

# Château Lafon-Rochet 2019

CSPC# 866975

750mlx12

14.3% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% 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 chateau 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**

Frédéric Renaut, cellar master. Jean-Claude Berrouet consultant

**Vintage**

In 2019, all conditions are met to move towards a very beautiful vintage. Conditions for ripening were excellent. All four varieties clearly show the advantages of our clay-heavy gravel soils and the limestone bedrock beneath: each is expressive in its own way, and all four are fresh, rounded, and full of flavour. The tannins are velvety, the balance exceptional: here is a wine similar in some ways to 2016 or 2018, yet even fresher and more aromatic.

**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



<b>Vineyards</b>	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. Perhaps this is why they have brought on the former winemaker at Pétrus, Jean-Claude Berrouet, as their consultant?
<b>Harvest</b>	Cabernet Sauvignon: Oct 2-12 Merlot: Sept 25-Oct 1 Cabernet Franc: Oct 5
<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>	An elegant nose, fruity, with blackcurrant and cherry notes, pepper, liquorice, and truffle. In mouth, the texture is fruity and well-balanced, minerality gives greediness. Tannins are airy and bring a dense and juicy structure. In the finale we find cherry and red berries. The aromatic persistence and salinity extend the tasting.
<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>Cellaring Scores/Awards</b>	Drink 2023-2038 <b>94 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022 <b>92 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022 <b>94 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2022 <b>93-94 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2020 <b>16+ points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - June 2020 <b>16.5+ points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - December 2021 <b>93 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - June 2020 <b>93 points</b> - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022 <b>94 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2022 <b>93-95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 2020 <b>91-93 points</b> - Farr Vintner - May 2020 <b>94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2022 <b>93-95 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - June 2020 <b>95 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2022 <b>93-95 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2020 <b>95 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2022 <b>93-95 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2020 <b>92 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020 <b>92 points</b> - Thomas Parker MW - March 2022 <b>92 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - June 2020 <b>95 points</b> - Terres de Vins (score only) - June 2020 <b>94-95 points</b> - Vert de Vin - April 2020 <b>17.5 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2020
<b>Reviews</b>	<i>"Ripe and sleek, delivering cassis, damson plum, loganberry, and mulberry notes that glisten, with iron, anise, black tea and savory accents. Offers lovely precision and poise, even as the fruit flirts with an exotic blend. Mouthwatering finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2023 through 2038."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator  <i>"The 2019 Lafon-Rochet has turned out nicely in bottle, mingling aromas of blackberries and red fruits with hints of violets and pencil shavings. Medium to full-bodied, deep, and seamless, with lively acids and ripe, powdery tannins, it's a bright, precise wine, with plenty of depth and structure to support sustained bottle age, but with enough modern polish to temper any suggestion of structural asperity. Drink 2025-2055."</i> - WK, Wine Advocate

- Reviews** *“Ripe blackcurrants and blackberries with hints of sweet tobacco, walnuts, and dark chocolate. Medium-to full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins, and lingering crushed-stone character. Firm finish with some nuttiness to it. Bold and solid, classic St.-Estèphe. Try after 2026.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “The purity of fruit and balance in this young St.-Estèphe is really beautiful with crushed-currant, stone and orange-peel aromas and flavors. It’s medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins and a pretty finish. We will see if this is better than the 2018 or not.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “Dark and subdued but very fresh. Adequate fruit but long and linear with plenty of drive. Good persistence and lovely palate-cleansing finish. Drink 2027 – 2038.”*  
- JL, JancisRobinson.com
- “65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc. Black core. Very dark and chabby on the nose. Savoury though there’s no lack of black fruit. Dark, rocky elegance. Big tannic presence but not aggressive. 14%.”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- “Spiced pepper and cinnamon on the first nose, good concentration, pencil lead and slate abound in this alongside cassis bud and touches of brambled hedgerow, all of which suggests fresh acidities and good backbone. Some chewy tannins also, this is a serious Lafon that will age well. Less immediately seductive than the 2018.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com
- “Clear tension and hold that heads towards austere, with tannins that close in on the finish and an emphasis on gunsmoke graphite and pencil lead. This needs time in the glass, but unwinds to show cassis and bilberry fruits, a little subdued but impressive, with potential to develop further over the next 10 to 15 years. The penultimate vintage under Basile Tesseron, just as this wine is reaching the market, ownership has changed from the Tesseron family to Jacky Lorenzetti.”*  
- JA, Inside Bordeaux
- “Deep in color, the wine exudes black and blue fruit, smoke, spice, tobacco, and lilacs on the nose. On the palate, the wine is full-bodied, with chewy tannins and vibrancy, leaving you with layers of ripe, fresh, spicy red fruit with earthy overtones in the endnote. Allow it a few years in the cellar and it should soften and fill out nicely. Drink from 2025-2040.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Dark ruby in color, the wine is lush, soft, rounded and concentrated with layers of perfectly ripe, black, red, and blue fruit complicated by crushed rocks, stones, smoke and spice-box aromas. Rich, lusciously textured and full-bodied, this is a beautiful expression of Saint Estèphe and Lafon Rochet.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Vibrant ruby purple in the glass. Mineral and cool on the nose, with hints of graphite, fresh blackcurrant, and blackcurrant leaf. This is compact and fresh, with chunky, grippy tannins and dark cherry fruits at the core. Lithe and lifted through to a crunchy finish.”*  
- Farr Vintners
- “The 2019 Lafon-Rochet has a bouquet very similar to the sample I tasted last year, featuring disarming, fragrant, beautifully defined blackberry and crushed violet scents and fine mineralité and elegance. The palate is medium-bodied and fresh, with fine-grained tannins, gentle grip, and a little chalkiness toward the saline finish. Very classic in style, less fruit-driven than the previous vintage, but with greater persistence. Tasted three or four times, at the château and elsewhere. 2025 – 2050.”*  
- NM, Vinous

## Reviews

*“The 2019 Lafon-Rochet, which was picked from 25 September to 5 October, requires a little coaxing from the glass, eventually unfurling with blackberry, bilberry, violet and light crushed stone/clayey scents that is quintessential Saint-Estèphe. The palate is medium-bodied with fine-boned tannins, fresh and saline in the mouth, old school in the best sense of that expression. No, it is not the most flamboyant Lafon-Rochet, but it is imbued with a sense of nobility and classicism that I much admire. Tasted three times with consistent notes. 2025 – 2050”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2019 Lafon-Rochet is every bit as compelling today as it was from barrel. There is a feeling of elegance to the 2019 that is so striking. Sweet dark cherry, plum new leather, tobacco, licorice, spice and rose petal all grace the 2019 as it unwinds to its long finish. Lafon-Rochet is not huge nor obvious, as some Saint-Estèphes are, but it is absolutely compelling. Drink 2029 – 2049.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The 2019 Lafon-Rochet is absolutely gorgeous. Dark and powerful, yet also wonderfully translucent, the 2019 has so much to offer. Black cherry, licorice, spice, sweet tobacco, leather, and dried herbs infuse the 2019 with striking layers of dimension and nuance. There is so much going on in this potent wine; this is a real sleeper in Saint-Estèphe.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“Brilliant stuff, the 2019 Château Lafon-Rochet shows the best of the vintage with its pure, precise, elegant, yet at the same time concentrated style. Showing lots of ripe currant, plum, tobacco, Asian spice, and cedar pencil aromatics, it's medium to full-bodied, has nicely integrated acidity, and just seamless tannins. It's beautifully done and well worth seeking out. It's going to evolve for 20-25+ years.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“A wine I don't get to taste as often as I'd like, the 2019 Château Lafon-Rochet is based on 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 5% Cabernet Franc from deep, gravelly soils in Saint-Estèphe. Deep purple-hued, with a great bouquet of ripe black and blue fruits intermixed with classic cedar pencil and tobacco, it's medium to full-bodied, has a balanced, elegant texture, silky tannins, and a great finish. It shows more floral and chocolaty notes with time in the glass and its purity of fruit is straight-up top notch. As with most 2019s, it's going to have plenty of upfront appeal yet should age effortlessly as well. Barrel Sample: 93-95”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Dark ruby garnet, violet reflections, subtle lightening of the edges. Fine wood root, dark cherry fruit, a hint of nougat, inviting bouquet. Medium-bodied, delicate fruit sweetness, ripe, integrated tannins, good freshness, mineral notes on the finish, has potential for aging.”*

- Falstaff Magazine

*“Bright ruby colour. Cool and savoury, with tones of camphor and cedar together with fresh hedgerow fruit. The palate is midweight, with a compact core of fresh black and ripe red fruit. There is an earthy, savoury tone throughout and chalky, firm tannins that are to be expected from St Estèphe. This is a classically proportioned, vibrant, and well-made wine, one for lovers of structure and savour.”*

- Tom Parker MW

*“The nose is fruity, elegant, aromatic and offers a nice power, richness, elegance as well as straightness. It reveals notes of pulpy / fresh cassis, boysenberry and small notes of strawberry associated with touches of cherry / sour cherry, small ripe red berries, violet, lily as well as nutmeg, Cuban pepper, licorice, spices, and a discreet hint of Bourbon vanilla. The mouth is fruity, well-balanced and offers a mineral frame, a good definition, gourmandise, tension, suavity, delicacy, juiciness, an aerial side, a beautiful fat (full of delicacy), power (full of balance), a good structure, a certain straightness as well as a fine freshness. In the mouth this wine expresses notes of fleshy / juicy blackcurrant, bright / juicy raspberry and small notes of juicy boysenberry associated with hints of morello cherry, small fleshy red berries as well as a hint of purple plum, lily, violets, almonds, graphite, nutmeg, and fine slight hints of Bourbon vanilla. Tannins are fine, racy, and elegant. A beautiful wine!”*

- Vert de Vin

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