



CARRUADES DE LAFITE 2003

■ 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 Pauillac appellation, bordering Saint-Estèphe. The vineyard consists of three main areas : the hillsides around the Château, the adjacent Carruades plateau to the west, and 4.5 hectares in Saint Estèphe appellation. The vineyard covers 112 hectares with soil made up of fine deep gravel, mixed with aeolian sand on a subsoil of tertiary limestone. It is well-drained and benefits from optimal sun exposure.

■ VINTAGE SUMMARY

Low rainfall and a heat wave marked the climatic year. From October 2002 to September 2003 total rainfall was only 555mm (the average annual rainfall is 850 mm). However, this lack of water ultimately had little effect, as the soil remained relatively cool and the vines did not suffer from lack of water. In fact, the vintage owes its particular characteristics to the excessive heat the first fortnight of August. Temperatures were truly exceptional (above 40°C), halting the ripening process and reducing berry size. The harvests were very early and over quickly, taking place from 8 to 24 September in excellent conditions. The relatively small sized berries gave little juice during the running-off period.

■ WINE MAKING SCHEME

These particular conditions made the vintage a challenge for our oenologists. The developments in the fermentation process were often in contradiction with the analyses, allowing a rebalancing of the musts, which bore the mark of the heat wave (lower than usual potential tannin and low acidity). But the natural balance won out and when the wines were tasted at the end of the malolactic fermentation, they were ripe, balanced and even quite lively.

■ TASTING NOTES

Early tasting of the wine showed signs of great freshness, excellent fruit and good balance.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Merlot 50%, Cabernet sauvignon 48%, Cabernet franc 2%

Yield : 35 hL/ha

Alcohol content : 13 % vol.

Total acidity : 3.31 g/l