

CHATEAU HAUT-BAILLY

C R U C L A S S É D E G R A V E S

PRESS KIT

CONTENTS

- 1 - Technical fact sheet
- 2 - The terroir
- 3 - The vineyard
- 4 - Viticulture
- 5 - Winemaking
- 6 - Tasting notes: the Haut-Bailly style
- 7 - The Haut-Bailly family:
 - La Parde Haut-Bailly
 - ROSE de Haut-Bailly
 - Pessac-Léognan
 - Château Le Pape
- 8 - The owners
- 9 - The men and women of Haut-Bailly



1 – HAUT-BAILLY TECHNICAL FACT SHEET**Identity:**

Name: Château Haut-Bailly
Cru Classé de Graves (Graves Great Growth)
Léognan, France

Appellation: Pessac-Léognan

The men and women:

Owner: The Wilmers Family
President: Véronique Sanders-van Beek
Technical Director: Gabriel Vialard

The vineyard:

Total area of the estate: 33 hectares
Area under vine: 30 hectares
Soil: Sand and Pyrenees gravel from the Tertiary Period
Subsoil: Shelly sand and clay-gravel
Grape varieties: 60% cabernet sauvignon, 34% merlot,
3% cabernet franc, 3% petit verdot
Vine density: 10,000 vines/hectare
Average age of the vines: 35 years
Unusual features: 15% very old vines (120 years)
Pest and disease control: Sustainable
Pruning: Guyot double
Rootstock: 101-14, Riparia, and 420A
The harvest: Picking by hand into small crates

Fermentation:

Vat room: 26 cement vats and 10 stainless steel vats (50 -90 hl.)
Temperature-control: alcoholic fermentation at 26-28°C
Duration of maceration: 3-4 weeks

Ageing:

Barrels: French oak with 50-65% new oak
Duration of barrel ageing: 16-18 months

Other wines:

La Parde Haut-Bailly
ROSE de Haut-Bailly
Pessac-Léognan
Château Le Pape

Average annual production: 180,000 bottles

Sales: Via the Bordeaux négociants
En primeur (futures) sales
85% export

Tours: By appointment

Address: 33850 Léognan, France
mail@haut-bailly.com
Tel.: +33(0)5 56 64 75 11

2 – THE TERROIR

Haut-Bailly is located in the heart of the Graves, on one of the highest rises on the left bank of the Garonne. The wine benefits greatly from this unique topography. The efficient natural drainage is enhanced by ditches situated throughout the estate.

The Gironde department's climate is ideal for winegrowing, with perfectly adapted sunshine and humidity. In addition, Haut-Bailly has a microclimate of which previous owners were well aware. Frantz Malvezin described it lyrically in 1920 in *L'Oenophile*: "The sun exposure is excellent from three thirty to eight thirty in summer. The rays bathe the vines in golden, ruby, and emerald light".

However, above and beyond topography and climate, the soil is the most subtle of the three components comprising Haut-Bailly's terroir. This consists of sand mixed with Pyrenees gravel from the Tertiary Period. The vineyard features a complex patchwork of plots with complementary characteristics (drainage, ability to restore warmth stored during the day or - on the contrary - cool, humid soil). Each of the four grape varieties – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot – is planted in soil that suits it perfectly.

Haut-Bailly's subsoil is also quite unusual. It features shelly sand containing stones and fossil shells (some of which are displayed on the cellar walls). The vines find all the nourishment they need here, i.e. minerals and trace elements that are also the basis of aromas and freshness. Furthermore, the subsoil acts as a filter and ensures good aeration. In addition, it provides good water and mineral supply, while maintaining early moderate water stress conducive to good ripening.

3 – THE VINEYARD

Haut-Bailly has some of the oldest vines in the appellation. The average age is 35 years, and a quarter of the vines are 100-120 years old. The wine's character is naturally due to its terroir: that combination of soil, climate, and grape varieties. However, a further component adds to the complexity of the terroir at Haut-Bailly: centuries of history, including the experience of employees who have worked at the estate for years. This accounts for Haut-Bailly's reliably consistent quality.

The château grows only red wine varieties and has an important percentage of very old vines planted in the late 19th century by Alcide Bellot des Minières, the owner at the time. These 4 hectares, with six different grape varieties, form a precious collection of rare genetic material.

In August 1901, Bellot des Minières wrote in *L'Œnophile*: "These vines are of the highest quality, from very old stock, and planted in carefully-studied proportions to produce optimum quality, in keeping with the soil of the various plots. Here is the breakdown: 1/12 Cabernet Franc, 1/12 Carmenère, 1/12 Merlot, 1/12 Malbec, 1/12 Petit Verdot, and 7/12 Cabernet Sauvignon".

Very few estates are as marked by their terroir as Haut-Bailly. The main task of the vineyard workers and winemaking team is to reflect this as faithfully as possible, year after year.

4 – VITICULTURE

Haut-Bailly's unique personality can only come through if the grapes are sufficiently ripe. It is therefore this ripeness, and a quest for balance, that constitute the château's primary goals.

Detailed soil surveys showed that Haut-Bailly is a veritable patchwork of micro-terroirs, and confirms that the historic match of grape varieties to specific plots was surprisingly on target. However, these detailed studies made it possible to be even more accurate.

Vineyard operations at Haut-Bailly are largely traditional, with an emphasis on close observation rather than completely relying on a technical approach. Chemical weed killers have never been used at Haut-Bailly and the grapes have always been harvested by hand. Respect for the environment means limiting the use of chemical sprays to a strict minimum (sustainable pest and disease control) and permanently adapting to each situation in the vineyard.

Maximum attention is paid to the vines' everyday needs, doing only what needs to be done, and no more. Financial considerations are by no means the overriding factor – quality is. This is reflected in a number of choices: very severe pruning, green harvesting as necessary, and very relentless selection when it comes to blending.

Determined to be at the forefront of technical progress, Château Haut-Bailly belongs to several research groups with an aim to improve quality and reduce environmental impact. Important issues being addressed at the present time are: fighting vine diseases, reducing copper content in the soil, limiting the use of chemical input products, and maximising green cover. Vineyard workers receive training in how best to prune vines in order to enhance their life expectancy.

5 – WINEMAKING

Winemaking is the culmination of choices made all year long in the vineyard.

The grapes are hand-sorted three times: once during picking, then on a sorting table, and finally on a vibrating sorting table, where the fruit is gone over by a team of four to six people.

Grapes from each plot are separately fermented. The 2002 renovation of the vat room means that there are now small (50-90 hl) vats conducive to well-focused, fine-tuned winemaking corresponding to grapes from each plot. Alcoholic fermentation takes place in these vats at a temperature of 26-28°C, with gentle pumping over. Malolactic fermentation happens in barrel as well as stainless steel vats.

Wine from each lot is regularly tasted all year long. The best lots are set aside for the *grand vin*. They must meet the strict criteria necessary for Haut-Bailly's terroir to come through. The selection is ruthless. The final blends of Château Haut-Bailly and La Parde Haut-Bailly are made meticulously after a series of intense tasting sessions (some of the lots are marketed as generic Pessac-Léognan).

The wines are then aged in oak barrels for sixteen to eighteen months. The proportion of new oak is adapted to the profile of each vintage. This varies from 50 to 60% for Château Haut-Bailly and an average of 15% for La Parde Haut-Bailly.

The barrels come from 7 different cooperages. They are all made from fine-grained French oak.

6 – THE STYLE

Haut-Bailly's terroir accounts for the wine's unique style: a subtle balance between finesse and concentration, smoothness and structure, soft tannins and pronounced aromatics – the epitome of purity and elegance.

The rich, intense red fruit bouquet is accompanied by considerable freshness: the sign of a great wine. This freshness continues onto the palate, which shows wonderful focus, volume, richness, and smoothness, as well as tremendous balance that follows through in a long and infinitely classy aftertaste.

Haut-Bailly's tannins soften over time, making the wine more harmonious still, and explain why it is much sought after by connoisseurs all over the world. Very old vintages are remarkably complex and in even greater demand.

Haut-Bailly has a rare quality: it's amazing regularity, year in and year out. The château's outstanding terroir comes through whatever the vintage.

7 – THE HAUT-BAILLY FAMILY

- LA PARDE HAUT-BAILLY

Haut-Bailly was one of the first estates to create a second wine, *Domaine de la Parde*, in 1967. The name was changed to *La Parde de Haut-Bailly* in 1979 and simply *La Parde Haut-Bailly* in 2011.

Produced from the same plots as *Château Haut-Bailly* and made in exactly the same way, *La Parde Haut-Bailly* has its own particular charming and elegant style. It starts out quite velvety on the plate, going on to reveal a smooth, silky texture and attractive, upfront flavours without any heaviness. The wine's freshness and openness mean that it is enjoyable even quite young, although it can also age for at least fifteen years.

- ROSE DE HAUT-BAILLY

First produced in 2004, this *rosé de saignée* is "bled" from vats of wine left on the skins. It is made only in certain years. The wine is fermented in barrel and in vat at low temperature to retain maximum fruity aromas. This brilliant-coloured, attractive rosé is made primarily from Cabernet Sauvignon and has a real personality. It is sold under the name "ROSE de Haut-Bailly".

- PESSAC-LEOGNAN

The estate's 3rd wine, sold under the name of its appellation, *Pessac-Léognan*, was first made in 1987. It frequently consists of wine made from young vines. Aged for a shorter time in barrel, it is a very accessible and can be enjoyed quite young.

- CHATEAU LE PAPE

Château Le Pape produces very fruity wines marked by characteristic freshness and expressive Merlot. The wines are smooth and best enjoyed from 5 to 10 years after bottling. Thanks to the expertise of the *Château Haut-Bailly* winemaking team, *Château Le Pape* is becoming more focused and elegant. It has its own unique style that sets it apart from other wines in the *Haut-Bailly* range.



8 – THE OWNERS

Haut-Bailly's terroir has attracted a series of owners going as far back as the 15th century who succeeded in revealing its remarkable potential.

The archives show that vines were grown in the place named "Pujau" on Haut-Bailly's gravelly rise as long ago as 1461. However, sharing a belief that this terroir was able to produce very great wine, Firmin Le Bailly and Nicolas de Leuvarde gave the vineyard its present-day configuration (33 hectares) in the 17th century. They amassed a significant capital circa 1630 to expand and consolidate the estate, paving the way for its commercial development.

Two noted local elected representatives were successive owners of Haut-Bailly: Christophe Lafaurie de Monbadon, member of the Bordeaux Parliament, followed by his son, **Laurent Lafaurie de Monbadon**, elected Mayor of Bordeaux in 1805. The latter's intelligent management had a lasting effect on the city. He was later a French senator, which took him increasingly away from the region, and his heirs decided to sell the estate in 1813.

Haut-Bailly established an international reputation thanks to **Alcide Bellot des Minières**, who acquired the château in 1872. He had a major impact not only on the estate, but also winegrowing as a whole in Bordeaux. His determination to make Haut-Bailly a model vineyard, based in the most advanced scientific knowledge of the day, earned him many admirers and the nickname "king of the winegrowers" in a period novel called "Herlot des Grandières". His success increased the market price of Haut-Bailly to the same level as the first growths of the Médoc.

The estate passed into the hands of Frantz Malvesin, a learned geographer and lover of fine wine, in 1918. His demise, combined with the economic crisis between the two world wars, marked the beginning of relative decline shared by many Bordeaux châteaux at the time.

The purchase of Haut-Bailly in 1955 by **Daniel Sanders**, a Belgian-born resident of Lille, opened up a new era. Daniel and his son, Jean, were passionate about making fine wine. They renovated the vineyard, built new cellars, and took pains to select only grapes from the best vines for their *grand vin*. Jean Sanders succeeded in giving the wines a unique style and reputation, and Haut-Bailly recovered its image as a great wine on the international marketplace.

The 21st century: acquisition by the Wilmers Family

Robert G. Wilmers acquired Château Haut-Bailly in 1998. Born in the US, this Francophile American grew up in Belgium and studied at Harvard. He was Chairman of M & T Bank Corporation based in Buffalo, New York, one of the United States' first twenty commercial banks. He was awarded as Banker of the Year 2011, for his qualities as visionary and wise among the torment that affected the American economy.

Much appreciated for his extreme courtesy, intelligence, and inimitable humour, "Bob" Wilmers lost no time in becoming a respected member of the small circle of great château owners. He did much to promote the fine wines of Bordeaux around the world.

While owning Haut-Bailly, he instituted a number of improvements, starting with a detailed soil survey conducted by Professor Denis Dubourdieu. Farm buildings were constructed and the cellars renovated in order to streamline and optimise the circuit from vine to bottle. The château also underwent restoration in keeping with its historic heritage.

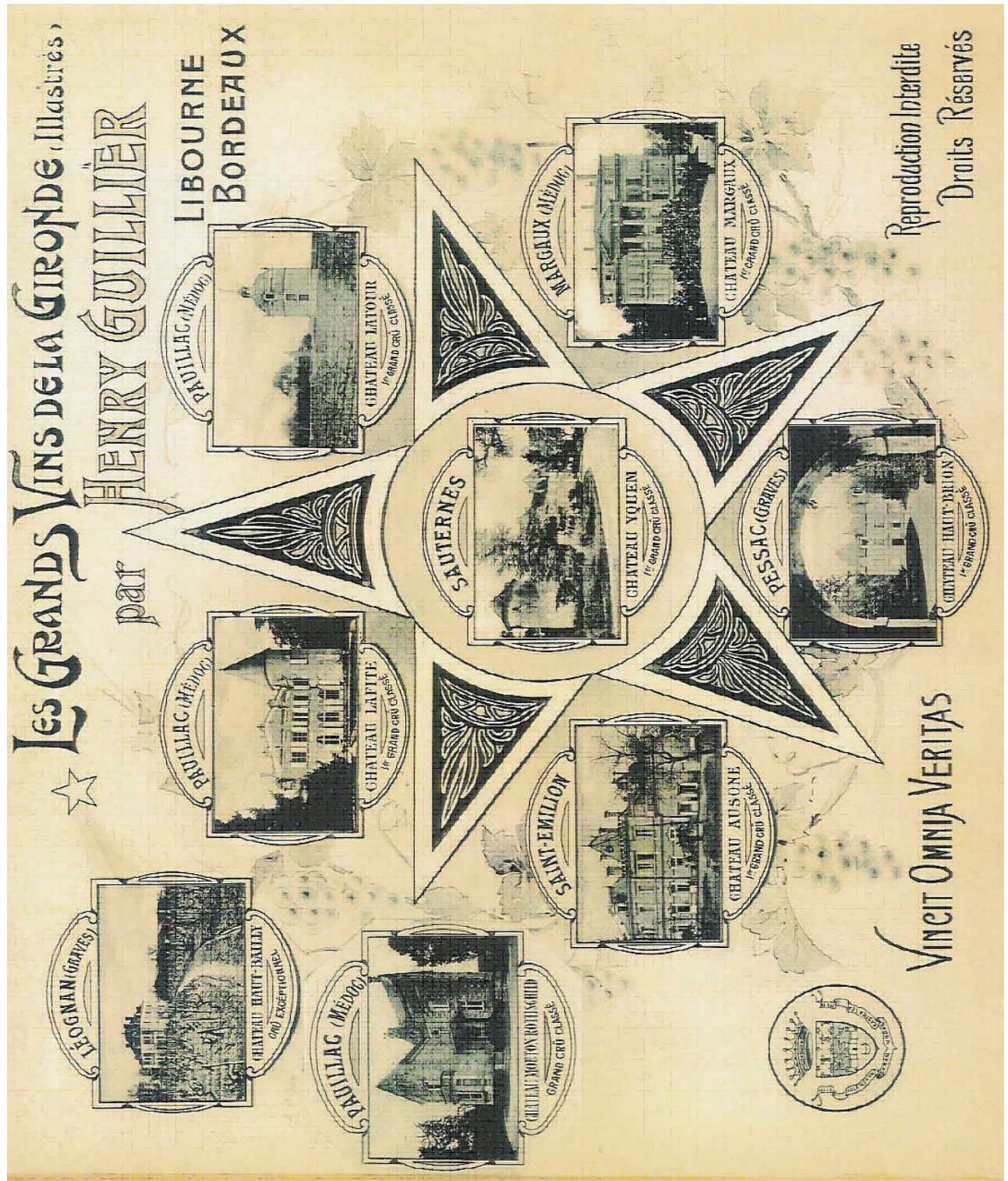
Thanks to these significant investments, the estate entered the 21st century with confidence and ambition.

Following the passing of Robert G. Wilmers in December 2017, his family has taken over and intends to continue in his footsteps. The management team as well as the family are committed to pursuing Bob's work in the same spirit and energy as in the past twenty years. Together they will lead and develop the initiated and future projects.

Robert G. Wilmers' son, **Chris Wilmers**, appointed as the chairman of the board, has been involved for many years in the development of Haut-Bailly to which he is very attached. He is an Ecology Professor at the Environmental Studies Department at the University of California in Santa Cruz. His research subjects cover wildlife ecology, climate change. He will be an asset to think about Haut-Bailly's future viticulture.

Illustration by Henry Guillier :
Haut-Bailly, an exceptional growth on a par with the “firsts”

This page dates from the beginning of the 20th century and describes the Great Wines of the Gironde. Haut-Bailly is mentioned as being the only Graves, together with Haut-Brion, capable of being ranked among the Classified Bordeaux First Growths. The price at which Haut-Bailly was being sold for at the time confirms this position. The title “Crû exceptionnel” was printed on the château label until 1987...



9 – THE MEN AND WOMEN OF HAUT-BAILLY

Véronique Sanders-van Beek

After studying literature, economics, and communication at the Sorbonne (CELSA), Véronique Sanders began her career as a consultant with Publicis in Prague and Paris. In order to improve her understanding of wine, she obtained the DUAD (University Diploma in Wine Tasting Aptitude) from the University of Bordeaux. When her grandfather, Jean Sanders, sold Château Haut-Bailly, Robert G. Wilmers asked her to stay on and manage the estate. Véronique thus achieved a childhood dream thanks to this tremendous opportunity to be in charge of a prestigious great growth.

In conjunction with Robert Wilmers, she oversaw a far-reaching investment programme to modernise the vineyards, cellars, offices, and château itself. They have made sure to perpetuate the warm, family atmosphere at Haut-Bailly, and continue to make visitors feel as welcome as they have always been.

A member of the Board of Directors of the Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc, Graves, Barsac et Sauternes, as well as that of the Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux and the Académie du Vin de Bordeaux, Véronique Sanders is deeply committed to the world of wine. She was the first woman to be elected president of the Union des Crus Classés de Graves between 2006 and 2009. She also received the National Order of Merit in September 2011 and became a member of the Board of Directors of the ISVV (Institute of Vine and Wine Sciences) in 2014.

Véronique Sanders is married to Alexander van Beek, Director of Château Giscours and Château du Tertre, and the couple have a son. She is a lover of literature and classical music, and speaks both English and German (and is learning Dutch).

Gabriel Vialard

A hands-on winemaker, but also one inclined to reflection, oenologist Gabriel Vialard is Technical Director at Haut-Bailly. He is the discreet, but efficient artisan behind the modernisation of the vineyard and cellars in recent years. He has perpetuated Haut-Bailly's traditional values, while keeping well informed of technological developments in winemaking thanks to regular contact with the Bordeaux Faculty of Oenology and Bordeaux Sciences Agro (ex-ENITA). Haut-Bailly is involved with ten other great growths in applied research projects involving experiments in the framework of the Vitinov programme. Each estate benefits from the results of these experiments, making for tangible progress and cutting-edge winemaking research.

Consulting

The Haut-Bailly team has received precious advice for many years from famous professors at Bordeaux University. Over the vintages, Emile Peynaud, Pascal Ribéreau-Gayon and Denis Dubourdieu have supported Haut-Bailly with their vision and knowledge, while never losing sight of how best to bring out the terroir's intrinsic personality.

Today, Axel Marchal (Institute of Vine and Wine Sciences of Bordeaux) follows winemaking and blending at Château Haut-Bailly in collaboration with Valérie Lavigne and Christophe Ollivier. They contribute precious expertise with regard to viticulture and winemaking.