# Chateau Haut-Brion

A profound and elegant wine from a historic First Growth, 2020 Haut-Brion showcases precision, harmony, and the richness of a warm, early-ripening vintage.

## Pessac Léognan 2020

Bordeaux, France

### Region and Vineyards

Château Haut-Brion is located in the commune of Pessac, just outside Bordeaux, and is the oldest of the five First Growths in the 1855 Classification. The estate lies in the heart of the **Graves** region, within the **Pessac-Léognan appellation**, an area celebrated for its deep gravel soils and complex microclimate, ideally suited to red Bordeaux varieties.

The 2020 vintage benefited from an early start to the vine's cycle, followed by a dry, sun-drenched summer marked by three separate heatwaves. To preserve freshness and avoid sunburn on the fruit, vineyard teams limited leaf-thinning and focused on canopy preservation. From mid-August, gentle rains refreshed the vines, allowing the grapes to ripen thoroughly without over-concentration. The red harvest, which took place from 7 to 29 September, was completed under ideal conditions with fruit in **exceptionally healthy** and balanced condition.

### Winemaking

The 2020 Château Haut-Brion is a blend of **42.8% Merlot**, **39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon** , and **17.5% Cabernet Franc**—a classic expression of the estate's gravelly terroir. Grapes were sorted and vinified parcel by parcel in the estate's state-of-the-art cellar to allow for precision and expression of site. Fermentation and maceration were carefully managed to extract fine, supple tannins while preserving aromatic clarity and depth.

Following vinification, the wine was transferred into **77.3% new French oak barrels** for aging. The élevage emphasizes integration, complexity, and longevity, characteristics that have long defined Haut-Brion's style. The final blend, marked by 15% alcohol (estimated), reflects the concentration of the vintage, yet maintains a poised and balanced structure.

Alcohol :15,00 %

Composition: 43% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Cabernet Franc

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## Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep, radiant ruby with a vivid sheen.
- **Aroma:** Aromatically intense with fresh black fruits, subtle spice, and floral notes. Hints of cedar, tobacco, and graphite emerge with aeration.
- **Palate:** Immediate impact with tightly knit structure and polished entry. Silky, juicy tannins support a multi-layered core of blackberry, plum, and cassis, evolving into spices, dried herbs, and mineral nuances. A long, harmonious finish showcases perfect varietal integration and freshness.

## Did you know?

**Château Haut-Brion is the only First Growth located outside the Médoc**, and the only one named in the original 1855 Classification not bearing the word "Château" at the time. It was also the first Bordeaux wine mentioned by name in English literature, cited by Samuel Pepys in his famous diary in 1663.

## Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Roast saddle of lamb with rosemary and garlic** – the wine's structure and aromatics complement the meat's richness and herbal character.
- **Beef Wellington with truffle jus** – echoes the wine's depth, elegance, and umami notes.
- **Duck breast with cherry sauce** – harmonises with the wine's vibrant acidity and dark fruit core.
- **Aged Comté or Saint-Nectaire** – draws out the wine's nutty, savoury, and mineral facets.

**Robert Parker (RP) : 100 Points (2020)**

*The 2020 Haut-Brion is a blend of 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17.5% Cabernet Franc, harvested from 7th to 29th September, with an estimated alcohol of 15% and a pH of 3.8. Opaque purple-black colored, it leaps from the glass with a first wave of vibrant black raspberries, ripe blackberries and mulberries scents, followed by a powerful core of warm cassis, dark chocolate and violets, before bursting into an array of crushed rocks, iron ore, tree bark and black truffles notes. The concentrated, densely packed, full-bodied palate is not in the least bit heavy, delivering a refreshing backbone of red berry and dried herbs suggestions, framed by seamless acidity and very finely grained tannins, finishing on an epically long, fragrant earth note. Simply stunning.Barrel Sample: 98-100*

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**Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 100 Points (2020)**

*Unquestionably one of the top wines in this impressive vintage, the 2020 Château Haut-Brion checks in as 42.8% Merlot, 39.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the balance Cabernet Franc, all of which will spend 15-18 months in 77% new French oak. Its deep purple color is followed by a thrilling nose of mineral-laced blackcurrants, black raspberries, toast, spice, scorched earth, and graphite. Possessing an almost Lafite-like elegance on the palate, it nevertheless has huge dry extract, full-bodied richness, flawless balance, and beautiful tannins. Per the spec sheet, the alcohol is an estimated 15% with a pH of 3.78, so it's no shrinking violet, yet it never shows a hint of headiness or being over the top. I finished my note with "Where can I buy some?" I suspect this wine will require a solid decade to hit the early stages of maturity and will be a 30-, 40-, or possibly a 50-year wine. Barrel Sample: 98-100*

**James Suckling (JS) : 98 Points (2020)**

*Aromas of blackberry, licorice, tile, stone and mocha. Tobacco and cigar, too. They follow through to a full body with ultra-fine tannins that go on and on. Sophisticated ripe fruit in the center palate with a brightness. Tangerines in the finish. Very supple and savory at the end, in a classy way. Reminds me of the 1998. Already so attractive, but it will reward you much more after 2028.*