

Château Pontet Canet 2012

CSPC# 744974

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

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| Grape Variety | 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot |
| Appellation | Pauillac |
| Classification | Fifth Growth. Cinquieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855. |
| Website | http://www.pontet-canet.com/millesime-pontet-canet-2012-en.php#2 |
| General Info | 5th classified growth in 1855. Jean-François de Pontet, royal governor of the Médoc, combined several vineyard plots in Pauillac in the early 18th century. Years later, his descendants added neighbouring vines in a place named Canet. This was the beginning of one of the largest estates in the Médoc, which quite naturally added the name of its founder to that of the land registry reference. A century later, Pontet-Canet was included in the famous 1855 classification, thereby confirming its membership among the elite of the Médoc. This privileged position did not go unnoticed by one of the most important Bordeaux shippers of the time, Herman Cruse, who bought the estate in 1865. He built new cellars, modernised the winemaking facilities, and established the wine's reputation around the world. The Cruse family owned Pontet-Canet for 110 years, until another shipper (from Cognac this time), Guy Tesseron, acquired it in 1975. Currently owned by Guy Tesseron's sons, Alfred and Gérard, this means that Pontet-Canet has belonged to only three families in over two centuries. |
| Vintage | Winter resolved to be particularly gentle. Then, in spring, the rain invited itself. Numerous and often plenteous rainfall accompanied the first months of the vegetative cycle of the vine. The flowering, which intervened rather late, was especially marked by its spreading over time. Fortunately, the sun always returns. This being the case from the middle of July onwards, at which point a very warm and particularly dry summer prevailed. These favorable conditions endured until the arrival of autumn and allowed us to minimize the heterogeneousness during the long flowering period. Then, suddenly a new meteorological turn-about brought abundant rains only days before the harvest of the first Merlot grapes. We had anticipated the possibility of a rainy grape harvest by equipping ourselves with the third line of sorting table reception for the grapes. Ideally we would have preferred no rain at all. But, having planned for the necessity of punctual sorting, only perfectly ripe grapes entered the vats. |
| Vineyards | Thirty years after their arrival in Pauillac, the Tesseron can be proud of having gradually restructured the entire vineyard as well as renovating the cellars and service buildings. Château Pontet-Canet is located in the heart of the Pauillac appellation, just south of châteaux Mouton Rothschild and d'Armailhac. It has the poor gravelly soil typical of the greatest vineyards. In fact, the soil has so much gravel and sand that it is difficult to imagine that anything could grow there at all. The château's winegrowing philosophy is to intervene as little as possible and as naturally as possible in the vineyard. Only traditional viticultural and cultivation practices are used. Chemical weed killers are banned in keeping with environmental protection, and priority is given to the vine's long-term health. Fertilisers are uniquely organic, and only used on plots that genuinely require extra nutrition. This helps to maintain a good balance and self-regulated low yields, as well as to respect the vines, reflect the terroir, and produce pure, natural wine. In 2003, a purification station was built. 2005 was the first harvest using biodynamic practices throughout the whole property of 81 hectares. In 2005, the second vat room was restored and modified at the image of the first one which dates back to the 19th century, with concrete truncated cone-shaped vats allowing fermentation by natural gravity flow, without the use of pressure or pumping. A part of the vineyard is worked with horses since 2008. Soil: quaternary gravel on a subsoil of clay and limestone; Area: 81 hectares. |



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| Vineyards | Average age of the vines: 35 years; Density of the vines: 9000 feet per hectare: Yield: 45 hectolitres per hectare |
| Harvest | The Merlot was harvested October 4 and the Cabernet Sauvignon was picked from October 11 through October 17, 2012. 90% of the harvest went into the grand vin. |
| Maturation | 50% in new barrels during 15 month/s |
| Tasting Notes | Vibrant and deep in colour. The nose is a fusion of red and black berries, graphite and spices. The palate's structure is particularly dense and long with chiseled tannins of incredible precision. |
| Cellaring | Drink 2017-2035 |
| Scores/Awards | <p>93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015</p> <p>91-94 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013</p> <p>94-96 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013</p> <p>93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013</p> <p>92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2015</p> <p>96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 11, 2013</p> <p>89-92 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2013</p> <p>17.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013</p> <p>17.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013</p> <p>18 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 16, 2013</p> <p>93-95 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013</p> <p>93 points - Jean Marc Quarin (no review)</p> <p>91 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013</p> <p>18 points - Adam Bilbet, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2013</p> <p>91-94 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2012</p> <p>17+ points - Farr Vintners - March 2012</p> <p>20/20 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)</p> <p>94 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p> <p>18.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)</p> |
| Reviews | <p><i>"This impeccably run, biodynamically farmed estate of Alfred Tesseron goes from strength to strength. The 2012 triumphs once again with its notes of dark plum, blackcurrant, licorice and almost a hint of truffle, its full-bodied, supple tannins, and beautiful, expensive mouthfeel. Complex and deep, this dense ruby/purple-colored wine may not be at the level of the 2009 or 2010, but it is a successful wine in this vintage, and a significant wine in 2012. Anticipated maturity: 2017-2035.</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> |

"A softer, less powerful and less prodigiously endowed Pontet Canet, the 2012 exhibits notes of creme de cassis and new barrique vanillin followed by a medium-bodied, elegant wine with sweeter tannin (and less of it) than is found in the great vintages that immediately precede it. The 2012 is certainly outstanding and, in fact, many readers may prefer it to the blockbuster, out-of-this-world, over-sized 2010, 2009 and 2008. Medium-bodied, pure and expressive, this classic Pauillac should only require 5-6 years of cellaring. It should drink well for two decades thereafter.

No one will confuse the 2012 Pontet Canet with the 2008, 2009 or 2010, but proprietor Alfred Tesseron has turned in another high level performance in this more challenging vintage (especially true in the Medoc)."

- RP, Wine Advocate

"What is a primeur report without one of Pauillac's most dynamic estate? I made the trip through the rain to taste their 2012. A blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot and 30% Merlot, the latter was cropped from 4th October and the Cabernet Sauvignon from 11th October, finishing six days later. The 50% of the crop once aged in new oak and one-year old barrels are now matured in concrete vats whilst 35% of the crop is aged in clay amphora quarried from their own vineyard. There is certainly great purity and terroir expression on the nose: blackberry, briary and background scents of fresh raspberry and cold stone. The definition is very impressive. The palate is interesting – quite different from the previous vintages. I love the tannins here – very fine but lending the Pontet-Canet great backbone It is utterly harmonious but I feel more understated, perhaps more controlled than recent vintages. The finish is much more introspective – a Pauillac

Reviews *politely informing you to go away and wait before bottling before making any judgement! This is a divine Pontet Canet - very succinct. Tasted April 2013."*

- NM, Wine Journal

"This shows incredible decadence and opulence for the vintage with dried meat, black berry, blueberries and hints of mushroom. Full body, very polished silky tannins and a chewy finish. Lots of richness for the vintage. Persistent palate. This was aged 35% in cement eggs for 12 months. Better in 2018."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A wine that makes you want to drink it already. It's stylish with berries, currants, cedar and stone aromas and flavors. Full body, with very integrated tannins and a long, long finish. A small percentage of the wine is now aged in cement vats instead of oak barrels. This touches all the senses. A beauty. Made from biodynamic grapes."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This tastes jammy and very fruity, with tannins that are totally enveloped by the rich texture. Plummy and comfortable, it's all about ripe berries and currants. Smoky flavors come from the wood aging, and contrast with the Port-like lushness of the wine.

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- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"96-98. Barrel sample. This is a structured, ripe wine that also has a great sense of freshness—vibrant blackberry flavor and lively acidity. The finish retains the same delicious freshness and brightness of this vintage."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"(65% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot, 4% cabernet franc and 1% petit verdot): Deep purple-ruby. Perfumed nose of violet and ripe blackberry jam. Smooth, rich and almost sweet on entry, then increasingly austere, with the sweet cassis and delicate herbal flavors overshadowed by rising, raw tannins. I detected a slightly green quality on the long finish. Though this wine lacks the amazingly sweet flesh of the '09 and '10 wines, and the classic elegance of the '08, I like its precision. Alfred Tesseron told me the estate picked late, on October 4, to offer the grapes a greater chance of reaching suitable ripeness, but they harvested quickly, using an extra sorting table."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Blackish purple. Much gentler than most. Easy and round and sating smooth and gouleyant with sufficient freshness – just. Very plush and round and easy. Lots of freshness. Highly distinctive. Rather dry and sudden on the end but really lovely on the way there. Gorgeous start and middle. I'm worried only by the finish. All texture and first two thirds of the experience. 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Picked 4-17 October."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Easy and round and sating smooth and gouleyant with sufficient freshness - just. Very plush and round and easy. Lots of freshness. Highly distinctive. Rather dry and sudden on the end but really lovely on the way there. Gorgeous start and middle. I'm worried only by the finish. All texture and first two thirds of the experience. "

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Dense colour, superb nose of blackberry and black cherry fruit, really lovely silky texture, with all the power and elegance of a great Pauillac."

- SS, Decanter.com

Reviews

"(tasted twice at the chateau). 65% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot, 1% petit verdot and 4% cabernet franc, same as last few years, 'the vines are just doing what they do,' says Melanie Tesson, 'we haven't found a need to change the percentages. This is also about the same percentage as in the vineyard itself'. Biodynamics brings out the ripeness, they believe, and this does have a vibrancy and purity that you would be so happy to drink. Doesn't feel huge, imagine not high alcohol (they say they haven't done the analysis yet apparently, which sounds hardly believable as surely, they are tracking alcohol levels during vinification?). Certified again 100% biodynamic and organic, harvesting began on October 4th, with third sorting table to ensure they could go quickly once the grapes were picked. They don't use any anti rot treatment apparently. This does not have the power of recent vintages of Pontet Canet, not the richness of the 2009 and 2010, but compensated by other things, such as elegance and plump fruit. It's a success and remains one of the most enjoyable northern Médoc's. 93 / 18. Highly recommended. Drink 2018-2034."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Winemaker Jean-Michel Cosme concedes that the vicissitudes of the vintage made it harder to use organic and biodynamic practices but seems happy with the result. This is a step down from recent stellar vintages, but it's still a dense, if oaky red, with a mixture of leafy, minty and slightly over-ripe flavours. The oak needs to integrate here, but the firm tannins should soften in barrel and bottle. Drink: 2022-30"

- TA, timatkin.com

"Produced from an assemblage of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot, this is one of the darkest wines of the vintage. The nose offers ripe dark berries, licorice, clay, minerality and fresh dark berries. Polished tannins, plush textures and layers of sweet, ripe berries fill your mouth. The suave, fresh wine ends with an expansive, rich finish in the mouth. Very successful for the vintage. This is the first year where Pontet Canet began using a percentage of amphore for the vinification. Alfred Tesson is clearly on a roll. 94-96 Pts (18-Apr-2013)"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep colour; very healthy looking; saturated blackcurrant aromas; cassis; little lift from the oak; black cherry notes too; very attractive and open; reminiscent of their 2011 [one of the red wines of the vintage for me last year]; lots of depth to the palate; real blackcurrant purity; clean and precise on the finish with freshness. Not overdone in the slightest. Excellent length. Tasted at Chateau Pontet-Canet April 12, 2013. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. 93-95+."

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Alfred Tesson has been making classic Pauillac here every year since the excellent 1994 and recent vintages have been amongst the best ever, scoring impressively when shown in blind tastings. Pontet Canet is now pushing the Pichon's as Pauillac's top non-first growth. Grapes are manually sorted by a team of 30 people on specially made sorting tables. The vineyard is now 100% organic and bio-dynamic and worked by horses. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot in 60% new oak. The yield is 32 hl/ha. There is a dark, saturated colour here. Black fruits, raisins, fruitcake, tar and liquorice are all present on the multi-dimensional nose. Huge, fat, and incredibly dense on the palate. There is an incredible concentration of black cassis fruit, yet the tannins are ripe and silky. Despite the power there is great purity and elegance. Another outstanding achievement here. A black beauty. Médoc wine of the vintage?"

- Farr Vintners

"Black fruits dominate both nose and palate lots of cassis and black cherry. The mid palate is rich with sweet ripe fruit lots of concentration the fruits underpinned by coffee beans and liquorice. The tannins although firm feel ripe and there is bilberry freshness at the back brightening the finish. 2020-35"

- Derek Smedley MW

"Lovely aromas of violets, dark berries and hint of mixed herbs. Full bodied, generous, accessible flavours with long length. Velvety tannins with roundness and delicacy with more detail and length than the 2011. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (06-Apr-2013)"

- JCL, asianpalate.com

Reviews *"I may sound like a broken record but Ch. Pontet-Canet is right at the top of the tree now. Not only performing at Super Second level, in my view this 2012 eclipses two of its illustrious First growth neighbours in Pauillac. There is no doubt that the bio-dynamic farming pays off in the tougher years and there is an underlying energy and life to this wine that few others have.*

Very pure cassis and blackcurrant fruit is offered, with so much weight, power and mint like freshness to the nose. The palate offers density and sweetness of fruit that is unmatched in any other wine, with sweet black fruit and a spiced cedar edge that guides you to the back of the palate. There is a real underlying precision, detail and freshness here once again. It doesn't have the structure or complexity of the really legendary years but once again Pontet-Canet lead the pack. This is certainly one to add to your cellar, as Alfred Tesseron begins to notch up more hits than the Rolling Stones"

- AB, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants
