

Château Les Carmes Haut Brion 2019

CSPC# 848995

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation
Classification
Website
General Info

42% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot
Pessac-Léognan
Grand Vin de Bordeaux
<http://www.les-carmes-haut-brion.com/en/>

Les Carmes Haut Brion got its start due to the efforts of the owner of another Bordeaux wine property that was located in Graves, or what we now call Pessac Leognan, Chateau Haut Brion. Jean de Pontac of Haut-Brion, gifted a watermill that was situated in the middle of what would shortly become the Carmes Haut Brion vineyards. The vineyard was named after a group of friars who managed the estate from as early as 1584 until the French Revolution in 1789.

Leon Colin, a Bordeaux wine merchant, and direct descendant of the current owners, the Chantecaille-Furt family, bought the Bordeaux wine property at the start of the 19th Century. Didier Furt began managing Les Carmes Haut Brion in 1987. Under his leadership, the estate was able to one additional hectare of vines to their vineyard. Until recently, Didier and Caroline Furt, along with their daughter Penelope run the Pessac Leognan chateau until 2010 when Les Carmes Haut Brion was sold in late 2010 to Patrice Pichet, head of the Bordeaux real estate company, Groupe Pichet. The price set a new record for Bordeaux wine vineyard land at 3.8 million Euros per hectare. At close to 18 million Euros, that set a new record as it was almost twice the price of any previous deal for prime Bordeaux vineyard property! the estate was sold to the Pichet Shortly after the purchase by Partice Pichet, the vineyard of Les Carmes Haut Brion was expanded by the purchase of 5.6 hectares of vines.

The Pichet group, headed by Patrice Pichet has continued to increase their holdings in Pessac Leognan. In July 2011, they purchased 6.5 hectares of vines from Chateau Le Thil. This was to be expected as Les Carmes Haut Brion was already leasing a large portion of that land from Le Thil. The remaining Bordeaux vineyard land was sold to Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte. Patrice Pichet had even bigger plans for Le Carmes Haut Brion.

The style of Les Carmes Haut Brion is light for the Pessac Leognan region, due to the high percentage of Cabernet Franc planted in the vineyard. With the new owners, the style has changed a bit, as the wine is showing more depth and concentration, while retaining its elegance. The wine offers more in the nose, than in the mouth. On average, 1,600 cases of Bordeaux wine are produced on average each year of Les Carmes Haut Brion. The estate makes a second wine, Le Clos de Carmes Haut Brion.

Winemaker
Vintage

Derenoncourt Consultants

The mild and dry 2018-2019 winter period led to a rather precocious budbreak, on March 1st. Then, in spring, with the cool temperatures, the vine grew slowly. The flowering was beautiful, with neither shatter nor millerandage. The vine growth was supported by consistent, steady rainfall in June, with the vine developing a very beautiful, uniform surface.

From the end of June, the year 2019 was marked by several heatwaves. The month of July, which was particularly hot, ranks as the third-hottest July on record, after July 2006 and 2013, registering a record-breaking 42°C (107.6°F) on July 23rd. In August, the temperature variation between cool nights and hot days favored the development of anthocyanins (which color the grapes and tannins).

These periods of intense heat resulted in relatively slow ripening, on the cabernet francs and sauvignons, but did not stunt the vine.

Ripening progressed smoothly across all of the white varieties - which were ready in time for harvesting season - as well as on the earliest merlots.

In September, the long-awaited rain arrived on the 9th of the month, returning from the 21st to the 25th, without any consequence on the grape clusters.



Vintage	In between these two rainy episodes, the dry, hot continental air accelerated the final ripening stage for all the red grape varieties avoids the extravagance of the vintage: moderately high degrees, a dense phenolic constitution with fine granularity, powerful Cabernets Sauvignons, and fresh Cabernets Francs. A miraculous vintage like only Bordeaux knows how to give birth to.
Vineyards	The 28.8-hectare Pessac Leognan vineyard of Les Carmes Haut Brion has a terroir of gravel, sand, and clay with some limestone in the soil. As you might expect from the name of the chateau, the vineyards are located not far from Chateau Haut Brion or Chateau La Mission Haut Brion. Essentially, the complex soil composition of Les Carmes Haut Brion serves to create three separate terroirs. The soils located close to Haut Brion are gravel based. Close to the chateau, the soils are a mix of gravel, sand, clay, and stones. Also located not far from the chateau are limestone and clay soils. The vineyard of Les Carmes Haut Brion are planted to 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon with vines that average about 35 years of age. Chateau Les Carmes Haut Brion has a higher percentage of Cabernet Franc than perhaps any other vineyard in the Left Bank or Pessac Leognan. The vineyard is planted to a vine density typical of the Medoc at 10,000 vines per hectare.
Harvest	17th September – 29th September 2019
Vinification/ Maturation	To produce the wine of Chateau Les Carmes Haut Brion, vinification takes place in Thermoregulated tanks: Tron conic stainless steel tanks (60HL) • Wooden tanks (76 HL) • Concrete tanks (50 HL). 84% new oak barrels, 7% foudres, 9% terracotta amphorae for 18-24 months. All vats were vinified in full grapes and partly in entire bunch. Pigeage only.
Tasting Notes	For this great vintage, Bordeaux and its climate imposed an important technical effort in the aesthetic quest for balance, in a context where the need for intervention was an important key to success. 2019 is thus proving to be a typical balanced Aquitaine vintage, rich, dense, and elegant, despite the extreme conditions incurred.
Serve with	Best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Production	3,300 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2023 – 2035
Scores/Awards	<p>92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022</p> <p>96 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>98+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2022</p> <p>97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2022</p> <p>98 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2022</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - June 2020</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022</p> <p>98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2022</p> <p>Review Only - Farr Vintners - May 2020</p> <p>97+ points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2022</p> <p>98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2022</p> <p>97 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020</p> <p>96 points - Thomas Parker MW - March 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>“Rich and caressing in feel, with alluring cassis, steeped plum, and boysenberry puree flavors. Shows pretty anise and apple wood accents that line the finish, where there's a solid tarry echo as well. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2023 through 2035. 3,300 cases made.”</i></p> <p><i>- JM, Wine Spectator</i></p> <p><i>“The 2019 Les Carmes Haut-Brion has turned out very well in bottle. Mingling aromas of plums and cassis with notions of blood orange, warm spices, and new oak, it's full-bodied, velvety, and seamless, with an ample core of bright, succulent fruit that's framed by an elegantly muscular chassis of ripe, powdery tannins and lively acids. Concluding with a long, expansive finish, it's reminiscent of a more giving, extroverted version of Pouthier's superb 2016. As is now the rule at this address, some whole bunches were retained during maceration, and the wine saw a long élevage in a variety of vessels, from classic 225-liter Bordeaux barriques to foudres and amphorae. The blend is dominated by 42% Cabernet Franc, complemented by 31% Cabernet Sauvignon and the balance Merlot. Drink Date 2026 – 2060.</i></p> <p><i>The irrepressible Guillaume Pouthier has delivered another fine success at this 6.9-hectare Pessac-Léognan estate. Viticulture at this address is rather innovative, with great attention paid to managing hydric stress: soils are worked at night or during the day, and sometimes the cover crop is rolled rather than being</i></p>

Reviews *cultivated, on a parcel-by-parcel basis, all with a view to creating the necessary hydric deficit for optimal maturation without going too far, causing the vines to shut down. Deleafing (traditionally performed to expose the grapes to sunshine and improve canopy airflow) has been banished to retain fresh, vibrant flavors. And since the 2015 vintage, when the château's new "Noah's Ark" winery was completed, conditions have been fully adapted to Pouthier's methods. Winemaking is rather reductive, featuring important percentages of whole bunches and vinification in tanks where floating lids keep the cap moist and immersed in the fermenting must below; and Pouthier, a Chapoutier alumnus, favors rather long macerations. Élevage of the young wines is long: generally, around 24 months—in a mixture of barrels, foudres and ceramic vessels—and extending as long as 30 months in the 2013 vintage, a notable success at this address in the context of a very challenging year. All this is delivering very singular wines (with comparatively moderate alcohol levels, incidentally), without changing Les Carmes Haut-Brion distinctive, Cabernet Franc-driven DNA."*

- WK, Wine Advocate

"The 2019 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is made from 50% Cabernet Franc, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 16% Merlot, with 70% whole-bunch fermentation. It has undergone two years' aging in 90% new oak, and 10% amphorae. Deep garnet-purple colored, it slowly emerges from the glass to offer a powerful nose of pure cassis, fresh, juicy blackberries, and plum preserves with hints of pencil shavings, fallen leaves, crushed rocks, and rose petals, plus a hint of charcuterie. Medium-bodied, the palate really packs a punch of fruit, supported by fantastic tension and very firm, ripe, grainy tannins, finishing very long and layered. A tongue-tingling wine, it has lots of texture interest from grapes, stems, and oak."

- LPB, Wine Independent

"What a great nose with such complexity of blackberry, forest floor, mushroom, and bark. Like walking in a deep forest. Full-bodied with a dense palate, yet it remains energetic and focused. Very fine texture. Flavorful finish. Extremely persistent. Fantastic young 2019. Try after 2028."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"42% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot. Deepest crimson. Subtle aroma of mostly black but also red fruit, with a gentle fruit sweetness and a fine leafy freshness. Really fragrant as it opens. Lovely balance between the youthful but fine-grained tannins and the fresh, lively fruit. Plenty of freshness too. Cool, elegant, and long. (JH) 13.3%. Drink 2028 – 2038."

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

"One of my favourite wines in 2019, immediately captivating with a lasting impression. Gorgeous dark purple in the glass with blackcurrant notes, perfumed violets, dark chocolate, and hints of truffle - the old-vine Bouchet (Cabernet Franc) giving aromatic intensity on the nose and palate. Succulent straight away with ripe cherry, blood orange and pink grapefruit flavours set against soft, mouthwatering acidity and a lovely saline grip to the tannins. It's rich but just giving delicate hints in each direction of fruit, acidity, freshness, structure, mouthfeel, and body. Restrained and poised, with a drinkability that makes you want a glass now but could happily be enjoyed decades from now. Managing director Guillaume Pouthier said he simply 'Wants to make wine that is drunk' and this is eminently drinkable. A blend of 48% Cabernet Franc, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot. 3.60 pH. 80% ageing in new barrel, 9% amphora, 11% foudre. Stéphane Derenoncourt consultant. Drinking Window 2026 – 2050."

- GH, Decanter.com

"Inky purple in colour, with peony and iris aromatics, then a whoosh of freshness that makes your mouth water before you are even halfway through. This is extremely impressive, well balanced, with fine tannins and real discretion but hidden power and depths. Clear floral character, with an austerity that makes you celebrate minerality. There are gourmet touches, but the focus is rather on slate, rosemary and crushed stones with hints of chocolate shavings alongside the damson and blackberry fruit. 3.56pH, 80% in casks, 11% 20hl wood and 9% amphoras, 55% whole bunch fermentation (which brings the alcohol down to this relatively low level for the estate's location). A wine to surprise those who think Bordeaux can't deliver understatement. Tannin count of 82IPT. Drinking Window 2024 – 2044."

- JA, Decanter.com

Reviews

“Rippling violet and peony waves alongside creamy blueberry and raspberry fruits, this is a gorgeous 2019 that continues a strong run of vintages at the estate. Slate-textured, salt-licked stones, rosemary, and saffron-edged, white truffle spice. Takes its time and stretches out through the palate, tingling and enticing. Technical director Guillaume Pouthier has created something here that stands on its own, with complexity and nuance. Give it a full five or six years before opening. 3.59ph. 60% stems, and once again you see the difference it makes not only in nuance and philosophy but also in the actual physical properties of the wine.”
- JA, Inside Bordeaux

“The only Pessac Leognan I was not able to taste in barrel has turned out beautifully! The wine opens with flowers, smoke, tobacco leaf, herbs, sea-salt, blackberries, plums, and forest leaf aromas. If that wasn't enough to steal the show, the wine is silky, intense, fresh, elegant, deep, and sensuous on your palate. Multi-layered and multi-faceted, this stunning wine has a seamless finish that doesn't quit. Give it a few years in the cellar before pulling a cork as this has the potential to age and evolve for 2-3 decades with ease. Drink from 2030-2060.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2019 is a blend of 42% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Merlot, with an abv of 13.5%. The yields are a healthy 46hl/ha with the harvest completed between 19th and 29th September. The wine will be aged in 84% new French oak, with 7% in large foudres and 9% in amphoras, for 18-24 months. As usual, the fermentation was entirely carried out with whole bunches but this year the extraction was carried out with total infusion - there were only one or two punch downs at the very beginning of fermentation. For the remaining fermentation the vats were filled to the top to leave the cap submerged. This should increase aromas while retaining colour. Production will be 42,000 bottles. We were unable to taste the 2019 ahead of release.”
- Farr Vintners

“Technical Director Guillaume Pouthier turned out another stellar wine with the 2019 Les Carmes Haut-Brion. Elegant, polished, and wonderfully nuanced to the core, the 2019 dazzles right out of the gate. Whole clusters enhance a whole range of Cabernet Franc inflections in a wine that is immediately seductive. On the palate, the 2019 is creamy and textured. Plum, blood orange, spice, mocha, and dried herbs lend an exotic quality that is so alluring. The 2019 is a mysterious, totally seductive wine that no one who is serious about Bordeaux will want to miss. To be sure, Les Carmes is far from typical, but it is incredibly unique. Its longevity is likely to be measured in multiples of decades. Quite simply, I loved it.”
- AG, Vinous

“I wasn't able to taste the 2019 Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion from barrel, but it certainly brings the goods from bottle. Deep ruby/purple-hued, with a smorgasbord-like array of red, blue, and black fruits as well as violets, candied flowers, tobacco, and sappy herbs, it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, a deep, layered, concentrated mouthfeel, flawless balance, and that rare mix of power and elegance that truly great Pessac can deliver. Showing the more elegant style of the vintage, it checks in behind the magical, perfect 2018 but is very much in the style of the 2016. Readers will love having this beauty in the cellar, and it will evolve for 40-50 years if stored correctly. Hats off to winemaker Guillaume Pouthier for another thrilling wine.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“Deep ruby colour. Though the trademark herbal accents from whole bunch are evident in the bouquet here, the fruit intensity adds a real sense of harmony to this vintage. Full of cherry blossom, violet and deeper tones of blackcurrant and graphite, this is very complex and enticing. The palate is initially glossy but quickly bolstered by chewy, mouthcoating tannins. There are tons of iris flower, pencil shavings and dark cassis fruit together. This has real structure and a unique personality. An excellent iteration of this idiosyncratic style.”
- Tom Parker MW
