

Leoville du Marquis de Las Cases 1985

CSPC# 766137

Gift pack: 750mlx6 (various vintages)

13.0% Alc./Vol.

Grape Variety

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Saint Julien

Website

<http://www.domaines-delon.com/en>

General Info

Chateau Leoville Las Cases is a second growth Bordeaux estate located on the northern end of the Saint-Julien appellation adjacent to the Gironde River. Leoville Las Cases is a perfect example of why the 1855 Bordeaux classification desperately needs to be updated. Although rated a second growth, Leoville Las Cases consistently produces wine of first growth quality. Like its next-door neighbor, Chateau Latour, Leoville Las Cases maintains a reputation for making stellar wine even in difficult vintages. It is the undisputed crown jewel of St. Julien, and unequivocally one of the best wines in Bordeaux.

Vineyards

The vineyards of Léoville-Las-Cases lie in the northernmost tip of the St Julien appellation, abutting the Gironde, and only separated from those of Château Latour to the north by the *Juillac*, which drains into the *Gironde*. Whereas the other Léoville vineyards, those of Barton and Poyferré, consist of a patchwork of numerous plots, those of Las-Cases are largely concentrated in this single block. This is the *Grand Clos*, a walled vineyard, the stone wall contiguous with that running around Latour, the highlight of which is the stone archway surmounted by the lion of Las-Cases, which can also be found above the doorway to the tasting room at the *château* (above), and which also graces the label. Totalling over 200 acres, Leoville Las Cases is comprised of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14.5% Merlot, and .5% Cabernet Franc.

Maturation

The fruit is harvested by hand, usually by a team of workers from Spain, before transport to the *chai*, where the berries are destemmed before a gentle pressing and then fermented under temperature-controlled conditions. The fermentation vessels include a fascinating mix of wooden, cement and stainless-steel vats. When finished the wine is pumped from the *chai* to the barrel cellar on the other side of the road through an underground pipe. Here it is transferred into oak *barrique*, between 50% and 100% new for the *grand vin*, Château Léoville-Las-Cases.

Tasting Notes

This wine brought the funk into overdrive. Brett, horse, vivid cassis and mineral on the nose. The palate was brilliant with concentrated flavors, Brett running throughout but not too much and perfectly integrated with the rest of the wine. Great texture. Finish was explosive and pure. The wine was just so complete. Fantastic and the last "real" LLC as after that they got the first reverse osmosis machine in Bordeaux and the rest is a sad sad history.

Serve with

braised oxtail *and* black angus ribeye

Cellaring

Drink 2003-2018

Scores/Awards

98 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - September 15, 1996

91 points - JL, Wine Spectator - September 15, 1996

94 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - October 15, 1994

92 points - HS, Wine Spectator - February 15, 1992

94 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - February 15, 1990

90 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - August 31, 1988

94 points - Robert Parker, Bordeaux Book 3rd Edition - January 2003

93 points - Robert Parker, Bordeaux Book 4th Edition - January 2003

91 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #101 - October 1995

92 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #88 - August 1993

95 points - Robert Parker, Hedonist's Gazette - January 2005

95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - July 2010

95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2008

94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - December 2007

93-95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2002



92 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - January 23 2014

95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 9, 2012

95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - September 10, 2011

18.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2012

87 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)

Review Only - John Berry, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

Reviews

"A fabulous wine; one of the first great Las Cases. Full-bodied and rich, with the tannins extremely well integrated into an impressive background of fruit. Give it time. --Cabernet Challenge. Best after 2004."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Firm, tight and closed, with a band of subdued, cedary currant and anise flavors and a slight mineral accent. Though the flavors aren't obvious, the tannins are well integrated and it's balanced. A tough wine to read at this stage; try around 2000. --Cabernet Challenge"
- JL, Wine Spectator

"Impressively rich. Dense and thick with black color; super opulent character of cassis, tar and berry. It goes on and on. --The Bordeaux 50. Best after 1998."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Ripe and supple, with a decadent edge to the currant, raspberry and cedar aromas and flavors. Vaguely violet aromas are interesting, and the decadent flavor makes this different. Still very youthful. --Léoville Las Cases vertical. Best after 1996."
- HS, Wine Spectator

"Impressively rich. Dense and thick with black color; super opulent character of cassis, tar and berry. It goes on and on. Best after 1998."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Quiet but extremely flavorful. Soft plum, cassis and spice flavors follow a n intensely fruity aroma. Built on firm tannins and great acidity, shows opulence with restraint."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"This wine is very similar to the 1981 produced at Las Cases. Spicy with the vanillin touch of toasty oak, very good fruit, and medium to full body, this is a very successful wine for the year. Anticipated maturity: Now. Last tasted, 1/90."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 1985 is a gorgeously open-knit Las Cases with a sweet nose of lead pencil, sweet black cherries and currants, and a hint of underbrush and new oak. Medium to full-bodied with expansiveness, supple tannins, and outstanding concentration, this is a beautifully made wine that still tastes like it is an adolescent and may even have an even greater upside as it continues to age in bottle. The low acidity and sweet tannin, however, suggest it has entered its plateau of maturity. Anticipated maturity: Now-2018. Last tasted, 8/02."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"This is one of my favorite vintages of Las Cases for present day consumption. The wine reveals a youthful deep ruby/purple color, followed by a classic Las Cases bouquet of pain grille, lead pencil, minerals, and ripe black currants. Medium to full-bodied, with outstanding concentration, and soft tannin, this is a classic, fleshy 1985 that reveals none of the potential dilution noticeable in many wines from this vintage. At one time I thought this might turn out to be a modern-day clone of the 1953, but it possesses a lot more flesh and intensity. Anticipated maturity: Now-2015. Last tasted 3/97"
- RP, Wine Advocate

"For present consumption, this wine is one of my favorite Leoville-Las Cases. The color is a deep, healthy ruby with purple tints. The wine reveals a classic Las Cases nose of cassis, minerals, lead pencil, and vanilla. Medium to full-bodied, with outstanding concentration and soft tannin, this classically rendered, fleshy, yet stylish wine can be drunk now or cellared for another 15+ years. It is another example where the 1985 may prove to be a modern-day clone of the 1953."
- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews *"Delon's 1985 Leoville-Las-Cases continues to evolve gracefully. Deeply colored, as well as ripe, sweet, and precocious, this medium to full-bodied, concentrated wine is close to full maturity. The gorgeously ripe cassis aromas and flavors, intertwined with scents of vanillin, minerals, and herbs, are seductive. Anticipated maturity: 1995-2010. Last tasted, 5/93."*
- RP, Wine Advocate

".. A brilliant, fully mature yet beautifully elegant wine of first-growth quality, the 1985 Léoville Las-Cases, which has another decade of aging ability, although it is certainly à point, as the French would say..."
- RP, Hedonists Gazette

"Tasted blind at Harry Gill's annual lunch. Always on the of finest Las-Cases of the 1980s, this bottle convinces with a complex, tightly wound nose of blackberry, cedar, dried herbs, sous-bois and cigar box. The palate is full-bodied with firm, sinewy tannins, compact at first but fanning out wonderful towards a supple, lithe finish tinged with iodine. Marvelous. Drink now-2030. Tasted February 2010."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted twice at the chateau with Jean-Hubert Delon and at the vertical tasting two months later with virtually identical notes. A deep garnet core with deep brick rim. The nose is as spellbinding as usual: a complex mélange of cooked meats, mocha, leather, burnt toast and savoury fruits. Very good definition, a bouquet that really draws you in. The palate is medium to full-bodied, vibrant acidity with spicy red-berried fruits, quite leafy and earthy, very well-poised. Quite savoury towards the finish, which has a touch of scorched earth. Cool and yet ripe. Drink now-2020+. Tasted December 2007."
- NM, Wine Journal

"A deep garnet hue. A captivating nose of cedar, damp earth, a touch of spice, Morello and burning embers. Very complex and much more vigorous compared to bottles tasted in the past. The palate is full-bodied, supple for a Las-Cases, but its corpulence belies the firm structure underneath. Much more backward than I expected, insistent and grippy on the finish although not as much weight as the Leoville Las-Cases 1986. But I still might have to extend my drinking window. Drink now-2030. Tasted April 2007."
- NM, Wine Journal

"First tasted in January 2002: deep garnet. Seamless ripe nose: pencil, blackberry and spice. Superb integration, exquisite balance, elegant, feminine and expressive with a supple, fleshy finish. A stunning wine: the most seductive of the vintages I have tasted. Divine. Tasted again in November 2003 and it seemed to have lost a little vigour since the marvelous bottle in 2002. More mature looking than the 1986. A very ethereal nose of earth and spice but with more noticeable green pepper. A very smooth entry, supple and fleshy though it seems more tart and the cherry more bitter than I remembered it. Drinking superbly now. I would cellar the '86, drink the '85."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Leoville Las Cases that is still young at close to 30 years of age is not all that surprising. But this is from an early drinking vintage! With an hour of air, the wine started singing its song of tobacco, cigar box, cassis and truffle. Concentrated, fresh and long, this traditional wine has another two decades of life, or more. This is the longest-lived wine of the vintage."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"This is the best example of this famed chateau for current drinking. Filled with ripe cassis, tobacco, earth and spicy aromatics, coupled with concentration of fruit and elegant tannins, this shows great today. With ample tannin and structure to age, this will only get better. The long, powerful, cassis filled finish lasts close to 40 seconds."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews *“Earth, truffle, spice, stone, cassis, black cherry, tobacco, mineral, smoke and blackberry scents pop the moment the wine hits your glass. Full bodied and concentrated, the wine combines power with elegance, which is a difficult combination to find. The wine finishes with a long, cassis, spice, smoke and dark cherry sensation. This is probably at, or close to full maturity. There is no reason to hold this Bordeaux wine any longer.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Like a few other wines tonight this demonstrates its potential even with its colour, which is red cut through with a purple streak of youth. Stylish, classically styled St Julien fruit with a hard, tarry character. There is a sense of a full, sweet richness to it. On the palate it is clear that this firm, tannic, backward wine is still in the ascendant. Firm fruit and balanced acidity provide the potential for future development.”
- CK, *The Wine Doctor*

“1985 Bordeaux in general and Las Cases in particular is one of life’s great pleasures; a moment of pure hedonism as you catch a great Claret at a time of sheer perfection. The tannins have softened, the primary and secondary fruit characteristics have given way to the classic cigar-box and cedarwood aromas of mature St Julien, and the texture on the palate is rich and satisfying, supported by an impressively long finish. If you want to keep it longer, however, fear not for I believe it will remain on this plateau for several years yet.”
- JB, *Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants*
