

## Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2018

CSPC# 849003

750mlx12

14.5 % alc./vol.

CSPC# 869826

750mlx3

14.5 % alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Sémillon

### Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

### Classification

Grand Vin de Graves

### Website

[www.smith-haut-lafitte.com](http://www.smith-haut-lafitte.com)

### Sustainability

Organic

### 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.

### Winemaker

Fabien Teitgen

### Vintage

"2018 was quite a difficult year because of the wetness, wetness, wetness," Smith Haut Lafitte's winemaker Fabien Teitgen sighed. "We are organic growers, so we lost a bit to mildew. May to mid-June, it was very depressing. But the abrupt change in the weather was amazing. The very dry, sunny conditions gave fantastic evolution of the grapes. The berries were very fresh and fruity with thick skins." "We are very focused on the sorting," Teitgen continued. "We pick by hand, do an initial sorting using a vibrating table and then finish the sorting by hand. There was more work to be done on sorting the Merlot. We used no stems this year. We had enough tannin in the skins this year, so we didn't use the stems. Then, we had to take great care with the extraction. We just focused on extracting the round tannins, none of the harsh tannins. We had to stop fermentation as soon as we detected any bitterness." Average yields for the vintage were 21 hectoliters per hectare for the reds and 28 hectoliters per hectare for the whites. Tiny quantities, but the wines—and the grand vin in particular—are simply stunning.

### Vineyards

11 hectares being planted to white, specifically 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. The average vine age is 38years, 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

Harvested 24 August to 17 September, by far the longest ever at SHL. Technical director Fabien Teitgen said he started picking early because he was worried about losing acidity, but found it was actually much better than expected. 28hl/ha yield.

### Vinification/

### 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.

### Tasting Notes

Complex, multi-faceted bouquet with aromas of passion fruit, mint and anise. With a little air, notes of Mirabelle plums and apricots appear. Delicious character on the palate. The wine has fat, a suave touch and race. Beautiful aromatic expression, and good tension. A successful, balanced wine, surprising by its breed and which will last over time. Salty and fresh character on the finish with a noble bitterness which ideally supports the fruity expression.



<b>Serve with</b>	Asian style salads, Asian-style pork tenderloin with noodles & lime peanut dressing; BBQ lobster; Avocado & papaya salad.
<b>Production</b>	2,083 cases made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2022-2030
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>96 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021</p> <p><b>97-98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>97 points/Cellar Selection</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2021</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019</p> <p><b>16.5++ points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - May 2019</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2020</p> <p><b>17+ points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - March 2019</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019</p> <p><b>16.5+ points</b> - Farr Vintner - April 2019</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021</p> <p><b>91-94 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019</p> <p><b>18.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2019</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2019</p> <p><b>18-18.5 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - April 2019</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This has a broad mix of lemon peel, gooseberry, tarragon and star fruit flavors that are holding back a bit for now, while wet straw, macadamia nut and shortbread accents emerge through the finish. Quite rich in feel throughout but has the underlying zip and cut for balance. Seriously long too. Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Sauvignon Gris. Best from 2022 through 2030. 2,083 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Already very full in feel, with alluring tangerine, verbena, orange blossom, bitter almond and brioche notes. Long and lush, this is coming together in a hurry and is set to be one of the showier wines of the vintage. Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Sauvignon Gris. 2,083 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The Smith Haut Lafitte 2018 Blanc is a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon and 5% Sauvignon Gris, aged in 50% new oak barriques. The nose hits the ground running with vibrant notions of fresh grapefruit, yuzu zest and lemon tart, plus touches of lime leaves, sea spray, green mango, and wet pebbles. The medium to full-bodied palate quivers with energetic citrus and mineral-inspired flavors, charged with fantastic tension and delivering a gorgeous silkiness to the texture, finishing long and steely. A bedazzling Pessac-Leognan that cannot fail to impress, it should show best after a couple of years of cellaring and then drink for a good 15+ years. 2023 – 2038."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The Smith Haut Lafitte 2018 Blanc is composed of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon and 5% Sauvignon Gris, aging in 50% new oak barriques. It features intense scents of lime leaves, pink grapefruit, white peaches, and green mango with hints of yuzu, lemon meringue pie, crushed rocks and coriander seed. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is laden with energetic citrus and stone fruit layers, with a satiny texture and bold freshness, finishing long and mineral laced."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

**Reviews** *“Dried apple, apricot, grapefruit zest, flint and a hint of hay on the nose. It’s full-bodied with crisp acidity and tight, concentrated layers of fresh and dried fruit. Incredible depth and focus. Even better from 2022.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This is very dense and deep with glorious fruit and a creamy textured, very long finish. A superb young white. Energetic yet textured. Lots of sliced-lemon, lime, and apple character with some cream. Top.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Powerful and rich, this dense wine offers intense fruits and a texture that promises considerable aging potential. White fruit flavours come through strongly, combining with spice, structure, and concentration. The wine will age for many years. \*Cellar Selection\*.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“This well-rounded wine offers flavors of ripe yellow fruit, apple and pear, with bright acidity to balance. The texture, concentration and intensity linger on the finish. The wine will age well.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Green notes and much simpler than the 2017. There may be more here for the long term but for the moment it’s all speculative and the wine seems a tad sweeter than ideal.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris. Organic. 12 months, 50% new oak. Complex but quite introvert on the nose, just a little spicy and oily. Somehow very self-contained. Plenty of spice but doesn’t smell overly oaky. On the palate, the oak is much more obvious, but it is really lovely oak: spice, oatmeal and the creamy texture of lees. And the fruit is zippy citrus, lemon, grapefruit and veering towards clementine. Excellent balance and length. Stands out from the crowd. (JH)”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

*“Lots of oak creaminess on the nose, sweetly spiced. The oak is a little dominant on the palate at the moment, yet it gives richness and depth. At this early stage there is a sweet/sour element that needs time to calm down or mesh. The lemon and grapefruit flavours are almost too intense so that the finish is just a little uncomfortable, almost spicy in its piquancy. Mouth-watering finish. Needs a lot of time.”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

*“You can feel a touch more ripeness here than in some years, but they have beautifully captured flavours of fleshy yellow pears, freshly cut herbs and some slate and saline minerality. This should manage a long life and I am surprised here, as with a few whites this year, by the grip and sense of fun in the wine. It’s not quite the 2017 again but has its own claim for attention. 50% new oak. Harvested 24 August to 17 September, by far the longest ever at SHL. Technical director Fabien Teitgen said he started picking early because he was worried about losing acidity, but found it was actually much better than expected. 28hl/ha yield. Drinking Window 2022 – 2036.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com

*“Flowers, white peach, yellow citrus, pears, green apples and even a touch of vanilla tinged cantaloupe are found in the aromatic complexities. Balanced on the precipice of opulent and fresh, the wealth of fruit is sweet, ripe, long, creamy and a pleasure to allow to linger on your palate.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“White peach, flowers, honeysuckle, lemons, pomelo and Granny Smith apples with just a touch of honey are on the nose and palate. The finish adds pears, vanilla, and almond with traces of vanilla bean to round things out. The wine was produced from a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

## Reviews

*“Tropical and juicy on the nose with pineapple, apricot and baked vanilla. The palate is glossy, rich, and opulent, with the ripe fruit and sweet spices of oak giving a supple and plush mouthfeel. The acidity refreshes the palate on the finish, taming the more exuberant elements of the wine, leaving a smoky but harmonious impression.”*

- Farr Vintners

*“The 2018 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc has clearly opened up in the 12 months since it was bottled. It has a really gorgeous bouquet of honeysuckle, orange blossom, nectarine and white chocolate aromas, the oak playing a supporting role. The focused palate delivers well-judged acidity, good depth, and flavors of tinned pineapple, clementine, and touches of peach, maybe less malic than it showed out of barrel. It sports very good length, although it will clearly benefit from a couple of years in bottle.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2018 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc was taken directly from tank. According to winemaker Fabien Teitgen it will be bottled in December 2019, a sufficient time to obtain the definition he seeks. It has a tightly wound bouquet that feels very closed at the moment, touches of pressed white flowers intermingling with granite and green apple scents. The palate is very well balanced with fine definition. This feels saline in the mouth with quite penetrating acidity (pH 3.15), a white Pessac-Léognan that gets the saliva flowing, with a pretty green apple and dried apricot finish. Very promising. 2022 – 2040.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2018 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc is airy, gracious and impeccably balanced. Lemon peel, white orchard fruit, jasmine, mint, and white pepper give the 2018 lovely freshness and brightness. There is plenty of 2018 richness lurking beneath. The blanc is going to need a few years in the bottle to fully blossom. Time in the glass brings out lovely freshness along with an upper register of citrus and floral notes that is immensely appealing.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The 2018 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc is gorgeous. One of the more pure, crystalline wines of the year, the Blanc is airy, lifted and very pretty. Time in the glass brings out attractive textural richness and creaminess in the lemon peel, floral and mint notes, with light tropical overtones that develop on the finish. In 2018, the Blanc is a wine of real brilliance and class. Tasted two times.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The Grand Vin 2018 Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc ratchets everything up a notch, offering a vividly fresh bouquet of crushed citrus, salty minerality, caramelized grapefruit, acacia flowers, and toast. It's rich, medium to full-bodied, and racy on the palate, with bright acidity, yet it still brings beautiful concentration of fruit as well as length on the finish. This is a brilliant white in every way. Give bottles another year or three and enjoy over the following 10-15. I suspect it will evolve well beyond that as well.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“The grand vin is the 2018 Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc, which is mostly Sauvignon Blanc with 5% each of Sémillon and Sauvignon Gris, that's being brought up in 50% new French oak. Deeper, richer, yet still racy and vibrant, it has gorgeous notes of tart pineapple, crushed citrus, salty minerality, and white flowers. Rich, concentrated, medium to full-bodied, it's unquestionably one of the whites of the vintage.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“(90 Sauvignon Blanc, 5 Sauvignon Gris, 5 Semillon) | 50% new oak Taken from mostly older vines (60+ years), this brings much more intensity and depth to the whole. The breadth of flavour here is staggering and the acid is crystalline and electric. There is some power here and some weight, too, and yet it still manages to give the illusion of being light on its feet. This will age for a very long time, given the quality of the acidity and the completeness of the oak integration.”*

- MJ, matthewjukes.com

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