



# Château de ROCHEMORIN

Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée Pessac-Léognan

"In Bordeaux, grapevines can be compared with that substance alchemists claim can be turned into gold..."

*Isabelle de Montaigne*

## Background



### Périgourdins first planted vines at Rochemorin in the 16<sup>th</sup> century

**In 1520**, a country gentleman from the Périgord region, Jean de Amelin, arrived in Bordeaux. This rich landowner from Sarlat in the Dordogne was lord of the noble Rochemorin manor in the parish of Saint-Front d'Alemps, located thirty km from Périgueux.

Having come to settle some business with the Bordeaux Parliament, Jean de Amelin became smitten with the region and decided to live there.

Many members of parliament were investing in vineyards at the time, so it was hardly surprising that he did the same.

He set out to find the ideal estate to acquire, and did not take him long to discover the Maison Noble de Beaubois situated close to Bordeaux, in the parish of Martillac in the Graves.

Beaubois was the perfect site, with a terroir ideal for producing quality wine as well as an ideal place for Jean de Amelin, a poet and translator in his spare time, to reflect and dream.

He married Clémence de La Boétie (aunt of Étienne de La Boétie, a close friend of Michel de Montaigne).



Over time, the Maison Noble de Beaubois was utterly transformed. The forest gave way to a large, beautiful vineyard whose wines were on an equal footing with ones produced by nearby ecclesiastical estates. The Amelin family's policy of consolidating numerous vineyard plots for nearly a century began to pay off.

The name of Beaubois was eventually replaced by that of Rochemorin.

The château's only other link with its origins in the Périgord is the architectural style.





## **Charles Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu: a philosopher-winegrower at Rochemorin...**

**In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century**, the Maison Noble de Rochemorin came into the hands of the de Pesnel family, lords of the nearby seigneurie of La Brède.

**In 1686**, the last de Pesnel heir married a former royal musketeer, Jacques de Montesquieu. They had a son, born on 18 January 1689 at Château de La Brède. He came into the world with a very intelligent, inquisitive mind, and went on to become one of the greatest philosophers of the Enlightenment: Charles Louis de Secondat, future baron de Montesquieu and Lord of La Brède...

Montesquieu had a happy childhood walking around the Rochemorin grounds and vineyard, which became the most important one of the La Brède barony. Furthermore, his father taught him all the secrets of viticulture. Montesquieu retained his love for winegrowing for the rest of his life, and was one of the staunchest defenders of the Bordeaux vineyards in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The author of the "Persian Letters" was very proud of the wine he produced at Rochemorin.

During his numerous trips throughout Europe, the great philosopher was delighted to be an ambassador for the wine of Rochemorin, which he is said to have considered more worthy of interest than his own writings, such as "The Spirit of the Laws".

Wishing to thank one of his friends, the Bishop of Warburton (England), he wrote these words to a mutual acquaintance:

**"... I would be under the impression of having sent him nothing at all. I would thus like to send him one of my most favourite things in the world, a barrel of my wine, which I trust he will do me the honour of accepting..."**

Charles de Secondat died in Paris in February 1755. His son, Jean-Baptiste, born at Rochemorin in 1716, inherited the estate as well as his father's love of winemaking. He was also a pioneer in studying the differences between grape varieties.

Rochemorin stayed in the Montesquieu family until 1919.

## **The 20<sup>th</sup> century: from oblivion to rebirth..**

**In 1919**, "Établissements Armand Beaumartin", a company specialised in forestry, bought Château de Rochemorin and its vineyard. Little interested in viticulture, they gradually replaced the vines with trees, especially maritime pines, more in keeping with their line of work.

**In 1940**, the Blancan family acquired the château and its vineyard or, rather, what was left of it... The estate deteriorated further and was virtually abandoned. This sad situation continued until 1973.

**1973** is a very important date in the history of Château de Rochemorin. It marks the arrival of André Lurton, a winegrower in the Entre-Deux-Mers, and the beginning of a renaissance. Mr Lurton was a passionate advocate of this part of the Graves and its wine, just as Montesquieu once was. Since then, André Lurton has worked tirelessly to restore Rochemorin's rightful place, on the finest tables in Europe...

He seems to have risen to the challenge in every way.



### **Wines produced by the château**

Château de Rochemorin Red | Château de Rochemorin White  
Château Coucheroy Red | Château Coucheroy White

