

# Château Les Carmes Haut Brion 2021

CSPC# 848995

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

<b>Grape Variety</b>	40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot
<b>Appellation</b>	Pessac-Léognan
<b>Classification</b>	Grand Vin de Bordeaux
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.les-carmes-haut-brion.com/en/">http://www.les-carmes-haut-brion.com/en/</a>
<b>Analysis</b>	3.60 pH
<b>Sustainability</b>	Though not certified organic, it's important to Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion that they adhere to organic standards. The grapes are all hand-harvested. All of these practices, along with wine-making techniques out of the norm for Bordeaux, have greatly increased the quality of the wine under the Pichet ownership.
<b>General Info</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Winemaker</b>	Guillaume Pouthier - winemaker. Derenoncourt Consultants, consult.
<b>Vintage</b>	This was a year... of incredible intensity! A year requiring the skills of a tightrope walker, when nature played games with the winegrowers. Solid in their vision of the place, present at all times, without respite, they played, shivered, imagined and ensured a commitment to the vine at all times. Passionate. Certain that this enthusiasm and these choices would be felt in the wines! The harvest began and the grapes showed all the richness of successful ripening, achieved slowly in cold conditions. The Cabernets excelled in performing their major role; character, juice, slender tannins.
<b>Vineyards</b>	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



<b>Vineyards</b>	composition of Les Carmes Haut Brion serves to create three separate terroirs. The soil located close to Haut Brion is gravel based. Close to the chateau, the soil is 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.
<b>Harvest</b>	100% hand-picked. Harvested from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 1st 2021
<b>Winemaking</b>	To produce the wine of Chateau Les Carmes Haut Brion, vinification takes place in Thermoregulated tanks: Tron conic stainless-steel tanks (60HI) • Wooden tanks (76 HI) • Concrete tanks (50 HI). The initial fermentation was for 35 days. 70% new oak barrels, 20% foudres, 10% terracotta amphorae for 24 months. All vats were vinified in full grapes and partly in entire bunch. Pigeage only.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	The 2021 is a heady, racy wine that captivates all the senses. Tobacco, mocha, cedar, leather, dried herbs, menthol, licorice and plum saturate the palate in a wine that dazzles from start to finish. The 2021 was bottled in late September 2023, much later than most wines, yet it is so expressive today. As always at this nimble and iconoclastic estate, the ageing is in a mixture of larger foudres and standard (20% new oak) barriques, and 10% in amphorae. This shimmers with primary aromas, accented more toward black fruits than the customary oyster shell sometimes present at this stage. The palate unfurls with smoky, floral and menthol tones, each playing its role in a wine with such integrity than it appears simultaneously seamless and translucent. A wonderful expression of its place, perhaps a little more forward than in recent years, this is still a keeper.
<b>Serve with</b>	Best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
<b>Production</b>	Approx. 3,000 cases made annually.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2027 – 2055
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>95 points</b> - Yohan Castaing, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p><b>93-95+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p><b>96-97 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>17+ points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2024</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p><b>90-93 points</b> - Thomas Parker, Farr Vintners - April 2022</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p><b>17.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes - August 2022</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022</p> <p><b>98-100 points</b> - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2022</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2022</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Vert de Vin - July 2022</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"The 2021 Les Carmes Haut-Brion has turned out beautifully in bottle, though it is more introverted and brooding than it appeared during en primeur tastings, unwinding in the glass with aromas of dark berries mingled with spices, loamy soil, licorice, rose petals, gentian, and black pepper. Medium to full-bodied, deep, and seamless, with a concentrated core of fruit framed by ripe but abundant structuring tannins and bright acids, it concludes with a long, palate-staining finish. As readers may remember, it's a blend of 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"A brilliant and intensely individual wine, the 2021 Les Carmes Haut-Brion shows immense potential. Wafting from the glass with aromas of rich berries and plums mingled with notions of raw cocoa, loamy soil, rose petals, burnt sage and vine smoke, it's medium to full-bodied, vibrant, and seamless, with a deep,</i></p>

**Reviews** *dynamic core of fruit and a long, penetrating finish. Transcending the limitations of the vintage, it wouldn't surprise me were this wine ultimately to surpass the 2019 and 2020 in quality. It's a blend of 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot that's maturing in 70% new oak and the rest in 15-hectoliter foudres. Tasted twice."*

- WK, Wine Advocate

*"The 2021 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is a blend of 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 25% Merlot, aging in 70% new barriques, 20% new 18 hl foudres, and 10% amphoras. Deep garnet-purple colored, it shoots out of the glass with vivacious notes of kirsch, black cherry preserves, cassis, and blueberries, plus hints of candied violets, star anise, cinnamon toast, and Ceylon tea. Medium-bodied, the palate shimmers with intense red and black fruit sparks, framed by grainy, multi-layered tannins and fantastic tension, finishing long and mineral-laced. While the weight is ethereal, the intensity is mind-blowing and an amazing achievement in this vintage. The Cabernet Franc contribution makes this a triumph, as does the inspired use of stems. Batches with ripe stems are selected for whole-bunch fermentation and the rest are destemmed. 45% was selected for whole-bunch fermentation this year, 10% less than in 2020. If you can put aside your stylistic preconceptions of what Bordeaux is and embrace this bright, energetic style with amazing textural complexity (from oak, stem, and grape skin tannins), you will love this evocative, age-worthy beauty. pH 3.6."*

- LPB, Wine Independent

*"This is a special wine for the vintage with a wonderful and impressive tannin texture that melts into the wine, giving softness and finesse. Medium-bodied, showing a solid core of fruit with beautiful, focused cassis, blackberry, and crushed-stone character. The unique terroir of this estate, which is surrounded by houses in a suburb of Bordeaux, has produced a gorgeous wine in this difficult vintage. 45% whole bunches. 40% cabernet franc, 35% cabernet sauvignon and 25% merlot."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Deep purple-crimson hue. Lively and fresh with spicy, smoky notes on the nose. There's a lushness to the ample fruit but lift and freshness as well, the plentiful tannins upright and integrated. Again, lots of energy and drive with just that bit more concentration than Le C. Clean, dry finish. Vibrant and harmonious. 13.5%."*

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

*"Beautiful aromatic complexity on the nose, floral nuances and expressive blackcurrant, black cherry and dark chocolate but you're really getting the perfumed Cabernet fruit. This has an instant presence in the mouth, fully flavoured and juicy but so balanced, nothing sticking out, with the elegance of the ripe cool fruit touching the sides of the mouth. Tannins are present but fine and gently grippy with detail and definition to them. This has a lot of life for the vintage, one of the more full, round wines with chewy, fleshy tannins. The Cabernet gives backbone and density, the Merlot ripe red fruits, and then the chalky, slate, pencil lead, graphite salinity of the terroir comes in on the finish, giving that nuance, the sense of place and the vintage. Great rise and persistence all the way through, such drive but also lift, it doesn't let up. A stand-out wine - extremely classy and memorable. Skilled winemaking on show from Guillaume Pouthier."*

- GH, Decanter.com

*"Inky colour, enticing texture and aromatics, accomplished construction with no drop of density through the mid palate. They use reductive techniques during ageing, so you always have to give Carmes time in the glass to open up (even after En Primeur, when in bottle), and you are richly rewarded by a bit of patience, with damson, black cherry, rich chocolate, liquorice, smoked earth, mandarin peel, rose bud and mouthwatering acidities. This has tension and subdued power and is a successful interpretation of the vintage. 42hl/h yields, same as 2020, no frost, no mildew, no coulure. Harvest as in Sauternes; with three passes through the vineyard at harvest. No chaptalisation. Harvest September 23 to October 1. 3.6ph, 45% whole grape, only 5% less than last year. 70% new oak, 20% large sized still new but 1800 litres, and 10% amphoras. A potential up score in bottle. Drink 2027 – 2040."*

- JA, janeanson.com

## Reviews

*“With a spicy, savory edge to the red fruits in the nose, you also find a plethora of singed herbs, cigar wrapper, flowers, and cedar in the perfume. The red fruits on the palate are fresh, vibrant, elegant, refined, and salty, almost as if the berries were brined. The long finish has a hint of cocoa, chalk, oyster shells, and savory-tinted red fruits, with olives that come in on the up-beat, backend. The wine was made using 45% whole bunch clusters during fermentation. From a blend of 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot, 13.5% ABV, pH 3.6. The wine is aging in a combination of 70% new, French oak, 20% foudres, and 10% amphora. Drink from 2025-2050.”*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](https://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*“Garnet in color, the wine opens with tobacco leaf, cigar box, thyme, herbs, flowers, espresso, and red berries. Medium/full-bodied, vibrant, fresh, and focused on its purity of fruit as well as its elegance. This sublime wine is silky, and sensuous. This finish is long and refined, with sweet, ripe cherries, dark cocoa, spice, herbs, a drop of citrus and cigar wrapper with a cool touch of salt and crushed rock that come out in the endnotes. The wine was made using 45% whole bunch clusters during fermentation. From a blend of 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot, 13.5% ABV, pH 3.6. The wine is aging in a combination of 70% new, French oak, 20% foudres and 10% amphora. Drink from 2025-2050.”*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](https://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*“The 2021 is 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot. Vivid ruby-purple. The idiosyncratic dried herbs and green spices of the winemaking are evident here but not too prominent on the nose. There are blue fruit tones with a brambly hedgerow edge. The palate is sinewy with a narrow focus and crunchy tannic structure. Blue and red fruits sit in a compact core in the middle, together with toasted spices and more prominent green spices. Long and full of hedgerow fruit on the finish, this may improve further through élevage.”*

- TP, [Farr Vintners](https://farrvintners.com)

*“The 2021 Les Carmes Haut-Brion includes 45% whole bunch, the same as the previous vintage with 70% new oak, 20% in new 1800-litre foudres and some in amphora. Interestingly, the whole bunch contribution is less evident here compared to the Le C des Carmes, more assimilated with touches of flint and graphite infusing the mineral-rich black fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with firm grip on the entry, plenty of crunchy black fruit infused with graphite, cracked black pepper and cedar underlying marine influences. With a surfeit of freshness on the saline finish, tensile with an almost penetrating minerally aftertaste, this will deserve 5-7 years in bottle. 13.5% alcohol  
Drink 2027 – 2055.”*

- NM, [Vinous](https://vinous.com)

*“The 2021 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is very possibly the wine of the vintage. Vertical and explosive, the 2021 possesses mind-blowing intensity and dynamic energy to burn. The 2021 is a heady, racy wine that captivates all the senses. Tobacco, mocha, cedar, leather, dried herbs, menthol, licorice and plum saturate the palate in a wine that dazzles from start to finish. The 2021 was bottled in late September 2023, much later than most wines, yet it is so expressive today. It was magnificent from barrel, and it is every bit as breathtaking today. Quite simply, Les Carmes is on another level. Bravo!”*

- AG, [Vinous](https://vinous.com)

*“Technical Director Olivier Pouthier crafted one of the wines of the vintage at Les Carmes Haut-Brion. The 2021 possesses mind-blowing intensity and stunning persistence. Bright, red-fleshed fruit, blood orange, mint, dried flowers, and exotic spice caress the senses as the 2021 shows off its sheer allure. I don't think I have ever tasted a young Carmes with this level of precision. The blend is 40% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot, aged in 70% new oak, 20% new foudres and 10% in amphora. As always, Les Carmes sees some whole cluster, 45% in 2021, an unusual technique in Bordeaux, but one that works so well here. The 2021 is a magical wine. That's all there is to it.”*

- AG, [Vinous](https://vinous.com)

**Reviews**

*"I'd put the 2021 Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion up with the crème de la crème of the vintage. Based on 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Merlot, aging in 80% new barrels, it offers a brilliant perfume of plum and black raspberry fruits supported by lots of spice and exotic floral notes. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, it has a rounded, expansive mouthfeel that's rare to find in the vintage, terrific mid-palate depth, moderate acidity, and a great finish. It's a singular, brilliant Pessac that will benefit from 2-4 years of bottle age and cruise for 20-25+ in cold cellars. Enough can't be said about the quality and passion being brought to this estate by winemaker Guillaume Pouthier, and this is an estate readers need to be purchasing."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"As always, this is a rich and full-bodied wine, and while the tannins seem fairly intense, they should even out. The oak is also mighty and perfumed, but for some reason, it works, and the spice and perfume balance out the sheer intensity of the fruit. I have put a '+' next to my score because the tannins are firm, but I wonder whether they might propel this wine forwards for a longer than usual life, but don't let this put you off opening a bottle after five years to check out how it is doing. 17.5+."*

- Matthew Jukes

*"Dark garnet, vivid core, purple hues at the rim. Pleasant herbal savouriness, black cherries, a touch of plums, a hint of mint and candied orange zest; an attractive bouquet. Complex, taut, dark berry fruit, sturdy, silky tannins, mineral and fresh on the finish. Full of energy with black cherries on the finish, great length. Wonderful elegance, certain ageing potential, perfectly balanced."*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*"The nose is pretty and reveals power, controlled intensity, accuracy, an infusion character, a touch of darkness/density, and a discreet velvety/powdery side. There are notes of bright wild blackberry, juicy/pulpy blackcurrant and more lightly camphor combined with hints of crushed raspberry, fairly ripe blue berries as well as fine hints of roasted cherry, violet, fine hints of incense, black pepper, a subtle hint of cornflower, star anise, a discreet hint of roasted almond and a subtle hint of smoke. The palate is fruity and offers juiciness, freshness, good definition, acidity, good definition, gourmandize, nice energy, stretch, good structure, complexity, depth, finesse. On the palate this wine expresses juicy/fresh raspberry, fresh/elegant bigarreau cherry and more lightly tart/juicy small red berry notes combined with hints of violet, blueberry as well as subtle hints of star anise, sap, subtle hints of camphor/incense, graphite, roast, a hint of hazelnut, very discreet hints of varietal, positive bitterness (in the background). The tannins are fine, elegant, racy. A nice approach to Cabernet Franc in harmony and elegance."*

- Vert de Vin