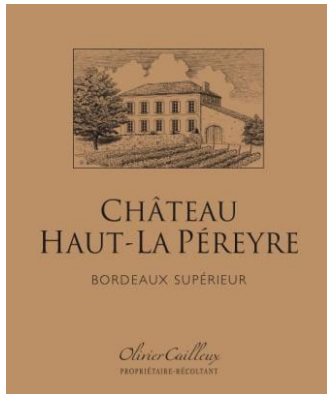


Château Haut-La Péreyre

Haut-Benauge



This domaine started life in 1881 in the prestigious, if small and under the radar, appellation of Haut-Benauge in Bordeaux's Entre-Deux-Mers region. It sold its wine in bulk to traders over the years until Olivier Cailleux's parents began to estate bottle in 1974. Olivier himself was given the keys to the domaine in 1994; he is the sixth generation to manage the family affairs.

In these hills during the Middle Ages the local lord established his digs at the nearby Château de Benauge, which served as a fortress during the endless skirmishes of the 100 Years War. It was the last bastion to fall to the French when they won the war in 1453 and finally drove the English out of Aquitaine. Named after the fort (see below serving as the backdrop for Olivier), the sub-appellation of Haut Benauge was created in 1955 as a superior zone for whites with Entre-Deux-Mers thanks to its hillsides and limestone soils. The appellation is reserved for both dry and sweet whites — red wine falls under the larger umbrella of Bordeaux Supérieur — but both colors do equally well here. This zone is located in the hinterland of Cadillac, a river town that still retains its fortified walls and looks straight across the river at the appellation of Graves. (A short aside: The Cadillac Motor Company was named after Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac, a French explorer who was born near Cadillac and who founded Detroit. The Cadillac logo is based on his coat of arms.) This sector's earlier claim to fame was that Benauges was the last bastion to fall to the French when they won the Hundred Years War in 1453 and finally drove the English out of Bordeaux (the English have never recovered).

Today, Olivier farms 126 acres of grapes at Château Haut-La Péreyre. In 2019 he earned HEV certification (High Environmental Value, a new program instituted by the Ministry of Agriculture—see [here](#) for more info), and currently he has 15 acres of red varieties in conversion for organic production. All in all, he makes a range of wine under several labels: red, white, rosé, even crémant; sells in bottle, in bag-in-box, continues to sell some in bulk (to the *négoce*), and he attends wine fairs on weekends to hawk his wares direct to consumers. As such, he typifies the ranks of petits chateaux, the class of unheralded small farmers who account for so much of the wine made in Bordeaux. There's little in the way of bells and whistles to announce their wines, but they can be some of the best values in Bordeaux—and France—today.

Olivier reserves 50 of his 126 acres of vines for the production of his two mainstays, the Haut-La Péreyre red and white.

He reserves 12 acres of his finest sites for Cuvée Meste-Jean. This is a wine he has made since 1989, but he began to tweak how he made it beginning with the 2014 and continued to refine things until 2018 when he landed on a mix of raising the wine in old and new 500-liter *demi-muids* with a bit of wine from tank. Our first purchase of this wine was with the superb 2016 vintage.