

MAISONS MARQUES & DOMAINES



Château Pichon Comtesse

Château Pichon-Lalande

Pauillac, France
Vintage: 2017

Overview

Founded in 1689, Château Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande has quite a spectacular history. The quality and elegance of the wines have been the maxim of all the château's owners since master winemaker Joseph de Pichon Longueville's reign in the 18th century.

For over thirty years, owner May Eliane de Lencquesaing modernized the château's installations in the truest respect for tradition. Her indefatigable passion elevated Pichon to a level equaled only by its consistency all over the world. In October of 2006, Lencquesaing joined forces with Champagne Louis Roederer, thus opening a new chapter in the long and magnificent history of Château Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande.

The vast majority of the vineyards are Gunzian gravel mounds of the classic Pauillac composition, with the deep bed of gravel placed over a substrata of clay and limestone. The commitment to sustainable farming practices extends throughout the 220 acres of vineyards, with over 27 acres fully converted to organic viticulture, and 37 acres farmed biodynamically.

The unique encepagement and the 30 acres of vines situated on the soils of Saint-Julien endow the wines of Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande with exceptional complexity, elegance, and longevity compared with the other crus of the Pauillac appellation.

Winemaking

After reception of the harvest, destemming and crushing, the grapes are placed in temperature-controlled wooden or stainless-steel vats, of variable capacity, allowing a precise and rigorous selection by plot. The heating and cooling system enables the alcoholic and malolactic fermentations to be controlled with precision. The vatting period ranges from 18 to 24 days depending on the year. Frequent pump-overs are performed to extract maximum colour and tannins from the skins.

Once blended, the wine is aged in oak barrels sourced from the Allier and Nièvre forests in France. The oak refines the wine, adding its own aromas and tannins, whilst allowing it to acquire the soft richness that is lacking in its youth, thanks to the gradual, natural contact with air through the pores of the wood.

The Grand Vin of Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande is aged 18 months in oak barrels; a little more than half are brand new; the other half are second-fill barrels. The barrels have a medium toast, which enhances their aromas. A harmonious balance of oak and wine is always sought.

Racking takes place every three months up to the bottling. Traditional fining with egg whites is still carried out to clarify the wine.

Tasting Notes

An acrobat on a wire. Well-balanced and elegant, fleshy and structured, complex and extremely rounded; a fine Pauillac according to Pichon Comtesse, expressing notes of blackberries, raspberry, a touch of granite and cedar. On the palate, extremely well-integrated tannins and an exceptional smoothness.

Harvest Notes

Another early bud break on the vine began at the end of March. A very dry April with a period of heavy frost managed to spare the early ripening vineyards of Pauillac and St. Estèphe in close proximity to the estuary. An all-round dry and mostly hot spring encouraged an early flowering at the end of May in the healthiest of conditions. Following this, the veraison started at the end of July. Some summer showers prevented water stress and aided the ripening process. The harvest which began on September 7th was halted by a rainy period between the picking of the Merlot and the Cabernet. The weather improvement which followed allowed the Cabernet to ripen fully until the start of October.

"Nature and the climate can be fickle and remind the winemaker to remain vigilant and humble. Pichon Comtesse 2017 is the fruit of relentless hard work showing the epitome of exceptional terroir and allowing us to escape the ravishes of unpredictable weather. Here it is, a vintage ending in "7" of which we are proud."

- Nicolas Glumineau

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
Wine Alcohol: 13.2%
pH: 3.8
Soil Composition: Gravel, clay and sand
Average Vine Age: 35 years
Aging: 18 months in oak barrels, 60% new oak