

Candid Wines presents a laughably abbreviated history of Chateau Lafite-Rothschild, Bordeaux, and Related European History from 1234 AD to the present.

Lafite Rothschild	The Rise of Bordeaux	Related Events in European History
<p><b>1234</b> – Written mention is made of “la hite” meaning hillock in the local dialect. Property is a multiuse farm.</p> <p><b>1670</b> – The widow Jeanne de Gasq, inherits “la hite” and remarries, transferring ownership to Jacques de Ségur, owner of Calon and other properties. Ségur plants the majority of the property with vines and begins the history of the estate as a vineyard.</p> <p><b>1695</b> – Alexandre Ségur, son of Jacques and Jeanne, marries Marie-Therese Clauzel, heiress to the Latour estate.</p> <p><b>1697</b> – Nicolas-Alexandre Segur, “Prince des Vignes” is born. By his death in 1755 he is the wealthiest vineyard owner in Bordeaux, less than 100 years after vines were planted at “La hite” in earnest.</p> <p><b>1716-1755</b> Lafite earns the nickname “The Wine of Kings”, being served at Versailles in the court of Louis XV.</p>	<p><b>1647</b>– Dutch traders rank Sauternes #1, “Palus” #2 and do not mention Claret.</p> <p><b>1660</b> – Arnaud de Pontac, in need of new customers, markets his Haut Brion estate as a luxury product, in London.</p> <p><b>1663</b> – “Drank a sort of French wine, called Ho Bryan, that hath a good and most particular taste that I ever met with.” Englishman Samuel Pepys in London.</p> <p><b>1665</b> – “Pontack’s Head”, London’s first restaurant, wine bar and retail shop is opened by Francois-Auguste de Pontac and sells Haut Brion for 3.5 times the going rate for good wine.</p> <p><b>1699-1705</b> Pontac has almost his entire harvest “captured” by Privateers working for English. Wine is sold in finest English establishments and continues to cement image of Haut Brion, and Bordeaux, in the minds of Londoners. Pontac is suspected to have paid the Privateers and is also credited with creating the single most important market for “Claret”.</p>	<p><b>1635</b> – France allies with the Netherlands in the 30 Years War; Dutch traders benefit in Bordeaux.</p> <p><b>1665</b> –The Great Plague kills 70-100K Londoners</p> <p><b>1666</b> – The Great Fire razes 400 acres of London</p> <p><b>1679 - 1685</b> –English ban French after tariff battle.</p> <p><b>1687</b> – More barrels shipped to England than in any other year from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but...</p> <p><b>1688 - 1697</b> – William III allies with Dutch. “Glorious Revolution” leads to Bill of Rights, Parliamentary Rule, War with Louis XIV. French wine banned in England.</p> <p><b>1697</b> – Treaty of Rijswijk opens English markets to French.</p> <p><b>1702</b> – War of Spanish Succession leads to more bans on French wine in London, but establishes England as the continent’s economic leader, and the English have learned to love Claret.</p>

“We have seen repeatedly throughout our story how politics shape trade, and trade fashions the wine it wants from wherever it is forced to buy.” Hugh Johnson, speaking of this period in [The History of Wine](#)

Our short history continues...1784-present

<b>Lafite Rothschild</b>	<b>The Rise of Bordeaux</b>	<b>Related Events in European History</b>
<p><b>1784</b> – The “Prince des Vignes” grandson leads the estate into debt and sells the property.</p> <p><b>1785</b> – Latour split from Lafite’s properties in complicated inheritance battles.</p> <p><b>1785- 1816</b> A rather ignominious period for Lafite including one owner being guillotined, the sale of the estate by the Revolutionary Government and secret ownership by a Dutchman.</p> <p><b>1816-1866</b> Estate is secretly owned by Aime Vanlerberghe in the Netherlands, but is publicly believed to be the property of Englishman Samuel Scott. Only a few know the truth. Vanlerberghe is an enormously wealthy, if shadowy, figure known as a “gun-runner” during the wars.</p> <p><b>1844</b> – Lafite refuses to sell at market prices and fetches 4,500 Francs a tonneau – more than twice the going rate. Its good to be the wine of kings.</p> <p><b>1866</b> – Aime dies and his sisters sell to Baron James de Rothschild of the English banking family. His cousin Nathaniel owns Mouton-Rothschild.</p> <p><b>1866-1945</b> – Lafite, Bordeaux and all of France’s vineyard suffer immeasurably.</p> <p><b>1945</b> – Baron Elie de Rothschild ends a series of absentee owners and starts to steady the ship.</p> <p><b>1975</b> – Lafite’s modern resurgence begins in earnest with the arrival of Baron Eric de Rothschild, a hands’ on owner who introduces vast improvements.</p>	<p><b>End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century</b> – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc are growing in popularity, but by no means are they the only grapes. Some 30 varieties of red are known to have been planted, and almost as many whites.</p> <p><b>1820-1840</b> – Merchants with credit gain much clout as European markets rebound. Battles between growers and merchants are commonplace.</p> <p><b>1844</b> – Chateaux Margaux and Latour sign ten year contracts to sell their entire harvests at fixed prices; 2100 and 1750 Francs a tonneau respectively.</p> <p><b>1851</b> – Oidium, or powdery mildew, arrives in Bordeaux, an unknown disease that reduce crops by as much as half.</p> <p><b>1855</b> – The Classification of 1855 codifies the status of each major Chateau in Bordeaux. Margaux, Latour, Lafite and Haut Brion are listed as “First Growths”. Mouton is added in 1973.</p> <p><b>1855-1945</b> Oidium, Phylloxera, German occupation and general loss of life make for hard times in Bordeaux and all of France</p>	<p><b>1789</b> – The French Revolution</p> <p><b>June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1815</b>– Napoleonic Wars come to a definitive end at Waterloo. France’s place as major European power does too.</p> <p><b>1855</b> – Napoleon III hosts the <i>Exposition Universelle de Paris</i> highlighting the best of what France has to offer.</p> <p><b>1870-1945</b> War, war, and more war ravage Europe.</p>

Candid Wines and Custom House present a tasting of three decades of Chateau Lafite-Rothschild to benefit Chicago Public Radio.



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*Notes:*

1964

**COPPA**

1966

*BLACK TRUFFLE  
VINAIGRETTE/MARINATED  
MUSHROOMS  
PISTACHIO TUILE/MUSTARD  
GREENS*

1970

1971

1975

**AGED AUSTRALIAN  
STRIPLOIN**

1978

*WINTER ROOT VEGETABLE  
GRATIN/BONE MARROW  
POACHED QUAIL EGG*

1979

**BRAISED VEAL CHEEKS**  
*TOMATO PRESERVE/SMOKED  
TOMATO  
YUKON GOLD POTATO CHIP*

1986

