
Seigneurs d'Aiguilhe 2017

CSPC# 765371

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Côtes de Castillon

Website

<http://www.neipperg.com/index.php?act=1,12,1>

General Info

The d'Aiguilhe seignury 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 defense 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 Leberthon's 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 and early spring were extremely mild and dry, in fact one of the driest of the century so far. This naturally led to quite uniform early budding, from the 26th of March in some of our plots, and an initial phase of rapid growth.

In the second half of April, however, the weather changed with the arrival of an anticyclone marked by clear skies and a north-easterly wind. The air mass therefore cooled, and temperatures fell fast.

The nights of the 27th and 28th of April were devastating, not only because of the intensity of the cold but also the vast area where it struck.

No region was spared: the only difference was the scale of the damage.

65% of the production at Château Canon La Gaffelière was affected, while at Clos de l'Oratoire it was 70%, Château Peyreau over 90%, and Château d'Aiguilhe 60%. Only La Mondotte was spared.

After the initial shock and despondency that an event like this causes, it was time to set to work. It was time to seriously take stock of the situation. What should we do? Prune? Rush to work without a plan. No. It was essential instead to take time, to wait, to watch and keep watching, and to weigh up the life force still present in the wood of the vines... and only then intervene and fight...

Marking the vines, taking action to prevent disease, analysing the petioles, applying liquid compost, etc.

There was a great deal of work to be done - painstaking, but necessary for the future, working in the short term for a second generation of grapes.

Yes, that was what it was about... betting on the second generation of this 2-in-1 vintage.

After the frost, the weather in spring was radiant and almost summerlike. Temperatures above the seasonal norms, combined with a dry spell that lasted until the end of June, led to a quick and consistent flowering, starting on the 15th of May in the earliest plots!

While late June was very wet, summer was amazingly dry, exacerbating the water shortage of the winter, even in clay soils. Rain at the beginning of September brought the grape skins to full maturity, and the ripening process was very uniform.

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	Painstaking work that marked the whole vintage reached its culmination during the harvest, with the combination of first and second-generation bunches: picking of the first-generation grapes began on the 14th of September, finishing on the 29th, while the second generation was harvested between the 3rd and the 10th of October.
Vinification/ Maturation	Fermentation in wooden vats for 25 days. Extraction by pneumatic pigeage (punching down the cap). Maturing in oak barrels (80%), on the lees for 15-20 months. No fining or filtration.
Tasting Notes	Bright ruby red. A nice fruity bouquet with a few spicy touches. Rich and fruity with a very long finish. Rich and complex, cinnamon and cassis throughout, this delicious wine is a classic example of what to expect from this prestigious producer.
Serve with	Vegetables, charcuterie, poultry, meat, hard cheeses, soft cheeses. 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 2026
