
Château Lafon-Rochet 2016

CSPC# 844660

750mlx6

13.6% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation
Classification
Website
General Info

67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot
Saint Estèphe

Fourth Growth. Quatrieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.
<http://www.lafon-rochet.com/en/>

Chateau Lafon Rochet in St. Estephe dates back to the middle of the 17th century. The estate was founded in 1650, when Antoinette de Guillemotte, brought the land of Rochette as her dowry to her husband, Pierre de Lafon. Shortly after they were married, following the custom of the day, they renamed the estate, using their last name, coupled with the previous name of the property and Chateau Lafon Rochet was born.

While many Bordeaux vineyards were confiscated during the French Revolution, that did not happen to Lafon Rochet. In fact, the Left Bank estate remained the property of the same family for more than two centuries.

Everything changed at Chateau Lafon Rochet in 1959 when Guy Tesseron purchased the estate. The property needed extensive work as it had fallen into a dilapidated state. The Tesseron family, under the direction of Guy Tesseron completely renovated Lafon Rochet from top to bottom. This was something that had to be done as most of the original buildings were in such bad shape, they could no longer be used. The vineyard also needed extensive replanting. At the time of the purchase, the vineyard was only 17 hectares. Through replanting and subsequent purchases, the estate has more than doubled in size since the Tesseron family took control of the property. That marked the start of the modern era for Chateau Lafon Rochet.

Tesseron had his work cut out for him at his Medoc property in the 1960's. The vineyards were as we mentioned in poor shape. Much of the land needed to be replanted in part, but the grape varieties that already existed in the vineyards were planted in the wrong types of soils for their varietal. The Merlot was in the gravel and the Cabernets were in the clay. That is still slowly being corrected today, although currently, almost everything is as it should be. This explains why the wines are so much better today. Because the wine making facilities had also become dilapidated under the previous owners, Guy Tesseron was forced to build all new wine making facilities. Even the Chateau had to be replaced! In fact, Chateau Lafon Rochet is the only 1855 Classified growth with a new chateau that was constructed in the 20th century!

In 1999, after being in the Bordeaux wine trade for more than four decades, Michel Tesseron, took over the property and decided to change the classic style of the 18th century design that was created for the chateau. Michel Tesseron did it by adding some color to Lafon Rochet in 2000. As you can see, the chateau of Lafon Rochet is now a bright, sunny, bold, Mediterranean shade of yellow. It's an artistic statement according to Michel Tesseron. At the same time, the labels of Chateau Lafon Rochet were also changed to showcase the new, artistic, sun filled, yellow theme. Chateau Lafon Rochet is still in the Tesseron family hands. Currently the Saint Estephe property is ably managed by the son of Michel Tesseron, Basile Tesseron.

It is Basile Tesseron who is helping usher Chateau Lafon Rochet into the modern age. Basile Tesseron, who started at the estate in 2007, after training with négociants, speaks perfect English, with a subtle accent. This is something he picked up while living in England.

Vineyards The 45-hectare vineyard of Lafon Rochet is in almost one single, large parcel, which is unusual for the region. They have 40 hectares under vine. Their terroir is mostly gravel, clay, sand, limestone and marl soils. Part of what makes their terroir unique



Vineyards	<p>is that some of the clay in their vineyards is the same type of hard, blue clay found in Pomerol at Petrus . Chateau Lafon Rochet has good neighbors. They are ideally placed not far from Chateau Cos d'Estournel and Chateau Lafite Rothschild in Pauillac . The Saint Estephe vineyard of Lafon Rochet is planted to 57% Cabernet Sauvignon , 37% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot and 2% Cabernet Franc . This shows a slight increase in their Cabernet Sauvignon plantings. On average, the vines are kept at 37 years of age. However, the estate has old vines. Their oldest parcels have Merlot vines that were planted all the way back in 1938. The vineyard is planted to a vine density of 9,000 vines per hectare on 40 separate blocks.</p> <p>Lafon Rochet continues to experiment with organic and biodynamic farming techniques. At least 10% of their vineyards were farmed using these techniques with more of their vineyards to follow if they like the results. Things turned around quickly here. In 2016, for the first time, they farmed almost 100% of their vines using organic farming methods. At Chateau Lafon Rochet, they take advantage of optical sorting techniques.</p>
Harvest	<p>Hand harvested from 29th September-20th October 2000.</p> <p>Cabernet Sauvignon: October 10th -18th.</p> <p>Merlot: September 29th-October 14th.</p> <p>Cabernet France: October 14th.</p> <p>Petit Verdot: October 20th.</p>
Vinification/ Maturation	<p>Manually harvested, crushed into vat for cold pre-fermentation maceration for 24-72 hrs. Alcoholic fermentation for 10 days, wine is separated from Grape seeds and skin and run into barrels for maloOactic fermentation which lasts from November to February with final blend made in March, then aged in oak till bottling. Aged 12 months in 50% new barrels.</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>The Château Lafon-Rochet 2016 vintage has remarkable strength and length providing much elegance to the tasting experience.</p>
Serve with	<p>Chateau Lafon Rochet is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Young vintages can be decanted for 1-2 hours. This allows the wine to soften and open its perfume. Older vintages might need very little decanting, just enough to remove the sediment. Lafon Rochet is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes.</p>
Production	<p>8,333 cases made</p>
Cellaring	<p>Drink 2023-2033</p>
Scores/Awards	<p>93 points - James Molesworth Wine Spectator - March 31, 2019</p> <p>90-93 points - James Molesworth Wine Spectator - May 11, 2017</p> <p>91-93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate - April 2017</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019</p> <p>93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017</p> <p>93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2019</p> <p>95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2017</p> <p>17.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2020</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - October 2018</p> <p>17+ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - July 2017</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - October 2018</p> <p>94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - September 2019</p> <p>94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018</p> <p>94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2017</p> <p>93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2017</p> <p>15.5 points - Farr Vintner - February 2017</p> <p>87-90 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017</p> <p>95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - August 2020</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>91-94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017</p> <p>17.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2017</p>

Reviews

"This is vivid, with a mix of steeped red and black currant coulis flavors streaming through, while ample savory, bay leaf, tobacco and warm stone notes course underneath. The elements meld wonderfully on the finish, revealing a tug of savory and earth at the very end. Best from 2023 through 2033."

- JS, Wine Spectator

"Very pure, with a lilac note leading the way for racy red currant and cassis flavors. The finish is alive, featuring a brisk iron note and long, pleasantly austere structure. Nicely done. 8,333 cases made. Score range: 90 – 93"

- JS, Wine Spectator

"The 2016 Lafon Rochetcropped at 46 hectoliters per hectare and matured in 50% new oak. The harvest was between 1 October and 20 October. The alcohol is 13.6%, which is just a little higher here than say Cos d'Estournel or Montrose. It has a very succinct bouquet with blackberry, bilberry, and light oyster shell aromas, classic in style, more reserved than I found the 2015 Lafon Rochet last year. The palate is medium bodied with powerful tannin on the entry, a keen line of acidity (3.65 pH), fine symmetry with a pleasant rondeur on the finish sprinkled with black pepper and tobacco. This is a very fine Lafon Rochet from Basile Tesseron and his team."

- NM, Wine Advocate

"An explosion of all manner of black berries with discreet, toasty and smoky oak, makes this a joyful St.-Estèphe. Then the great balance of ripeness, lively acidity and velvety tannins come together beautifully at the elegant finish to make this the best wine from this producer in modern times. Needs two or three years to soften."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Plenty of fruit and concentration to this wine, and it's buttressed by the tannins. Muscular and intense. Full-bodied yet reserved and tight. Excellent."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Now producing impressive wines, this estate has made a firm, rich wine in this vintage. Its tannins are very present, but they have a velvet edge that is immediately attractive. Not that the wine won't age: its structure and good acidity will see to that. Drink from 2025."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"The great improvements at this estate have really paid off in this fine wine. Owned by another branch of the family that owns Pontet-Canet, the estate has produced a beautifully structured wine, packed with tannins and full of delicious blackberry fruits. It's a wine with a great future, to be held until 2028 and beyond."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Tasted blind. Firm and minerally with lots of ripe, correct fruit in the middle. Very St-Estèphe. Dry finish but not drying tannins. Whizzy and lively and pure pleasure for fans of this commune. Drink 2027 – 2044."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Big move by Basile Tesseron towards true sustainability now. Bright crimson. Intensely aromatic in quite a wild way. Lots of sweetness on the front palate. Rather out of the mould! Real energy here even if far from traditional bordeaux. A property to watch. No extra sweetness!"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Cask sample taken 7 July 2017. 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Deep purple. Very fragrant nose – direct and very cassis. Great confidence. Sweet start and very luscious. Medium tannins. Lots of energy. Well done!"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Not the deepest crimson. Broad and rich and a bit beefy and yeast-extract-like. A tad scrawny on the end. Drink 2024-2038"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

“Closed yet concentrated and silky, this takes its time and although there is balance, it's certainly not generous. The high acidity is notable, but it softens, deepens, and opens on the palate, revealing black fruits held in a chargrilled frame. Matured in 50% new French and Austrian oak.”

-JA, Decanter.com

“Cigar box, earth, cedar wood, spice and fresh red fruits really sing out here. Full-bodied and loaded with ripe, red pit fruits, the wine has length and character. Age this for 5-7 years and drink it over the next 2 decades or more. Produced from a blend of 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Floral in nature, the wine is full bodied, rich, round and soft. The dark red fruits are ripe, spice, sweet and fresh. The wine has lift, character and while the freshness is present, the wine never loses its focus on its sweetness in the perfectly ripe berries.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Sweet dark, blackberry, cassis, floral and forest scents lead you to a finesse-styled wine. Full bodied, polished, fresh, and spicy with a nice shot of juicy cassis in the finish -- it sounds like a great evening to me. This wine has a serious concentration of flavor and a party pack assortment of dark red fruits in the finish. Produced from a blend of 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot, the wine reached 13.6% alcohol.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Another winery that's benefited from a shiny new cellar in recent vintages, this is every bit as good as the 2015, which was made in more difficult circumstances. Blueberry and cassis fruit, floral aromas, tangy acidity, and a nip of fine-grained tannin. A very stylish St Estèphe. 2024-32”

- TA, timatkin.com

“Recent vintages here at this classed growth St Estèphe have been amongst the best ever and now the latest generation of the family - Basile Tesseron - has become involved with the management. The new consultant is the legendary Jean-Claude Berrouet of Chateau Petrus - his first job on the left bank. This striking property with its yellow walls is just along the road from Cos d'Estournel and overlooks the vineyards of Lafite. En primeur prices remain reasonable. The 40-hectare vineyard is planted 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot with a little Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Deep in colour with a smoky, cherry fruit nose. The palate is firm with ripe tannins but shows juicy red and black fruit with a touch of all spice providing the sweetness. Savoury and classic on the finish, this shows real St Estèphe typicity.”

- Farr Vintners

“The nose is closed the start of the palate tight with firm structured tannins. Black cherry and cassis the mid palate has a richer feel fair depth at the back, but the finish is firm and quite tight. 2025-40”

- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2016 Lafon-Rochet has a very engaging bouquet, a mixture of red and black fruit laced with pencil shavings and loamy scents. In fact, the more you nose this wine, the more its complexity becomes apparent. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannins and a fine line of acidity, ripe and generous yet maintaining outstanding tension and revealing a judicious touch of peppercorns on the finish, which fans out gloriously. This is a fabulous Lafon-Rochet and certainly the best bottle of 2016 that I have encountered. Tasted blind at the Southwold tasting. 2021 – 2040”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2016 Lafon-Rochet has quite a floral bouquet, pressed iris infiltrating the black fruit, and touches of tar coming through with aeration. The palate is medium bodied with fine tannin, quite elegant in style, refined and much more approachable than I expected, yet still with satisfying substance and a light pepperiness on the aftertaste. This is a beautiful Lafon-Rochet from Basile Tesseron and his team. Drink 2021-2040.”

- NM, Vinous

Reviews *“A sleeper in this vintage, the 2016 Lafon-Rochet is positively stellar. Bright, translucent, and super-expressive, the 2016 has so much to offer. Lavender, tobacco, cedar, mint and dried herbs give the 2016 striking aromatic top notes to play off the darker fruit flavors. The 2016 is pure class. Don't miss it.”*
- AG, Vinous

“The 2016 Lafon-Rochet is a worthy follow-up to the 2015, although it is much less obvious than that wine. Scents of smoke, graphite, leather, wild cherry, lavender and blueberry give the 2016 its beguiling, expressive personality. Deep and concentrated but not big or overdone, it is likely to require at least a handful of years to be at its best. The long, persistent finish, punctuated by grippy tannins, is a thing of beauty. The 2016 has the most Cabernet ever at the estate. Proprietor Basile Tesseron told me he expects to increase plantings of Cabernet Franc at the property. Tasted three times.”
- AG, Vinous

“Classic, layered and suave, this is a focused, intense Lafon-Rochet with serious intent and masses of power beneath the bonnet. The nose shows the way with succulent fruit and showy oak and then the palate calms down to reveal a wonderful, balanced finish.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
