

## Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2014

CSPC# 749828

750mlx12

13.0 % alc./vol.

<b>Grape Variety</b>	90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris
<b>Appellation</b>	Pessac-Léognan
<b>Classification</b>	Grand Vin de Graves
<b>Website</b>	www.smith-haut-lafitte.com

### General Info

Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte has been transformed during the last decade from being a perennial underachiever to being one of the leading estates in the Graves region. For many years, it was owned by the Bordeaux négociant Eschenauer - in 1990 it was bought by former Olympic skiing champion, Daniel Cathiard. He cut down on the amount of chemicals and herbicides used in the vineyards, and fully modernised the winemaking facilities. The proportion of new oak barrels used in the maturation process was increased and a trio of eminent oenologists (including the ubiquitous Michel Rolland) were hired as consultants.

### Vintage

2014 was marked by an extraordinary Indian summer that saved the vintage. Fine spring weather was conducive to a good start to the growing season. However, challenging summer conditions seriously slowed down ripening. Fortunately, the month of September was absolutely beautiful, with dry, extremely sunny weather accompanied by highs of close to 30°C. This superb weather, with cool night-time temperatures, enabled the grapes to ripen beautifully, and they were able to be brought into the vat house having reached a perfect level of ripeness.

### Vineyards

11 hectares being planted to white, specifically 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. The average vine age is 38 years, on the usual 101.14 and 3309 rootstocks, and planting density is between 7500 and 10000 vines per hectare. The soils are typical of the region, mainly Gunzian gravel. The Cathiards have invested millions in the estate's vineyard, applying organic winemaking across the 78 hectares (67 planted to red, 11 to white). Technical director Fabien Teitgen's buzzword is "bio-precision," an approach that combines low-intervention, almost entirely biodynamic viticulture with satellite technology that reveals how the grapes have ripened.

### Harvest

Harvest started late on the 18th of September with the first in-field sorting on some plots of young Sauvignon blanc vines. The heart of the harvest for the Sauvignons blancs started on the 23rd of September to finish on the 30th with the old vines plots with beautiful maturity and complexity. We picked the Semillons on the 30th of September and 1st of October. The rain coming back during the last days of September made us sort more thoroughly the last plots picked.

### Maturation

Fermentation in barrel: 50% new barrels from our integrated cooperage, and 50% barrels used for one previous vintage. Ageing in barrel with regular bâtonnage (lees stirring) for 12 months.

### Serve with

Asian style salads, Asian-style pork tenderloin with noodles & lime peanut dressing; BBQ lobster; Avocado & papaya salad.

### Production

2500 cases made

### Cellaring

Drink 2018-2028

**94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2017

**94-97 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2015

**90-92 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #218 - April 29, 2015

**96 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - February 2017

**95-96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2015

**97 points / Cellar Selection** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2017

**96-98 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2015

**18.5+ points** - Richard Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2015

**91 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - October 2016

**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 2017



**Scores/Awards** **94 points** - Jeff Leve, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com) - April 2015  
**94-96 points** - Jeremy Williams, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com) - April 2015  
**95 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - [timatkin.com](http://timatkin.com) - April 2015  
**16.5 points** - Farr Vintner - March 2015  
**89-93 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2015  
**94 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com) - March 2015  
**94 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2017  
**93-96 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2015  
**17 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)  
**17 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)  
**16.5 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)

**Reviews** *"This is long and almost lush in feel, with creamed peach and yellow apple fruit taking the lead, but there's plenty of verbena, honeysuckle and star fruit notes imparting lift and cut. A long finish of quinine and Mirabelle plum imparts length. A beauty. Drink now through 2023. 2,500 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"This crackles with energy, while a mix of white peach, yellow apple, Chartreuse, chamomile and green plum notes all mix together. The finish is still coiled up, but there's range and length here to spare. Score range: 94-97"*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"The Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2014 is a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc and 5% each of Sémillon and Sauvignon Gris matured in 50% new oak. Curiously, it seems less expressive than the Le Petit Haut Lafitte and Les Haut de Smith at the moment. This is very taciturn in comparison but leaving it aside for 10-15 minutes it finally reveals chalk and oyster shell scents. The palate is fresh on the entry with crisp acidity and sharp citric fruit, but it feels quite linear on the finish, does not really deliver the knock-out punch that other vintages deliver. Hopefully it will muster something more to say throughout the remainder of its barrel maturation."*  
- NM, Wine Advocate

*"Clear and vivid with sliced lemons and green apples on the nose. Flows through to a medium to full body, tangy acidity and a long and delicious finish. Give this super white at least two or three years to come together in the bottle."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"This is a phenomenal young white with wonderful depth and finesse. Amazing aromas and flavors of lavender, lemon peels, sliced apples, lilacs and minerals. Full body, intense fruit and a long, long finish. Superb depth and intensity."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Dense and beautifully ripe, this is a rounded rich wine. It focuses on the tropical yellow-fruit spectrum. That gives a full wine with wood-spice hints and just the right amount of citrus acidity to give it a lift. Drink this finely structured wine from 2023."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"95–97. Barrel Sample. This is a finely fruity wine—all tangy acidity, crisp lemon and stone fruit. The wood aging shows in the notes of toast and burnt spice. It should all integrate well as it develops into a seriously age worthy wine."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"Creamy, rich but restrained nose with a strong citrus fruit at the core. Glossy, smooth texture. Bites back on the finish with a bitter juniper note. Nicely done. (RH)"*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*"Château Smith Haut Lafitte has done the same thing as Château Léoville Las Cases by introducing its Le Petit Haut Lafitte to be the 'true' second wine, with Les Hauts de Smith essentially a completely different label. Easily one of my favourites in Bordeaux, particularly the white version, which is made entirely from Sauvignon Blanc and is instantly recognisable from its exuberant nose. Shows bright citrus, slate minerality and exotic fruits. Full of enjoyment."*  
- JA, Decanter.com

**Reviews** *“This increasingly impressive château, which now ranks alongside Bordeaux's very best, makes equally delicious reds and whites. This Sauvignon dominated blend is pale and restrained, with delicate oak, tangy, pithy acidity and undertones of stone fruit and vanilla spice. The finish is long and noble.”*

- TA, [timatkin.com](http://timatkin.com)

*“Honeysuckle, lemon peel, vanilla and just squeezed grapefruit notes are all over the place in this concentrated, luscious, remarkable combination of sweetness and acidity. There is length, character and persistence here.”*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*“The wine pops with sweet citrus, honeysuckle and vanilla notes. Ripe, zesty with fresh citrus and a lingering touch of honey and vanilla bean in the finish make a nice impression. From a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon and 5% Sauvignon Gris, the wine reached 13.7% alcohol with a pH of 3.2. 94 Pts”*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*“2014 Pale straw/silver; full and gorgeous aromatics – white flowers; some melon; white peach; very seductive; taut at the same time; palate has more grapefruit and zesty tones; some lanolin and wax; real breadth to the palate; great texture and acid on the finish. Balanced. Length and texture. They say here that the 2014 whites have the body of 2010 with the acidity of 2008. Fascinating combination. Smith Haut Lafitte white once again almost up with La Mission Haut-Brion Blanc and Haut-Brion Blanc for me. [90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 50% new oak]. Drink 2018-2028. Tasted UGCB 1 April 2015. 94-96+”*

- JW, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com)

*“11 hectares at Smith Haut Lafitte are planted with white varieties - 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. Pale lemon colour. Tropical pineapple and melon on the nose with a hint of smoky, toasty oak. The palate is smooth, rich and exotic with pineapple and mango. Very creamy, with sweet vanilla and wood smoke from new oak. A hint of gun smoke on the spicy finish from this plush, sumptuous crowd-pleaser.”*

- Farr Vintners

*“Floral and fragrant lemon flowers the nose has lots of charm. The start of the palate is fresh with lime and apple, but it fills out towards the back with a hint of apricot some pineapple. The citrus mix is there on the finish crisp and bright. 2017-26”*

*“This is a great vintage for Smith Haut Lafitte white with focused flavors that are intense and quite concentrated on the palate. Flavors are intense, long on the finish with fresh acidity - all essential elements for long-term aging.”*

- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

*“The 2014 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc is nearly seamless, with striking textural depth and terrific overall balance. The typical Sauvignon aromatics are a bit buried by the intensity of the fruit. In 2014, the Blanc is a wine of richness and texture. Lemon confit, white flowers, chamomile and orchard fruit meld into the creamy, sensual finish. The blend is 90 % Sauvignon Blanc, 5 % Sémillon and 5 % Sauvignon Gris. Tasted two times.”*

- AG, *Vinous*

*“A real head-turner, the 2014 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc is all about texture, silkiness and polish. All the elements come together in a gracious, supple wine that captures the personality of the year in its interplay of seamless, richly layered fruit and explosive energy. Hints of pear, white stone fruits, jasmine and mint meld into a finish of incomparable finesse.”*

- AG, *Vinous*