
Domaine de Chevalier Blanc 2015

CSPC# 780487

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon

Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

Classification

Cru Classe de Graves in 1959

Website

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

General Info

The owners of Domaine de Chevalier, the Bernard family, have a long history dating all the way back to the 1155! Documents are available stating that the Count of Angoulême awarded the Bordeaux wine property to Chateau-Bernard for his for his valour in battle against the English.

Domaine de Chevalier in the Graves/Pessac Leognan, appellation, was purchased in 1865 by Arnaud Ricard and his son Jean the Bernard family for 33,000 francs. At the time, the Ricards family were familiar with the Bordeaux wine trade as they worked as coopers, producing some of the best barrels used by many of the best chateau. In 1865, the estate began selling their wine under the Gascon name of "Chivaley". In those days, the 44-hectare property was used for mostly food crops and breeding animals. While there was a tiny Bordeaux wine making operation at the estate, it was not the main interest of the property.

Shortly after the elder Ricard passed away, the son discovered the outstanding potential of the terroir and soil at Domaine de Chevalier and transformed it into a full-time vineyard. The name was changed from "Chivaley" to the French "Chevalier". When Jean Ricard died, his son-in-law, Gabriel Beaumartin, took over and managed Domaine de Chevalier for the next 4 decades. At various times the Ricard family owned other top estates in the Graves appellation including Chateau Malartic Lagraviere and Chateau de Fieuzal.

When Gabriel Beaumartin died in 1940, no one was interested in managing the estate. After a few years, Claude Ricard, Jean's son, started at Domaine de Chevalier in 1948. He was only 21 years old. Under Claude Ricard, Domaine de Chevalier was included in the 1959 Graves Classification. When Domaine de Chevalier was purchased 1983, Olivier Bernard was not much older at 23 years of age. By the time Olivier Bernard arrived, Claude Ricard had already managed the estate for over thirty years.

Domaine de Chevalier is fortunate to have such a fine team to run its affairs. Olivier, whose family business owns the estate, is the outgoing but canny administrator whilst Rémi Edange is hands-on, knowing every vine and every barrel. Whilst their white wines have always been amongst the very finest, the reds were simpler affairs. But from the 1995 vintage onwards greater flair and concentration was in evidence. The quality curve is now further accentuated by the team's bold move to appoint Stéphane Derenoncourt, of La Mondotte fame, as consultant winemaker. Domaine De Chevalier is classified as a Graves Cru Classé.

Vintage

An unremarkable winter (wet the first two months, then cold between mid- January and mid-February) followed by a dry, warm spring for nearly perfect flowering. Ideal weather to meet the first two conditions for a good vintage: early, quick, and even flowering and fruit set.

Dry, hot early summer weather between fruit set and véraison (colour change) followed by a wonderful month of August that launched ripening.

A halt to vegetative growth at the beginning of véraison: the 3rd condition for a good red wine vintage. Thus, at this stage, the first three conditions for a good red wine vintage – flowering and fruit set that were both early and well grouped together during fine, dry weather, and a stop to vegetative growth – were perfectly satisfied. September and October were cool and sunny, without rain. This meant that there was no rush to pick the grapes, and that the two final conditions for a successful vintage were also met.



Vineyards The 80-hectoliter vineyard of Domaine de Chevalier has 42 hectares under vine. The vines are relatively young due to replanting and the fact that the vineyard has frequently been hit by frost. The vineyard of Domaine de Chevalier is used to produce both red and white Bordeaux wine. For the white Bordeaux wine, 5 hectares are planted to 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Semillon. The vineyard is planted to a vine density of 10,000 vines per hectare. On average, the vines are close to 30 years of age. The vineyard management techniques used are sustainable farming methods. Only organic Fertilizers are used, and this is on a parcel by parcel basis. Approx 40-60% of annual crop goes into the grand vin. Domaine de Chevalier has a complex terroir and soil that starts with the forest that surrounds the vineyards three sides. The forest enhances the extremes of temperature and increase the risk of frost. The terroir is also gravelly black sand soils that are on average 60-90 cm deep. The rich sub-soil consists of a clay-gravel base mixed with hardpan. The vineyard drainage system, built in 1962, important as it drains excess water. At Domaine de Chevalier, it makes a big difference because the sub-soil is prone to retaining humidity. A wind machine and even helicopters are also used to keep the vines dry on occasion. This works because the helicopter blades stir and blend the lower layers of cold air with warmer air and helps avoid damage from frost.

Harvest We start the Sauvignon Blancs on September 7 and finish the Semillon on 16 September. Fairly compact harvest in 10 days. The Sauvignon Blancs are fresh, aromatic and powerful taste. The Semillon, unusually early, are very fine, fresh, concentrated and of high purity. Very healthy harvest, rich in sugars with nice acidity.

Maturation Fermentation in barrels. Age in barrels for 18 months (40% new oak) with bâtonnage (stirring the lees with a stick)

Tasting Notes Intense, fresh and elegant nose, of vine peach, acacia blossom and honeysuckle mixed with mineral and smoky notes (quartz, silica). Delicately creamy and rich palate despite a good acid tension. Exquisite concentration, energy and radiance of fruity taste. Good volume without heaviness. Great long finish.

Production 1,667 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2018-2030.

Scores/Awards **95 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018
93-96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016
95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018
92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016
93 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018
98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018
97-98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016
95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018
93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2015
17.5 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017
18 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016
95 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2016
95 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - March 2018
96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2018
96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 2017
96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016
92-94+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - July 2016
93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016
16+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2016
93-95 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016
94 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016
96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018
93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016
98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018
17.5 points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016
92-94 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016
16.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016

- Reviews** *"This has a full and enticing feel, with a shortbread note leading off, followed by lemon curd, peach, tangerine, salted butter and yellow apple flavors. Light verbena and heather hints show up through the alluring finish. This has outstanding range and a really gorgeous mouthfeel and should age wonderfully. Drink now through 2024. 1,667 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator
- "A distinctive style, with a rich core of tangerine, peach and Jonagold apple flavors that stretch out through the long finish, picking up salted butter, honeysuckle and mineral accents. Somewhat Burgundian in style, with more than enough stuffing to cellar once bottled. Score range: 93-96"*
- JM, Wine Spectator
- "The Domaine de Chevalier 2015 Blanc is composed of 75% Sauvignon Blanc and 25% Sémillon, fermented in barrel (35% new), and aged for 18 months on the lees with stirring. It opens with lovely lemon tart, fresh grapefruit and pineapple with a waft of honeysuckle. The medium-bodied palate is very tightly knit with wonderfully crisp acid and a citrusy finish."*
- LPB, Wine Advocate
- "The 2015 Domaine de Chevalier Blanc, which is matured in around 40% new oak, has a refined bouquet with gooseberry, lime, almond and grapefruit aromas, the oak neatly interwoven, gradually unfolding in the glass yet remaining focused. The palate has an almost flinty opening, very edgy but not shrill, a tensile and linear Domaine de Chevalier Blanc that is driven by the acidity, touches of crustacea coming through on the energetic finish. There is a twist of sour lemon and chalk popping up on the aftertaste. This is a great, intellectual, comparatively more reserved white from Olivier Bernard."*
- NM, Wine Advocate
- "The Domaine de Chevalier 2015 Blanc, which was matured in 40% new oak, has a refined bouquet just as it did out of barrel, with gorgeous yellow flower, linden and subtle grapefruit scents that seem to wrap themselves around your senses. The palate is very well balanced with a crisp line of acidity, a dab of sour lemon that has remained since its élevage and a saline finish that feels so engaging and energetic. What an outstanding Domaine de Chevalier. I am fascinated to see how this ages in bottle."*
- NM, Wine Journal
- "Instantly impressive nose with pristine lemons and limes as well as subtly flinty, reductive notes. The palate has power and direction, not to mention impressive yeast lees influence and perfectly integrated oak. Power, impressive tension and length. Drink this young or with some considerable age. It will deliver at both ends"*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "Incredible depth of fruit and density. Full and powerful with so much fruit and richness yet remains fresh and clean. Purity. Massive yet vibrant and electric. Minerality length. Love the to taste this."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "*Cellar Selection* Spice and ripe fruit aromas lead into a wine that has both richness and a crisp, fruity herbal character. Acidity shines through, giving the wine a tangy, mineral edginess. It will be a delicious fruity wine. Drink from 2023."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "93–95. Barrel Sample. While it is a little subdued at this stage, it is obvious that this will be an opulent, rich and generous wine. Hints of pear and yellow fruits are cut with tight citrus at the end."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "Smells rich and fresh at the same time. Utterly inviting without shouting at you. Rich and creamy with an oatmeal/oak quality, fine ripe citrus and green fruits and a long fresh finish. All there and all in place, and a slight grip in the texture adds to the freshness. (JH) "*
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

"Smoky, stony nose - obviously 'serious'. Very distinctive. Very mineral. Bone dry. Juicy. An absolutely model dry-white-Bordeaux-style wine. Oakiness not an issue. All vineyard."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Clearly working in a reductive environment during ageing, emphasizing a lovely sense of precision. Mouthwatering, watermelon juiciness, with round citrus underneath. A clear seam of freshness that runs through, and the palate is on an upward trajectory from start to finish with a slow build of wet stones. Yet another superb vintage that proves this is one of the very best white wines in Bordeaux."

- SS, Decanter.com

"A steel-bladed edge to the nose makes it immediately evident that this has more staying power than many of the 2015 whites, and it grips you on the attack. The citrus comes in more slowly, filling in the gaps, and it stretches out along the palate. An excellent wine for ageing."

- JA, Decanter.com

"Year in year out, this is one of the best dry whites in Bordeaux. Focused and precise, it's spicy, dense and rich on the palate, with a thread of grapefruity acidity, stylish toasty oak and a creamy texture. There's a sense of something in reserve here. Drink: 2017-25"

- TA, timatkin.com

"Clearly a contender for the top white Bordeaux wine, aside from you know who... The wine offers a crisp entry loaded with just squeezed lemon, pomelo, crushed rocks, lime and floral notes. Fresh and refreshing, concentrated and with racy acidity giving it lift, the honey and vanilla accents add just right amount of fatness to the wine. This is a beauty!"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The perfect blend of crushed rocks, assorted, fresh squeezed, yellow citrus fruits, a dab of honey and floral notes. Bright, crisp and refreshing, this wine has the uncanny ability to offer pleasure young, yet, age for decades. I've had enough of these wines at old age lately to know firsthand, how well they can age and improve for decades."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Bright and lively with an open, grapefruit, lemon zest, green apple and honeysuckle character, this wine is fresh, refreshing and long with a crisp, sweet, citrus-filled finish."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Silver/green; racy with minerality; depth; saline edge; apple note; tightly coiled on the palate; racy style – more Puligny than de Fieuzal's Corton; candy and pear drop notes here on the palate too; will blossom during élevage. Tasted UGCB 7/6/16. Drink 2020-2025. 92-94"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"One of the truly great names of dry White Bordeaux. Chevalier Blanc has a loyal following and is a wine with an amazing ability to age despite being attractive in its youth. The 5 hectares of vines are planted with 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Semillon. Pale lemon colour with a very zesty citrus fruit nose. Hints of passionflower and struck flint add to the tension and complexity. The palate is rich in texture but mineral in flavour with clean green apples and lemons giving real vivacity to the wine. Smoky notes with hints of vanilla on the finish give a touch of roundness, but this wine is pure and refined."

- Farr Vintners

"The fruit on the nose is sweet depth of flavour the palate starts with ripe greengage richness complexity of flavours. There is an underling citrus freshness bright at the back, but sweet fruit comes through giving richness on the finish."

- Derek Smedley MW

"A luscious, intense white that is unusual for this vintage in Bordeaux where white wines were fairly light and forward. There is a core minerally and restraint here that is much appreciated, and the gooseberry and star fruit flavors are carefully layered around the acidity. Long finish."

- JCL, asianpalate.com

Reviews *“The 2015 Domaine de Chevalier Blanc is every bit as captivating from bottle as it was from barrel. Time seems to have given the 2015 more depth and freshness, which is obviously a very good thing. A host of lemon peel, crushed rock, green pear, mint and dried apricot notes develop in the glass, but as is so often the case here, it is the wine's textural brilliance and persistence that place it among the world's great wines. The 2015 is simply magnificent. 2020 – 2055”*
- AG, Vinous

“One of the clear wines of the vintage, the 2015 Domaine de Chevalier Blanc is a stunner. Rich and intense, yet also finely cut, the 2015 dazzles from the very first taste. A host of lemon confit, white peach and slate notes race across the palate. Remarkably fresh and vivid, the 2015 offers an alluring interplay of textural creaminess and energy. I imagine the 2015 will age effortlessly for decades, as these wines do. The 2015 is 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Sémillon, fermented in barrel, with blocked malo. Domaine de Chevalier's Blanc remains a reference point, perhaps the reference point, for dry white wine in Bordeaux. Don't miss it!”- AG, Vinous

“If I had to pick the white of the vintage, it would be the 2015 Domaine de Chevalier Blanc from proprietor Olivier Bernard. Based largely on Sauvignon Blanc (there's around 30% Sémillon) and from a 6-hectare parcel located just outside of Léognan, it offers sensational notes of citrus oil, liquid rock, caramelized limes, and a huge chalky/flinty minerality. Full-bodied, rich and concentrated, yet with bright acidity, it should drink well for 2-3 decades. 2020 – 2050”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“Smooth, honed, well-knit and classy this is already looking like a nice with and the texture is delicious. I am slightly surprised that this wine seems so approachable give its reputation, but I am sure there is enough tension here to allow it to age, too.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
