

Château Lafite Rothschild 2010

CSPC# 756555

750mlx3

13.48% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

87.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12.8% Merlot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

First growth.

Website

<http://www.lafite.com/fr/>

General Info

Château Lafite Rothschild is one of the most renowned wine properties in the Médoc. Owned by Baron Eric de Rothschild and Lafite Rothschild is also one of the largest Médoc estates.

The vineyards of Ch. Lafite are found at the northern tip of the Pauillac appellation, just below the boundary with St. Estèphe. There is evidence of an estate on this site as far back as the 14th century, and of exports of wine to the UK in the early 17th century. The current owners, the Rothschilds of the famous banking dynasty, bought the property in 1866, but this is a different brand of the family from that which purchased Ch. Mouton-Rothschild. For many years the Rothschilds' control of Lafite was very much exercised at a distance, compared to the hands-on influence of Baron Philippe at Mouton, but since the Second World War this has changed somewhat, with the current owner, Eric de Rothschild, presiding over an extensive programme of investment in both vineyard and cellar. Throughout the 20th century Lafite was dogged by periods of inconsistency, often producing sublime wines but also failing to live up to its billing in other years. Since 1994, however the estate has been under the control of Charles Chevallier, and he has brought about not just an admirable level of consistency but has also been responsible for some truly brilliant wines often vying for the title of "Wine of the Vintage".

Vintage

The vineyard cycle began with a cold, relatively wet winter, resulting in a slightly later bud-break than in 2009, in mid-April. Growth was then boosted by dry, sunny weather in April. May and June were characterized by alternating periods of rain and sunshine. June began with a cold spell that complicated the flowering of the Merlot, resulting in flower abortion and uneven grape size. Fortunately, July was very dry (less than 20 mm of rain) with relatively high temperatures, which helped the vines to catch up from the delays caused during flowering. August and September were very dry, with beautiful daytime temperatures and cool nights creating ideal conditions for the grapes to slowly reach optimum ripeness.

Vineyards

All told the Lafite estate amounts to 178 hectares, although of this only 112 hectares are planted to vines, with the varieties dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon (71%), then Merlot (25%), Cabernet Franc (3%) and just a little Petit Verdot (1%). Average vine age is 45 years, although young vines (here meaning less than 10 years old) are not included in the *grand vin*, so those that are included have an average age of about 45 years. There are a few plots of more advanced age, including La Gravière, which was planted in 1886, and a number where the vines are between 50 and 80 years old. The *terroir* underfoot is typically gravelly, with Aeolian sands on a bedrock of tertiary limestone, known locally as *calcaire de St Estèphe*.

Harvest

Friday, September 24, 2010 - Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Maturation

Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, after which the wine is run off into barrels, 100% new for Lafite itself, a mixture of new and one-year-old barrels for the second wine.

Tasting Notes

Fine, concentrated colour. Solid and dense in the mouth, presenting good structure and well-defined tannins. A long, lingering wine with notes of violets on the finish. The 2010 is an elegant wine with excellent balance.

Cellaring

Drink 2022-2073

Scores/Awards

97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2013

96-99 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2011

98 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #205 - February 2013



Scores/Awards **98-100 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011
99+ points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2013
95-97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2011
99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2013
100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2011
94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2011
100 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2013
97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 25, 2011
95-98 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2011
19 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012
20 points/5 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2011
99 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2012
97 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2011 (score only)
97-99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 20, 2011
98-100 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2011
20 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)
19 points - Andy Griffiths, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2011
95-99 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2011
19+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2011
96 points - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2011 (score only)
97-99 points - John Sweeney, JJBuckley Wines - April 2011
98-100 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2011
97 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 24, 2011
18.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2011 (score only)

Reviews *"Rather tight, with an alluring whiff of cocoa that lures you in before disappearing into the core of steeped plum, roasted fig and blackberry coulis notes. Sandalwood, black tea and loam elements fill in on the long and expansive finish. This seems to be lying in wait for what could be a very long time in the cellar before unfurling fully. Best from 2018 through 2045."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

"This is all guile and elegance now, with sleek, perfumy black tea, currant and crushed fig fruit, laced with subtle smoke, incense and tar. Just as you think it starts to fade, the acidity kicks in on the finish and brings everything back for an encore. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 96-99."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2010 Lafite Rothschild, a blend of 87% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Merlot (a 3% difference from the barrel sample shown two years ago), achieved relatively high alcohol of 13.32%, according to administrator Charles Chevalier. The wine is very impressive, not as fleshy, flamboyant and massive as the 2009, but nevertheless, a big, rich, full-throttle Lafite-Rothschild meant to age a half century or more. Deep purple, with notes of white chocolate, mocha, cedar and charcoal as well as hints of vanillin and creme de cassis, the wine is full-bodied yet has that ethereal lightness that makes it a Lafite. Rich, with good acidity, precision and freshness, this is a slightly zestier version of the 2009 as well as more restrained and structured than that particular vintage. It will need at least 10-12 years of cellaring and keep for 50+ years."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"This exceptionally rich, thick Lafite came in with the highest level of natural alcohol (13.5%) ever achieved at Lafite Rothschild. To put that in its proper context, the 2009 and 2005 were 13.3% and in the hottest Bordeaux summer ever recorded in over 200 years, the 2003 achieved 12.8%. A blend of 84% Cabernet Sauvignon and 16% Merlot, all harvested between October 9 and 14, the 2010 exhibits an extraordinarily dense color, an unctuous texture and sweet black currant fruit intermixed with graphite, charcoal and truffle notes. A director Charles Chevalier told me, between July and the October harvest, Bordeaux had its driest weather since 1949, but it never got excessively hot. Hence the tiny berries, freshness and extraordinary precision of Lafite Rothschild. This superb effort will undoubtedly shut down slightly once it is bottled despite a pH of 3.8. It needs no building up because much of Lafite Rothschild has now become an obsession with the wealthy Chinese and most of it will undoubtedly be consumed before it ever hits its prime. Ideally, it should be cellared for 10-15 years and drunk over the following 50+ years."

- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"The Lafite-Rothschild 2010 is a blend of 87.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Merlot. It has a very sophisticated bouquet that demands a little more encouragement compared to the Mouton-Rothschild tasted earlier on this day. But it is worth the effort as it reveals wonderful graphite infused black fruit that boast bewitching focus and delineation. The palate is medium bodied with grippy, firm tannins that encase some fabulous, exuberant Cabernet Sauvignon: blackberry, a touch of fresh date, Christmas cake and kirsch. It is extremely well focused, less flamboyant than the 2009, but utterly harmonious and "complete". This is a future legend that will vie with the 2009 Lafite. Spellbinding! Tasted November 2012."

- NM, Wine Journal

"The 2010 is a blend of 87.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12.8% Merlot, cropped between 24th September until 13th October, delivering 13.48% alcohol at pH 3.82. Whereas the 2009 Lafite was an immediate "wow", this is far more introspective and broodier, particular coming directly after Latour. Deep, dusky dark berried fruit, a touch of cedar and pencil box. Good definition but not as expressive or as vigorous as I was expected. The palate is medium-bodied, very well balanced with fine but structure tannins, masculine in style, understated compared to Latour. I take a little sip (pourquoi pas?) and there is another annex of dark cherry and a touch of boysenberry. Hints of cedar and spice towards the dry, tannic finish. This is a Lafite that will grow during its elevage. Drink 2020- Tasted March 2011."

- NM, Wine Journal

"This is shy and not giving its all at the moment. Yet it is full and intense with a tightly intertwined tannic and fruit structure. Ethereal blackberry, currant, cedar, and nutty flavors. Dried flowers too. Cedar jewel box smell comes out with time. Great finish. So, so long and harmonious. Try in 2018."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A bit chewy but shows an impressive intensity of spice, sweet tobacco, and currant character. Full, dense and structured. Muscular for the vintage for Lafite. Tobacco box aftertaste. Some wet earth too."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Believe the hype. Lafite is perfect in 2010. The nose is amazing with sweet tobacco, dark chocolate and currants. It is amazing. It's like gazing into the blue sky in wonder after tasting this young wine. Full and powerful with amazing minerals, currants and bitter chocolate. It starts off slowly and then finishes with a bang. This is really layered and wonderful. It goes on and on. Stunning."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Almost black in color, this stunning wine is gorgeous, rich and dense. It's grand and powerful, with a strong sense of its own importance. The beautiful tannins and the fragrant black currant fruits are palpable. It's a great wine, with huge potential."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"97-99 An enormous structure, the wine is filled with tannins as well as dark berry fruit. It is so powerful, so concentrated, yet a great finesse brings together all the elements into a superb wine."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"(87.2% cabernet sauvignon and 12.8% merlot; 13.5% alcohol) Glass-staining deep purple-ruby. Archetypical Lafite elegance on the nose, offering delicate, pure aromas of cassis, blueberry, cedar and graphite complicated by intense minerality. Then bright and fresh in the mouth, with perfectly harmonious acids nicely supporting the pretty blackcurrant, cedar and delicate herbal flavors. Very long and extremely refined, with uncanny silkiness of tannins. A cool, refined, impeccably balanced Lafite that will need plenty of aging: drink 2022 through 2050. One of the top half dozen wines of the vintage."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Chateau Lafite Rothschild has a fabulous nose of wild violets, wonderful lissome texture backed by aristocratic firmness, a totally captivating wine for the long term. Drink 2020-50."

- SS, Decanter.com

Reviews

"Now, will this be the only time I ever get to see this wine, before it all migrates east? Very intense dark blackish crimson. Lovely Lafite scent - recognizable member of the family with a hint of oyster shells. But some extra breadth, even fat, this year. Hugely ambitious. Dense and quite dry on the end. But with Lafite breed and race. Somehow manages to have real roundness, covering the notable acidity and doubtless tannins which are very difficult to discern. Already a marvel and a pleasure to taste. Lovely, lovely balance. 19 out of 20."
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"40% first wine, very similar to last year (2005 was the highest at 49%, but that is rare). Less aromatic on the nose than the Carruades, because no cabernet franc, and of course built to last. 87.2% cabernet sauvignon, 12.8% merlot (last year was 82.5% cab sauvignon, 17% merlot and 0.5 petit Verdot). Again, this bright purple rim, but that dissolves within a fraction of a centimetre into rich, inky, black fruit. 20mm of rain in June, July and August in 2010. Slightly stormier in 2009, even if overall rainfall not that different. Chevalier: 'the figures are very similar between the two vintages, but the end result very different. Last year more opulent, this year fresher fruit on the finish'. A menthol finish, like the best Lafites. This has a weightless quality, very fine tannins, just delicious. Again, the length is remarkable. Some dark spices here. The balance is seriously impressive, which gives it this weightless quality because not one element is overpowering. Expect normal production, so 20,000 cases. 99/100. Drink 2025-2050."
- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Lafite Rothschild? Produced from a blend of 87.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 12.8% Merlot, (which is close to what the estate used in 2005,) the wine opened with cedar, earth, minerality, cassis and forest floor aromatics. In the mouth, the wine is suave, polished and fresh, with layers of pure blackberry and spicy cassis. This is pure refined elegance. While not the most powerful First Growth, it's the most regal in bearing. According to the Director, Charles Chevalier, part of the reason for the success in 2010 was due to less pumping over than usual. Chevalier added, with the high 13.5% alcohol level, his team spent more time watching over each individual vat during fermentation."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and saturated; the most saturated of all the wines shown at Lafite; thick in the glass; creamy blackcurrant aroma – very enticing and succulent; very deep nose but also very fresh; some summer pudding along with some graphite; sweet entry on the palate, sublimated, with some oak but soaked in blackcurrant fruit; real density and length; layers and layers; more strength it feels than 2009; great concentration and very well balanced by freshness. Very, very long and remains vibrant. [87.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12.8% Merlot, alc 13.5] 98-100/100 Tasted 7 April at Lafite."
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"There is a lovely depth of fruit on the nose with lots of black cherry to the fore. The brightness of bilberry refreshes the mid palate, but the richness sweetness of the fruit comes through fleshing out the back palate. Although there is lots of power the freshness gives elegance."
- Derek Smedley MW

"Lafite is currently Bordeaux's most fashionable and hotly demanded wine thanks to the Asian market which has devoured every physically available vintage. Situated at the northern limit of Pauillac, some of the vines are actually in St Estephe bordering Cos d'Estournel and Lafon Rochet. The 2010 Lafite is a classic Cabernet with 87.2% in the blend and 12.8% Merlot. All of the Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot as well as most of the Merlot was relegated to the Carruades. There is a black, glass-staining colour and a soaring nose of creme de cassis, spice, tar and woodsmoke. The palate is multi-layered and packed full of plump ripe black berry fruits. Wonderfully decadent with a sexy cloak of cashmere. Although tannic at the finish everything is in perfect balance. This really is a "tour de force" and a great Pauillac that remains pure and classic despite being incredibly opulent and decadent."
- Farr Vintners

"Deep ruby in colour, the Lafite has wonderful aromatics, with a gorgeous perfume of violets, cedar, cassis and blackberries. With its velvety tannins and layered, delicate flavours, there is a succulent juicy character to its fruit profile, accented with hints of violet. It is a gorgeous wine that is filled with delicate layers of flavours and at the same time is not heavy or dense. This is clearly a very successful vintage for Lafite in both style and intensity, producing a wine that will outlive the outstanding 2009."
- JCL, asianpalate.com

Reviews *"87.2% cabernet sauvignon and 12.8% merlot. The harvest at Lafite began on September 24th with the merlot and finished October 13th with the cabernet sauvignon and petit Verdot. 13.48% alcohol. This showcases a spicy, peppery nose with notes of raspberry, chocolate and black tea. On the precise palate, it is very pure and elegant. The chalky minerality is accented by pure cabernet flavors and framed by well-integrated French oak. Moderately complex and medium to full bodied, but I wish this had a longer finish."*
- JS, JJ Buckley Wines

"This has a slightly restrained nose at first, but it opens up to reveal sumptuous aromas of wild berry fruit, graphite, cassis and plum. A fabulous multi-dimensional texture on the palate fills the mouth and crisp acidity brings perfect balance; great intensity of flavour, exceptional length, and a staggering quality to the abundant tannins; really fine. It is hard to find fault in truth and worrying to think that we usually find Lafite grows in complexity over the next couple of months, so it will become even better!"
- AG, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

"Intense hue. Profound, focused nose of ripe red fruit with delicate oak. Emphasis is on concentration on the palate. Tannic, massive and well-balanced. A broad-shouldered Pauillac. A good level of acidity ensures huge ageing potential."
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
