

Château Lynch Bages 2012

CSPC# 749583

750mlx12

13.45% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

Fifth Growth. Cinquieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855

Website

<http://www.jmcazes.com/en/chateau-lynch-bages/grand-cru-classe>

General Info

Château Lynch-Bages was owned by the Lynch family for three quarters of a century. They descended from John Lynch, a young Irishman from Galway who was chased out of his country in 1691. In the 18th century, Count Jean-Baptiste Lynch, mayor of Bordeaux, inherited the estate and handed over management to his brother Michel Lynch, who was also mayor of Pauillac during the French Revolution. Jean-Charles Cazes, highly respected in the Médoc for his experience in viticulture and winemaking, bought the property in 1934. With his son André, he devoted all his energy to Lynch-Bages for more than 35 years. In 1974, his grand-son Jean-Michel Cazes set about restructuring and managing the estate and recently, in 2006, handed over the running of the property to his son Jean-Charles.

Vintage

A variable winter and a cool rainy spring failed to make up the water deficit that had accumulated over several years. Hot and dry weather ensued with the occasional peaks in temperature from July 15th to September 24th further accentuating the water deficit. These particular climatic conditions brought about local difficulties, prompting disparities in maturity with small berries. Following a similar pattern to the flowering, veraison remained slow. Our soils, consisting as they do of a combination of deep gravels and a sizeable clayey layer, allayed the negative effect of the considerable water deficit. They helped maintain a regular level of sugar even in very dry conditions. The grapes remained very healthy until the last week of September but rain at the end of the month hastened the start of harvesting on September 27th and through to October 18th.

Vineyards

Stretching over some 100 hectares in the commune of Pauillac, the vineyards of Lynch-Bages lie entirely upon the soil of choice for great wines, formed along the estuary by the alluvia from the gravel of Médoc. The property sits among favourably designed hillcrests located south and southwest of the city. This particular topography allows for both a natural drainage of soils to the river and, with help of the water table in shallow areas, a fine feeding of water for the vines. The red wine vineyard of Lynch-Bages extends across a homogeneous soil and subsoil of deep Garonne gravel. Early yielding, scantily fertile and well drained, these soils are particularly favourable for Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. In the plots located along the river and the Gaët channel, the Garonne gravel soil is associated with clayey subsoil, more specifically suitable for Merlot. There is also a small part of the vineyard of predominantly sandy gravel, ideally suited for growing Cabernet Franc, which helps to yield lighter, aromatic and nicely rounded wines. This analysis of the characteristics of the terroir, recorded during the planting of the varieties, has made it possible to identify an optimal planting. It is now composed of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. The average age of the vines is about 30 years old, with the oldest vines over 60 years old.

Harvest

Harvesting began at Chateau Lynch-Bages on 27th September with the Merlot, immediately after a short rainy spell. This stimulated ripening and prompted a slight growth in the berries. The old Merlots waited a few extra days before being picked between 4th and 5th October, thus according them optimal maturity. Early October went on to see a drop in temperatures and the onset of wet weather. This led to harvesting restarting for the Cabernet Franc on 11th October and for the Cabernet



Sauvignon on 13th October (almost 20 days later than in 2011). The maturity of the grapes picked was at last homogeneous with a good phenolic potential and considerable acid/alcohol balance. Meanwhile, the increasingly persistent rain led to the speeding up of the harvesting. Four teams of over 200 pickers enabled this rate to be kept up without a break until the end of harvesting on 18th October.

Maturation	Aged in French oak barrels for 18 months (75% new wood)
Tasting Notes	2012 offers wines in a classic style, balanced and full bodied. After the first tastings we can safely say that the 2012 vintage delivers classic-style ripe, balanced wines, boasting intense colours and a very decent tannic structure. The doubts concerning the consequences of a mixed and irregular vegetative cycle could now be swept aside.
Cellaring	Drink 2013-2027
Scores/Awards	92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015 91-94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013 87 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015 87-89 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013 90-92 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013 92 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015 93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013 93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 11, 2013 88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - April/May 2013 16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013 17.5 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013 92-93 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - 2013 90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 11, 2015 90-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 13, 2013 90-92 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013 92 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) 93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013 17+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2013 88-92 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013 88 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013 93-95 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 16, 2013 17.5 points - Simon Staples, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2013 91-93 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) 17 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) 17 points - Gault & Millau (score only) 16.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)
Reviews	<i>"This has a very solid core of dark plum, crushed black currant and blackberry fruit, with lightly firm flesh and good drive through the finish, where alder and iron notes fill in. Shows excellent energy and depth, while harnessing the austere edge of the vintage. Best from 2018 through 2025."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator <i>"Pure and racy, delivering a core of violet, cassis and cherry, well-framed by a sleek, iron-coated structure. Features a long, taut, focused finish. Shows the austerity of the vintage, but this remains long and pure, with fine cut. Score range: 91-94"</i> - JM, Wine Spectator <i>"The 2012 Lynch-Bages is deep ruby/purple with tell-tale cassis notes. Medium-bodied, but somewhat foursquare and monolithic, it has well above average concentration, impressive purity and nicely integrated tannins and wood. Nevertheless, there is something bland and one-dimensional about Lynch-Bages in 2012, making it somewhat of a disappointment. Drink it over the next 12-15 years."</i> - RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"Some of Lynch Bages's tell-tale cedary, black currant, earth and spice characteristics are present in the 2012's moderately intense bouquet. This wine exhibits good purity, a healthy dark ruby/purple color and medium body. There is a slight deficiency in the mid-palate, but it recovers sufficiently and offers up a decent finish that tails off ever so slightly. This good to excellent wine could use more fat and charm in the mid-section. Cellar it for a couple of years and drink it over the following 12-14 years."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted en primeur at the chateau. The Lynch Bages 2012 is a blend of 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot picked between 12th and 18th October and is being raised in 75% new oak just before the rains. It has a very attractive bouquet with crisp blackberry, sous-bois and graphite aromas that are very controlled. No frills here, but it does not need them. The palate is medium bodied with taut tannins and again, crisp acidity. I like the line here – nicely focused with a grainy finish. Very fine. Tasted April 2013."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Aromas of blackcurrants, blueberries and lemons follow through to a full body, firm tannins and a fresh, clean finish. A little tight now but excellent. Precision to this. Back ended. Better in 2018."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A fruity wine for the vintage with dense tannins. Full body, with impressive structure. Long finish. Generous and attractive. I like the balance and precision for the vintage"

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"93–95. Barrel sample. The wine is very dry, layered tannins giving a major sense of structure. It will always have this dry, dense character, very firm, solid and powerful."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Deep purple. Floral blackcurrant and mineral aromas on the delicate, pure nose. Then equally delicate in the mouth, offering flavors of dark berries, graphite and cedar. Finishes clean and long, with above-average concentration for the vintage. Jean-Charles Cazes explained that the harvest reception system was changed this year, with two extra reception lines added to destem/sort and then sort again. The result was a very clean crop."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Blackish purple. Lots of minerals on the nose. Tight and taut and almost painfully tart but there is energy here certainly!"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Rich dense colour, big meaty wine with good florality as well as rich fruit, a big wine, very ripe for this vintage."

- SS, Decanter.com

"Love the colour and weight of this, truly the vibrant violet thing. Tiny touch of Bret, but nothing unforgivable. This is a good wine, both dense and weightless at the same time, no hint of bitterness despite good extraction. The fruit (damson, blackcurrant, then some blackcurrant leaf because can't ignore the slight 'just barely made it ripe' aspect of this) holds together. Real potential 92-93 / 17.75-18 Highly recommended. Drink 2020-2040."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"This wine contains the lowest percentage of Cabernet at Lynch since 1994, reflecting the tricky growing conditions in the Médoc. This is still a pretty serious wine, mind you. The oak is a little intrusive, but it's still a classic Pauillac with notes of green pepper, blackcurrant and graphite and densely packed tannins."

- TA, timatkin.com

"Tannic, firm, medium/full bodied, fresh, crisp fruits need time to develop and come together. The wine finishes with a fresh, blackberry and cassis note."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews *"71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot created a wine that will be aged in 75% new French oak. It took some effort to find the cedar, cassis, coffee and earthy notes. The ample tannins are refined, ending with spicy creme de cassis sensations. This will take time to soften. 90-93 Pts"*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and dense looking; dusty nose; quite dumb; blackcurrants and some wet rocks; cool and fresh palate with stalky Cab notes; pretty tannic and dry on the end. Feels austere. Too much oak here I wonder? 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. 75% new oak. Tasted UGC Thursday April 11, 2013. 87-89+ [Earlier note] Deep and concentrated look; dense; ripe blackcurrants; some lift on the nose; depth; deep palate; lots of cassis and blackcurrant; feels pretty good effort. Tannins feel ripe and extract is there. Needs to fill in a bit. Elegance. UGC Tuesday April 9, 2013. 90-92"
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Lynch Bages is one of the most popular and reliable Châteaux of Bordeaux. Release prices of this classic Pauillac are usually modest compared to those that consumers are happy to pay for mature vintages. This much-loved Chateau consistently makes one of our most demanded and biggest selling wines and we are fortunate to have an excellent relationship with the Cazes family and good allocations which we have built up over many years. A wine to buy en primeur every year. If you are thinking of only buying a few cases en primeur then Lynch Bages should always be one of them. Jean-Michel Cazes' son Jean-Charles is now in charge here and recent vintages have been really outstanding. This year the percentage of Merlot (26%) is the highest ever with 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc (the lowest ever) and 1% Petit Verdot. A dense black colour and a really classic Pauillac nose with tobacco and cedar notes. Big, succulent and rich on the palate. This coats the mouth with dense black cassis fruit. The tannins are ripe and velvety. Multi-dimensional with notes of cherry, mulberry, blackberries and blackcurrants. Powerful, complex, elegant and classically structured. A very fine Lynch Bages that reminds us of the excellent 2006 that was made here. The yield was the smallest since 1991."
- Farr Vintners

"The fruit on the nose is rich and there is a good weight and depth of flavour on the palate. The tannins are firm and quite obvious but behind the structure there is depth and richness of fruit. The finish is a touch dry and lacking a bit of generosity. 2020-35."
- Derek Smedley MW

"This wine has freshness and dark berry flavours that are quite tightly wound. There is a nice focused linear aspect to this wine but at the moment the tannins are obtrusive and will need time for the components to come together. Good potential to evolve into a delicious, fairly early drinking red. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Drink. (11-Apr-2013)"
- JCL, asianpalate.com

"Reticent nose showing subtle smoke and oak notes. Evident yet refined tannins with huge tannic presence. At the end of the day, a very classic style. (16-Apr-2013)"
- en.gilbertgaillard.com

"One of our all-time favourite properties, Ch. Lynch-Bages has not only has been playing out of its skin since 2006, but when you are lucky enough to actually drink a fully mature vintage, it makes you purr like a kitten. The 2012, is certainly not a kitten though, more of a brooding lioness showing real volume, weight and substance that few can match. The nose has dark fruits, cassis and licorice whilst the palate exudes rich, silky and sublime density, sweetness and glycerol. The expression and volume build in the mouth with freshness, focus and texture followed by a bright and lifting finish. Unquestionably one of the weightier wines of the week, it is continually expressive onto the finish where an explosion of flavours takes over as if roaring to all in the Savannah!"
- SS, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants
