

Les Forts de Latour 2016

CSPC# 854934

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

64.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35.3% Merlot, 0.4% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Pauillac

Website

<http://www.chateau-latour.com/en/a-time-for-sharing/les-forts-de-latour>

General Info

If Lafite is renowned for elegance, Latour is prized for power. Vines were first planted on the site in the fourteenth century, but Latour's reputation stems from the late part of the seventeenth century, when the estate was inherited by Alexandre de Ségur. In recent years, no finer wine has been made in Bordeaux, for Latour displays an uncanny combination of deep color; Cabernet-dominated flavors of dark berries, licorice, and minerals; the finest oak that money can buy; and great length on the aftertaste.

Winemaker

Frédéric Ardouin

Vintage

The 2016 vintage, remarkable for the definition and concentration of the wines produced, will undoubtedly mark both the palate and the memory of tasters. After a mild and rainy winter, the month of March – cooler – brought about a bud burst noted on March 24 for the Merlot and March 30 for the Cabernet Sauvignon. The high temperatures of the first half of May contributed to the growth of the plant but the second fortnight of this month, unstable and stormy, weakened the sanitary condition. The first week of June, dry, with temperatures between 20 and 25°C brought a mid-flowering of Merlot on June 6, then Cabernet Sauvignon on June 7, which was threatened by 28 mm of rain between June 6 and 7. Fortunately, the month of July, exceptionally dry and hot, took advantage of the water content of the soil and allowed the plant to withstand this extreme episode. The first week of June, which was dry with temperatures between 20 and 25°C, brought about mid-flowering of the Merlot on June 6 and then of the Cabernet on June 7, which was threatened the same evening by 28 mm of rain. September was beautiful and warm, and while signs of water and thermal suffering appeared, 35 mm of rain relieved the vines and perfected ripening.

Vineyards

Many have called this the best vineyard in the world and the dynamic Director of Chateau Latour, Frédéric Engerer, is determined to make the greatest wine possible. He has the confidence of owner, François Pinault, to do all that it takes to achieve this aim. Production levels have been slashed in recent vintages with only the best parcels of vines now producing grapes for the Grand Vin. Latour has always had a fantastic terroir and now has a wine-making team working with state-of-the-art modern equipment under inspired leadership.

Harvest

Harvests took place in ideal weather conditions from September 22 to 30 for the Merlot, and from October 7 to 19 for the Cabernet Sauvignon.

**Vinification/
Maturation**

There is a second wine, Les Forts de Latour, which comes from the young vines of the Grand Enclos. The vines used to produce Les Forts de Latour are most often at least 12 years of age. Les Forts de Latour made its debut in 1966. Les Forts de Latour is aged in 50% new, French oak barrels.

Tasting Notes

An intense and beautifully bright colour. the nose is incredibly expressive, pure, and aromatic. On the palate, the structure is extremely delicate, elegant with matured fruits flavours. Tannins are rich, noble, and silky.

Serve with

Chateau Latour is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Latour is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.

Cellaring

Drink 2023 onwards

Scores/Awards

94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2019

95 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - March 2022

95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - November 2018



Scores/Awards

- 92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017
- 95 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2022
- 96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2022
- 96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019
- 94-95 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017
- 94-96 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - January 2017
- 18 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2020
- 18 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017
- 92 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017
- 94 points** - Jane Anson, JaneAnson.com - February 2022
- 94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - September 2019
- 94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2017
- 95 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2017
- 94+ points** - Farr Vintner - April 2017
- 91-95 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017
- 95 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2022
- 94+ points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - August 2020
- 94+ points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019
- 95 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019
- 94-97 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017
- 94 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2019
- 94 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - April 2017
- 94 points** - Thomas Parker MW - March 2022
- 94 points** - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - March 2019
- 93-94 points** - Vert de Vin - April 2019
- 17.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2020
- 17 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019
- 1 star** - Le Guide Hachette des Vins - 2020

Reviews

“A bit fleshier and more caressing than a typical Pauillac, this has flavors of warm fig, currant and blackberry preserves inlaid with charcoal and smoldering tobacco notes. There’s grip for sure and a twinge of warm cast iron on the finish, but the fruit detail keeps the upper hand throughout, showcasing the purity on the finish. Very, very solid. Best from 2023 through 2035.”
 - JM, Wine Spectator

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour is superb, unwinding in the glass with notions of blackcurrants, wild berries, sweet loamy soil, cigar wrapper and English walnuts. Medium to full-bodied, deep, and layered, it’s concentrated and tightly wound, with superb depth at the core, lively acids, and ripe, powdery tannins. This is an impeccably balanced, utterly classical Forts de Latour worth a special effort to seek out. 2030 – 2060”
 - WK, Wine Advocate

“Very deep garnet-purple colored, the 2016 Les Forts de Latour opens with cinnamon stick, cloves, and star anise scents with hints of crème de cassis, kirsch, wild blueberries and hints of black tea and violets. Medium to full-bodied, it has very firm, grainy tannins and is wonderfully intense with layers of bright fruit and loads of red berry sparks, finishing long and minerally. This is a superb showing for Les Forts and I would not be at all surprised if it far exceeds my conservative drinking window estimation!”
 - LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour is a blend of 64.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35.3% Merlot and 0.4% Cabernet Franc, and it represents 37.5% of production this year. It has a surprisingly opulent bouquet, almost a lushness to it thanks to the power of the Merlot, lending it an almost Right Bank allure (possibly due to one parcel in Artigues being declassified from the Grand Vin into the Les Forts de Latour). The palate is very well balanced with supple tannin. Occasionally this Deuxième Vin can be austere like the Château Latour, but this year I find this to be lithe in the mouth, quite sensual with the structure surfacing towards the graphite-tinged finish. The length is very impressive here. It will be interested to see when the estate eventually releases this wine. This is a plump 'n lovely Les Forts de Latour! Drink 2023 - 2045.”
 - NM, Wine Advocate

Reviews

“Very iron fist in a velvet glove,” commented winemaker Hélène Génin of the 2016 Les Forts de Latour. “It has a lot of power but also beauty and precision.” She’s not wrong. Deep garnet-purple in color, exuberant scents of kirsch, blueberry preserves, black currant pastilles, and star anise come bounding out of the glass, followed by aromatic nuances of cumin seed, candied violets, fragrant earth, and dark chocolate. The medium-bodied palate delivers irresistible grace and tension, with a solid backbone of super-ripe, velvety tannins lending a taut structure to the mighty black fruit layers, finishing very long and mineral-tinged. With a vigorous decant, it makes for an impactful experience right now. However, just another 3-4 more years in the cellar will yield impressive dividends on your investment, given that it is still holding back slightly. Expect to cellar this for a good 20-25 years+. The blend is 64.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35.3% Merlot, and 0.4% Cabernet Franc, sporting alcohol of 13.5%. 2025-2048.”

- LPB, Wine Independent

“Lots of blueberries, ripe blackberries, violets, peppercorns, olives, and cloves on the nose. It’s medium-to full-bodied with firm, fleshy tannins. Beautiful blue fruit and flowers. Layered and long. Drink after 2023.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“The fresh currant and violet aromas are so complex and beautiful on the nose. Full body, ultra-refined tannins, and lovely tannin tension. Shows focus and such finesse. Beautiful finish. Try after 2024.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This builds slowly on the palate, but it’s worth it. Medium to full body, firm, and silky tannins and lots of currants, berries, and minerals on the finish. On and on. Better than the 2015?”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“94–96. Barrel Sample. This is a great wine, with superb tannins and rich fruit flavors that are in balance. Made from 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, the palate is dominated by black-currant flavor and a pleasant structure from the very fine tannins.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Tasted blind. Dark and lustrous. High toned and interesting. Rich and layered. Lots of detail. Complete. Very Pauillac. Not heavy. Pretty dry end. Drink 2026 – 2046.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Very supple tannins and absolutely pure drive. Sleek and pure. Rather floral and great evolution of tannins. Super-expressive. (He used very little sulphur on the fruit, which may have had an influence...) Great purity. Dances. Much more refreshing than this wine used to be. 13.5%. Drink 2026-2042.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“This is the kind of vintage where you just know Forts de Latour is going to hit it out of the park, and I would be happy to recommend choosing this 2nd wine over many main estate wines in less impressive vintages. It's restrained, nuanced, keeping plenty in reserve, but the texture is rippled, by turns slate then velvet, slowing everything down through the palate. This was the first year of 100% conversion into organic viticulture, not just within the walled L'Enclos but across the entire estate, with official certification in 2018. Where the 2017 Pauillac de Latour (also released now) is all nuance and delicacy, the 2016 Forts is built, muscular, but full of precision, with deft strokes to define the tannins. A wine you will be thrilled to share - and one that has really grown into itself since being tasted En Primeur, underlining perhaps the benefit of a late release. 50% new oak. 37.5% of overall production.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“This is an exceptionally good Forts de Latour, representing 37.5% of production. It is full of graphite and black cassis, closed but not austere. There is flesh on these bones and the texture is already remarkably finessed. This is grippy, showing finesse and energy, aged entirely in new oak although you can't tell. The sense of energy is remarkable even in this second wine. 64.3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35.3% Merlot and 0.4% Cabernet Franc.”

- JA, Decanter.com

Reviews

“Regal, fresh, lively and with sweet, red fruits, hints of citrus, tobacco, earth, and flowers, this is soft, vibrant, and already showing its potential. This is classic in style, in all the right ways with juicy, crisp fruit, the structure to age and a tannic backbone. Give this five to eight more years before popping a cork.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Flowery with tobacco, blackberry, and spice with an interesting hint of citrus, this is smooth and reserved with a juicy blast of cassis and plum in the finish. Classic but with softness and refinement instead of severity, give this perhaps five to eight more years before popping a cork.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“A stunning second wine from Château Latour, as you’d expect in a top vintage like 2016, this is remarkably perfumed for such a young red, with notes of violets and dark berry fruit, liquorice, and cinnamon. Poised, balanced, and structured, with real class. 2026-34.”

- Tim Atkin MW

“First produced in 1966, this is not really a second wine as it is produced from separate parts of the vineyard which contain many old vines, as well as from some vats that are not quite up to the standards of the Grand Vin de Château Latour. Grapes from the vineyard’s young vines do not go into Les Forts de Latour but are used for a generic Pauillac third label. Clearly the equivalent of a top classed growth. Under Frédéric Engerer’s management, Les Forts de Latour has continued to improve in quality and recent vintages have been at “super-second growth” levels. This wine will not be sold En Primeur but kept at the Chateau until it is mature. A blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot and a dash of Cabernet Franc, this year it will represent 37.5% of the total production. Deep colour with a powerful blackcurrant and wood smoke nose. The palate is dense with concentrated blackberry and cassis supported by plentiful ripe and chewy tannins. Texture and smokiness build through the mid-palate to match the great intensity of fruit. Fine, long, and classic Pauillac, this is incredibly powerful and long for a “second” wine.”

- Farr Vintners

“Brooding richness the nose has smoky black fruits the palate dark chocolate and cocoa beans. The tannins are firm but ripe the fleshy fruit fills out the mid palate depth richness power all this balanced by underling bramble freshness an attractive purity of fruit. 2026-40.”

- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour has a gorgeous bouquet, extremely pure and floral, veins of blue fruit, cassis permeating the blackberry fruit. The palate is beautifully balanced, again, very saline and a little spicier than I expected. There is a veneer of black fruit that makes it seem quite approachable, yet the tannins and backbone are there behind it. This is a superb Les Forts de Latour. Frédéric Engerer opined that it will drink in two or three years, though its substance and complexity suggest that those with the wherewithal to cellar this Les Fort will be amply rewarded. 2028 – 2050.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour offers a pure, seductive bouquet of gorgeous, graphite-tinged black fruit, focused and full of tension. The palate is medium-bodied with fine-grained tannins and good balance and grip. This is a classic, tobacco- and graphite-driven Pauillac with a very persistent finish. There is something regal about this Les Forts de Latour, one of the finest vintages in recent years. Tasted blind at the Southwold tasting.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour is a wine that I remember as lush when I tasted it from barrel. Now in bottle, it has more Pauillac expression on the nose instead of that nascent lushness, offering copious black fruit infused with graphite and a touch of chalk. The palate is medium-bodied with fine-grained tannin, almost symmetrical in terms of balance, and shows beautiful definition toward the finish. This would frankly surpass some of the Grand Vins elsewhere. A wonderful Les Forts de Latour that may improve further with bottle age. 13.5% alcohol.”

- NM, Vinous

Reviews

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour is fabulous. Dark, rich, and expansive on the palate, the 2016 Forts boasts superb depth and intensity. Gravel, smoke, sage, grilled herbs, licorice, plum, pencil shavings and crème de cassis all run through the 2016. Readers should expect a somber, brooding wine that is going to need time to be at its best. Today, the tannins are imposing. Drink 2024 - 2036.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2016 Les Forts de Latour kicks things up a notch. Dark tonalities of red and purplish fruit, along with hints of grilled herbs, rose petal and smoke, give the wine a palpable sense of gravitas and power that plays off the silky, voluptuous fruit. The 2016 is wonderfully complete Forts de Latour. In 2016, Forts de Latour represents 37.5% of the 2016 harvest.”

- AG, Vinous

“Deep, saturated ruby purple in the glass. The nose is pure cassis, briary fruit and incense, the underlying weight of savoury fruit is very impressive. This intensity follows on the palate, which is tightly wound and framed by persistent, ripe, and chewy tannins. This is a wine of precision and power, more akin to second growths than a second wine. Piercing black fruit leads with subtle spices in the background, lingering on a very precise and powerful finish. Give this a good decant if approaching now or wait until a decade old. It will doubtless cellar for two decades. Excellent.”

- Tom Parker MW

“Deep dark ruby garnet, violet reflections, delicate lightening of the edges. Black berry fruit underlaid with delicate tobacco and herbs, nuances of precious wood, delicate cassis, smoky spiciness. Complex, firm body, pleasant extract sweetness, present, carrying tannins, mineral notes on the finish, good length, medium complexity, sticks, has potential for development.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“The nose is fresh and offers a beautiful finesse/delicacy. It reveals slight notes of fresh/ripe blackberry and slight notes of violet/lilac associated with discreet hints of ripe/fresh strawberry. The palate is fruity, juicy, well-balanced and offers a beautiful acid/fresh frame, tension as well as a beautiful minerality and juiciness. In the mouth this wine expresses notes of juicy blackberry, cassis and slight notes of plum associated with slight hints of Tonka beans, toasted oak as well as a very discreet hint of Cuban pepper (in the background), a discreet hint of chocolate and a very slight hint of caramelization (in the background). Tannins are fine and elegant. Good length.”

- Vert de Vin