

Château Talbot 2014

CSPC# 790552

750mlx12

12.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Saint Julien

Classification

Fourth Growth. Quatrieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855

Website

<http://chateau-talbot.com/>

General Info

4th Cru Classé in 1855. Legend relates that the name of this imposing estate originates with Connétable Talbot, a famous English warrior, defeated at the battle of Castillon in 1453. Talbot is one of the Medoc's oldest estates, its glory never tainted. Through the years, it has been fortunate enough to remain in good hands. The owners are Nancy Bignon-Cordier and her family. They are the fourth generation of Cordiers to manage this Saint-Julien fourth classified growth.

Vintage

The growing seasons were marked by a promising spring followed by a fine, fast and even flowering in early June that suggested an early harvest. The summer, however, was a big disappointment with July wet and cool, and August too cool to remedy July. 'Aout fait le mout' (August makes the must) is a common wine expression, summing up the need for sunshine, heat and hydric stress which forces the vine to concentrate the sugars in the fruit. Bordeaux had a significant deficit of sunshine and heat in August 2014, the advanced vegetative cycle caused by May and June's warmth had been cancelled out, and winemakers were getting very nervous of a repeat of the poor 2013 harvest the year before. Then came the miracle of September and October, which were the warmest, sunniest and driest seen in Bordeaux.

The late summer allowed the later ripening varieties Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot to benefit greatly from the extra 'hang-time' the weather allowed, while arriving a little too late to allow proper phenolic ripeness of the earlier ripening Merlot and Cabernet Franc. That was my impression from tasting more than 500 wines across the region.

Wherever a property's vineyards were planted with a majority of Merlot, the resulting wines often felt chalky, hard and a little hollow. Where Cabernet was, the dominant variety planted, the wines more often felt vibrant, fuller, with ripe tannins. Most red wines felt fresh in the mouth, a result of higher acids and modest alcohol levels of 13 -13.5%.

Vineyards

The vineyards of Château Talbot dominate St Julien, in terms of size at least, as they account for an impressive 107 hectares; in an appellation that amounts to little more than 900 hectares, that is a big vineyard! All the other *châteaux*, from the great second growths such as Ducru-Beaucaillou, Léoville-Las-Cases and Gruaud-Larose, down to the humble *cru bourgeois* properties (of which there are few), seem to dance around the periphery (mainly to the east, closer to the Gironde) of the Talbot estate, such is its size. The soils underfoot are, as is typical here, ancient quaternary gravels offering excellent drainage. Of the vineyard area, 102 hectares are planted to red varieties, mostly Cabernet Sauvignon (66%), followed by Merlot (26%), Cabernet Franc (5%) and Petit Verdot (3%); there are also 5 hectares of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. The vines are planted at a density of 7700 vines per hectare, mostly on 3309 rootstocks although there are also some on 101.14 and Riparia. They are Guyot trained, the norm in Bordeaux, average 42 years of age, and are harvested by hand with a final yield in the order of 45 hl/ha.

Harvest

Harvesting is performed by hand, with no fewer than 180 cutters. This step, crucial in the making of a great wine, is subject to numerous selective sortings. Initial grape selection is performed on the plant, the second when the grapes arrive at the vat house; eight to ten persons on either side of a seven-meter sorting table eliminate grapes not meeting optimal maturity standards. This precision work conserves the grapes' and the terroir's most intense expression.



Maturation	The oak used for the élevage comes for eight different coopers, with 50% new wood each year for the <i>grand vin</i> which is bottled as Château Talbot. This accounts for between 50-60% of the estate's production in a typical vintage, amounting to approximately 30000 cases per annum.
Tasting Notes	Very impressive on the attack, quite bright fruit with lovely concentration. Lots of lifted red plum and a creamy spicy weight. Oak presence does build towards the finish, but everything is in place for a longish future.
Production	26,283 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2020-2040
Scores/Awards	<p>92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2017</p> <p>90-93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2015</p> <p>90+ points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate Interim - March 31, 2017</p> <p>89-91+ points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #218 - April 29, 2015</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - February 2017</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2015</p> <p>92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2017</p> <p>92-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2015</p> <p>16+ points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2015</p> <p>16.75 (89) points - Steven Spurrier, Decanter.com - June 2015</p> <p>90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 2017</p> <p>91-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2015</p> <p>90-91+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2015</p> <p>90 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)</p> <p>93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2015</p> <p>86-89 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2015</p> <p>91 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - March 2015</p> <p>94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2017</p> <p>92-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2015</p> <p>17 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p> <p>17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)</p> <p>17 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)</p> <p>16.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This has melded together nicely already, with a core of gently steeped plum, blackberry and anise flavors intertwined with light licorice snap and roasted apple wood notes. Focused and solid, but with a charming supple edge. Best from 2020 through 2030. 26,283 cases made"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Tightly focused and ripe, with a lovely beam of blackberry, blueberry and plum fruit, lined with pastis hints and backed by brambly grip. Vivacious. Score range: 90-93"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2014 Talbot felt reticent and tightly knit on the nose, so I placed my glass to one side and allowed it to aerate for 15-20 minutes. This paid dividends as it revealed blackcurrant, smoke and tobacco aromas, hints of boysenberry with time. The palate is medium bodied with fine tannin, quite structure and perhaps needing more flow. It feels a little rigid at the moment and I would want more persistence and depth on the finish. Let's see how this ages in bottle, because it certainly showed improvement between samples in October 2016 and February 2017."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The Château Talbot 2014 has a simple bouquet that is missing the sophistication and nuance that is a consistent in Saint Julien wines this year. Aerating the glass for 5 minutes does seem to evolve more delineation. The palate is medium bodied with chalky tannin. There is a nice line of acidity here, a little hardness towards the finish but an attractive spicy aftertaste that lingers in the mouth. I can envisage this to be a more austere Saint Julien but if it gains flesh during élevage it could be an interesting proposition."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p>

- Reviews** *"The smoky oak, full body and chunky tannins make a bold statement; indeed, the wine has plenty of flesh and packs a big tannic punch on the finish. Best Talbot in years."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "This is really powerful with excellent depth of fruit and richness. Spices, blueberries and lightly toasted oak now. But it shows really serious structure. Best Talbot in years, maybe decades."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "This generous wine is on the fruity side of the 2014 spectrum. Blueberry and black-currant fruits are supported by the spice and tannins from wood aging. The wine is likely to develop easily over the medium term. Drink from 2020."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "92–94. Barrel Sample. This wine is structured with plenty of supple tannins as well as fruit notes that are both ripe and freshly juicy. The texture highlights the dusty tannins at their best."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "Dark purplish crimson. Sweet, almost bonbon nose. But a bit short of juice on the palate. Hard work and drying on the end. May come right eventually but for the moment it is much more obdurate than its neighbours. "Drink 2024-2032"*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- "Deep colour and rich fruit – good blackberry spice and quite smooth flavours. Will open up early but can last."*
- SS, Decanter.com
- "There's usually a fair bit of Talbot to go around, given its status as one of the largest vineyard holders in the commune. This is quite a backward wine, with tannins that need at least a decade to soften in bottle, supported by cigar box and blackberry fruit and a fresh, blackcurrant leaf lift."*
- TA, timatkin.com
- "Medium bodied, with bit of strictness in the tannin that leaves you with a touch of dryness in the finish, that takes away from the otherwise, complex aromatics and tasty, spicy, earthy fruits"*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "Forward in style with a nose of espresso, blackberry, dark cherry, cocoa and the woody aroma of terre-mere, this round-textured wine radiates an easy-to-like quality which is soft, fresh and clean. This is the best vintage for Talbot produced with the aid of the Stephane Derenoncourt team yet. 91-93 Pts"*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "Deep and saturated colour; opaque; tight to rim; blackcurrants and black fruits; some spices and freshness also; lacks some of the concentration of the best on the palate; but very clean and will flesh out nicely; this is impressive infant Talbot; pure and fresh. 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot. Drink 2024-2030. Tasted UGC 31 March 2015. 90-91+"*
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com
- "The nose is quite tight the start of the palate firm fresh but a bit closed. The touch of sweetness in the middle is overtaken by freshness the finish lacks richness is quite short and tending to dry. 2025-36"*
- Derek Smedley MW
- "A solid wine that is round, balanced and filled with plum, black currant and suave tannins. There is freshness and harmony in this wine. A well-made Talbot and their best vintage since 2010. Consulted by Stephane Derenoncourt."*
- JCL, asianpalate.com

Reviews *“The 2014 Talbot is soft, silky and wonderfully nuanced on the palate. Much more refined from bottle than it was from barrel, the 2014 has moved toward greater finesse over the last two years. This is a lovely effort. Lifted rose petal and lavender notes add closing nuance. The blend is 62 % Cabernet Sauvignon, 35 % Merlot and 6 % Petit Verdot. (AG)”*
- AG, Vinous

“Ample and broad on the palate, the 2014 Talbot captures the essence of the vintage with an enticing mélange of fresh blue and purplish-hued fruits. Graphite, lavender, mint and sweet spices waft from the glass as the 2014 gradually opens up. At times, Talbot is muscular and powerful, while at other moments it comes across as much more feminine. It is precisely those contrasts that make the 2014 so intriguing. Polished, silky tannins wrap around the super-inviting finish. The 2014 was vinified in cement and steel, with pump overs only. The blend is 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot, while new oak is around 50%. Tasted twice.”
- AG, Vinous
