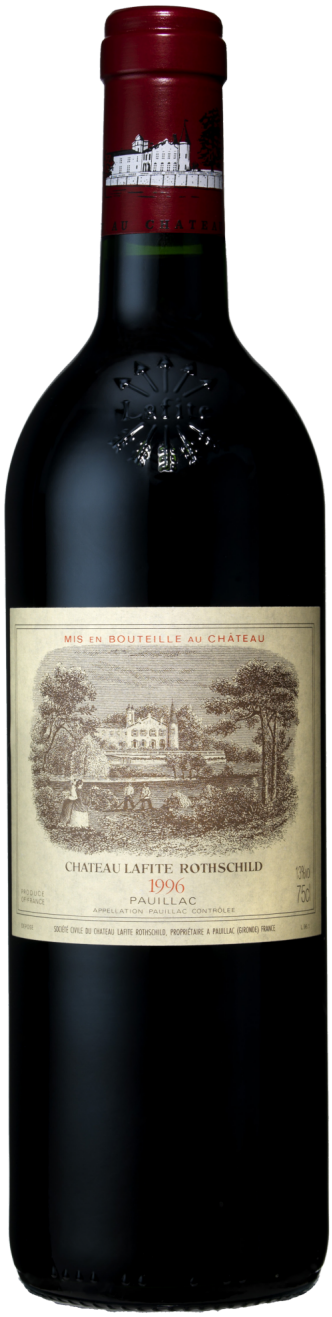
CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD 1996



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

A late budding for this vintage which took place on 30th March, a complicated spring followed with negative temperatures, therefore the flowering was homogeneous and fast to develop under exceptional hot weather conditions. Stormy and fresh weather for July and August, September and October saved the situation the weather was at last sunny with higher temperatures allowing very slow maturation which was essential for this vintage. The balance was excellent with good sugar and acidity levels, dedicate to be a long keeping 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 variesfor 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 20months in barrels, primarily of new oak.

TASTING NOTES

The robe is beautiful and intense.
On the nose, this wine offers aromas of cedar and black fruits.
On the palate the entry is silky and delicate, then the wine spreads out and becomes powerful. The tannins are tight and well structured on the finish.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Cabernet sauvignon 83%, Merlot 9%, Cabernet franc 8%
Yield : 58 hL/ha
Alcohol content : 13 % vol.
Total acidity : 3.43 g/l