

Château Cheval Blanc 2014

CSPC# 790546

750mlx6

13.25% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

55% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Premier Grand Cru Classé A

Website

<http://www.chateau-cheval-blanc.com/#/en-WW/home>

General Info

Cheval Blanc (like its neighbour and parent, Figeac) stands out in St Emilion for two reasons: first, it is geographically removed from the principal concentration of great names that cluster around the town itself, neighbouring the vines of L'Évangile to the west, and in fact it shares more with the gravelly topography and terroir of the Pomerol plateau than that of St Emilion. Secondly, the vineyard is made up in large part of Cabernet Franc, compared to the predominantly Merlot plantings of the rest of this appellation. The property began life as a scion of the great Figeac estate, whose origins are among the oldest in Bordeaux. In more recent times, the property belonged to the Hebrard family but was sold in 1998, for want of an agreement between shareholders, to the LVMH fashion house. Pierre Lurton manages the estate, and it is his job also to run Ch d'Yquem in Sauternes. Classified as one of only two 1er Grand Cru Classe "A" (the other being Ausone), Cheval Blanc has produced many legendary vintages and a vertical tasting through the 20th century will prove how well these wines age: even the lighter vintages can maintain their balance for 50 years or more. As any wine lover will know, this property is also responsible for producing what many believe to be the most remarkable wine of the modern era, Cheval Blanc 1947. Though it was bottled in various places and can be volatile, the '47 is port-like in its richness and remains vibrant, youthful and thrilling, 60 years after vintage.

Vintage

The late winter was warm and wet. April and May were cool, with average rainfall. Dry weather from 25th May to 21st June ensured satisfactory flowering. Thunderstorms on 22nd and 27th June ended the water deficit that was just beginning to set in. July was very rainy, with near-normal temperatures. August was cool and wet. The situation changed toward the end of the month and September was hot and sunny. The weather was generally hot and dry, with only three wet days on 17th, 18th and 30th September. October was very mild and relatively dry. The months of September and October were among the warmest recorded in the past twenty years.

In 2014, bud-break was one day earlier than average. The first flowers were observed around 22nd May, but was spread over a long period, due to the cool temperatures at that time. Mid-flowering occurred on 2nd June for the Merlot, and 5th June for the Cabernet Franc, four days later than average. Flowering ended rapidly. Fruit-set went well on most plots. Mid-colour change occurred on 30th July for the Merlot, three days earlier than average. Mid-colour change for the Cabernet Franc occurred on 6th August.

Vineyards

The vineyards border the Pomerol appellation and the wine is marked by extraordinary balance which brings to mind, though in a different style, Château Margaux on the left bank. Cheval Blanc is also famous for the high percentage of Cabernet Franc typically used in the blend. 40 hectares planted with 58% Cabernet Franc and 42% Merlot on clay and gravel. Average age of vines is 40 years. Yields of 35-40 hl/ha. The vineyards are planted to 66% Cabernet Franc and 34% Merlot.

Harvest

Thanks to exceptionally good autumn weather, it was possible to spread the harvest over 23 days, from 19th September to 10th October, and pick each plot at peak ripeness. The latest Merlot plots were harvested eight days after picking started on the Cabernet Franc.



Vinification/ Maturation	The wine is vinified in an organ of small concrete vats, with each vineyard parcel being harvested and vinified separately. After a light, pneumatic pressing, the free-run and press wines are aged separately before blending. The wine is aged in barrel for some 18 months. Barrels used for the Grand Vin are renewed every year.
Tasting Notes	Lovely, deep ruby-red colour. The rich and elegant bouquet reflects an impressive intensity, evolving into a cedar-wood bouquet. The black- and red-berry fruits presents a harmonious blend of blackberries, blackcurrants, cherries and raspberries. It also had heady, fruity and floral overtones, reminiscent of roses. The key descriptors for the bouquet of this vintage are its aromatic brilliance and precision. The initial impression on the palate is clean and powerful – even opulent. The mid-palate is bursting with fruit and has an unctuous texture, with a richness that perfectly envelops the density and tightness of the lovely, ripe tannins. The fresh and elegant aftertaste is remarkably long.
Production	8,335 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2019-2045
Scores/Awards	<p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2017</p> <p>96-99 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2015</p> <p>94-96 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #218 - April 29, 2015</p> <p>96 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - February 2017</p> <p>95-96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2015</p> <p>96 points / Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2017</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2015</p> <p>17.5+ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2015</p> <p>18.75 (95) points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2015</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2015</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2015</p> <p>98 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2015</p> <p>18+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2015</p> <p>93-96 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2015</p> <p>95 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - March 2015</p> <p>96+ points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2017</p> <p>93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2015</p> <p>95-97 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p> <p>18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p> <p>19.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)</p> <p>18 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)</p> <p>17.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This has dreamy aromas already, with notes of Lapsang souchong tea, smoldering cigar and cold charcoal wafting up from the core of dense yet supple currant, fig and blackberry preserves. A loamy edge thumps through the finish, giving this an addictive, head-bobbing bass line. Best from 2026 through 2040. 8,335 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Reserved aromatically for now, but this has a lot at its clutch, with remarkably silky plum, currant and raspberry fruit inlaid seamlessly with alder, rooibos tea and bergamot notes. There's a fine minerality that stretches out the finish, with remarkable cut, delineation and finesse. This is gorgeous. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 96-99"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The Château Cheval Blanc 2014 is a blend of 45% Cabernet Franc and 55% Merlot, picked from 19 September until 8 October. The alcohol level is 13.25% matured in 100% new oak, which Pierre Lurton told me was prolonged due to the heterogenous soils and wanting to wait for the Cabernet Franc on clay soils to reach full maturity. It is quintessential Cheval Blanc on the nose: predominantly red fruit here rather than black, touches of incense and dried roses, a dab of liquorice underneath. The Cabernet Franc is the engine behind the aromatics. The palate is medium bodied with grainy tannin. This is not a silky-smooth Cheval Blanc – here there is a graininess to the tannin that exert a gentle grip in the mouth. It is a complex and cerebral wine with cracked black pepper on the almost ferrous finish. Like the second wine, it is linear and fresh, in some ways reminiscent of</i></p>

Reviews *the string of superb wines produced in the 1980s. This is a formidable Cheval Blanc whose evolution will be fascinating to witness"*

- NM, Wine Advocate

"Aromas of strawberries, flowers and rose petals. Medium to full body and such beautiful polish and finesse. The texture is remarkably silky. It's a wine all in elegance and harmony. Such length. Try in 2022 but already a joy to taste."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"There is a little more cabernet franc than normal. Full body with fine and silky tannins, and a deep and beautiful fruit and acid balance. Wet earth, dried flowers and dried fruits. A beautiful length. Dense and compacted. Very fine tannins."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"With its high proportion of Cabernet Franc (45%), this is a finely perfumed rich wine. It has great tannins, a smoky character that comes from the wood. The tannins are quite marked, giving a tight firm edge to the wine that otherwise has generous fruitiness. This is a complex wine, impressive, and likely to age over many years. Drink from 2028."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"96–98. Barrel Sample. This wine has great tension, with an almost mineral character. The ripe black fruits are complemented by ample acidity, with a stylish structure and enormous aging potential."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"75% production. 45% Cabernet Franc, 55% Merlot. All the terroirs of the property but especially the gravel. Bright ruby, gentle and rather muted. Very cool. No drama! Gentle and rather balletic. Some Burgundian force towards the end of the palate. Lots to chew on and rather different from the old style. A flight from drama! 13.25%. Drink 2024-2036"

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"55% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Franc. 75% of the production. A truly elegant wine with beautifully perfumed aroma and flavour. Fine texture and tannins. Long, persistent finish. Lacks the density to be great, but still very fine."

- JL, Decanter.com

"Fresh black raspberries, flowers, red licorice and cherry blossoms create the exotic perfume. On the palate, the wine is refined, soft and silky, fresh, elegant and pure. It lacks the density found in recent vintages like 2009 but instead relies on refined tannins and textures, transporting the aromas of beautiful, pure fruit all the way to the finish. From a blend of 55% Merlot and 45% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 13.25% alcohol with a pH of 3.65, representing 75% of the Grand Vin. 94-96 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"2014 Deep and healthy colour; dark at the core; fresh looking at edge; purple; deep aromatics; blackcurrants and black cherry; elegant and sophisticated; structured palate; complexity; lots of blackcurrant fruit; depth; cool fruit characters no jam; nicely proportional and very good length on the end; matter and extract here but polished and balanced. Will be excellent. [55% Merlot, 45% Cabernet Franc, 13.1% alc, 75% of harvest, 100% new oak]. Drink 2022-2032. 94-96+"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"One of the great successes of the vintage, this grand vin represented 75% of production in 2014. It's a wonderfully refined, nuanced wine that doesn't show its 100% new oak. Grassy, mineral and elegant, with notes of graphite, red berries and cinnamon, silky, supple tannins and remarkable palate length."

- TA, timatkin.com

Reviews

“Cheval Blanc is one of the great names of Bordeaux and the most famous Chateau in Saint Emilion. The 37 hectares of vines border Pomerol but the wine is different from Pomerol thanks to the high percentage of Cabernet Franc in the vineyard (52% Cabernet Franc and 48% Merlot). A stunning new winery has recently been completed. There is no doubt that this is a great vineyard with an excellent wine-making team. The problem in recent years has been one of price. Once they get that right, Cheval Blanc could be back on the shopping lists of serious Bordeaux wine lovers. 45% Cabernet Franc, 55% Merlot, and 100% new oak. Medium-deep ruby colour. Graphite and flowers with a little ripe red fruit. Scorched earth, mulberry fruit and attractive herbal notes highlighting the Cabernet Franc. A classic Cheval Blanc nose. Very smooth, silky, rich texture on the palate. Lots of tannins but they are very fine grained and super silky. Lots of elegance and freshness from a bright core of fruit that is concentrated but light of foot. Complex and classy with real precision. A long finish of blueberry, red cherries, plums, violets and sweet vanilla.”

- Farr Vintners

“Perfumed fragrant woodland violets the nose has lots of charm. There is a lovely richness on the palate the fruit sweet the tannins ripe a balance between sweetness and freshness. Ripe fruit at the back gives depth yet there is enough underling freshness to bring out the fragrances the finish has elegance and length. 2022-40”

- Derek Smedley MW

“Lifted flavors of violets, sweet spices and crunchy berries. The palate is elegant with good intensity - not a blockbuster but one that is balanced and fine with lovely precision. Cashmere-like tannins caress the palate in this vintage.”

- JCL, asianpalate.com

“A wine of exceptional finesse, the 2014 Cheval Blanc lifts from the glass with captivating aromatics and sculpted red-fleshed fruit, all with the extra kick of acidity and overall freshness that are such a signature of this vintage. The 2014 is bright, finessed and persistent. It will almost certainly put on weight in bottle. I have a feeling something special is developing here.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2014 Cheval Blanc is delicate, saline and beautifully layered throughout. Mocha, dark cherries, plums, menthol and new leather are all pushed forward in a mid-weight, gracious Cheval Blanc that impresses with its superb overall balance and pure harmony. Cabernet Franc, 45% of this year's blend, is super-expressive in the glass. Sweet rose petal, violet, mint and herbs are laced into the sensual finish. Here too, the style is resonant, generous and inviting, with beams of acidity and salinity that convey brightness”

- AG, Vinous
