

Château Haut Bages Libéral 2015

CSPC# 832572

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

CSPC# 831117

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

SOLD OUT

Grape Variety

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot

Appellation

Pauillac

Classification

Grand Cru Classe

Website

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 5th 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.

Winemakers

Winemaking consultant Eric Boissenot

Sustainability

Today, Claire Villars-Lurton owns the estate; she has undertaken a complete overhaul of the winemaking tool and is orienting her management of the vineyard towards a sustainable viticulture. The vintage is now undergoing certification in organic and biodynamics farming

Vintage

The winter was rainy then dry. The conditions were much more favorable from April. Indeed, rising temperatures associated with water availability of the soil, had contributed to the uniformity of the bud break. Flowering was homogeneous and pretty fast. From the end of June, Summer became very hot. The water deficit and the warm temperatures allowed the skin of the grapes to thicken, to concentrate in tannins and the pips to evolve rapidly. The drought led to a very slow progression of the ripening throughout July. For cons, the heavy rains of August, helped to unblock the situation and then it was very fast and smooth. The berries could grow properly but the yield would remain low due to the drought before the veraison. It was clear that 2015 would be a great vintage. The special weather conditions were favorable to the concentration and maturation of the tannins. They are very elegant. The quality of the merlot was outstanding, and the cabernet sauvignon reached a level of tannin concentration and maturity of the great vintages.

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.

Harvest

The harvest began on September 17th and ended October 5, 2015.

Maturation

The wines are matured in oak barriques (40% new) for 16 months. 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^{ème} Cru Classé.



Tasting Notes	The nose is fresh, crisp and exalted aromas of small black berries. A few notes of spices and tobacco distributed in the bouquet a certain elegance. In the mouth, the attack is full and ample. The wine is precise, with firm tannins and well-proportioned acidity. The style is both gourmet and classic. The finish is long and voluminous. 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
Serve with	Chateau Haut Bages Liberal is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes. Chateau Haut Bages Liberal is also good with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms and pasta.
Production	10,000 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2020-2028
Scores/Awards	<p>89 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2018</p> <p>Review Only - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016</p> <p>83 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018</p> <p>88-90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018</p> <p>94 points/Editor's Choice - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018</p> <p>91-93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016</p> <p>15.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - January 2019</p> <p>17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017</p> <p>16 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016</p> <p>91 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017</p> <p>87 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2018</p> <p>88-90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2018</p> <p>92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018</p> <p>90 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - November 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Fresh up front, with friendly black cherry and plum fruit lined with gently singed vanilla, light black tea and graphite notes. Solid, though flashes of tobacco and savory flutter through the finish, tilting this toward the herbaceous side, with a slightly austere twinge at the end. Best from 2020 through 2028. 10,000 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"This has solid grip, with dark currant and blackberry fruit backed by lots of tobacco and bramble hints. Turns a touch taut in the end, but there's good energy here. 10,000 cases made."</i> - JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2015 Haut Bages Liberal is medium garnet-purple in color with an earthy, reduced nose with herbs and black fruits and a waft of fungi. The medium-bodied palate is lean, green and hard."</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2015 Haut Bages Liberal is a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot that is matured in 40% new French oak over a 16-month period. It has a slightly chalky bouquet, tight-knit and conservative, but that is the usual style of this Pauillac cru en barriques. The palate is medium bodied with solid tannin. This is an edgy Pauillac that is nicely focused, although I would have liked to have seen more substance towards the finish to balance the slightly obdurate tannins. This was one Pauillac cru that feels challenged by the September storms."</i> - NM, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Plenty of spicy, savory oak influence comes to the fore above a vibrant array of cassis, blackberries and plums. The palate has rich and powerful tannins that roll sturdy and long, carrying plenty of deep cherry and plum flavors. Filled out nicely, but still more to come."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"This is one of the three biodynamic estates that are owned by Gonzague and Claire Lurton. The wine is generous while also firmly structured in the style of this property. A dense, dry core surrounded by blackberry and black-currant fruit promises great things. It finishes clean, clear and crisp. Drink from 2024."</i> - RV, Wine Enthusiast</p>

"91–93. Barrel Sample. Pure black-currant fruitiness shines through this wine. It has great fruits and serious tannins that are developing into balance. Bright acidity lifts the finish, which is driven by pure Cabernet Sauvignon character."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

Reviews *"Tasted blind. Sweetly fragrant. With some rather raw juice and fruit. But awfully drying on the end."*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Bright crimson. Lifted and quite intense on the nose. Sweet and polished with a bit of inky pencil shavings on the end. Some lusciousness."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Bright crimson. Hint of wood shavings on the nose and then rather aggressively sweet, gamey palate. Very chunky and unintegrated at the moment. Really quite awkward."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Soft, smooth, deep fruit on the nose, with the oak being used to good effect. There's a flush of intensity to the black fruits - this is a wine for those who like cassis, cedar and liquorice, all delivered with a punch. It will need time to soften, but this is a good showing from Haut Bages Libéral. In biodynamic conversion. 40% new oak. (JA)"

- JA, Decanter.com

"Medium/full-bodied with a crisp, overly bright, red berry character, the wine mixes, cranberry and cassis, with leaf, olive, herbs, earth and tobacco. This is on the crisp and crunchy side of the red fruit range."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Medium/full-bodied with a crunchy, red berry, earth and tobacco profile, this wine will be appreciated by fans of a more classic Pauillac production."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2015 Haut-Bages Libéral is one of the best releases in recent years. It has an elegant bouquet of refined black cherry and crushed strawberry aromas; the oak here is very well knitted. The palate is medium bodied with firm, grainy tannin, layers of black fruit laced with tar and tobacco, and firm but not overbearing grip on the finish. Good aging potential here. Excellent. Tasted blind at the Southwold 2015 Bordeaux tasting."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2015 Haut-Bages Libéral is a bold, direct wine with lovely fruit intensity, good structure and fine overall balance. Today, the 2015 is quite closed in on itself, but there is good depth and persistence through the mid-palate and into the finish. It will be interesting to see if the 2015 acquires a bit more nuance and finesse over the coming years. (AG)"

- AG, Vinous

"The 2015 Château Haut-Bages Libéral (65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot brought up in 40% new oak) is an outstanding Pauillac that offers a little old-school vibe in its firm, focused, medium-bodied style and black fruits, earth, graphite and underbrush-driven aromas and flavors. It has impressive purity, integrated acidity, and notable tannin, and should be loved by classic Claret lovers. Give bottles 4-5 years and drink over the following 15."

- Jeb Dunnuck