

Château Larcis Ducasse 2012

CSPC# 771456

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

83% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Saint Emilion

Classification

First Growth B. Premier Grand Cru Classe B.

Website

<http://www.larcis-ducasse.com/en/saint-emilion/actualites/#>

General Info

Chateau Larcis Ducasse had its birth during the days of the ancient Romans. The modern era for Larcis Ducasse begins in 1893, when Henri Raba bought the St. Emilion vineyard. After Henri Raba passed away in 1925, his wife and son Andre Raba continued managing Larcis Ducasse. Andre died during World War 2. His niece, Helene Gratiot Alphantery, inherited the property in 1941. She managed Larcis Ducasse until 1990. Her son, Jacques-Olivier Gratiot took control of the property after she passed away and he remains in charge today. Larcis Ducasse remains the property of the Gratiot Alphantery family. Prior to 2003, it had been years since the wines of Larcis Ducasse were prized by Bordeaux wine lovers. The wine had fallen out of favor. That changed in 2002 when they hired the team of well-known St. Emilion consultants, Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt to turn things around and manage the estate. One of the first improvements at the property suggested by Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt was to create a new drainage system. The next step was to change harvesting practices. Prior to 2002, the grapes were often picked 2 early and over a short duration of 2 to 3 days. Now, the harvest takes place when the fruit is ripe, and the picking can take as long as 2 to 3 weeks to complete.

Winemakers

Nicolas Thienpont and Stephane Derenoncourt

Vintage

After the very cold and dry winter of 2011–2012, bud break lasted throughout April. The rains of April and May, coupled with mild temperatures, resulted insignificant mineralization and strong vegetative growth of the vines. Flowering was late (29 May) and drawn out, with a delicate fruit set. The old Merlot plants have at times seen yields reduced due to coulure (shatter, a failure of the fruit to set) or millerandage (shot grapes, incomplete development). There was settled summer weather from 15 July, with the hottest August since 2003, allowing partial recovery of the growth cycle. From mid-July onwards, 2012 was one of the driest vintages of recent years (along with 2005, 2009 and 2010), resulting in a significant water deficit (120mm lower than the thirty-year average). Ripening in early August was prolonged, with peaks of temperature from July to September and reduced rainfall. The biggest daily temperature difference recorded was 12.9°C, the highest in eight years, favouring a high level of anthocyanins and aromatic intensity. September and October were mild, close to the seasonal norm (27–28°C on 5 October).

Harvest

The Larcis-Ducasse is a blend of 83% Merlot and 17% Cabernet Franc picked on 11th-18th October and 18th October respectively, cropped at 28hl/ha.

Vineyards

The 10.85 hectare St. Emilion vineyard of Larcis Ducasse is located just around the bend in the road from Chateau Pavie . In fact, their vines abut each other. The terroir of Chateau Larcis Ducasse is a mixture of soils with vines on the plateau and the slopes with a south facing exposure. At the higher elevations on the plateau, the terroir is limestone and clay soil. As you travel further down the slopes the terroir is a blend of chalky limestone, marl, sand, and clay soil. The vineyard is planted to 78% Merlot and 22% Cabernet Franc . This shows a change in the vineyard, as more Cabernet Franc has been added to the plantings since 2003. On average the vines are 35 years of age. While the older plantings were done at a vine density of 6,600 vines per hectare, as the vineyard continues to be slowly replanted, the vine density is increasing. The new plantings are being done at 7,500 vines per hectare. They are



Vineyards	also using budwood obtained through selection massale. The yields are kept low at Larcis Ducasse.
Vinification/ Maturation	To produce the wine of Chateau Larcis Ducasse, the grapes are whole berry fermented. The fruit is transported by gravity flow into traditional, cement tanks for fermentation. Cuvasion takes between 25-28 days. There are no pump overs. Pigeages are conducted during fermentation. Malolactic fermentation takes place in barrel. The wine of Chateau Larcis Ducasse is aged in 75 % new, 25 % 1-year old, French oak barrels for an average of 20 months.
Tasting Notes	Merlot and Cabernet Franc vines are planted according to the profile of each vineyard. The final blend features well-balanced, characterful flavors and fine tannin. Sustainable viticulture practices coupled with low yields, gentle fermentation, and barrel ageing adapted to each vintage reflect all the elegance and personality of this great terroir.
Serve with	Chateau Larcis Ducasse is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted braised and grilled dishes.
Production	2,330 cases produced annually
Cellaring	Drink 2017-2027
Scores/Awards	<p>93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2015</p> <p>90-93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2013</p> <p>95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015</p> <p>93-95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - May 2013</p> <p>93-95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal #0513 - May 2013</p> <p>95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015</p> <p>92-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 2013</p> <p>17- points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013</p> <p>17.25 points - Decanter.com - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2017</p> <p>93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 2015</p> <p>91-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2013</p> <p>89-92 points - Derek Smedley, MW - May 2013</p> <p>97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2017</p> <p>93 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2016</p> <p>93 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - April 2013</p> <p>92 points - Falstaff Magazine - May 2013</p> <p>87 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 2013</p> <p>15 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2017</p> <p>16 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2013</p> <p>16 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - April 2013</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Dark and winery, with steeped currant, macerated plum and warm boysenberry coulis flavors, laced with licorice snap and roasted apple wood notes. The charcoal edge is buried on the finish, with a lingering minerality. Lots going on here. Needs time. Best from 2017 through 2027. 2,330 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Blueberry, damson plum and blackberry notes all mingle here, with a snappy licorice edge and briary tannins on the finish. This has length and balance, without the sinewy, extracted feel of some St.-Emilions."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"This great terroir, long owned by the Gratiot family, has come to life under the inspired winemaking of Nicolas Thienpont and Stéphane Derenoncourt. Some recent vintages have been legendary efforts, especially 2005, 2008, 2009 and 2010. The 2012 (83% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Franc) is right in the competition, with an inky, opaque, bluish/purple color, gorgeously sweet, rich nose of black raspberries, black cherries and currants, and licorice. The wine hits the palate with a full-bodied, thunderous effect. This blend tips the scales at 14.5% alcohol, which is indicative of its fabulously exposed vineyard on a full, steep limestone slope with a primarily southern exposure. This is full-bodied, ripe and one of the great stars of the vintage – again. The wine has full-bodied texture, gorgeous purity, richness, and length. Drink it over the next 20 years."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2012 exhibits notes of licorice, truffles, lead pencil shavings, barbecued meats, blackberries, black raspberries and a hint of espresso roast. Sweet new oak notes are apparent in the back of the wine, but its abundant fruit, full-bodied mouthfeel, and multidimensional texture as well as length, make for an impressive showing. This wine will need 3-4 years of cellaring and should keep for 20 years or more. Bravo! If you haven't yet jumped on the Larcis Ducasse bandwagon, it's time to do so.

Even if the 2012 is not as potentially prodigious as the 2005 and 2010, it is a remarkable effort. Yields were kept to 23 hectoliters per hectare by the brilliant team of Nicolas Thienpont, Stephane Derenoncourt, David Suire and Julien Lavenu. The final blend of 83% Merlot and 17% Cabernet Franc has produced a powerhouse with 14.5% natural alcohol. This team's goal is undoubtedly to elevate Larcis Ducasse to the status of Ausone, Cheval Blanc, Pavie and Angelus. They are well on their way."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"The Larcis-Ducasse is a blend of 83% Merlot and 17% Cabernet Franc picked on 11th-18th October and 18th October respectively, cropped at 28hl/ha. The nose is very complete even at this primal stage with copious but regimented dark cherry and blackcurrant fruit - the oak seamless integrated and lending it great volume. The palate is ripe and sexy on the entry with seamless tannins and a velvety texture. It is very controlled, very focused - modern in style but filled to the brim with panache. Nothing out of place here! Very good potential."

- NM, Wine Journal

"This shows so much class and balance with blackberry and mushroom character. Some wet earth. It makes you want to drink it! Fine and ripe tannins. Gorgeous. Drink in 2018."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Newly promoted to Premier Grand Cru Classé in 2012, this is a fine, concentrated wine, showing great style. It has weight and a delicious juiciness that is sustained by firm, dry tannins. Already a beautiful wine."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Deep dark cherry colour. Fine and dry and so fresh. Feels like a breath of summer. But it is not particularly light - good length - just no excess weight. Maybe just a very slight bitterness on the finish?"

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Rich and ripe on the nose with a hint of mocha. Fresh and long on the palate. Friendlier in style than 2011. Tannins softened by the fruit."

Decanter.com

"Holding a lot in reserve, flowers, chocolate covered cherries, plum and licorice are right there, if you know where to look. Soft, polished tannins and a ripe, pit fruit filled complete the wine."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Truffle, mocha and fresh plums and thyme scents lead to a rich, concentrated, polished, lushly textured display of fresh black cherries, crushed stone and licorice. This was starting to close down. Give this a few years to come around, soften and wake up as it should be even better."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"83% Merlot and 17% Cabernet Franc created a wine that pops with crushed stone, flowers and dark berries. Round in texture, the wine ends with a sweet licorice and cherry sensation."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Situated next to Château Pavie, on 11 hectares of south-facing slopes with marked levels of limestone. This has all the wine's usual succulence and power, but the oak seems better integrated than it sometimes is, with attractive, oyster shell-like minerality and a fine, balanced finish. Drink: 2020-30."

- Tim Atkin MW

Reviews *“Sweet fruit fills out the nose and gives a rich start to the palate. Red fruits intermingle with black the freshness balanced by sweetness and although the back palate feels ripe the finish is red fruited and fresh. 2016-25”*
- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2012 from Larcis Ducasse is a stunner, and not far from the otherworldly 2005. Made from 83% Merlot and 17% Cabernet Franc, this sensational 2012 offers a gorgeous bouquet of ripe black cherries, blackcurrants, cedary spice, tobacco leaf and damp earth. Opulent, full-bodied and decadent, yet incredibly light on its feet and graceful, with its oak completely concealed by its wealth of fruit, it has sweet tannin, no hard edges, and unbelievable purity of fruit. Buy as much as you can and enjoy bottles anytime over the coming two decades or more.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“Dark, dense ruby garnet. Spicy on the nose, some tobacco, and figs over concentrated dark fruit. Fine sweetness on the palate, nice tannin structure, somewhat furry, good acidity. Long finish.”
- Falstaff Magazine

“EN PRIMEUR - Open, expressive nose with red fruit and floral notes and a mineral oak touch. Delicate palate with lightweight stuffing. A lace-like, aromatic wine.”
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
