

Château La Mission Haut Brion 2016

CSPC# 813916

750mlx6

13.7% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

57.5% Merlot, 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

Classification

Cru Classe de Graves in 1959

Website

<http://www.mission-haut-brion.com/#/home>

General Info

Château La Mission-Haut-Brion is the greatest Graves wine after Haut-Brion and in some vintages, is considered the superior wine of the two. La Mission-Haut-Brion is situated just across the road from Haut-Brion in the commune of Talence in the southern suburbs of Bordeaux.

Once a rival of adjacent Haut-Brion, La Mission has actually shared ownership with its neighbor since 1983. While just a narrow suburban street divides the two properties, La Mission's wines maintain their distinctive wilder identity: more powerful and more tannic, often displaying a meaty, truffley character with extended time in bottle. The newly constructed tasting room and cellars here, which opened in 2007, are quite impressive.

La Mission-Haut-Brion has a long and illustrious history in Graves and in some eyes is the greatest estate in Bordeaux. The estate has an unbelievable record of great wines stretching back over the past century and today has a reputation for pure excellence. Robert Parker believes the quality is that of a First Growth. The vines are planted to 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Since 1983 the Clarence Dillon family, owners of Chateau Haut Brion have owned and managed La Mission now under the expert guidance of Jean-Philippe Delmas, the third generation in his family to manage the properties of the Dillon Family.

Winemaker

Jean-Philippe Delmas

Vintage

The unquestionably successful 2016 vintage is due to the conjunction of several important factors.

A rainy period lasting from the 1st of January to the 20th of June replenished water reserves and paved the way for a large potential crop. The significant precipitation between January and late June enhanced vine growth in spring and built-up essential water reserves in our gravelly well-drained soil. Quasi-miraculous flowering guaranteed a large crop.

A window of opportunity – a spell of splendid weather from the 4th to the 11th of June – miraculously opened in the context of a "spring monsoon". This led to perfectly-fertilised flowers producing well-formed, sizeable bunches.

An exceptionally dry period from the 1st of July to the 13th of September was conducive to richness and power.

Summer was warm, but not excessively so, and also extremely dry. In fact, this was one of the driest summers in a hundred years... In early summer, our deeply-rooted old vines were fortunately able to draw on water reserves accumulated in spring. The month of August was ideal for developing tannic structure in our red wine varieties and sugar levels in the white wine ones. However, these drought conditions were very trying for our young vines with relatively shallow roots. This necessitated the highly unusual step of watering them.

We were really in need of rain by early September! This finally arrived, on the 13th of that month. These 40 mm of rain did a world of good, giving a boost to ripening and refreshing the vines. An Indian summer from the 15th of September to the end of October provided finesse and elegance. The Indian summer, combined with diurnal temperature differences due to cool night-time temperatures, ensured a good end to ripening of the various grape varieties, as well as refined red wine tannins, while maintaining fresh fruitiness.



Vineyards	La Mission-Haut-Brion's vineyards (Cabernet Sauvignon 48%, Merlot 45%, Cabernet Franc 7%) lie on a large (up to 18 metres deep in places) gravel bank interspersed with clay. Average vine age is 27 years.
Harvest	picked between 19 September and 14 October
Maturation	The wine is fermented in temperature-controlled, stainless-steel vats and then matured in oak barriques (100% new) for 18 months. The wines of La Mission Haut Brion are rich, oaky, and powerful and need at least 10 years of bottle ageing before they should be broached.
Tasting Notes	This glorious wine typifies everything that makes La Mission Haut-Brion so appealing and why it is a habitual winner in blind tastings amongst the first growths. Beautifully polished loganberry and wild berry aromas, with hints of dark currants. This balances a lovely silky texture, with volume and richness, whilst maintaining a continuous flow of tannic structure throughout the palate. Vibrantly fresh, the finish of mocha and chocolate give added complexity and enormous appeal.
Serve with	Chateau La Mission Haut Brion is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau La Mission Haut Brion is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau La Mission Haut Brion is also good with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, salmon, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	7,300 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2022-2054
Scores/Awards	<p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2019</p> <p>98+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - November 2018</p> <p>98-100 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017</p> <p>97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019</p> <p>96-97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017</p> <p>96 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2019</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2017</p> <p>18.5++ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017</p> <p>99 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>18.5 points - Farr Vintner - February 2017</p> <p>95-98 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017</p> <p>99 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>18.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This is super vivid, offering cassis, blackberry, raspberry and blueberry compote flavors that bristle with energy while a mouthwatering frame of anise and apple wood adds electric energy. This is borderline rambunctious, but it's bridled well enough and when the fruit and wood sides mesh fully, this will be a rock star. Best from 2025 through 2040. 7,300 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2016 La Mission Haut-Brion is a blend of 57.5% Merlot and 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Deep garnet-purple in color, it is just a little muted to begin, soon unfurling to reveal slowly growing scents of crushed blackcurrants, black cherries, dark chocolate and candied violets with nuances of crushed rocks, tobacco leaf, forest floor and fragrant earth plus a hint of bergamot. Medium-bodied and exquisitely elegant, the palate offers perfectly ripe, fine-grained tannins and tons of freshness with layer upon layer of perfumed fruit and a very long, ferrous-laced finish."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2016 La Mission Haut Brion is a blend of 57.5% Merlot and 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon picked between 19 September and 14 October, one of the longest ever. "We had to be patient and wait for each plot," Jean-Philippe Delmas told me. "It took longer than usual." As is customary, I allowed my sample, and likewise all the wines poured at this tasting, around 40-45 minutes to open since they always transform in the glass. It has a clean and precise, quite understated bouquet with fine mineralité, cold stone aromas infusing the black fruit. This has incredible precision, perhaps even more pixelated than the "gaff over the road" Haut-Brion. The palate is medium-bodied with supple and lithe tannin. I appreciate the line of acidity here, the smoothness and harmony that takes your breath away. Every atom is infused with life-affirming freshness. It is a wine bridled with incredible focus and delineation. I thought that the 2015 La Mission Haut-Brion flirted with perfection. The 2016 has that extra edge, a "je ne sais quoi" that leaves you reaching for the thesaurus looking for superlatives."
- NM, Wine Advocate

"Regal wine, showing alluringly ripe and dark plums, that carries a wealth of complexity in its DNA - fine spices, leaves, graphite, violets and more. The palate has very precise drive and super focused style and delivers authoritative tannins that are arranged in linear fashion. Power with elegance. Try from 2024."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"The texture to this is very beautiful with chewy yet very polished tannins. Full-bodied, tight and mouth-filling. Starts very slowly and then takes off. Love the energy in this."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"As so often with this estate, this is a generous, opulent wine. This year a strong tannic element gives the wine a good structure. Smoky, textured and powerful, it needs many years to mature. Do not drink this wine before 2026."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"This is a seductive, rounded and smooth wine, with fine fruit that cushions the solid tannins. It has spicy tones and ample acidity as well as delicious, concentrated fruitiness. This is going to be a beautiful wine. (RV)"
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Glowing deep crimson. Very intense and ripe. Snazzy and spicy. Polished and racy. Very firm and lots of ripe tannins – very much à La Mission. Super-sophisticated. Inky and fresh and so ripe and confident. A dry style but great. Racy but tannic."
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Wonderful La Mission this year, graceful but with an unmistakable sense of controlled power. The wine just expands outwards and upwards in your mouth - insistent but terribly polite about it. It is deep and silky, shot through with coffee grounds, damson and soft cassis on a creamy mid-palate, utterly beautiful. There is a real energy and vitality here, with a caressing texture to the tannins and huge persistency on the finish. Dense, and yet so finessed that you could almost drink it today. Wow. The blend is 57.5% Merlot and 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon with a pH of 3.66, harvested between 19th September and 14th October."
- JA, Decanter.com

"The wall of perfectly ripe, dark, smoky, earthy deep red fruits wrapped in tobacco wrappers is perfectly matched with the massive wall of tannin. The level of tannins is strong, but they are ripe, refined and held in check by the quality of ripe fruits and their velvety textures. The finish holds on for close to 60 seconds!"
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep in color, the smoke, tobacco, dark red fruits, earth, espresso and cigar box aromatics keep you busy. Full bodied, concentrated, the wine takes up a lot of room on your palate. It's long, expansive and is a Cuban cigar dream, provided they also enjoy a big wave of fruit. There is a lot of tannin, but the fruit is so ripe, and sweet, you barely notice it. The wine was made from a blend of 57.5% Merlot and 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon. The harvest took place from September 19 to October 14. The wine reached 13.7% alcohol, with a pH of 3.66. This represents 50% of the harvest."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews *“Tight, focused and even a little backward, as it’s entitled to be at this young age, this is a very intellectual claret, rather than an exuberant fruit bomb. Fine oak, granular tannins, taut acidity and savoury red and dark berry fruit flavours. 2026-36”*
- TA, timatkin.com

“Frequently the qualitative equal of sister-Chateau Haut Brion and in some years even better. The historic La Tour Haut Brion vineyard has been incorporated into La Mission now but most of the fruit is relegated to the 2nd label - La Chapelle de la Mission. La Mission's production levels are now smaller than ever and, more than ever, it can be seen as an 'honorary' First Growth. There are normally around 5000 cases produced annually. The vineyard is planted with 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc and 40% Merlot. 57.5% Merlot, 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, and picked over nearly a full month - between 19th September and 14th October. Deep colour. Exotic on the nose with all spice, creamy damson and black cherry, nutmeg and cinnamon. Chalky, ripe and juicy on the palate, the layers of fruit are complemented by sweet notes of caramel, chocolate and exotic spices. Supple, rounded and soft, there is a lift of high-toned cherry blossom and violet on the long and complex finish that completes the wine superbly. Very high quality this year which reaches, and even surpasses, some of the First Growths.”
- Farr Vintners

“Concentrated black fruits the nose has depth the palate a rich mix of cassis and black cherry mid richness the sweet fruit backed by fine tannins. Rich and ripe at the back supple and fleshy but there is balance an underlying freshness the finish has elegance and length. 2025-43”
- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2016 La Mission Haut-Brion was stunning from barrel, and now in bottle. It has a sublime bouquet of blackberries, briar and hints of dark chocolate and rose petals that gain intensity with aeration while maintaining ethereal delineation. It never steps on the accelerator too hard. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin. There is still a veneer of new oak that will need to be assimilated over the coming years. This is a deep La Mission that caresses the mouth. Touches of graphite lingering on a finish that fans out gloriously. Is the 2016 up there with the 1955 or 1989? Nearly. Drink 2026-2066”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2016 La Mission Haut-Brion is flat out gorgeous. Today, La Mission is incredibly primary, with stunning purity in its red/purplish berry fruit. Readers will have to cellar the 2016 for the better part of a decade at a minimum before the telltale aromatics of this fabled chateau start to blossom in bottle. I adore the 2016 for its gracious personality, fine tannin and remarkable freshness, not to mention that it is absolutely delicious and the kind of wine that is so suggestive of a very bright future. 2026 – 2066”
- AG, Vinous

“The 2016 La Mission Haut-Brion is a total knockout. Vertical and powerful, but not at all austere, it exudes class. Fine-grained tannins support the fruit, but they are barely felt, as the wine's balance is so extraordinary. Lifted floral notes and a host of red fruits give the 2016 energy and verve. I can't wait to see how it ages.”
- AG, Vinous

“A lovely, wild nose of macerated berries and old library books greets the taster. This is a historic flavour and it shows amazing complexity and thrilling tannins. The fineness and richness of the skin elements are incredible. Long and smooth, this is a superb La Mission, built along a red fruit theme and even though it is very dry and savoury it is certain to blossom in a decade into a lithe, sensual creature.”
- MJ, matthewjukes.com

“The 2016 La Mission Haut-Brion checks in as a Merlot-heavy blend, 57.5% Merlot and 42.5% Cabernet Sauvignon. About as pure and seamless (yet sexy) as they come in the vintage, it offers awesome notes of dried flowers, sweet currants, cedarwood, forest floor, and exotic spices. With a flawless texture, medium to full body, and ultra-fine tannins, this beauty builds incrementally on the palate with terrific mid-palate depth and a stunning finish. It's sexier and more charming compared to the more backward Haut Brion, yet I suspect it will age just as long. Drink 2023-2063.”
- Jeb Dunnuck
