

# Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2021

CSPC# 855512

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Sémillon

## Appellation

Pessac-Léognan

## Classification

Grand Vin de Graves

## Website

<https://www.smith-haut-lafitte.com>

## Sustainability

Certified Organic since 2019.

## General Info

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.

## Winemaker

Fabien Teitgen

## Vintage

2021 is atypical, following the pattern of "1" vintages.

The climatic conditions were totally extraordinary, with a very challenging and highly stressful growing season leading up to the late harvest.

Coming out of winter, conditions were calm and mild with budburst occurring between 24th March and 1st April across our plots. We had to endure 9 nights of frost between 28th March and 19th April, and this impacted our yields – in addition to the unusually long flowering period which lasted all through June due to an unusually wet spring.

Very warm temperatures combined with relatively high rainfall created almost 'tropical' conditions, leading to wild vegetative growth. This required us to employ significant manpower and intervene quickly to keep our trellis in optimal condition. By doing so, we were able to control the ripening of our grapes by pushing back the harvest, overcoming some rainy spells between the 18th and 29th September in the process. There was constant pressure and suspense right up until the last moment, meaning that I certainly won't forget the birth of this unique vintage.

## Vineyards

11 hectares being planted to white, specifically 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. The average vine age is 38 years, on the usual 101.14 and 3309 rootstocks, and planting density is between 7500 and 10000 vines per hectare. The soil is typical of the region, mainly Gunzian gravel.

The Cathiards have invested millions in the estate's vineyard, applying organic winemaking across the 78-hectares (67 planted to red, 11 to white). Technical director Fabien Teitgen's buzzword is "bio-precision," an approach that combines low-intervention, almost entirely biodynamic viticulture with satellite technology that reveals how the grapes have ripened.

## Harvest

Harvest started August 20, one of earliest on record, through to September 9th.

## Vinification/

## Maturation

Manual harvest in small crates. The grapes are hand-picked into small crates and pressed in an oxygen-free environment using inert gas to retain the grapes' aromatic potential, followed by fermentation in French oak barrels and cold settling. Ageing: 12 months on the lees in barrels (50% new + 50% previously used for one vintage) from our own on-site cooperage.

## Winemaker's

## Notes

The wine is pale yellow with green hues. The nose is pretty discreet at first but as it opens up, we discover fresh citrus aromas of grapefruit, then elegant hints of white flowers and star anise. It finally reaches its full aromatic expression with white and stone fruits aromas, peach, apricot and nectarine) to finish with on a great complexity of fruits, flowers and flint stones.

The mouth is characterized by a frank, dynamic attack, then it reveals a larger body, smoother with a very beautiful texture. The palate, well chiseled by the acidity, develops a lovely suave and unctuous perception and stretches out over a very long period of time, fresh and thirst-quenching finish, with a nice mineral and saline dimension.



<b>Serve with</b>	Asian style salads, Asian-style pork tenderloin with noodles & lime peanut dressing; BBQ lobster; Avocado & papaya salad.
<b>Production</b>	2,400 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2024 – 2036
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>92 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2024</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Yohan Castaing, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p><b>94-96+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p><b>98-99 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>98-100 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2022</p> <p><b>17+ points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Jane Anson, Inside Bordeaux (score only) - May 2022</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Thomas Parker, Farr Vintners - April 2022</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p><b>19+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes - February 2022</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Vert de Vin - July 2022</p> <p><b>16 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - August 2023</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>“Plump, with an enticing edge to the mix of lemon curd, jasmine, honeysuckle, and white peach flavors. Shows length too, with paraffin and salted butter details filling in. A touch shy on depth and cut overall, but this is still well ahead of the pack in this vintage. Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Sauvignon Gris. Drink now through 2029. 2,400 cases made.”</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>“The 2021 Blanc has developed gracefully since en primeur, delivering attractive aromas of ripe pear, peach, lime tree leaves, verbena and mint intertwined with mineral, smoky nuances. Medium to full-bodied, satiny, and concentrated, with a broad attack and fleshy mid-palate, it exhibits compelling purity and tension, concluding with a saline, mint-inflected finish. It has the potential to improve in the cellar over the next decade or more. Drink 2023-2040.”</i></p> <p>- YC, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>“At this early stage, the 2021 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc appears set to number among the best white wines this estate has produced to date. Wafting from the glass with aromas of crisp orchard fruit, nectarine, grapefruit, pastry cream and smoke, it's medium to full-bodied, fleshy and layered, with a concentrated core of fruit, racy acids and a taut, chiseled profile, concluding with a saline finish. Balancing texture and tension to compelling effect, this beautifully integrated, characterful white is going to be thrilling to revisit in bottle. Certified organic with the 2019 vintage, the Cathiard family banished herbicides at this address in 1991, radically reducing chemical treatments and suffering the consequences for several years in the form of much diminished yields (today, happily, materiel and techniques are more sophisticated). In addition to organic methods, cover crops have been deployed on the vineyard's central blocks and western band, where soils are less well drained. Hedges have been planted to encourage biodiversity, and ultraviolet treatments are being trialed as an alternative to copper sulfate. In addition to such initiatives, the technical team is adapting to a warmer climate: that means picking a touch earlier, certainly, but more importantly, adapting in the vineyards, with somewhat lower canopies and an end to systematic deleafing to retain fresh, vibrant flavors. Winemaking, too, is a little gentler: reds see cool but protracted macerations, with periodic punch-downs, and whites are whole-cluster pressed with an inerted press. This has brought new structural elegance and energy to the estate's wines. It surely helps that as much as possible is done in-house: since 1995, the Cathiards have their own nursery for their own massal selections, in partnership with Bérillon, and barrels are made in the château's own on-site cooperage too, favoring the forests of Tronçais and Jupilles for reds and Loches (which brings tension) for whites. All this is symptomatic of the attention to detail and seriousness that the Cathiards, and their technical director Fabien Teitgen, have brought to this estate—and it has paid off in the challenging 2021</i></p>

**Reviews** *vintage with a superb set of wines at every level.”*  
- WK, Wine Advocate

*“The 2021 Smith Haut Lafitte blanc is composed of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon, and 5% Sauvignon Gris, aging in 50% new oak. A little closed to begin, it opens out to reveal notes of fresh pineapple, green mango, and lime cordial with wafts of lemon grass, sea spray, and coriander seed. The palate is medium-bodied with super-intense, tight-knit citrus and tropical fruit layers, framed by a satiny texture and electric backbone, finishing very long and energetic.”*  
- LPB, Wine Independent

*“This has so much depth and power, with complex notes of flint, oyster shell, white pepper, dried mango, lemon, papaya, apricot stone, and chalk. Medium-to full-bodied. Bright, yet creamy. It’s so long and concentrated. Wait and see. 90% sauvignon blanc, 5% semillon, 5% sauvignon gris. From organically grown grapes.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Fresh, crisp but with intensity and ripe texture, this wine is the star of the white wines this vintage. It is tight, with minerality and acidity. Pink grapefruit, and a dynamic texture reveal its concentration. It will be a great wine from a great white wine vintage.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris, 5% Sémillon. Cask sample. Reductive and a little green on the nose – less opulent than more-mature vintages on the nose but then it’s very broad and mouth-filling with some lanolin notes. Quite complex, combining many different elements. Still unformed. Drink 2024 – 2036.”*  
- JL, JancisRobinson.com

*“Toasted oak, lanolin, honeyed caramel, lemon zest and red apple peel on both the nose and palate. This has an unctuousness, a richness to the texture giving beautiful, honeyed lemon touches with Semillon fatness and intensity from the Sauvignon. It’s sleeping a little right now, feels as if it’s calm and quiet, not yet ready to show the world what it’s about but you do get a precision and detail along the edges, a real sculpting of elements. I love the presentation, such a success for the vintage, excellent winemaking on show. It’s the soft vibration you get as the flavours travel from start to finish that is so promising - a lot of life and immense enjoyment to come from this.”*  
- GH, Decanter.com

*“Skillful winemaking on display here, sculpted flavours and textures, a sense of momentum and push-and-pull through the palate. Quince, white pear, mango, nectarine, peach, with savoury white tea, liquorice, mandarin peel, and lemongrass, all delivered with pumice stone minerality. This has complexity and poise and is along the wines of the vintage. Harvest September 2 to 20.”*  
- JA, janeanson.com

*“Enjoyable, with an unfussy juicy feel and touches of pencil lead and gun smoke alongside the citrus fruit. One to sink into over a plate of oysters with a group of friends. They have managed to deliver exactly what you want Les Hauts de Smith to deliver; pleasure.”*  
- JA, Inside Bordeaux

*“Green apples, pineapple, flowers, vanilla, lemon chiffon and orange blossoms crowd into the nose. Energetic, crisp, fresh, clean and pure with a fabulous pop in the mouth from all the layers of sweet, but vibrant fruits. The touch of peppery spice in the finish adds another dimension. The wine was produced from a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon. 13.5% ABV. Drink from 2023-2035.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

## Reviews

*"The blend is 90% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Sauvignon Gris and 5% Semillon in 2021. Pale lemon colour in the glass. Intense, rich and oily fruit on the nose, showing lemon curd, clementine, beeswax and honeysuckle on the nose. The palate is boldly oaked, smoky and toasty, but balanced with the intense, ripe fruit. There are hints of tropical pineapple and mango together with finer citrus fruit. This succulent, seductive Smith Haut Lafitte is one of the finest examples of the vintage, managing to balance opulent fruit, spicy wood and steely acidity. Very long and lightly chalky on the finish."*

- Farr Vintners

*"The 2021 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc was picked September 2–20 and raised in 50% new oak. It needs some time to really cohere in the glass and certainly is not as immediate as the Le Petit Smith Haut Lafitte. Eventually, it reveals fresh lime, pineapple, honeysuckle, and touches of curry leaf. The taut, fresh palate is well balanced and intense, with a fine bead of acidity. Complex with plenty of salinity, this is a cerebral Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc that will benefit from three or four years in the cellar."*

- NM, Vinous

*"The 2021 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc is one of the great white wines of the vintage. Soaring in its aromatic intensity and sheer volume, the 2021 saturates every corner of the palate with its unctuousness and richness. Even with all of that volume, the 2021 remains bright and sculpted. Crushed rocks, lemon confit, orchard fruit, white pepper and mint build into the memorable finish. The 2021 is positively stunning, that's pretty much all there is to it."*

- AG, Vinous

*"The Grand Vin 2021 Château Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc checks in as the usual blend of 90% Sauvignon and 5% each of Semillon and Sauvignon Gris. It has a kiss of green in its gold hue as well as brilliant aromatics of melon, stone fruits, minty herbs, chalky mineral, and flowers. Complex, nuanced, and medium to full-bodied, with both richness and elegance, it's a brilliant white in the making."*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*"This is a sublime wine and one that completely took my breath away. Granted, it is the parent of Le Petit, which in itself is a triumph, so it ought to be show-stopping, but this sells it short. This is a phenomenal white Bordeaux, and it is a result of the mildew punishing the vines and reducing the crop, and this makes the concentration and length prodigious. Wave upon wave of incrementally gorgeous but different expressions of citrus and near-tropical notes woo the senses and the floral layers that defy belief. I am shocked at the energy and length here. It is a ten-minute long wine! 19+."*

- Matthew Jukes

*"Light yellow-green, silver reflections. Elegant bouquet of fresh meadow herbs, a touch of gooseberry, tangerine zest, white flowers, mineral touch. Juicy, subtle sweetness of fruit, elegant and lively structure, salty nuances on the finish. Already very well balanced offering finesse for this appealing leaner style, has great potential to age."*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*"The nose is beautifully elegant, complex, and classy, revealing a lovely multi-layered intensity. There are hints of lemon, tart green apple and slightly zest combined with hints of crunchy berries and a subtle hint of fresh oak, a subtle hint of menthol. The palate is fruity and offers juiciness, freshness, good definition, a wide range of aromas, delicacy and finesse, a tangy structure, a lovely delicate/fine/airy texture, energy, purity and a slight crystalline quality. On the palate, this wine expresses notes of pulpy/juicy green apple, lemon and, more slightly, yuzu, combined with hints of exotic berries, a subtle hint of fresh pineapple, fresh flowers, a subtle hint of tangy tangerine, a subtle hint of toast, almond, a subtle hint of gunflint, fresh mirabelle plum, verbena, physalis, a subtle hint of smokiness and vanilla. Good length. A discreet hint of positive bitterness on the finish/persistence."*

- Vert de Vin

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