

Château Lafite Rothschild 2019

CSPC# 848128

750mlx3

13.3% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 1% 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. 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".

Winemaker

Oenologist and winemaker: Christophe Conge

Winemaker: Régis Porfilet

Vintage

The vintage started off beautifully, with a mild and dry winter. The fine weather continued at the beginning of spring, resulting in an early growth. But the days and nights became cooler between March and May, and we had to hold our breath 6 times in fear of frost...

In April and May, the weather was colder than usual and above all dry, slowing the growth of the vegetation which quickly lost its head start.

The first flowers appeared in our Pauillac and Pomerol vineyards on May 23rd. This key stage of the cycle was somewhat capricious, with some rainy spells during the second part of flowering. This caused a small amount of poor fruit set and uneven ripening, meaning we had to be cunning in refining our protective measures.

After a cool and rainy start to June, there was a turnaround with the arrival of a heat wave at the beginning of summer, the likes of which we had not seen since 2003. Fortunately, it was only short-lived and the vines, which were catching up, seemed better armed than the previous years in the face of this heat. It was as if they had been able to prepare for it in the dry spring.

The miracle of rain arrived on July 26th, 26 millimeters fell at L'Evangile, 45 in Pauillac and 120 at Rieussec. Perfect for triggering veraison.

Temperatures in August then remained very good, without peaks of heat and with some scattered showers making us fear for a moment the arrival of our old and formidable enemy botrytis, that we had somewhat forgotten since 2018. But the drier weather lasting until mid-September, suited us well, allowing us to start the harvest under calm conditions, interrupted only once by a few rainy days that refreshed our ideas and the alcohol degrees!

Bud burst: 27 March; Mid-Flowering: 4 June; Mid-Véraison: from 8 to 12 August



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 from 19 September to 7 October.

At Lafite, we hesitated for a long time over the best moment to start picking. We took the plunge on September 19th with our finest Merlots. Then came a rainy spell of a few days that was beneficial, lowering the degrees and bringing our Cabernets Sauvignons to perfect ripeness. The first tastings, after running the wines off skins, left us amazed: the wines are pure, with a very precise ripe style.

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 At Lafite, we hesitated for a long time over the best moment to start picking. We took the plunge on September 19th with our finest Merlots. Then came a rainy spell of a few days that was beneficial, lowering the degrees and bringing our Cabernets Sauvignons to perfect ripeness.

The first tastings, after running the wines off skins, left us amazed: the wines are pure, with a very precise ripe style. A modern Lafite classic is already in the making.

At blending, some nice surprises from our vines from "outsider" plots, which this year have produced pure and elegant wines that were just ahead of some of the regulars in the blend for the Grand Vin. This is particularly the case for Merlot, with some plots of this variety planted on clayey gravel that surpassed our usual great Merlots thanks to their liveliness.

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 2026 - 2045

Scores/Awards

98 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022

100 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022

97-99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - June 2020

100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2022

99-100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2020

19 points - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - June 2020

98 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2022

98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - June 2020

98 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022

99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2022

98-100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 2020

97-99 points - Farr Vintners - May 2020

98 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2022

96-98 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - June 2020

98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2022

96-98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2020

98-100 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2020

96 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020

19 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022

96-97 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2020

Reviews

"A very energetic wine, with wild loganberry, mulberry, and black currant fruit flavors that bristle with mouthwatering bay leaf, licorice root and savory notes. The finish is tight now, with charcoal shadings and a smoldering cast iron note, but it has additional black tea, incense, and floral hints for contrast. Dense and driven, with more than enough elements to match its energy, meaning this can cruise in the cellar for a long time. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"One of the greatest wines produced in Bordeaux this year is the 2019 Lafite Rothschild, an impeccably balanced classic of immense charm and grace. Wafting from the glass with arresting aromas of cassis, blackberries and cherries mingled with violets, cigar box and warm spices, it's medium to full-bodied, deep, and seamless, its velvety attack segueing into a layered, concentrated mid-palate framed by exquisitely

Reviews *powdery tannins and ripe acids, and concluding with a long, perfumed finish. This rivals the 2010 and 2016 as the greatest Lafite of the decade, and of those three vintages, it's clearly the most sensual and demonstrative out of the gates. The blend contains fully 94% Cabernet Sauvignon and attained a modest 13.4% alcohol.*
- WK, Wine Advocate

"The 2019 Lafite Rothschild is a blend of 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot, harvested from the 19th of September to the 7th of October. Deep garnet-purple in color, it rolls effortlessly out of the glass with compelling notions of baked black cherries, ripe blackberries, and crème de cassis followed by hints of mocha, licorice, smoked meats, and Sichuan pepper with a waft of eucalyptus. Medium-bodied, the palate is at once ethereally graceful and powerfully intense, featuring layer upon layer of profound smoky, savory flavors and decadently ripe fruit, framed by exquisite, silt-like tannins and just enough freshness, finishing with epic length. In terms of flavor profile, this is a surprisingly (atypically) hedonic, forward expression, with notably lower acidity/higher pH (the pH is 3.9). The alcohol is 13.4%, just a tick higher than the 2018 (13.3%). And yet, the tannins here are unmistakably Lafite, featuring all the tannic grace, finesse and densely pixilated poise fans will expect. What an exciting paradox for the palate—bravo!"
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"So much sweet tobacco, Spanish cedar, dried flowers, dark mushrooms, and roses. Really aromatic. This is so polished and very powerful, yet ethereal and refined at the same time. The finish goes on for minutes. Tight and harmonious. You want to drink it! So balanced, yet it will age beautifully. It will be this good forever. Better after 2031."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Complex aromas of blackcurrants and lead pencil. Incredible. Graphite and tar. Stunning. It's full-bodied yet shows such harmony and polish. Elegance and complexity with finesse. The tannins are so integrated and endless. It goes on for minutes. 94% cabernet sauvignon, 5% merlot and 1% petit verdot."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot. Barrel sample. Supreme elegance in the Lafite mould. Fresh and fragrant on the nose with mineral, cedar, and dark-fruit notes. Poise and precision on the palate, the attack clean and direct, the tannins long and linear but enrobed in ripe fruit. Dense but with a reined-in discretion. Silky texture and overall great freshness. Just edges the 2018 for freshness and finesse. (JL) Drink 2030 – 2050."
- JL, JancisRobinson.com

"An opulent and fruit-forward vintage for Lafite in 2019. Vivid purple colour in the glass with blackcurrant, cherry, and milk chocolate notes. Gorgeous weight on the palate with such fine tannins and depth of flavour - not so much rich but driven, refined, elegant, almost refrained. Feels compact at first, settling to reveal layers of vibrant spiced fruit and cooling menthol hints alongside clear graphite and wet stone that comes through clearly. Supremely balanced with an underlying mouth filling juiciness that offers finessed creamy fruit. Structured and well framed with a long life ahead. Drinking Window 2028 – 2050."
- GH, Decanter.com

"Performs the trick of being immediately succulent and mouthwatering while simultaneously revving up and building power through the palate. You're getting sapidity and savoury black fruits that are both elegant and full of power. The spicy rosemary and black pepper, with slate-textured minerality, is almost unnoticeable until it closes in on the final stretch, helping to stretch things out, beat by beat, adding energy and lift. One half of the 5% Merlot in this blend is from plots that have never before been used in Lafite's 1st wine, because their drone and satellite research discovered three tiny areas that were similar in character and could be vinified together. They have worked on this for the past three years, successfully so for first time in 2019. It just holds on tight, with a creaminess that you don't always find in Lafite at this early stage. A brilliant wine, one that could be up scored from this when in bottle. Harvest September 19 to October 7."
- JA, Decanter.com

Reviews

"There is a sense of discretion to this Lafite, full of pencil lead, crayon, chalk-textured minerality, clear grain and grip to the tannins that lets everything unfold slowly and calmly, no drama and yet a slow-building sense of power. Enjoyable precision and chiseling to the spiced cassis and bilberry fruits, this feels supremely Lafite in its balance and finesse. The tight structure relaxes in the glass, adding a layer of creaminess to the blackberry and loganberry fruit. A large majority of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend, and it takes up its dominant role with grace. Brilliant quality. Harvest September 19 to October 7. Lafite always takes its time to show its full potential, and this could easily be a 100-point wine at the 10 year-plus window."

- JA, Inside Bordeaux

"A stunning example of Lafite Rothschild, the wine is deep, ruby in color. The attention seeking perfume serves up its Cuban cigar wrapper, roses, spice box, cedar, lead pencil and array of red fruits and blackberries easily. The most refined of all the First Growths, the 2019 is a modern version of classic Bordeaux at its best. Perfectly balanced, elegant, and deftly situated on the corner of power and harmony, the finish lingers and expands with its layers of sweet, fresh, pure, bright, crisp red fruits, spice, and herbs. The wine blends 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot. Patient consumers will be rewarded if they are willing to wait before opening a bottle. Drink from 2030-2065."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"This is a beautiful example of what Chateau Lafite Rothschild does best. Dark garnet in color and aromatic, you find lead pencil, cedar, forest, tobacco wrapper, mint and black with red fruit scents. The most elegant of all the First Growths, the wine, classic in nature, is refined, pure, bright, focused, precise, and long. There is an intensity that expands as the wine graces your palate, before moving to the finish that is all about the extraordinary purity in the fruits. The wine blends 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot. The Merlot was harvested September 19-September 25. Cabernet Sauvignon was picked September 22-October 7. The wine reached 13.4% alcohol with pH of 3.9. The Grand Vin was produced from only 40% of the harvest with yields of 38 hectoliters per hectare."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The blend is dominated by 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, with 5% Merlot and a dash of Petit Verdot. The grapes were harvested between 19th September and 7th October. Deep purple colour in the glass. The nose exudes sophisticated, cool cassis, layered with light notes of cedar, camphor, and tobacco. The palate is extremely refined, with plentiful, mouthcoating tannins very fine-grained to support the deep dark-fruited core. This is mineral, and savoury, the graphite and cedar tones refreshed into blackcurrant and a slight smokiness by refreshing acidity. This is all about precision, taming any warmth or ripeness with structure and well-judged oak. This leaves an impression of cool blackcurrant, pencil shavings and just a hint of sweet spice on a penetrating, long, harmonious finish. All about elegance and depth."

- Farr Vintners

"The 2019 Lafite-Rothschild screams Cabernet Sauvignon on the nose of intense black fruit, graphite, and subtle minty aromas, supremely well-defined and revealing a hint of star anise with aeration. The medium-bodied palate is beautifully balanced, offering sappy black fruit, black pepper, graphite and just a touch of spice. This has more body, maybe even a touch more sinew than recent vintages, perhaps because of the reconfiguration of the Merlot parcels (see my note en primeur). Very persistent and almost uncharacteristically grippy on the finish, this is a gifted Lafite-Rothschild that will last 50+ years. It will certainly surpass the 2018 with continued bottle age."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2019 Lafite-Rothschild was picked from 19 September with the Merlots, pausing during a rainy spell and then picked through to 7 October. The blend includes what Eric Kohler calls "outsider" parcels that met the grade, including some of the Merlot on more clayey soils (see introduction) as well as 13.5% vin de presse. Alcohol here is some half a degree lower than many of its peers at around 13.4%. It has a very sensual bouquet, not a common feature in this First Growth, with generous black fruit infused with pencil box, sous-bois, and discrete white pepper aromas. The oak is beautifully subsumed by the fruit already. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent, rounded tannins that lend this Lafite its creamy femme fatale texture and disguise its backbone. More powerful than expected, this builds in the mouth towards an atypically corpulent, dense finish that seems to "flow" across the senses. There is not a single hair out of place. I can envisage this

Reviews *firming up during its élevage and deserving more bottle age than seemingly appropriate at this juncture. Whatever its drinking plateau turns out to be, it is certainly a wonderful Lafite-Rothschild that pips the 2018 and revels in the growing season."*

- NM, Vinous

"The 2019 Lafite-Rothschild is a mesmerizing wine that shows how compelling the vintage is on the Left Bank. Elegant, creamy, and exquisitely layered, the 2019 Lafite conquers all the senses. There is tremendous density and power that belies the 12.8% alcohol, but then again, that can be the magic of Bordeaux. Classic Lafite red plum fruit, spice, cedar, licorice and rose petal linger on the striking, persistent finish."

- AG, Vinous

"The 2019 Lafite-Rothschild is sensual, alluring and simply breathtaking in its beauty. A vivid, towering Lafite, the 2019 simply has it all. Even with all of its intensity, the 2019 possesses striking minerality and tension that give the wine its sense of drive and precision. It is a stunning wine by any measure. The blend is 94% Cabernet 5% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot, including some Merlot from clay-rich parcels that are new to the Grand Vin."

- AG, Vinous

"A truly great Lafite, and maybe the wine of the vintage, the 2019 Château Lafite-Rothschild reveals a deep purple color as well as an ultra-classic bouquet of crème de cassis, lead pencil, unsmoked tobacco, chocolate, and gravelly minerality. Deep, full-bodied, and flawlessly balanced, it's a magical, heavenly bottle of wine that's going to be approachable with just 5-6 years of bottle age yet evolve for 100 years or more. It reminds me of the 2016, only with a touch more sexiness and opulence."

- Jeb Dunnuck
