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## Clos de l'Oratoire 2012

CSPC# 749564

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc

### Appellation

St Emilion

### Classification

Grand Cru Classe in 2006

### Website

<http://www.neipperg.com/index.php?act=1,10,3>

### General Info

Clos de l'Oratoire is located on Saint-Emilion's north-east slope.

The origins of Clos de l'Oratoire lie in the Peyraud estate, which was established by the Beylot family, a firm of *négociants* based in Libourne, in the middle years of the 19th century. This was a substantial estate which required extensive planting by the proprietors, who were also responsible for the construction of the *château* which still graces the vineyards today. Its division, in which some of the best parcels were cleaved off to create Clos de l'Oratoire, occurred following the first classification of the St Emilion vineyards in 1955. The Beylot family made the split in good time for the 1969 reclassification, seeing the smaller of the two classed as *Grand Cru Classé*. The larger part, by then known as Château Peyreau, remained unclassified, and both parts stayed under the tenure of the family.

Just a few years later, however, came a significant change in ownership with the arrival of the Neipperg dynasty. Today the property is owned by Stephan von Neipperg, although it was in fact his father, Joseph-Hubert, Graf von Neipperg, a descendant of Franconian nobility, who acquired the property. Joseph-Hubert was one in a long line of successful winemakers in his homeland, Württemberg, which is now part of Baden-Württemberg, a southwest German state. He had made his first investment in Bordeaux in 1971, with the purchase of Canon-la-Gaffelière, and it was only the following year that he added Clos de l'Oratoire to his portfolio. Nevertheless it is Stephan, his son, who is today the driving force behind Clos de l'Oratoire, as well as Château Peyreau, which also came under the direction of the Neipperg family. Contrary to what is sometimes said, the plots comprising Clos l'Oratoire were not acquired in 1991, but in 1971 (at the same time as the von Neipperg's four first vineyards in Saint-Emilion).

During the 2nd revision of the Saint-Emilion classification, in 1969, the owner at the time had already selected the best plots of Château Peyreau and submitted them for classification. His request was accepted, and Clos de l'Oratoire was born in that year. However, major efforts undertaken to achieve Clos de l'Oratoire's full potential date from 1991.

**Vintage** After the very cold and dry winter of 2011–2012, bud break lasted throughout April. The rains of April and May, coupled with mild temperatures, resulted insignificant mineralization and strong vegetative growth of the vines.

Flowering was late (29 May) and drawn out, with a delicate fruit set. The old Merlot plants have at times seen yields reduced due to coulure (shatter, a failure of the fruit to set) or millerandage (shot grapes, incomplete development).

There was settled summer weather from 15 July, with the hottest August since 2003, allowing partial recovery of the growth cycle. From mid-July onwards, 2012 was one of the driest vintages of recent years (along with 2005, 2009 and 2010), resulting in a significant water deficit (120mm lower than the thirty-year average). Ripening in early August was prolonged, with peaks of temperature from July to September and reduced rainfall. The biggest daily temperature difference recorded was 12.9°C, the highest in eight years, favoring a high level of anthocyanins and aromatic intensity. September and October were mild, close to the seasonal norm (27–28°C on 5 October).



<b>Vineyards</b>	The 10.32 hectares of vines grow on Fronsac molasse covering a layer of sand with a clay subsoil. Average vine age is 35 years. This terroir is ideally suited to the blend of Merlot (90%), Cabernet Franc (5%), and Cabernet Sauvignon (5%) grapes. Merlot contributes roundness and opulence to the wine, whereas Cabernet Franc is responsible for power, aromatic complexity, and length.
<b>Harvest</b>	The Clos de l'Oratoire was picked at 25hl/ha between 11th and 22nd October
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	In wooden vats for 30 days. Extraction by pneumatic pigeage (punching down the cap). Malolactic fermentation and barrel ageing: In new oak barrels (60%) on the lees for 15 months. No fining
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Lovely ripe, slightly creamy black cherry and plum fruit, plus the wood. This is a touch sauvages and riper than some. I find something rooty and dried herbs. There's a core of really tacky tannin. Spiced, warm exit. Big finish. And there's a medicinal note at the end.
<b>Production</b>	3,583 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2015-2030
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>90 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015</p> <p><b>88-91 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015</p> <p><b>90-93 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013</p> <p><b>90-92 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015</p> <p><b>92-93 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013</p> <p><b>15.5 points</b> - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2013</p> <p><b>88 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)</p> <p><b>89-91 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 26, 2013</p> <p><b>91-93+ points</b> - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013</p> <p><b>14.5+ points</b> - Farr Vintner - March 2013</p> <p><b>89-91 points</b> - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2013</p> <p><b>88 points</b> - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013</p> <p><b>89-91 points</b> - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p> <p><b>15 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Gault &amp; Millau (score only)</p> <p><b>15 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This has a ripe, fleshy feel, offering a core of plum, fig and boysenberry fruit laced with licorice, carrying through the toasty yet integrated finish. Very solidly built for the vintage. Best from 2016 through 2020. 3,583 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Features a bright feel, with bergamot, raspberry and cherry pit notes. Slightly sinewy through the finish, but hints at fine length and good fruit in reserve. Score range: 88-91"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"One of the von Neipperg estates, the 2012 Clos de l'Oratoire is an undeniable success story. Dense ruby/purple, with plenty of crème de cassis, roasted coffee, licorice and spice, full-bodied, opulent and sexy, it is a hedonist's dream wine. Pure and long, it has a great finish and terrific palate presence. Drink it over the next 12-15 years. Yields were exceptionally small in 2012 – 25 hectoliters per hectare"</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Copious aromas of Christmas fruitcake, cedar wood, underbrush, incense, black currants and black cherries emerge from this sexy, medium-bodied, lush, fruit-forward St.-Emilion. It should be enormously appealing to consumers over the next 10-12 years.</i></p> <p><i>Owned by Stephan von Neipperg and made with the consultation of Stephane Derenoncourt (who looks after all the von Neipperg estates), yields were extremely low for the 2012 Clos de l'Oratoire – 25 hectoliters per hectare. The final blend was 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, and the natural alcohol reached 13%."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p>

- Reviews** *"The Clos de l'Oratoire was picked at 25hl/ha between 11th and 22nd October and is a blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Considering how late it was picked, it shows no signs of dilution or rot on the nose – suave and sensual with lush red fruit. The palate is medium bodied with svelte ripe tannins. It is well balanced with a keen line of acidity and a gently gripping, tannic finish. This is well crafted as always. Tasted April 2013."*  
- NM, Wine Journal
- "Intense nose showing dark cherries, dried flowers and soft spices. Full body, ultra-fine tannins, fresh acidity and a long, spicy finish. Beautifully crafted. Drink now or in 2016."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "This is very minerally with hints of dark fruits and dark chocolate. Medium to full body, with integrated tannins and a juicy finish. Very fine and reserved. 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc. Sweet juicy red fruit. Lively and very fresh and crunchy. Fragrant and refined in aroma and structure. 60% new oak but not OTT. Tannins are super fine, giving a long finish where the fruit fragrance returns. Drink 2017-2025. 17/20 points"*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- "Round and agreeable but a touch under par. A little dryness to the tannins"*  
- JL, Decanter.com
- "From 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, the wine will be aged in 60% new French oak. With licorice, earth, cherries and round textures, this medium-bodied wine has a sweet, red cherry finish. 89-91 Pts."*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "Deep and saturated colour; very attractive, plummy fruit on the nose with perfume and sweet cake and spices; very attractive and very open and opulent on the palate with a silky-satin finish 91-93+ Tasted at Chateau Canon-la-Gaffelière, Friday April 12, 2013"*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com
- "This is produced by the same team as Canon La Gaffeliere, but the vineyard is not quite as well placed and has a higher percentage of Merlot. Sweet, black cherry fruit here. Plummy, generous and ripe. Not complex but an attractive mouthful of silky Saint Emilion."*  
- Farr Vintners
- "The nose is a bit closed at the moment and the palate firm and tight with lots of red fruits. There are richer flavours in the middle a mix of red and black fruits, yet the finish is firm and fresh. 2016-23"*  
- Derek Smedley MW
- "Plush tannins layered ripe black fruits with hint of cedar and plums. This is 90% Merlot which was very successful in this challenging vintage. This is one of the successful wines of the vintage with good length and ability to age/evolve over the coming decade. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (07-Apr-2013)"*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com
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