

Vieux Château Certan 2021

CSPC# 102705

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	77% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon
Appellation	Pomerol
Classification	Bordeaux AOC (<i>Appellation d'origine contrôlée</i>)
Website	http://www.vieuxchateaucertan.com/vieux_chateau_certan_uk.html
Analysis	pH: 3.62
Sustainability	Alexandre Thienpont practices 100% sustainable vineyard management farming techniques at Vieux Chateau Certan. While the estate is clearly a traditional winery, they embrace modern technology. For example, utilizing infrared cameras that are placed on tractors that allow for precise picking of single rows and even individual vines. That is a lot of work when you consider they have about 70,000 vines!
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.
Winemaker	Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont
Vintage	<p>From winter to the end of March, the first part of the 2021 growing season was marked by mild temperatures and frequent rainfall, which brought about a fast budding of the vines.</p> <p>Once the threat of April frosts had passed, a full flowering and a managed healthy vine canopy from spring till the beginning of summer ensured that solid foundations for the vintage had been laid down. The summer continued in temperate and frequently wet weather conditions up till the middle of August. Four glorious weeks of hot, dry and sunny weather then set in.</p> <p>Thank to these favourable conditions, the Merlot was superbly balanced, supple and perfumed. It brings uplift and roundness to the blend. The Cabernet Franc displayed aromatic intensity and its hallmark character. It shows delicacy, length of flavour and breed and gives a shimmering aspect to the wine.</p> <p>Finally, the Cabernet Sauvignon, brings a floral finishing touch and added structure.</p> <p>The 2021 Vieux Château Certan offers multiple facets: it shows a balance between freshness and roundness, fruit character and length of flavour.</p>
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	Yield: 38 hl/ha. The harvest was carried out every day from 24th September to 6th October
Vinification/ Maturation	The grapes are picked by hand and sorted meticulously at the end of each row of vines. 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 65% new French oak barrels and aged for 18 months.
Tasting Notes	Vieux Château Certan combines savoir-faire with exceptional soils. Coming mainly from the vineyard's oldest vines, Vieux Château Certan is every year a blend of the most excellent lots produced at the estate. The brilliance of the wine's hue, the richness of its aromas and the subtlety of its flavor bring it inimitable style.



Serve with	Best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Vieux Chateau Certan is also good when matched with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
Production	Approx. 3,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2029-2050
Scores/Awards	<p>95+ points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p>94-96 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>94-96 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p>96-97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2022</p> <p>17.5 points - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - May 2022</p> <p>96 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p>94 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - March 2024</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p>97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2024</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p>96 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>94-97 points - Thomas Parker, Farr Vintners - April 2022</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p>96-98 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>94 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2024</p> <p>93-95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p>19.5 points - Matthew Jukes - August 2022</p> <p>96 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p>95-96 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - May 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>“The 2021 Vieux Château Certan has turned out beautifully in bottle, unfurling in the glass with aromas of dark berries, cigar wrapper, black truffle, burning embers, mint and rose petals. Medium to full-bodied, deep, and layered, with impressive density, beautifully refined tannins, and a long, gently vanillin-inflected finish.”</i> - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>“The 2021 Vieux Château Certan wafts from the glass with lovely aromas of violets, rose petals, sweet wild berries, exotic spices, orange rind and smoke. Medium to full-bodied, supple, and enveloping, it's an elegant, fleshy wine with a bright core of fruit, ultra-refined tannins, and a precise, saline finish. Despite its almost Burgundian finesse, this Pomerol's remarkably penetrating, perfumed finish gives the lie to any notion that it's in any way lacking in intensity of flavor. As is almost invariably the case, Vieux Château Certan is one of the finest wines of the appellation this year.”</i> - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>“Deep garnet-purple colored, it slowly grows on the nose to reveal vibrant, perfumed notes of black raspberries, fresh black plums, and redcurrant jelly, plus suggestions of cast-iron pan, lilacs, rose oil, cinnamon stick, and aniseed with a waft of forest floor. The medium-bodied palate is very tightly wound, featuring loads of layers of red and black fruits intertwined with mineral sparks, supported by very fine-grained tannins and bold freshness, finishing on a lingering fragrant earth note. A wine that shimmers from start to finish. The alcohol is 13.3% and the pH is 3.62. 2028-2049.”</i> - LPB, Wine Independent</p> <p><i>“Medium to full body with a supple, textured, and firm tannin structure. Velvety and perfumed with fragrant notes of flowers, cloves, plums, and raspberries. Broad and layered. Very supple and evolving. Opens on the palate.”</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>“The wine has freshness and a fine perfume that highlights the structure. There is a lovely velvet character to this wine, enhanced by the structure from the 20% Cabernet Franc in the blend. It is light, packed with fruit, beautifully aromatic.”</i> - RV, Wine Enthusiast</p>

Reviews *"38 hl/ha. Cask sample. Rich, racy and aromatic with floral notes to the fore. Old-vine intensity, something not always evident this year. Smooth, elegant texture with fine, persistent tannins. Sweetness to the fruit on attack then fresh and driven on the finish. Good potential. (JL) 13.2%. Drink 2029 – 2050."*
- JL, JancisRobinson.com

"Ripe juicy strawberry, this has a gorgeous intensity on the nose, really fragrant and expressive, in a rich deep, heavily-scented way. You get the ripeness here with smooth, silky tannins giving depth and intensity on the palate. Succulent with a sharpness, that hit of freshly picked strawberry and cherry juice - electric and bright with tension and direction. It's softly spoken in one way, so quietly confident, yet showing so much detail in another, saying; "looking at how charming I can be". It has freshness and tension - 'a cool climate VCC' said Alexandre Thienpont. Bright acidity through delivered gracefully and sensitively with a gentle persistence. I love the delicacy, it has body no doubt, but it's the detail that's so captivating. A wonderful wine and one of the best from Pomerol in 2021."
- GH, Decanter.com

"Skillful winemaking, with fragrant curling aromatics, gunsmoke, cigar. This is a year for taking the pleasure in aromatics, so make sure you give it time to open up, as there is a lovely structure here that curls around red roses, raspberry puree, full of joy. No chaptalisation, very light fining. 65% new oak, 3.63ph. Harvest September 24 to October 6."
- JA, janeanson.com

"This has a classic structure, wet stones, smoked earth, plenty of sappy redcurrant and cassis fruits, graphite, and subdued power, will easily age for 15 to 20 years. The emphasis is on graceful structure rather than exuberant fruits, but it has clarity and complexity, and the most beautifully drawn-out finish. Skillful winemaking. No chaptalisation, 65% new oak, 3.63ph. Harvest September 24 to October 6."
- JA, janeanson.com

"In contention for wine of the vintage, and even better in the bottle than it was in the barrel, this gem pops with its display of flowers, spices, truffles, tobacco leaves, cherries, plums, and chocolate. The palate is influenced by its wealth of Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. This is a wine of finesse, freshness, refinement, elegance, and vibrancy, leaving you with lift, and energetic, red fruits with tension, precision, complexity, and length that builds during the finish. Drink from 2026-2055."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Dark ruby in color, the perfume kicks off with lilacs, violets, graphite, nutmeg, spice, plums, and black cherry nuances. On the palate, the wine is fresh, vibrant, crisp, chewy, and long. The salty touch of minerality in the endnote adds to all the sweet, dark red pit fruits. Refined, elegant and classic, (but in a good way) there is length, purity, tension, and energy in the finish, with just a hint of spice too. The wine blends 77%13.2% ABV. Yields were 38 hectoliters per hectare. Drink from 2026-2049."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The yield is in fact up on last year, at 38hl/ha. Deep purple colour. Dark fruit is immediate on the nose, but there is also a strong floral tone and delicate sweet spice from wood. The palate is very fine, an effortless intensity building through the mid palate. The tannins are ripe and silky but plentiful, keeping a very fine focus to the blue fruit in the middle. This is driven, cool and elegant Pomerol. Deep, spicy, and very long, this is another very impressive VCC that harnesses the best 2021 has to offer."
- TP, Farr Vintners

"The 2021 Vieux Château Certan was picked from September 24 to October 6 at 38hL/ha and registers 13.2% alcohol. It is a VCC defined by its Cabernets; Guillaume Thienpont told me they used all they had. "I would have blended more if we had more vines," he quipped. The nose unfurls with air to reveal graphite-infused black fruit, touches of undergrowth and tobacco – quintessential VCC aromatics. The palate is beautifully balanced with exquisite definition, not powerful and certainly not opulent, yet built around finesse, precision, and charm. It seems to grow in stature in the glass. Pure class."
- NM, Vinous

Reviews

"The 2021 Vieux Château Certan may very well be the wine of the vintage on the Right Bank. Intensely aromatic and nuanced, with exceptional balance, the 2021 is super-classy right out of the gate. Naturally, it doesn't have the richness or density of most prior vintages, but it more than makes up for that with its sublime harmony and overall freshness. All the elements are so well proportioned. Readers should plan on cellaring this beauty for at least another handful of years."

- AG, Vinous

"The 2021 Vieux Château Certan is a spectacular tour de force from Alexander and Guillaume Thienpont. What a wine. Vibrant and magnificent in its precision, the 2021 races across the palate, revealing seemingly endless layers of nuance over time. Dark blue/purplish fruit, cinnamon, new leather, graphite, lavender, and crushed rocks all build effortlessly. The Cabernets are dialed up in 2021 and that comes through in the wine's flavor profile and overall feel. The purity of the flavors is just mind-bending."

- AG, Vinous

"Ripe yet crunchy black cherries, sappy tobacco, spring flowers, and a kiss of crushed stone-like minerality all emerge on the nose, and it's medium to full-bodied, has a pure, silky, seamless mouthfeel, beautiful tannins, and the classic spine of acidity of the vintage. It clearly offers pleasure today with its vibrant, elegant style, yet this will cruise in cold cellars on its overall purity, balance, and acidity."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"The 2021 Vieux Château Certan is another pure, elegant Pomerol with plenty to love. Giving up a very pretty, precision, and medium-bodied style, it has lots of pure blue fruits, notes of spring flowers and graphite, finely polished tannins, and a great finish. It shows the cooler, fresher style of the vintage but has incredible purity and certainly brings good intensity. The tannins here are also terrific."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"Unlike many other famous estates in Pomerol, there is a sense that Alexandre and Guillaume Unlike many other famous estates in Pomerol, there is a sense that Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont feel their way through vintages, as opposed to having, or even winging it with, a plan. I sense that if a hurricane arrived on the horizon, then their wastepaper bin would receive another direct hit while they drew up a new and utterly relaxed recipe. This template might only last a day, but this openness, ability, and trust in their vineyards allows them never to lose faith in turning gloomy weather forecasts into invigoratingly delicious wines. So it was in 2021 when their old vine Merlot (some vines are 90 years old) kept its nerve and piloted this wine through the storms. Had they not pulled out a block of Cabernet Franc, it would have been jolly helpful in this wine, but I cannot sense any missing jigsaw piece. Guillaume explained that older vintages of VCC always had a sprinkle of Cabernet Sauvignon in the mix, and in 2021 they include fruit from vines planted in 2012. I can't imagine how heart-warming it must feel to include the fruit from ten-year-old vines in a wine of this level of distinction. So, as always with VCC, my tasting note starts from the end and reverses (no idea why). The acidity and brightness of the finish bring incredible definition and pixelation to this wine. If only my eyesight were this acute. The perfumes and flavours here are delivered in HD - so thank goodness for one's taste buds! You can experience every intricate detail here without relying on force, concentration, or repetition. The persistence of the mildly-exotic cherry fruit and floral spice is sensational, and the silkiness (no more than medium-weight at any stage) is captivating. VCC is a wine that glides, not rolls, across the palate. And then, eventually, the finish scratches to a halt on the palate with a scuff of ultra-fine tannins like a speed-skater going from full pelt to a standing stop in a moment. How amazing that this property didn't freeze, mildew was in check, and the four weeks of sunshine helped make a good vintage into an epic one. And, Immortelle is alive in this wine, too; Guillaume's eyes flickered when I mentioned this wizardly trait. 19.5."

- Matthew Jukes

"Dark deep ruby, purple hue to the narrow rim. Dark berry aroma, very clear, very ripe. Floral notes, tree resin. Silky and full-bodied on the palate, softly grounded, friable-grainy tannin without green tones, very dense, yet mild, lots of juiciness, great homogeneity and length, fine fruity accompaniment. An impeccably ripe harvested charmer with depth and incredible elegance."

- PM, Falstaff Magazine
