
Château Latour 2012

CSPC# 837341

750mlx6

13.1% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9.5% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

Website

http://www.chateau-latour.com/index_en.php#/home

General Info

If Lafite is renowned for elegance, Latour is prized for power. Vines were first planted on the site in the fourteenth century, but Latour's reputation stems from the late part of the seventeenth century, when the estate was inherited by Alexandre de Ségur. In recent years, no finer wine has been made in Bordeaux, for Latour displays an uncanny combination of deep color; Cabernet-dominated flavors of dark berries, licorice and minerals; the finest oak that money can buy; and great length on the aftertaste.

Winemaker

Hélène Génin

Vintage

The 2012 vintage was 'hectic', according to Engerer. It was marked by considerable spring rainfall followed by significant summer drought but despite heavy rainfall during the harvest grapes ripened and remained in very good condition. 2012 was rather a late year, marked by spring rainfalls and followed by an extended dry period towards the end of the season. There was substantially less rain than usual during the five winter months and the temperatures were mild except for the extremely cold first half of February. Budbreak was noted on April 3rd, which was otherwise a particularly wet month. A rainy and mild June encouraged the propagation of diseases throughout the vineyard. Fortunately, in July and onwards into August, the weather became very dry and the mid-veraison was noted on August 14th. These dry and moderately hot weather conditions ensured a slow ripening which was beneficial for acidity levels. However, it was noticeable on some plots susceptible to hydric stress that the vine had suffered from the heat.

Vineyards

Many have called this the best vineyard in the world and the dynamic Director of Château Latour, Frédéric Engerer, is determined to make the greatest wine possible. He has the confidence of owner, François Pinault, to do all that it takes to achieve this aim. Production levels have been slashed in recent vintages with only the best parcels of vines now producing grapes for the Grand Vin. Latour has always had a fantastic terroir and now has a wine-making team working with state-of-the-art modern equipment under inspired leadership. The heart of the Enclos is the only terroir that, every year, can produce the depth, elegance and concentration that we expect of the Grand Vin. It is here that the Cabernet Sauvignon (accounting for more than 90% of the blend) can achieve optimal expression in terms of colour, richness and freshness. These wines need time - often a decade- before they begin to be ready for drinking.

Harvest

The harvests took place from September 24th to October 16th under heavy rain, resulting in a high localised risk of botrytis on the Merlot. Nevertheless, the vintage remained in excellent health

Château Latour's Grand Vin is made exclusively from "vieilles vignes", an average of 60 years-old, in the Enclos. Gravettes, Sarmentier, Pièce de Château... these are the names of some of the finest plots that express the character of the terroir and forge the wine's identity every year.

Tasting Notes

The colour is dark with a beautiful intensity. The nose is fruity, refined, ripe and extremely expressive. On the palate, the wine is rounded and smooth, spicy and very aromatic. It evolves pleasurably towards a delicious finale with fine tannins. On the nose, this Château Latour is pure with a round and elegant fruitiness. The mouth is silky with great density and a vibrant fruit. The tannins are meltingly soft.

Serve with

Chateau Latour is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.



Serving Temp Chateau Latour is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift.

Cellaring Drink 2027-2055

Scores/Awards **95 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015
93-96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2013
96+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2020
97 points - Neal Martin, RobertParker.com #227 - October 2016
94+ points - Robert Parker, RobertParker.com #218 - April 2015
92-94 points - Robert Parker, RobertParker.com #206 - April 2013
94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019
93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013
18 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2020
18+ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013
97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com
95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2015
94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2013
97 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013
18.5+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2013
95-98 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013
96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2020
17.5+ points - Thomas Parker MW, Farr Vintner - February 2020

Reviews *"This features a terrific, gorgeously delineated graphite note that runs from start to finish, letting the dark plum, black cherry and cassis fruit play out beautifully. Shows a lovely backdrop of charcoal and iron on the finish. Ever so slightly rigid, with a strong graphite expression, this is straight rather than expansive in feel, but seriously long, nonetheless. Best from 2018 through 2030."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Tight and sleek, with a coiled core of cherry, Campari and red licorice. Features hints of brisk iron and savory through the finish, displaying a clear, coordinated structure. Should settle in with time, but this is likely to be a very linear, slightly rigid Latour all along. Will lengthen and expand, but the lines will persist rather than be absorbed as in '09 or '10. Tasted non-blind. 9,819 cases made. Score range: 93 – 96"
- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2012 Latour is a blend of 90.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9.6% Merlot and 0.2% Petit Verdot. Medium to deep garnet colored, the nose slowly, measuredly emerges with notions of preserved Morello cherries, baked blackcurrants and blackberry compote, giving way to nuances of pencil shavings, unsmoked cigars, Chinese five spice and sandalwood plus ever so subtle hints of cardamom and eucalyptus. Medium-bodied, the palate delivers mouth-coating black and red fruit preserves with a firm, grainy-textured frame, and fantastic freshness, finishing with a veritable firework display of lingering spices and minerals. This is a more restrained, relatively elegant vintage of Latour that may not have that "iron fist in a velvet glove" power of the greatest vintages but nonetheless struts its superior terroir and behind-the-scenes savoir faire with impressive panache. It is drinking nicely now with suitably rounded-off, approachable tannins, and the tertiary characters are just beginning to bring some more cerebral elements into the compote of temptingly primary black fruits. But, if you're looking to drink it in full, flamboyant swing, give it another 5-10 years in bottle and drink it over the next 20-25 years+. Drink 2020 – 2050"
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Tasted blind at the 2012 Southwold tasting, the 2012 Latour put in a deeply impressive showing. It has a precise bouquet: graphite-infused black fruit, hints of iodine and a light marine influence—shucked oyster shell and Japanese nori. The palate is medium bodied with fine tannin, well-judged acidity, quite sensual and harmonious with seductive purity on the finish. This possesses exquisite precision and detail that evinces a wine of genuine class. Of course, perhaps this tasting note is irrelevant for the moment, at least until the Grand Vin is released onto the market. It will be intriguing to re-taste it when it does see the light of day. Tasted January 2012."
- NM, RobertParker.com

Reviews

"A grand vin, the 2012 Latour (90.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9.8% Merlot) probably won't be released to the market for another 7-8 years. Representing only 36% of the crop, it has an opaque ruby/purple color, a beautiful nose of crushed rock and blueberry and blackcurrant fruit, sweet tannin and a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel. The striking purity and intellectually satisfying texture and finish all are indicative of this great first-growth that has overcome all of the challenges of 2012 in the Médoc. It finishes long, rich, and convincing. Of course, this isn't in the league with the great vintages of 2000, 2003, 2005, 2009 and 2010, but it has nothing to be ashamed of. This wine should drink well for 25-30 years and will probably prove to be one of the longest-lived of the 2012 Médoc's. Drink: 2015-2045."

- RP, RobertParker.com

"Reminiscent of the 2008, the 2012 is a classic Latour, but is neither profoundly concentrated nor potentially one of the greatest efforts from this exceptional terroir. While noble, racy, stylish, and medium-bodied, the normal power and density one expects of Latour is missing in this vintage. It is made in a more elegant, softer, lighter style, undoubtedly a smart decision since pushing extraction with potentially less than ideal grapes could have resulted in rustic aromas and flavors. This medium-bodied Latour reveals moderate tannin, but it should be drinkable when released, and last for nearly two decades.

Chateau Latour harvested its Merlot between September 24 and October 4, and most of the crop ended up in Les Forts de Latour and Pauillac. The Cabernet Sauvignon was picked between October 5 and 16, the Cabernet Franc on October 8 (obviously a wet harvest), and the Petit Verdot on October 12. The 2012 Latour, which is off the market as a wine future until the Pinault family and Frederic Engerer agree on when to release it (probably 7-8 years from now), is a blend of 90.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9.6% Merlot and the rest a tiny dollop of Petit Verdot. Only 36% of the crop was utilized in the grand vin, which achieved 12.8% natural alcohol"

- RP, RobertParker.com

"Very perfumed with hints of minerals, currants, wet earth and stones. Full-bodied, muscular, and chewy. Polished tannins, tight acidity, and a savory finish. Very reserved. Muscular. Better in 2019."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Firm and muscular Latour with silky tannins that are surrounded by compacted fruit. Very integrated tannins. Bright finish. Long too. It's racy. I prefer the more structured 2011."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"As usual this grand vin is based on the estate's oldest vines in the 47-ha Enclos. The original plan had been to release this wine, and Les Forts 2014, on 18 March 2020 but this was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic until 27 May. Frédéric Engerer described the vintage as 'quite hectic with lots of rain and then lots of heat, including two heat spikes that affected Merlot, and also some rain during harvest.' April saw 20 days of rain, but temperatures were low enough to stave off fungal disease. Flowering of Cabernet Sauvignon on 6 June was even. August was very dry whereas there was heavy rainfall during harvest. Picking started on 24 September and didn't end until 16 October.

Dark blackish crimson. Luscious looking colour. Profound, complex with lots of depth. Really complete and spicy with a dry, very Latour, mineral nose. Not the most concentrated Latour but with great character and Latour expression. Very muscular and not nearly ready."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Looks a little less blue than Les Forts. Scented and lovely on the nose. Playing the playful card. Dense and rich. Vibrant. Not made to show well at this stage - which may be a good thing. A little tiny bit of green but very fine and confident. Just rather hidden and restrained. Not the butch style of some years. A little short."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"This will be by far the biggest release since Latour brought in the new system, as the 2012 has not been on the market before. It's a good one to start with as this is a vintage where the drinking window is starting to come into view. This is pure liquorice, graphite and profoundly dark fruits, gourmet brushed damson and crushed stones, with a silky, appealingly open texture. The tannins are as bracing as you hope for from this

Reviews *estate, not giving an inch yet, but there is air between them, and the structure is starting to loosen up. Harvest from September 24 to October 16, under rainy conditions after a super-hot summer and early September that ensured the grapes stayed in good condition but turned the concentration from impenetrable to an altogether more approachable style.”*
- JA, Decanter.com

“All of the first growths made very good wines in 2012, especially given the growing season, but Latour was the star turn. What's so impressive about the wine is that the château has allowed the vintage to speak, rather than imposing a style upon it. That's why the wine is so light and poised, with a grace that is almost Pinot Noir-like. Silky, refreshing and aromatic, with subtle notes of red fruits and pomegranate and medium-weight tannins. Very graceful. Drink: 2018-35”
- TA, timatkin.com

“Deep in color, with just a hint of lightness around the edge of the glass, the wine is starting to close down. On the palate the wine is full bodied, rich, refined, polished, fresh and long, with a solid essence of fruit, freshness, volume and length. The tannins are refined and there is the structure to age, but this classic, (in all the right ways) requires at least a decade, and probably longer to come around. This is the first vintage for Latour that was not sold En Primeur. It will be interesting to see what the wine is released in about 2012, give or take.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Crafted from 90.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9.6% Merlot, and 0.2% Petit Verdot, this wine reached 12.8% alcohol. The Grand Vin represents just 35.6% of the crop. The color of a gleaming dark ruby, the wine is elegant, soft, plush, and polished in texture. There is a core of sweet, racy cherries and cassis with hints of vanilla and earth. The wine offers purity, symmetry, freshness, and balance. This is a refined style of Latour. According to Frederic Engerer, the key to the success in this vintage was working on a parcel-by-parcel and row-by-row basis, monitoring the needs of the vineyard with specific attention to the amount of hydric stress each vine endured.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Many have called this the best vineyard in the world and the dynamic Director of Chateau Latour, Frédéric Engerer, is determined to make the greatest wine possible. He has the confidence of owner, François Pinault, to do all that it takes to achieve this aim. Production levels have been slashed in recent vintages with only the best parcels of vines now producing grapes for the Grand Vin. In 2012 only 35.5% of total production will go into the Grand Vin, which is made from 90% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Merlot. This has a huge black colour and viscous texture. A strong cassis nose with hints of smoky bacon, spice, and vanilla. On the palate this is one of the few wines of the vintage that is genuinely mouth filling. Big, fat, juicy, polished, it is both concentrated and velvety. Beautiful, classic cassis fruit. Huge but harmonious. Very long finish. N.B. Will not be sold En Primeur”
- Farr Vintners

“The nose has brooding black fruited power and the palate has richness and depth of flavour a mailed fist in a velvet glove. Liquorice, chocolate and coffee beans all add to the richness of flavour the powerful mix feels slightly lighter towards the back. The finish is long and expressive. 2020-40.”
- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2012 Latour has a potent bouquet of blackberry, graphite and distinctive tertiary notes [instead of more marine scents observed four years earlier]. Initially, the palate is slightly disjointed on the entry and displays a subtle herbal quality, plus hints of pencil shavings. The 2012 demands a few minutes to really coalesce and achieve the precision and pixilation that have been the hallmark of this Grand Vin in its youth. Layers of black fruit coat the mouth, and a bitter edge lends tension, particularly toward the very persistent finish. Though its release implies, and the rhetoric from the château indicates, that it is ready to drink, if you want my advice, cellar the 2012 for another five or six years to witness it in full flight. It has always been a candidate for wine of the vintage... just have a bit of patience.”
- NM, Vinous

Reviews *“Deep ruby colour. Floral and expansive on the nose, with lots of blue fruit and sweet vanilla. Bold and forward on the palate, the fleshy black fruits and chunky tannins come together to give a perception of great intensity before fresh acidity cuts through the richness. The sweet spice of oak rounds out the fruit and tannin, softening the initial firmness. A fine and compact but long finish. Though young, this should soon be approachable with its expressive and aromatic qualities.”*
- TP, Farr Vintner
