

# Château Larcis-Ducasse 2018

CSPC# 869811

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

89% Merlot, 11% 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. 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

2018 Saint Emilion was not an easy vintage for producers. The winter months were easy, but the spring is one of the wettest in history. Depending on where you located in St. Emilion, during the initial 6 months of the year, between 550 mm to 600 mm (21"-24") of rain soaked your soils. This is more than the normal amount of rain the region experiences in a year!

From there growers fended off violent attacks of mildew, which struck fast and furious. 2018 Saint Emilion was saved by the hottest, driest, sunniest vintage conditions since 2003. Barely any rain fell from July to harvest.

Picking took place under warm, sunny and dry conditions. On average, production was down 10-20% for many vineyards. Conditions were so good between late September and mid-October; vigneron were able to pick at their chosen level of maturity.

## Harvest

Merlots on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>. Cabernet francs on October 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>.

## 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

## Vineyards

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 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



<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	barrel. The wine of Chateau Larcis Ducasse is aged in 50% new, 50% 1-year old, French oak barrels for an average of 16-18 months.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Merlot and Cabernet Franc vines are planted according to the profile of each part of the vineyard. Work in the vineyard is done meticulously. Fermentation takes place gently and then the wine is aged in barrel for a duration adapted to each vintage. The final blend from this superb terroir results in delicious, elegant, and magnificently balanced wines.
<b>Serve with</b>	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.
<b>Production</b>	2,416 cases made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2023-2035
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>93 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2021</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p><b>97-98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2019</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 2022</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - September 2021</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p><b>97-99 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>89 points</b> - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2019</p> <p><b>100 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p><b>95-97+ points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p><b>16.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2019</p> <p><b>94-95 points</b> - Vert de Vin - April 2019</p> <p><b>18 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022</p> <p><b>16 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>“Warm cherry, raspberry and plum preserve flavors form the core here, with nicely polished structure supporting it through the finish where anise, black tea, singed alder, and savory details steadily emerge. A touch austere in feel, but the breed and length are there. Best from 2023 through 2035. 2,416 cases made.”</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>“A solid wine, with raspberry and red currant fruit adhering to chalk and iron notes, while ample grip drives underneath. Reveals a mouthwatering tobacco accent at the end. Merlot and Cabernet Franc.”</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>“Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2018 Larcis Ducasse needs a fair bit of swirling to unlock notes of crushed blackberries, plum preserves, and boysenberries with suggestions of black truffles, tapenade and crushed rocks coming through, building to a subtle underlying perfume of roses and cloves. The medium to full-bodied palate delivers mouth-coating black fruits and loads of savory sparks, framed by firm, slightly chewy tannins and just enough freshness, finishing long and earthy.”</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>“Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2018 Larcis Ducasse features wonderfully expressive scents of baked black and red plums, kirsch, rose hip tea and cigar box with hints of pencil shavings, baked redcurrants, and truffles plus a waft of licorice. Full-bodied and beautifully nuanced on the palate, it has layer upon layer of red and black fruit preserves with beautiful, velvety tannins and loads of freshness, finishing long and perfumed.”</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

**Reviews** *“Polished aromas of lavender, plum, dried blueberry, clove, sandalwood, and dark chocolate. Hints of praline. It’s full-bodied with firm, tightly knit tannins. Supple, seamless layers with great length and precision. Still reserved and tight. A toned and textured red with great structure. Try from 2026.”*

*- JS, JamesSuckling.com*

*“This is very structured and powerful with bright and electric acidity and fine-grained yet muscular tannins. Full-bodied yet compact and focused. Greatly formed. Flexing. Thoughtful.”*

*- JS, JamesSuckling.com*

*“A concentrated wine with big tannins and a smoky character, this is rich, darkly textured, and full of blackberry fruit. The wine is powerful, spicy, and fresh on the end. Barrel Sample:92-94.”*

*- RV, Wine Enthusiast*

*“Tasted blind. Distinctive sweaty-leathery nose. Round and very mellow on the palate. Sweet and charming – though again quite potent. Saline. Almost exaggerated... 14.5%. Drink 2024 – 2042.”*

*- JR, JancisRobinson.com*

*“Black core with the thinnest of purple rims. Has both cassis and a more wild elderberry aroma. Tannins are really definite but not thick, firm but rounded, and there’s freshness to counterbalance the fullness and power. Long, blackcurrant finish. Drink 2025-2035.”*

*- JH, JancisRobinson.com*

*“I would count this as the vintage where the wider world sat up and took notice of what has been happening at Larcis Ducasse. It’s poised, controlled, knitted down in its blackcurrant and bilberry fruits, but you feel the energy that flows through it, along with espresso, liquorice, black tea, and tons of fresh acidities that root it in the clay-limestone slopes. Owned by Famille Gratiot-Attmane, but with the Nicolas Thienpont team overseeing winemaking. I loved it En Primeur, and it has only got better since.”*

*- JA, Decanter.com*

*“Powerful but with a sense of restraint, this is extremely well handled in 2018. The difference between this and a more massive St-Emilion is subtle for sure - it’s unquestionably on the dark fruit register - but you notice it in the way that the tannins respond and bounce rather than stiffen up in the mouth. You can enjoy them as they close in around you rather than beg for air. The palate has lots of dark chocolate, liquorice, and slate notes, with cassis and blackberry fruits. This is from south-facing slopes, so there’s plenty of ripeness in the grapes, but the limestone helps to temper it, along with the natural water sources that are found at this spot. Owned by Famille Gratiot-Attmane, but with the Nicolas Thienpont team overseeing winemaking.”*

*- JA, Decanter.com*

*“With a good depth of color, the wine serves up its blend of roasted cherries, licorice, smoke, flowers, plum liqueur, espresso, kirsch, and black raspberries with zero effort. The wine is dense, full-bodied, and concentrated. Yet with all its weight and richness, everything is in balance. Texturally, all the fruit is drenched in velvet, rocks, and stones. The seamless finish sticks with you for at least 50 seconds.”*

*- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com*

*“The purple hue announces this is a wine to take notice of and 2018 is up to the task. Full-bodied, the wine hits your palate with layers of decadently textured fruit that never quits. It is hard to say what I was digging more, the opulence on the mouth or the cage match between the density and freshness. The match came to a draw. The seamless finish is nearly endless. The wine coats your palate and stains your teeth, remaining perfectly in balance. Made from blending 89% Merlot with 11% Cabernet Franc, it reached 14.5% alcohol. The harvest took place September 21 to October 4.”*

*- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com*

*“Glass-staining and inky in colour, the nose here is extremely sweet, with tarry liquorice and damson jam. The palate follows, dominated by liquorice and baked fruit. The tannins come in a rush and dry out the sweetness of fruit, leaving a rasping finish that feels out of sync with the warming alcohol. This is a very modern and extracted*

**Reviews** *wine, and whilst impressive in concentration, is an acquired taste.”*  
- Farr Vintners

*“The 2018 Larcis Ducasse has a charming, pretty bouquet of subtle floral scents of iris and peony as displayed in barrel. This is very well defined with mainly black fruit, though there is more blue fruit as it unfolds with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with fine-grained tannins. Interestingly, after an initial flourish, it seems to clam up with aeration and reveals a firm spine that ought to safeguard its longevity”*  
- NM, Vinous

*“The 2018 Larcis Ducasse is one of the real overachievers of the vintage. Richness and classicism meld together in a Saint-Émilion that dazzles from the very first taste. Rich dark fruit, mocha, licorice, espresso and leather all open in the glass. Time brings out bright acids and that firm spice of Larcis tannin. More than that, though, Larcis impresses with its exquisite balance and class. It is easily one of the most undervalued wines on the Right Bank. Don't let its modest price fool you. Larcis is one the most compelling wines of the vintage. Don't miss it!”*  
- AG, Vinous

*“A wine of total sophistication and class, Larcis Ducasse is fabulous in 2018. Freshly cut flowers, bright red fruit, espresso, licorice, and wildflowers are all vibrant in the glass. The 2018 marries fruit intensity, energy, and structure like few wines in this vintage. The 2018 is deceptive in its mid-weight structure, but it packs a real punch. There is an element of precision in Larcis that is truly remarkable. Even with all of its intensity, Larcis retains its characteristic linear feel and drive. I loved it. Tasted three times.”*  
- AG, Vinous

*“The 2018 Château Larcis Ducasse comes from a gorgeous hillside terroir on the Côte Pavie, located between Château Pavie and Château Bellefont-Belcier. It offers a truly sensational bouquet of ripe blackcurrants, espresso roast, scorched earth, bloody meat, chocolate, iron, and bouquet garni. A massive, super-rich Saint-Émilion with a dense, concentrated, layered mouthfeel, it has building yet sweet tannins and incredible purity of fruit. Reminding me of the 2005 shortly after release, this heavenly juice offers astonishing richness and depth while staying flawlessly balanced and elegant. Sadly, there are less than 3,000 cases produced, but this monumental, legendary wine won't hit maturity for a good 8-10 years and will have 40-50 years of longevity if well stored.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*“This deeply colored beauty offers a thrilling blue fruit quality as well as complex violets, graphite, and a liquid rock-like minerality. It's deep and thrillingly pure, with fine tannins and a beautiful finish. This is an incredible terroir, and the estate has been firing on all cylinders thanks to the talents of Nicolas Thienpont and David Suire. Give bottles 4-5 years (if you can) and it will keep for 30-40 years if you're so inclined.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*“This is a powerful Larcis, and the oak influence is quite strong, but the fruit has a lot of depth and perfume and even though there are some vegetal notes it is a sturdy, structured wine.”*  
- MJ, matthewjukes.com

*“Deep dark ruby, opaque core, violet tints, delicate watery edge. Dark berry fruit with mineral underlay, a hint of cherries, candied orange zest. Elegant, black berry, substantial texture, pleasant freshness, fine herbal savouriness on the aftertaste, good ageing potential.”*  
- Falstaff Magazine

*“The nose is elegant and offers a beautiful definition, precision as well as a fine concentration, a beautiful elegance and richness (full of finesse). It reveals notes of fleshy/crushed blueberry, crushed cassis, small notes of violet associated with touches of lily/iris, crushed raspberry, crushed plum as well as fine hints of liquorice stick, chocolate, vanilla pod, and an imperceptible hint of fresh mild tobacco. The palate is fresh, fruity, well-balanced and offers a small concentration, a beautiful definition, fullness as well as a precise fruit. On the palate this wine expresses notes of bright cassis, bright blackberry, small notes of raspberry associated with touches of violet, violet plum as well as small hints of liquorice, tonka bean and an imperceptible hint of mild tobacco leaf. Good length. Tannins are elegant and well-built. A discreet hint of tonka bean on the persistence.”*  
- Vert de Vin

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