



# CHÂTEAU HAUT-BAGES LIBÉRAL

PAUILLAC . 5<sup>E</sup> GRAND CRU CLASSÉ EN 1855

FACTSHEET

Vintage 2012

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 5th 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.

Owner	Claire VILLARS LURTON
Production manager	Thomas BONTEMPS
Winemaking consultant	Eric Boissenot
Surface of the vineyard	30 hectares
Soil	Deep gravels from the Quaternary on limestone-clay substrate
Plantation	75% cabernet sauvignon, 25% merlot
Average age of vineyard	35 years
Density	10 000 plants/ha
Yield	650 g/plant
Growing	Traditional-Integrated wine growing management
Harvest	Hand picking
Vinification	Traditional in stainless and concrete vats, whose volumes are proportional to the plots
Fermentation on skins	18 to 24 days
Blending	70 % cabernet sauvignon, 30 % merlot
Aging	In oak barrels during 16 months. 40% of new oak
Second vin	La Chapelle de Bages, la Fleur de Haut-Bages Libéral, le Pauillac de Haut-Bages Libéral
Conservation	5 to 30 years



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VINTAGE

In 2012, after an especially difficult Spring and beginning of Summer, the weather conditions were very favorable for the plants from mid-July. Indeed, the Winter was very cold and dry, with an important deficit of rainfall. When the temperatures became warmer at the end of Winter, the budburst began but was long, which resulted in a heterogeneity especially for the merlot. The phenological shift also delayed the flowering, which was very disrupted by rainfall. At the berry set, there was sagging of the merlot and the yields were rather low. Generally, Spring was very wet with a heavy pressure of mildew. Prophylaxis and the balance of the vines played an important role in the control of fungal diseases. The rains stopped in mid-July for more than 2 months, which is extremely rare.

From this date, more favorable temperatures allowed to catch up but the high temperatures of August and especially the lack of water locally slowed the ripening of the young vines that do not have a sufficiently developed root system. Finally, in late September rainfall led to the development of the skin and accelerated the maturation. We started the harvest on October 1st to end on October 10th, 2012. But we had to hurry to get healthy harvest because the rains came back on October 7th.

The distribution of the harvest on the foot (low yields) and the good condition of the vineyard, combining with a very precise work of sorting, were capital to optimize the quality of the vintage. Quickly, the merlot showed a remarkable flesh that we haven't tasted for a long time. As the cabernet sauvignon, they did not disappoint us and were faithful to our land of Médoc. They are soft and rich of elegance. We will have powerful wines, tender and digestible. 2012 is a very good vintage and many successes are waiting for us ahead.

## TASTING

The nose is complex with notes of cassis, smoky and a hint of cedar. The mouth is also fruity with a slightly spicy touch and show an admirable roundness. An expressive, voluptuous wine with fine, freshness, and a beautiful aromatic persistence. This 2012 vintage is a pretty nice classic of Château Haut-Bages Libéral.

## TASTING SCORES

Gilbert & Gaillard – 91

Vinum Extra – 17,25

Wine Spectator – 88/91

Decanter – 16,75