

# Château Haut Bages Libéral 2011

CSPC# 742344

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot

## Appellation

Pauillac

## Website

[http://www.hautbagesliberal.com/\\_flash/index.html](http://www.hautbagesliberal.com/_flash/index.html)

## General Info

The name of Château Haut-Bages Libéral has two roots. The LIBERAL family ran the property in the early eighteenth century. Brokers from father to son, they sold the harvest in the Netherlands and Belgium. Their name adjoining to the topographical designation, earned them to be invited worldwide to the table of political parties of the same name. Over time, these connoisseurs gathered the best soils of Pauillac. Thus, this 5<sup>th</sup> Classified Growth in 1855 now has half of its vineyards adjacent to Château Latour and the other half behind Château Pichon Baron, on the heights of the locality "Bages", a large plateau in the south of Pauillac.

The property would regain his youth when, in 1960, the Cruse family, owner of Château Pontet Canet, another 5th Classified Growth in Pauillac, acquired the property. The Cruse would launch an extensive program of replanting the vineyard. However, it was in 1983 at the arrival of the Villars family that Château Haut-Bages Libéral really recovered its former glory. Today, the property is run by Claire VILLARS LURTON. She undertook an overhaul of the tool of winemaking and she directs the vineyard management to a sustainable viticulture.

## Vintage

Winter and Spring were dry. Since the beginning, climatic conditions predicted an early vintage. The water deficit worsened a little more up to July and the high temperatures in June made the vine suffered. The Merlot sagged after flowering because of these unusual dryness and heat. 2011 experienced unusual weather conditions that ultimately benefited many Cabernet Sauvignons. The grapes had a very good concentration of phenol compounds and very elegant tannins. The challenge of this vintage was a very strict sorting of the grapes. However, there is a lower yield due to the weather, and the berries were rather small with a thick skin.

## Vineyards

The 30-hectare property is superbly sited in the south of the Pauillac appellation between Château Latour and the 2 Pichon's. The vineyards (Cabernet Sauvignon 75%, Merlot 25%, lie on deep gravel beds over limestone.

## Maturation

The wines are matured in oak barriques (40% new) for 16months. Since Claire Villars has been at the helm, the wines have become deeper in colour and more concentrated, with notable depth of fruit. It is classified as a 5<sup>ème</sup> Cru Classé.

## Tasting Notes

The resulting wine has both the power and the elegance. The tannins are ripe and silky on the palate. A very nice balance. We can classify this vintage among the classic ones.

## Production

9166 cases made

## Cellaring

Drink 2012-2022

## Scores/Awards

**90 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2014

**89-92 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2012

**89 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #212 - April 2014

**87-89 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012

**87-89 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2012

**89-90 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2012

**88 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2014

**90-92points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 11, 2012

**88-91 points** - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2012

**16.5 points** - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012

**16.5 points** - Decanter.com - April 2011

**89 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)

**91 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only)

**91 points** - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2012



**Scores/Awards** **88-90 points** - Jeff Leve, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com) - April 10, 2012  
**86-88 points** - Jeremy Williams, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com) - April 2012  
**86 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com) - April 1, 2012  
**17 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)  
**91 points** - Gilbert & Gaillard - May 10, 2012  
**16 points** - Gault & Millau - April 2012 (score only)

**Reviews** *"A very pure rendering, with plum, cassis and bitter cherry fruit wound together, while bright iron, violet and stony notes fill in on the finish. A more elegant, minerally style of Pauillac. Best from 2015 through 2025. 9,166 cases made."*

- JM, *Wine Spectator*

*"Lively, with good lift and floral aromatics followed by a fresh mix of red cherry, black cherry, red currant and black currant. Nice tarry edge creeps in on the finish. Score range: 89-92"*

- JS, *Wine Spectator*

*"This well-endowed Pauillac has a deep plum/purple color, and a classic nose of cassis, licorice, barbeque smoke and a touch of oak. Medium-bodied and dense with fleshy fruit as well as silky tannins, this is a delicious wine to drink now and over the next 10-14 years."*

- RP, *Wine Advocate*

*"Smoky black currant and black cherry fruit aromas jump from the glass of this deep plum/purple-colored Pauillac. Soft, seductive tannins, medium body and excellent fruit as well as ripeness give this wine an endearing style with plenty of appeal. While there is not a lot of weight, there is an up-front forwardness that should provide attractive drinking over the next decade."*

- RP, *Wine Advocate*

*"A blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot, the HBL has a well defined, understated bouquet with crisp redcurrant and orange sorbet aromas. The palate is medium bodied with quite firm tannins and the finish is missing a little tension at this stage. This year, I think Clare made a better Margaux, but this is not bad at all. Tasted April 2012."*

- NM, *Wine Journal*

*"Pretty core of fruit and ripe tannins follow through a medium body with polished tannins and a minerally, fruity and delicate finish"*

- JS, [JamesSuckling.com](http://JamesSuckling.com)

*"This wine has structure, juicy acidity and lean fruit. It remains a tough wine in its youth, but the structure should soften as it ages."*

- RV, *Wine Enthusiast*

*"90-92. Barrel sample. This is a brooding, dark wine; its tannins are evident, with a complex series of dark, dense flavors. Its fruit is buried under all of its tannic scaffolding."*

- RV, *Wine Enthusiast*

*"Dark black cherry colour. Really sweet blackcurrant and blueberry fruit, and a roasted note, dark chocolate. Unexpectedly silky and fluid on the palate though there's still a marked oak char on the finish."*

- JH, [JancisRobinson.com](http://JancisRobinson.com)

*"Lifted, slightly spicy cassis fruit, in a lighter, almost Margaux style, with fine freshness and length. Drink 2014-2024."*

- [Decanter.com](http://Decanter.com)

*"Good rich colours. Attractive nose, some gentle black pepper and cinnamon spice. I like this, they have gone for fairly understated, casual approach where nothing is shrieking at you. It's an early drinker, probable 10-15 years, but it has confidence and pleasure. Good blackberry crumble."*

- JA, *The New Bordeaux*

**Reviews** *"Earth, cedar, black pepper and cassis, the wine is medium bodied, ending with bright kirsch flavors. 88- 90 Pts"*  
- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Mid depth; light spicy blackcurrant tones; more stalky blackcurrant fruit on the palate; quite tight and grippy at the end. Will settle but a lean style. Drink 2016-2026 86+ UGC Oct '13 [Earlier note] Deep, vibrant at edge; ripe cassis, blackcurrants, purity here; feels good; summer pudding notes; ripe fruit on the palate but quite structured; feels a little angular but will probably fill out. Structured but with probably enough flesh. Firm acid. Bite at the end. Tasted 3/4/12 and 5/4/12 at UGCB. 86-88"*  
- JW, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com)

*"EN PRIMEUR - Intense crimson hue. Nose of fruits in brandy and notes of mocha. Warm, powerful entry with evident fruit. Slightly lean finish."*  
- en.gilbertgaillard.com

*"Made by Claire Villars Lurton, this fifth growth Pauillac has firm tannins and offers restrained blackberry and cedar box flavours. It is a classic style with good depth and balance. Moderately long finish. Tasted i: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young."*  
- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

---