

Château Haut Bages Libéral 2021

CSPC# 742344

750mlx12

13.2% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot
Appellation	Pauillac
Classification	5ème Cru Classé
Website	https://www.gc-lurton-estates.com/fr/chateau-haut-bages-liberal.html
Sustainability	Environmentally friendly agriculture. The vineyard is both organic (since 2019) and biodynamic (Demeter, since 2021) certified. The property has been operating for over 15 years in agroecology and agroforestry to favor soil biodiversity.
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 th 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	Thomas Bontemps. Winemaking consultant Eric Boissenot
Vintage	After a complicated spring and summer (frost, sagging, cold), strong mildew pressure caused us to lose almost half the harvest. But fortunately, this will not impact the quality of the vintage 2021 of Château Haut-Bages Libéral. The wine is brilliant, powerful, elegant, and vibrant. At the end of a splendid month of September, the result is there: a very good vintage which is characterized by a lot of minerality and salinity and by long and ripe tannins. This difficult year reveals once again the crucial importance of the terroir and confirms our technical orientations which aim to respect and to enhance it. In our vineyard, trees, flowers, and cereals mingle with the vines. This ecosystem encourages the development of biodiversity and revitalizes our soil. Earthworms, fungi, and bacteria help the vine to feed itself and to be more resilient to disease. The connection between the soil and the vines allows us to produce grapes with complexity, and they are also a source of living, saline wines, with a softer tannic structure. It is in less sunny vintages like 2021 that agroecology and biodynamics allow our grapes to approach the excellence of the greatest years.
Vineyards	Half of the vineyard is located on a limestone ridge at the edge of the river and is close to Château Latour. The second part of the vineyard is located on the height of the place called "Bages" composed of deep bass, among the most qualitative qualities of the Pauillac appellation. Ideally located along the Gironde estuary, the vineyard enjoys a mild and humid microclimate which protects the vines severe weather and frost. The presence of limestone in the heart of the vineyard, very rare within the Pauillac appellation brings freshness and elegance to the style of the wine.
Maturation	The wines are matured in oak barriques (40% new, 40% 1-yr old) for 16 months, and also 20% aged in Amphorae. 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.



Tasting Notes	The wine has a beautiful balance, velvety tannins, and an unctuous body. The 2021 contains more Cabernet Sauvignon than ever before, and this gives it a powerful, expressive style with cedar and aromatic spices alongside a core of blackcurrant, red plum, and a floral lift. It is brilliant, powerful, elegant, and vibrant. A lot of minerality and salinity and long and ripe tannins. There's structure here with a grippy finish that will soften with time.
Serve with	Chateau Haut Bages Liberal is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Haut Bages Liberal is also good with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Cellaring	Drink 2027-2045
Scores/Awards	<p>92+ points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p>91-93 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p>16+ points - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com (score only) - May 2022</p> <p>93 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - February 2024</p> <p>91 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p>90-92 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p>92 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p>95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p>94-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>91 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>89 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p>95 points - Terres de Vins (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>92-94+ points - Colin Hay, The Drinks Business (score only) - September 2022</p> <p>92-93 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - May 2022</p> <p>92-93 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - May 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"The 2021 Haut-Bages-Libéral has turned out nicely, unfurling in the glass with aromas of cassis, minty berries, pencil shavings and cigar wrapper, followed by a medium to full-bodied, deep, and layered palate that's impressively concentrated, built around a muscular frame of ripe, powdery tannins that assert themselves on the youthfully structured finish. It will reward a bit of patience."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Containing fully 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2021 Haut-Bages-Libéral offers up aromas of rich berries, plums, loamy soil, licorice, and spices. Medium to full-bodied, lively, and youthfully primary, with lively acids and powdery tannins that assert themselves on the finish, I suspect it will flesh out nicely with élevage to number among the sleepers of the vintage. Tasted twice.</i></p> <p><i>Claire Villars-Lurton took over this 30-hectare estate in 2000 and shortly after initiated a viticultural revolution. Herbicides were banished in 2004; in 2005, cover crops were introduced; soon after, organic conversion began; and farming has been biodynamic since 2007. The unaccustomed competition in the vineyard initially resulted in very low yields and rather firm wines, but in recent years, Haut-Bages-Libéral has really come into its own, delivering a rather fleshy, charming style of Pauillac that deserves to be better known. The vineyards themselves are situated both on clay-limestone soils north of Château Latour and on the plateau of Bages between Lynch-Bages and Pichon-Baron. In 2021, a Mistral sorting machine was employed to eliminate mildew-impacted berries."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"This is already open and delicious with cherry, cassis, blueberry, and chocolate-orange character. Some peach notes, too. Medium to full body with velvety, ripe, and plush tannins. Caressing, yet it remains firm and solid. Lovely, creamy finish. 90% cabernet sauvignon and 10% merlot. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"Very aromatic on the nose, this has savoury, fruit and floral tones, liquorice, cola and earth with cranberries, strawberries, and black cherries. Dense and quite darkly fruited on the palate but with a brightness from the acidity giving a mouthwatering attack before the flavours deepen and widen in the mouth. So many layers, really showing the Pauillac power: everything presented in high definition with a bold structure even though the individual elements are so precise and defined. It's racy and confident but</i></p>

Reviews *also complex with a spiced cedar, clove, cinnamon, liquorice, and wet stone/ chalky element to the tannins that fill the mouth and don't let go. A lovely wine with lots of potential from Claire Villars-Lurton! 65% grand vin. A blend of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon - the highest percentage ever - and 10% Merlot, which usually comprises between 15 to 25% of the blend. 11.5% press wine. Ageing 16 months, 40% new oak, 40% one-year-old oak, 20% amphoras."*
- GH, Decanter.com

"A successful Haut Bages Libéral, with juicy black cassis fruits, firm Pauillac tannins with a eucalyptus and white pepper twist on the finish. 40% new oak here. This is an estate that is in full evolution right now, with an impressive commitment to doing things differently - they are just uprooting a 1ha plot in front of the chateau, for example, to replant as agroforestry. First year officially certified Ecocert. 49hl/ha yield."
- JA, janeanson.com

"Flowers and tobacco leaf accompany the bright red fruits on the nose and palate. Medium-bodied, with a softness as well as sweetness in the fresh red currants on the palate, and a touch of refreshing spearmint in the finish. The wine will be easy to enjoy just about on release. The wine was produced from a blend of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Merlot. This represents the highest percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend in the history of the estate, 13.2% ABV. Drink from 2024-2039."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2021 Haut-Bages-Libéral, aged 20% in amphorae and bottled in June, has a very typical Pauillac nose with graphite and pencil shavings littered across the black fruit—quite delineated and focused. The palate is medium-bodied with crisp tannins and flavors that echo the aromas. Nicely structured with good persistence on the finish, this has developed well during its barrel maturation and should give a lot of pleasure over the next 15 to 20 years."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2021 Haut-Bages Libéral is a powerful, dense wine. Black cherry, mocha, plum, licorice and incense are all amplified in a brooding, dense Pauillac endowed with notable textural richness and tons of sheer power. Aeration releases the wine's bracing acidity and aromatics, yet the 2021 remains quite rich. Yields were just 31.5 hectoliters-per-hectare, about 30% lower than normal. Haut-Bages Libéral is a rare 2021 that needs time to shed some of its considerable baby fat. It's a seriously impressive wine from Claire Lurton. The 2021 was aged 40% in new oak, 40% in once-filled barrels and 20% in a combination of amphora and concrete vat."
- AG, Vinous

"Dark ruby, narrow purple rim. Fine cedar notes over tobacco savouriness, blackberry aromas lie over subtle herbal notes. Medium-bodied, red cherry fruit, delicate wood nuances, salty note with fresh acidity showing on the finish."
- PM, Falstaff Magazine
