

# Château Haut Bailly 2012

CSPC# 749557

750mlx12

13.2% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot

**Appellation**

Pessac-Léognan

**Classification**

Grand Vin de Bordeaux

**Website**

<http://www.chateau-haut-bailly.com/en/content/2012>

**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**

The 2012 vintage plays like a foxtrot – in four defined steps... First, following a cold dry winter, a cool, wet spring made the flowering process difficult and threatened some of the Merlot vines with “couleur”. Then, as cool temperatures persisted until the beginning of July, we kept an extra careful eye on the vineyard and fought the onset of diseases (mildew, oïdium). The team remained on hand throughout the summer. A third step would be the month of August with the advantage of wide temperature ranges with hot days - as sunny as in 2000 or 2009 - and cool nights. All which favour the synthesis of anthocyanin. Traditional tilling of the soil allowed better management of hydric stress. Finally, at the end of a summer-like month of September, a few millimeters of rain on September 25th and 26th helped to re-ignite the ripening of the grapes, which led to the sublimation of the fruity character of the skins and the softness of the tannins.

**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**

The harvest started when the phenological maturity (tannins) caught up with the technical maturity (sugar, acidity). The Merlots were picked in ideal conditions. The weekend of October 7th was especially hot and wet, causing us to quicken the pace and pick the Cabernets before the return of the rain. The Merlots were pleasant and full of charm. The Old Vines delivered splendid Cabernets, typical of the great terroir of Haut-Bailly.

**Maturation**

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

**Tasting Notes**

Fruity, fresh and dense, the 2012 vintage has tight tannins and expresses the virtuosity of Haut-Bailly.

**Production**

6,665 cases made

**Cellaring**

Drink 2015-2045

**Scores/Awards**

**93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015  
**90-93 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013  
**96 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015  
**91-93 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013  
**91-93 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013



**Scores/Awards** **94 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015  
**93-94 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013  
**94 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2015  
**93-95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 10, 2013  
**90-92 points** - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - June/July 2013  
**16.5+ points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013  
**17.5 points** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013  
**91 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)  
**94 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 11, 2015  
**92-94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 25, 2013  
**90-93 points** - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013  
**15.5+ points** - Farr Vintner - April 2013  
**90-93 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013  
**94 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013  
**90-92 points** - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 16, 2013  
**17.5 points** - Simon Staples, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2013  
**17.5 points** - Tom Cave, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2013  
**16.5-17.5 points** - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - April 2013  
**90-92 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only)  
**18.3 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)  
**17.5 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)  
**16.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)  
**17.5 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)

**Reviews** *"Well-stuffed, with thick and muscular brambly structure that easily supports the core of macerated black currant, fig and boysenberry fruit flavors. A tarry edge coats the finish. More backwards than most of its peers at this early stage, but all the elements are in place. Best from 2018 through 2027. 6,665 cases made."*  
 - JM, Wine Spectator

*"Very pure, with dusty cherry, plum and cassis fruit flavors, featuring a suave finish threaded with warm stone and licorice notes. Shows solid length for the vintage. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 90-93"*  
 - JS, Wine Spectator

*"The classic 2012 Haut-Bailly is staggeringly great wine, with a stunning bouquet of lead pencil shavings, blueberries, black raspberries and blackcurrants and perhaps a touch of spring flowers, followed by a medium to full-bodied wine with an almost seamless integration of wood, alcohol and tannin. It is rich, concentrated, stunningly supple, pure and a total hedonistic and intellectual turn-on. This wine defines what is meant by intensity of flavor, but it is light on its feet, à la great cuisine. It should be drinkable reasonably young, but age effortlessly for 25-30 years.*  
*One of the great shining superstars of Pessac-Léognan has been the ascent of Haut-Bailly under the ownership of Robert Wilmers, an American, and his winemaking team lead by Véronique Sanders. Readers checking the database of the Wine Advocate will note that the 2009 has been elevated to a perfect score, which is of course not surprising, since it started off with a 98-point rating."*  
 - RP, Wine Advocate

*"While the 2012 Haut-Bailly is not as powerful or rich as the 2009 and 2010, it is classically elegant, racy and noble. This medium-bodied effort is the poster child for elegance, finesse, balance and equilibrium. The Cantemerle of Pessac-Leognan? Its deep ruby/plum/purple color is followed by a sweet nose of black cherries, black currants, lead pencil shavings and a touch of spicy oak. This medium-bodied, pretty wine will benefit from 4-5 years of cellaring and last for two decades.*  
*The grand vin has been impressive under the administration of Veronique Sanders and her boss, Robert Wilmers, who has given her carte blanche to do whatever is necessary."*  
 - RP, Wine Advocate

*"The Grand Vin is a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot, picked between September 27th and October 15th. The nose is comparatively reserved, broody black fruit, wild strawberry and hint of cedar. It is nicely focused, less precocious than recent vintages. The palate is soft and very smooth on the entry. Velvety soft tannins, although it needs just a little more lift on the mid-palate. It is quite linear towards the finish, quite*

**Reviews** *caressing in the mouth with just a little new oak to be absorbed. There is nice grip and persistency here – a classic Haut-Bailly. Tasted April 2013.”*

- NM, Wine Journal

*“This red shows intense blackberries, raspberries and strawberries on the nose, following through to a full body with refined yet firm tannins, fresh acidity and a delicate finish. The purity of fruit and finesse and texture of the tannins are all fantastic. Drink in 2019”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“A beautiful red with plums and chocolate and hints of licorice. Full body, with super polished tannins. Ripe fruit with forest undergrowth, dark fruits and sweet tobacco. Goes on for minutes.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Very firm and closed up, this wine is a tough proposition at the moment. It has the weight to develop well along with richness. Acidity, sweet fruits and concentrated tannins will all come through strongly as the wine matures. Drink from 2020.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“93–95. Barrel sample. Dark in structure, with a sense of austerity and dark tannins, this is a wine that will need time to develop. There’s a hint of tobacco and ripe plum on the palate, and the aftertaste promises juiciness.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Deep purple-ruby. Clean, fresh, very deep aromas of cassis, blackberry, minerals and smoke. Rich, dense and suave, offering intense flavors of dark cherry and blackcurrant lifted by graphite and ink. Finishes very long and pure. Estate manager Veronique Sanders plans to age this very promising Haut-Bailly for about 18 months in 50% new oak. For my money, this is one of the top 20 wines of the vintage.”*

- ST, International Wine Cellar

*“Dark with a purple rim. Lifted, appetising nose. Racy and flattering even if without enormous concentration. Flattering mouthfeel. No rusticity here! Though perhaps a little alcohol on the dry, slightly angular finish. A menthol note.”*

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“Superb colour, fine depth of earthy fruit, slightly green now, but natural richness and fragrance for a very good future.”*

- SS, Decanter.com

*“As it often does, Haut-Bailly has made one of the leading wines in Pessac-Léognan in 2012, and one that wouldn't look out of place alongside its 2010. It's a serious red, built for cellaring, with plenty of concentration, aromatic, floral fruit, tangy acidity and layered, age-worthy tannins. Drink: 2022-35”*

- TA, timatkin.com

*“Lots of smoke, tobacco, earthy, dark berries and oak add to the perfume. On the palate, the wine is soft, smooth and polished, leaving you with sweet, ripe fruits that linger on the palate, long after the wine has left the glass. This is showing better than it did from barrels and it could become even better if the wine continues to fill out with aging.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Dark ruby in color, the wine opens with framboise, licorice, cocoa powder, smoke, and caramel. Produced from a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon with 40% Merlot, the wine reached 13.2% alcohol with a pH of 3.6. Wine will be aged in 50% new French oak for 16 months. This is a finesse style of Haut Bailly with fresh and ripe red and black fruits that display a lot of purity and freshness. The wine ends with sweet black raspberry and cherry sensations in a forward, spicy finish. 92-94 Pts”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

## Reviews

*"Deep colour; vibrant edge; lots of briary and blackcurrant fruit on the nose; sweet ripe fruit attack and then come the tannins; little chewy on the palate [it always seems to be in its youth]; very dense and clearly lots of matter here but slightly drying quality to the tannins. Usually sorts itself out later. Serious, chewy and tannic. Probably underrating this and look forward to seeing it again down the track. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot. 90-93+ Tasted Wednesday April 10, 2013 at UGC"*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

*"This classic Graves property is managed by Véronique Sanders and produced from an approximate 50:50 blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. There is concentrated blackcurrant fruit here with an attractive spicy character from the oak. At the moment it is quite dry with firm tannins at the finish but whilst it lacks charm today it promises well for the future."*  
- Farr Vintners

*"Black fruits dominate deep brooding black cherry and cassis. The mid palate has ripe fruit the sweetness underpinned by firm tannins and fresh bilberry. Black cherry and cassis fill out and enrich the back palate and finish. 2020-35"*  
- Derek Smedley MW

*"Firm tannins with delicate flavours that are a bit shy at the moment. Hint of violets and plums on the nose. It is on the palate that this wine shines - tightly knit, medium weight red with an amazing density combined with freshness and finesse. The tannins are ripe and generous and there is good concentration in the mid palate and finish. Always a discrete wine, in this vintage, Haut-Bailly really stands out by combining restraint, intensity and complexity. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (06-Apr-2013) "*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com

*"Vegetal touch with black fruits, toasted aromas, coffee and spice. Round, well-integrated tannins on the palate with fruit presence. Peppery finish with a faint vegetal touch. (16-Apr-2013)"*  
- en.gilbertgaillard.com

*"Not many châteaux in Bordeaux are blessed with as fine a terroir and a chatelaine as exquisite as Véronique Sanders, but Ch. Haut-Bailly has both. Véronique mentioned that after the highs of 2009 (£450.00/6) and 2010 (£516.00/6), she wanted to get her 2012 back within the reach of buyers perhaps 'priced-out' as well as attract some new ones. The 2012 is a commendable reduction on the 2011 (£294.00/6) – and it is a very fine Ch. Haut Bailly indeed. It has great depth, and a warmth, but with structure there too, with all that old-vine intensity and classis Graves freshness that makes this one of the few Bordeaux to consider every vintage. It will take on more volume in time and prove as rewarding as any Haut-Bailly of the last 15 years. For me it is one of the wines of the vintage (true, it always is.)."*  
- TC, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

*"Possessing a warm and heavy coco content, Ch. Haut-Bailly has a dark, rich, chocolate nose which is outstanding and lures you in like a siren. It has a sumptuous, unctuousness texture and weight which would hint at a far more decadent year. I am not quite sure how Véronique and her team have pulled off yet another superlative wine that once again out-performs several of the First Growths, but I am delighted that she has. It was one of the most striking wines we tasted in Bordeaux; all we need now is a little bit of corrective pricing and it will be an essential case to add to our cellars. Drink 2020-2035."*  
- SS, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

*"Very dark fruits on the nose here, black cherries and plums, sweet and very bright and perfumed. The palate has a very elegant composure, with polished and balanced fruit substance, the tannins broad and substantial, but feel well-polished and cottony, and seem to sit within the substance of the wine rather well. Some notes of black cherries and cream complete the slightly floral fruit freshness seen on the nose. Very elegant, superior to the 2011 (tasted alongside), and with all that is necessary for it to do well in the cellar. Tasted twice during the primeurs week."*  
- CK, The Wine Doctor

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