
Château Haut Brion 2009

CSPC# 744971

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Pessac-Leognan

General Info

1st classified growth in 1855. Haut Brion was founded in 1525 by Jean de Pontac and since then, many illustrious personalities succeeded each other as owners. The last among them was Clarence Douglas Dillon, American financial minister under the Kennedy government. Today, the continuity and presence of the Dillon family are ensured by Prince Robert of Luxembourg who watches over the destiny of Domaine Clarence Dillon S.A.S., having joined the management of the Company in June of 1997 and succeeding his mother Princess Joan de Mouchy as President at the end of July 2008. Haut Brion is the sole 1st classified growth from the 1855 classification which is outside of the Medoc appellation. Its terroir may be compared to the one of Latour. Even if it is not the more concentrated wine, Haut Brion is the noblest wine of Pessac Leognan, and its longevity is incomparable. The silky structure of the tannins is always exceptional. Classed Premier Cru of the Gironde in 1855, and Cru de Graves in 1953, Château Haut-Brion was also classed thus in 1973, and although this latest classification only concerned the Médoc whilst Haut-Brion is located in the Graves appellation, the minutes of the 1973 classification meeting state: The jury, considering the situation of Château Haut-Brion and its long traditional connections with the Médoc Premiers Crus, and taking into account this tradition, the customs and practices on the one hand, together with its very eminent virtues on the other, has deemed it to be worthy of featuring alongside the Médoc's Premiers Crus Classés

Vintage

Excellent growing conditions.

Vineyards

Vines have been cultivated here for at least six centuries, in a vineyard once surrounded by pasture and parkland, now by suburban houses. Despite the encroaching reality of the 21st century, within the walls of the Haut-Brion there lies an excellent *terroir*, typical of Bordeaux in that it revolves around two gravel *croupes* - the same can be said for many of the leading estates of the Médoc. These gravelly mounds rise to the heady altitude of 15 metres, a lofty summit compared to much of the surrounding land, providing two south-east facing slopes perfect for the vine. The soils include ancient stones washed down from the Pyrenees over many millennia, Gunzian gravel peppered with quartz and related minerals, hardened conglomerates of stone and flint. All in all, there are just over 51 hectares of vines which are cared for by vineyard manager Pascal Baratié, who also looks after the vineyard of neighbouring La Mission Haut-Brion.

Harvest

August 31st-October 6th

Maturation

78% in new barrels during 20 month/s

Tasting Notes

The purplish red color is the first sign of this wine's concentration. When swirled in the glass, it displays a deep, warm, very ripe bouquet. It is full of flavor from beginning to end. It is so rich and concentrated that we are tempted to use the word "thick". However, this thickness is in no way synonymous with heaviness thanks to a counterbalancing freshness. 2009 is reminiscent of 2005 in terms of power but is even more concentrated. It also has the ripeness and mouth feel of the 1990 and the 1989. To summarize, the 2009 can be said to be a cross between 2005 & 1989. We are now able to say that it is the most beautiful wine the estate has ever produced.

Production

10,500 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2020-2040



Scores/Awards **98 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012
97-100 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010
100 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012
98-100 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010
97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012
96-98 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2012
95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010
97-100 points - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010
19 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010
17.5 points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - October 2011
18-19+ points - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010
19.5 points/5 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010
98-99 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2010
97 points/19 points - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2010
99 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2010

"This enormous young wine is among the most backward of the vintage at this early stage, with iron-clad grip holding the broad, deep core of blackberry, cassis and roasted fig notes in check for now. The finish is a torrent of dense, almost compressed layers of tobacco leaf, hot paving stone, singed bay leaf and tar that will take at least a decade to massage together fully. This one is for the kids born in 2009. Best from 2020 through 2040. 10,500 cases made"

- JM, Wine Spectator

"A dark and brooding wine, delivering blackberry, black licorice, mahogany, subtle grilled meat and raspberry jam. Full-bodied, with layers of ripe and chewy tannins. Loads of fruit yet subtle and reserved, and a long, long finish. Super fruit yet held back. A 2005 in the remaking, but perhaps slightly supercharged."

- JS, Wine Spectator

"What a blockbuster effort! Atypically powerful, one day, the 2009 Haut-Brion may be considered to be the 21st century version of the 1959. It is an extraordinarily complex, concentrated effort made from a blend of 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc with the highest alcohol ever achieved at this estate, 14.3%. Even richer than the perfect 1989, with similar technical numbers although slightly higher extract and alcohol, it offers up a sensational perfume of subtle burning embers, unsmoked cigar tobacco, charcoal, black raspberries, wet gravel, plums, figs and blueberries. There is so much going on in the aromatics that one almost hesitates to stop smelling it. However, when it hits the palate, it is hardly a letdown. This unctuously textured, full-bodied 2009 possesses low acidity along with stunning extract and remarkable clarity for a wine with a pH close to 4.0. The good news is that there are 10,500 cases of the 2009, one of the most compelling examples of Haut-Brion ever made. It requires a decade of cellaring and should last a half century or more. Readers who have loved the complexity of Haut-Brion should be prepared for a bigger, richer, more massive wine, but one that does not lose any of its prodigious aromatic attractions."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"There are 10,500 cases of the 2009 Haut-Brion, from a blend of 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 14% Cabernet Franc. For technicians, the highest ever natural alcohol, 14.3%, was achieved, with a pH of 3.9, which is about the same as the 1989 and 1990, as well as 1959. This is the kind of wine to send chills even up my spine, and I have been tasting here for nearly 30 years. An extraordinary nose of plum, blueberry, raspberry, crushed rock, and that intriguing floral as well as unsmoked cigar tobacco note (a classic sign of this terroir) is followed by a wine of creamy unctuousness reminiscent of 1989, but there is a freshness, vibrancy and precision that is historic and possibly unprecedented. Some graphite emerges as the wine sits in the glass, but the wine is very thick while at the same time precise and elegant. This is the quintessential expression of one of the greatest wine terroirs of the world. To reiterate, the good news is that there are going to be 10,500 cases of Haut-Brion in 2009, which is about 1,500 more cases than the 9,000 produced in 2005. This wine will probably need 7-8 years of cellaring when released and evolve as well as the 1959 has (which is still a perfect wine today), so we're realistically talking 50-75 years when stored in a cool cellar. (Tasted once.)"

- RP, Wine Advocate

Reviews

"Tasted at the Union de Grand Cru in London. The Chateau Haut-Brion 2009 is blessed with a very complex, but almost understated bouquet, the Cabernet Sauvignon (40%) much more pronounced here imparting more undergrowth/tobacco aromas at present. Very fine definition and freshness but more taciturn. The palate is medium bodied with a brightness on the entry that makes up for the introverted aromatics. Very good acidity, fresh and very tense, again the Cabernet defining the finish with touches of graphite and cedar. Grippy, austere finish at the moment, suggesting that this is a long-term Haut-Brion, but going back and forth between the two neighbours, I feel that this has edge in terms of finesse. Tasted September 2011."

- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted at the chateau. The Haut-Brion '09 is a blend of 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc, 14.3% alcohol, pH 3.84. The bouquet is markedly different from La Mission: far more rounded and opulent, much more sweet, ripe fruit with blackberry, red cherry, cassis and a touch of creme de menthe. This is one of the most decadent Haut-Brion's that I have tasted at this stage. The palate is full-bodied, layers of tannic black fruits, huge structure, dense and demonstrative. Blackberry, a touch of tar and graphite, some black olive towards the finish, almost a tidal wave of flavours. Huge grip on the dry finish, but incredible persistency in the mouth. Tasted April 2010."

- NM, Wine Journal

"95-97 Barrel sample. Haut-Brion's white wine is always a point of reference for a vintage. This has richness and power, but guards great freshness, citrus, lime zest, and beautiful spicy wood."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Saturated bright ruby. The deep, brooding nose is quite marked by the cabernet franc presence, opening slowly with air to offer sexy, soil-driven aromas of violet, raspberry, mocha, minerals and sweet spices. Then rich and sweet in the mouth but with outstanding minerality and enticing violet lift to the ripe red cherry, raspberry, cocoa and black pepper flavors. Offers a stunning combination of concentration, density and balance; as backward and reserved as this wine is today, it manages to come across as graceful. The endless palate-staining finish is loaded with sweet, ripe tannins and an exhilarating note of floral black pepper. This wine made me think of what a blend of the great '89 and '05 Haut-Brion's might taste like."

- ID, International Wine Cellar

"57% of the crop went into this. The alcohol level was 14% in 2005 when there was lots of Merlot, but in 2009 when the assemblage was 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc, it reached 14.3%, the highest ever. What problems did this cause? Jean-Philippe Delmas was asked. 'To find the right yeast.' He smiled, adding, 'and the fermentation was very long: three weeks with a very long malolactic fermentation. This was the first time they had such high alcohols with Cabernet. Dark crimson with a little more blue than La Mission. LOVELY supple exciting nervy nose with a great deal of integrity and complexity already."

Reminds me a little of Ch Margaux in its immediate appeal and class, even if the actual aromas are different (though equally terroir-driven). Real knockout stuff with lovely suppleness on the palate and real grace. Not a blockbuster, amazingly; it seems beautifully balanced. It has the same dense tannic charge but with a bit more fruit and less austerity than La Mission. Very long. So, it's definitely Haut-Brion, just more concentrated than usual! Lots of pleasure and luxury."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Black red, satiny smooth expression of pure fruit, rich and velvety texture with firm tannins that show up after the concentrated fragrance of pure vineyard fruit, beautiful structure and almost massive for Haut-Brion, but this robustness will assure a great and fascinating future."

- SS, Decanter.com

Reviews *“The blend here is 46% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc. Alcohol 14.3%, the highest ever figure (2005 in second place with 14%). Accounts for 57% of the harvest. A darker hue than Le Clarence, and a darker rim. Reticent on the nose, sweet but dusty at the same time. The fruit character although very restrained has a plump, plum and damson character to it, and although very ripe it doesn't move into the raisined spectrum, but it does have a faint edge of alcohol-macerated cherry - just a whisper, but it is there. Very soft and sweet on the start, full and very creamy, seems almost top-heavy at first. The texture is really quite fat, with some vibrantly peppery acidity cutting down the core of the wine. There is a lot of substance and spice here, with a very soft feel that doesn't quite have enough focus to please, possibly a warm-vintage Merlot effect? Perhaps with élevage this will come together and tighten up, but right now I don't find it as convincing as I think I should. Nevertheless, it is a very good wine, but I recall finding the 2008 more convincing than this when I tasted it last year. From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 18-19+/20 (March 2010)”*
- CK, The Wine Doctor
