

Le Petit Cheval Blanc 2021

CSPC# 845039

750mlx3

14.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

83% *Sauvignon Blanc*, 17% *Semillon*

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Bordeaux Blanc

Website

<https://www.chateau-cheval-blanc.com/en/vintages/>

Watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjNnOdTiQus>

Sustainability

Biodiversity is blooming at Cheval right now - 40 brebis goats and sheep since October 2019, alongside pigs, 200 Bresse chicken, 40 egg-laying chickens and 16 beehives. They have planted 850 fruit trees this winter among the vines, and no longer work the soils.

General Info

The story of Petit Cheval Blanc began in 2006, when Château Cheval Blanc acquired Château La Tour du Pin, an eight-hectare vineyard producing red wine under the Saint-Émilion Grand Cru appellation. Part of the terroir offered fine potential for white wine, and so the decision was taken to convert it: this would become the birthplace of a white Bordeaux.

The former La Tour du Pin vineyard underwent a profound restructuring.

Implementing such an ambitious project was lengthy and complex, in order to answer the question: if Cheval Blanc were a white wine, what would it be? The ultimate goal was to create a wine respecting the six fundamental qualities of Cheval Blanc: freshness, complexity, potential for aging, depth, length and purity. Five vintages were produced yet never released, constituting necessary steps along the path to excellence.

Le Petit Cheval will be sold as a generic AOC white Bordeaux Blanc because AOC law does not allow white wine grapes in Saint Emilion. According to Pierre-Olivier Clouet, the Technical Director of Cheval Blanc who spearheaded the project, the wine reminds him in some ways of a great Sancerre from the Loire Valley.

Cheval Blanc also maintains an interest in the Mendoza region of Argentina where they produce the wine, Cheval des Andes.

Winemakers

Pierre-Olivier Clouet - technical director

Vintage

The 2021 vintage is average in terms of rainfall (789 mm), as is the temperature (13.8°C), which is nevertheless one degree lower than in the last three vintages. The heavy rainfall in May (102 mm) and June (166 mm) was significantly above normal, as the average for these months since 1955 is around 60 mm.

The vintage was characterised by a summer of alternating sun and rain. In mid-August, drier weather, with occasional showers, set in until the relatively late harvest.

A very classic, average cycle: bud-break, which began around March 15th, was relatively long, with an average around March 26th. Flowering was prompt, at the beginning of June, veraison began at the end of July and finished at the beginning of August. It was not until a few days before the harvest that moderate water stress appeared.

Vineyards

Located on the edge of Pomerol, the vineyard has a very particular terroir. The vineyard is characterized by a combination of clay and sandy soils planted with Produced under the Bordeaux Blancs Secs appellation, Le Petit Cheval is the result of an adventure and a challenge that Château Cheval Blanc launched more than 10 years ago: that of producing a very great white wine on a terroir historically renowned for its red wines. If the initial idea was to produce a wine intended for an exclusively family and friendly production, very quickly, that of making a very great wine was obvious. Embodying in essence the identity of Cheval Blanc, Le Petit Cheval Blanc enjoys a plot that is entirely dedicated to it. This 6.6-hectare vineyard was formerly that of the Tour du Pin. Benefiting from its own vinification and aging tool, Le Petit Cheval Blanc is thus assembled from a mosaic of 13 different plots combining vines planted on sandy soils and clay soils.

For more than 10 years, Château Cheval Blanc has challenged itself to produce a great white wine on this small 6.6 hectares vineyard nested in the parcels of its elder. A genuine variation, in white, of the identity of Cheval Blanc, this wine is a blend of some 12 different plots, on sandy and clay soils, where 80% sauvignon blanc and 20% sémillon fit perfectly.



Harvest	The harvest, late for this vintage, ran from 10 to 16 September.
Vinification/ Maturation	Pressing and light settling precedes fermentation in demi-muids (600L), tuns (15hL) and wooden vats (15, 20, 25 and 30 hL). Following the vinification, the first daily bâtonnage gradually decrease according to the tastings carried out by the team. Following the assembly carried out in February, the wines are aged for 18 months before being racked, stabilized, fined, then clarified, and bottled on May 16, 2023.
Tasting Notes	Yellow colour with green highlights. A nose of great freshness and precision, with a fine diversity of white-fleshed and citrus fruits. The wine's energy is already perceptible. On the palate, the attack is full, straight, and full-bodied. It is well balanced between acidity, tension, and volume. The bitterness gives a long, lingering finish on the palate, giving it a salivating minerality.
Serve with	Goes well with appetizer course of shellfish, oysters (especially), or cheese and fruit. Chateau Cheval Blanc is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	2,466 cases made
Cellaring	Drink now till 2027
Scores/Awards	<p>91 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2024</p> <p>90 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p>89-91 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - May 2022</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - September 2023</p> <p>94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2024</p> <p>95 points - Farr Vintners - September 2023</p> <p>94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2022</p> <p>Review Only - K&L Wine Merchants- June 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Fresh, with a dusting of chalk over lemon pith and chamomile notes, backed by grapefruit peel and quinine accents on the lengthy finish. Nicely focused throughout. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2027. 2,466 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"A rich and exotic blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon, the 2021 Le Petit Cheval Blanc bursts with aromas of green mango, passion fruit, lime and white flowers, followed by a medium-bodied, ample and fleshy palate that's satiny, textural and perfumed."</i> - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Thanks to rather cool conditions in 2021, Bordeaux's white grapes preserved acidity and vibrant aromatics, delivering the finest set of dry whites since 2017. Chiseled and intense, they exhibit considerable potential."</i> - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"White pear, sage, mango, and citrus set the tone for this vibrant and juicy vintage of Le Petit Cheval. A touch of fennel and aniseed bitterness on the finish contrasts with a lovely density through the mid palate, and the whole thing is given lift, salinity, and spice from waves of subtle oyster shell, lime zest and ginger. Lingering finish, great quality. Very few Bordeaux whites have this kind of long barrel ageing on lees, 10% new oak, spread across a mix of 600l demi-muids for 20% of the volume and the rest in larger oak casks in a range of sizes."</i> - JA, Decanter.com</p> <p><i>"Crisp, bright, and fresh, as well as exotic, the nose exudes fresh, yellow citrus, Granny Smith apples, pear, orange rind, and honeysuckle. The palate follows the nose with its lush, crisp, display of waxy lemons, grapefruits, and tangerines, along with a dab of round to add the right touch of sweetness. Drink from 2024-2037."</i> - JL, thewinecellarinsider.com</p> <p><i>"80% Sauvignon Blanc 20% Semillon. 20 months in mostly demi-muids. Mirabelle plums, lime leaf, white pepper and pea shoot snap with a rush of candied melon, sweet-sour pineapple, kiwi, and ripe yellow pepper. Just the right level of bitter pithiness on the mid palate, with star fruit, grapefruit granita and a refreshing saline note, like the salt on the rim of a cocktail glass. Very long and with some textural crystallised fruit adding texture, and passionfruit peeping through on the persistent finish."</i> - Farr Vintners</p>

Reviews *“The 2021 Le Petit Cheval (Blanc) is fabulous. Silky and intensely aromatic, with tons of Sauvignon Blanc character, the 2021 is all raciness. Pear, slate, mint, crushed rocks, lime and white pepper abound, all framed by brisk acids and gorgeous saline undertones. The 2021 is 80% Sauvignon Blanc and 20% Semillon. It aged for 22 months, mostly in foudres and wood uprights. What a wine!*
Two-thousand twenty-one is a brilliant vintage for the dry whites of Bordeaux. It is an unusual year in which the wines have the energy that is often associated with cooler seasons, but the textural richness that is often only achieved in warm years. That duality makes the best 2021 whites compelling and absolutely riveting in the finest examples.”
- AG, Vinous

“What a fabulous wine this is. From the great white Bordeaux vintage of 2021 comes this gem from one of the finest estates in Bordeaux. Perfect balance with citric elements on the nose and palate. Also, quite rich on the palate-try with lobster when it arrives.”
- K&L Wine Merchants
