

Chateau Vin de Leoville de Las Cases 1998

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Grand Vin du Marquis de Léoville de Las Cases

(July 2008)

Bringing spine-shattering thunder to your world

For quite some time now, I have been dreaming of doing a vertical tasting of this legendary, though arguably discreet, estate which many consider as Bordeaux's most consistent producer of exemplary wines from the region (and therefore probably the world ...).

Situated on the extreme northern tip of Saint Julien, the emblematic stone arch, serving as a lion's watchtower, stoically welcomes you to the Pauillac region. Thus, it is often intriguing to wonder whether Léoville Las Cases makes Saint Julien or rather Pauillac styled wines. The answer, depending on the vintage, is both although after tasting 14 recent vintages, the pendulum would arguably swing more towards Pauillac.

Jean-Hubert Delon was not with us to accompany our staff through this exceptional tasting. Though

he personally took over this estate starting in 1995, it was his father who lead its qualitative renaissance notably by the end of the 1970's and most strikingly by 1982. Here, do not expect outlandish, eye catching, glittery nor techie architectural winery artefacts to gain customer seduction. This is a no non-sense, straight to the point, estate. Lastly, and most reassuring, is that media reports on the finished product almost always either confirms initial barrel assessments if not even raising the initial appreciation.

Winemaker's Notes

From <<http://www.wine.com/v6/Chateau-Leoville-Las-Cases-1998/wine/55324/Detail.aspx>>

1998 : 76% Cab Sauv, 15% Merlot, 9% Cab Franc (40% of the harvest)

Again, density and amplitude here. In this characteristically "dry" styled vintage, here one senses none of that asperity as the tannins, whilst present, are savoury and ripe. Lead-pencil notes, which I particularly appreciate.

Chateau Leoville Las Cases is one of the largest and oldest classified growths in the Medoc region of France. The fruit is harvested by hand. The fermentation vessels include a fascinating mix of wooden, cement and stainless steel vats. When finished the wine is pumped to the barrel cellar. Here it is transferred into oak barrique, between 50% and 100% new for the grand vin, depending on the vintage.

Critical Acclaim

RP93

The Wine Advocate - "The 1998 has turned out to be one of the vintage's superb Medocs. It boasts an opaque black/purple color as well as a classic Leoville Las Cases display of lead pencil, gorgeously pure black raspberries and cherries, smoke, and graphite. A broad yet focused entry on the palate reveals firm tannin, medium to full body, superb concentration and purity, as well as a totally symmetrical mouthfeel. Anticipated maturity: 2006-2025."

ST92

International Wine Cellar - "Medium ruby. Spicy, highly aromatic nose combines currant, lead pencil, licorice, minerals and roasted nuts. Dense, spicy and penetrating, with lovely clarity of fruit and considerable power. Quite suave and stylish. Finishes very long, with firm tannins that are quite fine for the year. "We'll prefer the '99 for the first ten years, but afterwards this '98 may be better," notes Jean-Hubert Delon.

92(+?)"