

GRAND VIN DE LAFITE ROTHSCHILD

CELLARS AND VINEYARDS

THE VINEYARD

The vineyard consists of three main areas: the hillsides around the Château, the adjacent Carruades plateau to the west, and 4.5 hectares in neighbouring Saint Estèphe.

The grape varieties are Cabernet Sauvignon (70%), Merlot (25%), Cabernet Franc (3%) and Petit Verdot (2%).

The average age of the grapevines is 39 years old. But it should be noted that vines younger than 10 years old are not used in the Grand Vin.

Both châteaux use exactly the same traditional techniques, based on strict control of yields, manual harvests, and numerous tasks that are carried out by hand all through the year.

THE CELLARS

The grapes from each plot are fermented in separate vats in order to preserve the identity of the terroir on which the grapes have ripened.

Upon completion of alcoholic fermentation, the cuvée-wines are tasted before being drawn off to the fine wine vats.

All of the barrels come from the Domaines cooperage, with a special “toasting” during manufacturing suited to the characteristics of the wine.

Château Lafite’s circular cellar room was constructed under the supervision of the architect Ricardo Bofill and inaugurated in 1987.





CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD

PREMIER CRU CLASSÉ, PAUILLAC 1983

71% Cabernet Sauvignon - 25% Merlot - 3% Cabernet Franc - 1% Petit Verdot

Weather: A difficult year in terms of weather: mastery of anti-parasite and anti-fungal treatments played a decisive role in maintaining crop yields. Winter was mild, spring cold and damp; summer was very hot and punctuated by storms. Heavy rainfall until mid-September preceded an exceptional late fall that put summer's uncertainty definitively to rest. The harvest took place between September 28 and October 18, without a single drop of rain.

NOTES ON THE VINTAGE

"Very good-quality wines, fruity, well balanced; some can still take further aging." -Gilbert Rokvam, Château Lafite estate manager, 1983 Gilbert Rokvam succeeded Jean Créte as estate manager this year.

"This is a little more evolved than the other two 1980s wines in the lineup here. The 1983 vintage was a little more difficult in Pauillac than down in Margaux, but the evolution has been extremely slow and it still tastes hugely enticing, with cigar box and touches of underripe tea leaf notes balanced by some lovely soft cassis and brambly autumnal fruits edged with cold ash."-Jane Anson, tasted at a dinner in 2018 celebrating 150 years of Rothschild ownership.



Château Lafite: The Almanac, by Saskia de Rothschild

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CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD

PREMIER CRU CLASSÉ, PAUILLAC 1986

69% Cabernet Sauvignon - 16% Cabernet Franc - 15% Merlot

Weather: A cold, damp spring; a beautiful, hot May and June compensated for delayed growth. Good flowering; summer was hot until mid-September, interrupted by several rain showers. (It rained less in Pauillac than elsewhere.) A storm moved in on September 23 and the harvest began on September 29.

NOTES ON THE VINTAGE

"This crop produced wines that are black and very concentrated without being heavy, with a pronounced tannic character. In a word, they are the surprising synthesis of 1945 and 1949. This is a great vintage that can be left to age forever, because it is very structured and adapted to the longest aging times". -Charles Chevallier, at Lafite in 1986 with Gilbert Rokvam.

These wines arrived on the market after the 1985; very, very tannic, solid, almost austere, but fabulous when they opened up. Do not forget to decant the wine in the morning if planning to drink it in the evening. Often compared to the 1953, it combines richness, elegance, balance, and suppleness.



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CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD

PREMIER CRU CLASSÉ, PAUILLAC 1990

57% Cabernet Sauvignon - 30% Merlot - 13% Cabernet Franc

Weather: A climate worthy of 1982: the weather was very mild and sunny from January to March. Bud break was precocious, occurring on March 15. An early spring brought beneficial rains in April. An early and successful flowering was followed by a scorching summer that reached the record temperatures experienced in 1947 and 1949. Timely rains arrived in August, followed by several alarming storms in September. It wasn't until September 13, far past the usual 110 days separating flowering and harvest, that grapes of exceptional richness were finally picked.

NOTES ON THE VINTAGE

"Those who appreciate our wines must think that the inhabitants of Bordeaux signed a pact with God (or the Devil!) to produce one year-of-the-century after another for some time now! But recent years have been different, and each time, for various meteorological reasons, we have trembled and feared losing a beautiful crop. Perfect sanitary conditions, that goes without saying, a superb level of alcohol, great concentration, beautiful tannins, but also-and what a divine surprise! -to the amazement of all the experts, quantities will not be small." -Baron Eric de Rothschild.



Château Lafite: The Almanac, by Saskia de Rothschild

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LES HAUTS DE SMITH

GRAND CRU CLASSÉ, PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2019

100% Sauvignon Blanc

Made from a blend of wines from Château Smith Haut Lafitte, Les Hauts de Smith are fermented and aged with just as much care as the Grand Vin. From the vineyard to the cellar, exactly the same winemaking techniques are used.

Yield: 32 hl/ha, before production was divided into three wines: Château Smith Haut Lafitte, Les Hauts de Smith, and Le Petit Haut Lafitte.

Fermentation: The grapes are hand-picked into small crates and pressed in an oxygen-free environment using inert gas to retain the grapes aromatic potential, followed by fermentation in French oak barrels (50% new oak) and cold settling.

Ageing: 12 months on the lees in barrels (50% new oak) from our own on-site cooperage.

Average age of the vines: 11 years old.

TASTING NOTES FROM FABIEN TEITGEN, WINEMAKER

Bright pale yellow color, citrus and white flowers on the nose with a distinctive scent of ripe lemon, juicy peach, with hints of lychee and passion fruit. The palate offers precision and suavity, fresh notes of pink grapefruit n rose and roasted almonds. Balanced, vivid and tight, finishing with a mineral touch.

