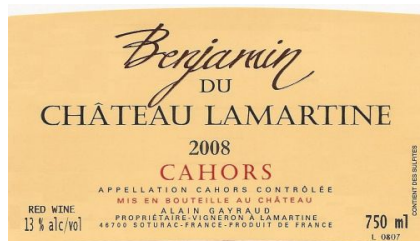




CHATEAU LAMARTINE

CAHORS

FACT SHEET



OWNER

Alain Gayraud

PRODUCTS

Cahors, Château Les Placiols

Cahors, Château Lamartine

Cahors, Cuvée Particulière, Château Lamartine

Cahors, Cuvée Expression, Château Lamartine

SIZE OF THE VINEYARDS

28 hectares

LOCATION OF THE VINEYARDS

The estate is located outside Soturac, at the extreme western edge of the appellation, some 35 km from the town of Cahors. The vineyards are planted on south-facing slopes above the River Lot.

The district of Cahors is equidistant from Bordeaux, the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees, making for complex climatic influences. Slightly cooler than Bordeaux, on account of altitude, the harvest relies on the significantly drier, sunny autumns. Drought can sometimes be a problem. Château Lamartine is in the warmest part of the Cahors appellation, where the Lot Valley opens out as it heads towards the Garonne. It is distinctly less arid here than up on the plateaux, helping the vines to ripen evenly.

SOIL

The bedrock is fossilised limestone, a legacy of the days when Aquitaine was the bed of a shallow sea. The stony topsoil is alluvial - deposits of pebbles, gravel, clay, limestone and silica which were brought downriver from the Massif Central.

GRAPE VARIETIES

Château Lamartine: 90% Cot, 10% Merlot

Cuvée Particulière: 80% Cot, 20% Tannat

Cuvée Expression: 100% Cot (old vines)

Cot, or Auxerrois as the locals often call it, is another name for the Malbec grape.

AVERAGE AGE OF THE VINES

Average 25-35 years old, with some vines over 50 years old



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AVERAGE PRODUCTION

150 to 200 000 bottles per year

VINIFICATION AND AGEING

For all the wines, the grapes are crushed and totally destemmed. Fermentations take place in lined cement vats, with temperatures controlled at around 30°C. The musts are regularly pumped over, and long macerations extend up to 28 days. Château Les Placiols ferments at the slightly cooler temperature of 28°C, and remains in cement vats for malolactic conversion and ageing; it is bottled 15 months after the harvest. Château Lamartine's regular cuvée also undergoes malolactic in vat, but in the following Spring 15% is put into barrique and another 15% into large oak foudres, for oak-ageing and subsequent bottling at age 18 months.

Cuvée Particulière has a malolactic fermentation in vat over winter, and then 12-14 months in barrique, a high proportion of which are new. The Cuvée Expression is a selection of the best old vine Cot, which goes into new oak for both malolactic and 18 months barrel-ageing. Gayraud is now experimenting with new techniques such as microoxygenation and délestage.

NOTES ON THE PROPERTY

The history of Cahors is an emotive one, a constant struggle of a proud people against wave after wave of adversity. Nature blessed them with a soil and climate ideal for wine grape growing and virtually nothing else. Their efforts to capitalise on this, their only viable means of making a living, have been thwarted by (successively) jealous Romans, jealous Bordeaux merchants, the railways that carried cheap wine from the Midi to the industrial north, phylloxera, world wars and various economic depressions. What was once the most highly prized wine of Aquitaine was reduced to an unacknowledged but essential blending component in 'Bordeaux', and then discarded altogether when the Bordelais finally learnt how to make their own wine properly. Cahors had a brief comeback in the mid-19th century, when Oidium struck everywhere except the Lot Valley, but phylloxera was not to be so kind. Grafting proved more difficult here than anywhere else, and many growers had to emigrate to South America to avoid starvation (which explains the quantity of Malbec in Argentina).

Winemaking would surely have disappeared from this region, were it not that the arid, poor limestone soil will support no other crop. The brave few struggled on, and their efforts were finally rewarded in 1971 with the award of AC status. Since then, a wave of young, innovative growers have assumed the helm, working hard to position Cahors in the blossoming market for quality red wine at sensible prices. One of these is Alain Gayraud. The family estate dates from 1883, but only now is it beginning to attract the full recognition the wines deserve. All Gayraud's Cahors display rich, mouthfilling fruit, and ripe tannins; the Cuvée Particulière has the concentration of a fine Bordeaux, and the Cuvée Expression is...well, suffice to say it is a very special wine that can hold its head up in competition with the best of all France.