

# Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2011

CSPC# 749828

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**

90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris

**Appellation**

Pessac-Léognan

**Website**

www.smith-haut-lafitte.com

**General Info**

Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte has been transformed during the last decade from being a perennial underachiever to being one of the leading estates in the Graves region. For many years it was owned by the Bordeaux négociant Eschenauer - in 1990 it was bought by former Olympic skiing champion, Daniel Cathiard. He cut down on the amount of chemicals and herbicides used in the vineyards, and fully modernised the winemaking facilities. The proportion of new oak barrels used in the maturation process was increased and a trio of eminent oenologists (including the ubiquitous Michel Rolland) were hired as consultants.

**Vintage**

The vintage 2011 can be analyzed dividing the year into two opposite weather phases that were determinant for the white grape's characteristics:

- First period: in advance compared to regular Bordeaux standards, the warm and dry weather induced an early vintage with harvest starting on the 18th of August.
- Second period: a summer with a quite low temperature average that allowed a slow maturation of the grapes preserving their natural acidity.

These two phases were the key to the vintage for vine-growers and winemakers who took great care of the grapes in the first period and waited for perfect slow maturation in the second period.

**Vineyards**

11 hectares being planted to white, specifically 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. The average vine age is 38years, on the usual 101.14 and 3309 rootstocks, and planting density is between 7500 and 10000 vines per hectare. The soils are typical of the region, mainly Gunzian gravel. Yield: 32 hl/ha, before production is divided into 2 wines: Château Smith Haut Lafitte and Les Hauts de Smith

**Harvest**

Harvests of the whites started very early on the 18th of August, with beautiful sunny days and went on for 3 weeks. We waited patiently for the perfect balance of the grapes, hand-picking in the cool mornings, batch by batch within plots, according to the maturity. We then cooled down the grapes to gently press them under neutral atmosphere (without oxygen contact) to preserve their freshness. Our focus is on respecting the grapes in every step of the vinification.

**Maturation**

Fermentation in barrel: 50% new barrels from our integrated cooperage, and 50% barrels used for one previous vintage. Ageing in barrel with regular bâtonnage (lees stirring) for 12 months.

**Tasting Notes**

The result is spectacular. Smith Haut Lafitte white 2011 is one of the best wines we have ever produced: a rare perfection in the crystal-clear balance of this wine. Its color is pale yellow with light green hue. The first nose is bright and vibrant, dominated by white-flesh fruits. Swirling it releases an explosion of aromas and freshness with white fruits (white peach, citrus fruits, lemon, grapefruit...), white flowers and lime-tree flowers. The nose is very expressive, complex and elegant. In mouth, the wine shows its vivid tension and intense character right at the attack. The concentration and the beautiful maturity follow; and balance the aroma freshness. This mouth is superbly well-shaped between matter and lightness with the freshness leading an endless length. White and citrus fruits, white flowers, spices, flint, vanilla... combine in a demonstration of aromatic complexity where the last word remains pleasure.

**Cellaring**

Drink 2012-2032



**Scores/Awards** **94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2013  
**93-96 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2012  
**89 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #212 - April 2014 (score only)  
**90-93 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012 (score only)  
**92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - April 2012  
**96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2014  
**95-96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2012  
**94-96 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 11, 2012  
**91-94 points** - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - July 2012  
**17.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012  
**17.5 point** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2012  
**90 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)  
**93 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2012  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 10, 2014  
**94-96 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 25, 2012  
**92-94+ points** - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - October 2013  
**16.5+ points** - Farr Vintner - March 2012  
**86-89 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2011  
**89-91 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2012  
**93 points** - Falstaff Magazine - April 2012 (score only)  
**17.5 points** - Gault & Millau - April 2012 (score only)  
**17.5-18.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

**Reviews** *"Loaded with layers of blanched almond, white peach, yellow apple and Cavaillon melon fruit flavors, all backed by piercing chamomile, fleur de sel, citrus oil and green plum notes. The finish shows vivacious acidity. This is the rare dry white Bordeaux that actually needs cellaring. Best from 2015 through 2020"*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Shows lovely ripeness, with peach, melon rind and yellow apple fruit flavors, but still plenty tangy, with fleur de sel and gooseberry notes along the edges. Very long, with a great interplay between ripe fruit and bracing minerality. Mouthwatering finish. Score range: 93-96"*  
- JS, Wine Spectator

*"A blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc and 5% each of Semillon and Sauvignon Gris, this has a lifted mineral-rich bouquet scents of oyster shell, yuzu and apricot with fine delineation (the Sauvignon Blanc not particularly evident.) It is very attractive and very well defined. The palate is fresh and crisp on the entry, showing more weight and structure than the Les Haut de Smith but has a similar flavour profile. It has a satisfying citric kick on the finish. Excellent. Tasted April 2012."*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*"This is truly great Smith white, with electrifying fruit and structure. It sends shivers down my back. Complex aromas of sliced lemon, minerals, stone, candied fruit and cream. It's full-bodied, with bright acidity and a lively finish. It goes on for minutes. A wine for the future - but who can wait? Drink or hold."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Wow. This shows a beautiful density of fruit for this white with mango, papaya, mineral and light honey character. Long and subtle with plenty of gorgeous fruit. Grand cru Burgundy quality. Salty and mineraly. Lively."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"94-96. Barrel sample. Showing a judicious blend of new wood and ripe fruit, this is a wine that has a creamed-apple texture. It's full of bright grapefruit, sweet apple and green plum flavors."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"Bright, pale yellow. Vanilla and clove complement green mango, green fig and floral aromas on the deep nose. Rich, dense and suave, with lovely balance to the white fruit and aromatic herb flavors. Finishes long and pure, with chewy vanillin oak tannins supported by mid-palate material."*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar

**Reviews** *“Clear pale straw. Smokey and attractively (lightly) reductive. Rich and full and concentrated with great freshness. Citrus purity rounded out by the creamy oak texture. Alive and really long. Drink 2015-2025.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“Pale lemon-gold, richly aromatic for a Sauvignon-dominated wine that shows perfect ripeness of fruit. It has both breadth and depth of flavour and an exciting future.”*  
- SS, Decanter.com

*“Maybe I was a little hard on this when I tasted it in Bordeaux, because a subsequent sighting in London was more satisfactory. Not as good as the red, by any means, but the oak has settled into the wine over the last month, allowing its grapefruit and fresh herb flavours to express themselves. 3 + years.”*  
- TA, timatkin.com

*“With a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon and 5% Sauvignon Gris, the wine popped with vanilla bean, smoke, citrus, apple, stone and spicy tones. Rich, soft, fresh and refreshing, the wine finished with pomelo and lemon peel in the crisp finish “*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Blending 90% Sauvignon Blanc with equal parts Semillon and Sauvignon Gris, the wine will be aged in 50% new oak. Fresh-squeezed lemon, honeysuckle and grapefruit in the nose, which opens to a fleshy, mineral-driven, lively, concentrated and fresh citrus oil finish tinged with vanilla. 94-96 Pts”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Attractive golden straw with silver highlights; complex nose – oyster shell, citrus notes, limes; deep and full; palate has nice mouth feel and body but also zap – grapefruit, limes and citrus freshness. Great length. This is already wonderful but needs 5 years to show its best and will last the distance. Drink now-2025+ 93+ UGC Oct '13 [Earlier note] Palest grey/gold; grapefruit, zest and some polish; restrained; big palate; lively and zesty with some barrique notes along with citrus tones, spices and grapefruit; roundness; good fruit and length. Very good effort. 92-94+”*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

*“11 hectares at Smith Haut Lafitte are planted with white varieties - 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. Elevage of the white wine is in 50% new oak. 2011 was the earliest ever harvest here, starting on August 18th. This is a wine of great balance with gorgeous creamy oak and vanilla flavours yet fresh and streamlined. Racy yet exotic. Lovely balance.”*  
- Farr Vintners

*“The nose has a floral charm the spring flowers backed by freshness. The palate is richer peaches and tropical fruits with the grapefruit and apple freshness coming through towards the back lifting the flavours.”*  
- Derek Smedley MW

*“A lovely white from Smith Haut Lafitte with detailed stone fruits and generous mid palate. There is a bit less concentration here than in previous few years of their whites but nonetheless balanced, fresh and lively. An elegant white wine with good length.”*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com

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