

# Château LaGrange 2009

CSPC# 742346

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**  
**Appellation**  
**General Info**

*73% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot and 4% Petit Verdot*  
Saint-Julien

The vast vineyard of Lagrange spreads over 117 uninterrupted hectares in the Saint-Julien-appellation. In 1855, its passionate and visionary owner, the Count Duchâtel, ex-Home Secretary to King Louis-Philippe, who had introduced a drainage system in the vineyard, contributed to its classification as a third growth. The beginning of the 20th century was much less glorious as the economic conditions deteriorated. Despite several changes in ownership, the decline in business meant the estate had to be broken up: from 280 hectares in 1840, the domain had been reduced to 57 hectares by December 1983, when the Japanese group Suntory bought it from the Cendoya family, owners since 1925. By dint of more than twenty years of major efforts and investments, Château Lagrange is universally acknowledged as being back in excellent form after this restructuration which is considered as the most spectacular of the Medoc. In May 2007, Bruno Eyraud succeeded to Marcel Ducasse (1984-2007) as Director of Château Lagrange. In 2008 was realised a new refurbishing of the vinification room. In 2009, Château Lagrange innovated with the optical sort-out of the berries in order to face the great volume of berries to sort out in this big estate. The great care taken to the vineyard (yield control, harvest by hand) and the vinification plot by plot give birth each year to a rich and elegant wine, with a long ageing potential.

Surprisingly, 2009 is not a very hot year (nowhere near the heatwave of 2003), nor is it a very dry one such as 2002 or 2005. However, we can say that the arrival of rainfall and warmth corresponded perfectly to the vine's needs during its growth cycle. Indeed, after a cold and wet winter that replenished the water supply and postponed the bud break, the weather conditions during the blossoming period were excellent. Moreover, the climatic conditions during the months of August, September and October were very favorable. Dry, but never to the point of creating a water shortage and hot, but not to the point of burning the berries and dehydrating them. The three months leading up to the harvest brought us great quality potential.

In view of the exceptional weather conditions, we decide to stop the de-leafing to allow the leaves to protect the berries from the sunrays. The "toiletage" (a sort of elimination of the second-generation bunches) is relatively light as the climatic conditions and the homogeneity of the grapes do not require it.

**Vineyards**

Located entirely within the appellation of Saint-Julien, our vineyard stretches in a single block over two North-South rises of Gunzian gravelly soil. In parts large and coarse and in others finer, this gravel is combined with sand or iron-rich clay depending on the plots. With an altitude of 24 metres, the centre of the domain marks the highest point of Saint-Julien. The estate covers 157 hectares (390 acres), of which 115 hectares (284 acres) are under vine. Most of the plots benefit from a drainage system. The red grape varieties planted are those that typically thrive on the Médoc terroir, with 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot and 7% Petit Verdot. The Cabernet Sauvignon contributes structure and ageing potential, the Merlot roundness and body, and the Petit Verdot fruit and complexity.

As for the white wine, our Sauvignon (60%), Sémillon (30%) and Muscadelle (10%) are planted over 4 hectares (10 acres).

**Harvest**

Paradoxically, this year, the harvest dates are late. From 28th September to 10th October for the Merlot, from 6th to 16th October for the Cabernet-Sauvignon and on the 3rd October for the Petit-Verdot. Indeed, the recent research and knowledge about polyphenol maturity encouraged us to pick the grapes later and spread the harvest time over nineteen days.

**Maturation**

21 months in French oak - 60% new barrels



<b>Tasting Notes</b>	As in the last two vintages, Château Lagrange is highly marked by Cabernet Sauvignon. The blend for Château Lagrange is made from 73% Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Merlot. The blend is very similar to the vintage 2000 (CS: 76% ; M: 24%). We no longer need the tannins brought by the Petit-Verdot. These can be less elegant, and consequently reduce the expression of finesse in the wine, a typical quality of a great Saint-Julien.
<b>Production</b>	22,500 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2012-2024
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>91 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012</p> <p><b>91-94 points</b> - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010</p> <p><b>90+ points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012</p> <p><b>90-93 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2012</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - July 2012</p> <p><b>89-92 points</b> - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2011</p> <p><b>16.5-17.5+ points</b> - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010</p> <p><b>17 points/4 stars</b> - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2010</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This has a solid core of juicy plum, red currant and blackberry fruit that sits in reserve, while mouthwatering briar and toasty spice notes move along the edges. Grippy and focused through the finish, with well-embedded acidity. Best from 2013 through 2024. 22,500 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Intense aromas of blackberry and smoke. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and long finish. Solid and tight. As it should be. Score range: 91-94."</i></p> <p>- JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Tightly knit, oaky and rich, with formidable concentration, but broodingly backward and not showing the charm and concentration of the top wines of St.-Julien, this 2009 from Lagrange is still an outstanding effort that has length, richness and character. It should be cellared for a good 5-6 year. Drink over the following 25 years."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"A slightly lighter, less powerful style of St.-Julien, but also less oaky than previous vintages have tended to be, ... offers attractive, fresh, red and black currant notes, and an elegant as well as corpulent attack and mid-palate. This wine does not have the weight of the "big boys" of St.-Julien, but it displays an endearing finesse, freshness, and purity. It is by no means a wimpish, understated wine, but in the context of the 2009 vintage, it is somewhat overwhelmed by many of its neighbors. Enjoy it over the next two decades. (Tasted two times.)"</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Tasted at the Union de Grand Cru in London. The Lagrange 2009 has an earthy, slightly introverted nose at the moment although it opens ajar with aeration with hints of lavender and crushed flower. The palate is medium bodied with a fresh, citrus entry, great delineation and a wonderful build of flavours on the mouth, a subtle crescendo as it were. This is so very refined and classy. Tasted October 2011."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Journal</p> <p><i>"This Japanese-owned third growth is very Cabernet Sauvignon in style, with firm, slightly four-square tannins, but good underlying acidity and bright blackcurrant fruit. The tannins should soften in barrel and bottle to produce something with considerable style and restraint. 10+ years."</i></p> <p>- TA, timatkin.com</p>

## Reviews

*"A very deep, almost opaque garnet/purple colour. The nose has beautiful definition with scents of ripe blackberries, small black cherries, blueberry, a touch of mint and cedar. Very focused with the oak completely in synch with the fruit. Seamless tannins on the full-bodied palate, lively and animated, very taut, this is not the cashmere wine of Ducru for example, a little firmer in terms of the backbone, very well balanced, perhaps a little more masculine. Tightly coiled towards the espresso/minerally finish, really leaving a tingle of excitement on the tongue. Superb – real finesse in the wine, although that comes through leaving it for five minutes in the glass. The sample at the UGC showed more harmony and cohesion than the one at the chateau. Tasted March 2010."*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*"Ripe wine, with soft tannins allied to great density. Weight and lovely, juicy, final fruit flavors meld together easily. This is solid, dense, impressive and for long-term aging."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"93-95 Barrel sample. Tight wine, the tannins firm, giving considerable dryness. With its dark texture, this is solid, but finishing with the freshest of blackcurrant juice."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"(Saturated medium ruby. Sexy aromas of cassis, licorice, menthol and cedar. Tightly wound, classic and intense, with sharply delineated flavors of dark berries, violet and minerals complemented by well-integrated oak. Dense, suave Saint-Julien wine with a very fresh, slightly austere finish. With its solid structure and excellent length, this will require at least five or six years of cellaring. A superb vintage for this property."*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar

*"Dark ruby. Precise aromas of flowers, redcurrant, dried herbs, cedar and tobacco. Lush, rich and fine-grained, with lovely inner-mouth spicy and floral lift to its pure redcurrant and cranberry flavors complicated by graphite and ink. Finishes with a pretty mineral persistence and high-quality but youthfully aggressive tannins that beg for a little more time to resolve fully. Not a blockbuster but charming and stylish, in typical Lagrange fashion. The higher-than-normal cabernet presence makes this a distinctly sturdy example of Lagrange."*  
- ID, International Wine Cellar

*"Dark crimson. Purple rim. Very sweet indeed on the nose - unusually so for St-Julien. Glamorous and luscious with a hint of ink and freshness. Lots to enjoy! The tannins are very well handled, and it is pure pleasure. Maybe lacks just a hint of freshness. Date tasted 1st April 2010. Drink 2016-2028."*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*"There is something quite enticing about the fruit aromatics here; there is a bright and open perfume to them that is undoubtedly appealing. And unlike many of the wines tasted here this is unhindered by a liberal application of oak. The palate is fresh and perhaps does not have the weight of many other wines. There is a substance and depth hinted at towards the finish, but otherwise it remains very finely polished but perhaps lacking a little in grit and texture. I think it is the flesh of the vintage more than anything else, and it should come good given time. There is certainly a grippy structure in the finish to suggest this, giving it a long and masculine finish. From a tasting of 2009 Bordeaux at two years of age. 17.5/20 (October 2011)."*  
- CK, The Wine Doctor

*"A very dark, crimson-black rim. Sweet fruit on the nose, all damsons and cherries, partly macerated in alcohol. Creamed fruit on the palate, very well composed, with lovely acidity too. It has a very fresh bite to it, welcome in view of the exuberant fruit. Well covered tannins, slightly savoury, fresh, yet intensely rich and really quite spicy. An attractive wine, although off the wall for the classicists I would think. From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 16.5-17.5+/20 (March 2010)."*  
- CK, The Wine Doctor

*"Black red, concentrated and smoky blackcurrant fruit with a little herby lift, very good firm fruit, still quite tight, but concentration and balance assure a good future. Drink 2015-28."*  
- SS, Decanter.com