

Château Smith Haut Lafitte Rouge 2010

CSPC# 749551

750mlx12

13.7% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
Appellation	Pessac-Léognan
Classification	Grand Cru Classé De Graves
Website	https://www.smith-haut-lafitte.com/en/
General Info	<p>Château Smith-Haut-Lafite 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.</p> <p>In July 2011, Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte purchased a majority of the vineyard property belonging to the neighboring estate, Chateau Le Thil. Out of the 42.5 acres of vines, 28.7 acres, the chateau and 20 acres of parkland went to Smith Haut Lafitte. Much of that land is located next to Smith Haut Lafitte and was actually part of the original estate that was owned by Lodi Duffour Dubergier. In essence, this reunited the original vineyards. Le Thil belonged to his nephew, from whom the de Laitre family is descended. The remaining vineyard land was sold to Les Carmes Haut Brion.</p>
Vintage	<p>The 2010 vintage will be remembered for: a sum of summer temperatures similar to 2009 (962°C as compared to 982°C), but much cooler than in 2005 (1052°C); Rainfall was low from March to August 2010 (267mm), a dryness comparable to 2005 (227mm). This was ideal for full ripening, while retaining the acidity typical of great Bordeaux vintages. The dry weather brought about an early stop to vine growth, and thus paved the way for a long, slow ripening period. The tannin had all the time it needed for total maturity. Red stems and brown crunchy seeds were sure signs of great phenolic maturity! Thanks to satellite photos of our vineyards we were able to produce a new detailed map of the estate and were thus even more efficient in picking at the opportune moment, and therefore fine-tuning winemaking.</p>
Vineyards	<p>The 55 hectares of vineyards are located on a gravel ridge to the east of Château Haut-Bailly. The red wine is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (55%), Merlot (35%) and Cabernet Franc (10%). Average vine age is 38 years</p>
Harvest	<p>The harvest began on 29 September in plots of young Merlot vines and finished on 22 October with Cabernet Franc</p>
Vinification/ Maturation	<p>The bunches were fermented whole in small oak vats at 28°C and extracted with manual <i>pigeage</i> (punching down the cap). Aged in barrel on the lees for 18 months (65% of the new barrels were made at the estate's own cooperage), and only racked once. Duration of ageing adjusted to each wine.</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>2010 Smith Haut Lafitte rouge is a deep, concentrated, nearly black colour. The bouquet displays a range of red and black fruit aromas, as well as ones reminiscent of spice and warm herbs. With aeration, the wine reveals magnificent black fruit, liquorice, clove, and graphite nuances... The wine starts out firm and straightforward on the palate. It is huge, but in no way austere. Its power comes through in a full-bodied flavour profile with a long aftertaste. The tannin is rich and silky, and the texture is well-defined thanks to ripe tannin and a careful control during extraction. The wine has an extremely well-focused structure and taste. The long aftertaste of liquorice, red fruit, and black fruit also features more subtle underlying flavours of hot stones and warm earth.</p> <p>This 2010 Smith Haut Lafitte rouge is undoubtedly one of the finest wines the estate has ever made.</p>
Cellaring	<p>Drink 2018-2058</p>



Scores/Awards **96 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2013
93-96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2011
98+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #205 - February 2013
95-97 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011
93-95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2011
95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2013
95-96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2011
92-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 25, 2011
88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2011
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2011
18.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - November 2012
16.5-17.5+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - April 2011
18 points/5 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2011
92++ points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2011
98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 15, 2013
95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 21, 2011
96-98+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2011
94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2011 (no review)
95 points - Jean Marc Quarin - April 2011 (no review)
90-94 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2011
16.5+ points - Farr Vintner - April 2011

Reviews *"Gorgeous, with alluring black tea and warm ganache notes that unfurl slowly, while the core of intense steeped plum, anise, blackberry compote and black currant confiture sits patiently in reserve. The beautiful loam-, tobacco- and tar-filled finish displays major heft, but also remarkable polish and grace. Should age very slowly. Best from 2018 through 2035."*
 - JM, Wine Spectator

"Really ripe, but with great focus, as linzer torte, blackberry, plum sauce and anise notes are woven tightly together, all carried by tar and graphite, with a long, seamless finish. Score range: 93-96."
 - JM, Wine Spectator

"This is an extraordinary performance once again from the Cathiard family, the proprietors of Smith-Haut-Lafitte. They think the 2010 is even better than the 2009. (I disagree, but only slightly.) This wine has laser-like definition in its a remarkable nose of a subtle charcoal fire interwoven with spring flowers, creme de cassis, blueberry liqueur and spicy wood. Full-bodied, stunningly concentrated, long, rich and moderately tannic, this wine is set for an exceptionally long life of 30-40 years but can be drunk in 5-7."
 - RP, Wine Advocate

"A qualitative home run, right up there with the profound 2005 and more opulent 2009, Smith-Haut-Lafitte has turned in a remarkable performance in this vintage, but then again, so have many other chateaux. A blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc, the wine has an inky/purple color and an extraordinary nose of graphite, blackberries, cassis, licorice, smoke, and camphor. The unbelievable skyscraper-like texture, stunning purity, and formidable intensity make for a remarkably rich, long, full-bodied wine that is classic Graves, but at the same time a staggering 2010. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2035+."
 - RP, Wine Advocate

"With a pH of 3.62, the Grand Vin is a blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, the bouquet is very intense and focused, stricter than the 2009 last year with blackberry, a touch of cassis and a hint of boysenberry. Fine delineation, the mineralite beginning to emerge after one minute in the glass. One is immediately struck by the almost citrus-like freshness on the entry, tight at first but then fanning out beautifully across the mouth towards the wonderfully structured finish that has more tension than it knows what to do with. Very persistent, very long. Tasted twice with consistent notes. Tasted April 2011."
 - NM, Wine Journal

"Aromas of blueberries, blackberries and plums follow through to a full body, with velvety tannins and a fruity finish. Lots of mushroom and fruit undertones. Very polished. Such finesse yet structure to this young wine."
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

Reviews *"Wonderful aromas of currants, berries and minerals. Very Stony. Full bodied, with an intense and dense palate structure. Loads of blackberries, sweet tobacco and hot stones. Long finish. We will see if it's better than the 2009 or not"*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"92-94 Spice, smoky fruit, with great acidity, a wine that offers richness, structure, powerful tannins and already some delicious blackberry fruits."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"(a blend of 64% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot, 5% cabernet franc and 1% petit verdot) Dark ruby-red with purple highlights. Slightly reduced, musky aromas of red berries, fresh herbs and lavender come across as rather cool. Then delicately smoky and fresh on the palate but the black fruit, mineral and underbrush flavors are still youthfully tight and stony. The long finish features mounting tannins and a lingering cassis note. This wine is still a bit folded in on itself and may yet blossom in the coming months, but at present it seems to be a little less concentrated than some recent vintages of Smith Haut Lafitte and perhaps a bit too tannic for its own good. Tasted four times, with some sample variability that made it harder to judge the wine."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Ch Smith Haut Lafitte 2010 Pessac-Léognan is savoury and appealing on the nose. Very fresh – admirably fresh. Very Graves and fragrant with firm minerality and very dry finish. Nothing overdone. Nicely balanced for the long term."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Some very fine, ripe and very purely defined and polished fruit on the nose here. There is a touch of tobacco to it, but most of all it is sweet and ripe. A very impressive combination of texture, concentration and harmonious elegance on the palate, all very nicely integrated, and remaining fresh despite all the substance. It possesses correct tannins, and bright acidity. A very complete and well-finished wine. From my Bordeaux 2010 assessment at two years. 18.5/20 (November 2012)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Cabernet Sauvignon 64%, Merlot 30%, Cabernet Franc 5%, Petit Verdot 1%. A really rich, glossy, creamy crimson hue here. A beautiful dark fruit nose, a very creamed character, slightly confit in terms of sweet intensity but not suggestive of jamminess. Creamy berry fruit on the palate, with a supple texture at first, prominent midpalate tannins providing a mass of structure, and also very good acidity. A smoky, dark, charcoally intensity to it. But pretty too, with hints of perfumed crimson fruit. A long, tannic finish. From my Bordeaux 2010 primeurs assessment. 16.5-17.5/20 (April 2011)"

- CK, The Wine Doctor

"Rich tobacco leaf cassis fruit, superb balance of natural vineyard concentration and elegance, already showing fragrance and charm, a notable success for château Smith-Haut-Lafitte."

- SS, Decanter.com

"Continuing a run of good vintages for this estate, this has a rich plum nose, and a fresh attack. There are evident chalky tannins, and clear fruit extraction (again, an organic programme that is paying off), but not integrated yet, and the heat is upsetting the balance in mid-palate. Still, it rights itself by the end, and I imagine this is just a little early to be tasting the wine. 92++/100. Drink 2018-2035."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

Reviews

“What a nose! Smoky blackberries, exotic spices, blueberries, licorice, jam, tobacco, olive tapenade and forest scents are impossible to avoid. The wine is incredibly concentrated, balanced, polished, sensuous and sexy. This blend of 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot should age and improve for decades.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Smith Haut Lafitte 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc and a dollop of Petit Verdot formed the assemblage. Deeply colored and filled with smoke, cassis, jam and licorice coated dark berry aromas, this rich, juicy, concentrated wine ends with a long opulent, fat, sweet, jammy black fruit and vanilla finish. 94-95 Pts”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Deep and dense, saturated; menthol, concentrated blackcurrants and cassis; some perfume too, less adorned with oak than Pape Clement and better for it; very ripe palate, big and plush; sweet and ripe but incredible purity. Lots and lots of flavour. This is truly great wine. Resonance and purity. Easily one of the best reds of the appellation. 96-98+/100 [65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot 13.7 alc] Tasted 6 April 2011 UGC.”

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

“There is a good deal happening on the nose all very black fruited. Blackcurrant tends to dominate but behind it is some rich black cherry and fresher bilberry. The tannins give structure, but they feel ripe allowing the fruit to show and fill out the back palate.”

- Derek Smedley MW

“Daniel and Florence Cathiard transformed this property in the early 1990s and have been making decadent, modern, sexy wines here since then which combine flavours of classic earthy Graves with silky and seductive new oak from barrels produced by their in-house cooper. This is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot with the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. 50% Tronçais new oak. Very forward, very silky, fleshy and smooth. This is so open knit, polished to a brilliant shine. Absolutely gorgeous and classy with a fine balance. It is intense but not at all heavy. Deliciously decadent and will be hard to resist in its youth - but will age well.”

- Farr Vintners
