

Château Cheval Blanc 2021

CSPC# 848122

750mlx3

14.4% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	52% Merlot, 43% Cabernet Franc, 5% 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. Œnologist: Cornelis Van Leeuwen, Gilles Pauquet
Vintage	Yields are down one-third on 2020. Key to the vintage was the huge amount of rain in May, which meant there was no drought stress later in summer. The road to maturity was thus uninterrupted (especially for the younger vines), and during the cooler summer, extended. The time between <i>veraison</i> (the change of colour in the grapes) and harvest is usually 40 days; in '21 it was 60-65 days.
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.
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 barrels for some 18 months. Barrels used for the Grand Vin are renewed every year.
Tasting Notes	A deep, intense, and dark red colour. On the nose, ripe red fruit, wild berries, blackberries and blackcurrant with floral violet notes, spices, and a discreet touch of oak. A savoury and powerful attack, supple and round with generous tannins. A lovely long finish with remarkable lingering freshness.



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	6,058 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2024-2038
Scores/Awards	<p>93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 2024</p> <p>97 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p>95-97 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>95-97 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p>97-98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p>95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2022</p> <p>17+ points - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - May 2022</p> <p>96 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p>96 points - Jane Anson, Inside Bordeaux - May 2022</p> <p>98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2024</p> <p>96-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p>97 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>95-97 points - Thomas Parker, Farr Vintners - April 2022</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p>96-98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>94-96+ points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p>19.5 points - Matthew Jukes - August 2022</p> <p>96 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>96 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p>96-97 points - Vert de Vin - July 2022</p> <p>96-97 points - Bettane & Desseave (score only) - May 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>“Polished and inviting in feel, offering notes of dark cherry and plum puree infused with black tea, followed by persistent echoes of warm stone, violet and bay through the lengthy finish. Lacks the density of a classic but displays a seamless feel that avoids the austerity of the vintage. Great effort. Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2040. 6,058 cases made.”</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>“The 2021 Cheval Blanc has turned out beautifully in bottle, and director Pierre-Olivier Clouet even considers it to be superior to the 2020, a preference that I share. Wafting from the glass with aromas of mulberries and cherries mingled with incense, iris and rose petals, framed by a deft touch of new oak, it's medium to full-bodied, deep, and layered, with a velvety attack that segues into a rich, concentrated mid-palate framed by sweet, powdery tannins and concluding with a long, penetrating, rose-inflected finish.</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, 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. Cabernet dominates in the 2021 blend, and the result is a serious Cheval Blanc built for the long haul.”</i></p> <p><i>“A terrific achievement, the 2021 Cheval Blanc is a blend of 52% Cabernet Franc, 33% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Unfurling in the glass with aromas of raspberries and cherries mingled with notions of cigar wrapper, vine smoke, rose petals and violets, it's full-bodied, layered, and concentrated, with an elegantly muscular chassis of ripe, powdery tannin and lively animating acids. Long and penetrating, this is a serious, rather structured young Cheval Blanc that will require and reward patience.”</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>“A blend of 52% Cabernet Franc, 43% Merlot, and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2021 Cheval Blanc is deep purple-black in color. It opens with intense notes of chocolate-covered cherries, blackberry preserves, and cassia, plus</i></p>

Reviews *suggestions of violets, star anise, chocolate box, and an exotic waft of sandalwood. Medium-bodied, the palate has a great core of black plums and cassis layers, supported by firm, grainy tannins, and seamless freshness, leading to a long and spicy finish on this beguilingly beautiful wine.”*

- LPB, Wine Independent

“This is so finely textured with very precise, tight tannins. Medium to full body. Lots of layers here with black and blue fruit, stones, tar, dark cocoa, and spices. Dried herbs. Long and persistent. Stays focused all the way. So precise.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“95–97. Barrel Sample. Nearly 60% of the blend is Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, this is an impressively structured wine. Power and density are right up front, there are fruit and spice tones along with a fine lift at the end.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“52% Cabernet Franc, 43% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Cask sample. Deep crimson hue. Fragrant and floral with a hint of mint, the same returning on the palate. Focused and precise, the fruit juicy and the plentiful tannins finely grained. Low-key but elegant and refined. Should fill out more in bottle. (JL) 13%. Drink 2030 – 2046.”

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

“Incredible aromatic complexity on the nose, just wow, the beautiful bitter dark chocolate, blackcurrant, blackberries, fragrant violets and roses, coffee, toffee, caramel, smoked earth, liquorice and tobacco, I could smell it for hours! It wows on the palate too giving succulence, freshness and juiciness balanced by integrated acidity and a backbone of spice coming from the Cabernet Franc - the highest percentage since 2011 and the first-time outweighing Merlot at 52%. Perfume continues on the palate also, the soft fragrance giving the nuance while the satin tannins coat the mouth with bite and chew. Minerality comes across via wet stone and graphite edges with liquorice and clove spice. Constituent tastings of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc show how skillfully this was created. Still quite tense and linear at this point but showcases perfectly both the vineyard and vintage - each detail and decision in the glass with no letup of power or concentration. A fantastic effort from the team and winemaker Pierre-Olivier Clouet. Drinking Window: 2027 - 2050.”

- GH, Decanter.com

“The 30th anniversary with Pierre Lurton as director, and the last official year as Premier Grand Cru Classé A following their withdrawal from the Saint Emilion ranking. Worth marking out for that fact alone, along with Ausone and Angélus, as whatever happens next there might be kudos in future years for having the last vintage where these three estates were at the top of the classification. This is easily one of the wines of the vintage, powerful, classical, and intellectual, with stretched out, taut tannins and a slow build of raspberry, redcurrant and blueberry fruits, run through with rosebud and peony aromatics.”

- JA, janeanson.com

“Poised between its regal bearing, and, sensuous, sexy side, this is a clear contender for wine of the vintage, avoiding all of the pitfalls of the vintage. This sublime gem pops from the glass effortlessly with an array of flowers, spices, red, and dark red fruits, tobacco, and mint leaves. The palate offers a majestic display of vibrant, al dente red fruits, and ripe, dark red berries, coupled with firm, cashmere, polished tannins, velvet-textured black cherries, and plums. This is showing even better in the bottle than it did in barrel! The wine blends 52% Cabernet Franc, 43% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, making this the highest percentage of Cabernet in over a decade. The willingness to delay harvesting, finishing October 14, along with low yields, at only 28 hectoliters per hectare, are part of the reason the vintage was so successful. Drink from 2029-2060.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“A gorgeous wine, especially when you consider the vintage, you start off with a nose offering complexities of tobacco leaf, violets, roses, spice-box, mint leaf, and ripe, red and black pit fruits. On the palate you find layers of sensual, pure, silky fruits, cashmere, polished tannins and a richness created by velvet textured plums and black cherries. There is a slight drop off in the weight of the fruit after the mid-palate that makes this a very, very good vintage for Cheval Blanc, but stops it from being one of the great vintages from the estate. Still, there is a lot to love about the 2021 Cheval, making this one of the contenders for wine of the vintage. The wine blends 52% Cabernet Franc, 43% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. the harvest took place September 24 - October 14, making this a very late vintage here. In fact, it is the lateness of the harvest that is the secret to the success of the vintage. Yields were low at only 28 hectoliters per hectare. Drink from 2029-2055.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2021 at Cheval Blanc brings back a historic, now replanted, plot of Cabernet Franc to its blend, so it is now 52% Cabernet Franc, with 43% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Pierre-Olivier Clouet believes this vintage represents the freshness that so many wineries and critics have been calling for in the recent warm vintages. The cooler summer has, in their eyes, retained aromatic freshness (harvest was 60 days after veraison rather than the usual 40) and the higher precipitation has given ripeness without hydric stress other than in their younger vines. Vivid purple colour in the glass. Intoxicating aromas that are synonymous with Cheval Blanc are immediate on the nose - blood orange, graphite, seductively ripe cherries, and cream, but this is deeply stony in equal measure. The palate offers graphite and tension, an effortless intensity, and a deceptively deep structure. The Cabernet Franc drives the palate forward, bringing cool hedgerow fruit, pencil shavings, dry forest floor and even hints of cocoa. A wine of precision and harmony, this is superbly refined with seamless tannins lingering in tandem with the savoury and lightly saline fruit on the finish. This is the essence of what Cheval Blanc are trying to achieve in style and is one of the wines to harness the best of the vintage and overcome much of the difficulty. Excellent.”

- TP, Farr Vintners

“The 2021 Cheval Blanc was picked between September 22 and October 14, and for the first time in many years there is a higher proportion of Cabernet Franc. This has a lovely bouquet, very clean and precise, featuring black cherry, wild mint, sous-bois and orange sorbet, all vivacious and very focused. The palate is medium bodied with fine-grained tannins, quite structured and very linear and strict. A bit like Ausone, this is an uncompromising Cheval Blanc, very saline and marine-influenced.”

- NM, Vinous

“Rich and explosive in feel, the 2021 Cheval Blanc is outrageously beautiful. For the first time since 2011, the Grand Vin is more than 50% Cabernet Franc. Black cherry, plum, chocolate, dried herbs, menthol, licorice, and mocha are all amplified in this potent, luxurious Cheval Blanc. Polished, seamless tannins wrap it all together. This is one of my favorites of the vintage.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2021 Cheval Blanc is one of the wines of the vintage. Vertical and aristocratic in bearing, Cheval is just stunning. Time in the glass brings out compelling inner sweetness and perfume to play off a core of rich dark fruit, gravel, spice, menthol, and dried flowers. I also tasted the final three blending components, none of which hints at the magnificence of the Grand Vin. Stunning. Reviewed by Antonio Galloni, Issue date: April 2022. Drinking window: 2031 - 2061.”

- AG, Vinous

“The Grand Vin 2021 Château Cheval Blanc checks in as 52% Cabernet Franc, 43% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Sauvignon, and it's a big step up over the second wine, offering serious density, depth, and richness while still holding onto the style of the vintage. Pure cassis and darker fruits, notes of scorched earth and graphite, obvious minerality, medium to full body, and gorgeous tannins all define this beauty, which is unquestionably up with the finest wines of the vintage. A wine that's never about overt power or richness, the 2021 shines on all accounts with its complexity, elegance, and incredible texture.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“All of the young Cabernet Franc vines on the property made the grade for this Grand Vin, and it certainly feels like this wine is the epitome of an exemplary team effort. Arnaud de Laforcade explained that the younger vines had smaller root systems and didn't “catch the water”. This makes perfect sense and explains why this is such an expressive and layered wine. The nose is nothing short of stunning, and this wine has reverted to the thrilling

aromatics of past great vintages of this wine. Cabernet Franc-driven, chiseled, square-jawed and with matinee idol looks, there is no preening musculature or self-conscious glossiness. 2021 Cheval Blanc is made from a thousand intertwined flavour threads, and they are combined to create a wine imbued with modesty, calm, confidence, and uncommon composure. I asked Arnaud if he could explain why I always prefer this style of wine and mark down the warmer, more imposing, and more crowd-pleasing vintages. He answered that I clearly like authentic Cheval Blanc and not just boldly structured red wine. This is another rare red wine in this vintage with hints of Immortelle (see my notes on Château Margaux and others). I explained my Immortelle theory to Arnaud. He recognised it immediately, putting it down to the aerial Atlantic influence coupled with the dune locations where this rare plant is found. I am convinced that this is one of the most impressive wines of 2021, and it is evidenced by the undeniable complexity and the unhurried yet all-pervasive way in which it delivers its sublime flavours. This is an incredible, live-giving Cheval Blanc, and it is both classic and also classical, and very few wines can tick both boxes in 2021. 19.5”

- Matthew Jukes

“Dark garnet with purple reflections at the narrow rim. Tobacco, fine herbal savouriness, dark berry fruit, ripe plums, notes of nougat and marked by fine spicy noble wood. Complex, juicy and silky, fine ripe tannins, good freshness, mineral, chocolate touch on the finish, shows lovely length and balance; certainly, has ageing potential.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“The nose is fruity, fresh, elegant and reveals finesse, distinction, and attention to detail. There are notes of fresh/blushing blackcurrant, violet and, to a lesser extent, fresh cherry, combined with hints of crisp/fresh blueberry, as well as hints of star anise, fresh bergamot, and discreet hints of fresh blond tobacco. The palate is fine and offers juiciness, acidity, a certain purity of fruit, purity, a nice linear side, elegance, crispness, and a nice freshness of fruit. On the palate this wine expresses juicy/pulpy cherry, violet and slightly brighter blackcurrant notes combined with delicate touches of bigarreau cherry as well as fine points of crisp violet plum, fresh blond tobacco, tonka bean, a subtle hint of sweet blond tobacco, and a subtle hint of serenity (in the background). The tannins are finely mellow and elegant.”

- Vert de Vin