

Château Léoville Poyferré 2020

CSPC# 866103

750mlx6

13.75% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot

Appellation

St. Julien

Classification

Second Growth. Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

Website

<http://www.leoville-poyferre.fr/english/news.html>

Analysis

Total Acidity: 3.5 g H₂SO₄ /L pH :3.69 IPT: 85

Sustainability

Château Léoville Poyferré is committed to its impact on the environment. As a testament to our engagement, we joined a voluntary collective initiative that is particular to the wines of Bordeaux called an Environmental Management System (SME)* in 2016. Château Léoville Poyferré is also certified HVE Level 3** since the 2017 vintage. The SME allows us to take into consideration the environmental impact from vine to bottle to continually improve and optimize our systems. HVE, meaning High Environmental Value, measures our environmental sustainability at various critical points in all aspects of the business. Level 3 is the highest level achievable.

General Info

With origins dating back to 1638, Léoville was the largest vineyard in the Médoc region at the time of the French Revolution. Léoville Poyferré springs from various divisions and successions in 1840. Its outstanding quality wines gained early recognition when it was ranked 2nd Growth in the 1855 classification. Château Léoville Poyferré was acquired in 1920 by the Cuvelier family. Château Léoville Poyferré was the Léoville that got left in the starting blocks in terms of reputation and in the quality of its wines.

Léoville Poyferré has been owned by the Cuvelier family (who also own Château Le Crock) since 1921, yet it was not until the 1970s, when Didier Cuvelier took control at the château, that quality began to improve. In the last 20 years, Didier, with the assistance of Michel Rolland since 1995, has turned Léoville-Poyferré into one of St-Julien's finest estates. Now up with the best of the St-Julien's but still selling at non-scary prices. Léoville Poyferré is classified as a 2ème Cru Classé.

Winemaker

Château Oenologist: Isabelle Davin. Consultant Oenologist: Michel Rolland
Cellar Master: Didier Thoman

About the label

Fourth generation to preside over the destiny of the estate, Sara Lecompte Cuvelier wanted to pay homage to the real strengths of Léoville Poyferré that may not necessarily be seen at first glance: a secular know-how paired with the complexity of the terroirs. She has imagined, for the first time in the Chateau's history, a commemorative bottle that reveals the contours of the vineyard engraved into the glass. Each golden dot glimmers like the infinite nuances that are offered by the different plots in the vineyard, enticing the owner of the bottle to discover some of the precise place names of these precious plots: "Bolitorte", where the Merlots are racy and opulent, or "Gauettes", where the Cabernets Sauvignons are sumptuous and elegant. A unique bottle inlaid with gold, the details of which pay tribute to the enduring strength of Léoville Poyferré: its multifaceted terroir.

Although temperatures rose slightly with the arrival of spring, ample water in the ground encouraged an early budbreak that began on March 18th, comparable to the 2019 vintage. Wet conditions prevailed in April, requiring our teams, downsized due to the pandemic, to step up their efforts to diminish the threat of mildew. Thankfully, beautiful sunny weather from June 19th heralded the beginning of summer and eased our fears. The ripening period that ensued until harvest was hotter and drier than usual. Miraculous thunderstorms mid-August signalled a turnaround for this vintage, allowing the grapes to reach perfect ripeness. Bruno Clenet, Vineyard Manager, refers to the raindrops as "gold from the heavens". The diurnal temperature range at the beginning of September ensured that precious grape aromatics were maintained.

During the first ripeness checks at the end of August, we observed, with great enthusiasm, the homogeneous quality of the grapes. The Merlots were generous, and the thick-skinned Cabernet Sauvignon berries were small and concentrated.

Temperatures were normal for the season as harvest kicked off on September 14th with the Merlots.

The thermometer easily reached 30°C during the first week of picking, resulting in a concentration of juice in the Merlot berries.



Vineyards	Léoville Poyferré has 80 hectares of vineyards planted with Cabernet Sauvignon (65%), Merlot (25%), Petit Verdot (8%) Cabernet Franc (2%). The various divisions throughout the history of the estate have split the vineyard of Léoville Poyferré into five large areas. They include all the main types of gravelly soil present in Saint Julien. This diversity contributes to the amplitude and complexity of the Léoville Poyferré wines.
Harvest	14th September to 30th September. Harvest went off without a hitch, ending on a cooler note with the Petit Verdots and Cabernets finishing by the end of September, which, it must be said, is quite rare.
Vinification/ Maturation	Double-walled, temperature-controlled stainless-steel vats. Vinification: Plot-by-plot with pre-fermentation cold macerations (6-8 days), alcoholic fermentations with selected yeast. Malolactic fermentation in new barrels. 18 - 20 months in French oak barrels (80% new, 20% second-fill). Traditional racking and egg white fining in barrel.
Tasting Notes	Like Barton, Poyferré is also excellent. Dark fruity, classy, cool, with depth, spice, coffee, and a lot of black cherries in the scent. The palate is firmly built, a small monument, not ponderous but amazingly elegant, compact, with energy, punch and plenty of length. Resonates with red berries. A very good Poyferré with large reserves.
Serve with	Leoville Poyferré is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau Leoville Poyferré is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted braised and grilled dishes.
Production	15,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2030-2050
Scores/Awards	<p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023</p> <p>94+ points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p>95-97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p>96-97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p>16.5+ points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - December 2021</p> <p>96 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023</p> <p>97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p>96-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p>94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Farr Vintners - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p>97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>95-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p>98+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p>95-97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p>95-97 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p>95 points - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021</p> <p>94-95 points - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021</p> <p>96-97 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022</p> <p>97 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021</p> <p>17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Showy and very hard to resist, this gushes with velvety plum and boysenberry reduction flavors, along with melted black licorice and violet hints along the way. This has a very cold cast iron note buried deeply on the finish, too, to keep it grounded. A very distinctive house style. Best from 2030 through 2038."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"A rich, powerful wine, the 2020 Léoville Poyferré offers up aromas of sweet berries, blueberry liqueur, exotic spices, incense, and creamy new oak. Full-bodied, broad, and layered, it's deep and concentrated, its ample core of fruit only partially concealing a hefty payload of sweet, powdery, generously extracted tannin. Poyferré is generally the most flamboyant and demonstrative of the three Léovilles, but in 2020, it's chunkier, broader shouldered and more brooding than usual.</i></p> <p><i>With some 80 hectares under vine, Léoville Poyferré's parcels are interfingering with those belonging to the Delon and Barton families by the river and on the plateau of Saint-Julien. The soils are cultivated less frequently</i></p>

Reviews *and less deeply these days, and conversion to organic methods is gradually being rolled out, parcel by parcel, some being easier to farm this way than others. Winemaking features a five- to eight-day cold soak, followed by comparatively long macerations, and maturation is in 80% new oak, with lots destined for new barrels completing their malolactic fermentation in barrel. Combined with an elevated percentage of Merlot in the vineyards (though the tendency here, as elsewhere, is to replant with more Cabernet Sauvignon), this has tended to deliver the richest, fleshiest, most flamboyant of the three Léoville estates, but while it's generally the most open out of the gates of the three, that hasn't come at the expense of longevity."*

- WK, Wine Advocate

"Deep purple-black colored, the 2020 Léoville Poyferré comes bounding out of the glass like an energetic young pup, delivering exuberant scents of crushed black cherries, juicy blackberries, and warm cassis, with hints of ground cloves, dark chocolate, lilacs and tilled soil. The medium to full-bodied palate is wonderfully plush, delivering bags of ripe black fruits with a seamless backbone of acidity, finishing long and spicy."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"This is really floral on the nose with violets and roses, and some black berries and dark cherries. It's medium- to full-bodied with firm and polished tannins, and plenty of hazelnut and milk chocolate. Structured, yet so finely textured. So attractive and enticing now but needs three or four years to show what it has."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Impressive purity of fruit on the nose with crushed raspberries, blackcurrants, and blackberries. Some lead pencil, too. It's full-bodied with very polished, intense tannins that go on for minutes. The quality and precision of the tannins are impressive, giving the wine form, energy, and equilibrium."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Rich, luscious and replete with dark plum and dark chocolate flavors, this wine shows great power as well as aging potential. Its richness is balanced by the fresher edge of acidity that stands the wine in good stead as it ages."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Full bottle 1,345 g. 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. Plot-by-plot fermentation and ageing for 18 to 20 months (still in train, as the notes explain). Here they admit they don't do the final assemblage until June. Dark crimson. Relatively voluptuous nose. Flattering initially but then with quite a charge of inky tannins underneath. Needs time. Notably dry on the finish but with good density. Rather more obviously dry and less flashy than some vintages. Very much made for the long term with a juicy, spicy undertow. Extremely youthful. Unusually, it seems drier than Léoville Barton. 13.7%. Drink 2030 – 2053."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Very dark colour with black core. Lightly floral (violets), such pure black fruit. Big, chewy but smoothed tannins. Just enough freshness, masses of fruit well-framed by those big tannins. Long, firm, compact."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Supple and generous with mouthwatering acidity, though really quite tannic at this point which does cover up some of the nuance. I like the texture, the frame, and the weight. It's clean, polished, and well worked, not overdone at all, but this has a sense of potent seduction in the flavours, rich blackcurrant, perfumed and scented. Detailed with lots of stony, slate, and wet stone elements giving a wonderful terroir influence."

- GH, Decanter.com

"Rich and concentrated with violet reflections and a wall of tannins. Well structured, it sets its feet deep in the ground and will need time to soften and develop. Good quality with depth. The tannins are far more present than the alcohol, setting it apart from the 2018. A yield of 35hl/ha. Harvest September 14 to 30. Planted blend (not 2020) 61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc. Drinking Window 2028 – 2042."

- JA, Decanter.com

Reviews

“Excellent quality, head and shoulders above most of the vintage even in St Julien. Blackberry, black truffle, damson, liquorice, crayon, and crushed rocks throughout. Great stuff. Harvest September 14 to 30, 35hl/h yield, 3.8ph. Consultant Michel Rolland, winemaker Isabelle Davin, 80% new oak. A special bottle as this vintage marks 100 years with the Cuvelier family.”

- JA, janeanson.com

“Even better in the beautiful, black, and gold bottle celebrating 100 years of ownership, then it was from the barrel, the wine instantly grabs your attention with its dark color and its equally dark-fruited profile centered on its core of blackberries, black cherries, black plums, spices, espresso, and dark chocolate. The wine is deep, rich, concentrated, and lush, as well as fresh, silky, vibrant, long, and focused. The finish leaves you with layers of sweet, ripe, black, and blue fruit, chocolate, espresso, and a touch of spice that comes in at the end of the silky finish. The wine blends 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Drink from 2026-2055.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Silky, polished, lusciously textured, and rich, the wine pops from the glass with incense, smoked berries, cherry blossoms, creme de cassis, tobacco leaf and blue fruit. Full-bodied, silky, and opulently textured, this concentrated wine offers layers of deep, ripe fruits that simultaneously coat your palate, yet feel fresh and vibrant. The flamboyant, seamless finish builds in intensity as it expands on your palate. To celebrate 20 years of ownership, the bottle will feature a special, one-time-only gold, embossed, etched label.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“2020 marks 100 years of Cuvelier family ownership at Léoville Poyferré, which will be commemorated with a special bottle in this vintage. It is a blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Deep purple in colour. The nose is smoky and rich, full of cassis, kirsch, cinnamon, and liquorice. The palate is full of brambly fruit that is matched by grippy, mouthcoating tannin and intense sweet spice. This will take a few years to fully integrate, but should offer plush, powerful but measured drinking in from 10 years after vintage.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2020 Léoville Poyferré was bottled in June. It has a very intense nose, displaying more black fruit than its showing from barrel, also the opulence tempered since its bottling. Fine mineralité, hints of clove and bay leaf develop with time in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with a smooth opening, still slightly lactic in style as I remarked from barrel, yet with immense depth and plenty of finesse. The structure really comes through on the finish, a pinch of cracked black pepper and tobacco lending complexity. This is a great Léoville Poyferré that will give more than four decades of enjoyment, though I advise waiting several years before broaching.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Léoville Poyferré builds on the success of recent vintages, offering intense yet exquisitely defined black cherries, wild strawberry, cassis, and crushed stone aromas. It is high-toned as usual but not quite as hedonistic as the recently tasted 2018. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins that belie the backbone of this Saint-Julien. Slightly lactic in texture toward the spicy finish; the oak will be assimilated by the time of bottling, leaving a very suave and sophisticated wine that will give 30–40 years of drinking pleasure. Easily one of the classiest offerings from this Saint-Julien in recent years.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Léoville-Poyferré is every bit as impressive as it was from barrel. If anything, it has gained in freshness and vibrancy with élevage. Dark cherry, plum, mocha, graphite and a kiss of French oak are some of the many notes that infuse the 2020 with tons of character. I especially admire its vertical energy and buttoned up personality. In some recent vintages Léoville-Poyferré has been quite showy, but the 2020 also has a more nuanced side that is hugely appealing.”

- AG, Vinous

Reviews

“The 2020 Léoville-Poyferré is a powerful, structured wine. In recent vintages, Léoville-Poyferré has been more opulent, but the 2020 shows off a towering, vertical build framed by a soaring spine of tannin. Dark red cherry, pomegranate, cedar, and spice box emerge with a bit of coaxing. Ultimately, though, Léoville-Poyferré is less showy than most Saint-Julien at this stage. I don't expect that will be much of an issue in time. In a word: magnificent. Tasted three times.”

- AG, Vinous

“The Grand Vin 2020 Château Léoville Poyferré, which is released in a stylish black bottle commemorating a century for the Cuvelier family, is reminiscent of the 2016 with its powerful, concentrated, yet vibrant and inward style. Pure crème de cassis, melted chocolate, loamy earth, graphite, and some spicy nuances all define the aromatics, and it's full-bodied, with a stacked mid-palate, nicely integrated oak, ripe tannins, and one hell of a great finish. This is another utterly brilliant wine from this team, which has been producing First Growth quality wines for many years now. It will benefit from just 5-7 years of bottle age and will evolve for 50 years or more if well stored. Bravo. Tasted multiple times with consistent results.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Cut from the same cloth as the 2016 with its focused, pure, yet concentrated style, the 2020 Château Léoville Poyferré reveals a dense purple color as well as ultra-classic notes of crème de cassis, graphite, toasted spice, and unsmoked tobacco. Rich and medium to full-bodied, it has brilliant mid-palate depth and ripe, velvety tannins, all making for a beautiful Saint-Julien that will benefit from 4-6 years of bottle age and shine for 30-40 years or more. Tasted three times. 95-97+.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Deep dark, opaque ruby, purple reflections, bright rim. Delicate tobacco and herbal spices lie gently beneath dark berry compote, cassis and blackberry, notes of cardamom and noble wood nuances. Complex, finely-meshed, ripe cherries, fine nougat, velvety, ripe tannins, mineral touch on the finish, very persistent. Powerful yet harmonious, definitely good ageing potential.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“The nose offers ripeness and purity with vigorous young fruit, cassis and dark berries with discreet oak, sage, and tobacco notes. The palate is structured yet elegant with fine proportions, rounded tannin, a fresh backbone, and unctuous fresh fruit flavours. dense and muscular finish with great persistency.”

- AL, Tasted.com

“(64% CS, 31% M, 3% CF, 2% PV; 13.7% ABV; 80% new). Inky; closed to smell, blackcurrant-tight; rich, elegantly “packed” wine, with a perfectly poised, freshly defining acidity and a superfine, velvety tannin, an overall effortlessly harmonious balance; ripe rather than “sweet,” long, graceful, rich, but not heavy, taut, close-grained, freshly ripe blackcurrant and mineral in flavor, very long across the palate, with a wonderful finish of subtle ripe fruit fragrance and fine gravel aromas. Most complete, a real beauty. 2030–50+.”

- MS, The World of Fine Wine