



Château LA LOUVIÈRE

Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée Pessac-Léognan

Background



1310: In the beginning...

"La Lobeyra" (La Louvière) already existed **in the year of our Lord 1310** when Aquitaine was under English domination as proved by an old register included in the **Gascon Calendars** kept by English civil servants...

The parish of Léognan, virtually unsettled at the time, was largely covered with trees and full of wolves. The latter undoubtedly account for name La Louvière (which means den of wolves in French)!

Guilhem de La Louvière, a local despot and tax collector, was the owner, and lived in a humble dwelling with a small tower in the middle of a clearing. A vineyard gradually grew up around the house on the best gravelly soil along the small "Eau Blanche" river.

A wine estate was born, and Château La Louvière's fate was sealed...



1398-1620 : The de Guilloche family, founders of the modern La Louvière estate

In 1398, an old Bordeaux family, the de Guilloches – nobles because of their status in the local administration as well as rich merchants – acquired La Louvière. The family's important political role in Bordeaux was uninterrupted for almost two centuries, and they contributed numerous councillors and alderman.





In the late 15th century, the family also included a poet, Jehan de Guilloche, brother of Raymond, Lord of La Louvière. Forgotten today, this Gascon poet, close to King Charles VIII, was the first one to use French in his verses, at a time when the Gascon language was virtually unchallenged in the province of Guyenne...

La Louvière's modern configuration, such as we know it today, gradually came into being from 1510 to 1550 thanks to the foresight and dynamism of Pierre de Guilloche and his son Jean, who expanded the property significantly.

Over nearly fifty years, they purchased and exchanged plots of land surrounding the modest family castle with several turrets. This first half of the 16th century was an important period in the history of Bordeaux wines. Many members of the Bordeaux parliament became winegrowers at this time, giving rise to the present-day great growths.

The de Guilloches were pioneers.

This Protestant family suffered several waves of persecutions all through the 16th century.

These entailed the sack of the manor house at La Louvière on several occasions by the soldiers of Charles de Montferrand, Governor of Guyenne and head of the Catholic faction that eventually assassinated Jehan de Guilloche in 1572.

In 1618, the last de Guilloche heir, Dame de Roquetaillade, sold La Louvière and its outbuildings to Arnaud de Gascq, commendatory abbot of Saint-Ferme abbey.

1620-1789 : The Reverend Fathers of the Carthusian order: expertise that led to the reputation of La Louvière's wines...



Unable to manage the estate properly, Sieur de Gascq donated it to the Carthusian Notre-Dame de Miséricorde (Our Lady of Mercy) monastery in Bordeaux on 28 April 1620. It was thus up to the monks to renovate the estate. The strict rule of this religious order combined with very rigorous management quickly solved all the problems the estate faced. La Louvière had finally come back to life!

Benefiting from a particularly favourable economic context conducive to vineyard expansion in the early 17th century, the monks made sure to pay special attention to their work.

In the cellars, coopers and cellar masters devoted themselves wholeheartedly to making excellent white and red wines much admired by merchants from Picardy, England and Flanders. Every year, several dozen barrels of La Louvière's red wine were sent to England. The white wines were shipped to Northern Europe and as far away as Canada. In the 18th century, the wines produced by the monks were "the most excellent anyone in the kingdom could hope to drink".

The Carthusian monks preserved the manor house for nearly two centuries. However, the turmoil of the French Revolution put a brutal end to their stewardship.





1792-1901: The Mareilhac family: a love for art and winegrowing

In November 1789, the National Assembly confiscated all church possessions. Declared "property of the state", La Louvière was auctioned off in the spring of 1791. The vineyard covered nearly 40 hectares at that time. The highest bid came from a Bordeaux négociant, Jean-Baptiste Mareilhac. Owner of one of the most prosperous merchant firms in Bordeaux, Jean-Baptiste knew La Louvière well because he had previously exported some of the wine to Saint Petersburg. This estate was thus a very good investment for him.

However something was missing from his happiness: a residence worthy of his young wife, Jeanne-Emilie. He therefore called on the skills of a famous Parisian architect, François Lhôte, the direct competitor of Victor Louis (who designed Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre). The old house and any medieval vestiges were razed and replaced with a beautiful neo-classical château. As for the interior decoration, he asked one of his friends, François-Louis Lonsing, a very talented Flemish painter. Lonsing was responsible for the "grisailles" and paintings on the drawing room rotunda based on the loves of Psyche. Unfortunately, poisoned by the handling of toxic pigments, the artist did not finish his work and died at La Louvière in spring 1799.

The new château was universally admired.



In 1946, the site was included on the Inventory of Historic Monuments and was designated an historic landmark in 1991.

The Mareilhac family presided over La Louvière's destiny for much of the 19th century. Alfred Mareilhac, Jean-Baptiste's grandson, made sure that it was one of the best-managed estates in Bordeaux and received a gold medal for his efforts from the Ministry of Agriculture in 1869.

1911-1965: Alfred Bertrand-Taquet and his family

In 1911, Alfred Bertrand-Taquet from Paris, a shareholder of the "Revue Vinicole", bought the estate and managed it until 1944. He was elected mayor of Léognan in 1919 and re-elected continuously until after the Second World War. Due to the increasing absence of its owners, La Louvière then became somewhat of a Sleeping Beauty for over fifteen years.



1965: The arrival of André Lurton and the rebirth of Château La Louvière

Finally, in 1965, André Lurton, a winegrower in Grézillac, fell under the spell of La Louvière and acquired it. In the years that followed, this estate gradually regained its former prestige... The château was entirely restored and the vineyard restructured...

Wines produced by the château

Château La Louvière Red | L de La Louvière Red
Château La Louvière White | L de La Louvière White
Les Lions de La Louvière White

