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## Seigneurs d'Aiguilhe 2014

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 defence 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 Leberthons 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 descendents 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

The winter of 2013/2014 was characterized by its dampness and very gentle temperatures, with the lowest number of days of frost (under 10) in the last decade. As a result, bud break was about two weeks earlier than average. The "green tip" stage was observed around 2 April.

However, a drop in temperatures in mid-April and then again in mid-May, resulted in the growth cycle losing its advance. Rain over the spring period was slightly above average, resulting in a significant threat of fungal diseases (mainly mildew and botrytis). Flowering began very slowly in late May. The Merlot vines were in full bloom around 9 June; fortunately, a rise in temperatures enabled an acceleration of the end of the flowering period.

The summer of 2014 was characterized by regular rain, with frequent thunderstorms until the end of August. Temperatures remained generally moderate, except for a few days in the second half of July, which saw peaks of above 35°C. August was relatively cool, with temperatures 1 to 2 degrees below average. The *véraison* (when the grapes change colour) began in mid-July and was spread over more than a month (the Merlot had fully changed colour by 14/08). The real summer did not start until the last week of August, with a very welcome period of high pressure that continued until the harvests, enabling the grapes to reach perfect ripeness and offer the much hoped for quality that the vintage had promised. No hint of water stress appeared until September and the foliage did not stop growing until relatively late.

The superb late summer brought a significant rise in temperatures and an increased difference between day and night-time temperatures.

The quality of the vintage greatly benefited from this magical period between late August and October. The beautiful Indian summer meant that we could take a relaxed approach to the harvests, beginning in mid-September and continuing until

18 October. The leaf-stripping that had been carried out in early September and the excellent health of the grapes enabled us to harvest the plots quickly and reduced the need to sort the grapes in the vineyard and in the winery.

**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 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.

**Harvest** 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

**Vinification/  
Maturation** 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.

**Tasting Notes** 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!

**Serve with** Suggested pairings / wine Stuffed vegetables, ham, andouillette à mustard, stuffed tomatoes, fontaine bleau, 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

**Cellaring** Drink now to 2021

**Reviews** *"This is the 2nd wine of the star of the appellation Chateau d'Aiguilhe. Proprietor Stephan Neipperg is also responsible for the great wines of Canon-la-Gaffeliere, Clor l'Oratoire and the super luxury "Garage wine" La Mondotte. Drinkable now, this elegant Merlot based blend is supple, rich, inviting and one of the best values in Bordeaux."*

- Steve Beardon, KL Wine Merchants

*"The second wine of Aiguilhe is always a great value and 2014 is just that. Plenty of blackberry aromas and flavors. Decant and enjoy with a nice hamburger."*

- Clyde Beffa Jr, KL Wine Merchants

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