

## Vieux Château Certan 2012

CSPC# 763559

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**

92% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc

**Appellation**

Pomerol

**Classification**

Bordeaux AOC (*Appellation d'origine contrôlée*)

**Website**

[http://www.vieuxchateaucertan.com/vieux\\_chateau\\_certan\\_uk.html](http://www.vieuxchateaucertan.com/vieux_chateau_certan_uk.html)

**General Info**

The Vieux Château Certan estate, which in 1745 already figured on Bellayme's famous map under the name of "Sertan", is located in the heart of the Pomerol plateau.

Covering 14 hectares (35 acres) in one single block, the Vieux Château Certan vineyard is the fruit of a century of painstaking work and careful decision-making.

**Vintage**

2013 Pomerol is one of the bright spots in this challenging Bordeaux vintage.

However, nature did not help much with the 2013 Pomerol growing season. From start to finish, to produce 2013 Pomerol, growers had to contend with poor flowering, long periods of non-stop rain, a lack of sun, uneven ripening of their grapes and an incredible amount of sorting in the vineyards and in their cellars.

At the end of the day, even with tiny yields and the lowest level of alcohol seen in years, (Which should please some people more than others) the producers that were not afraid of stringent sorting's, that were willing to exert an easy touch during te vinification ended up producing some of the best wines not only in the Right Bank but of the entire vintage with their 2013 Pomerol wines.

Clearly, 2013 Pomerol is a year for vineyard managers and winemakers that were up the Herculean challenge the vintage offered. You have to go back to 1991 and 1992 to find a vintage of Pomerol at this level. However, do not be mistaken about the comparison with 1991 and 1992. 2013 Pomerol is a much better vintage. It does not compete with the top years, but some nice wines were produced.

**Vineyards**

The 13.5 hectare Vieux Chateau Certan vineyard is located in the center of Pomerol, on the plateau. When you arrive at the junction where the estate rests, you are truly at the cross streets that could easily be renamed to the center of the heart and soul of Pomerol. Directly across the street is Chateau Certan de May and just down the road you'll find Petrus. Vieux Chateau Certan has a terroir of clay and gravel soil.

Vieux Chateau Certan is one of the largest vineyards in the Right Bank that are planted in one single block of vines. The Vieux Chateau Certan vineyard in total is divided into 23 separate parcels. The vineyards of Vieux Chateau Certan are planted to 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon with vines that average 50 years of age. However, there is one very old plot of Merlot that was planted all the way back in 1932, making it one of the oldest parcels in the Pomerol appellation. Alexandre Thienpont is responsible for changing the makeup of the vineyards as well. He removed the Malbec and reduced the amount of Cabernet Sauvignon in the vineyards, while adding more Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Unlike the vineyard farming practices used in the 1960's and 1970's, today, no pesticides of any type are used on the vines. Alexandre Thienpont practices sustainable vineyard management techniques.

**Harvest**

September 30-October 1, 2013 and then October 3-5, finishing Oct 9, 2013.

**Vinification/  
Maturation**

The grapes are picked by hand and sorted meticulously at the end of each row of wines. After a gentle crushing they are put into oak vats, by variety. Those vats destined to make up the blend of the Grand Vin are run off into 100 % new French oak barrels and aged for 18 to 22 months.

**Production**

1,665 cases made

**Cellaring**

Drink 2014-2021



**Scores/Awards** **92 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2016  
**90-93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2014  
**87-88 points** - Robert M. Parker Jr., Wine Advocate #214 - August 2014  
**92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2014  
**90-91 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2014  
**94 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016  
**94-96 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 4, 2014  
**87-90 points** - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - Aug 2014  
**17.5 points** - JancisRobinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2014  
**17.5 (91) points** - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2014  
**92 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2014  
**90-93 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 26, 2014  
**92-94 points** - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2, 2014  
**16 points** - Simon Berry, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2014  
**91-94 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2014  
**18.5+ points** - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2014  
**90 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2014  
**90-93 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2014  
**89 points** - Lea & Sandeman Wine Merchants - April 2014  
**90-92 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only)  
**16 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)  
**93 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)

**Reviews** *"Very enticing, featuring crushed boysenberry and raspberry fruit, accented by fruitcake, black tea and bramble notes. Shows excellent length and energy for the vintage, with enough stuffing for the cellar. This has developed grip since the barrel tasting. Best from 2018 through 2028. 1,665 cases made."*  
 - JM, Wine Spectator

*"Shows lovely blue and purple fruit, with a decidedly floral feel. Very expressive in terms of aroma. Long and refined through the finish, delivering polish and a lingering tobacco profile, echoing gently. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 90-93"*  
 - JM, Wine Spectator

*"Approximately 1,000 cases of the 2013 Vieux Chateau Certan (versus the normal 4,000 cases) were produced. Alexandre Thienpont told me that yields were 22 hectoliters per hectare, and the final blend was unusual in that it was 92% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. The alcohol was a surprisingly lofty 13%. While charming, tasty and elegant, this wine does not possess the depth, fat or texture of a great vintage. The tropical September that spawned botrytis throughout Bordeaux vineyards had to be cut out, and the result was a ridiculously small crop that cost a fortune to produce, but will never sell for a high price since it is a good rather than exceptional wine. Drink it over the next 5-7 years."*  
 - RP, Wine Advocate

*"The Vieux Chateau Certan 2013 is a blend of 92% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc picked from 30 September until 9th October at 22hl/ha. It has a lovely, pure bouquet with small red cherries, rose petals and mineral that has exquisite delineation, though it does not possess the profundity of a top tier VCC. The palate is precise on the entry, a little pinched perhaps but with aeration it unfurls nicely. There is great tension here: a streamlined VCC that has the precision of a Swiss watch and a sense of tension that Hitchcock would have been proud of. Tasted April 2014."*  
 - NM, Wine Journal

*"Another lively 2013 with lemon peel, minerals and blueberries. Medium body with fine tannins and a bright, delicious finish. Delicate. Tangy and bright. Only 1,000 cases instead of the usual 4,000."*  
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"With a higher proportion of Merlot (92%) than usual, this is a round, ripe wine released at just 20% of normal production. The generous texture and tannins are well integrated into the rich fruit. It's juicy, broad and*

**Reviews** *showing the typical acidity of the vintage. With its tannic structure, the wine will age well. Drink from 2020.*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"94–96. Barrel Sample. This is a wonderfully perfumed wine, with fine tannins and delicious juicy fruit on the palate. Low yields have produced a complex and fine wine, with concentrated, spiced black-fruit notes."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"(92% merlot and 8% cabernet franc): Bright ruby. Perfumed, very pure aromas of raspberry, blackcurrant and violet. Enters the mouth bright and fresh, with juicy small red and dark berry flavors complicated by hints of iron and cedar. The finish is long and a little austere. Another solid 2013 wine that is only missing the fruit and charm of the better vintages. Interestingly, while many in Bordeaux (Medoc estates included) are starting to increase their use of cabernet franc, even if only by small amounts, at VCC the percentage of this variety seems to be decreasing almost every year."*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar

*"92% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc. Highest proportion of Merlot in memory -- because it is earlier ripening, it performed better. Sumptuous and luxurious on the nose, very open and sweet fruited. Fine, floury tannins. Beautifully formed flavours -- no mean feat in this vintage. The oak is very complementary too. It's a light iteration of the style, but this is a fair and successful reflection of 2013. 17.5/20 points. Drink 2017 to 2027."*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*"Less than 1,000 cases – 4,000 in a normal year. Mainly (92%) Merlot. Suave texture. Rich and ripe. Structured palate but a little less definition. Very good all the same. Drink: 2020-2035. 17.5"*  
- JL, Decanter.com

*"At one point there was a rumour that, like its sister property Le Pin, VCC wouldn't show its wine en primeur. But they proved to be wrong, even if quantities are small. It's fine and refreshing, with granular tannins, good acidity and a grassy undertone. 2018-26 92"*  
- TA, timatkin.com

*"With primary notes of black licorice, flowers and dark cherry liqueur, this medium-bodied wine shows good fruit, soft textures and bright red fruits in the finish, concluding with silky textures and an intriguing minty note. From low yields of only 22 hectoliters per hectare, the wine was produced from a blend of 92% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. The wine reached 13% alcohol with a pH of 3.65. The Grand Vin was produced from just 33% of the harvest and is aging in 60% new French oak. The wine could fill out during élevage and become an even better wine. 90-93 Pts."*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*"Mid depth; glossy looking, purple at edge; plums and blackcurrant fruit; spices; great purity; a real stand out aromatically; delicious palate; very nicely balanced with real delicacy; some material here but extraction held in check; very good finish and length. Like the finest Grand Cru Burgundy this. It would be my pick of the 2013 Pomerols tasted. Great clarity. Tiny quantities. Drink 2018-2030. Tasted April 4, 2014 at VCC. 92-94"*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

*"Alexandre Thienpont has been making sensational VCCs for several years from the venerable old vines of this exceptionally well situated vineyard. The youngest Merlots were planted in 1959 and the youngest Cabernet Francs in 1948. This is one of the great properties of Pomerol and it normally has a high percentage of Cabernet in the blend. Not yet tasted."*  
- Farr Vintners

*"Merlot 92% Cabernet Franc 8%. Sweet fruited on the nose the palate starts with freshness a fragrant mix of red fruits and black cherry. There is depth in the middle ripe flavours generous and rich but towards the back it feels lighter with a strong red fruited finish. 2020-35. 91-94"*  
- Derek Smedley MW

**Reviews** *“Ripe plums and cherry nose with with ripe mixed dark berries on the palate. The wine is silky, supple and elegant but without the usual depth found in VCC. Finish is fairly short. Less than 1,000 cases were made this year and the average is 4,000 cases. The decision to even bottle the grand vin was made after much reflection - 1991 and 2003 were 2 vintages where they seriously debated about making any wine at all. This is one of the weakest offerings from VCC that I can remember over the past 15 years. The wine was made to last about 15 years according to Alexander Thienpont. 92% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (01-Apr-2014)”*

- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

*“Alexandre Thienpont surprised us all this year: at one point he was contemplating not making any 'Grand Vin' at all, and then he made one of the undoubted stars of the vintage. Furthermore, he achieved this with a cepage made up of mainly Merlot - extraordinary in this vintage, and especially extraordinary from this vineyard, which used to be an island of Cabernet Franc in the middle of the Pomerol sea of Merlot. The only downside is that he has had to sacrifice most of his crop, and has therefore produced tiny quantities. They are bound to be snapped up.”*

- SB, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

*“(92 Merlot, 8 Cabernet Franc) The selection was so severe here that only a fifth of the crop was made. In 2013, 1000 cases of VCC will be released compared to 5000 in a normal year. There were big problems at flowering here - they lost half the crop. After an average August the awful September came. They sorted the fruit on the vine but decided very early on that 2/3 would be made into the second wine Gravette. The Grand Vin, with its dominant Merlot theme, is truly magnificent. It is one of the most compelling wines of the vintage. The poise, balance and freshness are in a class of their own. There is nobility here and the counterpoint between darkness and levity is arresting. Sleek, controlled, polished and cool, the crunch of tannin is thrilling. The aromatic lift on the nose is sets the whole wine up. There are fleeting moments of exotic perfume tempered by restraint and calm. I love it. 18.5”*

- MJ, [matthewjukes.com](http://matthewjukes.com)

*“The weather wasn't with us', said Guillaume Thienpont, explaining that the Cabernet Franc was just not good enough this year. They have made only a thousand cases of Grand Vin, with two thirds of the crop going to the second wine. Perfumed floral and red fruit nose, palate smooth and light with a slight hardening of acidity. The signature silky elegance without the power and richness, and without the characteristic Cabernet Franc fruit flavours either. They really waited for as much ripeness as they could get, despite the pressure of the developing botrytis, because, as Guillaume put it, 'vegetal flavours are not acceptable these days', but then had to be very gentle with extraction. 2016-2021 89”*

- Lea & Sandeman Wine Merchants

*“The 2013 Vieux Chateau Certan is a wine of extraordinary finesse and elegance. Blue and purplish-toned fruits, violets, lavender, sweet spices and mint are woven together in a fabric of stunning beauty. The 2013 is translucent, weightless and simply impeccable throughout. Clearly, the structure is that of an average year, but the sheer beauty is that of a superb site. There is so much to like here”*

- AG, Vinous

*“Vieux Château Certan 2013 was made from exceptionally small harvest (22 hl/ha) of Merlot (92%) and Cabernet Franc (8%). A success once again! In 1924, the Belgian wine merchant Georges Thienpont took possession of Vieux Château Certan, one of the most illustrious properties in Pomerol. The vineyard, has been managed by his grandson Alexandre since 1985. “The wine must tell its own story, not mine,” Alexandre Thienpont is fond of saying. “My goal is to make the best wine possible using the most natural methods. It is only fermented grape juice after all,” he humbly says. Having worked at various overseas estates, his son Guillaume, joined his father in 2011. The stars are aligned for further great things, with authenticity and personality in abundance!”*

- SAQ (Quebec Liquor Stores)