

Château Haut Brion 2018

CSPC# 848994

750mlx3

14.60% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11.9% Cabernet Franc
Appellation	Pessac-Leognan
Classification	Premier Grand Cru Classé
Website	https://haut-brion.com/#/wines
General Info	<p>1st classified growth in 1855. Haut Brion was founded in 1525 by Jean de Pontac and since then, many illustrious personalities succeeded each other as owners. The lasted among them was Clarence Douglas Dillon, American financial minister under the Kennedy government. Today, the continuity and presence of the Dillon family are ensured by Prince Robert of Luxembourg who watches over the destiny of Domaine Clarence Dillon S.A.S., having joined the management of the Company in June of 1997 and succeeding his mother Princess Joan de Mouchy as President at the end of July 2008. Haut Brion is the sole 1st classified growth from the 1855 classification which is outside of the Medoc appellation. Its terroir may be compared to the one of Latour. Even if it is not the more concentrated wine, Haut Brion is the noblest wine of Pessac Leognan, and its longevity is incomparable. The silky structure of the tannins is always exceptional. Classed Premier Cru of the Gironde in 1855, and Cru de Graves in 1953, Château Haut-Brion was also classed thus in 1973, and although this latest classification only concerned the Médoc whilst Haut-Brion is located in the Graves appellation, the minutes of the 1973 classification meeting state: The jury, considering the situation of Château Haut-Brion and its long traditional connections with the Médoc Premiers Crus, and taking into account this tradition, the customs and practices on the one hand, together with its very eminent virtues on the other, has deemed it to be worthy of featuring alongside the Médoc's Premiers Crus Classés</p>
Winemaker	Jean-Philippe Delmas
Vintage	<p>The spring of 2018 was marked by frequent stormy weather. The growing season started very well, although was later slowed down as a result of a violent hailstorm on the 26th of May. The vines nevertheless recovered fairly quickly. The month of June was relatively warm, conducive to even flowering. A hot summer followed, with little rainfall. <i>Véraison</i> (colour change) took place under ideal conditions.</p> <p>A high-pressure system set in during the month of September. The grapes were picked under clear blue skies at peak ripeness and in excellent condition.</p>
Vineyards	<p>Vines have been cultivated here for at least six centuries, in a vineyard once surrounded by pasture and parkland, now by suburban houses. Despite the encroaching reality of the 21st century, within the walls of the Haut-Brion there lies an excellent <i>terroir</i>, typical of Bordeaux in that it revolves around two gravel <i>croupes</i> - the same can be said for many of the leading estates of the Médoc. These gravelly mounds rise to the heady altitude of 15 metres, a lofty summit compared to much of the surrounding land, providing two south-east facing slopes perfect for the vine. The soils include ancient stones washed down from the Pyrenees over many millennia, Gunzian gravel peppered with quartz and related minerals, hardened conglomerates of stone and flint. All in all, there are just over 51 hectares of vines which are cared for by vineyard manager Pascal Baratié, who also looks after the vineyard of neighbouring La Mission Haut-Brion.</p>
Harvest	Harvested between 6 September and 2 October. Cabernet Franc picked a bit later than usual after their colleagues at Quintus, who have lots of Franc, told them to wait!
Maturation	62% in new barrels for 20 month/s



Tasting Notes Without doubt one of the world's greatest and most individual wine estates. The family traditions continue here with Jean-Philippe Delmas running the winemaking as his father and grandfather did before him and Clarence Dillon's great-grandson Robert de Luxembourg in overall charge of this wonderful property. Haut Brion is one of the most consistently great wine of Bordeaux. Since 1958 it has been bottled in the unique and iconic Haut Brion bottle. Situated in the suburbs of the city of Bordeaux, the 48 hectares of red grape varieties are planted with 45% Merlot, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot. The 2018 is pretty much a classic 50:50 blend with 49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 11.9% Cabernet Franc. Jean-Philippe describes it as being closer to 2016 and 2010 in style than it is to 2015 and 2009. He likens it to the excellent 1998 made here, but better.

Dark, intense red colour. The initial impression on the nose is deep, spicy, and incredibly complex, underscored by ripe black fruit aromas. Starts out soft and well-structured on the palate, becoming full-bodied with impressive volume and smooth tannin. The finish is incredibly long, enhanced by rich flavours that are neither heavy nor harsh. Unquestionably a very fine Haut-Brion!

Serve with Best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Haut Brion is also good with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, salmon, mushrooms, and pasta.

Production unknown

Cellaring Drink 2028 through 2068

Scores/Awards

98 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021

100 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021

97-99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019

99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021

98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019

96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019

18 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019

98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020

98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019

100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021

18+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2019

96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021

94-96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019

97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021

93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019

98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021

97-99 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2019

19+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019

98 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2019

97 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019

96 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019

18 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2021

17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019

Reviews

"Waves of cassis, cherry puree and blackberry paste roll through in this showstopper, with notes of tea, sandalwood, iron and anise providing an entourage for the fruit. A subtle warm earth accent underscores the finish without intruding on the texture. A large-scaled yet eminently refined wine. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2025 through 2045"

- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2018 Haut-Brion is composed of 49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 11.9% Cabernet Franc. Deep garnet-purple in color, the wine needs a lot of swirling before it begins to release a whole complex melody of notes, one at a time to begin: tilled earth, followed by pronounced licorice, then crushed rocks, then the preserved plums. Eventually, it all comes together into a fascinating crescendo of intense crème de cassis, rose oil, wild blueberries and kirsch notes, giving way to quiet, persistent leitmotif scents of cinnamon stick, truffles and redcurrant jelly. The medium to full-bodied palate delivers all this and more, revealing tightly

Reviews *wound black fruit, red berry and exotic spice layers within a solid, wonderfully plush frame and seamless freshness, finishing with epic length and loads of earth and mineral sparks. This is a profound, highly intellectual, multilayered baby, which will require a good 7-8 years to begin to sing its incredible song, then should cellar a further 40 years at least. By way of reference, think 1989 with more restraint and even greater purity.”*
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2018 Haut-Brion is a blend of 49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 11.9% Cabernet Franc, harvested September 6 to October 2. Deep purple black in color, it is much more closed than the La Mission. It holds back for the first few minutes, reticent to reveal what slowly uncoils to give wave after wave of exotic spices—cardamom, cassis, star anise and fenugreek—over an opulent core of red roses, Black Forest cake, warm cassis and black raspberries with nuances of cigar box, crushed rocks, truffles, tilled black soil, iron ore and smoked meats. The full-bodied palate is truly profound, with restrained black fruit and spice layers slowly offering mineral sparks and savory suggestions within a rock-solid frame of firm, super fine-grained tannins, and beautiful freshness, finishing with epic length and depth. This will take longer to come around than the La Mission, but it will be well worth the wait.

Domaine Clarence Dillon pretty much nailed it across the board in 2018, from the first growth(s) in Pessac to the Saint-Émilion wines; to the more humbly priced, larger volume offerings; and even the whites, which were also tricky considering the heat. All the wines are ripe and seductive, true to what 2018 wanted to give as a vintage, and yet they possess bags of bright fruit, energy, and freshness. “The first key to success this vintage was to start the first mildew treatment in the vineyards a little bit earlier than usual,” Deputy Managing Director Jean-Philippe Delmas of Domaine Clarence Dillon informed me. “If you did that, you were protected. If you didn’t, you had to constantly run after the disease. The second challenge was the date of the harvest—the date was finally quite late. The best solution was to wait to get ripeness but to pick before there was heaviness or the wines got too fat.” I asked Delmas which he loved more this year, Cabernet or Merlot? “I loved everything,” he promptly replied. “And on the Right Bank, the Cabernet Franc was wonderful this year, which isn’t always the case. I would say Right Bank and Left Bank are the same for quality.” Bravo team!”
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“Aromas of currants, leaves, fresh mushrooms, oyster shell, tobacco, and dried flowers, following through to a full body, yet ever so refined and polished and it grows on the palate. Lovely, energetic finish. Subtle and driven at the end of the palate. Drink in 2026 and onwards.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

The length and texture to this wine is so very impressive. It’s not so much the sheer power that is impressive here, rather the form, tension and exquisite form that the abundant, fine-grained tannins provide. It lasts for minutes on the palate. A classic beauty in the making. ““
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This wine has an immense structure that’s powered by tannins yet backed by a dry core and bright acidity. The black currant flavor is very fine and concentrated while also having a juicy freshness that marks the vintage. It has all the structure that should be expected from this estate. (RV)”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“49.4% Merlot, 11.9% Cabernet Franc, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon. Harvested between 6 September and 2 October. Cabernet Franc picked a bit later than usual after their colleagues at Quintus, who have lots of Franc, told them to wait! Barrel sample. Deepest black cherry colour. Much more subdued on the nose than La Mission but has intense purity. Finely textured and yet dense, the freshness lifting it off the ground even with all the underlying power. Deep-rooted purity and wonderful persistence, all tied up and just with that slight rocky character that finishes dry but not drying. Impressive elegance in a powerful vintage. Firm, dry and yet so much more supple than many wines. Very slightly toasty on the finish but the oak is swallowed by the fruit.”
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

Reviews

"This is powerfully built. Less welcoming than La Mission at this stage but it feels like it is going to pull away increasingly as the decades pass. A serious wine, with layers upon layers of bilberry, blueberry, charcoal, fig, sage and rosemary that peel back over a good half an hour of being poured. Harvested 6 September to 2 October, yielding 44hl/ha. 3.8pH. (JA)"

JA, Decanter.com

"A beautiful Haut-Brion that combines generosity and elegance. It's rich, and velvety, with a vibrant ruby rim, all conveying structure and a sense of power. The flavour floods in through the mid-palate, displaying wonderfully vibrant blackberry, blueberry, slate, touches of blond tobacco, freshly cut herbs and exotic spicing. You can feel in the texture that it's a warm year, not holding back. It's powerful but elegant and unforced at the same time, with some brambled edges that give a welcome sense of acidity and a touch of bitterness."

"Opulent, powerful, full-bodied, dense and intense, this incredibly rich wine offers mouth-coating layers of ripe, lush, smoke and tobacco infused dark red and black fruits. What makes this wine great is that with all its power, you also find balance, elegance, harmony, and layers of complexity. The expansive finish, with its ripe fruits, tobacco leaf, smoke, barbecue and oceanic minerality holds you captive for over 60 seconds! This will age for at least 3-4 decades with ease. The wine blends 6% Merlot, 37.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6.5% Cabernet Franc, 14.6 ABV."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Very deep colour, with a dark, brooding, spicy nose of black pepper, cassis, cloves and sage. The palate is dense, concentrated and tightly wound, but with air the succulent, rich black fruit comes through. This leads to a hedonistic, ripe structure that is full bodied and mouthcoating but supremely refined with a white chocolate texture that is cut through by waves of fresh acidity. The fruit builds through the mid palate in tandem with smoky tobacco and exotic juniper and clove. The finish is long, fine and poised, yet muscular and needing time to reveal its true potential."

- Farr Vintners

"The 2018 Haut-Brion was double decanted, assessed after two hours and then over 24 hours, initially blind against La Mission Haut-Brion. There is more red fruit on the nose compared to the La Mission Haut-Brion, wild strawberries commingling with raspberry, light tobacco scents and shavings of black truffle. The palate is medium-bodied and beautifully balanced with superb salinity. Maybe this is more elegant and seductive than the La Mission thanks to the killer line of acidity, though it has slightly less backbone and grip by comparison. Oddly, this First Growth is the most approachable of the pair. It has wonderful cohesion and harmony toward the precise, captivating finish. Superb. My hunch is that this will have wider appeal in its youth, then the La Mission might put its nose in front after 15–20 years."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2018 Haut-Brion was picked from 6 September to 2 October at 44.6hL/ha. It has a quintessential Haut-Brion bouquet with billowing red cherries, boysenberry, black olive and tobacco aromas. The 2018 coheres beautifully with aeration as more blue fruit emerges. It reminds me of the 2015 at this stage. The palate is medium bodied with velvety tannin and perfectly judged acidity. There is an unerring symmetry about this First Growth, hints of cracked black pepper and clove towards the layered finish. Maybe what it does not have is the killer precision of a very top vintage, but it is certainly a great Haut-Brion. Drink 2024-2060."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2018 Haut-Brion is an infant, but its balance and potential are both amply evident. Rich and deep in the glass, the 2018 opens to reveal tremendous complexity and nuance, qualities that only grow with time. The 2018 is not a huge Haut-Brion, nor is it massively endowed, but it is so elegant and classy. I loved it. (AG)"

- AG, Vinous

"The 2018 Haut-Brion is a regal wine. Creamy, soft, and inviting, the 2018 is one of the more open-knit young Haut-Brion's I can remember tasting. Cedar, tobacco, smoke, licorice, grilled herbs, leather, and menthol are nicely layered in the glass. In 2018, Haut-Brion is almost shockingly elegant at this very early stage. There is plenty of tannin, but it is totally woven into the wine's fabric. In 2018, the blend is 49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 11.9% Cabernet Franc."

- AG, Vinous

Reviews

“A quintessential expression of this terroir, the 2018 Château Haut-Brion checks in as 49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and the balance Cabernet Franc brought up in a mix of new and used barrels. Ripe and sexy, yet also offering subtle aromas and flavors of blackcurrants, smoked earth, tobacco leaf, truffle, lead pencil, and minerals, it takes its time opening up but reveals a full-bodied, concentrated, multi-layered style carrying gorgeous tannins, flawless balance, and just a wonderful symmetry and elegance paired with beautiful richness. This noble, gorgeous Haut-Brion will benefit from 7-8 years of bottle age and cruise for 40 years or so.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“The grand vin 2018 Haut-Brion (49.4% Merlot, 38.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Cabernet Franc) is as deeply colored as its stablemate but has a darker, smoky bouquet of blackcurrants, roasted herbs, tobacco, and gravelly earth. Silky, polished, and ethereally textured on the palate, with beautiful tannins as well as mid-palate density, it's one of the most regal, classic wines in the vintage.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“(49.4 Merlot, 38.7 Cabernet Sauvignon, 11.9 Cabernet Franc) | 62% new oak | 14.2 – 14.4% alc | 72 IPT | Harvested between 6th September and 2nd October Like Le Clarence, Haut-Brion majors on the black fruit spectrum and it looks dark and menacing warning off all-comers. The tannins are superb here and they have none of the dryness and tart characteristics of La Mission, preferring to be super-fine and powdery. They don't get in the way of the flow, but the fruit, while complete, is refusing to budge an inch. I can detect some serious complexity here, but this is a belligerent wine, and it refuses to open up in the glass. The intensity of the flavour is staggering, and I venture that this will be another great Haut-Brion, but you have to be extremely patient for it to emerge from its chrysalis.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com
