

Château Lafite Rothschild 2018

CSPC# 848128

750mlx3

13.3% 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	<p>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.</p> <p>The vineyards of Ch. Lafite are found at the northern tip of the Pauillac appellation, just below the boundary with St. Estephe. 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 Chevalier, 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".</p>
Winemaker	Eric Kohler Technical Director
Vintage	<p>2018 was like a difficult child to begin that turned out to be a genius," Lafite's Technical Director Eric Kohler informed me, hardly able to contain his excitement about this vintage. "The finish to this vintage was so perfect in terms of maturation!" "It started out really wet—more wet than rainy," Kohler continued. "On the Right Bank and Sauternes, they got more rain. Same with Margaux. There was a lot of mildew pressure. Here at Lafite, the pressure from the mildew was lower than the Right Bank or Sauternes. We lost less than 5% here. We are close to organic with our farming, but not entirely. We were able to control the situation. And then from mid-July it became very dry and very hot. This was the hottest summer since 2003. Of course, it was not as extreme as 2003. This is why the potential of the terroir was very important. What is a great terroir? It is a terroir that can compensate for the excesses of the vintage. The terroir must have the capacity to behave like a sponge—to retain or give water. The sponge of clay that we have at Lafite regulated the excess of the vintage. This year instead of the humid wind from the west we got a dry wind from the northeast. So, there was no risk of botrytis as harvest approached. 2016 and 2018 are like two brothers, the former easier to manage, the latter more trouble and potential excess, but very great in the end.</p>
Vineyards	<p>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 <i>grand vin</i>, 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 <i>terroir</i> underfoot is typically gravelly, with Aeolian sands on a bedrock of tertiary limestone, known locally as <i>calcaire de St Estèphe</i>.</p>
Harvest	Took place September 17 to September October 4."



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	Dark colour with glints of purple giving the wine a bright, lively appearance. The nose is still quite closed but suggests tremendous depth. Aromas of black and red fruit, and cedar, characteristic of Lafite's wines, then emerge. On the palate, the attack is impressive thanks to a remarkable blend that expresses its full harmony and power in a long, fresh finish. This was an unusual year, and yet Lafite managed to demonstrate its extraordinary potential while at the same time keeping its balance and elegance.
Serve with	Chateau Lafite Rothschild is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Cellaring	Drink 2030 - 2045
Scores/Awards	<p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2021</p> <p>100 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>98-100 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>99-100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>100 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019</p> <p>19 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>98-100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>19 points - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p>96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p>19.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>98 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>99 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>19.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2021</p> <p>18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Very pure, with a sleek and extremely focused beam of cassis, black cherry puree and blackberry preserves streaming through, lined along the edges with savory, sweet bay leaf and black tea details. Those extra notes assert themselves through the finish, but without intruding too much on the fruit, letting it play out over a long iron spine. Hums with precision. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2018 Lafite Rothschild is blended of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot and has 13.3% alcohol. Deep purple black in color, it needs a fair bit of swirling to unlock intoxicating scents of blackcurrant cordial, baked plums, and black cherry compote with an undercurrent of dark chocolate, licorice, cast-iron pan, cedar chest and fertile loam, plus a waft of pencil lead. The delicately crafted, medium-bodied palate is dripping with class, featuring layers of mineral-laced black fruits and exquisitely ripe, singularly Lafite tannins, finishing with epic length and depth. This simply stunning, delicately crafted expression of 2018 with its singularly evocative imprint of Lafite will require a good 7-8 years in bottle, then should continue to inspire awe over the following 40+ years."</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2018 Lafite Rothschild is blended of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot and has 13.3% alcohol. The Merlot was harvested September 17-24, the Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested September 25 to October 5, and the Cabernet Franc was harvested on September 24. It has a deep purple-black color and then WOW—what a nose. It comes sashaying out of the glass with bags of grace and perfume, revealing notions of lilacs, red roses, fragrant soil, cinnamon stick, and Morello cherries with a core of blackcurrant</i></p>

Reviews *cordial, fresh black plums, redcurrant jelly and tapenade plus a waft of iron ore. Medium-bodied, the palate has wonderful, tightly wound layers of black, red, and blue fruits intermingled with floral, earth and mineral notions and a rock-solid frame of the most finely pixelated tannins you can possibly imagine. Anyone who wants to see what I mean when I babble about the Lafite tannins needs to try this benchmark. The finish goes on, and on, and on. If this wine doesn't get Bordeaux lovers hearts' racing, nothing will."*
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Wow. The aromas are so intense and refined at the same time, offering gorgeous blackcurrant, lead-pencil, and orchid character. Such purity of fruit. Sleek and finely polished with a fine cut to the tannins that provide such grace and glamor. Yet, it's got the power and structure to age for decades. On and on. Try after 2029."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A very compact and linear Lafite with a fantastic mouthfeel of intense but ever so refined tannins that draw a straight line through the middle of the wine. It's full-bodied yet compact with complex character of plums, blackcurrants, cigar tobacco, cedar and hints of hazelnuts and coffee. Salty. Orange zest at the end. Delicacy with power. Richness with softness. Glamorous. Lasts for minutes at the finish."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"An immensely structured wine, this is complex, concentrated and yet so contained. The wine impresses with its balance, layers of succulent black-currant fruits and effortless style. A wine for the long term, it should not be touched before 2029. *Cellar Selection**"*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"This wine is packed with plenty of dark fruits and structured tannins that offer an immense power, while also keeping the elegance and richness of a grand Pauillac. With 91% Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend, the wine has fine tannins as well as bright acidity. It is a great wine with a long-term future. Barrel Sample: 96-98"
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"pH 3.7. 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot. Barrel sample. Black core. Introverted dark fruit, almost sour in its dark freshness. Amazing elegance without any apparent sweetness. So dry, so serious but with body and richness in the middle. Classicism and precision. Some rocky/mineral darkness. Paper-fine layers of tannins. Fresh with a power and yet a delicacy at the same time. A dark dry purity. There is a serenity to this wine, it has muscles but is not flexing them. Opens up to riper, richer fruit character. Wonderful harmony and refined length. Could turn out to be my wine of the primeurs tastings. (It did.) (JH)"
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"This stood out during en primeur, not just for itself but also in comparison to so many estates around it. While several properties had an unusual vintage, where their personalities were subverted by the weather conditions, Lafite just continued being Lafite, a true mark of its character and its terroir. This is still of course extremely young, keeping its cards close to its chest; the power for now is hidden, waiting, and will slowly unveil. This is going to be a beautiful Lafite in the future, a brilliant wine with bilberry, slate and pencil lead character, and a eucalyptus mint wash. 3.75pH. A yield of 40hl/ha. 40% of the production went into the grand vin. 74IPT."
- JA, Decanter.com

"This is silky and delicious and juicy, not something you can often say about a Lafite En Primeur sample but before you even get close to tasting the wine you can feel the layers building. It has the precision, the freshness and the sense of effortless elegance that Lafite always conveys with lots of power and depth, deep black fruits on the nose and a mix of spices from rosemary to saffron on the palate. Is it better than the 2016? It's hard to say at this stage but it certainly feels its equal, although differently constructed and unlikely to take as long to come around - think 10 rather than 14 years before reaching its drinking window. It's worth adding that very few wines have been so unmarked by the extremes of the vintage, or as technical

Reviews *director Eric Kohler puts it; 'Even after 25 years of working at Lafite I continue to be full of admiration for this terroir. Other plots that we own reacted to the heat at times, but Lafite just kept sailing on as usual'. The harvest took place between 17 September and 5 October, with a yield of 40hl/ha. 40% of the production went into the grand vin. 3.75pH which is classic for them. 74IPT.*
- JA, Decanter.com

"Compelling in every sense of the word, you know you're in for something special just from the depth of color. From there you experience a cornucopia of aromatics meshing tobacco leaf, cigar box, cedar chest, red currants, cherries, red plums, 5 spice, flowers, and earthy scents. Rich yet incredibly refined, the wine offers incredibly silky textures, a beautiful purity to the fruit and a seamless finish that exceeds 60 seconds. Produced from a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and .5% Petit Verdot, 13.3% ABV."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The color matches a long obscured ruby jewel. The initial sip shows its sophistication, grace and refinement and there is an extraordinary purity in the fruit. Before taking a second sip for confirmation, you'll find tobacco, lead pencil, cedar, flowers, cherry pipe tobacco and if you dig really deep, you'll discover a subtle essence of orange in the background. On the palate, the wine is supple, silky, long, and focused. Precision is an often-misunderstood term used by wine writers. 2018 Lafite Rothschild is the poster child for precision in a wine. Never the most powerful of the First Growths, instead here, you find a wine of perfect balance, elegance, and harmony with a unified, seemingly endless finish. Produced from a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and .5% Petit Verdot, the wine reached 13.3% alcohol with a pH of 3.73. The Grand Vin represents 40% of the harvest, which took place September 17 to September October 4."
- TA, timatkin.com

"Deep, opaque ruby in colour. This is perfumed and pure on the nose, with black fruits, star anise, nutmeg, and violets. The palate is deceptively powerful, due to unparalleled refinement of the rich, mouthcoating tannins that provide the structure. The fruit can therefore shine through, bursting with creamy cassis and redolent red fruits, laced with Cuban tobacco and cedar. The finish is supple and enduring, a true reflection of the best 2018 has to offer."
- Farr Vintners

"The 2018 Lafite-Rothschild comes in an embossed bottle to celebrate 150 years of ownership by the de Rothschild family. Typical of this First Growth, there is nothing gaudy or showy on the nose; instead, sensual, almost placid aromas of tobacco and pencil-shaving-tinged black fruit unfold gently in the glass. Less extroverted than the 2018 Mouton, this is sophisticated and cerebral. As I found before, it only gains vigor after 60 minutes. The palate is beautifully balanced with finely chiseled tannins, pure black fruit, and those traits of cracked black pepper and sage extant. I once thought it might challenge the 2016 with bottle age, and though I feel that the 2018 is not quite at that level, it is certainly a wine befitting the anniversary. Lafite-Rothschild, masterfully proving how less is more."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2018 Lafite-Rothschild was picked September 17-25 for the Merlot and September 25 to October 4 for the Cabernet Sauvignon. It has a very intense bouquet of blackberry, tar, tobacco, and graphite aromas. It feels extremely cohesive and harmonious, gaining vigor with aeration over 30 minutes. The pure, refined palate is medium bodied with an arresting satiny texture, perfect acidity, and an undercurrent of cracked black pepper and sage. This is a great Lafite-Rothschild that might end up challenging the 2016, though I concur with winemaker Eric Kohler that it is unlikely to surpass it. The 2018 Lafite-Rothschild is certainly impressive, and at 13.3% alcohol, you will not need so much aspirin the following day. Drink 2025-2060."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2018 Lafite-Rothschild is a stunning wine. Silky and floral, the 2018 offers all the signatures of the Grand Vin but amplified by the radiance of the year. In the glass, Lafite is rich and exotic, yet it also retains tremendous vibrancy. The interplay of Merlot picked early, and Cabernet Sauvignon harvested late makes for wine of extraordinary dimension, complexity, and class. Graphite, dark red fruit, spice, and leather linger on the huge finish. Magnificent!"
- AG, Vinous

Reviews *“The 2018 Lafite-Rothschild is creamy, sensual and inviting, with lovely purity of fruit and impeccable balance. Dark cherry, plum, licorice and spice are some of the many nuances that develop. Time in the glass brings out striking aromatic depth and overall persistence. Although an undeniably attractive wine, the 2018 does not appear to have the sheer pedigree of the very best wines in this vintage. None of the three samples I tasted were as impressive as I had hoped for. Perhaps I had bad luck. Time will tell. The blend is 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot and 0.5% Petit Verdot.”*
- AG, Vinous

“Checking in as a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot, and the balance Petit Verdot, the 2018 Château Lafite-Rothschild is one of those magical Lafite’s that offers an already up-front, complex, nuanced style yet has the class and balance to evolve for 40-50 years. As always, this wine is never about sheer power, and the 2018 offers a full-bodied, incredibly elegant, and weightless style that carries textbook blackcurrant fruits, lead pencil shavings, green tobacco, cedarwood, and camphor aromas and flavors. I compared this wine to a more elegant version of the 2016 from barrel and I think that comparison still holds. Incredibly up-front and charming, and already drinkable with sweet tannins, it will unquestionably pick up more complexity and nuance over the coming 4-6 years. It should hit maturity around age 10 and evolve for 75 years or more given its perfect balance. This is a beautiful, quintessential Lafite that exudes elegance and charm.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“What will unquestionably be another magical wine from Eric Kohler and his team, the 2018 Château Lafite checks in as 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5% Merlot, and just a splash of Petit Verdot. It’s a classic Lafite that offers a deep purple/ruby color and beautiful notes of crème de cassis, lead pencil shavings, tobacco, cedar, and graphite. Flawlessly balanced, full-bodied, and seamless, it’s a wine that builds incrementally on the palate, offering incredible finesse, ripe, present tannins, and a great finish. It reminds me of a more elegant version of the 2016 and should be approachable with just 5-6 years of cellaring and keep just about forever.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“(91 Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.5 Merlot, 0.5 Petit Verdot) | 13.3% alc. With a more exuberant stance, which is certainly less classic than 2016, this is a rather shockingly delicious and immediately appealing Lafite. There is some superb depth, amazing graphite notes and even some floral tones here, too. The volume of flavour and freshness is thanks to the gentle extraction. It was important to control everything humanly possible in this vintage and I think that the team here has managed to get a little extra out of their bunches. Controlling temperature and less pumping over meant that this is an extremely interesting wine. It remains a Lafite-shaped wine and the signature is still here, but it is out on a limb in terms of its flavour expression, and I happen to like this a lot, as I favour more expressive wines over more reserved ones. Lafite suggested that it was their divine terroir which enabled them to retain the perfect balance which this wine shows, and this is the critical reason for its success. Even the small addition of Merlot, planted in 1919 and 1967 played their part! While this is an unusually exciting Lafite on the palate, it is familiarly strict on the finish and so while I venture that this is an atypical creature in the greater scheme of things it will still cast a Lafite-shaped silhouette on your palate in years to come.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
