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## La Gravette de Certan 2015

CSPC# 801704

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc

### Appellation

Pomerol

### Website

<http://www.vieuxchateaucertan.com/en/great-wines-pomerol/la-gravette-de-certan.html>

### General Info

Vieux Château Certan is certainly the most beautiful and historic château in Pomerol. The name is said to date back to the 12th century where it was recorded as “Sertan”. The estate was created in the 16th century by the Scottish family de May while the name “Vieux Château Certan” has existed since 1745. The Château is a magnificent “chartreuse” situated in the heart of the famous Pomerol plateau. In 1858, the estate was sold to Charles de Bousquet who completely renovated the château. Its appearance has remained unchanged ever since – even with its odd towers that flank the north and south sides of the château; one with a slate roof and the other with terracotta tiles.

Vieux Château Certan has been owned by the Thienpont family since 1924. After the death Georges Thienpont in 1962, the estate was run by one of his sons, Léon Thienpont. During this period the vineyards were completely renovated, and much replanting was carried out after the Great Frost of 1956. In 1972 a new chai was installed with large oak fermentation vats made by the Seguin Moreau cooperage which are still in use at the château and were greatly responsible for the return to wooden fermentation vats in many of Bordeaux’s grands crus.

Upon the untimely death of Léon Thienpont in 1985, his son Alexandre took over the estate and moved with his wife and four children into the château. Alexandre’s education was completely dedicated to wine. Apart from oenology studies, Alexandre had worked at Château la Gaffelière in Saint Emilion to gain valuable wine making experience.

Helped by continued investments from the family, Alexandre has continued to improve and build on the Thienpont tradition of winemaking excellence. His modesty and unassuming manner hide the pride and sense of deep responsibility he has in running Vieux Château Certan. He lives and works for his wine and is known in Bordeaux as the manager who intimately knows each vine in his 14-hectare vineyard. Two things can lure him away from Pomerol – gliding and endurance cycling in the Pyrenees Mountains. Over the last couple of years, Alexandre has been working in tandem with his son Guillaume whose winemaking studies have taken him all over the world. Guillaume brings a modern vision to Certan and a technical discipline (he has recently built a wine laboratory at Certan) which has permitted the estate to understand the difference in their vineyard parcels more precisely and adapt the winemaking to each terroir.

### Vintage

This year, everything combined to make the vintage a success: superb weather allied to a mature vineyard enabled an outstanding vintage.

A cool and sufficiently rainy winter, followed by a magnificent spring, brought about a quick and homogeneous budding of the vines. A good flowering followed, helped by fine weather at the end of May and beginning of June.

Hot weather during July brought a substantial water deficit in the vineyard. This amazing summer period caused the skins of the grapes to thicken and along with fine end-of-the-season weather this enabled us to look forward to a worry-free harvest. The Merlot was ripe, silky and complete. It brought all its strength to the wine. The subtle Cabernet Franc provided balance by its freshness, and length of flavour through its pedigree. It gave the wine delicacy and spirit.

<b>Vineyards</b>	Today the vineyard comprises 14 hectares in one contiguous plot. The vineyard is planted with 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. The high proportion of Cabernet is unusual in Pomerol and belies Certan's proximity to Château Cheval Blanc which is located just across the road that divides the appellations of Pomerol and Saint Emilion. The terroir at Vieux Château Certan is a mixture of gravel, clay and sand on an ancient plateau which contains a high content of "crasse de fer" (iron oxide). This explains the presence of the three major Bordeaux varieties. Strict pruning leaving only six buds per vine, limited spraying and treatments, green harvest and leaf stripping are part of the vineyard management program at Certan. Harvesting takes place around the middle or end of September with a team of 40 local pickers.
<b>Vinification / Maturation</b>	In the cellar, the crop is hand sorted, destemmed and lightly crushed before being fermented in close-top wooden vats with fermentation and maceration lasting around three weeks. Ageing is carried out in new French oak barrels for 18 months. The wine is gently fined with egg whites but never filtered. Alexandre and Guillaume take great care in the blending of the wine according to the vintage conditions. In years such as 1996 or 2000, the Cabernets ripened beautifully making up the full complement in the blend. In vintages such as 1998, it is the Merlots that dominate. Barrels that are not judged of sufficiently high enough quality for the "Grand Vin" are used to produce a second label, "La Gravette" or sold off as generic Pomerol. Approximately 45,000 to 60,000 bottles are produced each year
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	This is a stunning vintage for the second wine of Vieux Château Certan, which is named after a vineyard parcel between Certan and Le Pin. Thirty percent of the production of VCC is destined for La Gravette, notably the young vines and the Cabernets. This is certainly equal to many well-known Pomerols and the wine displays beautiful rich, dark fruit character with a hint of graphite and truffle. On the palate the wine is quite sweet and round with notable freshness and grip. Made from a blend of 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc, this wine will drink well for the next ten years.
<b>Production</b>	3,333 cases made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2019-2025
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<b>90 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018 <b>90 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018 <b>88 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018 <b>94 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018 <b>88-90 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016 <b>92 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018
<b>Reviews</b>	<i>"This is reserved, with subtle Earl Grey tea, singed apple wood and warm fruitcake aromas opening slowly ahead of a core of dark boysenberry, raspberry and blackberry compote flavors. A lovely swath of velvety tannins carries the finish, with the fruit and spice aromas pulling together nicely. Some patience is needed here, but this is one of the elites of the AOC in this vintage. Best from 2023 through 2040. 3,333 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator  <i>"This is the second wine of Vieux Château Certan, accounting for one-third of production and composed mainly of fruit from the younger vines. A blend of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc, the 2015 La Gravette de Certan is medium to deep garnet-purple in color with gorgeous, expressive plum preserves and blackberry pie notions on the nose with touches of powdered cinnamon, cloves, potpourri and dusty soil. Elegant, soft and pretty in the mouth, it has a spicy character and an earthy/savory finish."</i> - RP, Wine Advocate  <i>"The 2015 La Gravette de Certan, which comes from young vines (under 25 years old), has an attractive blackberry, raspberry and gravel-tinged bouquet, muted at first but opening nicely in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with fine-grain tannin. This is quite a masculine, slightly austere Gravette but the freshness shines through and it offers a pleasing savory finish that lingers nicely."</i> - NM, Wine Journal

**Reviews** *“So pretty on the nose with iodine, dark berries, flowers and rose petals. Full body and integrated tannins within a beautiful texture. Intense finish. Focused. Second wine of VCC. Better in 2022.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Medium-bodied with a touch of flowers and sweet, red fruits, soft textures and a confident, spicy, fresh approach for early drinking. The wine was made from 87% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc. 88 - 90 Pts”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“The 2015 La Gravette de Certan is a stellar second wine that shows just how fabulous the vintage is in Pomerol. Inky plum, blueberry, mint, lavender and spice notes give the Gravette its dark, sumptuous personality. La Gravette, Vieux Château Certan's second wine, emerges mostly from the younger vines on the property. Drink it over the next 10-20 years. (AG)”*  
- AG, Vinous

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