

# Château Haut-Brion

We went to the Château Haut-Brion to discover the methods and the history of extracting the DNA of vine leaves. Château Haut-Brion differs from the other wines on the list, due to its geographic location in the north of the wine-growing region of Graves, and because it is produced in Pessac, just outside the city of Bordeaux. Of the first five growths, it is the only wine with the Pessac-Léognan appellation and is in some sense the ancestor of a classification that remains a benchmark to this day.

Château Haut-Brion is a French wine, rated as Premier Cru Classé (First Growth). Château Haut-Brion is very famous but how has it become so successful?

## Timeline

- **XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The estate was created by Jean de Pontac in 1525. The De Pontacs were at the origin of the foundation of the vineyard as we know it today and the beginning of the celebrity of Château Haut-Brion. The vine was already cultivated on the summit of a hill.

In 1533, De Pontac bought the title 'Domaine de Haut-Brion'. In 1549, he undertook the construction of the castle whose silhouette still adorns the labels of the bottles. Under the impulse of De Pontac's numerous descendants, the estate will continue to grow and improve.

In 1649, Arnaud III of Pontac, became owner of Haut-Brion. He developed conservation techniques, such as topping and racking, enabling him to age his wines and to discover the virtues of the terroir.

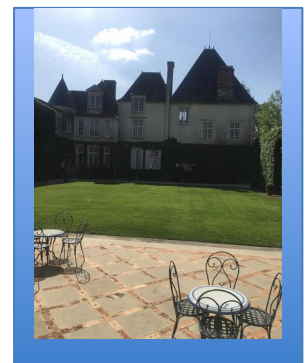
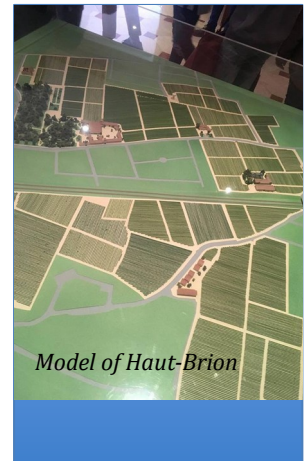
In 1666, after The Great Fire of London, his son François-Auguste, opened a tavern in London called "Pontack's Head", which was according to André Simon, London's first fashionable eating-house. It was an ideal platform to promote their wines.

- **XVIII<sup>th</sup> century**

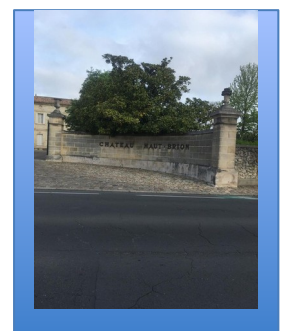
With the death of François-Auguste de Pontac, François-Joseph de Fumel, a nephew by marriage, inherited two-thirds of Haut-Brion. A third was bequeathed to Louis-Arnaud Le Comte.

In 1787, Thomas Jefferson, then American minister to France, came to Bordeaux. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, visited to Haut-Brion, and was impressed by its terroir.

As a consequence of the French Revolution, in July 1794, Joseph de Fumel was guillotined, and his holdings were divided. In 1801, Haut-Brion was sold to Talleyrand, Prince of Benevento, who remained the owner of Haut-Brion for three



Garden of Haut-Brion



Entrance of Haut-Brion

years.

In On February 28 th 1801, Charles-Maurice of Tallrand-Périgord, prince of Bénévent, bought the nearby Haut-Brion Castle from Jacques Pons, Marie Joseph and Laure of Fumel.

In March 1836 , Joseph-Eugène Larrieu, a Parisian banker bought Haut-Brion Castle.

In 1855, the castle was listed as one of the four "premiers crus classés". In 1859, Joseph Eugène died .Amédée Larrieu became the new owner then .When she died in 1873, her son took control and when he died in 1922 , his nephews inherited the property .

In 1935, Château Haut-Brion Castle became the property of an American family but the property was managed by the Delmas family , as still is the case today . In 2011, the Haut Brion estate was expanded after the purchase of 28 hectares of vines in Saint Émilion. In 2015, the manager bought a hotel in Paris which now accomodates the estate headquaters. Haut Brion also owns a two- star restaurant and a wine-shop.

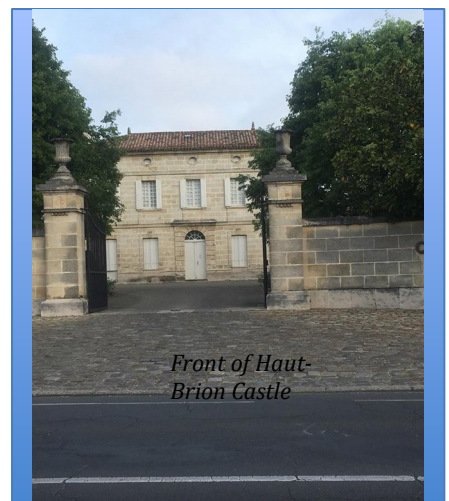
The Haut-Brion estate is composed of 30 hectares of red grapes and 4 hectares of white . There are 3 variety of red wine: Merlot&Caberney, Sauvignon and, Cabernet -Franc.

There are 2 varieties of white grapes : Sémillon and Sauvignon blanc.<sup>Wine cellar</sup>

Throughout the ages, many lands in the vicinity have been redeemed to increase the production of the estate .



*Bottles of  
Haut-Brion  
wine*



*Front of Haut-  
Brion Castle*

## The Different Stages of Wine Making

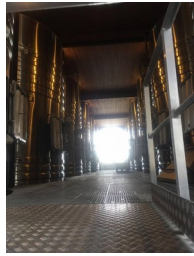
The first step in making wine begins with the grape harvest which involves hand-picking the grapes . This is followed by de-stemming, which consists in separating the cobs the berries from the stem before pressing, since the stems would then interfere with the quality of the product.

Grinding and pressing are crucial steps in the process of wine making . Formerly carried out by traditional trampling, it is now an entirely mechanical process that brings is more hygienic and enhances the wine 's quality, longevity and reduces the need for preservatives.

Once these steps are completed, the vatting is done in stainless steel vats (most of which are thermo-regulated), wooden barrels (oak which benefits the taste of the drink thanks to exchanges between wood and wine ) , or concrete vats (which keep the temperature very well). Subsequently, sulphurization is carried out . It consists in bringing sulfur dioxide to the wine in order to allow the good preservation of the product. Yeasting is used to accelerate or restart fermentation. This fermentation is the alcoholic fermentation that will then transform all carbohydrates (sugar) into ethanol (alcohol) and occasionally increases the alcohol content in the beverage. In addition to alcoholic fermentation, we distinguish maloactic fermentation, in which malic acid degrades into lactic acid, making the wine more "supple", gustatively speaking.

This follows the clarification of the wine with coagulant products (technique of collage) or with the use of a filter (filtering technique) which aims to remove all the waste and residues from the wine before bottling.

After this step, winegrowers can choose between bottling their wine immediately or giving it an extra aging in order to increase its value and quality. Depending on the wines , this technique can have a degrading effect however , it must therefore be used according to the wine considered .



*Wine tanks*



*Fabrication of barrels*



*laboratory*



*Wine cellar*