

Leoville du Marquis de Las Cases 1998

CSPC# 796082

750mlx3

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 9% 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

The color is deep purple inky, with a shiny coat and a subtle nose that opens up later to some graphite and a little mint. On the palate, the wine is all focus and precision. The texture is refined, and the fruit is bright and vibrant. The finish is long.

Serve with

Roast lamb, red meat in general, duck or goose, game.

Cellaring

Drink 2006-2025

Scores/Awards

93 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2009

93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #134 - April 2001

91-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #128 - April 2000

90-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #122 - April 1999

93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2008

94-96 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - December 2003

92 (+?) points - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2001

89 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - Feb 22, 2013

18 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - August 2012

93 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)

95 points - Wine & Spirits Magazine - April 2002

91 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)

18.5 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)

18 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)

Reviews

"Impressive dark, almost purple color. Intense aromas of crushed blackberries, minerals, mint and currant follow through to a full body, with licorice and berry character and a long, velvety finish. Needs a bit of time still, but very enjoyable already. Very serious for the vintage. — '88/'98 Bordeaux blind retrospective (2008). Best after 2011."
- JS, Wine Spectator



Reviews

"The 1998 has turned out to be one of the vintage's superb Medocs. It boasts an opaque black/purple color as well as a classic Leoville Las Cases display of lead pencil, gorgeously pure black raspberries and cherries, smoke, and graphite. A broad yet focused entry on the palate reveals firm tannin, medium to full body, superb concentration and purity, as well as a totally symmetrical mouthfeel. Anticipated maturity: 2006-2025."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Only 40% of the harvest was included in this wine, which is one of the finest Medocs of the vintage. It boasts an opaque black/purple color, superb intensity, surprising weight, and classic blackberry and cassis flavors intertwined with vanillin and minerals. Full-bodied, with remarkably mature, sweet tannin, this blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, and 9% Cabernet Franc is an exceptional effort in a tricky Medoc vintage. Anticipated maturity: 2008-2030."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 1998 does not appear to be a very complex wine, but Michel Delon and his son, Jean-Hubert, have turned in a superlative performance. It is a saturated purple-colored Las Cases with a classic nose of vanillin, black currants, cherries, and spice. Medium-bodied, with ripe, well-integrated tannin, and impressive length, this layered, concentrated, moderately tannic effort should be at its finest between 2002-2018."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"A deep garnet core with ruby rim – still quite unevolved for a nine-year old Las-Cases. The nose is relatively light and leafy, but with great definition. Blackberry, a touch of cassis, mineral, limestone with a touch of cold black tea. The palate is medium-bodied, well balanced with lots of freshness and vitality. Good acidity, quite lively and spritely, an attractive lightness of touch you do not often find with Las-Cases. Blackberry, blueberry, cedar, a touch of orange peel leading to an almost citrus-like finish. A very attractive wine, quite feminine in style like the 2001. Excellent. Drink 2012-2025+. Tasted December 2007."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted in December 2003 at the Leoville Las-Cases vertical: a slightly deeper hue than the 96, deep black/garnet. The nose is still tight, backward with minerals, iodine and cigar box notes beginning to develop. The palate has good acidity, very ripe tannins with a lot of glycerin and liquorice. Less depth than I anticipated after the sample last year and the finish reminds me of an animally Cote-Rotie. Very toasty on the finish, this is an excellent 1998 and comparable to the First Growths."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Medium ruby. Spicy, highly aromatic nose combines currant, lead pencil, licorice, minerals and roasted nuts. Dense, spicy and penetrating, with lovely clarity of fruit and considerable power. Quite suave and stylish. Finishes very long, with firm tannins that are quite fine for the year. "We'll prefer the '99 for the first ten years, but afterwards this '98 may be better," notes Jean-Hubert Delon"

- ID, International Wine Cellar

"Bright, cranberry and cassis fruits are in abundance. There is a tart quality to the fruit that is exacerbated by a touch of green flavors. The tannins are noticeable. The wine is beefy, fresh and masculine in nature. Clearly, there is a lot of raw material in this wine. But it's not charming and lacks elegance. Perhaps time will be generous with this wine. It cannot hurt. But I would not bet the ranch on it. Fans of what's considered traditional, old school, tannic Bordeaux wine will like this a lot more than I did."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Really deeply pigmented, dark but certainly not opaque. For the first four to five hours, this wine remained aromatically reticent. It held on to any nuances of perfume, of fruit, but when it finally relaxed it revealed reassuring multilayered seams of dark, sweet and dusty fruit, with smoky damson and plum skins. Dark, sooty but sweet, rich and concentrated, it remains primary but very appealingly so. In truth, I find it a little haunting and enticingly imperceptible, its depths difficult to fathom. It reveals much, but it also suggests there is much more complexity to come here. Despite opening up to reveal a sweet and exuberant character, the palate remains medium-bodied from the start, gently concentrated and full of substance. This is just delicious, sweet and yet with a savoury weight to it, so there is no super-ripe modernity here. In fact, towards the finish, it starts to reveal a more severe tannic backbone, but at no time is this fully laid bare, and so it remains beautifully balanced despite its youthful style. This is just super - but it needs time."

- CK, The Wine Doctor
