



Grape Varieties	80% Merlot 20% Cabernet Sauvignon
Winemaker	Jean-Christophe Barbe
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	14.5%
Residual Sugar	0.4g/L
Acidity	7.4g/L
Wine pH	3.77
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan

PRODUCER

The 14-hectare Château Laville in Sauternes is Jean-Christophe Barbe's family property. Professor of Oenology at Bordeaux University, he is mostly famous for his outstanding Sauternes (Decanter 2015 Sweet Bordeaux Trophy over £15), but also produces some stunning reds, albeit on a fairly small scale.

Although the domaine is mainly planted with white grapes, Jean-Christophe has set aside a 1.3 hectare vineyard of red varieties, which is sold as 'Château Mahon-Laville'. Thanks to the team of pickers that are constantly on hand at Château Laville (to perform the various passes through the vineyard required to make top Sauternes), Jean-Christophe is able to wait and pick the Merlot and Cabernet grapes when they are ripe (which can be an issue in this part of Bordeaux), rather than when he has pickers available.

VINEYARDS

Jean-Christophe's original 1.3 hectares planted with red grape varieties are located in Laville, on a plot of land called Mahon, lending its name to this wine. Soils are predominantly clay and the average age of the vines is 18 years. The work that goes into it - leaf stripping to expose the fruit, crop thinning before véraison to lower yields and aid ripeness - all add to this great value Bordeaux.

VINTAGE

The 2023 growing season began with favourable spring conditions that promoted uniform flowering and early budburst, which avoided April frost damage. June brought hot, humid weather requiring active mildew management. From mid August, conditions shifted dramatically to an exceptionally hot summer with an extended heatwave, followed by more moderate weather that created optimal grape ripening conditions through harvest.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand picked and spent three to four weeks on skins fermenting at 28°C-30°C. Malolactic fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks at temperatures of 22°C, followed by ageing for 12 months in barrel.

TASTING NOTES

Deep purple in colour, this wine has a classic Bordeaux nose packed with spice, blackberry and hints of toasty oak. The palate shows ripe, supple fruit, smooth tannins and a grip on the finish that reminds you that you are drinking a Claret.