

# Château Haut Bailly 2020

CSPC# 813883

750mlx6

14.3% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety** 52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc  
**Appellation** Pessac-Léognan  
**Classification** Grand Cru Classé de Graves  
**Website** <https://www.haut-bailly.com/en/wines.html>

**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 emphasize 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.

Bob Wilmers passed away in December 2017 at age 83. The estate is now managed by Chris Wilmers, the son of Bob Wilmers.

Today, the estate is directed by Veronique Sanders, the fourth generation of her family associated with Haut-Bailly.

**Winemaker** Gabriel Vialard

**Vintage** The winter was marked by heavy rainfall from November 2019 to March 2020, although January and February were fairly mild and dry, which facilitated the progress of pruning and vineyard maintenance.

Precipitation from March to June broke records. Budburst was particularly early. So when France went into lockdown on March 17th, we went straight to work to manage the rapid and proliferating growth in the vineyard.

Frost hit several plots during the nights of March 25th and 26th and caused localised damage destroying the most developed buds. Straw bales were lit several times to combat this threat, which has become frequent in recent vintages. Warm temperatures at the end of April (25-26°C) stimulated vine growth requiring additional seasonal workers from April 20th onwards. The reinforced team in the vineyard was able to work in safe conditions, respecting health guidelines.

The intense rains from May 1st to 11th were equivalent to two months of rainfall.

The soil was saturated and difficult to work. This is when a first miracle appeared: hot, dry conditions allowed for early flowering (two weeks early) for the Merlot between May 10th and 25th, and for the other grape varieties in a more homogenous and grouped manner, from May 18th to 22nd. The first fortnight of June was dreary and vulnerable to mildew. The closure of the bunches ended around June 15th, almost three weeks earlier than usual. Beginning on June 20th summer finally arrived when the weather changed radically (2nd miracle): hot and historically dry in July, and until August 11th with only 5 mm of rain for more than 50 days, punctuated by peaks of heat (> 40°C) on July 30th, and between August 7th and 12th. This short-lived drought did not affect our plots, whose root system was able to reach the water reserves in the deep layers of soil formed during spring. The early veraison - from July 14th onwards - was heterogeneous. From August 11th to August 13th, a few thunderstorms finally brought cooler weather and some rain (40mm), enabling the veraison to be completed and relieving the hydric stress of the young vines.

**Vineyards** The Haut-Bailly estate accounts for 33 hectares of the Médoc, of which 30 hectares are vineyards, 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.



<b>Harvest</b>	Early picking (September 9th to 25th) was carried out under exceptional weather. The vines were magnificent. Our harvest team was remarkable for its efficiency, mutual help, and solidarity.
<b>Winemaking</b>	The vinification took place at 24°C in order to preserve the perfect freshness and elegance despite the high degrees in alcohol. In small oak barriques (55% new) for 16 months and is bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	2020 is a vintage that was filled with unprecedented challenges, but also high-lighted the incredible power of adaptation and our capacity to think on our feet. It was a year in which we faced the threat of spring frosts, resisted mildew in June, drought during the summer, and were spared hail in May, June, and August. It was also a year that required us to respond to new health conditions imposed by the global pandemic. We are particularly grateful for the dedication, vigilance, and reactivity of our teams in organising the work in the vineyard, which was a key factor in the success of this year. Chateau Haut-Bailly 2020 is a wine that offers freshness but also complexity, with depth, texture, and elegant tannins. It is a powerful and rich wine. This vintage also holds a special importance, as it is the first to be aged in Chateau Haut-Bailly's new cellar. It is a magical place, combining nature with architecture, and which writes a new history of Chateau Haut-Bailly.
<b>Serve with</b>	Chateau Haut Bailly is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. The wine of Chateau Haut Bailly is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2030-2055
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>94+ points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p><b>96-98+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p><b>99 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>99-100 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p><b>17+ points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - December 2022</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p><b>97-99 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p><b>96-98+ points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Vert de Vin - May 2021</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021</p> <p><b>19 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"The 2020 Haut-Bailly opens in the glass with attractive aromas of cassis, sweet berries, loamy soil, violets, and pencil shavings. Medium to full-bodied, deep, and layered, it's a concentrated, rather broad-shouldered wine built around a chassis of firm, powdery tannin that asserts itself on the finish. Haut-Bailly once rivaled Haut-Brion for the title of Pessac's most elegant wine, and I would love to see the team here ease off extraction, but this remains a strong effort that will reward patience."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"A blend of 52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, the 2020 Haut-Bailly was harvested from the 9th to 25th of September. It has an alcohol of 14.3%. Deep purple-black in color, it prances out of the glass with naturally beautiful notions of fresh black cherries, violets, mulberries, and boysenberries, giving way to hints of redcurrant jelly, star anise, tilled soil, and menthol. The medium to full-bodied palate is delicately crafted with velvety/grainy tannins and fantastic freshness framing the perfumed red and black berry layers, finishing on a lingering fragrant-earth note."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

## Reviews

*“An absolute gem from France. A Bordeaux like no other from Haut-Bailly. This has incredible power and drive with blackberry, black olive, and graphite. It’s full-bodied, yet dynamic and agile, with so much polished and muscular tannin. Yet, it remains in harmony and balance. So much character. The head of the chateau calls it diabolical beauty.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This wine's texture is exceptional, with powerful dark fruits and rich tannins blending seamlessly. All this density is cut with the finest spice and fresh acidity. The result is a wine that has both power and delicacy that gives a lift to the aftertaste. It will certainly age so well.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Powerful, deep-coloured wine with a considerable tannic core. Mellow fruit provides a suave texture, but the pixelated tannins are still palpable. Intense, brooding with lots of extract, the finish warm, the oak just present. Needs time to knit. Drink 2028 – 2045.”*

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

*“Almost wild on the nose, aromatic and expressive, you can tell this is a powerful, concentrated wine with dark fruits, graphite, fresh mint, and medicinal herbal touches. Pure and focused, clean, lean, and multifaceted, the flavours hit the palate then melt away, giving the floor to liquorice, cedar, tobacco, and soft clove spices. I love the sleekness and the sense of seriousness that the 2020 has compared to the more 'look at me' 2019 at this point. The texture and depth make this wine, with vertical layers and excellent acidity. A profound wine.”*

- GH, Decanter.com

*“Rich in texture and colour, this has clear layers and complexity, a wine that you want to take your time with, slow down and enjoy. One that will take its time to age also. This has a precision and a clarity to the aromatics, and a gentle buzz of minerality that gives a physical reaction in the mouth. Less exuberant than the 2018 or 2019, making this a vintage that suits the style of Haut-Bailly. A slight austerity to the tannins on the finish gives a blueberry redcurrant edge. 3% Petit Verdot completes the blend (now around eight years old), usually co-fermented with the Cabernet Sauvignon (sometimes with Cabernet Franc). IPT similar to 2016, 2010, 2005, but with a softness that comes from extremely ripe tannins. Strong potential for up scoring when it bottle.”*

- JA, Decanter.com

*“Ruby violet colour, beautiful glass-staining purple; right up there among the best wines of the vintage. Serious structure and tannic architecture delivered with finesse. Plenty of estate signature also in its depth and poise, showing clarity, purity and precision to the blackcurrant, bilberry, blackberry and pomegranate fruits, spiced chocolate and bitter aniseed and frangipane on the finish. An up score from En Primeur. One to savour.”*

- JA, janeanson.com

*“Initially, you find a display of flowers before moving on to all of its cigar wrapper, spice, blackberry, currant, black cherry, smoke and hints of forest leaf. Deeply concentrated, vibrant and refined, the palate is packed with multiple-layers of perfectly, ripe, red fruits, a fabulous sense of purity, silky, soft, polished tannins, and ample lift in the finish, providing the backdrop to age, evolve for decades. Drink from 2027-2060.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Deeply colored, the wine explodes with fresh flowers, tobacco leaf, cigar box, currants, blackberry, Allspice, licorice, savory herbs, and smoke aromas. On the palate, the wine is intense, balanced, silky, and refined. The fruits express purity, harmony, length, and complexity, finishing with layers of currants, blackberry, herbs, pepper, and plums that hold your focus for at least 50 seconds. Give this at least 10-12 years of age. It will evolve and provide sensuous tasting for at least 25 or more years after that. 14.3% ABV, pH 3.9. The harvest took place September 9 to September 25. The Grand Vin was produced from 60% of the harvest. 2020 was the first vintage produced in their new cellars.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

## Reviews

*"The 2020 Haut-Bailly showed extremely well when I tasted it at my home during lockdown. Now in bottle since spring 2022, it upholds a wonderful bouquet with multi-layered black fruit laced with briary, flint, blood orange and light peony scents. That orange element becomes a touch more pronounced with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with grainy tannins, fine backbone, brimming with energy and remaining harmonious from start to finish. This is a long-term prospect, an achievement considering that this was supposed to be vinified in their new winery, but due to Covid delays ended up being vinified in their old facility (though barrel maturation was able to be done in the new cellar.)"*

- NM, Vinous

*"The 2020 Haut-Bailly was picked September 9–25 in what the estate has called the "year of reinvention." Having left my sample to open for 30 minutes and then assessed it over the following three hours, I found that it has a mercurial nose of gorgeous blackberry, briar, white pepper, incense, and hints of blood orange. It gains intensity and becomes more floral with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with supple but firm tannins that provide backbone. There is plenty of black fruit laced with white pepper and clove. Perhaps less rich on the finish compared to the last two vintages – a virtue as far as I am concerned, as it allows more terroir to show through. This is an impressive Haut-Bailly to coincide with their new winery, which I hope to visit very soon."*

- NM, Vinous

*"The 2020 Haut-Bailly has developed into an elegant, richly-textured wine with all its elements in balance. Classy and polished to the core, the 2020 is a Haut-Bailly that favors finesse over power. It's a wine of extreme precision and persistence more than anything else. Red-toned fruit, dried flowers, spice, and blood orange are some of the many notes that open over time. The 2020 spent 15 months in barrel, with 50% new oak."*

- AG, Vinous

*"Deep, rich, and explosive, the 2020 Haut-Bailly is magnificent from the very first taste. Dark fruit, chocolate, licorice and spice give the 2020 a level of unctuousness that is absolutely thrilling. Readers should be patient, as the 2020 is going to need time to come around. Yields are down 25% from 2019, and that richness comes through loud and clear."*

- AG, Vinous

*"The 2020 Chateau Haut-Bailly is a quintessential expression of this terroir and shines for its incredible purity, balance, and elegance. Revealing a ruby/purple hue as well as a terrific bouquet of ripe red and black fruits, Asian spices, smoked tobacco, and leafy herbs, it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, ultra-fine tannins, and a layered, seamless mouthfeel. Reminding me slightly of the 2016 with its pure, balanced, classical style, give bottles just 4-5 years and enjoy over the following two to three decades. President and CEO Veronique Sanders continues to do incredible job at this Chateau, and you won't find a more classy, elegant wine out there. Best After 2027."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"A legendary Haut-Bailly in the making, the 2020 sports a dense purple color to go with powerful notes of blackcurrants, black cherries, scorched earth, and graphite. Reminding me of the 2010, it takes plenty of air to show at its best yet is full-bodied, has a seamless texture, massive of ultra-fine tannins, and a blockbuster of a finish. It's one of the most structured, powerful Haut-Bailly I've ever tasted, yet it still has the classic elegance, nuance, and length of this terrific terroir. It will need 5-7 years (or more) of bottle age but will have 50 years of overall longevity."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"Closed, minerally to smell, with a great finesse; full, supple yet fresh, and very fine in tannin, an effortlessly beautiful balance; long and graceful, very Haut-Bailly in style, full of soft, sweet, freshly ripe fruit, long and subtle across the palate, and with wonderful fragrant length. A gloriously complete wine of great class. Power and delicacy, great beauty in a particularly discreet style. First-growth quality and refinement, an illuminating tribute to the splendid new chai. Likely to be accessible early, but offer decades of pleasure. Drink 2028 – 2050."*

- MS, The World of Fine Wine

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