

Château Lynch Bages 2018

CSPC# 756474

750mlx6

14.1% alc./vol.

CSPC# 871662

750mlx6

14.1% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

Fifth Growth. Cinquieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855

Website

<http://www.jmcazes.com/en/chateau-lynch-bages/grand-cru-classe>

General Info

Château Lynch-Bages was owned by the Lynch family for three quarters of a century. They descended from John Lynch, a young Irishman from Galway who was chased out of his country in 1691. In the 18th century, Count Jean-Baptiste Lynch, mayor of Bordeaux, inherited the estate and handed over management to his brother Michel Lynch, who was also mayor of Pauillac during the French Revolution. Jean-Charles Cazes, highly respected in the Médoc for his experience in viticulture and winemaking, bought the property in 1934. With his son André, he devoted all his energy to Lynch-Bages for more than 35 years. In 1974, his grand-son Jean-Michel Cazes set about restructuring and managing the estate and recently, in 2006, handed over the running of the property to his son Jean-Charles.

Winemaker

Jean Michel Cazes

Vintage

Following a particularly wet winter that recorded mixed temperatures, the wine season began with a slightly late bud break. However, it followed a normal pattern thanks to mild temperatures at the beginning of April.

The 2018 vintage was then marked by two periods. The first saw relatively mild temperatures but heavy rainfall, from March to early July. The second period began mid-July with fine summer weather, hot temperatures and excessive sunshine. Full flowering occurred in line with the 20-year average.

Lynch-Bages 2018 offers a seductive mouthfeel with powerful yet silky tannins. On the palate, there is a strong prelude of black chocolate, rosemary and spices on a fresh core leading to a long finish. "The early start of the season was nerve-racking because of the mildew pressure," Jean-Charles Cazes said. "We had to monitor the vines constantly and react. But we were equally worried about the dry period. We were concerned about getting vine blockage, like in 2003, but it didn't happen. The rains we had in the spring really helped the vines sail through and reach full maturity. Our harvest dates are pretty much on average, a little early for Lynch Bages, but again not like 2003. Sorting wasn't really a problem, everything was sanitary. The vintage reminds me of 2010, but more forward, like 2016." I asked Cazes about their biggest challenge this year. "The challenge was not to overdo extraction," he said. "That was the biggest challenge in the cellar. We had smaller berries, so the ratio of skin to juice was high. This is also why there is so much richness.

Vineyards

Stretching over some 100 hectares in the commune of Pauillac, the vineyards of Lynch-Bages lie entirely upon the soil of choice for great wines, formed along the estuary by the alluvia from the gravel of Médoc. The property sits among favourably designed hillcrests located south and southwest of the city. This particular topography allows for both a natural drainage of soils to the river and, with help of the water table in shallow areas, a fine feeding of water for the vines.

The red wine vineyard of Lynch-Bages extends across a homogeneous soil and subsoil of deep Garonne gravel. Early yielding, scantily fertile and well drained, these soils are particularly favourable for Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot.

In the plots located along the river and the Gaët channel, the Garonne gravel soil is associated with clayey subsoil, more specifically suitable for Merlot.

There is also a small part of the vineyard of predominantly sandy gravel, ideally suited for growing Cabernet Franc, which helps to yield lighter, aromatic and nicely rounded wines. This analysis of the characteristics of the terroir, recorded during the planting of the varieties, has made it possible to identify an optimal planting. It is now



Vineyards	composed of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. The average age of the vines is about 30 years old, with the oldest vines over 60 years old.
Harvest	Thanks to ideal weather conditions, harvest started on 19 September with the Merlot and was followed by Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot until 9 October.
Vinification/ Maturation	Upon arrival at the cellar, the sanitary state of the grapes was perfect, with rich sugar content and exceptional polyphenols. Alcoholic fermentation was straightforward and homogeneous and average vatting time was 21 days. During the runoff from 15 to 29 October, the vats produced juice yields that were below expectations. Then came the time for malolactic fermentation, one third of which took place in vats and two thirds in barrels. It was completed in November. The first blends were carried out in December. Aged in wooden barrels for 18 months (75% new oak)
Tasting Notes	Daring, innovative and with a reputation for often being the last to harvest, Jean-Charles Cazes defined the style of Lynch-Bages in the 1930's. The wine's distinctive character has earned it a place amongst Pauillac's greatest. It combines structure, finesse, and elegance, offering generous aromas in its youth and developing deeper complexities with bottle age. The estate's reputation as a top-quality wine producer took off in 1945 after a series of exceptional vintages. Since then, Lynch-Bages has continued to produce excellent wines, even during years considered difficult in the Bordeaux region. The wine's deep color and tannic backbone have become part of its signature style. Jean-Michel Cazes, grandson of Jean-Charles, has worked hard to develop and refine the wine's supple and smooth structure over the years. Vintage after vintage, the estate's precise and excellent winemaking techniques have served to firmly establish Lynch-Bages reputation for consistent quality.
Serve with	Chateau Lynch Bages is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Cellaring	Drink 2025-2040
Scores/Awards	<p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021</p> <p>96-99 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>96 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>97-98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>96 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019</p> <p>17+ points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2020</p> <p>17 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>18+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p>94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>96 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>18+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>96 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p> <p>93 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>17 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>

Reviews

“Vibrant, with a violet and cassis lead-in that then expands to include steeped black cherry and plum fruit as well as extra savory, iron and licorice root notes. Nice latent grip too, with a mouthwatering tug of earth at the very end. The fruit is so vibrant, it's a tease now, but there's structure here for the long haul, so be patient.”
- JM, Wine Spectator

“Dark cassis, plum and cherry fruit flavors stream through in this red, harnessed well by bolts of iron along the way. Sweet tobacco detail echoes through the finish, which is seriously long. An extremely rock-solid wine in the making here. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Score range: 96 – 99”
- JM, Wine Spectator

“Composed of 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, the 2018 Lynch-Bages was aged in 75% new barriques. Deep garnet-purple in color, it soars out of the glass with a magnificently expressive nose of blueberry compote, black cherry preserves and blackcurrant pastilles, plus suggestions of dark chocolate, licorice, tar and violets with a waft of hoisin. The medium to full-bodied palate is just as impactful as the nose, coating the mouth with juicy black berry and spicy layers, supported by firm, grainy tannins and seamless freshness, finishing long with a refreshing earthiness coming through at the end.”
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2018 Lynch Bages is made up of 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot aging in 75% new barriques. Very deep purple-black in color, the nose is quite coy and restrained to begin, fanning out to offer pure, ripe blackcurrants, black cherries and preserved plums with wafts of red roses, cigar box, incense, cardamom and fenugreek with savory touches of black olives, Marmite toast and smoked meats. Full-bodied, the palate is built like a brick house, with a solid foundation of very firm, very ripe, grainy tannins and superb freshness supporting the generous black fruit layers, finishing long with provocative ferrous suggestions.
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“Aromas of blackberries, cloves, licorice, dried leaves, graphite and black olives. It's full-bodied with firm, tight tannins. Structured and tannic with beautiful austerity and a long, mineral, and layered finish. The tannins grow on the palate. Try from 2026.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This is incredibly powerful and structured with so much tannin backbone and length, yet it's cool and fresh with a compact palate and great length. Muscular.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“The Lynch-Bages style is unmistakable in this wine's richness and the density of its structure and tannins. In addition, it conveys a great sense of style, restrained power, and opulence. Drink this wine from 2027.”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“This vintage shows the elegant side of a typically powerful wine. It offers dense black fruits that are balanced by the stylish wood aging and bold tannins. This impressive wine is likely to age well. Barrel Sample: 95-97.”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot. 16–18 months in 75% new oak. Black as the ace of spades, deep crimson rim. Scented with refined black fruits with notes of lead pencil and cedar. Dry, dry, fine tannins. Highly structured and powerful but miraculously in balance. Chewy and fresh enough. Has a really long and promising future. (JH)”
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot; 75% new oak. pH 3.66. Barrel sample. Black core. Spicy, intense cassis nose. Imposing grip in the tannins holding everything prisoner at the moment but they are compact and dense rather than tough. Chewy, dense, powerful and 'masculine'. Highly structured and muscular but well balanced. Not a charmer but finely built in its power. (JH)”
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

“Deep, rich black fruits on the nose followed by a powerful punch of spice alongside a ferocious tannic structure that will benefit from the extra polishing of bottle ageing. Combines tannic heft with cassis, bitter chocolate shavings, sage, cardamom, and smoke. This is impressive, with a solidly confident, classic Pauillac character and a great example of the confidence of Lynch-Bages right now. A yield of 38hl/ha.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“This is hugely impressive right from the off - strap on your walking boots, get your crampons at the ready, there is a wall to climb - not one that you ever hit by the way, because contrary to expectations this unfurls slowly, keeping the peak just out of sight.

It's great quality and one of my favourites from this property because it's full of power but with a caress, so much tannic power too and yet so light of foot. It's filled with absolutely delicious black chocolate, rosemary, cardamom and pepper but also lets the light in thanks for a fresh core running through. Having tasted it a few times it's clear it's going to age extremely well. A yield of 38hl/ha. Drinking Window 2026 – 2040.”

- Decanter.com

“Deep and dark in color, the wine exudes crème de cassis, blackberry, black cherry liqueur, BBQ smoke, Cuban cigars and a background note of roses. On the palate, you find richness, round, juicy, multi-layered essences of rocks, stones, earth, and lusciously textured, ripe, succulent fruits. The wine liberally coats your palate with layer after layer of sweet berries that hang with you for at least 50 seconds. With a decade of aging this will clearly be one of the top vintages of Lynch Bages ever produced! And considering their crack record, that is really saying something. The wine blends 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, 14.1 ABV.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Blue-black with purple accents, the pure crème de cassis aromas stand out easily. This wine combines power with layers of ready, succulent, dark penetrating fruits. Even though this is probably the densest Lynch Bages I recall tasting, the unique vintage character keeps the wine light on its feet. All this strength and purity is wrapped up nicely with ripe tannins and a long finish. Clearly, 2018 is a contender for the best vintage of Lynch Bages ever produced -- and with their string of hits, that's a real statement! Produced from 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, the wine reached 14.1% alcohol. The picking took place September 18 to October 9 and 65% of the harvest was used to produce the Grand Vin.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Deep, glass-staining purple in colour. The nose is deep, dense, and brooding, with an almost oily richness to the cassis, camphor, and cedar aromas. The palate is incredibly rich and powerful, with an explosive core of fruit that is only managed through plentiful, grippy tannins. Mulberries, scorched earth, and toasted cumin all come through as this wine gains complexity on the mid-palate. A towering, structured Pauillac with an incredibly long finish, this will need time, but will no doubt become a great Lynch Bages.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2018 Lynch-Bages has a wonderful bouquet of supremely well-defined blackberry, briar, crushed rock and pencil lead aromas that develop more floral scents with continued aeration (the samples were monitored over 6–8 hours). The palate is beautifully balanced with fine-grained tannins and superb acidity. Fresh and focused with a touch of graphite toward the finish. There is a swagger, a bit of brio, about this Lynch-Bages, one that will age over 30–40 years with style. Bravo, l'équipe Cazes! Drinking window: 2024 – 2050.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2018 Lynch-Bages was picked from September 19, the Cabernet starting six days later and continuing until October 9 and matured for 18 months in 75% new oak. It has a charming, pure bouquet of black cherries, blueberry, violet and iris petals, almost Margaux-like in style. The medium-bodied palate is quite dense and grippy, offering slightly grainy tannins, moderate acidity and a powerful, saline finish. It is a little monolithic when compared to, say, the outstanding 2016, although I appreciate its length and it should age well in bottle. It just needs to muster a bit more charm, and maybe that will appear once in bottle. I will remain prudent with my score for now.”

- NM, Vinous

Reviews

“An utterly fabulous wine, the 2018 Lynch-Bages captures all of the richness and generosity that make the year so appealing, and yet doesn’t stray too far from its classic feel. Rose petal, lavender, spice, sweet red berry fruit and mint are all beautifully lifted in the glass. Racy and silky to the core, the 2018 is a real head-turner from the very first taste. All the elements fall into place effortlessly. Readers will have a very hard time keeping their hands off this jewel of a wine.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2018 Lynch-Bages is a potent, racy wine endowed with real textural depth and intensity. Even so, it retains terrific nuance and vibrancy. All the classic Lynch-Bages signatures are present, but amped up, with huge tannins and equally huge fruit. The 2018 is going to need at least a few years to shed some of its baby fat. Today, it is decidedly rich and unctuous in style. Rose petal, lavender, mint, and sweet spice add striking layers of aromatic nuance. The blend is 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot.”

- AG, Vinous

“One of the finest vintages I've ever tasted from this address, the 2018 Château Lynch-Bages has everything you look for in a great wine: incredible aromatics, richness without weight, perfect balance, and a purity of fruit that's just about off the charts. Dense purple, it reveals a glorious perfume of blackcurrants and blackberry fruits, a deep, unctuous mouthfeel, building tannins, and a complex array of cedar pencil, tobacco, wood smoke, and chocolate. A true blockbuster in every sense, with masses of fruit and tannins as well as moderate acidity, it will probably merit a triple-digit score in a decade and is a 50+-year wine from this team.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Cassis, graphite, blackberries, scorched earth, and graphite notes all emerge from the 2018 Château Lynch-Bages, which is a rich, blockbuster style beauty up with the finest vintages to date from this historic estate, which by the way, is just about complete with a massive new cellar construction project. Checking in as a blend of 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, and the rest Petit Verdot, brought up in 75% new French oak, it's incredibly concentrated, opulent, and sexy on the palate, with building underlying structure, a stacked mid-palate, and a great finish. It reminds me of the 2009 with its fleshy, powerful style. The IPT, or amount of tannins, is a through the roof 95 and it hit 14.1% alcohol with a pH of 3.66. It's going to live for just about forever.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“(72 Cabernet Sauvignon, 19 Merlot, 6 Cabernet Franc, 3 Petit Verdot) | 75% new oak for 18 months | 14 alc | 95 IPT A stunning Cabernet nose leads the way, and this signals the start of a rather imposing wine. Exquisite fruit concentration coupled with prodigious length make this a bit of a beast and I found myself searching for detail among the power and extraction. Big and just about balanced with rather racy tannins and a lot of oak, this is a monolithic Lynch Bages, and I hope that it starts to unravel soon for fear that it will always be a little bit too muscular and tough.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com