

Château Cheval Blanc 2019

CSPC# 848122

750mlx3

14.4% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

58% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Premier Grand Cru Classé A

Website

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

Sustainability

Biodiversity is blooming at Cheval right now - 40 brebis goats and sheep since October 2019, alongside pigs, 200 Bresse chicken, 40 egg-laying chickens and 16 beehives. They have planted 850 fruit trees this winter among the vines, and no longer work the soils.

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'Evangile 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.

Winemaker

Cellar Master: Thierry Garnaud. Œnologists: Cornelis Van Leeuwen, Gilles Pauquet

Vintage

2019 one of the great vintages at Cheval Blanc.

The weather conditions were perfect for producing a great wine. The year was notable due to the extreme climatic conditions; risks of frost in the spring (up to 6 May); heavy rainfall during flowering in June and a heatwave during July. Thanks to exceptional conditions during the summer and late summer the grapes reached perfect maturity and harvesting therefore was stress-free.

The first three months of the year were drier than usual and quite mild in February and March. In 2019, April and June were wet months whilst May was dry and mild: +3.6°C higher than usual. July, August and September were dry with record highs recorded in July. Rain at the end of July came at exactly the right time and in the right quantities. September was dry and mild which promoted perfect maturation producing grapes of excellent quality.

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. Cheval Blanc is one of the great names of Bordeaux and the most famous Chateau in Saint Emilion. The 39 hectares of vines border Pomerol but the wine is different from Pomerol thanks to the high percentage of Cabernet Franc in the vineyard. A stunning new winery has recently been completed. There is no doubt that this is a great vineyard with an excellent wine-making team led by the talented Pierre-Olivier Clouet and overseen by Pierre Lurton. It is now planted with 49% Cabernet Franc, 45% Merlot and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2018 vintage reminds Pierre-Olivier of the 2016 and is dense and ripe but also fresh and vibrant - harking back to the great 1998 vintage.

Harvest

The harvest started on the 10th September with Merlot, which was almost all picked before the rains near the end of September. The last of the Cabernet Franc was picked on 4th October.



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| 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 | <p>In this vintage, the expressions of the 3 different terroirs of Cheval Blanc stand out perfectly. Although rich and powerful at 14.4% the early picking of the Merlot helped to preserve freshness, purity, and tension. The slower ripening of the Cabernet helped the grapes to reach ideal phenolic maturity. This is reflected in the wines which have a remarkable tannic presence. This vintage combines freshness and complexity, power and precision, balance, and density.</p> <p>Aromatic complexity dominates from the first nose and this wine expresses the elegance brought to it by optimal weather conditions. The significant proportion of Merlot brings particularly intense aromas of red and black fruit. The impressive nose is pure and precise with notes of raspberry, cherry, blackberry, and blackcurrant embalmed in balsamic and subtle sweet aromas of pastries. The generosity and complexity of the nose dominate. Clean, pure, and precise, this wine is lush and juicy reflecting perfectly the traits of the fresh fruit when it is tasted directly in the vineyard. A full, attractive attack is redolent of the Merlot of this vintage which is unctuous, round and mouth filling. The Cabernet Franc lends a lovely freshness to the mid-palate and gives the wine length on the finish. This wine is both dense and powerful whilst at the same time soft, unctuous, and round. Depth, length, and balance are the hallmarks of this vintage and form the identity of this wine.</p> |
| Serve with | Chateau Cheval Blanc is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau Cheval Blanc is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Cheval Blanc is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta. |
| Production | 10,000 cases made. |
| Cellaring | Drink 2024-2038 |
| Scores/Awards | <p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022</p> <p>100 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2022</p> <p>18 points - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - June 2020</p> <p>99 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2022</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - June 2020</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022</p> <p>100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2022</p> <p>97-99 points - Farr Vintners - May 2020</p> <p>98 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2022</p> <p>100 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2022</p> <p>99 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2022</p> <p>98 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020</p> <p>98-99 points - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2020</p> <p>98-99 points - Terres de Vins (score only) - September 2021</p> <p>19.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022</p> <p>98 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2020</p> |
| Reviews | <p><i>"This has loads of dark currant, fig and blackberry preserve notes that are supported by dense waves of loam and warm gravel, all hallmarks of the 2019 growing season. But there's an extra dimension here, thanks to its remarkably lush and fine-grained texture, with endless ripples of tobacco, bay and singled sandalwood and balsam wood through the finish. In the end, it's the combination of power, refinement and expressing an essentially unharnessable vintage that sets this red apart from the pack. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2025 through 2045. 10,000 cases made."</i></p> <p><i>- JM, Wine Spectator</i></p> <p><i>"One of the unequivocally great wines of the vintage is the 2019 Cheval Blanc, a stunning young Saint-Émilion that wafts from the glass with aromas of wild berries and plums mingled with notions of lilac, pipe tobacco, violets, raw cocoa, licorice, crushed mint and burning embers. Full-bodied, layered and enveloping, it's deep and intense, with beautifully rich, powdery tannins and vibrant flavors. Concluding with a long, saline finish, this rivals the 2016 as the finest Cheval Blanc of the decade, and in many respects, it might be thought of as the latter vintage's sun-kissed cousin. Bravo to Pierre-Olivier Clouet and his team!</i></p> <p><i>One of Bordeaux's most complex terroirs, Cheval Blanc sits on the site of an ancient river delta, with (to generalize) clay-rich soils in the lower-lying parts where rivulets once flowed and gravel and sand elsewhere. This complexity is reflected, of course, in the resulting wine, but also in how it is farmed and made, with thoughtful use of cover crops according to soil type and parcel-by-parcel vinification. A concerted effort is being made,</i></p> |

moreover, to bring life back to the vineyard, with hedges of native species to act as wildlife corridors, and fruit trees planted among the vines. The same attention to detail that's applied in the vineyards, for example with regard to developing and testing an in-house massal selection, is applied in the cellar, where cooperage trials are notable for their exigence. All of that shows in the glass. On my most recent visit, technical director Pierre-Olivier Clouet and I tasted the 2019 in the context of the last 10 vintages of Cheval Blanc, and it stood out even in such illustrious company, with—to my palate—2016 its only plausible rival for the title of Cheval Blanc of the decade. Readers with the requisite disposable income won't want to miss it.”

- WK, Wine Advocate

“Blackcurrants, cassis, graphite, and earth on the nose, then changing to roses, violets, and berries. Full-bodied with incredible energy of fine tannins and lively acidity. It grows on the palate and escalates to the summit of perfect wine. Very powerful at the end. Holding back and a great finish. Quantity and quality. Menthol. Cool. One of the greatest young Cheval Blancs I have ever tasted. 58% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. Great finish. Give it time. Try after 2028.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“58% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. 82% of production. Barrel sample. Aromatically a little more reserved than the 2018 at this stage. But ripe, intense, and flickeringly floral. Beautifully poised on the palate with a density of fruit and silky texture of finely matted tannins. Pure, seductive, and persistent, the finish long and digeste. A super Cheval Blanc but 2018 may just have the edge. Drink 2027 – 2050.”

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

“A sexy, direct, and precise Cheval with a seriously expressive nose of dark chocolate, blackcurrants, and perfumed red cherries. The palate starts off slow and delicate and builds in the mouth, gaining in character and intensity. The acidity is more marked after a few sips, mouthwatering and juicy, giving the palate real life and verve as the generous fruit flavours come into play, a lovely strawberry and raspberry vein with some mint notes all the way through giving such freshness and cooling sensations in the mouth, while soft tannins balanced by acidity give length and direction. Real weight and depth but also delicacy – concentration and restraint – lift, but such coolness. A sensational wine with pure energy. Cheval, 58% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. (GH)”

- GH, Decanter.com

“Extremely precise floral and berry aromatics build out of the glass and this sense of construction continues through the palate. On the attack you get a whoosh of powerful blueberry and blackberry, with sage, woodsmoke and crushed stone, all cut cleanly through, exposing juicy minerality and a feel of different elements layering on top of each other. 82% 1st wine in this vintage. Harvest from September 10, picking only in the mornings for two weeks (the only three plots of Merlot that were brought in after the September rains are in Petit Cheval). Biodiversity is blooming at Cheval right now - 40 brebis goats and sheep since October 2019, alongside pigs, 200 Bresse chicken, 40 egg-laying chickens and 16 beehives. They have planted 850 fruit trees this winter among the vines, and no longer work the soils. Less Cabernet Franc in the vineyard until 2022 due to replanting. Drinking Window 2027 – 2044.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“An enticing touch of cigar box straight on the first nose. The precision of this wine is striking, with a flexed, stretched out core supported by tannins that are creamy but precise, Depth, power, and elasticity, driven through with black chocolate, slate, campfire smoke, liquorice root, bilberry, and blackberry puree. There are inky depths here. 82.5% of overall production in the main estate wine this year. Bottled July 2021, 100% new oak, 82% 1st wine in this vintage, with a little less Cabernet Franc than usual due to replanting in the vineyard.”

- JA, Inside Bordeaux

“One of the few wines I did not receive a sample of to taste in barrel, it took only a moment to realize this was one of those rare, show-stopping gems that will blow your mind in the years to come. There is a unique, sensual texture here that screams opulence at every turn. The wines exotic nature is allowed to show its true character here. The non-stop layers of cashmere textured fruit is the perfect setting for all the perfectly ripe black plums,

Reviews *black cherries, blueberries, and blackberries, which are happy to display their gorgeous purity. The polished, silky finish holds your focus for over 60 seconds as it builds and expands. A worthy competitor to the incredible 2018, if you have the ability to purchase this wine, it is going to be a cellar treasure that people talk about for generations to come. Drink from 2035-2060.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The harvest started on the 10th September with Merlot, which was almost all picked before the rains near the end of September. The last of the Cabernet Franc was picked on 4th October. The resultant wine has an abv of 14.4%. The blend is 58% Merlot, with 34% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. Interestingly 2019 was the 4th driest year on record at Cheval Blanc, behind 2005, 2015 and 2010 - all wines with 100 points at this property, and brilliant vintages across Bordeaux. The 2019 is a deep ruby purple colour. Expansive and intense on the nose, full of kirsch, red cherry, violets, graphite, and sweet spices. It is impressively perfumed despite undertones of dark, ripe fruits. The palate is perfectly crafted, with velveteen, ripe tannins and fresh acidity coating the mouth to provide ample freshness and structure. At the middle, the fruit is deep, ripe, and powerful, with plums, forest fruit and violets bursting through. The oak is perfectly judged, with hints of savoury spices and cedar complementing the intense fruit. The finish is cool, savoury, and multi-dimensional. A brilliant effort in 2019 that is very true to Cheval Blanc. Tasted in Bordeaux.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2019 Cheval Blanc was picked from September 10 until October 4 at 41hL/ha. Pierre-Olivier Clouet said that it was important not to have too low a yield in order to maintain balance. This has an almost introspective nose at first, showing blackberry and touches of cassis, cedar, and tobacco, plus a hint of wild mint in the background. The palate is medium-bodied with a fresh opening, and much livelier than the nose at the moment thanks to the superb tension, the Cabernets lending density in tandem with elegance. Quintessentially Cheval Blanc, but there is little doubt in my mind that it will take longer to come around than the 2018. Have a cellar handy, because this is a mighty Cheval Blanc from Pierre Lurton and his able team. 2027 – 2054.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2019 Cheval Blanc is a stunning, riveting wine. There is simply nothing like a great Cheval in all of Bordeaux. Soaring aromatics are immediately alluring. Bright, red-toned fruit, blood orange, cinnamon, espresso, and dried herbs build in a Cheval that possesses tremendous layers and exceptional balance. Clean, mineral notes lend tension and drive. The 2019 is a bit strict today and not ready to show all its cards, but it is very clearly a special, special wine in the making. In 2019, the Grand Vin represents 82.5% of the estate's production, a very high amount by any measure. I wouldn't dream of touching a bottle anytime soon. The 2019 is an eternal Cheval Blanc. (AG)”

- AG, Vinous

“Reminding me slightly of the 1990, the 2019 Château Cheval Blanc is a brilliant, brilliant wine from this estate that's up there with the true greats. It shows the purity, finesse, and elegance of the vintage beautifully yet backs it up with density, concentration, and depth, revealing a stunning nose of red and black currants, tobacco leaf, new saddle leather, and spring flowers, with absolutely perfect ripeness. As complex and nuanced as only Cheval Blanc can be, even at this young age, it hits the palate with full-bodied richness, abundant opulence, fat, and sweetness, polished tannins, and a gorgeous finish. It's almost in a class all its own. It deserves at least 5-7 years of bottle age and will shine for 30+ years. Hats off to Pierre-Olivier Clouet, who continues to keep this estate at the top of the pyramid in Saint-Emilion.”

- Jeb Dunnuck
