
Château Haut Brion 2016

CSPC# 801733

750mlx3

14.9% alc./vol.

CSPC# 813914

750mlx6

14.9% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

56% Merlot, 37.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6.5% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

Pessac-Leognan

Classification

Premier Grand Cru Classé

Website

<https://haut-brion.com/#/wines>

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

Winemaker

Jean-Philippe Delmas

Vintage

The unquestionably successful 2016 vintage is due to the conjunction of several important factors.

A rainy period lasting from the 1st of January to the 20th of June replenished water reserves and paved the way for a large potential crop. The significant precipitation between January and late June enhanced vine growth in spring and built up essential water reserves in our gravelly well-drained soil. Quasi-miraculous flowering guaranteed a large crop. A window of opportunity – a spell of splendid weather from the 4th to the 11th of June – miraculously opened in the context of a "spring monsoon". This led to perfectly fertilized flowers producing well-formed, sizeable bunches. An exceptionally dry period from the 1st of July to the 13th of September was conducive to richness and power.

Summer was warm, but not excessively so, and also extremely dry. In fact, this was one of the driest summers in a hundred years... In early summer, our deeply rooted old vines were fortunately able to draw on water reserves accumulated in spring. The month of August was ideal for developing tannic structure in our red wine varieties and sugar levels in the white wine ones. However, these drought conditions were very trying for our young vines with relatively shallow roots. This necessitated the highly unusual step of watering them.

We were really in need of rain by early September! This finally arrived, on the 13th of that month. These 40 mm of rain did a world of good, giving a boost to ripening and refreshing the vines. An Indian summer from the 15th of September to the end of October provided finesse and elegance. The Indian summer, combined with diurnal temperature differences due to cool night-time temperatures, ensured a good end to ripening of the various grape varieties, as well as refined red wine tannins, while maintaining fresh fruitiness.



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 <i>terroir</i> , typical of Bordeaux in that it revolves around two gravel <i>croupes</i> - 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	picked between 19 September and 13 October
Maturation	70% in new barrels during 20 month/s
Tasting Notes	A serious, tightly knit Haut-Brion with structured backbone and reserved flavors. There is less flamboyance and generosity compared with 2015 but the structure is classic – dense, fine-grained tannins with cigar, tobacco and earthy flavors accented by savory herbs and spices. Long finish. A wine to be enjoyed in 10-20 years' time.
Serve with	Chateau Haut Brion is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes. Chateau Haut Brion is also good with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, salmon, mushrooms and pasta.
Production	11,600 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2025-2070
Scores/Awards	<p>98 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2019</p> <p>100 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - November 2018</p> <p>97-99 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017</p> <p>100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019</p> <p>100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017</p> <p>100 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2019</p> <p>97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2017</p> <p>19 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017</p> <p>100 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - December 2018</p> <p>98 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017</p> <p>99 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2017</p> <p>97 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2017</p> <p>18 points - Farr Vintner - February 2017</p> <p>95-98 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017</p> <p>99 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>100 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>95-98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017</p> <p>100 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2019</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Large and in charge, this has a prodigious core of steeped plum, black currant and loganberry fruit flavors that show both compote and coulis aspects. While that steeps, this delivers a sturdy frame of roasted mesquite, smoldering tobacco and incense, surrounding a muscular spine of worn cedar and tar. Still rather backward, this will be showing well when most others from the vintage have had their day. Best from 2025 through 2045. 11,600 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2016 Haut-Brion is blended of 56% Merlot, 37.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6.5% Cabernet Franc. Medium to deep garnet-purple colored, the nose is at once profound and arresting, offering drop-dead gorgeous Morello cherries, lilacs and red rose scents with a core of Black Forest cake, warm blackcurrants and blueberry preserves plus wafts of sandalwood and underbrush. Medium-bodied, the elegantly crafted palate is completely packed with intense floral, mineral and cassis-laced flavors with a firm frame of very finely pixelated tannins and seamless freshness, finishing very long and achingly stunning."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2016 Haut Brion is a blend of 56% Merlot, 37.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6.5% Cabernet Franc that was picked between 19 September and 13 October. Jean-Philippe Delmas told me that this represents a touch more Merlot than last year's vintage. It clearly has a more powerful and intense bouquet compared to the La Mission Haut-Brion, although maybe not the same killer level of detail and delineation. The palate is beautifully balanced with arching tannins that insistently grip the mouth. There are layers of black fruit, minerals, sea salt and a touch of crushed violets. Unlike the 2015 Haut-Brion, this is more linear, stricter and you could argue more nimble on its toes. Yet maybe it does not quite have the same depth and labyrinthine complexity that made the 2015 such an astonishing wine. Nevertheless, this 2016 is not far behind and it will be fascinating to compare in the future."
- NM, Wine Advocate

"Stunning black fruit with plenty of forest berries in there, the whole picture cool and very delicate, also on the concentrated and highly structured palate. The tannins are very fine-grained, but decisively austere and, together with the vibrant acidity, they propel the finish out towards infinity and leave a breathtaking final impression. A blend of 56 per cent merlot, 37.5 per cent cabernet sauvignon and 6.5 per cent cabernet franc. Very long aging potential, but you could try it in 2023"
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is a monument for Haut-Brion and reminds me of the great 1998 but in a modern and bright style. Full-bodied, very tannic and superbly structured yet always agile and vivid. Its energy and dynamic nature grabs you by the shoulder and tells you it's great. Staggeringly precise. It can't get better than this, can it?"
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Immensely tannic, this is a great Haut-Brion, one of the finest for many years. It shows the severe side of this estate, with a dense structure to match the powerful black fruits. Rich with berry flavors and lifted by enough acidity, the wine will age for many years. Drink from 2026. "
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Barrel Sample. Structured and serious, this is complex and dense. Dark black-plum fruits are covered by powerful tannins and ample acidity. It is destined for long, slow aging. (RV)"
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Even deeper colour than La Mission. Broad and spicy and very rich and a compote of warm bricks. (La Mission is more muscular and obviously tannic.) Firm and not over the top. Prances. Transparent and very much Haut-Brion."
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"This has a little more reticence initially on the nose than La Mission, but after a few minutes the rich texture begins to reveal itself, with charcoal, tobacco, dark plum and damson fruits that are straining at the leash. It has hidden power and subtle oak toasting - this clearly feels no need to shout about its presence, but there will be plenty to discover over time. You can feel those tannins licking around your teeth, building up one layer at a time. A great wine En primeur that has settled into greatness. Drinking Window 2026-2046. (JA)"
- JA, Decanter.com

"This stunning wine is flexing its muscles, showing off its power and depth. Perfectly placed, so precise and utterly gorgeous with a hand-in-glove power. The texture is satin, silky and velvety, each strand providing a different take on charcoal, slate, menthol and bilberry, with mouthwatering acidity that suspends the finish for several minutes. Harvesting took place between 19th September and 13th October. 56% Merlot, 37.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6.5% Cabernet Franc aged in 78% new oak. (JA)"
- JA, Decanter.com

Reviews

“Very dark in color, with just a bit of purple in the sheen the wine is the perfect combination of purity, power, refinement, complexity and length. Not as powerful as other recent vintages, you find more elegance on the palate. The finish builds in intensity moving from flavor to flavor, leaving you with this sense of purity and Cuban cigar tobacco. The wine reached 13.9% alcohol with a pH of 3.67. The harvest took place from September 19 to October 13. The wine represents 53% of the Grand Vin.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Ambitious, concentrated and built for the long haul, this is a superb Haut-Brion that’s combines density and concentration with grace and fine balance. Scented, grassy and floral, it shifts into another gear on the palate, with layers of fine tannins, dark, savoury fruit and refreshing acidity. 2028-40”

- TA, timatkin.com

“Without doubt one of the world's greatest and most individual wine estates. The family traditions continue here with Jean-Philippe Delmas running the winemaking as his father and grandfather did before him and Clarence Dillon's great-grandson Robert de Luxembourg in overall charge of this wonderful property. Haut Brion - unlike the other First Growths - has never had a bad period and, for our money, is the most consistently great wine of Bordeaux. Since 1958 it has been bottled in the unique and iconic Haut Brion bottle. Deep colour with a tight, brooding nose of clove, cassis and wood smoke. The palate is tightly wound, with layers of fine tannin holding a dense core of brooding fruit. The lifted acidity gives great finesse to the texture of the wine, which is svelte, precise and fine on a very long, pure cassis finish. Currently more backward than many wines this year, it may take time to reveal its true qualities.”

- Farr Vintners

“Brooding richness the nose has depth the palate has concentrated black fruits. Sweet in the middle the tannins are fine and integrated supple fleshy rich fruit. At the back, fresher fruit gives a lighter feel fragrant stylish but there is sweetness rich fruit on the finish. 2028-48”

- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2016 Haut-Brion has a beguiling sense of purity on the nose, which features scents of blackberry, crushed violet petals, hints of dark chocolate and even a suggestion of fresh fig. Underneath all this is a seam of mineralité that becomes more conspicuous with aeration, tightening everything up. The palate is medium bodied with filigreed tannin, a satiny texture, perfect acidity and incredible harmony. Everything here is in the right place. Quite sensual in style, conveying an enthralling sense of delineation on the long finish. About as good as you will find in this vintage”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2016 Haut-Brion is quite possibly even more magnificent from bottle than it was from barrel. Powerful and rich, yet not at all heavy, the 2016 is a wine of nearly indescribable beauty. Haut-Brion is often a thrilling wine, but it is rarely this finessed in its youth. Gravel, cure meat, tobacco and cedar are some of the many nuances that develop with air, but it is an extraordinary sense of harmony that really stands out. What a wine! (AG)”

- AG, Vinous

“The 2016 Haut-Brion is shaping up to be one of the jewels of the vintage. Towering, powerful and intense, the 2016 is marvelously complete in all of its dimensions. Gravel, bacon fat, black cherry, smoke, leather and licorice are all pushed forward. The 2016 is quite rich, but never heavy. It is especially polished, even understated Haut Brion built more on finesse than power.”

- AG, Vinous

“As to the reds, the 2016 Haut Brion is a prodigious, legendary wine in the making, although it’s not for those seeking instant gratification. Deeper colored and more concentrated than the La Mission Haut Brion, it reveals a purple/ruby color as well as a sensational bouquet of blackcurrants, cassis, cigar tobacco, cold fireplace, violets, and lead pencil. Deep, masculine, structured, and mineral-laced, it has a stacked mid-palate, full-bodied richness, building tannins, and a firm, blockbuster styled finish that lasts for close to a minute. A wine for the ages, don’t even think about opening bottles for at least 7-8 years. It should keep for half a century.”

- Jeb Dunnuck
