

Château Lafite Rothschild 2015

CSPC# 749573

750mlx6

12.8% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

First Growth. Premier Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

Website

<http://www.lafite.com/eng>

General Info

Château Lafite Rothschild is one of the most renowned wine properties in the Médoc. Owned by Baron Eric de Rothschild and Lafite Rothschild is also one of the largest Médoc estates.

The vineyards of Ch. Lafite are found at the northern tip of the Pauillac appellation, just below the boundary with St. Estèphe. There is evidence of an estate on this site as far back as the 14th century, and of exports of wine to the UK in the early 17th century. The current owners, the Rothschilds of the famous banking dynasty, bought the property in 1866, but this is a different brand of the family from that which purchased Ch. Mouton-Rothschild. For many years, the Rothschilds' control of Lafite was very much exercised at a distance, compared to the hands-on influence of Baron Philippe at Mouton, but since the Second World War this has changed somewhat, with the current owner, Eric de Rothschild, presiding over an extensive programme of investment in both vineyard and cellar. Throughout the 20th century Lafite was dogged by periods of inconsistency, often producing sublime wines but also failing to live up to its billing in other years. Since 1994, however the estate has been under the control of Charles Chevalier, and he has brought about not just an admirable level of consistency but has also been responsible for some truly brilliant wines often vying for the title of "Wine of the Vintage".

Winemaker

Christophe Congé

Vintage

A recurring phenomenon in recent years, the beginning of the winter was mild and dry, and it was only at the end of January that beneficial colder temperatures arrived, accompanied by rain. Bud break began in early April as usual, and the vines then grew quickly, as they had ample reserves of water and the weather was mild. In June, flowering was early and uniform, which is always a promising sign.

The influence of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gironde estuary helped to reduce the effect of a somewhat hot summer with high temperatures. Water stress was high, but rain in August brought the freshness required for the grapes to change colour and then to ripen perfectly. Conditions were ideal during the harvests, enabling us to obtain optimal ripeness for each plot.

Vineyards

All told the Lafite estate amounts to 178 hectares, although of this only 112 hectares are planted to vines, with the varieties dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon (71%), then Merlot (25%), Cabernet Franc (3%) and just a little Petit Verdot (1%). Average vine age is 45 years, although young vines (here meaning less than 10 years old) are not included in the *grand vin*, so those that are included have an average age of about 45 years. There are a few plots of more advanced age, including La Gravière, which was planted in 1886, and a number where the vines are between 50 and 80 years old. The *terroir* underfoot is typically gravelly, with Aeolian sands on a bedrock of tertiary limestone, known locally as *calcaire de St Estèphe*.

Harvest

Harvest took place between 17 September and 6 October 2015.

Maturation

Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, after which the wine is run off into barrels, 100% new for Lafite itself for 18 months.

Tasting Notes

Very dark colour, with purple glints, indicating that the wine is still very much in its youth. The nose is still quite closed, which is to be expected after only a few months in the bottle. But it already presents good depth and plenty of complexity. Notes of fresh strawberries and tobacco, in which the wood has become perfectly integrated. The attack is simultaneously supple and very powerful. The intensity on the palate



Tasting Notes	rises steadily... gently coming to rest on a plateau that is already very high. Not at all aggressive, it continues with great length, and in perfect harmony. This is a Lafite that is currently revealing very little of its potential; to experience it in its full glory will require waiting... for some years.
Serve with	Chateau Lafite Rothschild is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes.
Production	16,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2025-2045
Scores/Awards	<p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018</p> <p>96+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018</p> <p>94-96 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016</p> <p>95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018</p> <p>99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018</p> <p>97-98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016</p> <p>100 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018</p> <p>95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2015</p> <p>18 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017</p> <p>96 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2016</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017</p> <p>95-97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016</p> <p>93-94++ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2016</p> <p>98 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016</p> <p>17.5+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2016</p> <p>96-98 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016</p> <p>96 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016</p> <p>96+ points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018</p> <p>94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016</p> <p>96 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018</p> <p>18.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016</p> <p>96-98 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016</p> <p>19 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016</p> <p>17 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016</p> <p>19 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - June 2016</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Velvet- and silk-textured red currant, raspberry and black cherry compote notes glide through, supported by a perfectly embedded graphite spine, while enticing violet, black tea and alder accents add range through the finish. Very refined and sneakily long. Best from 2025 through 2045. 16,000 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The deep garnet-purple shaded 2015 Lafite Rothschild is blended of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Merlot and was matured for 20 months in new oak barrels from Tonnellerie des Domaines (their own cooperage). It is still sporting a lot of cedar at this nascent stage with a vibrant core of black raspberries, red currants and crushed plums plus touches of cigar boxes, violets and underbrush with a waft of tilled loam. Medium-bodied and elegantly styled with wonderful freshness and depth, it is compellingly earthy/minerally in the mouth with a frame of seductively silky yet very firm tannins and culminating in a very long, racy and pure finish. Boasting spectacular finesse and packed with nuances, clearly, given some of the challenges here in 2015, this is a masterpiece of diligence in the vineyards, careful selection and very clever crafting—bravo!"</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2015 Lafite-Rothschild is a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Merlot picked between 17 September and 6 October. Matured in 100% new oak, it has a tightly wound bouquet with black cherries, cassis, cedar and graphite, though it does not quite possess the depth one would have expected the vintage would have bestowed. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannin, harmonious on the entry and with the oak neatly integrated. There is a very fine grip towards the finish, which has a tangible spicy edge - white pepper with a touch of bay leaf and enough pencil lead to fill a stationery set. The aftertaste is extremely long here, more than a minute when I timed it on my watch. It is an excellent Lafite-Rothschild in the making and it often "finds its voice" only after bottling, so it could ultimately end with a higher score."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2015 Lafite Rothschild, which was bottled in May 2017, has a very refined bouquet with blackberry, bilberry, hints of cassis and violets, all beautifully defined. It is initially quite understated but blossoms in the glass. The palate is medium bodied with fine, slightly chalky tannin. The acidity here is perfectly pitched, lending tension and that sense of vibrancy that winemaker Eric Kohler talks about. It just seems to flow nicely along before fanning out toward the precise finish although I still believe that its proximity to Saint-Estèphe that suffered more pre-harvest rain possibly shaved off a little of what could have been. Nevertheless, this is a Lafite that seems to run like clockwork, and it will surely give immense pleasure over the next 20 or 30 years."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Lead and graphite are complimented by notes of blueberries and blackberries. Blackcurrants, too. Full-bodied and focused with very round and polished tannins. Elegance with power. Very classic nature for Lafite. Try in 2022."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Here is a Lafite with lots of muscle and tone. Very tannic and velvety textured. Full body, fresh acidity and a bright finish. Shows a tenderness at the end. Gorgeous."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is a great vintage from Lafite. The profile is rich in feel, with a seriously firm tannic structure. Solid, complex and with great authority, this Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant wine, is impressively dense in dark-fruit tones. It will age for many years. Drink from 2027, although that would almost be too soon."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"95-97. Barrel Sample. Almost entirely Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a seriously structured wine. It has dense tannins that dominate the potential fruits with their firm, never hard touch. The fresh character of the fruits is just beginning to show in a wine that will develop slowly."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"91% Cabernet Sauvignon picked 23 September to 6 October; 9% Merlot picked 17-23 September. Lustrous mid crimson. Lightly spicy nose and very smooth tannins in the Lafite style. Only just enough acidity. Blurry impression. Mild and charming - very restrained and Lafite. It builds on the end in an impressive manner."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"The Lafite violets come to the fore, providing finely polished elegance to the palate. It seems discreet, but the cellar master says 2015 is the most 'concentrated' Lafite they have made. This will show as it matures."

- SS, Decanter.com

"The power in this vintage of Lafite is hidden, but it is there in spades and tiptoes up along the palate. Lovely brushed tannins are extremely well placed, discreetly holding the fruit. In many ways this is a truly classic Lafite because it is understated and lyrical. It's a wine that demands you know Lafite to see just how beautifully it will develop, says winemaker Eric Kohler. 40% of overall estate production. 100% new oak. (JA)"

- JA, Decanter.com

"Finesse and elegance are what you hope to find at Lafite, which is exactly what is in the bottle this year. An exotic fragrance of smoke, thyme, cedar, damp earth and the wrapper of a Cuban cigar, this wine is vibrant and juicy, flowing with seasoned cassis, black raspberries, spice box and cherries. This wine combines silk and freshness in the mouth with length and purity. The Merlot harvest took place between September 17 and September 23, the Cabernet Sauvignon was picked between September 23 and October 6. Neither Cabernet Franc or Petit Verdot was used in the blend this year. The wine represents 42% of the harvest, reaching 12.8% with a pH of 3.69."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

“Mid depth; purple edge; mineral tones and cool blackcurrant aromatics; some graphite and spice; elegant aromatics; quite compact on the palate; measured style; fruit a bit tight and the acidity showed through on the day. Tannins are fine but considerable. A degree of freshness on the finish – almost grippy. Will put on weight during élevage I hope. [91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot]. Drink 2023-2035. Tasted 4/4/16. 93-94+”
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

“A wine that has divided opinions in 2015. What some people see as greenness, I regard as freshness and balance. This is elegant and harmonious, but doesn't lack stuffing, carrying its 100% new oak with ease. Graphite, blackcurrant and cedar wood are underpinned by chalky minerality. Drink: 2022-30”
- TA, timatkin.com

“Such was the demand from Asia a few years ago that Lafite was selling at much higher prices than the other First Growths. However, we are now back to reality. Medium-deep purple colour. A nose that defines elegance and purity, with blackcurrant etched and defined, layered with a little toasted almond, sweet vanilla and a little cedar. The palate has a silky-smooth entry and remains that way due to very fine, refined and ripe tannins. Pure cassis and a little wood smoke give way to creamy vanilla and an almost aromatic violet note. This is perfumed, understated and perfectly poised. The finish is long and fine. This is very refined, focusing on elegance rather than power.”
- Farr Vintners

“Woodland violets fragrance the nose has charm the start of the palate is fresh. There is depth of fruit in the middle rich flavours velvet smoothness suppleness the fruit underpinned by fine tannins. Under the rich mix of cassis and black cherry bilberry refreshes and lightens the back palate is lifted fragrant ethereal and long.”
- Derek Smedley MW

“The nose is subtle - tobacco, cigars, earth. The palate is riper with dark berry fruit, fine grained, sumptuous tannins that although firm and high in quantity seems gentle. A complex, restrained Lafite that is quintessential in its delicate, layered expression; a classy wine that is restrained, intense and focused.”
- JCL, asianpalate.com

“Rich, powerful and enveloping, the 2015 Lafite-Rothschild is endowed with serious volume and textural resonance. Super-ripe plum, smoke and spice notes emerge in the glass, but only with great reluctance. Although the aromatics aren't giving much at this point, the palate is much more expressive. The wine's sheer power and authoritative tone result in an unusually dramatic Lafite. The 2015 is 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Merlot that spent 20 months in oak, which is a bit more than the norm. 2025 – 2055”
- AG, Vinous

“A dramatic, ample Lafite, the 2015 is also arrestingly beautiful and vivid. Expressive floral notes give the dark red and black flavors gorgeous aromatic lift. Today, the new oak is a bit pronounced, but otherwise, this is an exceptional wine. Rose petal, lavender, mint and purplish stone fruits add the last shades of detail.”
- AG, Vinous

“With much more power and intensity than the second wine, Carruades, and an awful lot more Cabernet in the blend this is a darker, swarthier, more pagan Lafite with stunning purity and lift and remarkably forward fruit. The slender chassis seems to be more upholstered than the alcohol suggests meaning that this wine will evolve very slowly over a very long time. While not a bombastic style, this is a scintillatingly attractive Lafite, with a slightly wild side hinting at more drama to come in time.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com

“The grand vin 2015 Lafite-Rothschild checks in as 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Merlot that was brought all in 100% new oak. Director Eric Kohler (who replaced Charles Chevalier in 2015) told me the vintage suffered a touch of dilution but wasn't a complicated year. The 2015 is an aristocratic, classy example from this estate that offers textbook lead pencil shavings, tobacco, smoked herbs, and graphite as well as a beautiful core of currant and cassis fruit. It's the most refined and subtle of the first growths, has medium to full-bodied richness, building tannin, and undeniable class and charm. Give bottles 4-5 years of bottle age and enjoy over the following 2-3 decades. 2023 – 2053”
- Jeb Dunnuck
