

Château Talbot 2020

CSPC# 888293

750mlx12

13.3% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot
Appellation	Saint Julien
Classification	Fourth Growth. Quatrieme Grand Cru Classé in 1855
Website	http://chateau-talbot.com/
Sustainability	The estate has been part of the HVE (High Environmental Value) environmental approach since the 2018 vintage
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.
Winemaker	Jean-Max Drouilhet, cellar master. Jean-Michel Laporte, winemaker. Stéphane Deroncourt and Julien Lavenu consult.
Vintage	<p>The growing season was warm even before the summer. In fact, May entered the record books as the 4th warmest month in eight decades! At its peak, temperatures rose to 30 Celsius, 86 Fahrenheit, hastening the pace of the vintage. Flowering took place 10 days faster than usual, making 2020 Bordeaux an early vintage.</p> <p>Temperatures cooled down in early June, which was a good thing, as that decelerated the growth rate. June started out with cool and rainy weather. The remainder of the summer was hot, sunny, and extremely dry. In fact, almost 30 days saw temperatures of 30 Celsius, (86 Fahrenheit) and at least 6 days endured temperatures of 35 Celsius, (95 Fahrenheit.)</p> <p>July was marked by drought conditions, which continued through to August. Here is where the differences in terroir came into place. Water retentive clay and limestone soils were able to nourish the vines. Vineyards with dry, warm gravelly soils suffered from vines that stopped their growth cycle. Young vines as you would expect suffered the most.</p> <p>By the end of September, things were looking up. September started hot, sunny and dry. But because the nights were cool, the grapes were able to maintain acidity. These good conditions lasted until September 20, when the weather cooled down. It was as if fall weather conditions started to kick in with temperatures in the daytime dropping to almost 12 Celsius, (54 Fahrenheit!) in the northern Medoc. The unseasonably cool temperatures continued through the harvest period. Picking began for young Merlot vines in the early part of September, which is quite early. For the most part, Cabernet Sauvignon was picked after the Merlot. But that was not always the case. Many Left Bank vineyards were picking Cabernet while Merlot was still being harvested starting in early to mid-September. For some vigneron, 2020 turned out to be the earliest vintage since 1989.</p> <p>Even though 2020 St. Julien was an early harvest, because the vintage got off to an early start, the grapes were able to remain on the vine with an extended hang-time, which Jean-Michel Laporte Chateau-Talbot credits as playing a role in the success of the vintage.</p> <p><i>"The main point in 2020 for me is the length of the physiological cycle of the vines. Flowering was 2 weeks early, but we finally harvested with an average of 5-6 days of advance only. That permitted us to get a wonderful maturity, especially for the Cabernet Sauvignon."</i></p>
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 <i>châteaux</i> , from the great second growths such as Ducru-Beaucaillou, Léoville-Las-Cases and Gruaud-Larose, down to the humble <i>cru bourgeois</i> properties (of which there are few), seem to dance around the



Vineyards	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	From September 11th to October 1st
Winemaking	Harvested manually, the grapes are subjected to successive sorting (manual and optical) before vinification in oak vats. Aging lasted 15 months in barrels, 60% of which were of new oak.
Tasting Notes	Expressive, with notes of tobacco, cassis, ripe blackberries, and some leather. The palate is creamy at the start, very precise, firm, with a good structure, fine-meshed tannins, and a fresh acidity. A charming Talbot with a long finish.
Serve with	Chateau Talbot is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Talbot is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, stewed, and grilled dishes. Talbot is also good when served with Asian dishes, hearty seafood or richly textured fish like tuna, mushrooms, pasta, and cheese.
Production	18,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2025-2040
Scores/Awards	<p>95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023</p> <p>90? points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p>90-92 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p>90 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2023</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p>95 points / Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2023</p> <p>94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p>17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023</p> <p>93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p>92-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p>90 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p>92-94 points - Farr Vintners - May 2021</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>92-94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p>95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>92-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p>94 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p>91-93 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p>92 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p>92-94 points - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2021</p> <p>92-94 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p>96 points - Terres de Vins (score only) - September 2021</p> <p>94-95 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021</p> <p>93 points - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021</p> <p>90-91 points - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021</p> <p>95-96 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - July 2021</p> <p>96-97 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021</p> <p>16.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
Reviews	<p><i>“Exuberant, with generous plum sauce, licorice root, blackberry compote and apple wood notes vying for attention, as graphite and cast-iron accents drive along underneath. Reveals a little flash of exotic toast that snazzes up the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot. Best from 2030 through 2040. 18,000 cases made.”</i></p> <p><i>- JM, Wine Spectator</i></p>

Reviews

“The 2020 Talbot exhibits aromas of cassis and plums mingled with hints of clove, violets, and toasty new oak. Medium to full-bodied, with a rich core of fruit, powdery tannins, and lively acids, it's quite strongly marked by its élevage out of the gates, and it's an open question for me as to whether there's enough depth here to integrate the barrel program and reassert its Saint-Julien identity. On each of the three occasions I tasted it, it left me wanting more.”

- WK, Wine Advocate

“Deep purple-black colored, the 2020 Talbot storms out of the glass with powerful blackcurrants, raspberry leaves, and baked plums scents, followed by suggestions of dried Mediterranean herbs, tobacco leaf and graphite. The medium-bodied palate delivers lovely freshness and an approachable chewiness, nicely framing the herb-laced black fruits, finishing savory.”

- LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2020 Talbot has a deep garnet-purple color. It sings of black cherries, fresh red and black plums, and blackcurrant preserves, followed by hints of spice cake, wild thyme, and cedar chest. The medium-bodied palate is chewy and refreshing, with just enough bright fruit and a lifted finish.”

- LPB, Wine Independent

“Focused and composed with notes of currants, truffles, dried leaves, dark chocolate, and graphite. It's full-bodied, with firm, fine tannins giving sturdy support throughout. Savory and austere at the moment. Needs some time to open up.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“A tight, focused young red with blackcurrant, lead-pencil, and chocolate character. It's full-bodied and tense with a long, flavorful finish.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Spicy, structured, and dense, this is a complex, smoky, and powerful wine. With polished fruit and structure, it comes from an increasingly impressive estate. *Cellar Selection*”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“A great success from this estate, the wine has bold tannins and richly, concentrated fruit. Its blackberry flavors mingle with the dry core, promising some serious aging. Barrel Sample: 94-96.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Full bottle 1,350 g. Cask sample taken 2 April. 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot. Aged in barrel, 60% new. Dark crimson. Savoury, saline nose. Luscious palate entry with ripe fruit that almost smothers the tannin. A very good effort from Talbot with velvety tannins in profusion and some winning perfume too. This is doing well under ex-Conseillante Jean-Michel Laporte. 13.3%. Drink 2029 – 2046.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“This is a great Talbot, a real success for the château. Subtle and deft touches throughout, from the smoked turmeric notes that lace the black fruits to the finessed aromatics that accompany the body of the wine. Balance and freshness, and a saline edge to the finish that is extremely moreish. Three years with Jean-Michel Laporte as director and he is doing great work.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“Smooth textured cassis and blueberry fruit, cocoa bean, espresso, turmeric, and rosemary spice giving definition, along with an appealingly bitter amaretto biscuits edge on the close of play. This is layered and nuanced, with St Julien character. 105ha estate, Stéphane Derenoncourt consultant. Jean-Michel Laporte has been in charge for the past three years and is overseeing a sustained rise in quality.”

- JA, janeanson.com

Reviews

“Classy and classic, the wine pops with aromatics consisting of flowers, tobacco leaf, currants, spearmint and peppery blackberries. On the palate, the wine is medium/full-bodied, lively and loaded with layers of sweet, juicy, fresh black and red currants, savory herbs, wet earth, and dark cocoa. Give it just a few years in the bottle and it will offer over 2 decades of pleasure. Things continue improving here under the direction of Jean-Michel Laporte. Drink from 2025-2050.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The array of flowers and fruits here, blackberry, black currant, kirsch and cassis is just great! Concentrated, fresh and lifted, the wine is long, elegant, and expansive with a solid touch of minerality and crispness to the fruits on the palate and in the finish bringing complexity and ageability here. This is going to be just great with 7-9 years of aging. Things continue improving here under the direction of Jean-Michel Laporte.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2020 is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon (a record high here), with 21% Merlot and 3% Petit Verdot. The wine will be aged for 16 months in 60% new French oak. Bright ruby colour in the glass. Fresh blackcurrant and mint on the nose, layered with cool fresh cherry and a hint of toast. The palate is linear and fine, with an intense but compact core of hedgerow fruit. The tannins are fine but firm at this stage and will need time to integrate. The spicing from oak is well judged, bolstering the fruit without overpowering it. Cool and fresh to the finish.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2020 Talbot contains the highest degree of Cabernet Sauvignon to date (76%). It has developed a wonderful, classically-styled nose built around black fruit laced with mint and graphite. The palate is very well balanced and again, classic in style, a touch of wild mint intimating Pauillac instead of Saint-Julien. The mid-palate demonstrates the weight that was missing in vintages of the Nineties. Plenty of freshness on the finish - this is an impressive Talbot.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Talbot has a fragrant nose with black cherries, bilberry, wild mint, and chalk, quite harmonious and gaining intensity in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with a sweet, almost candied opening, predominantly red berry fruit laced with mint and orange zest, and a liberal sprinkling of black pepper. I admire the way this Talbot builds so that it finishes with a flourish. This may well land at the top of my banded score. 2026 – 2055.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Talbot is every bit as impressive as it was from barrel. Strong Cabernet Sauvignon inflections open first in the bouquet, leading into a rich palate laced with expressive dark cherry and plum fruit. A Saint-Julien of power and stature, Talbot is fabulous in 2020. I love the breadth and overall intensity here, but there is just as much focus to keep things in balance. The 2020 is superb, certainly the best in recent memory.”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2020 Talbot is a hugely promising wine. It offers up an exotic mélange of inky dark fruit, chocolate, licorice, gravel, lavender, and menthol. Brooding in the glass, with broad shoulders and tons of intensity, the 2020 is a Talbot that marries power, breadth and savory intensity with notable stylishness and tons of personality. Impressive.”

- AG, Vinous

“Another gorgeous 2020, the 2020 Château Talbot has an almost Pauillac-like sense of graphite and lead pencil as well as ripe blackcurrant fruit, medium to full body, and abundant notes of smoked tobacco, leather, and dried herbs. It shows the more focused, almost austere, yet still ripe style of the vintage and has terrific mid-palate depth, ripe, polished tannins, and a great finish. There's an almost old school Bordeaux-like vibe in this beauty, but it's not rustic in any way, the balance is spot on, and it has loads of character. I'd be thrilled with bottles in the cellar.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“The 2020 Château Talbot is a winner and certainly an outstanding wine. Offering lots of blackcurrants, green tobacco, chocolate, and lead pencil notes, it's a classic Saint-Julien, with medium to full body, velvety tannins, and a rounded, layered texture.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

Reviews *“Dark ruby, opaque core, purple reflections, discreet brightening on the rim. Fine plums and cassis, hints of nougat with candied orange zest. Juicy cherries, generous black fruit, ripe well-integrated tannins, elegant, fine savoury finish. Already open and very approachable.”*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“On the nose it is fruity with elegance, and it offers a good definition, depth, richness (while subtle/rich), with power (delicacy), a certain complex grain. Notes of bright blackberry, violet, bright strawberry and more lightly ripe small red fruits, blueberry combined with hints of pulpy berry, nutmeg, discreet hints of szechuan pepper and a subtle hint of licorice and bourbon vanilla. On the mouth it is fruity and offers freshness, minerality, tension, richness (in control/air), acidity, juiciness, a good definition as well as a certain gourmandize, fine grain, harmony, elegance, and dynamism. The wine expresses the notes of pulpy/juicy blackberry, bright blackcurrant and more slightly juicy/fresh cherry, small red fruits as well as hints of tonka bean, toasted almond, saffron and chocolate. The tannins are fine, precise, elegant, and supple. A nice persistence with a subtle touch of tonka bean. The sapidity and a little mellow on the finish/persistence.”

- Vert de Vin

“Pure nose, high ripeness, rather sweet fruit with some herbal spiciness, bay leaf, and sage. Supple and ample texture, fine polish, elegant and persistent.”

- AL, Tasted.com

“(76% CS, 21% M, 3% PV; 13.3% ABV; 60% new). Dense, fresh black-fruit and gravel impressions to smell; medium-full, fresh to crisp in acidity, very fine in firm tannin, classic, elegant, St-Julien balance; crisply ripe flavor, gently fleshy-cored, defined by a brisk acidity, and with just a touch of austerity, but fine, close-grained, quite complex, and with good length. Very good rather than grande année quality and character, just not the “ease” of, for example, the 2018 or 2019 here. Will certainly need time—a decade at least, I would say. 2030–45+.”

- MS, The World of Fine Wine
