

# Château Lafon-Rochet 2017

CSPC# 785927

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety** 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc  
**Appellation** Saint Estèphe  
**Classification** Fourth Growth. Quatrieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.  
**Website** <http://www.lafon-rochet.com/en/>

**Sustainability** Organic

**General Info** Château Lafon-Rochet is a property that is impossible to miss off the D2, a picturesque wine route that weaves its way through the Médoc. The structure is a brightly painted sunny yellow color, and unlike some of the more formidable estates with their drawbridges, moats and guard towers, the atmosphere here is distinctly modern and cheery. The story of Château Lafon-Rochet is a long and redemptive one with its share of hardships yet manages to have a happy ending. Once Château Lafon-Rochet was acquired by the Tesseron Family, the estate really managed to reinvent itself. What was once a property near the brink of destruction is now a shining success story. Château Lafon-Rochet produces powerful wines that are very much worthy of its Fourth Growth title.

The inception of Château Lafon-Rochet dates back to the mid 17th Century, when Antoinette Guillemotes purchased the Rochet Estate as a dowry for her husband, Etienne de Lafon. The story goes the estate was named Rochet after its rocky, Saint Estèphe terroir. Once the Lafon family owned the property, they changed the name to Lafon-Rochet, as was tradition of the time. The estate rose to prominence and was classified as a Fourth Growth in 1855. At the turn of the century, however, Château Lafon Rochet fell victim to the phylloxera plague that was destroying vineyards throughout Bordeaux.

The tides of fortunes turned for the worse, and in the 1960s when the Tesseron purchased it, it was in such disrepair the buildings were rendered unusable. Always up for a challenge, Guy Tesseron spared no expense at renovating the property and Château Lafon-Rochet is the only Classified Growth to have had a château built in the 20th Century. He chose to paint the property a sunny yellow color because he wanted to celebrate the modernity of Château Lafon-Rochet. The estate is a family-run operation, and it's clear they prioritize the vines above everything else.

**Winemaker** Jean-Claude Berrouet consultant

**Vintage** St Estèphe had a geographical advantage in 2017: its proximity to the widest part of the Gironde Estuary. Being so close to such a large body of water afforded the commune good frost protection. Its clay soil was also an excellent vessel for the June downpour, and this water helped sustain the vines through the dry July and August period. Many estates waited for the September rain to pass before picking their Cabernet Sauvignon in the October sunshine, and the best wines have a luminous, silky quality.

**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 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 Estèphe vineyard of Lafon Rochet is planted to 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot and 2% Cabernet Franc. 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. The terroir is highly unique at Château Lafon-Rochet, as they have the same type of blue clay as the incomparable producer, Château Pétrus.

**Harvest** Cabernet Sauvignon: September 25th to October 4th, 2017. Merlot: September 15th to 26th, 2017  
Cabernet Franc: September 27th, 2017. Petit Verdot: September 27th, 2017



<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	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 malolactic 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.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	The nose is fine, toasted, with licorice and cherry notes, slightly peppery, after agitation. The attack is fleshy and smoothy with silky tannins. Well-balanced in the mouth with tangy notes. The finale brings sweetness and freshness while finding the licorice notes back.
<b>Serve with</b>	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.
<b>Production</b>	11,311 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink now-2029
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>90 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2020</p> <p><b>87-90 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2018</p> <p><b>85-87 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2018</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - December 2022</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2020</p> <p><b>92-93 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2018</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 2020</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - October 2019</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2018</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - March 2018</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2018</p> <p><b>86-89 points</b> - Derek Smedley MW - May 2018</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2020</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2018</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2020</p> <p><b>89-91 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2018</p> <p><b>17.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2018</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020</p> <p><b>90 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2018</p> <p><b>94-95 points</b> - Vert de Vin - January 2020</p> <p><b>16 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseauve (score only) - July 2018</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2020</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"Fresh red currant and black cherry fruit mingles nicely with lilac and tobacco notes. Judicious toast provides the frame, while the finish features a solid tug of iron. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2021 through 2029. 11,311 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Prominent savory and tobacco notes lead to the core of crunchy pomegranate and black cherry fruit, with a lightly brisk finish."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Medium to deep garnet-purple colored, the 2017 Lafon-Rochet gives up subtle cassis and black cherry notes with hints of sautéed herbs, damp soil and pencil lead. Medium-bodied and slightly thin in the mouth, it has a well-played chewy texture and nice freshness, finishing with an herbal lift."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Lafon-Rochet 2017 has a medium to deep garnet-purple color. It rocks up with ready-to-go scents of warm black and red cherries, mulberries, and fragrant soil, plus hints of wild sage and pencil lead. Medium-bodied, the palate is soft and juicy, with a lively line and a savory finish."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Independent</p> <p><i>"Aromas of smoke and tobacco with some currants, too. Medium body. Chewy tannins and an herb and berry aftertaste. Shows attractive fruit drive at the end."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p>

- Reviews** *“Solid, ultra-clean 2017 with a very pretty core of fruit and chewy tannins. Flavorful and fresh. Extremely long and focused.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “Owned by the Tesson family, this wine is smoky, ripe, and full of tannins as well as blackberry fruit. Density gives it potential, and this wine from an estate that is performing well should be ready from 2024.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- “Scented, attractive nose with good integration of the elements. Quite plummy fruit vinified to provide something softer than the average representative of this commune. Dry, proper St-Estèphe finish. Good fruit weight in the middle. Correct! 16.5/20 points.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Tangy, almost salty, nose. Smooth, layered, very fine texture. Not hugely fruity but balanced with a long, elegant aftertaste following a relatively light mid palate. Longer than it is deep but attractive. Drink 2024-2032.”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- “This is a lovely St-Estèphe this year, firm and bright with bristling fruit right out of the gate - hugely unusual to see that this year. This is one of my favourites and is totally charming with its cassis and damson fruit, but it's the juice and friendly tension that sets it apart. Silky and enjoyable. Buy.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com
- “Dark, spicy and soft textured, there is fresh blackberry and cassis with accents of licorice and espresso. The wine is medium bodied and bright, leaving you with an earthy, red berry finish.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “The nose is not showing a lot of fruit the start of the palate tight with fresh fruits and structured tannins. Richer in the middle the mix of black cherry and sloe gives more depth the sweetness slightly overtaken by the tannins at the back. Drink 2025 - 2040.”*  
- Derek Smedley MW
- “Bottled at the end of April, Basile Tesson told me that the 2017 Lafon-Rochet underwent a very light pressing with slow pumping over and no pigeage or délestage since the fruit was fragile. Around 35% of the production was lost due to frost, mainly on the western flank of the vineyard. It offers more red fruit on the nose compared to some of its Saint-Estèphe neighbors, raspberry and crushed strawberry intermixed with light Cuban cigar aromas. The palate is medium-bodied with light, off-dry tannins, a little more black fruit than on the nose. It has a fleshy, rather conservative, light finish with tobacco notes lingering on the aftertaste.”*  
- NM, Vinous
- “The 2017 Lafon-Rochet has matured in 50% new oak and the remainder in one-year old. I have to say, the bouquet is very expressive with plenty of blackberry, wild hedgerow, oyster shell and pressed flower that blossom in the glass. It is very well defined and more sophisticated than I have detected in recent vintages. Perhaps this is the first vintage where the new winery, replete with concrete vats, has really played a serious role in meliorating quality. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy black fruit, quite saline in the mouth with just a hint of black olive. There is a slightly grainy texture with a sustained peppery finish, completing a crisp and vivacious Lafon-Rochet that should please many wine-lovers. Expect this to land at the top of my banded score. Drink 2020 – 2040.”*  
- NM, Vinous

**Reviews** *“The 2017 Lafon-Rochet has really come together nicely since I tasted it in barrel. Deep, rich, and yet also vibrant, the 2017 has so much to offer. In 2017, Lafon-Rochet is a wine of precision and class. What it lacks in an overt body, it has in persistence and that most elusive quality in wine - personality. I don't expect the 2017 to be especially long-lived, but it will offer fine drinking over the next decade or so.”*  
- AG, Vinous

*“The 2017 Lafon-Rochet is wonderfully deep and fleshy, but in the mid-weight style that is typical of the year. Dark red and purplish fruit, lavender, licorice, spice, and leather all flesh out in this attractive, if somewhat understated, wine from Lafon-Rochet. Silky tannins accompany the mid-weight finish nicely. The 2017 is a very pretty wine, although it is a touch light in this vintage. Tasted three times.”*  
- AG, Vinous

*“Very impressive with a rich nose, deep fruit and a full finish, this is a powerful wine, but nothing is forced, and the oak and alcohol only serve to underpin the dark, inky fruit.”*  
- MJ, matthewjukes.com

*“Deep dark ruby garnet, violet reflections, delicate lightning of the edges, dark wild berry confit with a slight herbal underlay, tobacco nuances. Medium-bodied, red cherries, built-in tannins, mineral notes, delicate nougat on the finish, a versatile food accompaniment.”*  
- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*“The nose is fruity and offers concentration and power. It reveals notes of blackberry, wild strawberry and small notes of ripe blackcurrant associated with touches of small wild berries as well as hints of liquorice, Sichuan pepper and very discreet hints of dry tobacco leaf, graphite, and incense. The mouth is fruity, fresh, well-balanced and offers a good definition, gourmandize, an acidulous/juicy frame, a very fine unctuousity as well as tension. On the mouth this wine expresses notes of fleshy/juicy red cherry, fleshy/juicy blackcurrant and small notes of violet associated with fine hints of small red berries, liquorice, nutmeg, and Sichuan pepper. Tannins are well-built. There are slight toasted notes, hazelnut, and caramelization on the finish/persistence.”*  
- Vert de Vin

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