

MAISONS MARQUES & DOMAINES



Château Pichon Comtesse

Château Pichon-Lalande

Pauillac, France
Vintage: 2020

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.

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

A pure and fresh nose of blackberry, blackcurrant, peony and that cedar association of Pauillac. On the palate a subtle blend, full-bodied, powerful and great length, with a sweetness that is both seductive and savoury, with a touch of elegance. The flavours confirm these blackcurrant and blackberry notes, with structured, smooth tannins.

Harvest Notes

Another very mild winter favoured an early bud break starting on March 20th. April and May were hot but also very wet with rainfall superior to the last thirty years' average. Despite the rainy spells that preceded it, flowering was early and fairly rapid, from May 16th to 26th. After a cool and fairly rainy June, the drought and heat set in for good until mid-August. Careful leaf thinning limited the exposure of the bunches to the sun's heat. The veraison began early, on July 24th, and lasted until August 8th. The rains that followed were enough to preserve the maturity process after the period of hydric stress. The harvest began on September 9th in dry and healthy conditions. Some rainfall accompanied us until the end of the harvest on September 29th, without affecting the superb quality of the grapes.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals: 77% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc

Wine Alcohol: 13.6%

pH: 3.8

Soil Composition: Gravel, clay and sand

Average Vine Age: 30 years

Aging: 18 months in 60% new oak barrels