



CHATEAU PICHON LONGUEVILLE

COMTESSE DE LALANDE

2012,

When hard work and terroir all came into play

Weather conditions

After a dry winter with a cold spell at the end of February (snow and sub-zero temperatures), growth started relatively early for the region, towards the end of March.

Spring 2012 was characterized by alternating periods of cold and mild weather, and was generally very wet (with substantial rainfall of nearly 300 mm). These conditions continued into mid-July. Flowering was difficult, with the rain and cool temperatures causing flower abortion and uneven grape size, especially in the Merlot. The high rainfall from the spring until the beginning of the summer period resulted in the start of ripening being delayed by nearly three weeks compared to 2011. This was followed by a severe dry spell from mid-July to the end of September, with heat waves in August causing significant sun-scalding on some bunches. The high temperatures also resulted in very uneven start to the ripening stage.

Fortunately, the last week of September was rainy, enabling the grapes to finish ripening in satisfactory conditions. The variable weather made for a complicated harvest, and a great deal of calm was required to bring in the grapes when they were fully ripe.

So overall, this was a particularly difficult vintage for which the quality of the work in the vineyard and the quality of the terroir were essential factors in obtaining a good level of ripeness.

Leaf removal was more severe than usual this year because the vines grew a lot during July, due to all the rain at the start of the growth cycle.

Two rounds of crop-thinning were also necessary. One in July to remove overcrowded and unevenly sized bunches; and another after the grapes had started to ripen to remove excessively late-ripening bunches.

Harvest

As a result of the unusual weather, the harvests were delayed. They began on 1 October.

The Merlot was picked in excellent conditions. The wines are voluptuous and full-bodied with beautiful colour and silky tannins.

The Cabernet Sauvignon was more mixed, but generally offered good density. The best of them present a tight yet very elegant tannic structure.

The Cabernet Franc is complex, bringing fine spicy notes (black pepper) to the blend.

The Petit Verdot, planted on moist, hot terroir, bring a very flowery expression to the wine.

Due to the lack of uniformity in the grapes, stringent sorting was necessary and the newly acquired optical sorter proved to be a valuable tool.

As part of our commitment to quality, we reduced yields, in order to extract the best from the vintage and achieve a balanced, dense, voluptuous wine, offering elegance and superb aromatic complexity.

Bud break: 21 March
Flowering: 30 May
Mid-ripening: 10 August

Réserve de la Comtesse

64 % Cabernet-Sauvignon
31 % Merlot
5% Petit Verdot

Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande

59 % Cabernet-Sauvignon
28 % Merlot
8 % Cabernet franc
5% Petit Verdot