

Château Lafite Rothschild 2011

CSPC# 756555

750mlx3

12.8% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot

Appellation

Pauillac

Website

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

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 weather conditions for the 2011 vintage were unusual and required all of our technical teams' vigilance and expertise.

This was a very early vintage, with an exceptionally hot spring, low rainfall at the beginning of the year, but then more in the summer, and a persistent threat of powdery mildew (a vine disease that is usually quite rare in the Bordeaux region). Finally, just as we were getting ready to harvest, a huge hail storm in the north of Pauillac and Saint Estèphe on 1 September obliged us to reorganize the schedules. The plots that had been affected had to be picked first; fortunately, as a result of the conditions, the grapes had ripened early, and quality was not compromised.

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 for 18 months.

Tasting Notes

Intense, deep crimson colour. Dense nose, aromas of red and black fruit, boxwood and spicy notes. Very dense on the palate with fine intensity. Very complex finish.

Cellaring

Drink 2018-2031

Scores/Awards

94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2014

93-96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2012

90-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012



Scores/Awards **93-95 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2012
94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2012
96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2014
95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 11, 2012
89-92 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2012
18.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012
18.5 points/5 stars - Decanter.com - April 2012
94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2012 (score only)
95 points - Jean Marc Quarin - April 2012 (score only)
97 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2012
95-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 10, 2012
94-96+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2012
93-95 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2011
94 points - Falstaff Magazine - April 2012 (score only)
18 points - Gault & Millau - April 2012 (score only)
18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2012 (score only)

Reviews *"This delivers pronounced tobacco and bay leaf notes up front, with a core of steeped plum and currant fruit and a fleshy edge through the charcoal-lined finish. There's some serious buried minerality, which should emerge with cellaring. Best from 2018 through 2031."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Still tightly wound and very restrained, but there's a serious well of black plum and macerated currant fruit in reserve, held behind substantial but well-ripened tannins and a strong chalk and iron note. There's a nice austerity to the very driven mineral finish. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 93-96"
- JM, Wine Spectator

"A blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot (harvested between September 3-21), the 2011 Lafite Rothschild came in at 12.6% natural alcohol (considerably lower than in 2010 and 2009). Exhibiting a deep ruby/purple color, lots of crushed rock, red and black currant, forest floor and underbrush characteristics, moderate tannin and medium body, it is built somewhat along the lines of the 1999 and 2001. It should be a 20- to 25-year wine, but it is not at the level of the 2008, 2009 and 2010. Fresh acids give the wine a somewhat more clipped feeling than most great Lafites have exhibited. Nevertheless, there is a lot of freshness and vibrancy to this vintage."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 2011 Lafite-Rothschild is a blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot with an alcohol level of 12.6%. It has wonderful purity on the nose with blackberry, cassis, raspberry, a touch of graphite and an attractive floral note. It is feminine and beguiling. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannins on the entry, crisp acidity, very harmonious and alluring with blackberry, raspberry and a saline touch towards the long caressing finish. It is a more sensual Lafite that I was expecting, with great persistency and poise. April 2012."
- NM, Wine Journal

"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

"The wine shows the power typical of a Lafite but within the context of the fruity 2011 vintage. The immensely dense tannic structure gives the wine a solid feel that is lifted by so much ripe black currant and berry fruits. At the back, the wine has a more brooding, dark character that suggests great aging potential. Drink this wine from 2019."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"95-97. Barrel sample. A powerful wine with dark and dry tannins. It has a great depth of fruit flavor, with immense and concentrated weight, and a structure that is for long-term aging."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

Reviews

"(80% cabernet sauvignon and 20% merlot): Good dark red. Very closed nose hints at blackcurrant, licorice, mocha, graphite and spices. Slightly hard-edged in the mouth, with a peppery element to the dark fruit, mineral and spice flavors. Finishes a tad pinched, with palate-saturating tannins verging on dry. This will obviously need time in bottle to smooth out, but I fear that the tannins will always maintain at least a light green streak. Of course, I hope I'm wrong, but this doesn't strike me as one of the most successful Lafites of the last ten years."
- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Dense black-red, lovely fragrance yet still very firm, a seriously classic Lafite, very long term."
- SS, Decanter.com

"80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot. Deep dark crimson with rich purple rim. Delicate, pure cassis dark fragrance, the merest hint of oak spice. Tannins are a conundrum, feeling dense and savoury at first and then gliding over the finish line. Polar opposite of Mouton style."
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Cabernet sauvignon 80%, merlot 20%. No cabernet franc was considered up to First Wine quality this year (Chevallier wanted it in, but the rest of the tasting team decided against it. 'We run a democracy here and it didn't get past the final blending stage', says Chevallier.) 12.8%ABV. In temperament, the vintage was similar to the 1986. The colour is positively inky, and on the palate, this has a very silky texture, fine tannins, not huge impact on the attack, but it builds, with great confidence as it goes, hanging in there through the backbone of acidity as the fruit unfurls. This is classy rather than powerful, which is a classic Lafite characteristic. Wonderful, persistent, unhurried, seriously confident."
- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Produced from a blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot. Spice, blackberry liqueur, licorice, earth, graphite and gravel scents lead to a full-bodied wine with supple tannins, freshness and good concentration. The wine ends with a bright, elegant cassis-filled finish."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and dark centre; vibrant earthy purple meniscus; brilliant seam of pure blackcurrant fruit on the nose; very precise and intense; spot on Pauillac; very precise Cabernet; graphite; cool and fresh; very attractive blackcurrant flavours on the palate with much polish; dense and cool, layers here and great harmony on the palate. Little bite on the finish but harmonious, focused and wonderfully measured. Great length. 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot 12.7% alc Tasted 6/4/12 at Lafite. 94-96+"
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"This is classic Latour expressing the seriousness and weight of this majestic wine. With 85% Cabernet Sauvignon in this blend, the flavours lean toward blackberries, dried Chinese red dates and cedar; there is a hint of aged pur tea in the finish. With 20 hectares of vineyards now being farmed in the ?io? method since 2010, Frederic Engerer attributes these subtle nuances and minerality in the wine to new farming methods. Full-bodied and generous, this is a wonderful Latour with plush, velvety tannins and a very long finish. Latour 2011 is powerful yet subtle and refined while still being concentrated. One of my top red wines of this vintage exhibiting great focus and terroir expression."
- JCL, asianpalate.com

"A blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot and it's easy to see that the technical team here think very highly of the quality of their Cabernet this year. Estate Manager Charles Chevallier has confided in the past that he would much rather not show his wine this early as it always benefits from a bit longer in barrel. Whenever I have had the chance to taste the young wine in both April and June, I have always been amazed at how much development it undergoes in those extra two months. The bouquet exhibits a piercing purity of cassis and crushed rocks, while on the palate there is an extraordinary precision and finesse. The quality of tannins, in particular, is remarkable, and if the wine puts on weight during maturation, as it always does, then this could be turn out to be a Lafite of enormous refinement and elegance."
- Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants