

Château La Mission Haut Brion 2020

CSPC# 848127

750mlx3

14.7% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.2% Cabernet Franc
Appellation	Pessac-Léognan
Classification	Cru Classe de Graves in 1959
Website	http://www.mission-haut-brion.com/#/home
General Info	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Winemaker	Oenologist and cellar master: Jean-Philippe Masclef
Vintage	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.
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	From the 7th to the 29th September
Maturation	The wine is fermented in temperature-controlled, stainless-steel vats and then matured in oak barriques (76.8% 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	<p>A beautiful dark purple hue.</p> <p>The first nose is intense and fascinating, full of red fruit aromas, with ripe and fresh notes simultaneously. Swirling the wine confirms the fruity, captivating powerfulness, enhanced by a superb woody, spicy hint. The first taste is round, fleshy, and thick. The wine develops on a tightly-knit, juicy sensation on the palate, almost sweet, with full-body.</p> <p>It stretches out in length with an elegant presence of tannin, rich in taste and full of pleasure on the finish. This is a superb Château La Mission Haut-Brion, its blend well-balanced and representative of the grape varieties planted in its vineyard.</p>
Serve with	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.



**Cellaring
Scores/Awards**

Drink 2035 - 2065

- 100 points** - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023
- 97-99 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021
- 99 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023
- 99 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023
- 97-98 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021
- 95-97 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021
- 18+ points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021
- 98 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021
- 98 points** - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023
- 97-99 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021
- 96 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021
- 95-98 points** - Farr Vintners - May 2021
- 98 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023
- 97-99 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021
- 96-98 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021
- 99 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023
- 96-98 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021
- 97 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023
- 95-97 points** - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021
- 97 points** - Vert de Vin - May 2021
- 94-95 points** - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021
- 17.5 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021

Reviews

"The 2020 La Mission Haut-Brion is a brilliant effort that exhibits a level of balance and integration that are impressive in such a powerful young Bordeaux. Unwinding in the glass with aromas of dark berries and plums mingled with burning embers, pencil shavings, violets and smoked black tea, it's full-bodied, deep and concentrated, with a layered, elegantly muscular profile, its brooding core of fruit framed by a generous endowment of powdery tannin that tempers the ripeness of the vintage. Checking in at 14.7% alcohol, it's nonetheless more classically styled than the more flamboyant 2019 vintage or even the slowly maturing 2010 which I re-tasted alongside for context."
- WK, Wine Advocate

"Composed of 48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8.2% Cabernet Franc, harvested from 7th to 29th September, the 2020 La Mission Haut-Brion has an alcohol of 14.7%. It needs considerable swirling and coaxing to reveal slowly emerging scents of freshly crushed blackcurrants, Morello cherries, wild blueberries, and forest floor, leading to suggestions of violets, baker's chocolate, and cardamom with wafts of dusty soil and oolong tea. The medium to full-bodied palate bursts with impactful, fresh red, black and blue fruit layers, supported by impressive freshness and fantastically ripe, fine-grained tannins, finishing very long and fragrant. A stunning expression of this vintage!

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 of 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 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

"Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2020 La Mission Haut-Brion is a blend of 48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 8.2% Cabernet Franc, with a pH of 3.85. After a swirl or two, the nose blossoms with an alluring array of black cherries, kirsch, and blackcurrant jelly scents, followed by hints of rose oil, sandalwood, tree bark, and Indian spices. The medium to full-bodied palate is densely laden with muscular black fruits, supported by firm, rounded tannins and plenty of freshness, finishing long and fragrant."
- LPB, Wine Independent

Reviews *“Perfectly ripe black and blue berries on the nose with blackcurrants, too. Crushed fruit. Complex and perfect. Full and intense. You feel the intensity of the tannins, yet it is not overpowering. They are in a sophisticated and elegant state. Muscular and formed finish. Gorgeous in every sense of the word. Strength with finesse.”*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This really builds on the palate. Loads of blackberry and iodine with asphalt undertones. It’s full-bodied with tannins that steamroll at the end and keep going. Classic blend.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“The wine's roundness comes from the ripe fruit. The warm 2020 vintage has produced a wine that is generous, poised between crisp citrus and hints of yellow fruits. The subtle use of wood aging will sustain this wine for its long-term future.”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Full embossed bottle 1,280 g. Cask sample taken 13 April ... nice and fresh! 48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8.2% Cabernet Franc picked 7 to 29 September. Estimated alcohol is 14.7%. Dark, blackish crimson. Obviously extremely dense and concentrated – so much so that initially the nose is buried in all that concentration. Then – whoosh – what a spread of firm fruit and layers of cassis and minerals! There is no shortage of ripe tannin buried under here so this will be a very slow burner but it's a worthy addition to the La Mission canon. Needs years and years and it's far from opulent, but then that's not what La Mission is about. Subtly builds towards a very long peacock's tail finish. Though it's impossible to imagine drinking this tightly structured wine without food. Drink 2032 – 2055.”
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“A kick of black fruit and confident spice right from the first nose, this is an intense and concentrated La Mission, tightly in control, not letting up from beginning to end. The pencil lead and bitter dark chocolate is layered in between the cassis notes in a way that makes you see the Cabernet influence although this is majority Merlot (once again - this is a character of the year, low yields of Cabernet mean Merlot is more featured in the blend than usual; but the intensity of the Cabernets mean that it still has an outsized influence on flavour profile). Grilled coffee beans overtake the close of play, this is seductive and switches beautifully between the tannins pressing in on the palate and the juice expanding things outwards. This is the wine to go for in the Domaines Clarence Dillon stable this year. Harvest from 7th to 29th September.”
- JA, Decanter.com

“Grips from the first moment, lashings of damson, cassis, brownie, chocolate shavings, espresso, pencil lead, plum pudding, incense, the is muscular but juicy, totally mouthwatering, real tension and depth, powerful but restrained. Gets better and better the more you go back to it, building in floral notes, lives up to its En Primeur promise. Harvest from 7th to 29th September.”
- JA, janeanson.com

“Dark in color, the wine pops with its profile of Cuban cigars, black currants, camphor, spice, tar and smoke. Full-bodied, powerful, long, and rich, the wine builds as it intensifies on your palate. There is length, intensity, and layers of mineral-driven, dark red pit fruits with lift and persistency in the extended finish. The wine demands 12-15 years of aging and will evolve for at least 3-4 decades after that. The wine blends 48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8.2% Cabernet Franc, 14.7% ABV. Harvesting took place, September 7, September 29. 97-99.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2020 is a blend of 48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8.2% Cabernet Franc. Deep ruby in the glass. Explosively aromatic, full of cedar, tobacco, cassis, and dark cherry. Brambly dark fruit competes with a cool graphite note on the palate, offering sweet and savoury in equal measure. There are exotic notes of liquorice and clove too, but everything is measured and harmonious. Firm but ripe tannins offer ample structure for long term ageing, complementing rather than dominating the fruit. Expansive on the finish that has a flourish of spice and dried flowers.”
- Farr Vintners

Reviews

“The 2020 La Mission Haut-Brion has a detailed bouquet with a mixture of red and black fruit, black olive, terracotta, and a light wet clayey scent (I sometimes think of a potter's wheel.) It gains complexity in the glass and becomes increasingly refined. The palate is beautifully balanced and caters for the 14.7% alcohol with ease. Very fine tannins, perfectly matched with the acidity, beguiling in terms of their cohesive and velvety smooth finish that lingers long in the mouth. The greatest La Missions are the effortless ones and the 2020 is just that. Beautiful.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 La Mission Haut-Brion was picked September 7–29. It has a very intense and beautifully defined bouquet of blackberry, wild strawberry, wilted violet petals and hints of orange blossoms. It unfolded with aeration as I examined it side-by-side against its neighbor over the course of an hour. The exquisitely balanced palate is lightly spiced on the entry and segues into a very structured midpalate that frames the weight of pixelated black fruit. That spicy theme continues and is exaggerated toward a finish that fans out wonderfully. This is a less alcoholic La Mission Haut-Brion compared to recent vintages, a bit "cooler" and streamlined, yet no less intense and satisfying. An enthralling wine in the making from Jean-Philippe Delmas and his team. Drink: 2028-2060.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 La Mission Haut-Brion is a gorgeous, elegant wine. Silky and pliant, La Mission is all finesse. Fine tannins lend energy as the 2020 gradually opens with some coaxing. Today, the flavors are remarkably primary, and yet the 2020 is so persistent, so elegant. Hints of cedar, tobacco, gravel, and dried herbs add aromatic complexity, but the 2020 is a mere infant. I can't wait to watch it grow up. There is a bit of new oak that needs to integrate, but nothing élevage can't take care of.”

- AG, Vinous

“Lastly, the Grand Vin 2020 Château La Mission Haut-Brion is cut from the same cloth as the La Chapelle, only it brings more of everything. Black raspberries, cassis, ripe cherries, sandalwood, smoked tobacco, and acacia flowers are just some of its nuances, and this beauty hits the palate with full-bodied richness, a layered, seamless, sexy mouthfeel, remarkable tannins, and a great, great finish. The level of purity, finesse, and elegance, paired with incredible concentration, is something to behold. Give bottles just 5-7 years in the cellar and enjoy over the following half a century. The blend is 48.6% Merlot, 43.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Cabernet Franc, hitting a natural alcohol of 14.7%.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Another sensational wine, the 2020 Château La Mission Haut-Brion boasts a deep ruby/purple color to go with a rocking perfume of ripe black cherries, tobacco, damp earth, chocolate, and exotic spices. Rich, medium to full-bodied, and concentrated, it has a ripe, expansive texture, building tannins, and just an opulent texture. The vintage doesn't get any sexier than this beauty.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Dark ruby, opaque core, narrow rim purple tinge. Cardamom and cinnamon spices underpin black berry fruit, cassis, a touch of liquorice, fine nougat, tobacco, and candied orange zest. Substantial with depth and weight to fruit, ripe cherries, elegant, fresh, very well-structured, vivid, well-integrated tannins, chocolate and cocoa echos, very good length. Huge potential but needs lots of time.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“On the nose, it is fruity, fresh and offers a certain gourmandize, straightness, a balanced richness, elegance, accuracy, and a nice grain. It reveals notes of pulpy / bright apple, lemon and more slightly of juicy / ripe kumquat associated with touches of quenette, apple blossoms, crushed peach, beautiful minerality, with discreet hints of acacia flowers, zest, and a subtle hint of gravel salinity. On the palate, it is fruity, nicely fresh and offers a racy minerality, tension, energy, a nice definition, a discreet tangy frame, gourmandize, a certain purity, a fine airy side in the balance, power, and precision. The wine expresses notes of pulpy / juicy apple, tangy / juicy peach and more slightly lemon associated with touches of fresh / tangy kumquat, fresh starfruit, juicy / fresh quenette as well as fresh minerality, with discreet hints of gravel salinity and zest. Good length. Chewy at the finish.”

- Vert de Vin

Reviews *“Good purity, depth and nuance, some stony notes, charcoal, violet and ripe dark berries, and crème de cassis. Excellent combination of power and freshness, dense young fruit with plenty of fine tannin, good oak integration, layers of digest dark fruit mild spices and a very long lingering finish.”*
- AL, Tasted.com

“(49% M, 42% CS, 8% CF; 14.7% ABV). Ripe blackberry and cassis-sweet and finely oak-tinged to smell; the merest hint of raisin?; rich and concentrated, defined by a fresh to vital acidity and firmly but finely dry in tannin; refined core fruit, long and close-grained and gently mouthcoating, the “gravel” element is hardly apparent any more, and the firm 2020 tannins are a bit hardened and dried by the nearly 15% alcohol; its overall balance and “frame” apart, this remains refined and subtle, long in the mouth, with excellent fragrant fruit length. I would no longer recognize it as LMHB blind. Which is not to say that it is not good wine, just that it now tastes rather more of its climate than its soil. Will that change with bottle age? Who knows. It is said that always “terroir will out”—let’s hope so! The alcohol just gives a slightly hard dryness to the overall texture, and the ripeness masks the “cooler” (soil-based?) aspect of terroir. All that said, this remains a classy wine ... but vitiated in some sense? Subtle, complex, racy, complete. But no longer Pessac-gravelly! 2032–52+.”
- MS, The World of Fine Wine
