



CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD 2002

■ 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. 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

The early bud burst due to a hot and dry winter was followed by a rather cold and rainy period during flowering which led to incidents such as coulure (flower abortion) and millerandage (poor fertilization with mixed size berries). As from the beginning of June, the yield was expected to be low.

The rather cool months of July and August were unexceptional as was the weather since the beginning of the year. However, this did not halt the ripening and veraison of the grapes. The weather was excellent when the harvest neared; September was superb, sunny and dry with a north-east wind which accelerated the ripening process.

A radiant sun shone throughout the harvests, which allowed the grapes to reach full maturity calmly. The Merlots were picked between 26 September and 1 October, followed by the superb Cabernet Francs, then the Cabernet Sauvignons until 8 October and to end with the Petit Verdot.

The grapes that had been affected by the millerandage were picked separately. For all the vines that had been more or less affected by the coulure and the millerandage, the final yields were relatively low (15 to 30% less in general).

■ 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 healthy, balanced and even quite lively.

■ TASTING NOTES

During the 'en primeur' tasting, this vintage illustrated density and full-body, with firm tannins and texture. It is well-balanced with great length.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals : Cabernet sauvignon 87%, Merlot 9,50%, Cabernet franc 3,50%
Alcohol content : 12.5 % vol.

