

# Château Larcis-Ducasse 2015

CSPC# 801735

750mlx12

14.4% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc

## Appellation

Saint Emilion

## Classification

First Growth B. Premier Grand Cru Classe B.

## Website

<http://www.larcis-ducasse.com/en/saint-emilion/actualites/#>

## General Info

Chateau Larcis Ducasse had its birth during the days of the ancient Romans. The modern era for Larcis Ducasse begins in 1893, when Henri Raba bought the St. Emilion vineyard. After Henri Raba passed away in 1925, his wife and son Andre Raba continued managing Larcis Ducasse. Andre died during World War 2. His niece, Helene Gratiot Alphantery, inherited the property in 1941. She managed Larcis Ducasse until 1990. Her son, Jacques-Olivier Gratiot took control of the property after she passed away and he remains in charge today.

Larcis Ducasse remains the property of the Gratiot Alphantery family. Prior to 2003, it had been years since the wines of Larcis Ducasse were prized by Bordeaux wine lovers. The wine had fallen out of favor. That changed in 2002 when they hired the team of well-known St. Emilion consultants, Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt to turn things around and manage the estate. One of the first improvements at the property suggested by Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt was to create a new drainage system. The next step was to change harvesting practices. Prior to 2002, the grapes were often picked 2 early and over a short duration of 2 to 3 days. Now, the harvest takes place when the fruit is ripe and the picking can take as long as 2 to 3 weeks to complete.

## Vintage

2015 St. Emilion has it all going on. Frankly, I could sum this article up rather quickly by just saying, "2015 Saint Emilion Rocks!"

Across the board, 2015 St. Emilion was lucky. Vineyards in the cool clay soils that harvested late made stunning wines. But so, did the estates on the limestone plateau, in the gravel soils and properties on the more sandy terroir were also quite successful. That does not mean buyers do not need to be choosy. Some estates pushed the pedal to the metal a bit too far. There are overly extracted wines, and wines that are aging in too much new oak. But generally speaking, the level of quality here is homogenous. 2015 St. Emilion is the product of a hot, dry summer, with drought conditions. April was hot. June was hotter. July was scorching, and the lack of water exacerbated those conditions. What made this unique was that this level of heat is usually experienced later in the growing season. That was not the case with 2015. Fortunately, the rains in August arrived in the nick of time, providing enough nourishment to allow the growth cycle to continue.

## Harvest

Merlot vines picked on October 1st, 4th, 7th, 8th, 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

Cabernets picked on October 8th, 10<sup>th</sup> and 14th

## Vineyards

The 10.85 hectare St. Emilion vineyard of Larcis Ducasse is located just around the bend in the road from Chateau Pavie . In fact, their vines abut each other. The terroir of Chateau Larcis Ducasse is a mixture of soils with vines on the plateau and the slopes with a south facing exposure. At the higher elevations on the plateau, the terroir is limestone and clay soil. As you travel further down the slopes the terroir is a blend of chalky limestone, marl, sand and clay soil. The vineyard is planted to 78% Merlot and 22% Cabernet Franc . This shows a change in the vineyard, as more Cabernet Franc has been added to the plantings since 2003. On average the vines are 35 years of age. While the older plantings were done at a vine density of 6,600 vines per hectare, as the vineyard continues to be slowly replanted, the vine density is increasing. The new plantings are being done at 7,500 vines per hectare. They are also using budwood obtained through selection massale. The yields are kept low at Larcis Ducasse.



<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	To produce the wine of Chateau Larcis Ducasse, the grapes are whole berry fermented. The fruit is transported by gravity flow into traditional, cement tanks for fermentation. Cuvaision takes between 25-28 days. There are no pump overs. Pigeages are conducted during fermentation. Malolactic fermentation takes place in barrel. The wine of Chateau Larcis Ducasse is aged in 75 % new, 25 % 1-year old, French oak barrels for an average of 20 months.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Purple color, intense and beautiful. Complex nose, with pure fruity, ripe and intense. Mouth at once wide and very refined. The wine melts on the palate, graceful, juicy, with a tense character too, but fine, coated and noble. Given its pH, there is a good chance that breeding will reveal it even more.
<b>Serve with</b>	Chateau Larcis Ducasse is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted braised and grilled dishes.
<b>Production</b>	2,375 cases made."
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2022-2042
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>95 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018</p> <p><b>93-96 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018</p> <p><b>99 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018</p> <p><b>98-99 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2016</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2018</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 2017</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016</p> <p><b>94-96++ points</b> - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - May 2016</p> <p><b>93-95+ points</b> - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2016</p> <p><b>89 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016</p> <p><b>86-88 points</b> - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018</p> <p><b>17+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseauve (score only) - April 2016</p> <p><b>18 points</b> - Gault &amp; Millau (score only) - June 2016</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This nearly gushes with succulent plum, blackberry and black currant preserve flavors, but they stay on the racy and refined side overall, flecked with anise, Lapsang souchong tea and violet notes. A lovely chalky spine controls the finish with a deft hand. Best from 2020 through 2035. 2,375 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Lush, with velvety structure that lets the raspberry, plum and cassis fruit glide beautifully through the spice-tinged finish. Still very primal but has length and fruit for days. Score range: 93-96"</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Medium to deep garnet-purple in color, the 2015 Larcis Ducasse opens with opulent scents of blueberry pie, baked plums and spice cake with nuances of unsmoked cigars, dusty soil, licorice and a touch of salami. Big, rich, full-bodied and incredibly impactful on the palate, it proudly struts its bold black and blue fruits with a plush, velvet-textured cape, finishing long and spicy."</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2015 Larcis-Ducasse is a blend of 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet France, picked between 28 September and 10 October, 7-13 October respectively. Cropped at 37 hl/ha it is being matured in 500-liter barrels. It has an</i></p>

*intense nose of raspberry preserve, boysenberries and an almost honeyed-like richness that thankfully retains freshness and delineation, when it could have been over-powering. The palate is medium bodied with very fine tannin, a little grainy in texture, very well-balanced and graceful, gently building to a convincing, quite minerally, blackberry and wild strawberry finish. There is superb terroir expression here, an excellent Larcis-Ducasse that should offer 3-4 decades of drinking pleasure.”*

- NM, Wine Advocate

*“The 2015 Larcis Ducasse has a tightly wound bouquet with blackberry, cedar and tobacco aromas that take time to find their voice. This is far more introverted than older vintages, more cerebral. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannin, crisp acidity, lithe in the mouth with a strict and quite linear, tertiary finish. It just needs a little more expression but that will hopefully come with time. This is a long-term Larcis-Ducasse that is going to bide its time, but there is nothing wrong with that.”*

- NM, Wine Journal

*“The aromas to this are phenomenal with oyster shell, blackberries, iodine and black truffles. Full-bodied, layered and so refined and intense. Love the texture and intensity. Chalky. Amazing. Goes on for minutes. Try in 2023.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Hard to believe this. It has a minerality and intensity like a great white wine with so much chalky character that it gives an oyster shell flavor. Full and racy. Shaking my head in intrigue. Wonderfully silky tannins.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Deep crimson. Rich, dark but withheld on the nose and a lovely rocky dry impression. A little more fragrant with air. Juicy and fresh, finely structured and already in harmony if not (yet) approachable. Elegant length. (JH)”*

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

*“A Stéphane Derenoncourt wine. 87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc. The lighter fruit on less clayey soils, about 40%, is aged in 500-litre casks. Intense but mellow nose. Rich and round on the palate with some zest. A light animal note gives this drama. But it's not forced. Just a slight veggie note on the end.”*

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc. Maturity of the fruit balanced by the limestone terroir. Ripe, dark fruit aroma and flavour – raisins and blackcurrant. The palate tight and firm with good tension and length. Affirmative in style. Slightly chewy finish.”*

- JL, Decanter.com

*“Smoke, tobacco, crushed stone, dark red fruits and wet earth are all over the place. The wine is full bodied, intense, concentrated and richly textured. There is a beautiful sensation of minerality and ripe fruits at work here. But at least 10 years are needed for this to get where it needs to be.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“This is going to need time in the cellar before the essence of the crushed stone, flowers, smoke, wet earth and red fruits fully come alive. Full bodied, concentrated and intense, there is richness and mineral essence that are the hall marks of this stunner. The wine is going to tighten up shortly, so give it at least 7-10 years in the cellar.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Developing as you would hope, the minerality and florality continue gaining ground the wine keeps adding weight and density. This will hit the top of my range with ease.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

## Reviews

*"Flowery with stones, licorice and dark red fruits on the nose, there is concentration combined with power, elegance and grace. Not big, but rich, sensuous and mineral driven. The fruits are ripe, spicy and fresh. The luscious finish really keeps on going. Produced from a blend of 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 14.52% alcohol with a pH of 3.42. The harvest took place from September 28 to October 12. Usually priced quite fair, this stunner is a wine to look for during the futures campaign."*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Big and bold in colour; vibrant at rim; lots of depth; plenty of fruit; not pretty exactly but there is a suave quality to the fruit profile; nicely cool fruit; excellent quality; purity and ripeness without over doing it; real clarity; fresh and still nimble. This will fill out and will probably get even better than the score I'm giving. Let's see. Lovely terroir adjacent to Pavie. [9ha in production, 37hl/ha, 87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc]. Tasted Pavie Macquin 3/4/16. Drink 2021-2035. 94-96+"*

- JW, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com)

*"[Second tasting UGCB 6/4/16]: Mid depth; purple edge; stone and mineral note; opens up with ripe black fruits; plums and cherries; lots of extract and matter but extremely refined palate; needs to meld a fraction on the finish. Lots of matter and extract – but not extracted in style. Pure. Drink 2021-2035. 93-95+"*

- JW, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com)

*"Bright and fresh there is a strong red fruit influence. The start of the palate is light, but it does fill out a bit in the middle with sweet black fruits. The back palate is firm the finish quite tight. 2021-32"*

- Derek Smedley MW

*"Wonderful detail and charming flavors with lifted notes of cedar, violets and plums. The wine is intense but without any heaviness or weight - the flavors are precise and well defined. A gorgeous wine with great aging potential."*

- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

*"The 2015 Larcis Ducasse is just as compelling from bottle as it was from barrel. Rose petal, lavender, spice and mint give it an attractive upper register that melds seamlessly into a core of inky red and purplish fruit. Dense, powerful and overt, the 2015 also has quite a bit of freshness to liven up the flavors. Silky tannins and soft contours add to the wine's racy, sensual personality. The 2015 is going to be virtually impossible to resist in its youth. (AG)"*

- AG, Vinous

*"One of the stars of the vintage, the 2015 Larcis Ducasse is intensely aromatic, silky and totally sensual from the very first taste. The purity of the fruit here is striking. Even so, it will be many years before the 2015 is ready to show all it's got. Today, it is the wine's total sense of harmony that is absolutely alluring. A rush of raspberry jam, pomegranate and blood orange leaves a lasting impression. The 2015 is a dramatic, richly textured Larcis Ducasse long on class and pedigree. The blend is 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc picked between September 28 and October 12 and aged in 50% new oak. Tasted two times."*

- AG, Vinous

*"A more elegant, finesse-driven style of cuvee than normal, the 2015 Château Larcis-Ducasse is comprised of close to 90% Merlot and the balance Cabernet Franc. It reveals a terrific bouquet of cassis, spring flowers, cedary spice and forest floor, with more graphite and lead pencil nuances developing as it sat in the glass. With full-bodied richness, a tight, backward, yet promising style on the palate, beautiful tannin quality, and a great finish, it's an undeniably classy, balanced 2015 that will reward 2-4 years of bottle age"*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"A good, powerful, chunky Larcis with a firm attack and a nice compact chassis. This will do well over the medium term."*

- MJ, [matthewjukes.com](http://matthewjukes.com)

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