

## Château Haut Bages Libéral 2017

CSPC# 831117

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

CSPC# 891880

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot

### Appellation

Pauillac

### Classification

5ème Cru Classé

### Website

[http://www.hautbagesliberal.com/\\_flash/index.html](http://www.hautbagesliberal.com/_flash/index.html)

### General Info

The name of Château Haut-Bages Libéral has two roots. The LIBERAL family ran the property in the early eighteenth century. Brokers from father to son, they sold the harvest in the Netherlands and Belgium. Their name adjoining to the topographical designation, earned them to be invited worldwide to the table of political parties of the same name. Over time, these connoisseurs gathered the best soils of Pauillac. Thus, this 5<sup>th</sup> Classified Growth in 1855 now has half of its vineyards adjacent to Château Latour and the other half behind Château Pichon Baron, on the heights of the locality "Bages", a large plateau in the south of Pauillac.

The property would regain his youth when, in 1960, the Cruse family, owner of Château Pontet Canet, another 5th Classified Growth in Pauillac, acquired the property. The Cruse would launch an extensive program of replanting the vineyard. However, it was in 1983 at the arrival of the Villars family that Château Haut-Bages Libéral really recovered its former glory. Today, the property is run by Claire Villars Lurton. She undertook an overhaul of the tool of winemaking and she directs the vineyard management to a sustainable viticulture.

### Winemakers

Claire Villars Lurton. Winemaking consultant Eric Boissenot

### Sustainability

Today, Claire Villars-Lurton owns the estate; she has undertaken a complete overhaul of the winemaking tool and is orienting her management of the vineyard towards a sustainable viticulture. The vintage is now undergoing certification in organic and biodynamics farming. The estate is in the process of getting its organic agriculture certification with the aim of achieving certification in biodynamics. Château Haut-Bages Libéral oversees a 30-hectare vineyard with an exceptional terroir located on the famous Bages plateau that rests on Garonne gravel soil dating back to the Gunz Ice Age.

### Vintage

Winter had a very significant rainfall deficit. The first part of the winter was cold, while the second part experienced rather mild temperatures. The budburst was relatively early.

The frosts that hit the southern part of the Medoc vineyards at the end of April 2017 spared the Pauillac vineyards due to the protective role of the river, which helps regulate weather. The berries reached the perfect stage of ripeness to have an ideal tannin-acidity balance while maintaining great aromatic freshness. The mild weather of May and June accentuated the precocity of vegetative growth. The early flowering was very homogeneous, and it ensured an excellent fruit set.

Our plots in biodynamic cultivation showed a particularly interesting health profile with sustainably healthy foliage, especially after the summer rains and on early September when the pressure was high. At the harvest, the skin of the grapes was thick, the seeds were ripe, the pulps were aromatic and the tannins not so astringent. 2017 is characterized by ripe tannins; the wines are balanced, aromatic and dense.

### Vineyards

The 30-hectare property is superbly sited in the south of the Pauillac appellation between Château Latour and the 2 Pichon's. The vineyards (Cabernet Sauvignon 75%, Merlot 25%, lie on deep gravel beds over limestone.



<b>Maturation</b>	The wines are matured in oak barriques (40% new) for 16 months. Since Claire Villars has been at the helm, the wines have become deeper in colour and more concentrated, with notable depth of fruit. It is classified as a 5ème Cru Classé.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Bright ruby red color with a fruity and fragrant nose with aromas of cherries and blackcurrant. The finish is supple and round, with a well-integrated freshness. A charming wine, harmonious and easy to drink.
<b>Production</b>	10,000 cases
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2025-2035
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<b>90-93 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2018 <b>94 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2020 <b>92 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2020 <b>91-93 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2018 <b>16 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2018 <b>92 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2018 <b>92 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2020 <b>89-92 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2018
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"Solid, with dark plum and currant fruit forming the core, while tobacco and iron accents add bass and cut through the finish. Has the fresh cut of the vintage."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"This is very floral with blueberry, fresh-currant and currant-bush aromas. Crushed stones. Medium body and creamy, lightly chewy tannins with citrus and blueberries. Tangy and pretty. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"Fresh and juicy, this wine is quite a change in style for this estate. The wine's fine tannins are impressive, giving richness as well as succulence. Drink from 2023."</i> - RV, Wine Enthusiast</p> <p><i>"91–93. Barrel Sample. This is a solid, foursquare style of wine with some firm tannins that should soften as the fruit develops. There is brightness and plenty of fruit at the core, waiting its turn. Drink from 2024"</i> - RV, Wine Enthusiast</p> <p><i>"Deep cherry with smudgy rim. Lifted cherry fruit on the nose – pretty and bright. Soft, supple and rather gentle but all in balance. Creamy finish"</i> - JH, JancisRobinson.com</p> <p><i>"No frost affects at this estate in 2017, and the wine starts out well, majoring in bright dark fruits, but again this is extremely austere and needs time in the bottle to soften. Clear spice that once unfolded contributes to the excellent aromatics and the backbone suggests good ageing ahead. On the reductive side now, with notes of violet and rose. Drinking Window 2024-2038. (JA)"</i> - JA, Decanter.com</p> <p><i>"The 2017 Haut-Bages Libéral is dense, powerful and quite rich. Red cherry, blood orange, pomegranate and spice all build in the glass. The 2017 boasts quite a bit of density and concentration but perhaps a bit less nuance. It remains to be seen whether the 2017 will accrue more finesse as the new oak (45%) integrates over time. (AG)"</i> - AG, Vinous</p> <p><i>"The 2017 Haut-Bages Libéral is dense, pliant and nuanced, with plenty of red cherry, blood orange, smoke and spice notes that give the wine a decidedly exotic character. There is good depth and resonance to the 2017, if not quite the finesse or balance of the other wines in Claire Lurton's range. Haut-Bages Libéral is now a fully biodynamic property. (AG)"</i> - AG, Vinous</p>

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