

Château Pichon-Longueville Baron 2008

CSPC# 764173

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot

Appellation

Pauillac

Website

<http://www.pichonlongueville.com/>

General Info

Château Pichon-Longueville Baron, a leading Pauillac 2ème Cru Classé estate, is one of Bordeaux's most illustrious "super seconds". In 1987 it was bought by the AXA Millésimes Group, who also own Cantenac-Brown, Petit-Village, Suduiraut. AXA built a state of the art cuverie and chai at Pichon-Longueville Baron, while, in 2000, Christian Seely took over from Jean-Michel Cazes as general manager. The Cabernet-dominated Pichon-Longueville Baron is a more muscular, tannic and full-bodied wine than that of its neighbour across the road, Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande. The *grand vin* is Chateau Longueville au Baron de Pichon-Longueville. The second wine is Les Tourelles de Longueville, introduced with the 1986 vintage.

Jean-Rene Matignon started with the Left Bank Bordeaux property in 1985. In three short years, Pichon Baron once again began producing wines of world class quality. The first vintage that brought this historic estate back to prominence was the sublime 1989 followed by the even better 1990. When Jean-Michel Cazes retired from Pichon-Baron in 2000, Christian Seely was asked to take over the management of Pichon Baron as well as the other seven properties of the wine group including Château Suduiraut in Sauternes, Château Petit Village in Pomerol, Chateau Pibran in Pauillac and Quinta do Noval in Portugal. AXA also maintains and interest in Burgundy with Domaine de l'Arlet. Christian Seely has managed many of these estates since 1993. AXA also owns one of the larger Bordeaux wine negociant companies, Compagnie Medocaine.

Vintage

There is no doubt about it – we came away from a week's wine tasting in Bordeaux having found many more wines of exciting quality than we expected after the indifferent weather of much of the summer. Maybe, in retrospect, we have over-played the poor quality of the summer, because there was never a glorious stretch of holiday weather in the high summer months. But in fact, July was drier than usual, sunnier than usual, but just not especially warm. August was indeed a touch cooler and grayer than normal and a little wetter, but warm, dry weather in September and October truly saved the day. For most, the harvest started and ended later than ever before with many properties picking as late as 18th October.

The lateness of the vintage meant the grapes were allowed to ripen slowly yet surely. This unusual length of the ripening season, or long 'hang time' as our Californian cousins would refer to it, resulted in grapes with relatively high sugar levels, red or black fruit with no trace of green, and a silkiness to the tannins which were abundant but not intrusive; Success is not universal. Some minor players have made lean and dilute wines; some top names left us underwhelmed. Merlot flourished on the Right Bank but was less convincing in the Médoc where Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot excelled, but Cabernet Franc was weak. Clearly the most important features were vineyard husbandry and especially yield. Nobody should have made big volumes after difficult weather conditions at the flowering, preceded in some spots by frost in April and hail in May, but those who ended up with yields north of 55 hl/ha were unlikely to succeed. On the other hand, why was modest Ch. d'Angludet so outstanding? Because the Sichel team had thinned the crop not once but twice, fearing a potential inability to ripen the crop in such a late season, so that in the end they brought in only 30 hl/ha, but of superb quality.



Vineyards The 73 hectare vineyards of Chateau Pichon Baron are planted to 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. However, the Cabernet Franc and the Petit Verdot are reserved exclusively for the second wine. This marks a change in the makeup of the vineyard with the addition of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. The vineyard is planted to a vine density is 9,000 vines per hectare using a double Guyot training. The average age of the vines is 30 years. However, the estate has old vines. The oldest vines date all the way back the 1930's. While the vineyard occupies 73 hectares of vines, the grapes used for Pichon Baron come from the 40 best hectares in the vineyard. The vineyards of Pichon Baron are situated at the southern end of Pauillac, across the street from Pichon Lalande, not far from Chateau Latour and close to the St. Julien border. The soils are mostly deep gravel.

Harvest Hand harvested

**Vinification/
Maturation** Malolactic fermentation takes place in tank. The wine of Chateau Pichon Baron is aged in an average of 80% new, French oak barrels for 18 months. Of course, the percentage of new oak and the time in barrel varies, depending on the character of the vintage. Production of Pichon Baron averages 18,000 cases per year. The estate also produces a second wine, Les Tourelles de Longueville, which made its debut in 1986. They also own and produce Chateau Pibran, a value priced, Pauillac wine.

Tasting Notes A wine of great personality, with fresh red-fruit and blackberry scents. It is quick to express itself on the palate, rolling out an assertive, powerful character and rich flesh. This is the style of wine to be laid down in the cellars, true to the spirit of the estate. The finish is very long-lasting, with dense, precise tannins. A finely balanced wine of substance with firm structure and body.

Production 13,000 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2013-2019

Scores/Awards **91 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 30, 2011
88-91 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2009
95 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011
92-94 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #182 - April 2009
96 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2012
95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2011
94-97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2009
92 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com (score only)
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2011
94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - December 31, 2009
93 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - Jul/Aug 2011
17.5 points/4 stars - Decanter.com - April 2009
18 points - JH, JancisRobinson.com - April 2009
93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 20, 2010
91-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - August 31, 2009
17 points - John Berry, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2009
94 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
17+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2009
93 points - Derek Smedley, MW - November 2012
92 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2012
18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)
18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)

Reviews *"This is solidly packed for the vintage, with dark currant, fig and graphite notes framed by bittersweet cocoa, espresso and iron. Still a touch chunky on the finish, but the structure is fine-grained, and this should settle in nicely with modest cellaring. Best from 2013 through 2019. 13,000 cases made"*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Black licorice and blackberry aromas, with hints of spices. Full-bodied, with well-integrated tannins and a balanced finish. Refined and polished. Could use a little more midpalate. Score range: 88-91"
- JS, Wine Spectator

- Reviews** *"A sleeper of the vintage, the 2008 Pichon Longueville Baron is one of the densest, most concentrated wines of Pauillac in 2008. An inky/purple color is followed by aromas and flavors of creme de cassis, blackberries, charcoal, coffee and licorice. Exceptionally full-bodied with velvety tannins and undeniable appeal, this gorgeous, well-proportioned, larger than life 2008 should age effortlessly for two decades or more. With the realistic pricing that remains for many 2008s, this is a no-brainer."*
- RP, Wine Advocate
- "Firm, but sweet tannins (which suggests ideal maturity) characterize this 2008. Displaying good minerality along with plenty of floral, creme de cassis, blackberry, coffee, and white chocolate notes, this full-bodied, dense, promising Pauillac is built to age for 20-25 years."*
- RP, Wine Advocate
- "Tasted ex-chateau and single blind in Southwold. "Oh baby baby" as Salt 'n Pepa declared back in the day: Pichon Baron is a real star of this vintage. It is a little introverted at first, tightly wound dark berries, tar and graphite and a touch of autumnal leaves. The palate has a chewy entry, good acidity, firm grip with a dense persuasive finish that is First Growth standard. There is quite a bit of extraction here, but it is beautifully focused and tensile. This is one of the finest Left Bank wines. Tasted January 2012."*
- NM, Wine Journal
- "Tasted at the UGC 2008 tasting in London. This has a very pure, very -Pauillac- nose with blackberry, graphite and just a faint hint of Hoi Sin in the background. Fine definition, perhaps even a little more restrained than usual. The palate is superb: full-bodied with a great sense of roiling power, good acidity, more masculine than Pichon-Lalande with the flavours expanding across the back palate with hints of liquorice and black plum. Great length - this is a Pichon Baron brimming with ambition and intent. Superb. Drink 2013-2035+"*
- NM, Wine Journal
- "En primeur barrel sample. Just 52% of the total crop in the Grand Vin, which is a blend of 71% Cabernet Sauvignon and 29% Merlot from the "historical" part of the vineyard cropped at 35hl/ha. This has a lovely, more restrained nose, blackberry, smoke, touch of cigar box, Very pure. The palate is medium-bodied, very cohesive and lithe, beautiful balance, very fine tannins, less opulent than usual, conservative but there is a lot of breeding here. Not a powerful Pichon Baron, but there is an ethereal sense of harmony and focus. This is a tour de force Pichon Baron. Tasted April 2009."*
- NM, Wine Journal
- "Powerful, rich, firm and solid. The tannins are rounded and there is a noticeable amount of wood here, although the wine has preserved its fresh fruit at the same time. Very linear, the finish showing ripe plums and sweet fruit."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "94-96 Barrel sample. Firm, ripe and sweet an opulent wine, that is balanced with acidity that pierces right through. The texture is dense, dusty tannins balancing with hints of wood. Almost a meal in itself, this is a fruity, but definitely chewy wine."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "Bright ruby-red. Black cherry, leather and strong graphite minerality on the nose. Silky, sweet and suave, with dark fruit flavors lifted by a violet element and given grip and definition by a strong mineral spine. Wonderfully deep, ripe Pauillac with strong early sexy appeal. Finishes very bright and long, with serious but sweet tannins. Deceptively approachable now, this wine is built for two decades of evolution in bottle."*
- ST, International Wine Cellar

- Reviews** *"Very vibrant blueish purple. Complete and neat. Low key but in the same idiom as Latour with 71% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tight and dry and not at all flashy. Serious stuff. May well develop into something really quite considerable."*
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- "Black-red, big smoky blackcurrant nose, good concentration on the palate, ripe, almost creamy fruit, vibrant vigorous vineyard-specific fruit, really good depth and length. Drink 2016-30."*
- Decanter.com
- "With an intense, complex nose and dense bramble and spice notes on the palate, the 71% Cabernet, 29% Merlot blend is concentrated with dark fruit gravitas and a long, mineral finish. The richness of the fruit is very evident here and brings to mind the 2001 but the crisp acidity is a reflection of the unique character of 2008. Pichon-Baron may be classed as a 2ème Cru Classé but in 2008 they have produced a wine of First Growth quality. The richness of the fruit is very evident here and brings to mind the 2001 but the crisp acidity is a reflection of the unique character of 2008. Pichon-Baron may be classed as a 2ème Cru Classé but in 2008 they have produced a wine of First Growth quality."*
- JB, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants
- "2008 Pichon Baron has a cassis filled perfume that's complicated with hints of tobacco, coca, earth and blackberry jam. Full bodied and loaded with flavor, this elegant, round, polished Pauillac feels great on the palate and ends with a long cassis and dark berry sensation. 93 Pts"*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "08 Château Pichon Baron was deep ruby with purple accents in color. Blackberry, cassis, raspberry, and a touch of oak were easily discernible in the nose. Soft tannins, concentration, and a good depth of flavor are the hallmark of this wine. If it puts on a bit more weight, and it should, this Pichon Baron will be outstanding. 91-94 Pts"*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "This great vineyard has been producing classic Pauillac since the late 1980's when Jean-Michel Cazes of Lynch Bages took control. For the last few years Englishman Christian Seely has been in charge and quality continues to rise. Latour - like in style, Pichon Baron has been a star performer in all our recent blind vintage tastings. 74% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot and aged in 80% new oak. The Grand Vin is now produced only from the vineyards near Latour with those that used to go into the blend now making the second wine - Les Tourelles de Longueville. An undoubted member of the super-second league, now with prices beginning to match the undoubted quality. 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot with all the Cabernet Franc going into the Tourelles this year. 80% new oak. Dense colour, viscous texture. Strapping, big cassis fruit. Fat but structured with plenty of substance. Classically Cabernet Sauvignon with a touch of exoticism from the new oak. Nevertheless, this is a dense, cedary Pauillac very different from the sweeter, silkier style of Pichon Lalande. Another serious effort here."*
- Farr Vintners
- "There are some rich flavours on the nose lots of powerful black fruits. The palate has depth ripe feeling black fruits liquorice and dark chocolate. The fruit is sweet the mid palate fleshy and rich and this powerful mix fills out the back palate. The tannins give support but are not too obvious. 2015-2030"*
- Derek Smedley MW
- "This vibrant and very attractive wine has wonderfully floral and cedar notes with toasty hints, along with lovely cool dark berry fruit. With a sweet middle, well woven tannins and nice cedar finish, this is a good Pauillac made in a classic style meant to age/evolve."*
- JCL, asianpalate.com
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