaker who would name a wine in honor of me based upon the childhood tradition, *effeuiller la marguerite*. In France, the petals of a daisy are removed in order to determine if the object of one's affection loves you a little, a lot, passionately, to madness, or not at all. This is the story of how Luc's expertise in *L'Art d'Assemblage* or "The Art of Blending" led him to symbolize his love for me by crafting our 'Passionnément' Cabernet Sauvignon.

### A CHILD'S CURIOSITY

As a very young boy, Luc was too shy to interact with the visitors who came to his family's domaine, Champagne Pierre Morlet et Fils. When guests departed, he would come out from hiding underneath the table and pour the portions remaining in each flute into one glass. Proud of his blend, he would drink his creation with a true sense of accomplishment. This led him to seek out other beverages to taste and mix together. His curiosity got the better of him, as once he mistook black ink for crème de cassis, and on another occasion ingested... bleach! (which his grandmother had stored in an old sparkling lemonade bottle).

The Champagne region's blending techniques are recognized as an art



*Luc's dedication to L'Art d'Assemblage has been rewarded with 100 points!*

form. The climate can prove to be quite challenging, so having a variety of vineyards with different elevations and sun exposures helps to ensure that if a heavy frost damages one area, other plots may thrive that year.

This necessity to have multiple blocks provides the foundation for crafting complex wines, for each *terroir* im-

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pacts the same varietal in different ways. The Morlet family owns forty blocks of *Grand* and *Premier Crus* Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the heart of Champagne, all of which reveal an ideal balance of ripeness and acidity. The family's Chardonnay vineyards include *Gilbertin* in Ay. Its pure chalky soil and southwestern exposure bring minerality, structure and finesse to a wine. *Berziret-Renard* in Mutigny, which has an eastern exposure and a predominantly deeper, loamy clay soil, provides the *gras* and weight. Also in Mutigny but facing southeast, *Côte de Mai* is named for its early bloom and leads to a powerful and rich wine.

At an early age, Luc came to understand that the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts" as he assisted his father in combining *terroirs*, varietals and vintages to craft multidimensional Champagnes. Luc was eager to learn the century-old blends of the prestigious Champagne houses. While in graduate school, he interned at one of these *Maisons* and discovered, through his research, the proprietary blends of Krug's 'Grande Cuvée' and Bollinger's 'Special Cuvée.' For over a hundred years, these blends were perfected and passed from one *chef de cave* to the next.

### BLENDING IN BORDEAUX

Luc was first exposed to Bordeaux wine-making techniques after earning his graduate degree, when André Lurton chose him to become the *Régisseur* at Château Dauzac, a clas-

sified Margaux growth. The estate, located near the Gironde Estuary, encompassed multiple blocks with gravelly soils.



*He loves me...*



'Morlet Estate' St. Helena, Napa Valley

Unlike Luc's family's Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes, these Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot varietals contained tannins which needed to be carefully considered throughout the winemaking process. Under the guidance of consultant Jacques Boissenot and Bordeaux University professor Pascal Ribéreau-Gayon, Luc blended the wines from the various blocks to make the *Grand Vin* 'Château Dauzac' as well as the second and third labels.

#### CONTINUING HIS CRAFT IN CALIFORNIA

Luc and I met in Paris in the summer of 1994. Our friendship turned into love, leading him to move to California. In 1996, he was hired by Newton Vineyard, where he worked with "Master Blender" Michel Rolland for five years. Luc's professional path led him to be the winemaker at Peter Michael Winery. He continued Helen Turlay's legacy, whose ingenuity in selecting and blending the best barrels from the Gauer Ranch in Alexander Valley, became the winery's 'Point Rouge' Chardonnay bottling. Luc crafted all of the Peter Michael wines, including 'Point Rouge' from 2001 through 2005, and has been their consulting winemaker ever since.

#### OUR THREE TERRIFIC TERROIRS

In 2006, Luc and I founded Morlet Family Vineyards. The portfolio represents his expertise in the expression of *terroir* as well as his artistry in blending. Our 'Coup de Cœur' label results from Luc's selection of the best Chardonnay barrels from our 'Ma Douce' Fort Ross-Seaview and 'Ma Princesse' Russian River Valley vineyards. The 2015 'Coup de Cœur' was awarded 100 points by Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, and when describing the 2009 vintage, he affirmed, "This may be one of the all-time great Chardonnays ever made in California!" Jeb Dunnuck concurred by calling our 2016 vintage "pure perfection in the glass!"

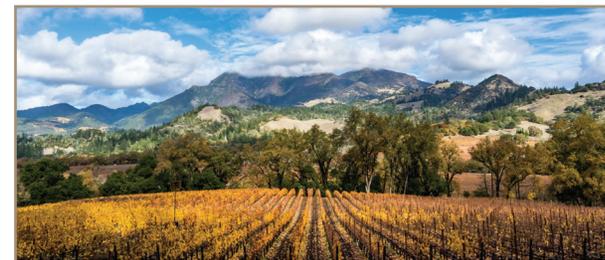


'Cœur de Vallée' Oakville, Napa Valley

Our estate Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards represent three distinct *terroirs*. The fruit is gently harvested by hand at full physiological ripeness and transported to the winery in our refrigerated trucks. Meticulous berry per berry sorting leads to a five-week natural fermentation and maceration in either oak puncheons or small open top stainless steel tanks. Using gravity, the wine is transferred to French oak barrels for a sixteen-month *élevage*. A post-malolactic racking is carefully done so that the wine in a barrel returns to its original oak aging vessel. Unfined and unfiltered, the barrels are racked one final time prior to bottling.

The single vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon wines allow Luc to showcase each unique *terroir*. The 'Morlet Estate' vineyard is located from 240 to 440 feet in elevation on the hillside surrounding our historic winery in St. Helena. The porous cemented volcanic ash soils found throughout the property provide a strong minerality, while round and soft tannins lead to a refined Cabernet Sauvignon. Robert Parker likened our 'Morlet Estate' to a first-growth Pauillac, and Antonio Galloni asserted "This is one of the most distinctive Cabernets in Napa Valley," further describing it as "an absolutely gorgeous wine that captures all the personality and pedigree of St. Helena's Northern Corridor."

Prior to the 2017 vintage, our 'Cœur de Vallée' and 'Force de la Nature' wines came from the Beckstoffer To Kalon vineyard. Our own vineyard is located within the same alluvial fan on the world-renowned Oakville Bench. The seasonal To Kalon Creek flows through our 24 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc vines. The gravelly and loamy soil, combined with a warm yet temperate climate, result in silky tannins, a rich and creamy texture and beautiful depth. Jeb Dunnuck noted that this wine is opulent and "classic Napa Valley" and Robert Parker claimed that Luc "is making some of the most exciting wines of the region!"



'Mon Chevalier' Knights Valley

Our 'Mon Chevalier' vineyard is situated from 500 to 600 feet in elevation and benefits from its proximity to Mount St. Helena in Knights Valley. The cooler climate leads to a longer ripening season and a more classic Bordeaux-like expression. An ideal combination of silt, sand and clay translates into an age-worthy wine with power, richness and more masculine tannins. This wine is typically comprised of the five red Bordeaux varietals, and in December 2010, Mr. Parker exclaimed, "Mon Chevalier may be the finest wine I have ever tasted from Knights Valley!"

#### L'ART D'ASSEMBLAGE

Moving beyond the concept of *terroir*, our 'Passionnément' Cabernet Sauvignon demonstrates Luc's expertise in *L'Art d'Assemblage*. Much like a composer's elaborate arrangement results in a melodic symphony, Luc has the ability to "compose" a harmonious 100% Cabernet Sauvignon by selecting and blending the "best of the best" barrels from each of our three vineyards. He is committed to achieving the highest quality for our single vineyard wines, therefore only a small number of barrels are designated for this judicious blend. Additionally, as one of the rare winemakers who takes the time to taste and evaluate each barrel multiple times, Luc purposely maintains a small enough production to make this possible.



Step One: Individually tasting 120 barrel samples



A preselected barrel

### STEP ONE: INDIVIDUAL BARREL TASTING & PRESELECTION

During the first step in *L'Art d'Assemblage*, Luc blind tastes each of our 120 barrels of Cabernet Sauvignon. He writes down a precise description and overall rating for the wine from each barrel and marks those barrels which he believes will become 'Passionnément' with a chalk asterisk.

This occurs in the spring, approximately six months after harvest.

### STEP TWO: PRELIMINARY BLENDING

As soon as he has completed the individual barrel tasting, Luc begins the *ébauche*, or preliminary blending. He looks for the synergy among barrels as he begins to create



Step Two: Looking for synergy among barrels

a wine which is harmonious and seamless in character, displaying intensity, complexity and refinement with a great aging capability. He assesses the quality of the tannins as he makes a prediction of how the combined barrels and the resulting wine will present itself upon release and how it will develop for years to come. The wine is measured in cylinders which will eventually be converted to a quarter, half or full barrel.

### STEP THREE: SELECTING THE FINAL BLEND

For the next eight months, Luc repeats the first two steps twice more. By the completion of the third phase, he has narrowed down the final blend to a few options, at which point I enthusiastically join the process! We taste a mini-vertical of the wine to ensure a stylistic congruency



Step Three: Deciding the final blend

from one vintage to another and reach an agreement on the final blend in December. Each barrel is then marked according to its designated wine in preparation for bottling. The letters "PA" inside of a heart distinguish a 'Passionnément' barrel.

Dark purple in color, 'Passionnément' consistently expresses an intense bouquet of red, black and blueberries intermixed with notes of crème de cassis, plum, cedar and a hint of cigar box. Full-bodied, the palate is reminiscent of the nose. A creamy texture, luscious tannins, aromatic complexity and lively acidic structure create a harmonious ensemble, leading to a very long and smooth finish. This *ne plus ultra* will age gracefully for decades.

As Luc tasted each 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon barrel, he made a judgment as to whether he loved the wine *un peu*, *beaucoup*, or *passionnément*. Only those which he loved the most (symbolizing his love for me!) were selected for this special bottling. We are delighted that Robert Parker's Wine Advocate rewarded Luc's dedication to *L'Art d'Assemblage* with 100 points. Lisa Perrotti-Brown proclaimed, "The palate has a quiet intensity at first that grows exponentially in the mouth into an aria of epic proportions!" We invite you to share Luc's passion and enjoy the 2016 'Passionnément' with friends and loved ones. *A Votre Santé!*



A barrel designated for 'Passionnément'

### A PERFECT PASSION!



The 2016 vintage of 'Passionnément' was awarded 100 points by Robert Parker's Wine Advocate! Lisa Perrotti-Brown exclaimed, "This is a staggeringly stunning and very singular Cabernet achievement by Luc Morlet – bravo!" Robert Parker has referred to Luc as one of northern California's "most talented wine producers" and characterized past vintages of this wine as "gorgeous, exquisite, magnificent, exceptional, extraordinary, seamless and stunning."

Our 2009 and 2015 vintages were given 100 points by Doug Wilder of the Purely Domestic Wine Report. He described the 2009 as an "extraordinary wine at grand apogee... a devotion to love, to life and to craft."

In November 2018, Luc poured our 2012 vintage at the Decanter Fine Wine Encounter in London. Dr. Nenad Jelusic of NJ Wines in Sweden, named it "The Best Wine of 2018" and declared that it is the best Cabernet Sauvignon he has ever tasted in his life! He further remarked that the wine "is already wonderful, but it will be even better with a few years," explaining that he may have to increase his rating system from a 5.0 scale to a 6.0 scale when that time comes!

Recently, Master of Wine Sandy Block selected his top six wines for Caviar Affair's 2018 Holiday Gift Issue. He chose the 2014 'Passionnément' as one of his most memorable wine tasting experiences of the year!

Luc continually strives for excellence, and although he personally believes that only God is truly perfect, he is immensely grateful that his artistry and skills are appreciated by experts and that the wines he crafts are enjoyed by connoisseurs around the globe. Of course, he is also thrilled that I love the Cabernet Sauvignon he named in my honor, and likewise, I am thankful that he expresses his passion for me in wine and throughout our life together.

## Spring 2019 Release



2016

### 'PASSIONNÉMENT'

OAKVILLE, NAPA VALLEY  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Crafted with the passionate, uncompromised and ongoing pursuit of quality, this judicious blend comes from the finest barrels of our manicured vineyards on the Oakville Bench and on the foothills of Knights Valley and St. Helena. As the French say, "Je t'aime, un peu, beaucoup, passionnément!" (I love you, a little, a lot, passionately!) This special wine is dedicated to my wife, Jodie Morlet. It is 'Passionately' or 'Passionnément.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 100 points:** *Very deep garnet-purple colored, the 2016 'Passionnément' leaps from the glass with notes of licorice, chocolate mint, warm cassia, plum preserves, charcoal and smoked meats with touches of lilacs and cedar chest plus a waft of pencil lead. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has a quiet intensity at first that grows exponentially in the mouth into an aria of epic proportions, revealing layer upon layer of savory/sweet flavors, bags of black fruits and tons of spicy sparks all within a firm, very finely grained frame, finishing very long and with compelling minerality. This is a staggeringly stunning and very singular Cabernet achievement by Luc Morlet – bravo! – October 2018*



2016

### 'CŒUR DE VALLÉE'

OAKVILLE, NAPA VALLEY  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Located on the world-renowned Oakville Bench, in the heart of the Napa Valley, the vineyard lies within the To Kalon alluvial fan. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc vines benefit from gravelly and loamy Bale deep soil in this warm yet temperate climate. Handcrafted using classical winemaking techniques, this wine is dedicated to Drs. Richard Johnson and Nancy Hampel who have always demonstrated their kindness of heart. It is 'Heart of the Valley' or 'Cœur de Vallée.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 97 points:** *This is the last vintage when this wine will come exclusively from Beckstoffer's To Kalon vineyard. In the future it will come (more and more) from Morlet's own new vineyard in Oakville—just across from To Kalon. A blend of 87% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Cabernet Franc, the 2016 'Cœur de Vallée' has a very deep purple-black color and reveals compelling notes of minted blackcurrants, black cherries and wild blueberries with touches of sage, cigar box, tilled black soil and Indian spices with a suggestion of cardamom. Full-bodied and laden with densely packed, muscular fruit, it has a rock-solid frame of ripe, grainy tannins and seamless freshness, finishing very long with those To Kalon spices lingering with fantastic persistence. – October 2018*

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2017

### 'LA PROPORTION DORÉE'

SONOMA COUNTY  
PROPRIETARY  
WHITE BORDEAUX-  
STYLE BLEND

A harmonious blend of the three classic white Bordeaux varieties, this unique cuvée was inspired from the finest producers of Pessac-Léognan. The Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle come from dry-farmed vineyards in the Golden State's Sonoma County. Classical winemaking techniques such as *sur lies élevage* (aging on the lees) and *bâtonnage* (stirring) contribute to this true *vin de garde*. As in architectural arts, it is 'The Golden Ratio' or 'La Proportion Dorée.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 97-100 points:** *The 2017 'La Proportion Dorée' is a blend of 66% Sémillon, 33% Sauvignon Blanc and 1% Muscadelle from 30+-year-old dry-farmed vines barrel fermented with bâtonnage. It presents a wonderfully spicy nose of allspice, powdered ginger and white pepper over a core of lemon curd, ripe apricots and guava plus underlying hints of baking bread, marzipan and honeysuckle. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is packed with stone fruit and tropical fruit flavors, framed with a refreshing line and a beautifully creamy texture, finishing epically long and wonderfully spicy. – October 2018*



2017

### 'MA DOUCE'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW  
CHARDONNAY

Located on the Sonoma Coast, on the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean, this hillside vineyard is comprised of Goldridge soil and benefits from both the cool maritime breeze (*douce brise*) and the mild and sunny mountain climate. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this white wine is dedicated to my wife, Jodie Morlet. It is 'My Sweet' or 'Ma Douce.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 96-99 points:** *The 2017 'Ma Douce' comes from Old Wente clone vines in Fort Ross-Seaview, located on the second ridge in from the ocean at 1,300-1,500 feet in elevation and planted on Goldridge soils. Pow! It bursts out of the glass with the most profound, exotic fruit scents—pineapple, guava, passion fruit and mango—with nuances of honeycomb, candied citrus peel and lemon drops plus a waft of fresh ginger. Full-bodied, rich and opulent in the mouth, the palate explodes with tropical and spicy layers, framed by great freshness and finishing long and zesty. – October 2018*



2017

### 'MA PRINCESSE'

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
CHARDONNAY

Located on the river bench of Sonoma County's Russian River, this vineyard benefits from Goldridge soil containing metamorphic rock. The cuttings come from the Old Wente field selection, renowned for excellent quality and minerality. Its concentration originates from the typically petite size of the berries. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is dedicated to our daughter, Claire Morlet. It is 'My Princess' or 'Ma Princesse.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 95-98 points:** *From Old Wente clones planted on Goldridge soils, the 2017 'Ma Princesse' gives up super intense, preserved lemons, chalk dust, struck flint and lime leaves notes with touches of pie crust, mandarin peel, pink grapefruit and marzipan. Full-bodied,*

*wonderfully concentrated and demonstrating bags of nuances, it's complimented by fantastic freshness, finishing very long and very savory. – October 2018*



2017

### 'CÔTEAUX NOBLES'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW  
PINOT NOIR

Located on the Sonoma Coast, on the eastern slope (Côte) of the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean, this hillside vineyard (Côteau) benefits from the cool maritime breeze and the mild and sunny mountain climate. The noble site's natural conditions are ideal for growing excellent Pinot Noir in the Goldridge soil. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is a tribute to the Nobles family that has been farming this land for four generations. It is the 'Noble Hillside' or 'Côteaux Nobles.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 93-95 points:** *The 2017 'Côteaux Nobles' comes from 26-year-old vines located at 1,000-1,250 feet on the second ridge in from the ocean. Medium ruby-purple colored, it gives up notes of wild strawberries, kirsch and raspberry preserves plus hints of baking spices, forest floor and black tea. Medium-bodied, fine, refreshing and elegant, finishing long and earthy. – October 2018*



2017

### 'EN FAMILLE'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW  
PINOT NOIR

For generations, our family has been growing the Pinot Noir grape in France. Each harvest, we celebrate this time-honored commitment while our children stomp a small vat of Pinot Noir from California's Sonoma Coast. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this special wine is dedicated to our grandparents, parents and relatives from both countries. As with any family celebration or casual gathering, this wine is to be appreciated 'En Famille.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 92-94 points:** *From a vineyard planted on Goldridge soils in 1990, the 2017 'En Famille' is medium to deep ruby-purple colored and has a very pretty nose of mossy bark, raspberry leaves, rose hip tea and strawberry preserves with wafts of chanterelles and cinnamon stick. Medium-bodied and delicately played with a lively line of freshness and a light chew of tannins, it gives a nice long, earthy finish. – October 2018*



# MORLET

Family Vineyards





VINTAGE	TASTING NOTES	CELLAR NOTES JANUARY 2019
2007	<p>“The 2007 ‘Passionnément’ exhibits a dense ruby/purple color as well as an extraordinary bouquet of graphite, cassis, cedar, and ink, full-bodied power, and huge tannins and density. The wine’s velvety structure means it can be drunk in 2-3 years or cellared for 25+.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Feb. 2010 RP</i></p> <p>“Good medium ruby. A compote of red, black and blue fruits on the nose, lifted by spicy oak. Suave and silky on the palate, with fully ripe flavors of red berries, blueberry, smoke and pepper. Finishes broad, dry and seriously long, with big, smooth tannins and very good focus. Lovely fruit here.” <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2010 ST</i></p>	<p>Superbly complex. Decant 1 hour prior to serving. Otherwise, cellar for 3 to 5 more years.</p>
2008	<p>“The exquisite 2008 ‘Passionnément’ boasts an opaque purple color along with an extraordinary perfume of graphite, blueberries, blackberries, flowers and cassis intermixed with hints of white chocolate and toast. The wine possesses terrific concentration, full-bodied power and a stunning, multidimensional mouthfeel and finish. This exceptional wine should drink well for 30+ years.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2010 RP</i></p> <p>“Bright ruby. Aromas of blackberry, bitter cherry and crushed rock. Super concentrated with lovely purity to its flavors of blackberry and graphite. At once sweet and penetrating, finishing with powerful tannins.” <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2011 ST</i></p>	<p>Incredible <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant 24 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 5+ years.</p>
2009	<p>“The 2009 ‘Passionnément’ is a beautifully focused, layered wine. Sweet roses, flowers of all sorts, dark red berries, licorice and new leather flow gracefully from this supple, silky wine. ‘Passionnément’ possesses lovely textural depth and plenty of volume in a racy, sleek style.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2011 AG</i></p> <p>“Good bright, deep red. Cassis, graphite, cedar, licorice, tobacco and flowers on the nose. Seamless and fine-grained, with lovely precision and lift to the dark berry and violet flavors. Impressively complex and intense wine with a light touch. Finishes with terrific sappy perfume and a tight tannic spine for extended aging.” <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2012 ST</i></p> <p>“The 2009 ‘Passionnément’ is essentially the no-holds-barred ode to Jodie, Luc’s wife. Extraordinary wine at grand apogee, it could have been called anything I suppose, but the truth is always underneath the cork: a devotion, to love, to life, and to craft on however many levels you may want to imagine. The sumptuously gorgeous parfum of ancient, seductively scented heirloom stone fruits and plump, vibrant sour/sweet berry assemblage make me want to squirm in my seat. This wine is sooo locked in, it’s unnerving, and that’s before I tasted it. The palate doesn’t leave anything to chance; perfect pure blackberry, currant, java and faint curry are of impeccable weight, dimension and spectrum. I’m left grasping for superlatives.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Oct. 2011 DW</i></p>	<p>Wonderfully complex and seamlessly intense. Decant 2 to 3 hours prior to serving, or cellar for a few more years.</p>
2010	<p>“The 2010 ‘Passionnément’ covers every inch of the palate with sweet dark cherries, plums, menthol, licorice and sweet spices. A round, sumptuous wine, the 2010 impresses for its phenomenal balance and class. The integration of fruit, acidity and structure is flat-out great. The 2010 is drop-dead gorgeous.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2012 AG</i></p> <p>“Good full ruby. Very dark aromas of blackberry, violet, menthol and licorice. Rich, dense and super ripe, but without any impression of heaviness.” <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2012 ST</i></p> <p>“The 2010 ‘Passionnément’ shows a lovely nose of blueberry, graphite, black currant and violet. Dense, polished graphite, blackberry, blueberry are found on the palate wrapped around a sturdy backbone of tannins with a silky finish.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Nov. 2012 DW</i></p>	<p>Remarkable <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant 5 to 6 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 5 or 6 more years.</p>
2011	<p>“The inky-colored 2011 ‘Passionnément’ reveals lots of sweet toasty oak, beautiful upfront black currant and licorice-infused blackberry fruit, medium to full body, low acidity and ripe tannin.” <i>Robert Parker Wine Advocate, Oct. 2013 RP</i></p> <p>“The 2011 ‘Passionnément’ is soft, supple and very nicely balanced throughout. It possesses lovely depth and textural finesse, both supported by firm, yet harmonious tannins.” <i>Vinous, Dec. 2012 AG</i></p> <p>“The 2011 ‘Passionnément’ offers dense fig, sea salt, blackberry flavors yet elegant and feminine in their measure. The palate is creamy and dense with some firmness leading to a core of limitless richness of berry, black fruit and loam.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Nov. 2013 DW</i></p>	<p>Intense and very complex. Decant 1 hour prior to serving, or cellar for another 3 to 4 years.</p>



VINTAGE	TASTING NOTES	CELLAR NOTES JANUARY 2019
2012	<p>"The full-bodied 2012 'Passionnément,' which comes from the Oakville Bench, was aged in new oak puncheons. This Pauillac-like offering possesses notes of Christmas fruitcake, spice box, vanillin and black fruits in its opulent, open-knit personality." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2014 RP</i></p> <p>"The nose is coffee, black currant, chocolate, boysenberry and dark cherry. The palate is youthful and robust, polished in the core with firm tannins." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Dec. 2014 DW</i></p>	<p>Amazing intensity and silkiness. Decant 1 hour prior to serving, or cellar for 5 to 7 more years.</p>
2013	<p>"The 2013 'Passionnément' is pure Oakville bench Cabernet, with notes of Christmas fruitcake, unsmoked cigar tobacco, cedar wood and crème de cassis. There is a seamless integration of acidity, alcohol, wood and tannin, and the wine is opulent, majestic in the mouth, and very pure and rich. This magnificent Cabernet Sauvignon should drink well for 30+ years." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Dec. 2015 RP</i></p> <p>"The 2013 'Passionnément' is a dark, voluptuous wine. Black cherry, leather, smoke, tobacco and licorice infuse this heady, flamboyant Cabernet Sauvignon." <i>Vinous, Mar. 2017 AG</i></p> <p>"The 2013 'Passionnément' nose has a lush edge of ripe black cherry, graphite, Asian spice, plum and black raspberry. The palate entry shows the firm/supple dynamic of this producer. Dense velvet like chocolate, violet and camphor. Very impressive at this point." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Dec. 2015 DW</i></p>	<p>Great <i>vin de garde!</i> Best to cellar for another 5 years.</p>
2014	<p>"The 2014 'Passionnément' has sweet tannin, a seamless entry on the palate, an opaque ruby/purple color and a big kiss of crème de cassis, blackberry, scorched earth and burning embers is followed by a wine with a long finish, moderate tannin and surprising intensity and power for a 2014." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2016 RP</i></p> <p>"The 2014 'Passionnément' offers a ripe, sweetly fruited, elegant, yet also powerful style that just glides over the palate with no sense of heaviness or coarseness. Revealing notes of crème de cassis, crushed flowers, graphite, and spice, this cuvée always shines for its seamless, elegant personality, yet it never lacks for density or richness." <i>JebDunnuck.com, June 2018 JD</i></p> <p>"The 2014 'Passionnément' is plush, sensual and inviting. which is a selection of the best barrels in the cellar. Bittersweet chocolate, lavender, graphite, spice and silky tannins add to the wine's considerable appeal." <i>Vinous, Mar. 2017 AG</i></p> <p>"The 2014 'Passionnément' nose is beautiful spiced currant with polished notes of plum, blackberry, licorice and carbon. The palate entry is a seductive mint and sleek black fruit that merges with a dense chocolate and currant filled core of youthfully fresh fruit, finishing with sumptuous spice and chocolate." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Mar. 2017 DW</i></p>	<p>Intense, complex and creamy. Decant 2 to 3 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 4 or 5 more years.</p>
2015	<p>"Displaying a deep garnet-purple color, the 2015 'Passionnément' has crushed black currants and black plums with touches of dark chocolate, espresso, spice box and sautéed herbs. Full-on expressive and packed with cassis and spicy flavor layers, with finely grained tannins and great freshness, it finishes very long on an earthy note." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2017 LPB</i></p> <p>"Flirting with perfection, the 2015 'Passionnément' has a Léoville Las Case-like regalness in its crème de cassis, graphite, camphor, charcoal, and gravelly minerality. Full-bodied, incredibly concentrated, yet pure, structured, and on point, this sensational Cabernet Sauvignon needs 2-3 years of bottle age and will cruise for 2+ decades in cold cellars." <i>JebDunnuck.com, June 2018 JD</i></p> <p>"The 2015 'Passionnément' is dense, creamy and voluptuous, with the silky contours and all the raciness that is typical of Oakville. Succulent red cherry, chocolate, mocha, plum, incense and white chocolate infuse this vivid, densely packed Cabernet." <i>Vinous, July 2018 AG</i></p> <p>"2015 'Passionnément' nose is dense licorice and mixed dark berries with notes of mint and beautifully present plum. The palate leaves the taster wanting for nothing from beginning to finish. A totally pure expression of gorgeously sculpted and energetically polished blackberry, plum, currant and spice. A fitting follow-up to the 100 point 2009." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Apr. 2018 DW</i></p>	<p>Outstanding <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant 5 to 6 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 5 or 6 more years.</p>
2016	<p>"Very deep garnet-purple colored, the 2016 'Passionnément' leaps from the glass with notes of licorice, chocolate mint, warm cassis, plum preserves, charcoal and smoked meats with touches of lilacs and cedar chest plus a waft of pencil lead. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has a quiet intensity at first that grows exponentially in the mouth into an aria of epic proportions, revealing layer upon layer of savory/sweet flavors, bags of black fruits and tons of spicy sparks all within a firm, very finely grained frame, finishing very long and with compelling minerality. This is a staggeringly stunning and very singular Cabernet achievement by Luc Morlet—bravo!" <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2018 LPB</i></p>	<p>Intense and complex. Decant 3 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 2 or 3 more years.</p>