
Château Lafite Rothschild 2012

CSPC# 749573

750mlx6

12.6% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

First Growth. Premier Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

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

2012 was characterized by difficult weather conditions in the Bordeaux region. After a relatively mild winter, the spring was mostly wet and rainy, especially April, with a hailstorm on the 24th. Such conditions hampered fertilization, leading to fears of reduced yields. Work in the vineyard was as vital as ever. June and July alternated heat and humidity. The weather became more stable from the beginning of August, enabling the healthy grapes to finish ripening in good conditions.

Nevertheless, there was considerable variation in their degrees of ripeness and a great deal of sorting work was carried out by our teams from the end September.

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

Harvest took place between September 28 and October 9 for the Merlot, October 9-16 for the Cabernet Sauvignon.

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

The nose is closed at first, then the fruit is expressed, with a slightly dominant woodiness. On the palate, the texture is tight and dense. Then the heart of the wine comes through, with solid, compact balance. Very dense finish, and yet the tannins are "almost light and airy"! Great length with long, lingering flavours.

Production

16,000 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2020-2035



Scores/Awards **94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015
93-96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013
91 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015
92-95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013
92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013
93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2015
95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 11, 2013
90-93 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2013
18.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013
18.5 points - Decanter.com - April 2013
95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013
92 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
97 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013
92-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 23, 2013
94-96 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013
92 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013
95-97 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 16, 2013
88 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)
18 points - Gault & Millau (score only)
18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)

Reviews *"This has a dark, smoky edge from the start, with smoldering tobacco and grilled savory notes lining the core of steeped plum, macerated black currant and lightly mulled cherry fruit. Shows a loamy, smoky edge to the finish, with the tobacco hint peeking out. Features admirable range, depth and grip, with just a twinge of the vintage's austerity lurking. Best from 2018 through 2030. 16,000 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Tightly drawn, with a firm, toasty edge framing the core of plum skin, red currant and black cherry fruit. A taut mix of beet, anise and bay chimes in on the finish, showing a touch of astringency. The ample flesh and length should fill this out in time. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 93-96"
- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2012 Lafite Rothschild, representing only 38% of their total production, is a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and the balance mostly Merlot. It is a very stylish, elegant, yet concentrated Lafite Rothschild with an opaque ruby/purple color, soft well-integrated tannins, nice integrated oak, acidity and alcohol. Lafites's 2012 reveals good, opaque, ruby/purple color and plenty of lead pencil and blackcurrant fruit. The wine is medium-bodied and should hit its prime 2020-2035."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The classically styled 2012 exhibits attractive elegance, medium body and outstanding concentration, but not the complexity and depth or prodigious qualities of many other recent Lafites. It is a relatively soft, spicy effort displaying notes of crushed rocks, white chocolate, black currants and graphite. It should be drinkable in 5-8 years and last for two decades.
Charles Chevalier was candid in saying that the tropical heat wave, along with the poor flowering resulted in intense labor in the vineyard and during the harvest where triage was the operative word and had to be done thoroughly and consistently. The 2012 Lafite Rothschild, a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot, was the result of a harvest that took place between September 28 and October 9 for the Merlot, October 9-16 for the Cabernet Sauvignon. The small amount of Cabernet Franc included in the Carruades de Lafite was harvested on October 11 - 12. Only 38% of the production made it into the grand vin. If the 2012 fills out completely it could turn out similar to the 1998 Lafite."
- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"Tasted en primeur at the chateau. The Grand Vin was picked between 28th September (with the Merlot) and 16th October (with the Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot) and is a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and a pinch of Petit Verdot. It has a fragrant pencil lead bouquet with small dark cherries and brambly blackberry fruit. The definition is very fine with moderate intensity. The palate is more convincing than the aromatics at this point with fully ripe, quite tensile tannins and very good cohesion. Naturally it does not have the weight of a top Lafite vintage, although the focus is impressive. There is a nascent femininity about this Lafite, and it might show much better after bottling. Tasted April 2013."

- NM, Wine Journal

"This is beautiful for the vintage. Full body and very tender with fine tannins and a pretty finish. Attractive currant, cedar, and sweet tobacco character. More delicate than the 2011."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Showing the serious side of Lafite, this is big and dark, powered by tannins as much as fruit. The wood aging is still showing, although that will integrate into the great structure that holds up the ripe black currant fruits. Totally dominated by some of the finest Cabernet Sauvignon in Bordeaux, this wine has strength while also having great freshness. Drink from 2024"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"95–97. Barrel sample. Full and powerfully concentrated, this wine has dense acidity, sweet black fruits and very fine tannins. The concentration is enormous, but it expresses itself through the prism of smooth, velvet-textured tannins."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"(91% cabernet sauvignon, 8.5% merlot, 0.5% petit verdot; 38% of the total crop went into the grand vin; 40 hectoliters per hectare produced): Dark ruby-red. Aromatic nose combines blackberry, black cherry, minerals, violet, spices and cedar. Fresh and juicy in the mouth, offering clean flavors of dark berries, graphite and cedar but not the flesh of the great vintages. This very fragrant Lafite displays noteworthy energy but turns tougher on the back end, finishing firm and tight, with rather muscular tannins and a vegetal nuance."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot. Very dense and lustrous. Unusually (for Lafite) intense and creamy; it's almost as though Carruades has assumed Lafite character and Lafite is more Moutonish, almost flamboyant! Dry edge but very savoury and rather lords it over us - see how ripe our Cabernets were...! Perhaps the tannins are not the ripest, but the fruit certainly is. Classic Pauillac if not exactly classic Lafite. Not quite as 'whole' as Haut-Brion perhaps."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Vibrant fruit from 91% Cabernet, not yet expressive but all the firm elegance of Lafite for a very good future."

- SS, Decanter.com

"It's in years like 2012 that the talent of a winemaker like Charles Chevalier is most evident. After a slight dip in 2011, at least by its own high standards, this is a very elegant, even restrained Lafite, with lots of colour, a leafy, graphite-like perfume, refreshing minerality, subtle oak and very pure cassis fruit. It's fairly light, but there's concentration there too. A classic wine that will appeal to lovers of refreshing, understated claret. Drink: 2022-40"

- TA, timatkin.com

"Blend of 91% cabernet sauvignon, 8.5% merlot, 0.5% petit verdot, with the harvest from September 28 to October 16. Gorgeous rich vibrant colour, plenty of bright anthocyanin extraction. Here have the violet blue that haven't seen in many wines this year, indicating good acidity, lovely fresh attack, and well-knit tannins, very little merlot, when did the tasting of blends, it just didn't come out as well as the cabernet sauvignon (and this is another year when no cabernet franc made it into the first wine). This was done very much plot by plot choice, did some green harvesting where strong heterogeneity was, some leaf thinning also in certain plots, on one side only, but on plateau of Lafite don't need to, vines are not vigorous in the first place. This is a classic Lafite vintage for me, it steals up on you, supremely attractive on the finish. Second year of the new vat room, very useful to work with smaller plots. A classic, elegant Lafite that is going to be supremely drinkable in the medium to long term. It's not the powerhouse of some vintages, but it rivals Mouton for me. 97 / 19.25. Outstanding. Drink 2020-2045."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% and .5% Petit Verdot produced a restrained, medium bodied, lighter style of Lafite Rothschild which offers an elegant, refined, red berry profile with polish and freshness. A strict selection and extensive sorting were required for the vintage. In fact, optical sorting was performed for the first time at the estate. 37% percent of harvest was used the grand vin. This is the highest percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon used in the blend since 2000, when it was 94% 92-94 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and saturated; tight to the rim; very deep and layered on the nose; quite packed with aroma; usual core of blackcurrant fruit; cassis; coffee beans and an earthy note too; concentrated palate and pretty tight; clearly lots of material and density and grip on the end. That earthy note again. Usual Lafite paradox – fleet of foot but full in flavour. Very good in vintage context, though they have the financial luxury to make the hard choices necessary to do so. 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot. 94-96"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Lafite is currently Bordeaux's most fashionable and hotly demanded wine thanks to the Asian market which has devoured almost 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. This year it is made from 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot. A perfumed and intense nose of exotic spices with hints of ripe blackcurrant fruit. On the palate there is sweet cassis, elegance and freshness. This is a good Lafite, set in watercolour rather than oil. Complex, but without the power and warmth of a great vintage. Plenty of finesse and an enduring sweet, silky finish. Elegance abounds here. Will be approachable at an early age. A charming Lafite."

- Farr Vintners

"The nose is rich black fruit dominated and the palate starts with damson plum richness. The mid palate is lighter complex the fresher bramble backed by richer cassis. The tannins give structure but are not too obvious and towards the back there is freshness that brings out hints of spice. The finish has richness yet an elegant charm. 2020-40."

- Derek Smedley MW

"Full bodied, generous Lafite with good depth and substantial mid palate weight. In this vintage, the difference between the grand vin and the second wine, Carruade, is huge. Only 38% of the crop went into this grand vin. Focused, restrained with delicate flavours. Lacks the generosity of previous vintages. An elegant vintage that can be enjoyed much earlier than the blockbusters of 2009 and 2010. Wonderful drinkability. There is 91% Cabernet in this blend. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (06-Apr-2013)"

- JCL, asianpalate.com

Elegant nose of black fruits with a subtle oak touch. A combination of power, fullness and substantial tannic framework on the palate. A traditional style with huge ageability where Cabernet-Sauvignon plays a lead role. (16-Apr-2013)"

- en.gilbertgaillard.com
