

Château Le Pin 2021

CSPC# 102698

750mlx1

13.4% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

100% Merlot

Appellation

Pomerol

Website

<https://francois-thienpont.com/en/vin/le-pin-2/>

Sustainability

The estate places a strong emphasis on organic and sustainable viticultural practices.

General Info

Le Pin is, without exaggeration, an exceptional to fantastic wine. It immediately captures the attention of a wine-lover with its incredibly tempting appearance, very marked lushness, and exotic character. However, this exotic character has been missing since the 2005 vintage, which doesn't make Le Pin lower in quality, only that this wine became more typical Pomerol. In 2010, 2016, and 2018 vintage, the kinky and exotic style of Le Pin has come back!

Since 1924, what we know of as Chateau Le Pin had been the property of the Loubie family. The grapes were sold or blended to produce other fine, but undistinguished Pomerol wines until 1978.

That changed in 1979. At first, it was thought that the vines of Chateau Le Pin would become part of Vieux Chateau Certan. But that idea quickly faded away. The price for the land was too much money in those days to add it to Vieux Chateau Certan. Leon Thienpont, the father of Alexandre Thienpont talked Jacques Thienpont into buying the 2-hectare property for one million French Francs. In those days, that was a lot of money. With that purchase, Le Pin was born.

At the time of the sale, the cellars Le Pin were in poor condition. The chai was nothing more than a shed that had been used to store gardening tools. The dilapidated house on the property needed work. Alexandre Thienpont took up residence at the estate in the small house at Le Pin for a period of time.

The next investment at Le Pin was made by Jacques Thienpont. It was his idea to add a single, 50 hectoliter, stainless steel vat. In the early days at Le Pin, things were really managed for very little money

However, things quickly changed for Jacques Thienpont and Le Pin after Robert Parker heaped effusive praise on their 1982 vintage. From that point forward, Le Pin became the first wine of Bordeaux selling for as much, if not more than the First Growth Bordeaux wines.

The owner Jacques Thienpont is quite picky when it comes to the wine and what is released. This can be in the selection, as lots not deemed worthy of Le Pin are declassified, or even an entire vintage can be declassified when in 2003, the entire production was declassified!

There is no second wine at Le Pin. However, they do produce a tiny amount of Trilogie, which is a multi-vintage blend of 3 different years, made from various declassified lots.

In April 2010, Jacques Thienpont added to his holdings with the purchase of 5 hectares in St. Emilion. The wine is being sold under the name L'IF.

Winemakers

Guillaume Thienpont

Vintage

The 2021 growing season began in mild weather but with a certain amount of rain. Winter had been warmer than average, and rainfall was very much higher. The great turning point in the season was the early part of spring when a cold snap produced a winter-like frost during the night of April 7th. Low temperatures, which continued from March until May, slowed down the vine cycle making it later than the previous three vintages. Between May and June, rainfall reached 250 mm. These wet conditions, together with increasingly mild temperatures, meant that constant close monitoring of vine health was essential. This situation continued throughout the summer period. While during July and August, rainfall decreased, temperatures were markedly cooler than the ten-year average. The veraison of the Merlot proved slow (lasting from July to mid-August), while that of the Cabernet was completed more quickly, taking place around 18th August. The colour change in the Cabernet had been quickened by the summer's rain. As is often the case in Bordeaux, the end of summer and the beginning of autumn proved beneficial: the month of September was less



humid and warmer than usually, while the month of October turned out to be a little cooler but clearly drier than normal.

Vineyards Le Pin is situated on the outskirts of Catusseau, in the middle of the clayey plateau and app. 1 km southwest of Vieux Château Certan. The soil's surface here consists mainly of gravel mixed with a bit of clay and sand, while the underground has two layers: first, a blend of rock and sand, then an app. 2.5 m deep layer of clay mixed with iron dirt ("crasse de fer"). The soil here is very poor due to no fertilization during Mme Laubie's ownership, so the vines' roots have to search deep down in the subsoil and fight to find nutrition.

That is why the yield per ha here rarely exceeds 30 hl, meaning the wine gets more concentration. There was 1.25 ha (1979), and later came 0.3 ha (1984) with 30 years old vines between Vieux Château Certan and Petit Village. In 1985 Jacques Thienpont bought for a lot of money a 0.7 ha big parcel, "Domaine de Vieille École," with 70 years old vines bordering Le Pin's vineyard. Jacques Thienpont is a talent-blessed winemaker who always tries to improve his wine.

Harvest The harvest took place September 25 - October 4.

Yields were 35 hectoliters per hectare.

Vinification/ Le Pin was probably the first chateau in all of Bordeaux to conduct malolactic fermentation in barrels.

Maturation Interestingly, this was by accident and not by design.

In their formative years, they did not have enough tanks to hold all the wine for fermentation. So, out of necessity, following alcoholic fermentation, they moved the wine to barrel as an experiment for malolactic fermentation and it worked!

Le Pin produces between 400 and 600 cases per year. The wine of Le Pin is vinified in 7 small, stainless-steel tanks that range in size from 15 hectoliters up to 42 hectoliters. In the cellars, all wine is moved by gravity. Malolactic fermentation takes place in new oak.

In fact, Le Pin was one of the first producers to perform malolactic fermentation in barrels in the Right Bank. The wine is aged in 100% new, French oak. Blending takes place prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes Medium-deep crimson. Attractive redcurrant, raspberry, plum, and cassis aromas with dark chocolate notes, some rose garden and violet. Juicy sweet wine with plentiful chalky/ hint al dente textures, lovely pure red cherry raspberry and plum fruits. Underlying savoury vanilla notes. Minerally bitter notes. Beautiful. 100% merlot 13.4% alc

Serve with Le Pin is a prestigious wine that pairs perfectly with meat dishes such as grilled beef, roast lamb, and game (deer, roe deer). It can also accompany poultry dishes such as stuffed turkey or roast chicken. Its aromatic complexity offers a beautiful complementarity with dishes rich in flavors and textures. For an unforgettable tasting, it is recommended to serve Le Pin at a temperature of 16 to 18 degrees Celsius and to let it breathe for 30 minutes before tasting.

Production 9,000 bottles made

Cellaring Drink 2027-2047

Scores/Awards

- 95 points** - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024
- 94-97 points** - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022
- 92-94 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022
- 98-99 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022
- 17+ points** - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - May 2022
- 94 points** - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022
- 94 points** - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022
- 94-96 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022
- 96 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022
- 95-97 points** - Thomas Parker, Farr Vintners - April 2022
- 95 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2024
- 94-96 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022
- 96 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2024
- 94-96 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022
- 93-95 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022
- 19 points** - Matthew Jukes - August 2022
- 95 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022
- 95 points** - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022
- 97 points** - Vert de Vin - July 2022
- 95-96 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - May 2022

Reviews

"The 2021 Le Pin has turned out beautifully in bottle, bursting with aromas of raspberries and blackberries mingled with notions of pencil shavings, spices, black truffle, and licorice, framed by a discreet touch of new oak (only 55% new this year). Medium to full-bodied, ample, and enveloping, it's suave and sensual, with a fleshy core of fruit and beautifully refined tannins and concludes with a long, rose-inflected finish. Le Pin, after all, is an early-ripening, well-drained terroir, so it's hardly surprising that it should perform especially well in a vintage like 2021. Drink 2027-2047."

- WK, Wine Advocate

"I tasted the 2021 Le Pin several times this spring, and on every occasion the wine showed brilliantly. Wafting from the glass with aromas of dark berries, plums, exotic spices, vine smoke and carnal nuances, it's medium to full-bodied, sumptuous, and enveloping, with a velvety attack, supple tannins and a long, penetrating finish. Seamless and impressively concentrated, it demonstrates how precocious, well-drained sites such as Le Pin came into their own in the 2021 growing season. As usual, it's 100% Merlot, and this year it checks in at 13.4% alcohol."

- WK, Wine Advocate

"The 2021 Le Pin is 100% Merlot, harvested from 25 September to 4 October with a yield of 35 hl/ha, and aging in 65% new oak. This finished blend was sampled straight from the barrel. Medium to deep garnet-purple in color, it needs a lot of swirling to unlock very pure notes of crushed black plums, fresh blackberries, and clove oil, followed by subtle hints of truffles, tobacco leaf, fertile loam, and Sichuan pepper. Medium-bodied, the palate delivers impactful energy with wonderful tension to the tightly knit black fruit layers and firm, ripe, rounded tannins, finishing long and minerally. pH 3.6. 2027-2047."

- LPB, Wine Independent

"This has a firm, seamless and velvety tannin structure, accompanying a deep core of dark plum fruit, peach stones, chocolate, and mahogany. Layered and caressing. Supple, yet full and powerful. Silky and smooth at the end. It shows real structure for the vintage and will age really well. 100% merlot."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"100% Merlot. 35 hl/ha. Cask sample. Poised and perfumed with porcelain finesse. Floral aromatics, appetising fruit with freshness and lift, very fine tannins. Harmonious if not hugely intense but should develop further. As is often the case, a burgundian air. (JL) 13.4%. Drink 2028 – 2045."

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

"Red cherries and strawberries alongside roses, peonies, and smoked earth on the nose. Immediately, so smooth, silky in the mouth with bright and searing strawberry and red cherry flavours. A delicate style on show, less plush and plump, more finessed and defined. Minerality shows through clearly with the high-toned fruit framed by just-robust tannins at this point giving a firmness to the overall structure. It has freshness and a sense of underlying power with a menthol backbone and touches of liquorice and black pepper. Long flavour and an appealing chalky finish."

"Jewel-ruby colour, this has layers of nuanced black fruits and campfire smoke on the nose. One of the more delicate renditions of Le Pin after a number of years of powerful seduction, this is vivid and juicy, heading towards brambled raspberry fruits, with finely-spun tannins and a twist of liquorice bud and grilled earth. The deep gravels of Le Pin (among the deepest of Pomerol, up to 6m) were able to ripen earlier than most areas, and this still delivers an arresting wine, with nuance, hidden power, and beauty. But it may not still be the conversation in a room the way that the best vintages of this remarkable wine can do. 75% new oak. Diana Berouet arrived in January 2022 (from Ch Petit Village) to Le Pin for the blending of this vintage, working with viticulturalist and consulting winemaker Guillaume Thienpont. 35hl/h yield, harvest November 25 to October 4. No frost impact, no mildew either. They made no 2013 and no 2003 here, so if they are making it, it's a good sign that they are happy with it."

- JA, janeanson.com

Reviews

“Cinnamon, flowers, licorice, roses, plums, and cherries with espresso, black raspberries, and fresh, leafy herbs create the array of notes in the perfume. On the palate, the wine is fresh, bright, soft, polished, elegant, and refined. The tannins are silky, and the fruits are pure and vibrant, with a crisp, almost crunchy quality to the sweet cherries, cocoa, and orange rind in the finish. The wine was produced from 100% Merlot, 13.4% ABV. The harvest took place September 25 - October 4. Yields were 35 hectoliters per hectare. Drink from 2025 - 2045.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2021 - entirely Merlot as always - was harvested from 25th September to 4th October. It is 13.4% abv. Production is close to average, with minor chaptalisation and saignee carried out where necessary. Bright, fairly deep ruby colour in the glass. The nose is bursting with sweet flowers, ripe cherries, baking spices and rich dark fruit. The palate has impressive flesh for the vintage but there remains the refreshing acid cut of the vintage. The result is a wine that is distinctively Le Pin but with an elegant, tense finish and saline drive. Glossy but deep, this is a succulent and harmonious wine that will greatly please those lucky enough to drink it.”
- TP, Farr Vintners

“The 2021 Le Pin showed impressively from barrel. Now in bottle since the beginning of June 2022, it has evolved since then, developing more depth and delineation. Oddly, you might misconstrue this as containing some Cabernet Franc (though, of course, it is 100% Merlot). The palate is medium-bodied with finely chiseled tannins. It has a wonderful symmetry and, although it declines to fan out on the finish like a top growing season, it is fresh and saline, beckoning you back for another sip. Lovely.”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2021 Le Pin was picked from 25 September to 4 October at a respectable 35hL/ha. Jacques Thienpont remarked how Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont had tended the vineyard so well throughout the year and for the first time they oversaw the vinification and the current élevage. It has a beautifully-defined bouquet, less ostentatious than recent vintages, unfolding with quite mineral-rich red and black fruit. The palate follows in a similar vein, a Le Pin imbued with a sense of athleticism, no excess fat, framed by fine tannins and a laser-focused finish. The terroir really shines through in 2021 perhaps more than in other feted vintages. Wonderful. This has 13.4% alcohol.”
- NM, Vinous

“The 2021 Le Pin has turned out beautifully. Élevage has done wonders in building texture. Dark, pliant, and super-expressive, the 2021 is fabulous right out of the gate. Bright acids resonate on the striking finish. Black cherry, plum, leather, spice, graphite, and jasmine lend an exotic flair. Time in the glass releases the aromatics. The 2021 is a gorgeous wine.”
- AG, Vinous

“The 2021 Le Pin is a delicate, refined wine that is still coming together in barrel. Bright saline accents and vivid floral aromatics lend energy to a core of red-fleshed fruit. The 75% new oak is expertly judged. Production is down quite a bit, about 14 barrels instead of the more typical 20 or so. The 2021 is a somewhat unusual, lighter style of Le Pin. I can't wait to see how it ages.”
- AG, Vinous

“Always 100% Merlot from a tiny parcel of clay and gravelly soils, the 2021 Château Le Pin offers up a textbook Le Pin nose of ripe red and blue fruits as well as toast, crème brûlée, spice, and exotic flowers. It's one of the sexiest, most opulent, and seamless wines in the vintage and is medium-bodied, has beautiful tannins, and great overall balance.”
- Jeb Dunnuck

“Jacques Thienpont introduced me to Diana Berrouet-Garcia at our tasting, joking he would retire and spend the rest of his life on a beach. I cannot see this happening, but this pioneering gent surely deserves a couple of days off, so who could argue with him rolling up his trousers and kicking off his loafers as long as he hangs around for a couple of days each year around EP time! As always, Jacques was happy to doff his hat to his VCC family members for keeping his vines clean and ship-shape during the testing growing season, and with well-drained plots, he didn't suffer too much anyway. There were no mildew problems here, and with slight chaptalisation from 12.2% to 13-ish coupled with a bit of saignée he and Diana arrived at a wine that would stop a runaway

Reviews *truck with its overriding sense of power and grace. This is one of the most aromatic and ethereal Le Pin vintages I have tasted. Jacques loves this 2021-style more than the '18, '19 and '20, and I concur. But he reasons that it is a 10am wine and that it is so delicious he could be tempted to open a second. Of course, he has the keys to the cellar, so this is his privilege. I, for one, will be ringing Diana and enquiring about his upcoming beach holiday plans while booking brunch dates with her from now 'til eternity if this is their corporate motto! In all seriousness, this is a compelling and shimmeringly beautiful Le Pin. Of course, it will make old bones, but no one in their right mind would let this wine linger for too long in their cellar. This wine should be drunk while it possesses all of the joie de vivre of its inventor! And that is that. 19."*
- Matthew Jukes

"Dark vivid ruby red, purple reflections at the narrow rim. Fresh nuances of cherries and blackberry, a touch of precious wood, liquorice, and a little nougat. Juicy, fine red berry fruit, finessed, well-structured, silky tannins, refined blackcurrant, mineral-silky finish, very good length; an elegant wine, marked by freshness and delicacy. Already very approachable."
- PM, Falstaff Magazine

"The nose is fruity, beautifully fresh, delicate and reveals a lovely purity of fruit, silky feel, fine richness (in delicacy/complexity). There are notes of bright/pulpy cherry, red currant and more lightly fresh/crunchy blueberry combined with fine hints of pulpy blackcurrant as well as fine hints of violet, star anise, a discreet hint of serenity, racy minerality. The palate is fruity and offers minerality, a beautiful freshness with delicacy, tension, a certain power (with finesse) and a discreet linearity. On the palate, this wine expresses notes of fresh/pulpy raspberry, pulpy cherry and, more slightly, juicy/acidic blackcurrant combined with touches of pulpy/juicy blue berries as well as hints of blueberry, star anise, fine hints of sap, violet, a subtle acidic/appetising touch, a discreet hint of vanilla and toastiness. The tannins are supple, fine, delicate, racy, and silky. Sapidly and a discreet mellowness on the finish. A very nice freshness!"
- Vert de Vin
