

Château Haut Brion 1988

CSPC# 710369

750mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation
General Info

55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc
Pessac-Leognan

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 last 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

Vintage

Both winter & spring were very humid while the summer was dry but not very hot. A little rainfall in September. The ripening of the grapes was good, and the skins were thick and rich. The wines produced are powerful with a beautiful structure.

Vineyards

The terrain at Haut-Brion, formed of two large mounds of a type of gravel known as Günzian because it was deposited during the earliest geologic stage of the Pleistocene epoch, rises between 40 and 50 feet above the beds of the neighbouring streams. This gravel consists of small stones, including various kinds of quartz, and it is these precious gems that help to give Château Haut-Brion's wines their distinctive character. The sub-soil consists of a mixture of clay and sand. The vineyard covers an area of 51 hectares (about 126 acres). Slightly more than 48 hectares are planted with red grape varieties (Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) and just under 3 hectares are devoted to white grape varieties (Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc).

Harvest

September 28th -October 14th

Maturation

78% in new barrels during 20 month/s

Tasting Notes

The wine shows deep colour with substantial but supple tannins. It is long on the palate, while the aromas are still hidden due to the youth of the wine. At this stage of evolution, it seems the vintage is not comparable to any other ones but 1966.

Production

150,000 bottles produced

Cellaring

Drink 2003-2025

Scores/Awards

- 96 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2009
- 98 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - November 30, 1998
- 92 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - April 30, 1997
- 98 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - April 30, 1991
- 92 points** - Robert Parker, Bordeaux Book, 4th Edition - January 2003
- No score** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #95 - October 1994
- 91 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #88 - August 1993
- 91 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #85 - February 1993



Scores/Awards **91 points** - Robert Parker, Bordeaux Book, 3rd Edition - January 1998

92 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #84 - December 1992

89 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2008

85-87 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - April 2004

94 points - Jean Marc Quarin (no review)

93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - December 20, 2010

93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - November 3, 2010

93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - August 15, 2007

90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 20, 2005

94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 18, 2003

Reviews *"What a beautiful and complete wine, with dark chocolate, crushed blackberry, cedar and raspberry on the nose. Full-bodied, with super silky tannins and a beautiful licorice, tar and fruit aftertaste. Long and complex. Will improve with age, but delicious now. —'88/'98 Bordeaux blind retrospective (2008). Drink now."*
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Amazingly harmonious, complex and supple, with intense, generous plum, currant, spice, cedar, cherry, and anise flavors that have a wonderful sense of finesse and grace. The tannins are intense, yet graceful, allowing the flavors to pour through on the finish. Best to cellar from 2001 to 2009."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"The wine of the vintage and one of the greatest Haut-Brion's ever made. Super powerful and ripe, with masses of spice, mint and berry character. Full-bodied, with full yet polished tannins, this wine is a joy to taste and will be for decades. --1988 Bordeaux horizontal. Best after 2003__."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Firm, youthful and disarming with its bright, richly delicious currant, berry and tobacco flavors. Perhaps a bit uncharacteristic of Haut-Brion, but beautifully balanced and elegant. --Haut-Brion vertical."
- JS, Wine Spectator

"A more firmly structured Haut-Brion, built somewhat along the lines of the 1996, this dark garnet-colored wine is showing notes of licorice, underbrush, compost, truffles, dried herbs, creosote, and sweet black cherries and currants. Medium-bodied, rich, but still structured, this wine unfolds incrementally on the palate, showing superb density and a lot of complex Graves elements. It is just beginning to hit its plateau of full maturity. Anticipated maturity: Now-2025. Last tasted, 11/02."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"A Possible Legend Candidate"

- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 1988 is built along the lines of the 1966, but better made and more concentrated. Medium-bodied, rich, and tannic, it will have to be cellared until the end of this century. Anticipated maturity: 2000-2025. Last tasted, 6/93."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 1988 Haut-Brion is built along the lines of the 1966, but it is more concentrated and powerful. The dense bouquet of tobacco, ripe, black fruits and spicy oak has just begun to develop. Medium-bodied, rich, tannic, with a good inner-core of fruit, this wine will have to be cellared until the end of this century. Anticipated maturity: 2000-2025."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 1988 Haut-Brion is built along the lines of the 1966, but it is more concentrated and powerful. The dense bouquet of tobacco, ripe, black fruits and spicy oak has just begun to develop. The wine is medium-bodied, rich, and tannic, with a good inner-core of fruit. This wine will have to be cellared until the end of this century. Anticipated maturity: 2000-2025. Last tasted 1/93"

- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"Last Tasted 8/92. This vintage merits more attention from consumers looking for a good buy. Just about every merchant in America is discounting their 1988s, making it one of the more attractively priced Bordeaux vintages. Haut Brion's 1988 is a more structured and tannic wine than the 1989, without the latter vintage's sweetness and sheer essence of jammy fruit. Nevertheless, there is plenty of concentration, a tight yet promising nose of black fruits, earth, tobacco, and minerals, as well as a medium-bodied, long, moderately tannic finish. This wine continues to reveal more personality and character now that it is in the bottle. Although drinkable now, the wine ideally needs another 3-4 years of cellaring and should easily last as long as the 1989 (25 years) ."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"This is one of the better bottles of Haut-Brion '88s that I have had. A deep garnet hue with a deep brick rim. The nose is austere and conservative with cedar, pine, leather and cigar box but good definition and vigour. The palate displays fresh acidity, an austere, slightly lean character with a firmness creeping in towards the finish. Great purity though, but just lacking something in the middle. Drink now. Tasted September 2007."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Quite youthful in appearance compared to the 1989 and 1990 but dwarfed by both on the nose and palate. A dry herbal, woody nose typical of so many 1988's - very little fruit. The palate is austere, a bit mean and lacking some cohesion. Leafy tobacco finish. Definitely needs some food to accompany it. A bit disappointed considering this is a first growth; rather skeletal when all is said and done. Drink now. Tasted April 2004."

- NM, Wine Journal

"1988 Haut Brion greets you with tobacco, smoke, stone, cassis, earth spice aromas. Elegant, smooth, soft and open, this mature wine ends with smoky, cassis and cherry flavors. 93 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"1988 Haut Brion is a traditional style of Haut Brion. Cassis, spice, earth, smoke, mushroom and tobacco notes open the perfume. Full bodied and filled with ripe, juicy cassis, the wine lacks the polish and ripeness found in the top vintages. 93 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Smoky aromatics, cassis, tobacco and fresh ground spices, full bodied, concentrated with hints of under ripeness that appears in the otherwise, stylish finish, this is a good but not great Haut Brion."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The black fruit, tobacco and spice perfume was reticent and needed a lot of swirling to come out and play. Structured, tannic, needs time."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Coffee, licorice, cassis and herbal notes filled the air. Full bodied, lush, rich and tannic. Cassis and blackberry with spicy tones are easy to find in the finish. Needs another decade of sleep."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com