

Château Haut Brion 2020

CSPC# 848994

750mlx3

15.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17.5% 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 have 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 Masclef
Vintage	<p>Winter 2019/2020 is mild and wet. The vine's growth cycle begins very early (it is the earliest year after 1989). In Spring, constant rainfall encourages mildew to appear, so we are doubly attentive. Flowering is very early too and occurs as usual. From mid-June and until mid-August, an exceptionally hot, dry period sets in, during which we note three periods of heatwave. As a result, we decrease work carried out in the vineyard, especially leaf-thinning, to protect the wholeness of the grape bunches and to preserve aromatic freshness. From 11th August, steady rainfall enables the grape to perfect its ripeness. Harvests of white grapes are early and gathered in very good conditions. Temperatures are above seasonal averages, ideal for completing the ripening of all the red grape varieties, which entered our fermenting rooms in excellent health.</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>
Vineyards	
Harvest	Harvested from 7 to 29 September.
Maturation	77.3% in new barrels for 20 month/s



Tasting Notes	The colour of this Château Haut-Brion is a dark, radiant red. Before swirling, the nose already reveals both fresh and spicy notes. Swirling the wine confirms good ripeness of the grapes, with no excess. The first taste is incredibly tightly knit and precise. Straight away the wine is assertive, with instant presence. The development is never forceful, but what presence on the palate! The tactile sensations are completed by the taste, the flavours. The tannins are well-rounded, refined, juicy. Excellent length, even when the wine is no longer in the mouth. The musical score composed by the three grape varieties, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, is incredibly accurate and harmonious.
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 2030 through 2065
Scores/Awards	<p>99 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p>98-100 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p>99 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023</p> <p>100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p>99-100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p>18.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021</p> <p>97 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023</p> <p>99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p>95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p>96-99 points - Farr Vintners - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>96-98 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p>97-99 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p>100 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p>98-100 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p>97 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p>96-98 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p>97-98 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021</p> <p>95-98 points - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021</p> <p>18 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"The 2020 Haut-Brion is more aromatically demonstrative than La Mission Haut-Brion, bursting with aromas of blackberries and raspberries mingled with licorice, cigar wrapper, pencil shavings and nicely integrated new oak. Full-bodied, ample, and fleshy, it's rich and layered, with an enveloping core of fruit that's girdled by plenty of sweet, powdery tannin. Despite checking in at a similarly lofty alcoholic degree to the 2019, its more granular tannic profile tempers the vintage's sweetness of fruit and lends the wine a more classically proportioned, and more classically structured, profile. 2030 – 2065."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2020 Haut-Brion is a blend of 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17.5% Cabernet Franc, harvested from 7th to 29th September, with an estimated alcohol of 15% and a pH of 3.8. Opaque purple-black colored, it leaps from the glass with a first wave of vibrant black raspberries, ripe blackberries and mulberries scents, followed by a powerful core of warm cassis, dark chocolate and violets, before bursting into an array of crushed rocks, iron ore, tree bark and black truffles notes. The concentrated, densely packed, full-bodied palate is not in the least bit heavy, delivering a refreshing backbone of red berry and dried herbs suggestions, framed by seamless acidity and very finely grained tannins, finishing on an epically long, fragrant earth note. Simply stunning."</i></p> <p><i>"First, we had to manage with the very humid spring—we had to fight against mildew," Deputy Managing Director Jean-Philippe Delmas of Domaine Clarence Dillon informed me. "It was challenging. Regardless for whether you were using natural products or not. So, yields were already lower than in 2019. Then we had almost two months without a drop of water—mid-June to mid-August. We decided for the first time not to do the leaf thinning. It was not so much because of the heat, but it was SO dry. Not so many bunches were dropped in July. This year there was less intervention in the vineyards. When you intervene, you modify the</i></p>

Reviews *profile of the wines. We started to harvest the whites very early. What is rare this year is that we finished the whites in August. It was a very early year for the whites. For the reds, the maceration was a bit shorter. We used more Cabernet Franc for all the grand vins. This was definitely a Cabernet Franc year! For La Mission Haut-Brion and Haut-Brion, the proportion reflects exactly the proportion we have in the fields.”*
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2020 Haut Brion is a blend of 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17.5% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.78. Deep garnet-purple in color, it opens with profound blackcurrant cordial, baked plums, and boysenberry preserves notes, leading to an undercurrent of graphite, iron ore, black truffles, and wood smoke, plus a hint of cardamom. The full-bodied palate is tightly knit with black fruit and mineral layers, supported by a rock-solid backbone of grainy tannins and seamless acidity, finishing long and savory.”
- LPB, Wine Independent

“This is a superb Haut-Brion with incredible tannins that are wonderfully fine-grained. It’s really powerful. This is very primary with so much grape-generated tannin structure. Very, very long, going on for minutes. Seductive and friendly at the start and then takes you on at the finish with so much structure. Wine of the vintage?”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“Aromas of blackberry, licorice, tile, stone, and mocha. Tobacco and cigar, too. They follow through to a full body with ultra-fine tannins that go on and on. Sophisticated ripe fruit in the center palate with a brightness. Tangerines in the finish. Very supple and savory at the end, in a classy way. Reminds me of the 1998. Already so attractive, but it will reward you much more after 2028.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“Full, distinctive, embossed bottle 1,305 g. Cask sample taken 12 April. 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17.5% Cabernet Franc. Estimated alcohol 15%. Picked from 7 to 29 September. More obviously aromatic and lifted than the second wine, Le Clarence de Haut-Brion. Intensely seductive nose in fact. Very savoury, tobacco-leaf palate entry and then quite a tingle. Acidity is a feature of the finish. Very muscular indeed but clearly with more flesh and less obvious tannin than La Mission 2020. Almost juicy. Too early for much of the 'warm bricks' nose to have developed, I assume. Long and emphatic with a little more zest than Haut-Brion often has at this early stage. Drink 2028 – 2052.”
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Concentrated and persistent. This remains quite tight overall with clear power, push and generosity of ripe blackcurrants, fragrant black cherries, blueberries, liquorice, cocoa powder, clove, and wet stone. The acidity and oak keep the elements all very centered but there’s no denying this is a statuesque wine that will need time to come around. Vivid, full, and well framed.”
- GH, Decanter.com

“Concentrated, powerful and precise; this takes a grip and holds on, layers of liquorice, grilled coffee bean, chocolate, blackcurrant pastille, cassis bud and a more steely wet stone edge that gives a much needed balance to the richness of the overall feel of this wine. Gunsmoke curls out of the glass after half an hour - this is going to need serious ageing, impressive and powerful stuff. Harvest from 7th to 29th September. Drinking Window 2030 – 2050.”
- JA, Decanter.com

“Where usually Haut-Brion feels rooted in the Left Bank, this is almost Pomerol in its fleshy fruits. Strikingly powerful layers of plum, damson, cocoa, crushed rocks, bitter black chocolate. Easy to see the brilliance of this wine, one to stand back and admire, wait for those muscular tannins and fresh acidities to melt together over the next few decades. Harvest from 7th to 29th September, 77% new oak.”
- JA, janeanson.com

Reviews

“Dark, ruby, garnet in color, the wine exudes cedar, cigar box, tobacco leaf, smoke, roasted cherries, herbs, spice box and forest floor scents. What is amazing here is the incredible level of density, because it is also light on its feet, perfectly balanced, poised, and energetic. Texturally, this is surreal. Picture velvet and polished silk on your palate coating each berry. The fruit offers intensity, purity, and length, with a finish that exceeds 60 seconds. The seamless finish could put a smile on the most jaded taster. Do not be concerned with the alcohol levels as there is no heat. All of that is buried in the wealth of fruit. If you have the money, this is one of the great vintages of Haut Brion that promises to evolve for at least 4-5 decades with ease. The wine blends 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17.5% Cabernet Franc, 15% ABV. Harvesting took place September 7-September 29. 98-100.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2020 is a blend of 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17.5% Cabernet Franc, all picked by 29th September. Deep ruby colour with silky, ripe cassis and bramble yet a restrained savoury edge of lead pencil and spice. The palate is tightly wound with plentiful but refined tannins providing ample structure. The core of fruit is intense with brambly dark fruits but also offers notes of black truffle, cedar, and flint. The riper elements here are cut by wonderfully fresh acidity, lifting to floral overtones towards the finish. An outstanding 2020, and a contender for wine of the vintage.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2020 Haut-Brion was picked September 7–29. It has a more opulent, more precocious bouquet compared directly with its neighbor across the road, resplendent with layers of black cherry, wild strawberry, black olives, and a touch of inkwell. Perhaps it displays slightly less mineralité compared to La Mission Haut-Brion? The palate is medium-bodied with pliant tannins and a disarming satiny texture matched by a perfect line of acidity. It builds beautifully in the glass, and yet as I constantly return to the La Mission, it does not possess quite the same thrilling tension and pixelation. This is still a magnificent, bold, and almost audacious Haut-Brion and I am intrigued to see how it develops in barrel. Drink 2028-2055.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Haut-Brion is shaping up to be one of the wines of the year. Substance, depth, and textural intensity elevate Haut-Brion into the realm of the sublime in 2020. All the elements are so wonderfully balanced. Inky dark fruit, gravel, lavender, violet and dark spice build as the 2020 gradually opens with some aeration. Wow.”

- AG, Vinous

“I finished my trip through Bordeaux with the 2020 Château Haut-Brion, and it was certainly a fitting cap to the trip. Revealing a deep ruby/plum hue, the 2020 exhibits extraordinary aromatics of ripe black fruits, scorched earth, cold fireplace, and acacia flowers. An absolute blockbuster on the palate, this structured, full-bodied, massively concentrated Pessac builds incrementally, with ultra-fine tannins, a deep, layered mid-palate, and a great, great finish. Richer and more concentrated than both the 2018 and 2019 (there are some similarities to 2010), this is a legend in the making. The blend is 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the balance Cabernet Franc, all of which will spend 15-18 months in 77% new French oak. Hide bottles for a decade, and it should evolve for 50-75 years.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Unquestionably one of the top wines in this impressive vintage, the 2020 Château Haut-Brion checks in as 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the balance Cabernet Franc, all of which will spend 15-18 months in 77% new French oak. Its deep purple color is followed by a thrilling nose of mineral-laced blackcurrants, black raspberries, toast, spice, scorched earth, and graphite. Possessing an almost Lafite-like elegance on the palate, it nevertheless has huge dry extract, full-bodied richness, flawless balance, and beautiful tannins. Per the spec sheet, the alcohol is an estimated 15% with a pH of 3.78, so it's no shrinking violet, yet it never shows a hint of headiness or being over the top. I finished my note with “Where can I buy some?” I suspect this wine will require a solid decade to hit the early stages of maturity and will be a 30-, 40-, or possibly a 50-year wine.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

Reviews *“Dark ruby colour with an opaque core and purple reflections. Black wild berries with a touch of nougat, in the background and a hint of cherry, subtle wood spice followed by a dash of vanilla. Full-bodied, ripe blackberry and cherry, a hint of nougat, fresh, sophisticated acidity, a touch of red berries, mineral-salty finish, classic style, good ageing potential.”*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“On the nose, fresh, fruity and offers good definition, a certain intensity, a discreetly tight texture. It reveals notes of pulpy / juicy nectarine, fresh quenette, and crisp apple associated with touches of zest, beautiful minerality as well as subtle hints of fresh almond, white flowers, with a subtle hint of fresh apricot and of saline. On the palate, it is fruity and offers minerality, freshness, juiciness, a little crystalline side, good definition, intensity, juiciness, roundness, smooth, a certain roundness, energy, and tension. It reveals notes of pulpy / juicy apple, fresh / crunchy nectarine and notes of lemon associated with touches of zest, fresh apricot, fresh lychee as well as fine hints of white flowers, rose petal, with discreet hints of quince, nutmeg, and toast. Savory on the finish / persistence.”

- Vert de Vin

“Pure, stony, and floral with fine intensity, ripe black currant, dark cherry, fine tobacco, sage, and discreet oak underneath. Very powerful with a bright freshness, dense fruit and plenty of super fine tannin, impressive length, and nuance, should become absolutely tremendous.”

- AL, Tasted.com

“(43% M, 40% CS, 17% CF; 15% ABV). A fine, discreet nose, the first in the Haut-Brion group of reds where there is the merest hint of “gravel” origin in the smell behind the crisply sweet cassis aromas; full, concentrated, finely tannic, and freshly defined; vibrantly sweet, long and complex in its fruit core, racy and aromatic (the terroir’s class will out!); there is a considerable richness of fruit here, and great subtle length across the palate, followed by splendid persistence to finish. Elegant, aristocratic, poised, even at 15%, the location’s class is all there but in a forte, almost fortissimo rendering. Clearly a very fine Haut-Brion in its current “high-alcohol” style: silky rich, sweetly ripe, fleshy cored within the fine, slightly alcohol-dried and harshened tannins. Will that texture ever mellow completely? Impossible to say at the moment. 2032–50+.”

- MS, The World of Fine Wine
