

Château Lafite Rothschild

**Presented by Tanneguy d'Harcourt, Brand Ambassador
The Great Wine Seminar, Florida
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*With selective tasting notes from 2019***

This outstanding tasting which I moderated followed a Lafite vertical I presented to a Chicago wine investment fund in 2019. For comparison, I have included my notes from that earlier tasting here when vintages coincided.

Echoing the earlier event, there were many impressive examples at the Great Wine Seminar which expressed the distinctive signature of Lafite Rothschild: intricacy, complexity, and intensity with a sense of weightlessness. The two vintages of Carruades showed well alongside the exalted grand vin.

Carruades de Lafite 2015

Garnet to red. Clean, notable purity. Scented, youthful red fruits. Understated with a long line across palate. Delicate, fresh, medium weight. A discreet echo of Lafite itself. A lovely, elegant wine with early appeal.

Carruades de Lafite 2010

Nearly dense dark red. Reserved to nose, with medium plus concentration, dark red fruit, and early tertiary notes. Polished in the mouth with a sense of fleshiness and marked fruit maturity. Still masked on finish. Very fine, embedded acidity and fine-grained tannins. The vigor of this outstanding vintage along with excellent equilibrium. Needs time to show itself fully.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 2015

Dark red, medium density. Relatively open to the nose, high toned and accented by red fruits and spice. On the palate, the 2015 is delicate and lacy. Finely calibrated and just medium in weight. Refined and precise. A model of finesse. This vintage is engaging now and has been accessible from the outset.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 2010

Nearly dense dark red. Aromatically, the 2010 shows restrained richness and a background of dark red fruit. Just beginning to develop. In its taste, ample if reserved, rich for Lafite. Lovely underlying texture. Medium-bodied plus. Still developing and promising a long life ahead. Prominent high-quality, mature tannins. Noteworthy concentration and muscle for Lafite. Superb wine with a long life ahead.

2019 notes: *Nearly dense, youthful very dark red with faint purple rim. Beautiful, fragrant, mature dark red fruit to the nose. Concentration, depth, class. Concentrated on the palate, well-proportioned and layered. Medium weight plus. A long line from attack through a very promising finish. Poised and fresh with fine embedded acidity and fine tannins. Elegance, strength and reserve. A brilliant wine far from its apogee.*

Ch Lafite Rothschild 2008

Nearly dense very dark red. Beautiful nose, rich and broad and with a measure of bottle development. Dark fruits, cedar, and a hint of tobacco. On the palate, considerable depth and expressiveness along with significant length. From an unheralded year at time of release, this 2008 presents the best qualities of the vintage. Very attractive and complete. Will develop further over the coming decade.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 2006

Dark red, medium density. A stunning bouquet! Enticing initial signs of evolution in its lift and nuanced expression of fruit allied with spice and cedary notes. In the mouth, the 2006 is far less forthcoming on attack. But the wine has notable flesh and depth. Reticent to a degree, suggesting far more will be unveiled over time. Lafite's refined signature.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 2001

Dark brick, medium plus density. Gorgeous, fragrant, subtle, and delicately inflected bouquet with a mature and harmonious mélange of aromatic notes. The palate follows in a similar vein and has an intriguing, faintly inky accent. This beautiful wine is polished and relatively ample. Seems to have reached an ideal stage but will no doubt develop further. One of the standouts of the tasting.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 2000

Almost dense to the eye. Strikingly rich aromatics confirming the original ripeness of fruit. Suggestions of bottle development yet still vigorous. The taste delivers Lafite's characteristic elegance. Delicately inflected and strikingly youthful and fresh. Astonishing length. A dazzling example of this voluptuous, much-admired vintage.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1998

Dense brick color. An open and maturing bouquet with pronounced cedar and toast. This 1998 has a commanding presence on the palate and is masterfully composed with beautiful balance and harmony. Completed by a fine frame of acidity and particularly fine tannins. All is in perfect order in this sublime Lafite.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1995

Dense brick red to the eye. Inviting warm, high-toned aromatics with toasted and cedary accents and underlying dark fruit, now evolving. The taste is warm and generous and is offset by a still-dry, pointed finale. As noted below, the 1995 presents a contrast, with both well-developed aspects and a more assertive structure. Enjoyable now, may continue to develop.

2019 notes: *Lightening dark red with slight brick at rim. Medium concentration to the nose with a maturing profile: roasted highlights, toasted wood, spice notes and a background of dark red fruit. The taste reveals a similar empyreumatic expression. Dry, somewhat angular. Elevated acidity, unresolved tannin. Combines elements of maturation with a more youthful structure. An excellent example of the vintage.*

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1990

A lighter density brick. The nose is losing intensity and showing evolution, dark fruit, and a cedary overtone. The 1990 is, in the mouth, largely gentle and refined. A degree of astringency is imparted in the final taste. This appears to be a mature wine and is very pleasurable now. It may be slightly further along in its evolution than the bottle tasted in 2019.

2019 notes: *An appearance similar to 1995, a paling dark red brick. The bouquet is alluring and scented, joining mature dark fruit and cedar. On the palate, more restrained at first, then builds in complexity. Very fine, intricate and especially well-balanced with a fine acid spine and fine tannins. The wine surprises with its intensity at the end, signaling the potential to develop further to 2024-2027. But drinks beautifully now. Lives up to its reputation.*

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1988

Nearly dense, very dark red. A stunning and captivating bouquet with noteworthy depth and presence. Mouth-filling and multi-faceted with a roasted overtone and note of ink. This impeccable 1988 possesses remarkable tension for its age and will continue to improve. A brilliant example of the vintage.

2019 notes: *A more youthful color, very dark red with red rim, medium density. A dissimilar profile: low-toned ripe red fruit offering “sweet” notes. Concentrated, warm. In its taste the ‘88 is restrained and layered, less viscous. Still firm tannins, high acidity and an intriguing saline note. Individual wine of terrific quality and interest possessing intensity and a degree of severity like many ‘88s.*

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1985

A lightening dark brick. The nose shows evolution and is weakening in expression, exhibiting a warm cedary aspect and a hint of tobacco. Quite soft and resolved as well as elegant in the Lafite style. Lovely now. This was an excellent year filled with sun, similar to 1982, and yielded supple, velvety wines. The Lafite ‘85 may not have been destined for exceptionally long keeping. After all, it is more than 35 years old at this writing.

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1982

Paling brick. Shows understated maturity and has reached its apogee. Enticing nuances, delicacy, and grace. Still a slight firmness at the end. A once-great Lafite which was generous and well-endowed in its youth. The bottle tasted in 2019 may have been a tad more vigorous. The drinking window suggested below seems right.

2019 notes: *Paling brick with red eye, brick at edge. Extraordinary and generous perfumed bouquet suggesting rose water and beautiful ripe red fruit, now evolving. Cedar and spice. The flavors reflect an ideal stage of bottle maturity and have considerable persistence. There is still a degree of structure including tannin to be resolved. Expressive, cedary aftertaste. A brilliant example of this lauded vintage. Drink or keep to early or mid-2020's.*

Ch Lafite Rothschild 1970

Pale brick. The nose indicates the wine is weakening. A faint cedary, spicy fragrance. The palate is thinning. Some dry tannins and sharp acidity still remain. Consistent with the bottle tasted in 2019.

2019 notes: *Losing all color: a brick-tinted rosé. Aromatically, the '70 exhibits cedar, dried rose and spice, signs of a fully developed wine. The palate shows more age and is now weak and drying out. There is sharpness at the end. Interesting in its way for those who favor very mature red wines. This is actually better than some critics claimed, but it is not to be kept longer.*