

Château d'Aiguilhe 2020

CSPC# 890676

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Côtes de Castillon

Website

<http://www.neipperg.com/en/discover/chateau-d-aiguilhe.html>

Sustainability

Sustainable viticulture and a biodynamic approach characterize vineyard management hereby Stephan Von Neipperg. This means no herbicides, pesticides, or insecticides are used.

Dating from 1988, this deep ecological commitment is constantly revised and updated to enhance the environment and biodiversity. Many years of effort culminated in obtaining organic certification for Château Canon La Gaffelière and La Mondotte in 2014. In addition, both estates are now ISO 14001 certified.

General Info

Chateau d'Aiguilhe is a castle located in the Côtes de Castillon wine appellation on the right bank of the Bordeaux region in France. The castle dates back to the 13th century and has been owned by a number of different families over the years. The castle is situated on a rocky outcrop and offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside. The vineyards surrounding the castle are planted with predominantly Merlot grapes, with smaller amounts of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Château d'Aiguilhe always had promising *terroir*, and this producer was making wine during the 1700s. Though the estate was primarily used for agriculture back in the day, the family that oversaw the operations at the estate, the Leberthon family, knew there was something special here. Eventually, Etienne Martineau purchased the land in 1920 and created the vineyards that are on the property today. At the time, the property was known as Château La Fleur d'Aiguilhe. He owned the estate for several generations, yet this jewel of Côtes de Castillon was relatively obscure. All that was to change in 1998, when the legendary Stephen von Neipperg set his sights on the property. The Von Neipperg's are a prominent family within the Saint-Émilion appellation, famous for owning illustrious estates such as Château Canon La Gaffélie, Château Clos de l'Oratoire, and Château La Mondotte, to name a few. Once Stephan von Neipperg purchased Château La Fleur d'Aiguilhe, he renamed the estate Château d'Aiguilhe. The reason it is named, "l'Aiguilhe," is because of the estate's unique *terroir*. The property is bordered on one side by a plateau and the other by a small valley. This overlooks l'Aiguilhe, which is a French term meaning, "needle."

After purchasing Château d'Aiguilhe, much work needed to be done both in the vat room and the vineyards. The vineyards were completely replanted and the von Neipperg's spared no expense in creating a brand-new, circular-shaped winery. The winemaking facilities were upgraded to the latest technology.

Winemakers

Stephan von Neipperg

Vintage

The growing season began with an unseasonably warm winter and the high temperatures continued into the spring, which meant the worst of the April frosts were avoided. Instead, the region saw heavy rains create a warm, humid atmosphere and diseases like rot and mildew became prevalent, meaning producers had to be vigilant. However, the downpours did provide one boon by revitalizing the water tables in the soil, which would prove invaluable in the upcoming summer months. The summer was extremely hot and arid although infrequent showers did fall until late August, when the season then completely dried out. Good weather prevailed through to the harvest. The resulting crop was smaller than usual, it was in excellent condition with small, thick-skinned berries in great health.

Vineyards

The *terroir* is a mixture of limestone and clay soils with an impressive elevation of 110 meters at its peak. This property sits on the choicest parcels within the entire Côtes de Castillon appellation. There is excellent drainage, and the vines have a southern-facing exposure, which gives them the perfect amount of sunlight. At the time of purchase by the Von Neipperg's, there was a hefty portion of Cabernet Sauvignon. That was pulled in favor of more Merlot – the star of this region. This 140-hectare estate has 90 hectares planted with Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Château d'Aiguilhe practices sustainable viticulture, and all the vines are diligently tended



to. Everything is harvested by hand, and the wine is vinified in a mixture of concrete and wooden vats. The wine is subsequently aged in French Oak for approximately 15-18 months to give it plenty of backbone and structure.

Harvest	By hand in small crates to avoid bruising. Sorting before and after destemming. No crushing. The grapes are put into vats by gravity flow.
Vinification/ Maturation	To produce the wine of Chateau d'Aiguilhe, after intense sorting, the fruit is whole berry fermented in a combination of oak vats and cement tanks. In 2015, a complete renovation and modernization of Chateau d'Aiguilhe was completed. They added 9 new, truncated cone-shaped concrete vats giving them a total of 26 vats in all. Maceration runs for 28 days with regular, pneumatic pigeages. Malolactic fermentation and sur lies aging take place in 50% new, French oak barrels.
Tasting Notes	Opaque, glossy in the glass. A ripe nose, rounded and voluminous, with detailed dark fruits, speckled spices, tea and oak, nice blue note too. A fresh palate, silky attack, lots of fine tannins that do grip. Intense, cherry, and red fruit finish.
Serve with	Chateau d'Aiguilhe is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau d'Aiguilhe is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau d'Aiguilhe is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	20,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2023-2040
Scores/Awards	92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023 92 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023 90 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023 92-93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021 93 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2021 93-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021 89 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021 90-92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021 92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023 90-92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021 93 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023 91-93 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2021 92-94 points - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2020 91-93 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021 94 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021 90-91 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2020 15 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021
Reviews	<i>"Nicely rendered, with a very pure beam of cassis, and cherry puree leading the way, infused gently with violet and savory accents. The fresh, focused finish is sneaky long. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2034. 20,000 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator <i>"Aromas of cassis, dark berries and cherries mingle with subtle hints of incense and spices in an inviting bouquet to introduce the 2020 d'Aiguilhe, a medium to full-bodied, fleshy, and layered wine with powdery tannins and the lively acids that are typical of this later-ripening, limestone-rich sector. Always a notable value, this age-worthy cuvée has turned out very well this year."</i> - WK, Wine Advocate <i>"Really fresh and bright with clean currant and crushed stone aromas and flavors. Light-bodied. Orange peel. Dark earth. Delicious. Outstanding. Drink now."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com <i>"A solid density of fruit with blackberry, white pepper, and some salt. Walnut undertones. Very long and flavorful. Compact palate. Very well done. Barrel Sample: 92-93."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com

Reviews

“Violet reflections, great clarity of colour and immediate whoosh of salinity through the redcurrant fruits. Powerful and focused with bright berry flavours, it practically defines the term crunchy fruit, then softens to show creamier black cherry purée as it relaxes in the glass. Really a very tasty d'Aiguilhe from Vignobles Comtes von Neipperg. Extremely moreish. Barrel Sample: 93.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“Quite floral on the nose with earthy red fruits, forest floor and oceanic notes. On the palate the wine is silky, pure, fresh, vibrant, and juicy. There is length and complexity with a cool salty touch to the tannins that are there from the mid-palate through to the finish. Blending 90% Merlot with 10% Cabernet Franc.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2020 d'Aiguilhe captures all of the exuberance of the vintage. Jammy and explosive, the 2020 offers up a heady mélange of raspberry preserves, mocha, spice and rose petal. This lush, extravagantly rich wine is a real beauty, but the style is definitely pushed in the direction of ripeness and textural intensity. Give the tannins a few years to soften.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 d'Aiguilhe is bright, punchy, and so expressive. Clean mineral accents cut right through a core of blueberry fruit. Graphite, lavender, spice, and mocha linger on the clean, bracing finish. Medium in body and vibrant, Stephan von Neipperg's Côtes de Castillon is superb in 2020.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2020 Château d'Aiguilhe has a nose laden with mulberry, blackberry, allspice and even rooibos scents that lends it a subtle Capelands slant, not necessarily in a bad way. The palate is medium-bodied with a fine grip on the entry, offering crunchy black fruit struck through with a silver bead of acidity. Fresh and vibrant, leaving blackberry, tobacco, and touches of sour cherry on the aftertaste. There is real joie-de-vivre here.”

- AG, Vinous

“From the up-and-coming Castillon region, just east of Saint-Emilion, the 2020 Chateau D'Aiguilhe has a floral, cassis, and black raspberry-driven style that shows more tobacco and classic limestone minerality with time in the glass. It's medium to full-bodied, has fine tannins, and the balance and class to evolve for 10-15 years. It's a seriously good Castillon, even better than the brilliant 2019. Best After 2023.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“I loved the nose of the 2020 Château D'Aiguilhe, which is loaded with pure, clean cassis and raspberry-like fruits well as white flowers, crushed stone, and even a touch of blue fruits with time in the glass. It's very floral, fresh, and medium-bodied and is impeccably made. It's well worth seeking out and should be one of the value gems in the vintage.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Deep dark ruby garnet, opaque core, violet reflections, delicate edge lightning. Red cherry fruit underlaid with fine herbal spices, candied violets, black berries in the background. Juicy, nuances of blackberries and plums, freshly structured, mineral-lemony on the finish, a lively companion to food.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“On the nose, fruity, fresh and offers a nice finesse of grain (limestone), depth, finesse, a certain small richness as well as a small floral side (violet, peony). There are notes of pulpy/juicy cassis, bright blueberry and more lightly raspberry associated with small touches of lilac, lily as well as fine points of grey pea, rose and a subtle hint of spices. The palate is fruity and offers a tangy frame, a nice definition, precision, gourmandize, a nice power (with excellence/ in finesse), tension as well as a little compact side (in finesse). On the palate, this wine expresses notes of juicy/pulpy blueberry, fresh redcurrants and more lightly lily associated with touches of lilac, bright cassis, bright raspberry as well as fine points of licorice, toast, cardamom, and a subtle hint of chocolate. The tannins are precise, elegant, and fresh. Good length. Nice little chew, sapidity and a touch of good bitterness on the finish/persistence.”

- Vert de Vin

