

# Château Haut Bailly 2009

CSPC# 749557

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc

## Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

## General Info

For the past four centuries, Château Haut Bailly has overlooked 28 hectares of vines in a single block. These grow on soil consisting of sand and gravel from the Tertiary period with a fossil stone subsoil. Haut Bailly's reputation as one of the very finest wines of Bordeaux was established in the 19th century. Haut-Bailly was bought by the Sanders family in 1955 and was run by Jean Sanders until 1998 when Robert G. Wilmers, an American banker, purchased it. Robert G. Wilmers continues to emphasise quality in all aspects of production, combining a blend of tradition and modernity with respect for the environment. Château Haut-Bailly's unique terroir produces wines that are outstandingly reliable, and whose prestige is due to an inimitable style marked by finesse and elegance.

## Vintage

Luckily, all the elements were present for 2009 to be an unforgettable vintage. The growth cycle of the vines and the ripening of the grapes took place in particularly favourable weather conditions, assisted by meticulous work in the vineyard. The rather dry and cold winter delayed bud burst by a fortnight, the Merlot and Cabernet flowered at the same time, around May 30. The great weather conditions in the summer were perfect for the ripening of the grapes and continued through to September, during which warm days were generally followed by cool nights. These conditions particularly favoured the concentration of flavours and the accumulation of pigments. The grapes were sweet, richly coloured, and fruity, in proportions similar to the greatest vintages.

## Vineyards

The Haut-Bailly estate accounts for 33 hectares of the Médoc, of which 30 hectares are vineyard, largely in a single block on a gravel *croupe*. The soils are a mixture of sand and Tertiary gravel over *Faluns de Léognan*, a subsoil rich in sandstone and ancient fossilised shells. The vines themselves are mainly Cabernet Sauvignon (64%), which are planted on the upper parts of the *croupe* and slopes where the drainage is best, with 30% Merlot, which are planted on those plots where the soils are richer in clay. The remaining 6% is Cabernet Franc, and overall the planting density is an admirable 10000 vines/ha.

## Harvest

Harvesting began on September 15 with the Merlot in the mornings, to avoid the afternoon heat and went on late into the season. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc were picked on October 7 and 14.

## Maturation

In small oak barriques (55% new) for 16 months and is bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

## Tasting Notes

The wines' structure is characterized by a succulent texture and a very pure expression of ripe fruit resulting, in particular, from the alcoholic fermentation process, during which temperatures were kept at around 26°C. The structure presents a remarkable harmonious balance. The Merlots are superb while the Cabernets are powerful but incredibly creamy: these are real thoroughbreds. 2009 is an exceptional vintage

## Production

6,665 cases made

## Cellaring

Drink 2017-2035

**94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012

**95-98 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010

**98+ points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012

**96-98+\* points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010

**94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012

**92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010

**97 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - Web Only 2012

**94-96 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010



**Scores/Awards** **94 points** - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - July 2012  
**92-95 points** - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010  
**16.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010  
**18.5 points** - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2011  
**18-19+ points** - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010  
**18.5 points/5 stars** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010  
**91 points/16.75 points** - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2010  
**94 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2010  
**94-96 points** - Alan Duran, Periodic Review - March 2010

**Reviews** *"Offers a rich, very dense feel, but stays racy thanks to a strong graphite frame around the core of roasted fig, plum sauce and maduro tobacco. Muscular but defined on the finish, with a long tarry edge in reserve. This shows serious depth and is more backward than most of its peers. Should really stretch out nicely in the cellar. Best from 2017 through 2035. 6,665 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Lovely sweet berry and plum aromas, with hints of sandalwood and cedar. Full-bodied, with milk chocolate, berry and vanilla bean character. Thick and dense tannins, but balanced and very pretty. Sneaks up on you. Really powerful in tannins. This could be better than the fab 2005. 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 37 percent Merlot and 3 percent Cabernet Franc. Score range: 95-98"*  
- JS, Wine Spectator

*"A dense ruby/purple-tinged color offers up notes of forest floor, subtle wood smoke, mulberries, black cherries, cassis and a hint of lead pencil shavings. There is even a floral component lurking in the intricate aromatic profile. The wine is medium to full-bodied with wonderful intensity that builds incrementally and has a long, silky, luscious finish. There is plenty of tannin, but it is largely concealed by the wine's beautiful fruit and ethereal complexity. Given its virtually perfect balance, this brilliant Haut-Bailly should age effortlessly for 3-4 decades.*

*This is a tour de force in winemaking, particularly for readers seeking the quintessential example of a Bordeaux that combines compelling complexity and finesse with significant flavor authority and intensity. I suppose we could see this coming as American owner, Robert Wilmers, along with his winemaker/manager, Veronique Sanders, continue to push the envelope. Yields were extremely low in 2009, and the final blend was an intriguing concoction of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc. It came in just under 14% natural alcohol, which makes it among one of the more powerful Haut-Baillys produced. However, power is not the hallmark of this wine. This terroir is known to produce relatively light wines, and by reducing yields and picking riper fruit, Wilmers and Sanders have achieved a level of concentration and intensity that is unprecedented for Haut-Bailly. That said, they have not lost any of these wines' stunning elegance, finesse or aromatic complexity."*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*"The greatest Haut-Bailly ever made? One can't speak enough of the job Veronique Sanders has done in 2009, allied with the owner, the American banker Robert Wilmers, who has given her carte blanche authority. Tiny yields have resulted in the most concentrated Haut-Bailly I have ever tasted. Eclipsing even the 2005, the 2009 (a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, and 3% Cabernet Franc) possesses 13.9% natural alcohol. Dense purple to the rim, it exhibits a precise, nuanced nose of mulberries, black cherries, black currants, graphite, and a singular floral component. A wine of profound intensity and full-bodied power, yet stunningly elegant, and never heavy or massive, it builds incrementally on the palate, and the finish lasts over 45 seconds. Remarkably, there is not a hard edge to be found in this beauty. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc were harvested between October 7 and 14, which explains their phenolic maturity. The wine's extraordinary freshness, elegance, and precision are nearly surreal. This tour de force should age brilliantly for 40+ years. (Tasted two times.)"*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*"Tasted several occasions with consistent notes, this taken in Hong Kong. Deep and clear in colour. The nose is very well defined with superb delineation with tightly wound scented of blackberry, bay leaf, black olive and a touch of crushed stone. Very Graves-like. The palate is very well balanced with fine tannins and tension. Very feminine but there is good backbone here, graceful towards the finish. Superb. Tasted November 2011."*  
- NM, Wine Journal

**Reviews** *"Tasted at the chateau, the sample taken 16th March from a pre-blend of the Merlot and three lots of Cabernet (probably no pressed wine this year) and a second sample at a negociant. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc with 55% new barrels. A very deep garnet/black colour. This has a very*

*refined nose of blackcurrant, raspberry, wild hedgerow, a nice minerality all with very good delineation but very tightly wound at the moment: this really does demand coaxing from the glass. With further aeration, that minerality is really coming through nicely (much more so than at the chateau!) The palate is full-bodied with a soft entry, grippy tannins, structure on the entry, dense black ripe fruit with an underlying stoniness. It is the follow through, like a wave crashing onto the back palate that really marks this wine out, with very fine persistency and minerality towards the finish. Silky and slightly creamy in texture towards the finish. Superb. Tasted April 2010."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"Lovely sweet berry and plum aromas, with hints of sandalwood and cedar. Full-bodied, with milk chocolate, berry and vanilla bean character. Thick and dense tannins, but balanced and very pretty. Sneaks up on you. Really powerful in tannins. This could be better than the fab 2005. 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 37 percent Merlot and 3 percent Cabernet Franc."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"94-96 Barrel sample. Dominated by firm tannins, dark texture, black berry and currant fruits. A powerful wine that shows an immense dry core."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"Medium ruby-red. Very ripe but subdued aromas of dark berries, black cherry, minerals, woodsmoke, mocha and smoky underbrush. Silky on entry, then utterly smooth and seamless in the middle, with outstanding concentration and lift to the berry, tobacco and hot rock flavors. Finishes with utterly noble tannins and outstanding, slowly building length and lingering perfume. This outstanding Haut-Bailly saturates every square millimeter of the palate without leaving any undue impression of weight. I was reminded of the time I was served three classy old Pessac-Leognan wines blind. I guessed that I was tasting Haut-Brion, but the bottles turned out to be Haut-Bailly 1961, 1945 and 1928."*

- ST, International Wine Cellar

*"Deep ruby. Highly perfumed nose is brimming with blackcurrant, blackberry and violet; shows an almost fruit cocktail quality. Then smooth, dense and lush, with noteworthy intensity to its fresh black fruit flavors complicated by stony minerality and exotic herbs. A wonderfully seamless and concentrated wine with superb balance, very smooth tannins and an extremely long aftertaste. Though very ripe, this betrays no sign of over extraction or the exaggerated flavors shown by many other wines in this vintage. Likely to be one of the great vintages for Haut-Bailly."*

- ID, International Wine Cellar

*"Rather pale. Lifted and gentle and a little muted and tart but certainly appetising. Just the merest hint of green?"*

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*"Dark, slightly earthy on the nose, spicy, with a dense, dark suggestion of concentration. There is a bright and firm substance to it on the palate, the wine showing a very bold, tightly compacted character, tense and rather reticent rather than the softer flesh or grippy weight found in some wines tasted alongside. Highly polished, taut rather than fleshy, with great power behind it, this is savoury, dense and forceful. It manages to combine Graves composition with a weighty, impressive backbone. It could be great, but it will need many years. From a tasting of 2009 Pessac-Léognan at two years of age. 18.5/20 (October 2011)"*

- CK, The Wine Doctor

## Reviews

*"Tasted twice, at the UGC tasting and at the château. Cabernet Sauvignon 60%, Merlot 37% and Cabernet Franc 3% fermented at 26°C, cooler than usual, a response to the massive presence of tannins in this vintage. IPT 70, 55% new barrels, alcohol well controlled at 13.4%. A very dark and concentrated hue here. The nose has a warm style of fruit, with a macerated cherry and red-black forest fruit character, although it has perfume too, with some floral elements peeping through the dark exuberance. The palate kicks off in a very ripe and soft style, although richly imbued with tannins, which have a velvety, fur-coat-feel to them. Rich, creamed, honeyed fruit, fresh, the tannins prodigious but very much in harmony with the wine. Fresher on the palate than I expected from the nose though, with quite vigorous acidity balancing out the warm piles of substance. Elegant despite all that texture underneath. Perfumed finish. And it is incredibly long. This is monumental, especially so for Haut-Bailly. Could be a great wine given cellar time. From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 18-19+/20 (March 2010)"*

- CK, *The Wine Doctor*

*"Dense purple red, quite rich cassis fruit with fragrant wild roses concentration, great clarity, depth and precision over succulently ripe vineyard fruit, still quite reserved, a wine of undeniable beauty and class."*

- SS, *Decanter.com*

*"Showing a lovely, intense, dark color with a fine and fruity nose of vanilla, this wine offers a fat, creamy, aromatic and generous expression on the palate. It evolves sweet and melting and boasts taste and a tight weaving. Very good length."*

- J-MQ

*"This is the most alcoholic wine there has even been at Haut-Bailly apparently (they should talk to producers on the Right Bank), but it is still a very harmonious wine, using its Cabernet Sauvignon for backbone as well as elegance. Cedar wood and cassis notes are underpinned by fine tannins and palate-cleansing acidity. One of the best wines in the appellation. 10+ years."*

- TA, *timatkin.com*

**2009:** This remarkable estate has strengthened in such a short period of time. It has produced another stunning wine that competes with the big 2008. The gorgeous, saturated ruby/purple hued Haut-Bailly offers a striking perfume of *pain grille*, *a la plancha* meat juice, savory blackberry, *crème de cassis*, and stone-dust. Sensational richness is combined with a medium to full-bodied, dense mouth-feel, savory cassis, and a beautiful expansion on the finish. This is a big, complex wine that is youthful in its evolution and potent in flavor. There is upside potential for this sumptuous Haut-Bailly! Maturity period 2017-2032.

94-96

- AD, *Periodic Review*

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