

# Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion - Notes de dégustation / Ratings

2023

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CHÂTEAU  
LES CARMES  
HAUT-BRION



Yohan Castaing

97 – 99 / 100

Guillaume Pouthier and his team have once again crafted one of Bordeaux's most unique and characterful wines. Revealing aromas of mulberries and raspberries mingled with notions of vine smoke, orange zest, rose petals and spices, the 2023 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is medium to full-bodied, fleshy and concentrated, with a powerful, vibrant and complete mid-palate, concluding with a long, ethereal and mouthwateringly saline finish. Sensual, suave and seamless, its beautifully refined tannins are, analytically, more abundant than even those of the 2022 vintage, yet they are so brilliantly integrated as to be near-imperceptible. This blend of 50% Cabernet Franc, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot is crafted for longevity, though its refined structure will make it surprisingly approachable at an early age. It's maturing 70% in new oak barrels, 20% in 18-hectoliter foudres and 10% in amphorae. A creditable yield of 50 hectoliters per hectare represents a decided agronomic success in what was a challenging growing season.



James Suckling

98 - 99 / 100

This is a fantastic wine and very, very exciting, with purity and brightness to the floral, spicy and blackberry notes. It's full and deep with agility and weightless. You feel the greatness in this. The winemaker says this is more concentrated and structured than the 2022. Lightly salty. 60% whole-berry fermentation. 50% cabernet franc, 30% cabernet sauvignon and 20% merlot. From organically grown grapes.



Georgie Hindle

97 / 100

Extremely floral nose; peony, iris, rose, expressive and aromatic with black fruits too, liquorice, dark fruit, cedar, some black chocolate and coffee bitterness on the nose too. Smooth and supple, nicely weighted in the mouth, forward, grippy and bright with a soft chew - really quite polished and pristine. Seamlessly integrated with the acidity balancing the tannins and the ripe fruit with some mineral wet stone undercurrents and slight bitter liquorice and grapefruit skin on the finish. It's a little serious, but certainly polished with a soft chew of strawberry and raspberry and stoney-edged tannins giving excellent terroir signature. Ripe, fresh, clean, fragrant, sleek and streamlined. It has a lovely style and lots of finesse from winemaker Guillaume Pouthier. Harvest 11-25 September, 60% whole bunch fermentation taking the alcohol down from 14.3% at picking to 13.5%. 3.62pH.



Jeb Dunnuck

95 – 97 / 100

As to the Grand Vin 2023 Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion, this beauty checks in as 50% Cabernet Franc, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 20% Merlot that was fermented with 60% whole cluster, brought up in 70% new barrels, with a good portion in foudre and amphora. It has a deep ruby/purple hue and vibrant aromatics of cassis and black cherries as well as leafy tobacco, spring flowers, woodsmoke, and graphite. Medium to full-bodied, it stays tight and compact on the palate, with a lively spine of acidity, beautiful precision and focus, ripe yet certainly present tannins, and outstanding length. It's incredibly elegant, and I wouldn't be surprised to see this gain mid-palate density over the course of its élevage. It's going to be long-lived. supple on the attack, with a plunge-pool mid-palate reminiscent texturally of Pichon Comtesse. Glacial and incredibly harmonious, an impression accentuated by the amplitude. The calcaire character of the tannins is much in evidence here. A wine that transcends the challenges of the vintage – that's what Guillaume Pouthier does!



Antonio Galloni

94 - 96 / 100

The 2023 Les Carmes Haut-Brion is increasingly a wine of seamlessness. Whereas the various components were once easily discernible, today Carmes is most often a wine of total beauty. The 2023 is a bit shy, especially in its aromatics. In other words, a pretty big departure from so many other recent vintages that have been far showier at this stage. Technical Director Guillaume Pouthier explains that he plans to give the 2023 longer aging, around 24-26 months, so he approached vinification and the early part of aging in a more reductive style than in the past. As always, Les Carmes is marked by its strong presence of Cabernet Franc and use of whole clusters, but as mentioned above, those signatures are less immediately evident than they once were. Les Carmes has been one of Bordeaux's stars over the last few years. I can't wait to see how the 2023 turns out.



Neal Martin

94 - 96 / 100

The 2023 Les Carmes Haut-Brion was picked September 11 to 25 with 60% whole bunch and more Cabernet Franc than usual. Aging was 70% in new barrels, 20% in 18-hectoliter foudres and 10% in amphorae. This offers plenty of dark berry fruit mixed with cedar and pinecones on the nose, very well defined and focused. The palate is medium bodied with pliant tannins, and the acidity is very well-judged. Just a soupçon of white pepper appears toward the finish. This is a much more succinct Les Carmes than the 2022, but it's extremely harmonious and characterful.



CHÂTEAU  
LES CARMES  
HAUT-BRION



Lisa Perrotti-Brown

96 - 98 / 100

A blend of 50% Cabernet Franc, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 20% Merlot, Les Carmes Haut-Brion 2023 has a pH of 3.62. It was fermented with 60% whole bunches and it is aging in 70% new oak barrels, 20% new oak vats of 18 hl, and 10% amphorae. It has an opaque purple-black color and needs a little swirling and coaxing to bring out fabulously pure, well-defined notes of juicy black cherries, blackcurrant pastilles, ripe juicy blackberries, and licorice, leading to hints of tar, peonies, wet slate, and black olives, with a touch of Sichuan pepper. The light to medium-bodied palate is airy and refreshing, with a solid backbone of very fine-grained, prancing tannins and bold freshness supporting the pristine black fruit flavors, finishing long and minerally. I had to spend a good 15 minutes with this wine to allow it to grow: it is incredibly tight to begin but expands to become something powerful. A beguiling 2023 with fully ripe black fruit characters and a paradoxical airiness, it really makes your head spin in the best possible way!

Beckustator – Yves Beck

99 – 100 / 100

Que de finesse, de profondeur et de subtilité dans le filigrane et précis bouquet de Carmes. Les nuances de cerises noires couplées à des effluves de pivoine et de sureau créent une symbiose et une complexité exceptionnelles, non par leur quantité mais par cette aptitude à créer une telle pluralité avec pour source d'énergie l'élégance et la pureté. Le vin se profile de manière pondérée, ambitieuse, fraîche et précise. Les tannins apparaissent tardivement et commencent par afficher leur délicatesse avant de retrousser les manches et de mettre leur biceps en évidence. Encore une fois, Guillaume Pouthier et ses équipes ont su être réceptifs aux messages que la vigne et le climat leur ont envoyé. Ils ont su les lire, les interpréter et les assimiler dans le vin. Un exercice de subtilité, de précision, de rigueur et d'ambitions motivées par ce désir d'excellence. Il en résulte un vin équilibré, défiant, qui éveille les récepteurs dédiés à l'hédonisme, mais qui met également les sens voués à apprécier les détails en alerte... Respectivement le côté un peu plus cérébral. Carmes 2023 est profond, exceptionnel, précis, salivant, voire désaltérant. Une fois encore, Carmes prouve que la finesse et la subtilité, menées par une délicate puissance, disposent des arguments nécessaires en soulignant son excellence, indépendamment du millésime car le 2023 ne se laisse pas intimider par son prédécesseur ; bien au contraire il s'assied à côté de lui afin qu'ils regardent ensemble vers l'avenir avec leurs différences respectives et, surtout, leur âme commune ! Il a probablement été plus difficile, par rapport à 2022, de mener le 2023 là où il est aujourd'hui. On est donc tenté de dire qu'il a d'autant plus de mérite, mais à vrai dire je pense que l'on se doit, dans ce contexte, de reporter le mérite aux gens qui se sont engagés à 100% et qui ont contribué à ce magnifique résultat. Je leur rends hommage par ces quelques lignes et je les remercie de récompenser les passionnés du vin avec ce très grand vin. 2029-2063



Adrian Van Velsen

98 – 100 / 100

Une fois de plus ce vin laisse sans voix, brillant ; des notes incroyablement profondes, florales, de violette, d'iris, de coriandre, d'agrumes, un parfum qui donne la chair de poule que l'on ne retrouve que sur Les Carmes ; la bouche est dense, concentrée mais légère comme une plume, flotte sur la langue, les tanins sont parfaits, soyeux, une grande tension, une longueur presque infinie. Apportera de la joie dans chaque phase de sa vie. (Dégustation Primeur Avril 2024, 13.5 Alcool)

ALEXANDRE MA

Alexandre Ma

98 - 100 / 100

Jacques Perrin – Vinifera

98 – 100 / 100

Quelle beauté aromatique ! Il y a quelque chose d'envoûtant dans cette complexité où s'associent le floral, les séquences épicées et balsamiques et des notes plus racinaires et minérales. Le vin affirme une présence et une intensité de goût remarquables. Finale dotée d'une grande énergie et d'une belle salinité. Encore une grande réussite pour les Carmes !

WEINWISSER Tjark Witzgall

19.5+ / 20

2023 Les Carmes Haut-Brion: 50 % Cabernet Franc, 30 % Cabernet Sauvignon, 20 % Merlot, alcohol 13.5 vol%, pH 3.62, 60 % whole bunches incl. stems, 70 % new barriques, 20 % 18 hl vats, 10 % amphorae, 50 hl/ha. Densely interwoven bouquet, delicate blueberry contours, black Tasmanian mountain pepper and Brazil tobacco. Blueberry jelly, noble cassis spice and nougat chocolate in the second attack. On the sublimely structured palate with tremendous energy, which gives the tightly meshed, dense, rich body an unimaginable dynamism, "a paradox" says Guillaume Pouthier with a smile. The concentrated, long-lasting finish is a firework of blackberries, dark cherries and sublime astringency and noble bitterness. A truly great Les Carmes that can achieve the highest score when perfectly mature.



Pierre Citerne

96 – 98 / 100

Les cabernets représentent 80 % de l'assemblage (50 % de franc et 30 % de sauvignon). La robe est saisissante de profondeur. Tout aussi profonde, l'expression du fruit, "noir" comme la robe mais paradoxalement d'une grande fraîcheur, développe des nuances presque extravagantes, qui ne sont pas sans évoquer celles que l'on trouve dans les crus du cœur du plateau saint-émilionnais : muscade, pain d'épices, cacao, figue rôtie, évolution vers la rose fanée... Et le bois n'est pour rien dans tout ça. Satinée dès l'entrée en bouche, la matière regorge de saveur. La tension interne est forte, les dimensions multiples, l'harmonie évidente.



CHATEAU  
LES CARMES  
HAUT-BRION

## B My Bordeaux *Christer Byklum*

97 – 99 / 100

Ruby. Scented, bright, nuanced, pure, stunning nose, detailed and refined, complex, exotic, layered and complex. Fresh acidity, ripe tannins, dark fruits, anise, liquorice, blackberries, fruit driven, energetic, textured, layered, superb and long. Saline finish. One of my absolute favorite expressions of this vintage.

## *Michel Bettane*

95 - 96 / 100

Puissance et fraîcheur indéniables, l'ensemble est bien construit et parfaitement en place. De grandes promesses en perspective.

## *Terc de Vins* *Terre de Vins*

99 - 100 / 100

C'est un strike, bluffant pour le dégustateur, pas pour Guillaume Pouthier, convaincu par la pertinence de la vinification par infusion qu'il étend d'année en année et fait une partie de l'originalité des Carmes. Puis l'assemblage : moitié cabernet franc, pour son côté aérien, un tiers cabernet sauvignon soit un peu plus que d'habitude, et donc moins d'un quart de merlot. 60 % de la récolte vinifiés en grappes entières, le marc mis sous claies, plus de remontages. Un fruit pulpeux et expressif dès le premier nez, iris, lilas, œillet, puis crème de cassis et fumée à l'aération. Juteux en diable, les tanins sont caressants, poudrés, subtils, intégrés, des saveurs de gomme à la violette, cachou et poivre de Timut. En milieu de bouche, une sensation crayeuse subtile. « *On veut faire des grands vins de garde... avec la générosité du Sud* », c'est hors normes.

## *Jean Marc Quarin*

97 / 100

Couleur noire. Grand nez complexe et nuancé. Touches de bois de pin et de fumée. A l'agitation du verre, il change. Nuances de framboise écrasée. Fond crémeux. En bouche, c'est l'art de la glisse, tout fond, tendre, juteux, minutieux, sur un déroulé aérien qui prend peu à peu de la puissance et s'élève en finale, avant de finir mesuré, incrachable et délicieux. C'est superbe ! Assemblage : 50 % cabernet franc et pour la première fois 30 % cabernet sauvignon, 20 % merlot. Degré d'alcool : 13°5 - pH : 3,62. Vinification avec 60 % de vendange entière. Elevage : 70 % barriques neuves, 20 % foudres de 18 hl, 10 % amphores.

## *Jeff Leve*

96 -98 / 100

Deep in color, the wine is equally deep, sporting nuances of blackberries, black cherries, flowers, blueberries, tar, herbs, and spices. On the palate, the wine is rich, full-bodied, supple, and deep. There is intensity, purity, length, and vibrancy. The wine is rich, and concentrated, yet, the cool part of the tasting is that the wine is also light on its feet. With all the obvious density, the wine never feels heavy. Although it is mouthcoating, its also elegant, leaving you with layers of crushed stones, herbs, and a wealth of ripe, sweet, dark fruits, with a touch of salty chocolate in the finish. The wine was made using 60% whole bunch clusters, blending 50% Cabernet Franc, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Merlot, 13.5% ABV, pH 3.6. The wine is aging in a combination of 70% new, French oak, 20% foudres and 10% amphora. Picking took place September 11- September 23. Drink from 2025-2050.

## *the drinks business* *Colin Hay*

96 - 98 / 100

(Pessac-Léognan; 50% Cabernet Franc/Bouchet; 30% Cabernet Sauvignon; 20% Merlot; a final yield of around 50 hl/ha, down from a potential 55 hl/ha due to shrivelling of the grapes just before harvest; pH 3.62; 13.5% alcohol – 14.3% before the 60% whole bunch fermentation; tasted at the property with Guillaume Pouthier). The impressive concentration here was achieved by creating the conditions for hydric stress within the vineyard – cutting the leaves in the form of a Christmas tree to increase transpiration. Purple rimmed and intense; radiant, unusually so for the vintage with palpably visible density, viscosity and concentration. Lilac. Violet. A little dark chocolate. Texturally, we have the sensation of silk inter-layered with cashmere, due to the entirely passive immersion maceration practiced here. Pulp, with copious black cherries, wild blueberries, graphite as if from the nuclear reactor core. There's cedar too, but more subtly so, iris and peony. Gloriously

## **WINEDOCTOR** *Chris Kissack*

95 - 97 / 100

The blend here is 50% Cabernet Franc, mostly old vines, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, making 80% Cabernet overall, high for the estate, and 20% Merlot, the fruit all picked between September 11th and the 25th. The yield was 51 hl/ha. The vinification used 60% whole bunches, a high level, with an infusion of the cap, held below the surface of the juice. Beautifully sweet Cabernet – specifically Cabernet Franc – on the nose, with perfumed rose, verbena and mint, with dark chocolate and dried raspberry beneath. A very savoury, polished and structured style on the palate, with dense ribbons of tannins and fresh acidity, keeping this bouncing along quite beautifully on the palate. This is sinewy, lithe, with an infused structure of tannins, sweet but restrained fruit, with fresh acidity, leading to a finish grained with energy and salty structure. Delicious composure, the tannins so tightly knit and finessed, with such joyous harmony and grip at the end. A triumph! The alcohol level is declared at 13.5%.



JANE ANSON  
INSIDE BORDEAUX

*Jane Anson*

**96 / 100**

Elderflower and peony aromatics, stunning inky plum colour that is very much a signature of Carmes, where it looks so enticing and ripe visually, and then on the palate you feel this contrasting vibrant lift and drinkability. Back to the signature squid ink flavour that is the key marker of ripe Cabernet in the vintage, and here the grippy slate texture slows everything down, slowly humming through the palate. Has a sappy, drinkability, with crushed rose petals and salted cracker salinity. 60% whole cluster, harvest September 11 to 25. 3.6ph. Distinctive, intense, one for Carmes lovers to celebrate.



*Ella Lister*

**96 – 98 / 100**

Un nez profond et délicat qui vous invite à découvrir les masses de fleurs et de plantes sauvages au fond de son puits magique. Des notes délicieusement amères d'agrumes s'y ajoutent. Assuré en bouche, d'une identité affirmée, il déploie ses fruits noirs, toastés, fumés, frais (une Grace Jones vineuse). Un noyau serré, captivant de sève envoûtante, et une finale soyeuse, saline et alléchante avec une superbe amertume en arrière-goût.



*Markus del Monego*

**97 / 100**

50% Cabernet Franc, 30% Cabernet Franc and 20% Merlot create a blend with dark purple colour and violet hue with a black core. Sophisticated nose with ripe fruit, juicy blackberries, blackcurrants, blackcurrant jelly, intense floral character with peony and violets, discreet hints of spiciness and subtle oak. Opulent yet elegant taste with fine freshness yet excellent fruit and floral character, hints of dark chocolate in the background. A velvety character with excellent length, stunning.



*Vladimir Kauffmann*

**100 / 100**



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