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## Château Les Carmes Haut Brion 2017

CSPC# 848995

750mlx6

13.0% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

41% Cabernet Franc, 31% Merlot, 29% Cabernet Sauvignon

### Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

### Classification

Grand Vin de Bordeaux

### Website

<http://www.les-carmes-haut-brion.com/en/>

### General Info

Les Carmes Haut Brion got its start due to the efforts of the owner of another Bordeaux wine property that was located in Graves, or what we now call Pessac Leognan, Chateau Haut Brion. Jean de Pontac of Haut-Brion, gifted a watermill that was situated in the middle of what would shortly become the Carmes Haut Brion vineyards. The vineyard was named after a group of friars who managed the estate from as early as 1584 until the French Revolution in 1789.

Leon Colin, a Bordeaux wine merchant, and direct descendant of the current owners, the Chantecaille-Furt family, bought the Bordeaux wine property at the start of the 19th Century. Didier Furt began managing Les Carmes Haut Brion in 1987. Under his leadership, the estate was able to one additional hectare of vines to their vineyard. Until recently, Didier and Caroline Furt, along with their daughter Penelope run the Pessac Leognan chateau until 2010 when Les Carmes Haut Brion was sold in late 2010 to Patrice Pichet, head of the Bordeaux real estate company, Groupe Pichet. The price set a new record for Bordeaux wine vineyard land at 3.8 million Euros per hectare. At close to 18 million Euros, that set a new record as it was almost twice the price of any previous deal for prime Bordeaux vineyard property! the estate was sold to the Pichet Shortly after the purchase by Partice Pichet, the vineyard of Les Carmes Haut Brion was expanded by the purchase of 5.6 hectares of vines.

The Pichet group, headed by Patrice Pichet has continued to increase their holdings in Pessac Leognan. In July 2011, they purchased 6.5 hectares of vines from Chateau Le Thil. This was to be expected as Les Carmes Haut Brion was already leasing a large portion of that land from Le Thil. The remaining Bordeaux vineyard land was sold to Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte. Patrice Pichet had even bigger plans for Le Carmes Haut Brion.

The new owners have continued added to their holdings in Pessac Leognan. In September 2013, the Pichet group made anther purchase in the appellation when they bought 17 hectares of vines from the Priest family, the owners of Chateau Haut Nouchet for 11 million Euros. The Briest family retained the vines to produce white wine, as well as 12 hectares of vines for the production of red wine. Patrice Pichet has said they plan to completely replant the vineyard at a much higher vine density of 10,000 vines per hectare. Initially, the young vines will be used in the production of the second of Les Carmes Haut Brion, Le Clos de Carmes Haut Brion. In time, it is expected the better vines will be added to increase the quantity of the Grand Vin.

The style of Les Carmes Haut Brion is light for the Pessac Leognan region, due to the high percentage of Cabernet Franc planted in the vineyard. With the new owners, the style has changed a bit, as the wine is showing more depth and concentration, while retaining its elegance. The wine offers more in the nose, than in the mouth. On average, 1,600 cases of Bordeaux wine are produced on average each year of Les Carmes Haut Brion. The estate makes a second wine, Le Clos de Carmes Haut Brion.

### Winemaker

Guillaume Pouthier. Derenoncourt Consultants

### Vintage

2017 will most likely be remembered for the spring frosts. But, on those estates fortunate enough to be wholly or partially spared by the weather, it was nonetheless a very successful vintage. Early bud break and rapid growth, followed by even flowering, seemed to pave the way for a precocious vintage. Abundant



<b>Vintage</b>	rainfall in late June, just before the bunches set, meant that the individual grapes were quite substantial in size. Ripening began before the vines had even stopped growing. The maturing process was helped along by the higher-than-average temperatures in August, accompanied by cooler nights which helped to maintain high concentrations of organic acids and aromatic compounds.
<b>Vineyards</b>	The 28.8-hectare Pessac Leognan vineyard of Les Carmes Haut Brion has a terroir of gravel, sand, and clay with some limestone in the soil. Essentially, the complex soil composition of Les Carmes Haut Brion serves to create three separate terroirs. The soils located close to Haut Brion are gravel based. Close to the chateau, the soils are a mix of gravel, sand, clay, and stones. Also located not far from the chateau are limestone and clay soils. The vineyard of Les Carmes Haut Brion are planted to 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon with vines that average about 35 years of age. Chateau Les Carmes Haut Brion has a higher percentage of Cabernet Franc than perhaps any other vineyard in the Left Bank or Pessac Leognan. The vineyard is planted to a vine density typical of the Medoc at 10,000 vines per hectare.
<b>Harvest</b>	4 - 9 Sept 2017
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	To produce the wine of Chateau Les Carmes Haut Brion, vinification takes place in Thermoregulated tanks: Tron conic stainless steel tanks (60HI) • Wooden tanks (76 HI) • Concrete tanks (50 HI). 75% new oak barrels, 16% foudres, 9% terracotta amphorae for 18-24 months.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Among the classic elegance of Pessac-Léognan, the Carmes top wine has carved out its own niche. Unprecedented proportions of Cabernet Franc offer a silky power which is then supported by the intensity of Cabernet Sauvignon. Within this structure, Merlot develops rounded and refined fruitiness: balance is the order of the day, ensuring a style that is complex and delicious in equal measures.
<b>Serve with</b>	Best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
<b>Production</b>	3,333 cases made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2022 – 2036
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>93 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2020</p> <p><b>89-92 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - April 2018</p> <p><b>93+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2020</p> <p><b>91-93+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate #236 - April 2018</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2020</p> <p><b>94-95 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2018</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2019</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2018</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2020</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2018</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2018</p> <p><b>90 points</b> - Farr Vintner - April 2018</p> <p><b>89-91 points</b> - Derek Smedley, MW - May 2018</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2020</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2018</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2020</p> <p><b>93-96 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2018</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2020</p> <p><b>17.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2018</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Falstaff Magazine - May 2018</p> <p><b>96-97 points</b> - Vert de Vin - April 2019</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2021</p> <p><b>18 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseauve (score only) - April 2019</p>

**Reviews** *“A sanguine thread weaves around the core of steeped red and black currant fruit, with singed mesquite, iron and briar notes filling in along the way. The sanguine element leaves a mouthwatering echo at the end. A distinctive and alluring expression of the appellation. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2022 through 2036. 3,333 cases made.”*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*“Fresh cherry compote flavors and a light cassis thread work together, picking up light savory and iron notes. Shows charming energy, with twinges of spice and tobacco through the finish. Pure, but a bit shy on stuffing in the end. Score Range: 89-92”*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*“Composed of 41% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot and 29% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion was fermented using 40% whole clusters and aged for around 20 months in French oak barrels, 65% new. Medium to deep garnet-purple, it springs from the glass with fragrant notions of Black Forest cake, kirsch, and black raspberries plus touches of cedar chest, red roses, black tea, and dried mint. Medium bodied, the palate struts itself with great elegance and poise, featuring restrained, mineral-sparked red and black fruits with a firm, grainy texture, and bold freshness, finishing long, and perfumed.”*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

*“Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is a little reticent to begin, opening up to fragrant notes of potpourri and oolong tea over a core of crushed red and black currants plus hints of violets, dark chocolate and cinnamon stick. Medium-bodied, it has an ambitious palate with firm, grainy tannins slightly masking the elegant fruit, finishing with good length though just a tad chewy.”*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

*“Aromas of graphite and spiced wood here. The fruit is nicely ripe, in the redder end of the berry spectrum. The palate has good depth and weight. Quite fine, fresh tannins carry plenty of red-plum flavor.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“A tight and linear red with a firm and intense, pretty center palate of blackberry and wet-earth character. Full-bodied, reserved, and focused. Really compacted.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Deep crimson. Dark, almost cherry, and quite closed at first. Invitingly dark and savoury, stony/mineral. Tannins are really supple and the wine flows across the palate, elegant and harmonious. Delicious already – though not really ready – but should age gracefully. (JH)”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

*“This is gorgeous: peony and iris aromas alongside cocoa-dusted black fruits. A saline note gives a mouthwatering finish. Opens up with time in the glass and is hugely persistent. There is austerity, as you’d expect with high Cabernet levels, but the energy to the tannins bodes well for ageing.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com

*“Brilliant wine that continues to impress three years on from the En Primeur tasting, with a creamy but restrained texture, precise black fruits with a spicy undertow. By this point Carmes had the highest percentage of Cabernet Franc on the Left Bank and had really started to establish its own identity. It was also using a full 40% whole bunch winemaking, choosing only the ripest stems to include in the fermentation tanks, adding a twist of salinity on the finish and ensuring a dip of around 1% in potential alcohol levels at picking (this is a hot site close to the city centre). Owned by Patrice Pichet since 2011, with Guillaume Pouthier joining as director in 2012 - whose experience in the Rhône meant he was not afraid to use stems in winemaking, something traditionally shunned in Bordeaux. This wine shows the success of that approach, giving personality and poise. Needs another few years for the austerity to soften further. Drinking Window 2024 – 2042.”*  
- JL, Decanter.com

## Reviews

*"A lighter framed vintage goes long on subtle woodsmoke, and we are back to roses here, but they are petals and rosebuds, not stems, along with fragrant peony, raspberry, redcurrant, cassis. Graceful, plenty of sappy tannins and slate minerality, with liftoff through the finish. A lovely wine, graceful with finesse and hidden power. Can drink earlier than either the 2015 or 2016, just ensure you carafe for a few hours. 50% stems. Ageing takes place in a mix of 25% new oak, 5% oak casks, and 10% amphoras."*

- JA, Inside Bordeaux

*"The wine is as dark in fruit as it is in color. This is a nap on Pratesi sheets – a silky, sensuous, and richly textured rendezvous. Vibrancy on the palate, creamy tannins and layers of fruit-enhanced strata propel a surfeit of multi-colored fruit. Not quite at the level of the stunning 2016 but very close. The wine was made using 50% whole bunches during fermentation. ...the wine reached 13.25% with a pH of 3.59."*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*"Very deep purple black colour. Inviting black fruit scents, some spices already – hints of coffee and toast. Rich and deep fruit flavours, with good acidity and freshness. Very good quality. Barrel Sample: 92-94."*

- TimAtkin MW

*"In 2017 the blend is 41% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot, 29% Cabernet Sauvignon from a yield of 43 hl/ha. production was "Burgundy-style" with part whole bunch and part de-stemmed but not crushed. 40,000 bottles to be produced. Hedgerow, spicy green peppercorn, and blueberry on the nose, this is a unique aromatic profile in Bordeaux. The grip from the stems creates a different texture too, sappy, and earthy. Lots of graphite and earthiness sit opposite some very ripe red fruits and a touch of rosemary. This wine needs time to knit together, as despite the enticing fragrance and unique flavour profile, the elements are yet to meld as one."*

- Farr Vintners

*"The nose is tight and fresh the start of the palate light bramble and bilberry. The mid tannins are structured and although there is a sweeter feel some rich black cherry at the back it finishes with firm black fruits."*

- Derek Smedley MW

*"The 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion was impressive from barrel. It includes 52% whole bunch, the same as in 2016, matured in 70% new oak with 10% in amphora and 20% in foudres. Now in bottle it sports a well-defined bouquet with blackberry, raspberry, hints of lavender coming through with aeration. I appreciate the precision here. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins, a fine bead of acidity and quite harmonious. A precise blackberry, tea leaf and clove-tinged finish does retain a Burgundy-like allure, the same that I found in barrel."*

- NM, Vinous

*"The 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion includes 10% more Cabernet Sauvignon than last year with 45% whole bunch fruit. There is 13.2° alcohol. It is aged in 60% new oak (less than previous years), 30% one-year old oak and 10% amphora that have been baked at 1,200° Celsius instead of 500° Celsius that means there is less oxygen ingress. It has a very pure and strangely, almost Burgundy-like bouquet, perhaps somewhere towards the mid-Côte de Nuits. Dark cherries, wild strawberry, a hint of orange sorbet and later a touch of glycerol. The palate is medium-bodied with fine grain tannin and plenty of sappy, black fruit sprinkled with white pepper and bay leaf. As Guillaume Pouthier mentioned in conversation, there is a linearity to this Les Carmes Haut-Brion, and one has to admire the precision and focus on the finish. Afford this five or six years in bottle before approaching and you will have a very delicious and distinctive Pessac-Léognan on your hands. Drink 2022-2040."*

- AG, Vinous

*"One of the real highlights of the vintage, the 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion possesses off the chart's aromatic intensity and tremendous depth. An exotic mélange of sweet tobacco, menthol, rose petal, licorice, dried herbs, and sweet dark fruit builds in a wine endowed with extraordinary beauty. Energetic and vibrant to the core, Les Carmes Haut-Brion was magnificent on the three occasions I have tasted it so far. Don't miss it. (AG)"*

- AG, Vinous

## Reviews

*"The 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is subtle and understated, but it's all there. Lifted aromatics, bright, red-toned fruit and silky tannins add to the wine's brilliant, chiseled personality. I find the 2017 more precise and nuanced than in the recent past, with less overt power. It's hard to know exactly if the style of the 2017 is a result of the growing conditions of the year, or the result of an evolution in winemaking that includes the introduction of terra cotta, among other things. I certainly get the sense Guillaume Pouthier reined the wine back a bit in 2017. No matter. The end result is all that counts, and in 2017 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is positively stellar. As always, the high percentage of Cabernet Franc and a healthy dollop of whole clusters give Les Carmes an explosive bouquet and plenty of saline-infused energy. A closing flourish of sweet red berry fruit, mint, rose petal and mocha leaves a lasting impression. The 2017 is not an obvious wine, but it sure is gorgeous. Don't miss it! Tasted two times."*

- AG, Vinous

*"Offering an Haut-Brion-like level of purity and precision, the 2017 Chateau Les Carmes Haut-Brion (41% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot, and 29% Cabernet Sauvignon) sports a vivid purple color as well as perfumed notes of blueberries, blackberries, unsmoked tobacco, crushed violets, and spring flowers. It's not a blockbuster in the mold of the 2015 or 2016 (or 2018), but it has medium to full body, a beautiful elegance and purity, notable minerality, and an exceptional finish. It opens up with time in the glass, and I was able to follow a bottle for 3 days without it ever showing a hint of oxidation. Give bottles 4-5 years of bottle age and enjoy over the following 30 years or more. Guillaume Pouthier and consultant Stephane Derenoncourt have unquestionably raised the quality from this estate, and this 2017 ranks with the gems of Pessac as well as all of Bordeaux."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"Very powerful, focused and mineral, this is a structured wine with serious presence and poise. There is a lot of oak on the nose, but this doesn't detract from the fruit which is more than capable of handling it. There are some beautiful flavours here and they are delivered over a very long palate. Impressive."*

- MJ, matthewjukes.com

*"Deep dark ruby garnet, violet reflections, delicate lightening of the edges, fine dark wild berry note, a hint of honey, fresh plums, nougat, inviting bouquet. Elegant, structured with finesse, red cherries, mineral, a fine, balanced food wine, good potential for development"*

- Falstaff Magazine

*"(41% Cabernet Franc, 29% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 44% whole bunches) The nose is fruity, elegant, beautifully fine (in its complexity) and offers a beautiful aromatic palette, a very beautiful finesse of the grain as well as a beautiful finesse in its pulpy / fleshy side. It reveals notes of blackberry, ripe cassis and small notes of fleshy strawberry combined with fine touches of warm gravels (terroir / graves), Cuban pepper, cornflowers as well as slight hints of plum, cocoa, nutmeg, discreet hints of graphite, toasted / chocolate and a subtle hint of blond tobacco (in the background). The palate is mineral, beautifully fresh, well-balanced and offers a beautiful definition, a beautiful verticality, finesse / delicacy, dynamism, a beautiful juiciness, an acidulous frame, deepness, silkiness, a very fine grain, an enveloping side, a beautiful tension, generosity / richness (in its delicacy) as well as an aerial side. On the palate this wine expresses notes of juicy / acidulous cassis, juicy / acidulous blackberry and small notes of red berries associated with fine touches of crunchy / juicy raspberry, crunchy / juicy plum, toasted hints, graphite, sweet blond tobacco as well as discreet hints of iris / cornflower, a very discreet hint of bitterness (good bitterness) and an imperceptible hint of gray pepper. Tannins are elegant, very fine and "rounded". There are very discreet hints of caramelization on the finish. Fine salinity in the background. Beautiful finesse, length, and persistence."*

- Vert de Vin