

Château La Conseillante 2020

CSPC# 801695

750mlx6

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Pomerol

Classification

unclassified

Website

<http://www.la-conseillante.com/en>

Sustainability

Organic

Analysis

Total Acidity: 3.31 pH: 3.67

General Info

The name "La Conseillante" first appeared in the middle of the 18th century. It was given to the property by a certain Catherine Conseillan, an influential figure who ran the estate at that time -almost 300 years ago.

It was in 1871 that the Nicolas family bought the estate, whose surface area and vineyard plots have remained unchanged since then.

Today, it is the turn of the fifth generation of the Nicolas to manage the estate, a demonstration once again of continuity and the attachment of the family to this great growth. Bertrand Nicolas and Jean-Valmy Nicolas are the joint managing directors of La Conseillante. Marielle Cazaux is the estate manager.

The Nicolas heirs are clearly identified on each bottle by the initials "LN" on the label at the centre of a shield within a silver-edged border whose four corners are sloped. The violet-coloured bottle capsule evokes the characteristic aroma of the wine. These packaging features, first chosen back in 1871 by the Nicolas brothers, remain elegant and yet modern even today.

Château La Conseillante is a member of the Union des Grands Crus and L'Académie des Vins de Bordeaux.

Winemakers

Marielle Cazaux. Michel Rolland - consultant winemaker

Vintage

2020 - a year of more than the usual challenges. In a few words, 2020 is a high-quality vintage of less than normal quantity. The mild and wet spring led to early flowering which in turn turned into a hot summer including over fifty days of drought, and a heat spike during the summer. The diminished yields of the year resulted from mildew pressure in the spring and a few hail-producing thunderstorms, and in fact is one of the lowest yield vintages in the last decade. The heat throughout but particularly at the end of the summer led to concentrated fruit. And of course, COVID 19 led to most critics' inability to travel to the various Chateau or en premiere events to taste, most were able to taste from home. Not an ideal circumstance but given the year's weather and the expertise of these top producers, critics are overall excited and pleased with the prospects of the 2020 vintage.

Vineyards

The 12 hectares of vineyards are in the heart of the Pomerol plateau next to Petrus and Cheval Blanc. One third of the vines – the ones to the left of Cheval Blanc's driveway – are located in Saint-Emilion on gravel and sand, but the remaining two thirds of the vineyard is planted on blue clay. It is apparently the combination of these two elements which provides the finesse and aroma for which the property is famous, and the power and depth which make it long lived. 80% of the vines that grow in this unique place, where the soil is predominantly made up of clay, are of the Merlot variety, which makes our wines round, deep and smooth. The remaining 20% that grow in gravel soils are Cab Franc, which contribute structure and freshness to the blend.

Harvest

Merlot 04/09 - 17/09, Cabernet Franc 21/09 & 30/09

Vinification

The parcellaire constituting the 12 hectares of the vineyard, unchanged since 1871, allows Château La Conseillante to perpetuate its exception. Permanent attention and appropriate care are provided to the vine culture. Fertilization tends to compensate for deficiencies rather than to enrich the soil. But the major asset lies especially in the high average age of the vineyard, which confers a limited production. Merlot, supple and round, which covers 80% of the property, is the earliest. Then comes the Cabernet Franc, for 20% of the grape varieties planted. The Château La Conseillante has equipped itself with a grape reception dock, which is one of the most successful in the region, four sorting tables, so as to make a rigorous selection of the grapes. Parcel management is respected at every stage of the winemaking process.

Maturation

70% aged in traditional new oak barrels; 27% aged in traditional second-fill oak barrels; 3% aged in amphora.



Tasting Notes	The deep purple colour matches this great estate's striking label: absolutely radiant! Stunningly perfumed, full of blueberries, violets, tayberries, and a sprinkling of cinnamon. This is as silky as they come: wine maker Marielle Cazaux so aptly describes the wine as having cashmere like tannins and there really can be no better description. This stunning 2020 inches towards perfection as the layers of fruit compote flavours build in the palate in total unison with the light touch of energetic freshness, all held together by fine lacy tannins giving both length and complexity to undoubtedly one of the wines of the Vintage. Sensational in every way.
Winemaker's Notes	Aromas of black fruits, such as blackcurrants, mingle with floral peony notes. The blending of the La Conseillante lots brings lovely balance to this wine. The 2020 displays creamy fruit character and concentration. Its juicy texture is enhanced by velvety, silky, and elegant tannins. La Conseillante 2020 is a vibrant wine which promises to age beautifully for decades.
Serve with	Young vintages can be decanted for 2-3 hours. This allows the wine to soften and open its perfume. Chateau La Conseillante is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Cellaring	Drink 2027-2060
Scores/Awards	<p>100 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p>97-99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p>98 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023</p> <p>99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p>98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p>94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p>98 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023</p> <p>99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p>98-100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p>94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p>94-96 points - Farr Vintners - May 2021</p> <p>97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>96-98 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p>96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - December 2022</p> <p>94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p>99 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p>96-98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p>19.5+ points - Matthew Jukes - April 2021</p> <p>98 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p>97-99 points - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p>98 points - Terres de Vins (score only) - September 2021</p> <p>99 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021</p> <p>95-97 points - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021</p> <p>97-98 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"One of the wines of the vintage is the 2020 La Conseillante, a blend of 86% Merlot and 14% Cabernet Franc that wafts from the glass with inviting aromas of raspberries, red cherries and mulberries mingled with exotic spices, violets and rose petals. Medium to full-bodied, satiny and vibrant, it's a beautifully elegant, sensual wine with a deep core of fruit framed by powdery tannins, concluding with a long, extravagantly floral finish. This is a Pomerol of striking purity and sophistication. Congratulations to Marielle Cazaux and her team for surpassing even what they achieved in 2016 and 2019 with this brilliant 2020!</i></p> <p><i>Under the direction of Marielle Cazaux, La Conseillante continues to go from strength to strength, and the 2020 is the finest wine that she has bottled to date. The estate's parcels are harvested into 15-kilogram crates, spend the night in a cold room and are sorted the next day, before being vinified, parcel by parcel, with pump-overs by hand. Percentages of new oak have diminished, from 80% between 2011-2014 to only 70% from 2015 onward, but more importantly, the selection of barrels has changed, too, favoring lighter toasts—and cooler temperatures in the chai help too. Contemporary La Conseillante is an immensely sensual, seamless wine, exhibiting striking perfume and purity of fruit, and it's a strong candidate for the title of Pomerol's most elegant—and dare I say it, Burgundian—wine."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2020 La Conseillante is a blend of 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc. Seventy percent of the wine is being aged in new French oak barriques, 27% in second-fill barrels and 3% in amphorae. The alcohol came in at 14% and the pH is 3.64. Deep purple-black colored, it sails gracefully out of the glass with vivacious notes of black raspberries, kirsch, and redcurrant jelly, leading to suggestions of ripe, juicy blackberries, violets, star anise and iron ore with a faint waft of dried mint. The medium to full-bodied palate is an exercise in elegance, delivering a quiet intensity of pure, energetic red and black berry layers with gorgeous floral and mineral sparks, framed by perfectly ripe, finely pixilated tannins and seamless freshness, finishing with epic length and the most breathtaking perfume. Simply mind-blowing.

This is Marielle Cazeau's sixth year at La Conseillante, having arrived at the estate in 2015 from just over the fence, so to speak, as former winemaker for Petit Village. "The summer was very warm and dry," said Cazeau. "There is lots of talk about hydric stress this vintage. We were locked down with the vines, so we spent a lot of time in the vines. There was no leaf removal this year because we needed to protect the bunches. We plowed the grass cover between the rows to create a mulch. This helped a lot to keep the moisture in the soil. I also did the green harvesting just before veraison this year—to give the vines a boost, to give the good bunches more water. We have a good clay composition in the soil too. So, naturally, there was less hydric stress among our vines. In the end, vineyard management and terroir made all difference this year." One of the most striking features of the 2020 La Conseillante sample I tasted was the tannins, which I call, "perfectly ripe, finely pixilated" in my tasting note. "I worked for a few years on the tannin management," Cazeau said with a smile. "I have tried to best express the estate's DNA. Picking date is so important for this. If you don't have great knowledge of your vineyard, the date of picking the grapes can be too late. I know my parcels very well. The date of picking is most important. Then, I adjusted the temperature of the fermentations. We start at 20 degrees Celsius. We kept it low. We do not use any machines for the pump-overs. We only do pumping-over by hand, for better control. And I use less and less sulfites. The sulfites can hide a little bit of the aromas. We have decreased the sulfites by 40% over the last few years. The oak we use—we choose the cooper very carefully and with a lot of experimenting. In the end, it is all these tiny details that produce this result. And we had healthy yields of 40 hectoliters per hectare. I loved this vintage! I am ready to sign [on] for another vintage like this. If you are on top of everything, you can have good yields and good quality in 2020."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"A blend of 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc, La Conseillante 2020 has a pH of 3.67 and a deep garnet-purple color. It waltzes out with energetic scents of crushed blueberries, blackberry preserves, and juicy black plums, giving way to nuances of lilacs, redcurrant jelly, iron ore, and cumin seed, with a touch of fallen leaves. The medium to full-bodied palate is vibrant and intense, featuring a firm, grainy backbone, and bright acidity to counter the muscular black fruits, finishing long and mineral-laced."

- LPB, Wine Independent

"So much black truffles here with dried earth, too. Black berries. Crushed stone. Plus, violets. Full-bodied. Very plush with velvety tannins. Gentle yet very structured. Succulent. Clear and bright. Superb depth and length. Goes on and on. Thoughtful. Soulful. Try after 2028."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"The balance and energy to this is very impressive with blackberry, black-olive, tar, and walnut character. It's full, but very compact with superb tannin quality that is intense, yet so fine-grained, building layers on the palate. A subtle and structured young wine. It really goes on and on."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"The wine is dense, but the tannins are velvety. The combination gives a wine with obvious power and concentration wrapped in fruit that is perfumed, ripe and shot through with terrific acidity. In the end, those tannins will give the essential structure for long-term aging."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

Reviews

"A seriously memorable wine from La Conseillante in 2020. Uplifting and glamorous with blackcurrant patisserie, scented flowers - the Cabernet Franc showing itself on the nose, alongside herbal touches with dark chocolate. Immediately juicy and so lively and bright on the palate turning creamy with a combination of chalky and bitter tannins and touches of wet stone lifted by the almost sweet Merlot fruit with freshness all the way through. A real 'drink me' wine with balance and harmony that grows and expands as it opens."
- GH, Decanter.com

"There are some beautifully fragrant floral aromatics here with concentration through the mid palate and effortless balance. A little more width and opulence in the 2019 perhaps, but here you get precision and purity, and a feeling of 2010 levels of concentration. An elegant 2020, bright, confident, bursting with life. 70% new oak. A yield of 39hl/ha. 3.67pH. Gravel and clay soils, and to keep freshness they left crop cover on the old vines but on the young ploughed it into the soil so as not to have too much competition for the water. Lowered canopy also but kept shade and leaves around the bunches to protect from the sun."
- JA, Decanter.com

"Some beautifully fragrant floral aromatics here with concentration through the mid palate and effortless balance. (...) Here you get precision and purity, and a feeling of 2010 levels of concentration. An elegant 2020, bright, confident, bursting with life."
- JA, janeanson.com

"The showy display of violets, and lilacs that get the wine going is made even better by the accompanying notes of truffle, chocolate, black cherry liqueur, licorice, and plums. However, as good as this is aromatic, the silky, fresh, sensuous textures, and the level of purity found in the multiple layers of perfectly ripe, elegant fruits are what provide all the right stuff. The seamless finish, with its energy, concentration, and refinement seal the deal. Bottled sexiness, this is so good, I could not put the glass down without refilling it. The only reason this didn't yet garner 100 Pts is the perfect 2016 is just a tiny bit better, for now. Don't be surprised to see this hit 100 Pts as it ages for a bit. Drink from 2027-2060."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Dark garnet in hue, the wine explodes from the glass with its showy display of lilacs, violets, spice, chocolate, truffle, espresso, and black plum liqueur. On the palate the wine is incredibly sexy with its silk and velvet textured fruits. The wine is showy, ostentatious, opulent, and frankly decadent. In other words, this is everything you want in a great Pomerol. Full-bodied, rich and with length, purity and energy, the wine deftly balances density with lift, remaining with you for over 60 seconds in its seamless finish. Different in style, this could be at the same level of quality found in the perfect 2016! The harvest took place September 9-September 30, making this one of the longer harvests in the history of the estate. The wine blends 87% Merlot with 13% Cabernet Franc, 14% ABV, 3.67 pH."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep ruby colour. The nose is bursting with succulent blue fruit, accented with notes of violet and savoury spice. The palate is chalky, rich, and full of structure - this is a muscular 2020. Bold blue and red fruit form the intense fruit core, but the plentiful, chewy tannins immediately form a powerful structure that persists through to the finish. The result is a wine of real texture - the brilliance is that despite their power all the tannin is ripe and fine grained. This is sweet and savoury in equal measure, and a real vin de garde. It will need at least 10 years in bottle before broaching but should be one of the longer-lived wines of the vintage."
- Farr Vintners

"The 2020 La Conseillante was bottled in the beginning of June. This takes time to unfurl in the glass, blackberry and iris, touches of black truffle and cigar humidor, all beautifully defined. The Cabernet Franc, despite constituting a minor part of the blend, plays a major role in the aromatics, lending a touch of black pepper. The palate is medium-bodied with a saline entry, here, the Merlot taking over the steering wheel, fresh and saline, a discreet touch of white pepper mixed with sage and a hint of graphite. Quite persistent in the mouth yet I feel this might close up for a time in bottle. It's quite a serious wine, less flamboyant than the previous vintage, one for hardcore Pomerol aficionados. This is a La Conseillante for long-term ageing. Superb."
- NM, Vinous

Reviews

“The 2020 La Conseillante was picked September 14–17 for the Merlot and September 21–30 for the Cabernet Franc (eight picking days), the yields coming in at 37hl/ha, and matured in 70% new oak. Of the 13 parcels, four underwent vinification intégrale this year. Iridescent purple in color. The nose makes an immediate impression, delivering pure and quite precocious black currants and crushed iris flowers; subtle touches of morello cherries develop with aeration. It is beautifully defined and the oak seamlessly integrated. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent, ripe tannins that disguise the backbone of this exquisitely balanced Pomerol. A discreet crescendo leads to a pixelated finish of awe-inspiring persistency. The old “iron fist in a velvet glove” cliché rings true here. A deeply impressive and quite profound La Conseillante courtesy of Marielle Cazaux and her team. 2029 – 2065.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Conseillante offers up gorgeous scents of mocha, cinnamon, lavender and dried herbs. This year’s blend is 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc, with the Franc very much in evidence, especially in the wine’s aromatic presence. The 2020 is a very restrained, buttoned up Pomerol, less exuberant than some recent vintages, but super-finessed, pretty much as it was en primeur. It will be interesting to see where this goes. There’s potential for sure, how much is less obvious. The 2020 is very pure but also lithe in feel. It was aged for 16 months in a combination of 70% new oak, 27% one-used barrels and 3% amphora.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2020 La Conseillante is a supremely elegant, restrained wine that shows the continued move toward finesse here. Silky and gracious, it’s wonderfully classy from start to finish. Lavender, mint, spice, and mocha complement the purplish berry fruit nicely, all framed by bright saline and mineral notes that lend energy. Today, the 2020 is quite reserved, with less opulence than some previous vintages. It’s the sort of wine that is shy in its youth and then explodes with years in bottle. Yields were just under 40 hectoliters per hectare, very much in line with years like 2016, for example. Harvest took place September 4–19 for the Merlot and 21–30 for the Franc, more or less in line with what has become the norm of late. As usual, the malos were done in steel. Aging is 70% new oak, 27% once-used barrels and 3% amphora. It’s a brilliant effort from Technical Director Marielle Cazaux and her team. Drink 2028 – 2030.”

- AG, Vinous

“Another utterly brilliant wine from this team, the 2020 Château La Conseillante is based on 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc that saw 70% new French oak. Unquestionably in the same league as the 2019, this beauty offers an incredible bouquet of pure blue fruits, cassis, violets, spring flowers, and truffle. This carries to a full-bodied, seamless, incredibly elegant, layered Pomerol offering perfect tannins, the vibrant, focused, structured style of the vintage, impeccable balance, and a gorgeous finish. As always, this wine is more about purity, finesse, and elegance than power. It offers pleasure even today yet should be given a decade in the cellar, and it will be a 40- to 50-year wine.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“The 2020 Château La Conseillante is a blend of 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc that saw the Merlot brought in between September 4 and 17 and the Cabernet Franc from the 21st to the 30th of September. Still resting in 70% new barrels, it’s a juicy, vibrant Pomerol in every sense and has a vivid purple color to go with a great nose of blueberries, cassis, spring flowers, and violets. Showing the vintage’s rich, concentrated, yet also pure and straight style, this beauty is full-bodied, has flawless balance, and terrific tannins. It’s another gorgeous wine from Marielle Cazaux that will require a solid decade of bottle age, but it will see its 30th birthday in fine form.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Winemaker Marielle Cazaux explained that she will remember 2020 as a vintage when all of her colleagues, not just the winemaking and viticultural teams, played a part in the vineyard. With the various challenges of lockdowns, kids school runs, and a desire to adhere to social distancing, while keeping the employees safe, La Conseillante operated an ‘all hands to the pump’ system which meant that they all multi-tasked and in doing so became more au fait with each other’s responsibilities. This team effort brought a new harmony and understanding to this estate and its employees and for this reason, despite some of the challenges which the

Reviews

weather presented, it was a very happy vintage and one in which every member of staff can genuinely say that they played a full role in making this wine taste so exquisite. Of course, a collaborative team, combined with some very happy vines is likely to make delicious wine. The clay soils at La Conseillante meant that while the summer was hot, and there was a degree of hydric stress, the vines did not suffer. They have learned a lot here over the last few warm vintages and so an adapted cover-crop, as well as a careful (slightly earlier mulching than normal) green harvest all contributed to a perfect vendange with all of the team involved. Harmony breeds harmony and 2020 La Conseillante is a quintessential creation which not only perfectly reflects the vintage but also acknowledges the human skill involved in making a wine of this elegance and distinction. Deeply perfumed at the same time as being refreshing aerial, the nose is sensational, drawing you deeper and deeper into the glass. With a luxurious, black-fruited theme, the precision here is breath-taking and the balance is astonishing, too, given that the fruit is so profound. The finish is amazingly bright and alive, and the tannins are pure cashmere. This is one of the most elegant and complete wines of the vintage and I am sure it will start drinking relatively early and then hold for three or four decades with ease. 19.5+/20."

- Matthew Jukes

"Deep ruby colour with opaque core, purple reflections. Delicate notes of tobacco and herbal spice back black cherry fruit, some nougat, candied orange zest. On the palate this is juicy and elegant with a fine chocolatey texture, ripe tannins, good freshness, silky and long lasting, mineral, very well balanced, certain ageing potential."

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

"On the nose, elegant, nicely precise and offers power with delicacy, complexity with, energy/dynamism, a little freshness, and a fine concentration. It reveals notes of boysenberry, bright small black fruits and hints of lily are combined with nuances of fresh black currants, violet, fresh plum, fine hints of crushed strawberry, lilac, cardamom, bergamot, szechuan pepper, discreet hints of sweet spices and a very subtle hint of vanilla. An imperceptible hint of white flowers in the background. A nice multi-layered side, a very nice complexity. On the palate, fruity, balanced, nicely racy, all-in precision and delicacy and offers juiciness, suavity, good definition, a certain gourmandize, a fine acidic frame, subtle tension, suavity, depth, power in delicacy, roundness, a little fleshiness, a multi-layer side, creaminess, an airy character in the balances as well as a nice, stretched side. A controlled boldness, in its richness and in the intensity of its freshness. The wine expresses notes of fresh/juicy raspberry, juicy/pulpy blackcurrant and hints of violet associated with touches of black currants, fresh/zan licorice, sweet spices, star anise, bergamot as well as fine cocoa, nutmeg and a very discreet touch of pepper. The tannins are elegant, racy, precise, structured and nicely polished. Good length and very nice persistence. A nuance of a powdery side on the finish/persistence. Nice work on the bitters, especially at the finish. A great success that is all elegance and subtlety. A very great wine/millennium that has not yet revealed its full potential."

- Vert de Vin

"Fresh and aromatic nose with refined spiciness, violet, wild berries, tobacco, and fine oak. Great density but more emphasis on freshness than opulence, elegant dark berry flavours with silky and fine tannin, nuanced with a very long and elegant finish."

- AL, Tasted.com

"(87% M, 13% CF; 39hl/ha; 14% ABV; 70% new)

Plump and black-fruit mulberry-rich to smell; a full-bodied, but very elegant balance, with noticeably fresh acidity and very fine-grained tannin; rich, dense, vivid wine, its generosity well-defined by its freshness, both plush and close-grained in texture, it's ripe black fruit mineral-marked, and very aromatic to finish. A beautifully poised wine, of great complexity, continuing the recent move to a slightly richer, denser style, and this has a lovely sense of completeness from start to finish. Another 2020 that is "classic" in the best sense(s). 2032-30+."

- MS, The World of Fine Wine
