



## Cape Winemakers Guild Technical Tasting Report

**Tasting Title:** The Beauty of Ch Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande  
**Presented by:** Carl van der Merwe  
**Date:** 27 March 2018  
**Venue:** Glenelly Wine Estate

### Notes from Carl

Bordeaux fascinates in terms of the volumes (produces more wine than SA, 10 times more than NZ) but also the quality of limited production wines.

Well-drained soils, slight elevation, akin to the importance of aspect in the Mosel – rainfall all year round so drainage is key.

Pichon-Longueville contains high % of other varieties – always has higher % of merlot than other wines nearby - accounts for around 35% of the blend most years. Also known for high % pf CF and PV – 55% in total of other varieties and generally only 45% CS

Has 11hectares of vines in St Julien – special permission to include this in the Grand Vin.

### Notes from Madame May-Eliane de Lencquesaing

“It’s always been women who run the family – the men all seem to die young and leave widows in Pichon Longueville.”

“Making wine is not just making a drink. It’s making a piece of art linked with the soil. “

“St Emilion and Pomerol was somewhere I never went until I was 30 years old. The river was a complete border.”

What makes Right Bank unique is the very poor and well-drained soils – roots going down 7/8 metres. Specificity of the wines come from the soil and the subsoil.

3 parts of the P-L Grand Vin vineyards – near Latour, on a hill and in St Julien.

Our wines are similar to Beychevelle – doesn’t have the same body as other Pauillac wines. Different terroirs add finesse, elegance and ageing potential though.

“It’s like people – the older they grow, the more they become wise and knowledgeable.”

Quote from Peter Alan Sichel “About wines – the character comes from the soil, the specificity of the vintage comes from the elegance and the quality comes from the man”

Madame came to SA because of the Dutch connection with Bordeaux and thus SA.

“Now this terroir is not recognised but at some point it will, and will be recognised as much greater than Australian wine. We need to work to make proper selections, find balance and we have to get together to win the battle for this recognition.”

## **Wines**

### **1993**

CS dominated – always in their family, but always choose to have a lot of merlot in there as well. Can have very big tannins of CS by structure but doesn't show because of the Merlot. Also choose to have a lot of PV – they go for 8-10% - this is very high compared to others but adds character and makes P-L unique. "We like capricious grapes – they are more fun to work with and more interesting and that's Petit Verdot."

Mild spring, flowering early, veraison quick and early, but ended with very small crop and being much lighter than normal. Roses and flowers – perfumed – very PL style.

"It is important that the wine is happy in the barrel, it's with its friends, it can see what's going on, chat with its friends. Wine is something alive, it has a spirit, it has a reaction to life."

Notes - medium garnet, earthy, truffles, strong meat and marmite nose – slight dust and plastic. Medium + acid, medium tannins, tar, truffles, black fruit, mint, herbs. Lengthy finish with polish and herbal notes. 13.5%. Better on palate than on nose.

### **1994**

Typical normal blend of P-L of 45% CS, 30% Merlot, 17% CF, 8% PV.

Cold and rainy winter – perfect keeps off the bugs. Followed by very hot heatwave in May, Aug is very hot ("It's August which makes the must.") CF very important in this vintage – best in 25 years. Short picking season.

Notes - Medium garnet, much more typical Bordeaux – lots of earth, truffles, marmite, cooked, stewed black fruit. Plenty of cooked fruit, grippier tannins, full body, high acidity, higher abv as well. Strongly structured, tertiary but plenty of ripe black fruit character in there.

### **1995**

Winter was mild and rainy followed by hot July, means very thick skinned thus 45%CS, 40% M 15% CF, no PV– very unusual for them.

"For the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1945 vintage (end of war), I wish that God and nature would be kind enough to give us the right weather conditions to make a great vintage and this has been the case. "

Quite plushy in the mouth (ripe Merlot evident), velvety and soft, much more pliable tannins, whiffs of herbs and some pepper. Fresh black fruit (blackcurrants, cherries, berries) with whiffs of violets and flowers, pronounced aromatics and strong notes of leather, vanilla and polish.

### **2000**

Start of a trio of late harvested vintages. Makes them very nervous but they love the Indian summers because the grapes take much longer to get fat by the sun. Can be some of the greatest harvests and that's what happened in 2000, 01, 02.

51% CS 44% merlot 5% PV.

Notes - Strongly earthy, lots of power on nose. Sweet ripe fruit, lovely gritty texture, ripe tannins, lengthy finish. Vanilla notes prominent, great interplay between red fruit – raspberries, black fruit – cassis, polish and lavender notes.

## **2001**

Some rainfall in Sept, Oct, grapes slow to mature and Oct was perfect, late harvest – mid Oct. 50% CS, 36 merlot 14% PV

Notes - Very tight and unyielding on the nose - may just need time. Opens up, elegant and subtle, similar to 1993, quite floral, soft rich palate. Licorice and fennel overtones, ripe black berried fruit, good length and finish, lower acidity than some others.

## **2002**

Blend ???

Notes - Subtle and perfumed on the nose then very ripe on the palate – lots of vanilla oak still to be resolved in there. High tannins still to be resolved as well with quite ripe fruit, good acidity, balanced alcohol, long finish. Coiled and poised, waiting to go.

## **History of Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande**

Prior to 1850 – Pichon Longueville & Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande were one property.

1850 – Joseph de Pichon Longueville dies & estate is split between his children – Raoul & Virginie. Virginie takes ownership of Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande.

1925 – Edouard & Louis Miailhe buy Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande.

1978 – May-Eliane de Lencquesaing, Edouard's daughter, inherits Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande & runs it for 30 years.

## **Pauillac**

Soil type – well-drained gravel-based top soils with stony subsoils and iron-rich sand

Appellation size – 1,200 hectares planted

Total yield – 50,000 hl.

Varieties – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Carmenere.

Maximum yield – 47 hl/ha.

2014 Academie Des Sciences in Bdx, article by Mme now available in English. Parallels between soil and subsoil between Bdx and SA.