

# Château Pichon-Longueville Baron 2020

CSPC# 848999

750mlx6

13.6% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% 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 an 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

## Vintage

2020 began with a historically rainy winter followed by a tropical spring. Vigilance was required in soil management and protecting the vines against mildew. Warm, dry weather then led to one of the earliest flowerings on record, two weeks ahead of the norm. The first flowers were observed between 9th and 10th May and flowering took place between 15th and 25th May.

Rainfall stopped at the end of June, giving way to cool, dry weather until the onset of ripening in mid-July.

Mid-veraison was reached between 23rd and 25th July on the earliest ripening Merlot plots and subsequently developed well in warm and dry conditions.

Summer brought drought and sporadic heat waves until mid-August, when thunderstorms cooled down excessive temperatures and caused the Merlot grapes to swell. The later-ripening Cabernets remained small until the harvest. Picking started about ten days ahead of the norm, mostly in sunshine for the Merlots and thunder showers for the Cabernets. The Merlots and Cabernets were tannic, and colourful, with acidities and potential alcohol content within normal ranges.

Ripening took place in hot weather, apart from the second half of August.

Thunderstorms of varying intensity, with between 80 and 120 mm of rain, struck Pauillac between 12th and 16th August, in most cases counteracting the water stress observed in early August. The Merlots once again benefited from the rainfall, with the grapes growing swiftly, unlike the Cabernets.

## Vineyards

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



<b>Vineyards</b>	Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. The vineyard is planted to a vine density is 9,000 vines 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.
<b>Harvest</b>	The harvest took place from 14th to 22nd September for the Merlot and from 22nd to 30th September for the Cabernet-Sauvignon. Yields were only 33 hectoliters per hectare.
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	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. Aged 70% in new barrels, 30% from barrels of one vintage for 18 months.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	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 2020 reveals a very beautiful, intense garnet colour. The fresh, precise, and complex nose offers aromas of ripe red fruit, spices, cedar, and pencil lead. The attack is ample with a powerful, creamy, and elegant palate. The tannins are silky and racy. The finish is long, fruit-driven, and peppery.
<b>Serve with</b>	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.
<b>Production</b>	12,404 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2030-2045
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>97 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p><b>95-97+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023</p> <p><b>99 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p><b>97-98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p><b>18 points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Yohan Castaing, Decanter.com - December 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - December 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p><b>97-99 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Farr Vintners - May 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p><b>98+ points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p><b>18.5 points</b> - Matthew Jukes - April 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p><b>97-98 points</b> - Vert de Vin - May 2021</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021</p> <p><b>18 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This has a very large-scaled yet properly proportioned core of cassis, plum and blackberry fruit flavors that are remarkably pure and focused. Buried deep within is a sleek, vibrant iron spine that drives the finish as the fruit keeps pace. Extra savory, tobacco and cedar nuances fill out all the remaining available space. A towering wine, with a buttoned-up feel. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2030 through 2045. 12,404 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p>

## Reviews

*"The brilliant 2020 Pichon-Longueville Baron offers up inviting aromas of sweet berries and cassis mingled with pipe tobacco, loamy soil, pencil shavings and licorice. Medium to full-bodied, deep, and layered, its velvety attack segues into a concentrated mid-palate that's framed by rich, powdery tannins, concluding with a long, vibrant finish. A blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot, it's a true classic that's a touch less demonstrative out of the gates than the sensual 2019, but which in the fullness of time will prove every bit as good.*

*The numbers speak for themselves: Until 2000, Pichon-Longueville Baron produced some 350,000 bottles per year, but since 2001, that figure has fallen to 160,000. Managing director Christian Seely's first decision on arriving at the property was to reduce production, focusing the grand vin on Cabernet Sauvignon growing on the deep gravel terraces opposite Château Latour that have always been the heart of this historic estate, and which were the source of the great duo of 1989 and 1990 before being joined by other holdings after a series of acquisitions in the early 1990s. The results also speak for themselves in the form of a series of excellent vintages, and things improved further with the construction of a new barrel cellar in 2006, permitting better temperature control and more precision during élevage. In style, Pichon Baron these days has more in common stylistically with the depth and structure of Latour than it does with the perfumed sensuality of its sibling, Pichon Lalande, and in quality, it's clearly one of contemporary Bordeaux's greatest wines."*

- WK, Wine Advocate

*"The 2020 Pichon-Longueville Baron is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot aging for an estimated 18 months in French oak barrels, 70% new. The production of the grand vin represents 48% of the harvest this year. Opaque purple-black in color, it comes bounding out of the glass with exuberant notions of blackberry pie, preserved plums, and crème de cassis, plus suggestions of Chinese five spice, chocolate mint, graphite and cedar chest with a touch of violets. The medium-bodied palate is built like a brick house, featuring firm, ripe, grainy tannins, and bold freshness to support the taut, muscular black fruits, finishing long and spicy."*

- LPB, Wine Advocate

*"A blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot, the 2020 Pichon Baron is deep garnet-purple in color. It gallops out of the glass with powerful notes of crème de cassis, blackberry pie, and licorice, followed by suggestions of rose petals, Indian spices, and cedar chest with a touch of mocha. The medium-bodied palate is elegant and fresh with fine-grained tannins supporting the bright black fruits, finishing long, and perfumed."*

- LPB, Wine Independent

*"Fabulous aromas of blackcurrant, blueberry, crushed stone, graphite, and lead pencil. Some violets and other flowers, too. Full-bodied with incredibly encompassing tannins that are like the finest velvet in texture. The structure is superb, with so much tension and focus. Seamless. This could be the new 1990 or better. Try after 2028."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"This young Bordeaux is totally seamless with fine, velvet-like tannins that are integrated and refined. Underlying freshness and verve. It's full-bodied, linear, and long with a compact palate."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Made with a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine offers dark tannins that give density and massive black fruits. With a magnificent combination of dark fruits and rich structure, it is set for long-term aging."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"The wine has both the power and the elegant structure that is associated with this estate. The rich tannins are dense while not hard, emphasizing the freshness of the black currant fruits."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

**Reviews** *"76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot. Cask sample. Deep crimson hue. Powerful and reserved, the nose dark and restrained with just a nip of vanilla oak and spice. Dense, firm, and persistent on the palate, a massive tannic frame heightened by acidity. Powerful and brooding. Will definitely need time. (JL) 13.7%. Drink 2030 – 2050."*

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

*"The nose exudes the same winning combination of dark berry fruit and freshness as well as power and sensual pleasure that has become a hallmark of Pichon Baron. The palate provides the same winning alliance between dense, fleshy texture and delicate freshness. What stands out in this vintage is its already irresistible charm at this stage, which one hopes will last for a long while, but patience over the next 10 years will undoubtedly be rewarded."*

- YC, Decanter.com

*"Intense, concentrated, rippling with power while still delivering finesse. A muscular Pichon Baron, layered with liquorice and chocolate shavings. Unmistakably Pauillac, and hugely Cabernet dominant, with savoury spice notes of grilled cumin and the same muscular, saline-backed tannins that you find in Les Griffons, just here with more definition and depth. 70% new oak for 18 months, 48% of overall production. Harvest September 14 to 30. Yields on the old vines here just above 30hl/ha. Drinking Window 2029 – 2048"*

- JA, Decanter.com

*Densely structured, with muscular tannins that confidently hold the cassis and blackberry fruits in check and load up on the Pauillac character. This is great quality, full of liquorice, gunpowder tea and grilled cocoa bean set against plump black fruits and a mouthwateringly fresh finish with eucalyptus and slate. Will be bottled in June 2020 (and go into vat a few months earlier) but will easily need 6 to 8 years in bottle to fully soften. 80% new oak, 48% of overall production, 30hl/h yield. Harvest September 14 to 30."*

- JA, Decanter.com

*"With an intensity of color that matches the intensity you taste, and feel, here you find a wine that coats your palate with its multiple layers of rich, dark, deep, black, and dark red fruits coupled with smoke, tobacco, Cuban cigars, spice, dark chocolate, and burning oak embers. This incredible wine is perfectly poised on the corner of power, and intensity with an almost, endless, seamless, regal, and refined finish. This is clearly going to be one of the all-time great vintages of Pichon Baron. Drink from 2028-2065."*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*"Richly colored with purple around the edges the wine struts its creme de cassis, tobacco, cigar box, earthy, forest floor and peppery spice nose with ease. On the palate the wine is round, polished, sweet, fresh, ripe, long, and elegant. This is a refined, classic, potentially forward vintage of Pichon Baron that should start showing quite well with just a decade of aging. The wine was made from blending 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot, 13.6% ABV. Yields were only 33 hectoliters per hectare."*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*"The 2020 is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot that will be aged in barrel for 18 months. All the fruit was picked by the end of September. Deep purple in colour. Slightly reductive on opening but with air blueberry, cassis, sweet vanilla, and toasted spices can be coaxied from the glass. The palate is bursting with swollen blueberries and pure cassis. This is round and full, but tempered by rich, grippy tannins. The finish is driven by black fruit and hints of savoury spice with real persistence."*

- Farr Vintners

*"As I found before, the 2020 Pichon Baron takes a while to open in the glass. Finally, it offers enticing blackberry and boysenberry fruit, peony and iris flower, hints of graphite and black truffle. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannins, again, displaying outstanding symmetry and focus, fresh as a daisy with a strong and mineral-driven finish. Christian Seely and his team have overseen a splendid Pichon Baron for the ages. Blue-blooded Pauillac."*

- NM, Vinous

**Reviews** *"The 2020 Pichon Baron underwent an early picking with relatively low yields. A blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot, it has a very tight nose at first that demands 15–20-minute coaxing in the glass. It eventually reveals enticing blackberries, blueberries, and hints of balsamic and undergrowth, all very precise, crushed rock scents surface with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy black fruit, fine-grained tannins, and touches of hoisin toward a dense but structured finish of unerring symmetry. Tasted from test tube sample and regular 75cl bottle. Drink: 2028-2050"*  
- NM, Vinous

*"The 2020 Pichon Baron is every bit as magnificent as it was en primeur. A wine of vertical intensity and explosive power, the 2020 offers up an exotic mix of dark red/black fruit, espresso, licorice, menthol, gravel, and dried herbs. This potent, driving Pauillac needs time to come together. It marries the fruit intensity of a warm year with the driving energy of a cool year. The 2020 is a gorgeous Pichon Baron."*  
- AG, Vinous

*"The 2020 Pichon Baron is utterly breathtaking, and also one of the very best young vintages I have tasted here. An exotic mélange of red cherry, mint, rose petal and blood orange comes alive in the glass. More than anything, though, the Pichon-Baron possesses remarkable energy and vibrancy that builds to an intense, beautifully focused finish. This is hands down one of the most impressive wines of 2020. Superb."*  
- AG, Vinous

*"The flagship 2020 Château Pichon-Longueville Baron is pure gold, a full-bodied, rich, powerful 2020 displaying the vintage's purity, focus, and structure front and center. A blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot, its dense purple hue is followed by a mammoth-sized bouquet of cassis, blackberries, smoked earth, graphite, and cedar pencil. With ripe tannins, a seamless, layered mouthfeel, and one heck of a finish, it comes closest in my mind to the estate 2010, and I think is clearly in the same realm as the 1989, 1990, 2000, 2009, 2010, 2015, and 2019. It offers pleasure today, but it certainly warrants 7-8 years, a decade, if possible, of bottle age and will have 40-50 years of overall longevity. 98+."*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*"The inky hued 2020 Château Pichon-Longueville Baron checks in as a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot that spent 18 months in 70% new barrels. It's a dense, rich, powerful 2020 offering loads of pure cassis and almost blue fruits as well as full-bodied richness, a round, lush, incredibly sexy texture, sweet tannins, and ample classic Pauillac lead pencil, tobacco, and violet aromas and flavors. It's unquestionably in the same ballpark as the 2015, 2016, and 2018, and given its sweet tannins and beautifully integrated acidity, it should have some up-front appeal as well, yet still age at a glacier pace."*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*"As expected, Cabernet leads the way in this blend, and it is the only red in this particular family to feature this grape in the driving seat. For this reason, it has a markedly more commanding nose and stance on the palate. Small berries make for a deep, dark colour and alongside the intensity of the perfume and palate one might expect to experience a markedly tannic finish, but no. This is a genteel, honed wine with a long, lithe finish and a discreet, savoury kick on the back of the palate and this makes me think that it might start to drink a little sooner than the more structured 2018 vintage. A shade lighter, a touch more expressive and silky, this is a suave Pichon Baron with restraint offset with typical distinction and I expect it to blossom in a decade and then hold well into the future."*  
- Matthew Jukes

*"(76% CS, 24% M; 48% harvest; 13.7% ABV; 70% new). Very gravelly behind the freshly ripe black fruit on the nose; full, vigorous, finely tannic, an ample but vital constitution; dense and deep and ripe in flavor, the dark, ripe fruit brightened by its acidity, long and even and tenacious within the currently slightly grippy tannin; an effortless, even, classic, fine Pauillac with great fruit and aroma length. Upright, ample, finely muscular Pauillac, a wine of class, scope, and effortless power. Will certainly need time to loosen up and yield and meld. 2034–54+."*  
- MS, The World of Fine Wine