

Château Pichon-Longueville Baron 2018

CSPC# 848999

750mlx6

14.1% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

Second Growth. Deuxième Grand Cru Classe in 1855

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 négociant companies, Compagnie Medocaine.

Winemaker

Jean-René Matignon - Technical Director

2018 was characterised by moderate winter temperatures with no extremes. There was regular rainfall from early December to the end of March. The total rainfall was significant, exceeding 500 mm, that is to say approximately 180 mm above average. Spring was mild, followed by a very hot, dry summer. Bud break, which started in early April, was consistent. However, more heavy rainfall and optimum temperatures favoured the development of cryptogamic diseases, leading to very significant crop losses in places. Flowering started at the end of May and continued smoothly. Great care was taken to protect the health of the vines up until the end of July. Then a phase of water stress, unfavourable to grape growth, gradually increased leading up to the harvest. Average and maximum temperatures were very high between bunch closure and the end of veraison, lower than in 2003 but slightly higher than in 2005. Veraison began in the early sectors in the last week of July and mid-veraison in early August.

Moderate temperatures resulted in very good ripening conditions. 2018 was comparable to 2005, with earlier development than in 2015. This early tendency for sunny weather continued until the end of the harvest. High temperatures and water stress were optimum for the anthocyanic richness of the skins and early ripening of the tannins. At the same time, the potential alcohol content increased rapidly, total acidity and malic acid levels were low and pH high.

Vintage

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



Vineyards	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.
Harvest	The old Merlot vines were harvested between 24th and 25th September and the Cabernet-Sauvignon vines from 3rd to 10th October.
Vinification/ Maturation	Plot-by-plot and intra-plot selection are the foundation of our approach. This year, sorting ensured consistent vatting quality. The temperature increase was gradual in order to favour extraction. Alcoholic fermentation soon started at a moderate rate, enabling progressive extraction during the fermenting phase to suit each variety and each terroir. Temperatures were kept at 25 to 29°C. Maceration lasted from 18 to 23 days. The wine was transferred to barrels by the end of November. Aged 80% in new barrels, 20% from barrels of one vintage for 18 months.
Tasting Notes	Our Grand Vin Château Pichon Baron 2nd Cru Classé in 1855 comes from the very oldest vines grown on the historic plots of the estate. This authentic Pauillac offers an amazing sensory experience with its black fruit flavours and spicy hints. Château Pichon Baron shows great elegance, intensity and exceptional length on the palate. It is a wine that improves year after year and can age for over 40 years in the cellar. Château Pichon Baron 2018 reveals a dark garnet colour. The precise and delicate nose offers notes of fresh fruit, black berries, and spices. The attack is mellow, generous, rounded, and juicy, developing powerful, well-blended tannins. The body is structured with silky, racy tannins. The flavour is carried by the structure, which preserves the mid-palate. The finish is tasty, full, fleshy, and harmonious. The richness is perfectly integrated, and the style is highly characteristic, built to last through the decades, while retaining elegance and distinction.
Serve with	Chateau Pichon Baron is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Production	13,300 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2030-2050
Scores/Awards	<p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021</p> <p>95-98 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p>96+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p>97-99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p>97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p>97-98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p>100 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2021</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019</p> <p>17.5+ points - Tom Parker, JancisRobinson.com - October 2020</p> <p>18 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p>97-99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p>17.5 points - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p>94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>93-95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p>97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p>94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p>97+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p>97-99 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p>19+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p>95 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p> <p>95 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019</p> <p>19 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2021</p> <p>18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>

Reviews *"A very polished and pure expression of Pauillac, but don't go to sleep on it. As charming and vibrant as the cassis, cherry preserve and blackberry paste flavors are, they have a latent saturated feel. And then there's a serious network of iron girders supporting it all, along with sweet tobacco, floral and worn cedar accents."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Warm, dense and fleshy in feel, featuring cassis, plum and cherry compote flavors infused with tobacco and worn cedar details. Seriously long, with a well-buried iron note, though the purity of the fruit is the dominating feature overall. This cuts a pretty broad swath as it moves along. A big wine. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. 13,300 cases made. Score range:"

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Deep garnet-purple colored, the nose bursts from the glass with flamboyant scents of stewed black plums, crème de cassis and Black Forest cake, plus suggestions of Indian spices, unsmoked cigars, pencil shavings and espresso. The medium to full-bodied palate delivers impactful black fruit preserves and exotic spice layers, framed by plush tannins and a lively backbone, finishing long and spicy."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"The 2018 Pichon-Longueville Baron is made up of 78% Cabernet Sauvignon and 22% Merlot. The Merlot was harvested September 24-25, and the Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested October 3-10. The wine is to be aged 18 months in barriques, 80% new and 20% one year old, and production represents 50% of the harvest this year. Very deep purple-black colored, it begins a little coy, rolling slowly and languidly out of the glass with notions of baked raspberries, blueberry coulis, crème de cassis and incense plus nuances of lilacs, truffles, damp soil and garrigue with wafts of lavender and wild sage. Full-bodied, voluptuous and oh-so-seductive, the palate reveals layer upon layer of savory, earthy and black fruit preserves, framed by wonderfully ripe, velvety tannins and lovely freshness, finishing very long and perfumed. Beautiful."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Aromas of blackcurrants, blueberries, ash and cedar with hints of conifer. Full-bodied, yet so tight and refined with polished, toned tannins that are creamy and compact with a silky texture. Energetic and driven."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Deep and dark young wine that takes you down, deep down to its center palate of blackberries and blueberries, firm and very silky tannins and a vivid finish. Wonderful palate and depth in this with such class and finesse. So many layers of polished, fine tannins. Great wine."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This great estate in southern Pauillac, facing the Latour vineyard, is at the top of its game. In this release, the tannins are as impressive and dense as the black fruits. Together they form a harmonious ensemble, richly structured, concentrated from the many old vines in the blend, and very age worthy. Drink from 2027."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Offering big, powerful tannins, this wine shows an amazing density of immense black fruits. It has a rich structure that's allied with great acidity and a strongly spicy character. There is a wonderful juiciness at the end that gives it an impressive lift. Barrel Sample: 96-98."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Deep ruby colour. Slightly reductive at this stage but oodles of ripe black fruit underneath, as well as subtle toasted spices. Powerful black fruit on entry, rich and ripe. The muscular, mouth-coating tannins are very ripe and as a result melt into the intense fruit. Incense and coffee bean come through on the finish, the perfect foil to the fruit. A harmonious wine, showcasing vintage ripeness without excess."

- TP, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

"Colour of elderberry juice. Intensely pure Cabernet nose, so intense it is quite introvert, especially compared with the Tourelles, but there is just a hint of fresh and creamy blackcurrant. A dry beauty on the palate. Not a great deal of acidity but finishes clean and fresh with these slub-silk tannins. There's texture and depth but it's still silky. Freshness of fruit compensating for moderate acidity."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Grilled cedar and attractive aromatics, with well-handled extraction giving confident but unmistakable oak impact. This is good-quality, showing gentle raspberry leaf aromatics on the opening, savoury cassis and bilberry, with pencil lead and crayon appearing along with the tannins as it stretches out through the palate. There was one week less of maceration than normal, so 21 days instead of 28, which will have helped control extractions. Drinking Window 2028 – 2045"

- JA, Decanter.com

"Straight from the nose you feel the wave of power with the wine uncurling through the palate, starting with tight notes of cassis then gently softening into sweeter brambled hedgerow fruits alongside a ton of ink and pencil lead. The tannins are present but seductive, and as is often the case this year, they're concentrated without being remote. It's less monolithic than the 2010 with some of the seduction of 2009 at this property but with higher levels of extraction."

- JA, Decanter.com

"Incredibly dark in color, the wine pops with Cuban cigar, cedar, herbs, tobacco leaf, red and black currants, forest floor and peppery spice box aromas. This could be the most concentrated, powerful vintage of Pichon Baron ever produced. The wine is very concentrated, full, and deep. Yet, with all this depth of flavor, everything remains perfectly balanced. The tannins are ripe. Full-bodied and lush on the palate, with layers of sweet, ripe, dark red fruits in the finish, the wine really sticks with you. Jean-Rene Matignon feels this is his best vintage. I am not sure I agree. But if it is not, it is damn close to it! Due to its immense power, this is the only vintage of Pichon Baron aged in 100% new oak, however, the oak is already fully integrated into the wine."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The color is pure purple and on the nose the level of fruit is enormous. Blackberry, boysenberry, dark cherry, smoke, espresso, black currant, and cigar wrappers are the first thing you'll notice. Powerful yet regal, rich, concentrated, and multi-layered, the fruit comes at you with non-stop waves of flavor. But more importantly, the fruit is fresh, pure, and quite dense. Although quite tannic, the ripe berries coat your palate, teeth and gums and stay with you. The tannins do not intrude. There is no touch of heat, jam, or overripe sensations even though the wine reached 14.1% alcohol. This stunner will age and develop into one of the great vintages for Pichon Baron. To enjoy this at its best, you'll need to have some patience, at least 10-12 years are needed before popping a cork. The wine will age and evolve for 3-4 decades after that. The Grand Vin was made from 50% of the harvest with the picking taking place September 24-25 for the Merlot and October 3-10 for the Cabernet Sauvignon."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep purple in colour, with a powerful nose of black fruit, and heady spices. This is dense and brooding. The palate is big and layered, with spicy blackberries and black cherries, liquorice, and creamy vanilla. This exuberance is restrained by the bold and chewy tannins that are ripe but mouthcoating, providing ample structure and a savoury depth. This brings great focus and precision to the finish, with is very intense and long but has great delineation of both fruit and spice. A Vin de Garde that will greatly reward laying down for at least a decade after bottling."

- Farr Vintners

"The 2018 Pichon-Baron is matured for 18 months in 80% new oak. It has retained its quite extroverted, almost audacious bouquet featuring copious scents of blackberry, blueberry, and mint, though I might contend that it still needs to show more Pichon Baron DNA. The palate is medium-bodied with ripe tannins and firm grip, quite assertive and perhaps more austere than I expected in the mouth. Plenty of graphite here, much more than in barrel, and a foursquare finish. This 2018 Pichon-Baron will require 5–8 years in bottle because it is one of the more tannic Pauillac's of the vintage but could also be one of the most rewarding for those with patience and a cool, damp cellar."

- NM, Vinous

Reviews *"The 2018 Pichon-Baron is matured for 18 months in 80% new oak. It has a comparatively high-toned bouquet compared to recent vintages, featuring black cherries, blueberry, cedar, and mint, although I think it needs to express more Pichon-Baron DNA. The palate is medium-bodied with ripe tannins creating a huge frame that lacquers the mouth. This is almost a burly Pauillac, not muscular but very dense, though I would like to see more finesse on the finish by the time of bottling, and then it may warrant a higher score. I would use Christian Seely's descriptor of the vintage: untamed. 2024-2055."*
- NM, Vinous

"Suave and sophisticated, the 2018 Pichon Baron is a real head-turner. Silky, polished tannins wrap around a core of inky dark red/purplish berry fruit. More than anything else, the 2018 impresses for its exceptional balance. All the elements are so impeccably balanced. That will make the 2018 easy to drink relatively early, although my preference would be to leave it in the cellar for the better part of the next decade. Rose petal, spice, blood orange and mint add brightness and perfume on the long, finely-knit finish."
- AG, Vinous

"Pichon Baron is exceptional in 2018. Pliant, silky and super-finessed, the 2018 has a level of textural finesse that really elevates the wine into Pauillac's upper echelon. Ripe fruit and silky tannins give the 2018 much of its inimitable finesse. At the same time, the 2018 is bright, punchy, and surprisingly fresh, not to mention absolutely impeccable in its balance."
- AG, Vinous

"A beautiful, majestic Pauillac that reminds me a little of the 2000.. It shows the estate's more pure Cabernet, focused, elegant style yet offers full-bodied richness and serious depth of fruit as well as awesome notes of crème de cassis, graphite, lead pencil shavings, tobacco, and wet stone-like minerality. With building tannins, a fresh, focused texture, and a great finish, it's not for those looking for instant gratification, and I suspect it will need a solid decade or more of cellaring, but it will evolve for 50 years or more. It's a profound 2018."
- Jeb Dunnuck

"Representing just 50% of the production and a blend of 78% Cabernet Sauvignon and 22% Merlot aging in 80% new French oak, the 2018 Pichon-Longueville Baron reveals a deep, saturated purple color as well as a decadent bouquet of crème de cassis, high class tobacco, crushed violets, and freshly sharpened cedar pencils, which is about as Pauillac as you can get. Full-bodied, incredibly opulent, with moderate acidity and silky tannins on the palate, it still shows beautiful purity, freshness, and elegance, with the tannins giving focus and length on the finish. It's a brilliant, brilliant wine that's in the same class as the 1990, 2000, 2005, 2009, and 2010."
- Jeb Dunnuck

"80% new oak and 20% one-year-old for 18 months | 14.1% alc | 3.89 pH | This wine represents 50% of the production of the estate | 86 IPT Very smart and much more exuberant than I had expected, Directeur Général Christian Seely prefers this wine to both his 2010 and 2016 and I happen to agree. The balance is already evident and while it will undoubtedly start to drink early in its life it has the legs to run and run. This is a blackberry and blackcurrant-soaked wine with perfect weight and intensity. Something magical happened here in 2018 and they have managed not to lose any flavours from the vine to the barrel. The length and freshness of the tannins and acidity on the finish is nothing short of tremendous and everything is held together by succulent, perfectly seasoned oak. This is one of my favourite Pichon Baron's of all time. Its seamless flavour appears to borrow elements from every great style of Cabernet in the world, combine them, and then make them its own."
- MJ, matthewjukes.com