

## Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2012

CSPC# 749828

750mlx12

14.0 % alc./vol.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Grape Variety</b>  | 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris  |
| <b>Appellation</b>    | Pessac-Léognan   |
| <b>Classification</b> | Grand Vin de Graves  |
| <b>Website</b>        | www.smith-haut-lafitte.com   |
| <b>General Info</b>   | <p>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.</p>   |
| <b>Vintage</b>        | <p>After a chaotic beginning of the vine cycle: early bud break and blockage in April (cold and wet); the vine found back a proper growing path with the beautiful weather conditions from May to September. However, the delay and heterogeneity undergone because of this difficult start of the vine cycle was to be felt all year long. Once more, the reality of great terroirs, the efforts made in the quest for the balance between the plant and the soil, the vitality of the soils and the low yield reduced greatly these gaps and induced a slow yet complete maturity of the grapes.</p>   |
| <b>Vineyards</b>      | <p>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: 31 hl/ha, before production is divided into 2 wines: Château Smith Haut Lafitte and Les Hauts de Smith</p>  |
| <b>Harvest</b>        | <p>After some manual in-the-field sorting from the young vines (from the 4th to the 12th of September), the white harvest really started on the 13th of September. The decrease in temperatures and some rain episodes were necessary at the end of the maturation. This date is a crucial point in this white harvest. From this day on, we witnessed plots evolving very fast, going from a stage of clear under-maturity to a stage of proper beautiful ripeness, with crisps and aromatic berries in 48 and even 24 hours times. Therefore, we had to show great reactivity to pick at the right time.</p>   |
| <b>Maturation</b>     | <p>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.</p>  |
| <b>Tasting Notes</b>  | <p>Château Smith Haut Lafitte white 2012 offers a bright, vibrant pale-yellow colour with green hue. The first nose, quite discreet, offers delicate notes of white fruits and flowers. Through aeration the nose opens up to become very expressive, complex, rich with an explosion of yellow fruits, peach, apricot, mango, citrus fruits (grapefruit), sweet spices, star anise and even a hint of caramel. This nose, both mature and refreshing, reflects perfectly the good weather conditions at the end of grape maturation. On the palate, the subtle balance between acidity freshness and fruit maturity appears clearly to give the wine a harmony of ripeness, richness, tension and vivacity. The attack is tense, then the mouth enlarges to become dense, more unctuous with a sense of fatness. And the acidity dimension comes back to add lightness and freshness on a very long finale that emphasizes this wine aroma complexity through yellow and white fruits, broom flower, spices, vanilla, stone flint... A very mineral mouth, undoubtedly marked by the terroir.</p> |
| <b>Production</b>     | 2,500 cases made   |
| <b>Cellaring</b>      | Drink 2015-2040  |



**Scores/Awards** **94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015  
**92-95 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013  
**95 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015  
**93-95 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2013  
**92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013  
**94 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015  
**95-96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013  
**95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast – October 1, 2014  
**92-94 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast – October 4, 2013  
**90-92 points** - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - June 2013  
**16.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013  
**17.25 point** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013  
**95 points** - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013  
**92 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)  
**92 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013  
**93-95 points** - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 10, 2013  
**17+ points** - Farr Vintner - March 2013  
**88-93 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013  
**88 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013  
**91-93 points** - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 16, 2013  
**91-93 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only)  
**17.5 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)  
**16 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)  
**17.5-18.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)  
**17 points** - Bettane & Desseaveu (score only)

**Reviews** *"Packed, with dense straw, tarragon, white peach, chamomile and tangerine notes, this is still a touch tight but should unfurl fully soon enough. Shows lovely cut despite the weight, ending with a long echo of yellow chartreuse and salted butter. Drink now through 2020. 2,500 cases made."*  
 - JM, Wine Spectator

*"Lovely, with a kiss of brioche and toasted macadamia nut leading the way, followed by yellow apple, fennel, white peach and green almond notes. Long finish retains the toasty hint but shows lovely purity too. Gorgeous. Score range: 92-95"*  
 - JS, Wine Spectator

*"The grand vin, the 2012 Smith Haut Lafitte, offers up lovely honeysuckle, orange marmalade, white peach, fig, and caramelized citrus notes. Medium to full-bodied, with great concentration and length, and a stunningly long finish, it should last for 20-25 years."*  
 - RP, Wine Advocate

*"Under the capable hands of the Cathiard family, this property has been producing fabulous red and white wines. The 2012, another brilliant effort, exhibits notes of orange rind, figs, mangoes, pineapples and caramelized citrus presented in a full-bodied, heady, powerful style. It should drink well for 15-20 years."*  
 - RP, Wine Advocate

*"Tasted from a barrel sample at en primeur. A blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc and 5% Semillon and 5% Sauvignon Gris (the latter to increase the density of the wine), the 2012 has a well-defined bouquet with lime, fresh apple, apricot blossom and cold stone. The palate is very well balanced with fresh dewy green apples, lime and citrus peel. There is a slight resinous quality on the spicy/lemongrass finish imparted by the Sauvignon Gris, with very good length. This is an excellent wine. Tasted April 2013."*  
 - NM, Wine Journal

*"This is very deep and sensual for the vintage with blackberry, tobacco, chocolate, coffee and spice character. Full body, super-integrated tannins and a long, long finish. Superb for the vintage. Give it three or four years to come around but already gorgeous."*  
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

**Reviews** *"This is fabulous. It's a white that is so vertical with wonderful depth of fruit and structure. It goes on for minutes. Dense and complex. It's so structured and amazing. Peaches and mineral with a salty and savory character. It is captivating to taste now."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"A richly rounded wine, impressively dense and powerful. Its ripe tropical and green fruits are integrating well with the toast from wood aging to give great swathes of complex fruit and structure. This is a wine for the long haul. Drink from 2017."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"92–94. Barrel sample. Warm, ripe, fruity and opulent, this wine has remarkable weight. Very rounded and rich on the palate, it boasts ripe apricot and dried peach flavor and a touch of pepper that reveals its alcohol."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"Purple-ruby. Enticing aromas of blackcurrant, tobacco, violet and herbs. Creamy-sweet and rather powerful on entry, then brighter in the mid-palate, with lively acidity energizing dark fruit, floral and tobacco flavors. This is densely packed for a 2012, but also has a degree of finesse I haven't found in some past, bigger vintages of this wine. Finishes with building, smooth tannins and terrific persistence. A very strong vintage for this wine; this is yet another example of an estate that lowered the proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon in its 2012 blend (normally it's 60% to 65%)."*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar

*"Slightly stinky Sauvignon aromas. Tight. Then it broadens and sweetens on the palate to something much richer and more distinctive. Just a little sugary but this is to split hairs."*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*"Beautiful lemon-yellow colour, slightly exotic/spicy nose and flavours from the Sauvignon Gris in the vineyard, generous fruit, character and class."*  
- SS, Decanter.com

*"Slightly richer firmer in colour and nose, good, I like this, one to develop, really quite burly for a white wine, touch of diacetyl buttery aromas, but well masked, not too overpowering. A great foodie white wine, well structured, and excellent typicity of the best whites of the region. 95 / 18.5. Outstanding. Drink 2014-2022."*  
- JA, The New Bordeaux

*"The white wine from this excellent property isn't quite as good as the red in 2012, but that's partly a reflection of the high quality of the latter wine. This is still a special blend: leesy, exotic and ripe, with hints of pineapple and stone fruit, a touch of tangerine and a broad, textured finish. Drink: 2014-20"*  
- TA, timatkin.com

*"Palest silver/green; full and broad; some wax and grapefruit; lots of density to the palate; very ripe material; weight and density here; with very good length. 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sémillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris. 92-94+ Tasted Monday April 8, 2013 Pessac-Léognan tasting at Chateau Olivier [Later note] Steely silver/green; grapefruit, lees, quite serious; some ginger spice; deep; very full almost waxy palate. Very full, very good indeed. 93-95 Tasted Wednesday April 10, 2013 at UGC"*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

**Reviews** *"11 hectares at Smith Haut Lafitte are planted with white varieties - 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. Elevation of the white wine is in 50% new oak. Lemons, pineapples and melons on the nose here. The palate is sexy, plump and exotic like a tropical fruit juice, but balanced with citrus zip and fresh acidity. Concentrated, long and spicy. Very impressive."*  
- Farr Vintners

*"The nose has an attractive floral character with lots of fresh lime and lemon. Although there is freshness on the start of the palate the mid palate is rich with lots of ripe tropical fruits and melon fleshiness. The grapefruit and apple on the back-palate refreshes and brings out the flavours on the finish. 2014-19."*  
- Derek Smedley MW

*"Soft, succulent red with firm tannins and an array of spicy, dark berry fruit flavours. Well composed red that is balanced and charming in this challenging vintage. Good depth and fairly long length. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (06-Apr-2013)"*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com

*"Expressive nose with predominant toasted oak aromas. Fruit is more backward. Supple palate with polished tannins and finesse yet fruit still a little reticent. (16-Apr-2013)"*  
- en.gilbertgaillard.com

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