



CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD 1999

■ VINEYARD ATTRIBUTES

Appellation : AOC Pauillac, Bordeaux, France

Pauillac is located on the left bank of the Gironde estuary, approximately 40km North of Bordeaux. With the tempering influence of the estuary and a great diversity of soils originated from both the Massif Central and the Pyrenees, Pauillac boasts exceptional climatic and geological conditions to make outstanding wines.

Terroir : Chateau Lafite Rothschild is located to the north of the appellation, bordering Saint Estèphe. Lafite's best terroirs stretch on the 50ha Plateau des Carruades to the west of the Château. This plateau, which is the highest point of the Pauillac appellation, is well-drained and enjoys optimal sun exposure. Its clayey gravel soils offer excellent water regulating abilities, and provide optimal ripening conditions for the Cabernet Sauvignon.

Some 4.5 ha planted in the neighbouring Saint Estephe appellation, count amongst the oldest vines of the property and provide year after year grapes of outstanding quality for the Grand Vin.

■ VINTAGE SUMMARY

1999 was an early year, which meant we were kept rather busy throughout the vines growth period. This was "enlivened" by numerous technical challenges, that proved interesting to solve. The winter was mild like almost all the others in the decade and was followed by a beautiful spring and an early flowering.

From July to mid-August, the days were relatively damp and characterized by parsimonious sunshine.

The harvests took place very quickly (over 10 days) from 21 September to 2 October, during a fairly wet period. But technical progress has allowed us to understand that grapes, provided they are thoroughly ripe, which was the case after the superb September, can be harvested in the rain without coming to any harm. The harvest was carried out by hand and sorted with a reinforced team of pickers (over 420 people).

■ WINE MAKING SCHEME

In order to reveal the magic of Lafite's terroir, every step of the wine elaboration is carried out with the greatest precision. Depending of their provenance and level of ripeness, grapes will be transferred into either wooden, stainless steel or concrete vats. Alcoholic fermentation is conducted at controlled temperature, with regular pumping over to gently release all the phenolic compounds in the grapes. Each vat is carefully monitored and tasted daily in order to determine the best racking time. The maceration period varies for each tank but is around 20 days in total.

After malolactic fermentation wines are transferred into French oak barrels. Lafite has its own cooperage in Pauillac, la Tonnellerie des Domaines, which contributes to its unique style. The selection for the grand vin is made in March, once the wines have settled and start revealing their full potential. Every barrel is tasted individually and only the best ones are set aside for the final blend.

Once blended, the wine is aged for a further 15 months in barrels, primarily of new oak.

■ TASTING NOTES

The wine was made with four grape varieties, which is relatively rare (Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot hardly ever appear together in the grand vin).

This vintage has a pleasantly woody, spicy nose; the palate is structured and well balanced, gradually increasing in power with great elegance; the finish is long and characterized by very red, ripe fruit.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Cabernet sauvignon 74%, Merlot 18,50%, Cabernet franc 6%, Petit verdot 1,50%

Alcohol content : 13 % vol.

Total acidity : 3.45 g/l