

## Château Lafite Rothschild 2013

CSPC# 749573

750mlx6

12.7% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot

### 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

The very wet, cold winter resulted in work in the vineyard being considerably delayed; bud break was late, and flowering was three weeks later than the average for the last 50 years; the changeable weather resulted in some flower abortion and uneven grape size, and therefore in lower potential yields than usual. Then at the end of June, the weather suddenly changed, and it was if we were in the middle of the summer with no transitional period; there were however several localized storms (on 27 July and 2 August, depending on location).

The situation became somewhat challenging from 15 September: there was rain, sun and a long wait for the grapes to fully ripen, even though they had partially caught up from the late start; things then became more delicate at the end of September, when it became clear there was a risk of "explosive" growth of botrytis! It was like a race with no time to warm up, and we had to find all the pickers we could to go as quickly as possible. Fortunately, the sorting teams were very efficient despite the difficult harvest. The usual picking sequence for the red wine grapes had to be adjusted in order to minimize the impact of the botrytis and to take into account the potential to make the first or second wine.

### 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.



<b>Maturation</b>	Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, after which the wine is run off into barrels, 100% new for Lafite itself for 18 months.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Tasting a great wine so soon after bottling is always a challenge. The nose is very closed, verging on austere. On the palate, its solidity quickly becomes apparent, then volume on the mid-palate, before reaching a long, pleasantly fruity finish, still with traces of the barrel. Patience will be required!
<b>Production</b>	16,000 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2020-2035
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>92 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2016</p> <p><b>89-92 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2014</p> <p><b>87-89 points</b> - Robert M. Parker Jr., Wine Advocate #214 - August 2014</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2014</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2016</p> <p><b>92-93 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 4, 2014</p> <p><b>89-92 points</b> - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - Aug 2014</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>17+ points</b> - Richard Hemming, JancisRobinson.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>18.25 (93) points</b> - Steven Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>93-94 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 20, 2014</p> <p><b>90-92 points</b> - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2, 2014</p> <p><b>90 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)</p> <p><b>16 points</b> - Farr Vintner - April 2014</p> <p><b>92-95 points</b> - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2014</p> <p><b>18.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2014</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>90-93 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2014</p> <p><b>92-93 points</b> - Lea &amp; Sandeman Wine Merchants - April 2013</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Gault &amp; Millau (score only)</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseauve (score only)</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"Features a charcoal coating, along with singed bay and tobacco leaf notes, melding pleasantly with the core of lightly steeped black currant and bitter plum fruit. Shows ample length and depth, with the grip striding through the finish. This should be among the long-lived wines of this modest vintage. Best from 2018 through 2028. 16,000 cases made."</i></p> <p><i>- JM, Wine Spectator</i></p> <p><i>"Still a bit clouded by oak today, this presents a slightly firm frame and a whiff of bread dough, but there's persistence to the red currant, floral, iron and sanguine flavors, all carried by finely beaded acidity. Noticeably austere throughout. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. —Tasted non-blind. Score range: 89-92"</i></p> <p><i>- JM, Wine Spectator</i></p> <p><i>"Only one-third of the tiny 2013 crop made it into the 2013 Lafite Rothschild, which may be the lowest rated Lafite produced in the last twenty years. Composed of 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Merlot, only the 1994 (99% Cabernet Sauvignon) and 1961 (100% Cabernet Sauvignon) had higher percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon in the final blend. The 2013 possesses a dark ruby color, but it does not reveal much of the Lafite Rothschild character in the aromatics or flavors. Elegant, with dark cherry fruit interwoven with underbrush and damp wood-like notes, it narrows in the mouth, and while it is above-average, possibly even excellent, it is hardly an inspiring wine. At its price point, it is a major underachiever in this vintage."</i></p> <p><i>- RP, Wine Advocate</i></p>

## Reviews

*"The Grand Vin is a blend of 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Merlot. The latter was apparently difficult to assimilate with the Cabernet, gradually adding 1% at a time and finally, electing 2% as the optimal amount. As usual, I spent 10+ minutes with my sample, as it is never as immediate as say, Latour or Château Margaux. It has an elegant bouquet with a fine violet scent that became more accentuated with time. There is plenty of dark cherry and blackcurrant fruit, a touch of pencil shavings that becomes more pronounced with aeration. The palate is a little austere because of the dominance of the Cabernet Sauvignon, although that 2% Merlot does take the edge off the finish, rounding out any edges. The aftertaste has that attractive saline tincture, but here a little spicier and longer than its peers. This is a traditional Pauillac; a success for the vintage and a wine that I think will improve in bottle rather than in barrel. A steadfast Lafite. 91-93"*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"The aromas of Lafite in 2013 are complex and fascinating with cigar box, Spanish cedar, and dark fruit. Hints of hot stone. Full body, chewy tannins yet very polished and refined. Solid density on the palate. Very long and impressive. This needs three to five years to open. Very impressive for the vintage."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"This is exceptionally high in cabernet sauvignon at 98%, with only 2% merlot. It shows aromas of blackcurrants, flowers and cigar box. Full body, fine tannins and a long finish. It's subtle and polished. 92 - 93/100"*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Almost entirely Cabernet Sauvignon (98%), this structured and dense wine is packed with concentrated dark fruits that are firm, showing intense acidity and freshness under the dark tannins. It's classic Bordeaux, with fruit and tannins in equal measure and needing time. Drink from 2024."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"94–96. Barrel Sample. This wine has firm tannins, lending it a dark, serious character. It is hugely concentrated, full of black fruit and sweet wood flavors. Along with the weight, it does have a more elegant side, showing potential balance, freshness and a long finish."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"(98% cabernet sauvignon and 2% merlot): Medium red-ruby. Very precise, pure, flinty raspberry and coffee aromas are complicated by an intense violet note. Then almost steely in the mouth, with a bright, juicy personality to the flavors of red berries, plum, graphite and minerals. This struck me as quite mouth filling without being at all heavy. Finishes with building but smooth tannins and a lovely lingering strawberry sweetness. General director Charles Chevalier said "I went looking for fruit this year by harvesting as late as feasible, which of course meant that due to rot we made even less wine than projected, but I think we were able to achieve more fruit in this manner. I may have to decrease the time this wine will spend aging in oak, but I don't know yet." When I mentioned to Chevallier that I couldn't remember the last time a vintage of Lafite had so much cabernet sauvignon, he promptly answered: "Few people know, but in 1994 the final blend was an unbelievable 99% cabernet sauvignon and 1% petit verdot; this year we just had to get rid of most of the merlot, because even at 3% or 4% of the total it was obviously only diluting the whole." 89-92"*

- ST, International Wine Cellar

*"98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot. Closed nose. Bold black fruit on the palate, moderate tannins on the mid palate that become pretty strong on the length. This is very classic Pauillac with excellent fruit clarity – but in the context of the price and provenance, it's clear that 2013 is a levelling vintage. 2018-2028 17+"*

- RH, JancisRobinson.com

*"Superb black-red colour, fine depth of blackcurrant fruit, all elegance, precision, clarity and class, total vineyard expression that will repay keeping. 2019 - 2035. 18.25"*

- SS, Decanter.com

*"Made with 98% Cabernet Sauvignon (only 1994 and 1961 had 100%), for my money this is the best First Growth in 2012. Long, refreshing and smooth, with seamlessly integrated new oak, polished tannins and a mineral, graphite core. 2018-30 95"*

- TA, [timatkin.com](http://timatkin.com)

*"Tobacco, cassis and gravel open the perfume, transitioning to a medium-bodied, polished and fresh—but slightly short and light, cherry finish. From a blend of 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Merlot, the blend is the highest percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend since 1994. Before that, 1961 was produced from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. From yields of 30 hectoliters per hectare, the wine represents 33% of the harvest. 90-92 Pts"*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Deep centre core; colour tight to the rim; deep and clean; purity; blackcurrant; graphite; quite strong aromatically; bold in scope on the palate [98% Cabernet this year] but tannin a little on the austere side on the finish; needs to settle; overall palate quite tight and sappy at present. Obvious gravity but fruit is tight and intense and pretty sappy. Elements are there. Tannins a little austere. The vintage speaking... [98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot]. Drink 2020-2030. 90-92+"*

- JW, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com)

*"Lafite is one of Bordeaux's most hotly demanded wine thanks to its fame in Asia. Situated at the northern limit of Pauillac just below Cos d'Estournel. This year only a third of the production will be grand vin with nearly half the crop relegated to Carruades and the rest sold off in bulk. Despite a choice of varieties in the vineyard it is 98% Cabernet Sauvignon in 2013, with a dash of Merlot. Deep purple colour, with a pure nose of blackcurrant and sweet vanilla spice from new French oak adding a creaminess to the profile. The palate has firm tannins and a fresh acidity alongside lots of smoke, nutmeg and clove spice. The fruit is focused in pure blackcurrants and plums, providing a sweet core to complement the structure of the wine. Balanced with a reasonably long finish which is delicate and slightly floral with notes of violets."*

- Farr Vintners

*"Cassis and bilberry the nose is fresh the start of the palate quite light. There is more depth in the middle black cherry and cassis underpinned by chocolate a touch of liquorice. Sweet at the back the finish has lovely rich flavours. 2020-32 92-95"*

- Derek Smedley MW

*"A subtle Lafite that will take time to open up. Right now, the flavours are not expressive. Tannin are soft and accessible, and the structure is lacking to carry the wine for longer than 10-12 years. 30 hl/ha in 2013 which is about half of the normal crop. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (01-Apr-2014)"*

- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

*98% Cabernet Sauvignon this year. After Duhart Milon Lafite shows, as one might hope, more weight, more richness. A suave dry oak-influenced dark floral and dark cherry and sloe fruit and a firm but densely packed mid-palate. Graphite and plum. Fine tannins on the finish full of sharp, aromatic black fruit. All very taut and quite long.*

- Lea & Sandeman Wine Merchants

*"(98 Cabernet Sauvignon, 2 Merlot) Exceptional depth of flavour for a wine that is medium-weight and also only 12.7% alc. They had to select around the botrytis in order to try to get more and more depth of flavour without any botrytis notes creeping in. Incredible, weightless and epic graphite and cassis fruit. This wine is an anomaly – fine, old style weight and yet with modern, bright fruit. Acidity and tannins are incredibly ripe and very pure. One of the most centered, elegant and clean wines of the vintage. Heroic weight (or lack of, I suppose!). Only half the normal yields. Charles Chevallier agreed with me that while he won't want to make vintages like this every year it is like going back to the seventies only with cleaner, more pinpoint accurate fruit. For this reason and because I think it will age with grace and charm this wine merits the same score as last year's wine and this makes it one of the wines of the vintage! 18.5+"*

- MJ, [matthewjukes.com](http://matthewjukes.com)

*"The 2013 Lafite hits the palate with a burst of dark red and purple fruit. White flowers, mint and licorice all develop in the glass, adding layers of depth and complexity. Smoke, tar, cinnamon, graphite, dried violets and plums are all layered into the resonant finish. The style is up-front, textured and generous, with no hard edges*

*and plenty of near to medium-term potential. The blend is 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Merlot. 90-93”*  
- AG, Vinous

*“Lafite 2013 was almost entirely produced with Cabernet Sauvignon (98%) giving it seriousness and sophistication. A truly exceptional Lafite! The French branch of the Rothschilds took possession of this renowned property in 1868. From the get-go, Baron Éric de Rothschild, holding the reins since 1974, has surrounded himself with the talent necessary to create wines of outstanding quality. Case in point, Charles Chevallier, who joined the team as technical director in 1994. At a distance from the Gironde estuary, planted on extremely gravelly soil, the Cabernet Sauvignon revels in its earthy element here. Holding pride of place in the north of the Pauillac commune, not far from Cos d’Estournel, Lafite Rothschild is the most important Premier Grand Cru Classé in Médoc certainly in terms of area if not also in quality.”*

- SAQ (Quebec Liquor Stores)

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