



CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD 2013

■ 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

The very wet, cold winter resulted in work in the vineyard being considerably delayed; bud break was late, and flowering was three weeks later than the average for the last 50 years; the changeable weather resulted in some flower abortion and uneven grape size, and therefore in lower potential yields than usual. Then at the end of June, the weather suddenly changed, and it was if we were in the middle of the summer with no transitional period; there were however several localized storms (on 27 July and 2 August, depending on location).

The situation became somewhat challenging from 15 September: there was rain, sun and a long wait for the grapes to fully ripen, even though they had partially caught up from the late start; things then became more delicate at the end of September, when it became clear there was a risk of "explosive" growth of botrytis! It was like a race with no time to warm up, and we had to find all the pickers we could to go as quickly as possible. Fortunately, the sorting teams were very efficient despite the difficult harvest. The usual picking sequence for the red wine grapes had to be adjusted in order to minimize the impact of the botrytis and to take into account the potential to make the first or second wine.

■ 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 20 months in barrels, primarily of new oak.

■ TASTING NOTES

Tasting a great wine so soon after bottling is always a challenge.

The nose is very closed, verging on austere. On the palate, its solidity quickly becomes apparent, then volume on the mid-palate, before reaching a long, pleasantly fruity finish, still with traces of the barrel. Patience will be required.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Cabernet sauvignon 98%, Merlot 2%

Yield : 33 hL/ha

Alcohol content : 12 % vol.

Total acidity : 3.84 g/l