

Château Haut Bailly 2016

CSPC# 831123

750mlx6

13.6% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

Classification

Grand Cru Classé de Graves

Website

<https://www.haut-bailly.com/en/wines.html>

General Info

For the past four centuries, Château Haut Bailly has overlooked 28 hectares of vines in a single block. These grow on soil consisting of sand and gravel from the Tertiary period with a fossil stone subsoil. Haut Bailly's reputation as one of the very finest wines of Bordeaux was established in the 19th century. Haut-Bailly was bought by the Sanders family in 1955 and was run by Jean Sanders until 1998 when Robert G. Wilmers, an American banker, purchased it. Robert G. Wilmers continues to emphasize quality in all aspects of production, combining a blend of tradition and modernity with respect for the environment. Château Haut-Bailly's unique terroir produces wines that are outstandingly reliable, and whose prestige is due to an inimitable style marked by finesse and elegance.

Bob Wilmers passed away in December 2017 at age 83. The estate is now managed by Chris Wilmers the son of Bob Wilmers.

Today, the estate is directed by Veronique Sanders, the fourth generation of her family associated with Haut-Bailly.

Winemaker

Gabriel Vialard

Vintage

The 2016 growing season was marked by extremes, records, and luck. The two extreme situations were torrential rain in winter and spring amounting to a full year's normal precipitation (the first record), followed by a tremendously dry, sunny autumn (2016 was even hotter around the world than the previous record holders, 2014 and 2015). Wet, mild weather from January to March brought about early bud break.

The rain continued throughout the spring, accompanied by low temperatures. Then three lucky breaks occurred:

1. A wonderful window of opportunity opened up during the wet spring; it was wide enough to enable flowering to take place quickly and evenly. Capricious spring weather nevertheless implied a late-ripening year, so we very much hoped for a fine Indian summer. Fortunately, beautiful warm weather set in beginning on June 24th, by which time 80% of the precipitation in 2016 had already been recorded. On the contrary, the month of July will be remembered for high temperatures and the total absence of rain.
2. Thanks to two light showers on July 30th and August 4th, *véraison* (colour change) took place as evenly as flowering did. Conditions at the height of summer (26% more sunshine than usual, accompanied by water stress) were ideal for ripening. In addition, the temperate range, i.e., the gap between highs and lows, set new records. Cool nights locked in fresh fruit aromas and were conducive to the synthesis of anthocyanins. Despite drought conditions (this was the driest summer in Bordeaux since 1893), water stress was only moderate. Vines in all plots, including the estate's great gravel terroirs, took advantage of deep rooting enhanced by working the soil. The vines were thus able to seek nourishment from a water table filled to the brim by spring showers.
3. Third lucky break: miraculous rainfall on September 13th giving a new impetus to ripening. The leaves stayed green until October and the vines looked every bit as beautiful as in 2015. The doubts we had in spring gradually gave way to joy.

Vineyards

The Haut-Bailly estate accounts for 33 hectares of the Médoc, of which 30 hectares are vineyard, largely in a single block on a gravel *croupe*. The soils are a mixture of sand and Tertiary gravel over *Faluns de Léognan*, a subsoil rich in sandstone and ancient fossilised shells. The vines themselves are mainly Cabernet Sauvignon (64%),



Vineyards	which are planted on the upper parts of the <i>croupe</i> and slopes where the drainage is best, with 30% Merlot, which are planted on those plots where the soils are richer in clay. The remaining 6% is Cabernet Franc, and overall, the planting density is an admirable 10000 vines/ha.
Harvest	Picked 26 September to 18 October 2016. The beautiful, warm, sunny weather continued into September and October. These two outstanding months enabled grapes in every plot to reach perfect ripeness. Picking began on the 26th of September and there was no need to hurry. Merlot grapes were harvested over ten mornings, until the 6th of October. We waited until the 11th of that month to start on Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. This amounted to fifteen days of picking spread over four weeks, during which gorgeous, large bunches could be picked at the ideal moment! The Merlot grapes were big, whereas the Cabernets were very small. Yields were generous, on the whole, and the fruit was in superb condition.
Maturation	In small oak barriques (55% new) for 16 months and is bottled unfined and unfiltered.
Tasting Notes	The wines are deeply coloured, with round tannin and high phenolic content. The Merlot wines have wonderful fruit, whereas the Cabernets display high-quality tannin and an extraordinary texture. 2016 is fruity, concentrated, powerful, and elegant. Great years always come in pairs...
Serve with	Chateau Haut Bailly is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. The wine of Chateau Haut Bailly is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Production	7,500 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2023-2046
Scores/Awards	<p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2019</p> <p>98 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - November 2018</p> <p>96-98 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017</p> <p>98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019</p> <p>98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017</p> <p>97 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2019</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2017</p> <p>18 points - Jancis Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2018</p> <p>17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017</p> <p>97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017</p> <p>97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 2019</p> <p>98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018</p> <p>98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2017</p> <p>95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2017</p> <p>17 points - Farr Vintner - February 2017</p> <p>92-95 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017</p> <p>97 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2017</p> <p>97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>94-97+ points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017</p> <p>98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2019</p> <p>19-20 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016</p> <p>18-19 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - April 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This is energetic and grippy, with tar and melted licorice notes wrapped around a core of bramble, red currant paste, and black cherry preserve flavors. The tarry edge reemerges on the finish, working with a singed apple wood element to give this solid drive through the finish. Best from 2023 through 2038. 7,500 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2016 Haut-Bailly is medium to deep garnet-purple in color. The nose opens with beautiful floral notes of violets and lavender accented with earthy notions and sparks of crushed rocks over a core of kirsch, cassis and wild blueberries. Full-bodied, rich and seductive, it has layer upon layer of red, black and blue fruits intermingled with earth and mineral hints leading to a very long, perfumed finish."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

“Coming in with 13.6% alcohol and an IPT of 81, which is quite close to 2010, this was quite closed at first and so I allowed my sample 15-20 minutes to open while discussing the vintage with Véronique Sanders and technical manager, Gabriel Vialard. It has a classic bouquet that is certainly less opulent and extravagant than recent vintages. This is more controlled and focused, beautifully delineated with blackberry, cedar and Earl Grey aromas that gently waft from the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with very fine-grain tannin, sappy with superb delineation and real weight and presence in the mouth. There is just the right amount of spice and salinity, the latter beckoning you back for another sip and there is a haunting pencil lead note that forms the closing credits on the aftertaste. What a brilliant Haut-Bailly, perhaps the best that I have tasted in almost 20 years of tasting at this estate.”

- NM, Wine Advocate

“Wonderful aromas of tobacco, sweet fruit and licorice follow through to a full body with ultra-fine tannins that caress every inch of your palate. Love the length and subtlety to this young wine. Gorgeous. Drink after 2024.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This young wine shows such pinpoint precision with a full body, dense fruit and gorgeous intensity. Muscular yet toned and beautiful. It really builds on the finish. Very fine-grained. So long and beautiful. Sophisticated power. Oyster shell and iodine undertones. Traditional style yet with a modern interpretation. Savory.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“From an always-impressive estate, this vintage is superb, offering big tannins plus but also generous black fruits and powerful ripeness. Dense and with a good structure for aging, the wine will develop slowly and will not be ready before 2026.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Firm tannins cannot mask the fact that this aromatic wine is gorgeous, rich and fruity. It has a powerful structure to sustain the black plum and berry flavors. It is an impressive and concentrated wine, ready for the long haul. (RV)”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Mid crimson. Seductive and elegant at the same time. Pure, cedary dark fruit, dustily fragrant. Succulent and fresh and with such beautifully fluid tannins. This is singing already but built for the future with finesse and effortless intensity. One of the best Haut-Bailly's I have tasted. A hint of chocolate on the finish widens its appeal.”

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

“Picked 26 September to 18 October. Rather floral nose. Ripe and broad. Quite chewy and structured. Cool and pretty dry. Pretty chewy! Lots of dynamism.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Hugely successful, a wine where the architecture becomes clearer with every minute that it remains in your mouth. Each strand of those softly-spun tannins really stands out, giving effortless support to the cassis, charcoal, tobacco and slate. Over it all, the most appealing, gently curling woodsmoke comes right on up through the palate. The whole effect is of a soft, caressing texture that manages to also be hugely intense. A wonderfully complex layering of flavours, absolutely no doubt that this is going to age beautifully. Harvest lasted for 12 days but was spread out over four weeks. Alcohol levels are the same as last year because they had no blockages of ripening.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“Dark in color, this is a beauty. The wine is a knock out from the first whiff of those, spicy, juicy, ripe, blackberries, plum and cherries that are merged with a nice, smoke, thyme and dark cocoa note. Full bodied, concentrated, focused and fresh, this powerful, refined wine needs over a decade in the cellar for the wine to soften, open and start hitting its stride.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

"Just stunning, the wine is deep, concentrated, full-bodied, richly textured and fresh. The fruit has a purity to it that stands out. The wine is tannic, but the tannins are refined. However, this will not be fun to drink early in its life, it will demand 15 years or so to come around."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep in color, with intensity of fruit, silky tannins, length and volume. There is a lot going on here. On the attack, the wine opens with ripe, spice filled plums, moving next to darker fruits. The fruit and flavor build in the mouth and really sticks with you. The refinement of the texture, depth of flavor and the purity of the fruit is what you'll notice, before being impressed with the length. The wine was made from 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot and 3% Cabernet Franc. The wine reached 13.6% alcohol with a pH of 3.7. The Grand Vin was produced from 55% of the harvest, which took place from September 26 to October 18."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Winemaker Gabriel Vialard puts the freshness of his wine down to the cold nights during the growing season, especially in September. Whatever the reason, this is an excellent Haut-Bailly with remarkable focus, precision and balance, stylish, scented oak and a long, satisfying finish. 2026-36"

- TA, timatkin.com

"This classic Graves property is managed by Véronique Sanders. The vineyard is planted with 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 30% Merlot. The relatively high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon for the appellation results in wines of good structure and grip. Floral yet smoky on the nose with an elegant, perfumed fruit character. The palate is succulent and fully ripe on entry, with polished tannins building to provide a firm grip and chalky structure to the dense, ripe fruit at the core. Laser-like precision with hints of smoke, kirsch and savoury spice, there is a long, fine and lifted finish to this impressive effort from the Chateau."

- Farr Vintners

"Brooding black fruits, the nose has the richness of ripe fruit the palate is sweet with depth of flavour in the middle. Discreet integrated tannins support with the rich black cherry and cassis at the backed underpinned by bramble freshness. 2025-42"

- Derek Smedley MW

"This is an incredibly refined, elegant Haut-Bailly that has an enormous amount of detail, refinement and focus. There is gorgeous purity of flavors, wonderful depth and layers of dark berry fruit, fresh herbs and violets. Voluptuous without heaviness, a lightness on the palate despite the density and body. The wine is less than 14% alcohol, refined, elegant and classic Haut-Bailly."

- JCL, asianpalate.com

"The 2016 Haut-Bailly was mightily impressive when tasted from barrel. Now, matured in 50% new oak and bottled at the end of April 2018 (they prefer to bottle before spring here), it has a very well-defined bouquet of black fruit, graphite, crushed stone and light rose petal aromas that gain intensity with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with quite grippy tannin. This Haut-Bailly feels pure and classic in style, offering well-judged acidity and a sophisticated, quite tensile finish that lingers long in the mouth. I suspect this might close down in a year or two and deserves perhaps 8 to 10 years in bottle to show what it can really do. The best Haut-Bailly in the modern era? For certain"

- NM, Vinous

"A big, vertical wine, the 2016 Haut-Bailly explodes onto the palate with tremendous depth and intensity. Readers should be in no rush to drink the 2016, as it won't be close to ready to drink for at least a decade, and I say that as an eternal optimist. Black cherry, smoke, tobacco, cedar, gravel and incense add to the wine's decidedly somber personality. (AG) 97+"

- AG, Vinous

"The 2016 Haut-Bailly is a huge, powerful wine that explodes in all directions. Black cherry, smoke, tobacco, licorice, menthol, incense and gravel are all pushed forward, but it is the wine's volume and pure intensity that stand out most. Readers will have to be patient, as the 2016 is likely to be a slow-maturing wine, but even today the phenomenal finish is a marvel. The 2016 is a great Haut-Bailly in the making. It will reward several decades of cellaring."

- AG, Vinous

Reviews *“Matching the brilliant 2015, the 2016 Château Haut Bailly checks in as a blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc brought up in 60% new French oak. This sensational effort boasts a deep purple color as well as a massive bouquet of crème de cassis, tobacco leaf, crushed flowers, and graphite, with just hints of smoky earth emerging with time in the glass. Deep, medium to full-bodied, and concentrated, it’s nevertheless all about finesse and elegant, and this beauty just glides across the palate. Reminding me a little bit of the 2009 with its textural richness and length, it’s another awesome wine from Véronique Sanders that’s capable of keeping for 30+ years.”*
- Jeb Dunnuck
