
Domaine de Chevalier Blanc 2012

CSPC# 780489

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

76% *Sauvignon Blanc*, 24% *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

A rainy spring was welcome after two years of strong drought. Risks of diseases (mildew...) have been checked with preventive works by a very good technique strategy. A long period of flowering created a serious heterogeneity which was homogenized by precise green works all along July and August.

Finally, we had a wonderful summer after a hesitant July but lightly rainy (in terms of quantity). Growing cycle stopped early August. Ripening period (August-October) was fully sunny without any drop of rain.

Such conditions have been excellent to clean the vineyard: no diseases, no damages. We had high sugar potential and very good acidity (quality of gravelly and clayey soils) together with high level of tannins in red skins.



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. For the red wine, 37 hectares are planted to 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. 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 Hand-picked, into small crates from 12th September to 05th October 2012
Our white vineyard has been handpicked and selected by lots between 12/09 and 5/10. Climatic conditions were perfect, and we get sumptuous different lots. (Alcoholic fermentation in barrels, no malolactic). The lots were characterized by: aromatic intensity, roundness, freshness, power and vivacity. Fine lees maturation increases elegance and complexity. Really great dry white vintage 2012.
Only in the morning: fresh and aromatic potential

Maturation Fermentation in barrels. Age in barrels for 18 months (35% new oak) with bâtonnage (stirring the lees with a stick)

Tasting Notes Brilliant pale gold. Intense nose of fresh citrus fruit, white peach and exotic fruit. Gravelly soil notes are also very present with menthol and flinty flavors. On the palate very pure and straight wine showing a great and unctuous richness perfectly balanced by fruit and soil acidity. Feeling of sweetness traducing perfect ripeness of the fruit. Very long finish. Precise and balanced wine with concentration and very high-class style. Authentic wine.

Production cases made

Cellaring Drink 2018-2030.

Scores/Awards **93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 30, 2014
91-94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013
93+ points - Robert M. Parker Jr., Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015
93-95 points - Robert M. Parker Jr., Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013
94-96 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013
95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - December 2013
94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013
93-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - October 2013
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - June 2013
16 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - October 2014
18 (93) points - Steven Spurrier, Decanter.com - June 2013
95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013
93 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 11, 2015
93-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 25, 2013
92-94+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 10, 2013
16 points - Mark Pardoe, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - June 2013
17.5 points - Farr Vintner - March 2013
92-95 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013
90 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - January 2014
90-92 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 24, 2013

Scores/Awards **95 points** - Lea & Sandeman Wine Merchants - April 2013

18 points - Matthew Jukes, MW (score only)

92 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)

18.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)

17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)

18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

Reviews *"There's serious depth to the shortbread, lemon curd, creamed yellow apple and melon notes, all inlaid with mouthwatering savory and thyme flavors. The long, powerful finish has plenty of buried mouth-watering acidity. This should age well. Best from 2015 through 2020."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Good, floral-framed style, with honeysuckle and chamomile notes followed by Meyer lemon, meringue and shortbread flavors. Very juicy through the finish, with a nice stony backdrop for added cut. Score range: 91-94"

- JM, Wine Spectator

"A beautifully elegant and complex wine, with subtle notions of citrus, honeysuckle and tropical fruits, this medium-bodied, fresh, super-pure 2012 from Domaine de Chevalier should drink well for 30 or more years. The color is light straw with a greenish hue to it."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"A gorgeous effort, the 2012 Domaine de Chevalier, made from a blend of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Semillon that reached 13.5% natural alcohol, boasts abundant notes of creme Brule, lemon custard, candle wax and oranges in its beautifully rich, honeyed personality. Great acidity gives laser-like precision to its component parts. Drink this full-bodied white wine over the next 2-3 decades."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted from a barrel sample at en primeur. The Domaine de Chevalier Blanc has a reserved, stony nose that you have to be patient with – give it a few minutes and there are some subtle undergrowth scents that begin to emerge, hints of orange blossom and dried apricot. The palate is well balanced with a delicate touch of spice on the entry. This is very focused with good weight and it displays wonderful tension on the finish that offers a Burgundy-like texture. Wonderful. Tasted April 2013."

- NM, Wine Journal

"This is very tender and pretty with very fine elements. Dried lemons, minerals and lilac as well as character of oyster shell and iodine. Full body, yet refined and long. You normally see this sort complex character in reds from Pessac-Leognan. Fascinating young white. 95"

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

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"Barrel sample. Complex, rounded and full bodied, this wine is still reticent at the moment, hiding its rich fruit. As it develops, this will be impressive, with its mineral texture over apricot fruits and layers of spice and wood"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Sweet and rather oily start. Lots of weight. Could only be Pessac-Léognan – tant mieux! Big and beefy but not sweet. I admire this style – for food. Long, with an admirably dry finish. 17"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Very pale and introvert. In a blind tasting this would so easily be overlooked – as it has been so many times. It's really so different from the norm and isn't nearly ready. Almost more like a Sancerre than a Pessac. Lots of stoniness and bone dry. No perceptible wood influences. (23-Oct-2014)"

- RH, JancisRobinson.com

- Reviews** *“Silver-pale, deceptively restrained white flowers nose reveals white peaches and an elegant persistency and purity of mineral-backed fruit that will be astounding over its long future. 18/20pts (93/100pts) Drink: 2014 – 2030”*
- SS, Decanter.com
- “Olivier Bernard rates his 2012 white as highly as his 2010, which is praise indeed. This is certainly a delicious white blend, right up there with the best of the vintage, showing a waxy, creamy, lees-derived texture, subtle, smoky oak and focused, refreshing flavours of grapefruit, vanilla and fresh herbs. If you only buy one white wine from 2012, this should be at the top of the list. Drink: 2014-22 95”*
- TA, timatkin.com
- “Blending 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Semillon produced an exciting wine with lift, energy and freshness that really lets you experience the ripe, grapefruit, lemon zest, honeydew, marmalade, floral and mineral elements present in the wine. The finish feels great with the right balance of ripe fruits and acidity.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Grapefruit, lemon, stone and vanilla make the attention-seeking perfume. Rich, fresh and zippy fruits with plush texture and a fresh citrus and spice finish remain with you long after the wine went where it was supposed to go. 93-95 Pts”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Very washed colour – palest silver/grey; tight and very mineral; crisp and very cool on the palate; some spearmint notes; nice; balanced and appetizing on the palate; quite lean and tight still. Needs a few years to come out. Classical Domaine de Chevalier. Drink 2018-2025. 91+ UGC Oct '14 [Earlier note] Palest/washed gold; freshness and minerality; feels crisp; palate quite elemental; racy; almost Chablis Grand Cru like. Great minerality. Obvious class, usual restraint. 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon. 92-94+ UGC Weds April 10, 2013”*
- 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. A zesty, spicy nose exhibits lots of grapefruit and passionfruit flavours with a hint of exotic Thai spices. A lovely, rounded, melony texture with some fresh lemon acidity and tension to balance the exotic fruit. This is seriously refined and classy. Top quality dry white Bordeaux.”*
- Farr Vintners
- “Sauvignon Blanc 80% Sémillon 20% The nose is rich fleshy with sweet fruit and the start of the palate has the richness of pineapple and melon. Apple and lime refresh the back palate yet there is richness and depth of flavour underpinning. The finish is long citrusy and mineral. 2014-19 92-95”*
- Derek Smedley MW
- “Broader and less precise than the 2013 vintage with riper flavours. This white is for fairly early consumption and the flavours are already accessible and ready to be enjoyed. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Drink. (04-Jan-2014)*
- JCL, asianpalate.com
- “The nose shows pronounced citrus, coffee and spice. Medium intense palate that is still relatively muted and marked by stone fruits. (16-Apr-2013)”*
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
- “There is a qualitative similarity between 2012 and 2011 for the dry white wines of the Graves, high praise indeed given the undoubted quality of the latter. However, the summer of 2012 was hotter and drier, giving what Remi Edange at Domaine de Chevalier called a "pulpeux" quality to the wines. That is to say a fleshy and juicy character. This 2012 white is very impressive with a bright firm fruit showing citrus and stony flavours in equal measure. As usual as 70/30 blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon, this is sure to be an outstanding wine once it has finished its maturation in oak. 16/20”*
- JD, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

Reviews *“Very pale green. Freshness of sea breeze on a clear day. Fantastic nose! Fresher than fresh and breathtakingly mineral. Sauvignon is identifiable as a flavour, but here it is just part of the expression and so pure. Palate continues the theme - total harmony and penetrating freshness in a medium body packed with flavour. Clearly so much more to come here. This is great. Very very long and linear, broadening only slightly in the middle. This is the best young Domaine de Chevalier I've tasted.”*
- Lea & Sandeman Wine Merchants
