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## Seigneurs d'Aiguilhe 2015

CSPC# 765371

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon

### Appellation

Côtes de Castillon

### Website

<http://www.neipperg.com/index.php?act=1,12,1>

### General Info

The d'Aiguilhe seigneurie would appear to have covered a vast territory in the Middle Ages, encompassing several large feudal estates. Located on the border between French and English-occupied zones during the Hundred Years' War, Château d'Aiguilhe's allegiance changed according to the tides of war.

This very ancient estate, undoubtedly one of the oldest in Bordeaux, was a key element in the defense network established by the kings of England to protect their holdings in the province of Guyenne. It was therefore long a bone of contention between the French and Anglo-Bordelais armies. After this tumultuous period of its history, Château d'Aiguilhe went back to more peaceable pursuits, namely developing exports of its wine, especially to Northern Europe. Starting in the 19th century, the wines of Château d'Aiguilhe were shipped from the port of Castillon to England, Holland, and ports belonging to the Hanseatic League.

The château was acquired by the d'Albret family and then came into the hands of the Leberthon family, who produced many members of the Bordeaux parliament. The Leberthon's sold Château d'Aiguilhe on the eve of the French Revolution to a certain Etienne Martineau. He expanded it into a huge estate with four hundred hectares of vines in a single block. His descendants remained owners of the château until 1920.

Stephan von Neipperg acquired Château d'Aiguilhe in December 1998. One of the most beautiful vineyards in the Côtes de Castillon, d'Aiguilhe now benefits from the same exacting standards as the von Neipperg family's estates in Saint-Emilion. A new approach in the vineyard has raised this wine to new heights, and it has received near universal praise since the change in ownership.

Seigneurs d'Aiguilhe is the second wine of Chateau d'Aiguilhe.

### Vintage

While the 2014 vintage was saved by some late summer sunshine, in 2015 it was rain that vines desperately needed as a drought that had delivered half the normal rainfall ended in mid-August. A uniform flowering had led to a good fruit

set and healthy bunches, but as temperatures soared in June and July the grapes stopped growing and skins thickened prematurely, leading to widespread anxiety.

Significant rainfall then fell in August which helped to reinvigorate the vines and the sun returned until 12<sup>th</sup> September. That was the day that 'shuffled the pack' as Bill Blatch put it, as there was torrential rain in certain places that affected the potential of the harvest quality for those that received it. The rain fell heaviest in the Northern Medoc, the area that has more clay soils planted with Merlot than in the gravelly southern Medoc which Cabernet Sauvignon prefers. Margaux and Saint-Julien, Graves and most of the Right Bank escaped excessive rainfall.

The rain came at a tricky moment for the earlier ripening Merlot, with humidity threatening botrytis rot. Some chateaux had to pick early as a result, while those unaffected went on to enjoy sunny days and cool nights for most days until the harvest was completed in mid-October. Those cooler temperatures helped to retain acidity as the vines reached full maturity.

### Vineyards

At Chateau d'Aiguilhe, the vine density ranges from 5,500 vines per hectare to 9,000 vines per hectare. The density continues to increase as the vineyards are replanted. The Cotes de Castillon vineyard of Chateau d'Aiguilhe is planted to 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. On average, the vines are 28 years of age. Sustainable viticulture and a biodynamic approach characterize vineyard management here by Stephan Neipperg. This means no herbicides, pesticides, or insecticides are used. Harvesting is manual into small plastic crates. The fruit is sorted before and after destemming. The

<b>Vineyards</b>	fruit is whole berry fermented in a combination of oak and stainless-steel tanks, all equipped with temperature control. There is a second wine, Seigneurs d'Aiguilhe.
<b>Harvest</b>	Harvesting: by hand, into small crates to avoid bruising. Sorted before and after destemming. No crushing. The grapes are put into vats by gravity flow
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	Fermentation in wooden vats for 25 days. Extraction by pneumatic pigeage (punching down the cap). Maturing in oak barrels (60%), on the lees for 18 months. No fining or filtration.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Intense, dark, almost black red. Delicious aromas in the nose. Ripe, dark fruit (berries) with hints of tobacco. Merlot gives a super mouthfeel with again a lot of ripe, black fruit and soft wood-supported tannins. Slightly spicy. The Cabernet Franc ensures that the wine goes into depth. Very long final. Of great class!
<b>Serve with</b>	Suggested pairings / wine Stuffed vegetables, ham, andouillette à mustard, stuffed tomatoes, Fontainebleau, red meat, white meat, game, cooked with beef (8 years), roasted rabbit, madeira sauce, lamb skewers, capon stuffed with morels, rabbit hunter, guinea fowl, guinea fowl roasted saddle of rabbit, aangler bordelaise
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink now to 2021
<b>Reviews</b>	<i>"Lush aromatics of cassis, cocoa, wild berries and vanilla let you know this second wine really is second to none! It has a "sweet" palate showing the perfect ripeness of the grapes alongside smoke, blueberry, cinnamon and French vanilla. Rich and complex, this delicious wine is a classic example of what to expect from the excellent 2015 vintage - and I hear the 2016 is even better... Impressive. Really."</i> - Jacques Moreira, KL Wine Merchants

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