

# Château Lafite Rothschild 2009

CSPC# 749573

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot

## Appellation

Pauillac

## 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 Chevallier, 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".

## Vintage

The beginning of the growth cycle was a tricky period due to a rather warm, very wet spring. The team had to be particularly vigilant in order to protect the vines.

Fine, stable weather returned in June and continued throughout the summer. In fact conditions became drought like, interspersed in July, August and September with welcome periods of light rain. Plenty of sunshine, with temperatures that were high without becoming scorching, and fairly cool nights enabled slow ripening that pushed the start of the harvests back to the end of September.

Exceptionally favourable weather conditions, crowned by harvests in the sun, made for a vintage that is certain to be outstanding.

## 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 38 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

Grapes are hand-harvested, and vinified parcel by parcel.

## Maturation

Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, after which the wine is run off into barrels, 100% new for Lafite itself, a mixture of new and one-year-old barrels for the second wine.

## Tasting Notes

A deep bouquet of dark fruit and liquorice. The palate is full-bodied and surprisingly expressive, but then becomes tighter, expressing power and exuberance. The youth of this Lafite does not hide its energy, but the distinctive elegance and complexity are already there!

## Production

20,000 cases made

## Cellaring

Drink 2020-2072



**Scores/Awards** **98 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012  
**96-99 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010  
**99+ points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012  
**98-100 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010  
**97 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012  
**98-100 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010  
**95-97 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010  
**96-99 points** - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010  
**19 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010  
**19-19.5+ points** - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010  
**19 points/5 stars** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010  
**97-99 points** - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2010  
**95 points/18 points** - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2010

**Reviews** *"This is stunning for its ability to take massively endowed fig, currant paste and crushed plum fruit flavors and harness them with ultra suave freshly roasted espresso, black tea and ganache notes. A seductive style, long and velvety, with the dense core of black fruit and smoldering iron just waiting and waiting. Best from 2020 through 2040"*

- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Offers currant and wild raspberry, with a lilac and exotic character on the nose, turning to sweet tobacco and cedar. Full-bodied, showing very racy tannins and a balance of pretty fruit. This is powerful yet elegant, almost delicate, with a wonderful polish. But then the tannins take off. Muscular yet agile. A very classic Bordeaux style. Score range: 96-99"*

- JS, Wine Spectator

*"The main reason the 2009 Lafite Rothschild did not receive a perfect score is because the wine has closed down slightly, but it is unquestionably another profound Lafite, their greatest wine since the amazing 2003. Among the most powerful Lafites ever made (it came in at 13.59% alcohol), the final blend was 82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot and the rest Petit Verdot. The selection was incredibly severe with only 45% of the crop being utilized. A tight, but potentially gorgeous nose of graphite, black currants, licorice and camphor is followed by a full-bodied wine revealing the classic elegance, purity and delineated style of Lafite. It is phenomenally concentrated with softer tannins than the 2005, the 2003's voluptuous, broad, juicy personality, and low acidity. There are several vintages that I thought were a replay of their colossal 1959, most notably 1982 and 2003, but 2009 is also one to keep an eye on. It is still extremely youthful and seems slightly more backward than I would have guessed based on the barrel tastings, but it needs 10-15 years of bottle age, and should last for 50+."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"The 2009 Lafite Rothschild is a candidate for "wine of the vintage." Although the 2003 was powerful (12.9% alcohol), the 2009 came in at 13.4% alcohol. It is a blend of 82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot. Only 45% of the crop went into the grand vin, which may be the most concentrated Lafite I have ever tasted. There is not a hard edge to be found in this inky/purple-colored wine displaying notes of charcoal, incense, black currants, and licorice. In the mouth, it represents a liqueur of black fruits offered in a remarkably full-bodied, incredibly elegant, lush style. Expansive, savory, staggeringly concentrated, and voluptuous as well as wonderfully precise with a hint of minerality, this sensational wine's technical numbers are off the charts. Is this a replay of the 1959? Although it will be surprisingly approachable in its youth, this is a 50-100-year wine. (Tasted once.)"*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"The Lafite-Rothschild 2009 is a dark, limpid purple colour. The nose is very closed and so I jabber with Charles Chevalier for ten minutes before returning and...well, not much more...but one can sense the intensity that bubbling under like a smoking volcano: blackberry, vitamin, graphite and a touch of black olive. The palate is medium-bodied but with bold tannins, perhaps unusually expressing more weight than Latour at this juncture although that could change. It has beguiling intensity and focus with great length and persistency, leading to a masculine, grippy finish that says: bummer off and don't come back for 10-15 years...or else. Exceptionally fine. Tasted November 2011."*

- NM, Wine Journal

## Reviews

*"Tasted at the chateau from a sample taken on 19th March 2009 and the sample left 20-30 minutes before approaching. The Lafite 2009 has a very dark, almost opaque black/purple hue. The nose is very intense with blackberries, griottes, a touch of apricot and an almost sorbet like freshness. Powerful but also, so graceful and elegant, nothing over-ambitious. The palate is full-bodied with silky smooth tannins, seamless texture, pure blackberry, plum, minerals, crushed stones. I have never tasted a Lafite at this stage so elegant and graceful. The puissance is deceptive, only at the finish are there lapping waves of pure, heavenly black cherries, minerals, a touch of cassis, cedar and graphite. Astounding persistency. Tasted March 2010."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"95-97 Barrel sample. A powerful expression of Cabernet Sauvignon, solid in structure. The wine is rich and concentrated, very textured. Great spice goes with just enough fresh acidity, in this big wine"*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"(a blend of 82.5% cabernet sauvignon, 17% merlot, and 0.5% petit verdot; 13.8% alcohol; 75 IPT; a 43% selection of the total crop) Deep ruby-red. The deep, intense nose is a bit more forward than usual for Lafite, displaying classic, pure aromas of cassis, cedar and graphite. Enters the mouth beautifully pure and fresh, with laser-like precision to its deceptively light blackcurrant, blackberry, cedar and mineral flavors. The exceptionally refined tannins give this wine an utterly seamless quality on the pure, extremely long, mineral-driven finish. Though it will be drinking well sooner than usual, this truly remarkable wine will be enjoyed by your grandchildren as well. Is it lacking just a bit of flesh to reach a perfect score? This may yet turn out to be the wine of the vintage and is an archetypical expression of the unique characteristics of great Bordeaux cabernet sauvignon."*

- ID, International Wine Cellar

*"43% of the crop. 82.5% Cabernet Sauvignon(!), 17% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot. Deep, lustrous, dark crimson. Mineral, low-key nose, slow to open, but it did with time into something really very refined with great minerality. Very muted and super-restrained. Very fine boned, with a bit more flesh than is usual for Lafite but no flashiness whatsoever. Bravo for making such a good wine in such a buoyant market. Even a hint of milk chocolate! Though no trace of oak. Very vibrant, very fine and a great undertow. Very complex and subtle indeed. Bone dry finish. A little less ethereal than usual. Super refined. Bravo!"*

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*"Cabernet Sauvignon 82.5%, Merlot 17%, Petit Verdot 0.5%. 43% of the harvest. Very dark, a touch glossy. On the nose an elegant layer of creamed fruit here, reserved rather than exuberant. Slightly smoky, but very well defined and composed. The palate has a fine layer of creamed fruit which slowly unfolds on the palate, and it covers the alcohol very well, as well as the building tannin. Beautifully sweet, rich, expansive but also well contained within the frame of acidity. This is an exciting and very vibrant wine. Very stylish, composed and elegant, with a sleek and seamless composition, yet with great depth. Overall a brilliantly fashioned wine here. This will be magnificent, a Pauillac that should evolve into a wine of great elegance and beauty. From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 19-19.5+/20 (March 2010)"*

- CK, The Wine Doctor

*"Black purple red, elegant concentration of pure Lafite Cabernets, wild violets, succulent yet restrained fruit, both fleshy and firm, superb middle palate, not massively structured but like a Gothic cathedral: austere on the outside and soaring to great heights in the inside."*

- SS, Decanter.com

**Reviews** *“Blend is 82.5% cabernet sauvignon, 17% merlot, 0.5% petit verdot. There is less depth of colour than in some years, and on the palate, it is truly surprising. This has that softness of tannins that was evident in Chateau Margaux and is a signature of the confident winemaking of the very top chateaux in 2009. The tannins are very definitely there, but more of a benign force than a controlling one – instead they are soft, well balanced and fully integrated, even at this early stage. A lovely depth of fruit – red fruits mixed in with the tighter black fruits, again a very marked characteristic of this year. Not even the slightest hint of over-doing one single part of this wine. Harvesting of the merlot began on 23 September and went through until the petit verdot finished on 8 October. This is so different from the intense wine of last year. It’s utterly delicious, very elegant.”*  
- JA, The New Bordeaux

*“Showing a black color with a fine, subtle, fruity and noble nose, the 2009 Lafite offers hints of red and black fruits. Lovely, soft and silky on entry, this wine then develops aromatic over a good body, even if I expected more flesh on the mid-palate. It displays a gorgeous woven length, made of fine grains along with an unprecedented creamy sensation. But above all, the wine is beautifully enhanced by a superb and wonderfully long and aromatic length of black fruit fragrance. Plenty of finesse. A blend of 82,5 % cabernet sauvignon, 17 % merlot and 0.5 % petit verdot - Alcohol content: 13.45% - IPT: 77 95”*  
- J-MQ

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