

Château Pontet-Canet 2021

CSPC# 866178

750mlx6

13.1% alc./vol.

Grape Variety 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 4% Cabernet Franc
Appellation Pauillac
Classification Fifth Growth. Cinquieme Grand Cru Classé in 1855.
Website <https://www.pontet-canet.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2021-CHATEAU-PONTET-CANET-UK.pdf>

Sustainability Biodynamic & Organic.

As a biodynamic estate whose 2017 vintage was effectively destroyed by mildew, alarm bells may have been ringing here this year – but lessons have been learnt. An in-house tisanerie for the advance preparation of biodynamic treatments, a policy of no-plough and grass between the rows (to absorb as much rain as possible) did the trick, alongside ceaseless monitoring of the bunches. Alfred Tesseron says they were only down 15% on expected yield. As usual, SO2 use is heavily reduced and 35% of the crop is aged in concrete amphorae.

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.

Winemaker Jean-Michel Comme. Michel Rolland consultant winemaker.

Vintage An unusual year in every way. Doubts, fears, and finally relief thanks to the fortunate late-season conditions. After a historically mild February (+2.49°C compared with the ten-year average), bud burst occurred early in mid-March, i.e. a week before the already-early 2020 vintage. A cold snap threatened at the end of March, but we did what was needed to protect the buds (early tillage).

The first flowers were observed on 24 May. Then, for the third year in four consecutive vintages, there was a succession of extreme weather events. No doubt this is the “new normal”. Rainfall intensified in June. Fortunately, our herbarium, fitted out in 2021, reinforces therapeutic effectiveness by allowing a quicker response from our teams, who were intensely busy during the months of June and July.

Véraison started on 19 July. The grapes ripened slowly until the first plots of Merlot were picked on 24 September. As with the flowering, we observed synchronisation in the ripening of the grape varieties, an unusual phenomenon to say the least. Hence, picking of Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon as well as Petit Verdot started from 4 October.

Great terroirs always stand out in difficult vintages. Our viticultural practices and our knowledge of the plots have allowed us to produce a cuvée of very good quality.

Vineyards Thirty years after their arrival in Pauillac, the Tesseron family 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



Vineyards	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. Average age of the vines: 35 years; Density of the vines: 9000 feet per hectare: Yield: 45 hectolitres per hectare
Harvest	Harvest started on 24 September with Merlot, followed by the Cabernets and Petit Verdot on 4 October, and finished on 12 October.
Maturation	In the cellars, with the aid of our sorting and manual de-stemming system that we introduced back in 2017, we were able to select the finest grapes. With the high quality of the fruit harvested, very little intervention was required in the vinification process. We simply allowed our grapes to “infuse” while from time to time plunging the cap of skins by hand into the must. Aging in 50% new French oak barrels, 35% in amphora and 15% in one-year old casks.
Tasting Notes	Deep colour with garnet reflections. The nose is precise and complex, with notes of cedar, blackcurrant, graphite, and spices. The mouthfeel is particularly creamy, spicy, and clean. The well-integrated tannins support the mid-palate, bringing density and length to the wine. Notes of oak, chocolate, cedar, and black fruit give way to a smoky, floral finish.
Winemaker's Notes	These cooler, richer soils are better suited to Merlot and produce wines that are more structured, and fleshy in texture. To establish a link with the viticultural past, four plots located on the edge of the outcrop have been planted with the Petit Verdot variety, which brings spicy aromas to the Pontet-Canet “grand vin”.
Serve with	Chateau Pontet Canet is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Chateau Pontet Canet is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
Production	Approx. 25,000 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2027-2038
Scores/Awards	<p>92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2024</p> <p>91-93 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>93-95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p>95-96 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p>97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2022</p> <p>17+ points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2023</p> <p>95 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p>94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p>91-93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>93-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>93 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2024</p> <p>93-95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p>18.5 points - Matthew Jukes - August 2022</p> <p>93 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p>98 points - Vert de Vin - July 2022</p> <p>94 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - May 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>“A nice, dark, winy offering, with steeped black cherry and black currant fruit melding nicely with warm earth, alder, and cast-iron accents through the focused finish. Shows grip and range, with barely any indication of the vintage's skinny side. Best from 2026 through 2038.”</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>“Offering up wild, exotic aromas of blackberries, cloves and Indian spices mingled with notions of rose petal, bruised orchard fruit and cherry pit that evolve rapidly in the glass, the 2021 Pontet-Canet is medium to full-bodied, ample, and fleshy, with a layered mid-palate and refined tannins that assert themselves on the firm, saline finish. Always one of the Médoc's most singular, idiosyncratic wines, it will be interesting to see how it performs in bottle.”</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2021 Pontet-Canet is a blend of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 6% Petit Verdot. Deep purple-black in color, it pops from the glass with vibrant blueberries, Morello cherries, and cassis scents, plus suggestions of violets, cinnamon stick, wet rocks, and forest floor with an exotic touch of cardamom. Medium-bodied, the palate has very finely grained tannins and well-poised freshness supporting the perfumed black fruits, leading to loads of minerally sparks on the finish of this very bright and shimmering wine. Harvest started on 24 September with Merlot, followed by the Cabernets and Petit Verdot on 4 October, and finished on 12 October. The wine is to be aged in 50% new oak barrels, 35% amphorae, and 15% 1-year barrels."

- LPB, Wine Independent

"Plenty of blackberry and blueberry with wet earth and crushed stone. Some spice, tobacco, and lead pencil, too. It's full-bodied with layered tannins and brightness. Fine and chewy at the end."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"The dense color and the perfumed aromas set the scene for a rich wine full of fruit. The balance is already there, complex with structure and dense juicy fruits. The wine is impressive."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 4% Cabernet Franc. Cask sample. Purple-crimson hue. Dark, dense, and rich with a brush-stroke of vanilla oak. Broad across the palate on attack then prominent tannins on the finish. Certainly, chalky, dry, and chewy. *Élevage* should help. Awkward at present but hopefully will pull together. (JL) 13.1% Drink 2027 – 2038."*

- JL, JancisRobinson.com

"Very dark with purplish rim. Open and fragrant, a touch floral along with fine savoury fruit. Powerful and very different from most of the 2021s in this line-up. Dry, elegantly tannic finish. 17+/20 points."

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

"Gorgeous fragrance on the nose, so perfumed and floral - really vibrant - you can smell the Cabernet and the Petit Verdot on the nose. Juiciness straight away from a burst of high acidity focused on blackcurrant and black cherry with both a fragrance, spice and minerality following. This really hits you square on - it's not opulent but it's so fully flavoured, forward, and upfront. Tannins are fine-grained but plentiful, they hold the structure and give the frame while the creaminess and freshness give an expansive aspect to the palate. There's refinement and an aerial quality here despite the clear Pauillac power. The Cabernet fruit is in full shine mode, giving a eucalyptus, perfumed berry, and black pepper touch. Structured and supple with grape and terroir characteristics. If you love Pontet, and classic Pauillac claret, this is an impressive reference point. Skilled winemaking from technical director Mathieu Bessonnet. 4% Cabernet Franc completes the blend."

- GH, Decanter.com

"Bright berry red in colour, nuanced blackberry and loganberry with bitter black chocolate notes from the first attack. Lovely precision, good level of spice, earthy, unfussy, rose stem and blackcurrant bud. This was the third vintage with mildew pressure, but the team are now experienced, and I can attest to seeing the vines during harvest and remarking on how healthy they looked, with no-till farming helping concentration. Plenty of tannins give structure and are shot through with sinew and juice, this is an impressive wine from technical director Mathieu Bessonnet, with Pauillac typicity. Harvest 24 September until 12 October. 50% new oak, 35% amphora, 15% one-year barrels, 15% press (aged in the amphora)."

- JA, janeanson.com

"The wine opens with flowers, tobacco leaf, currants, herbs, and a touch of spice. Medium/full-bodied, elegant, refined, fresh, and vibrant, there is a gorgeous sense of purity to the red fruits along with vivid freshness and a touch of spice in the endnote. The wine is aging in a combination of 50% new, French oak, and 35% Amphora. The wine is a blend of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc. Drink from 2028-2055. Drink from 2028-2055."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

"The 2021 is 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petit Verdot. The abv is just under 13%. Élevage in 50% new oak, 35% concrete amphoras and 15% one year old oak. The fruit was 100% de-stemmed by hand and Alfred Tesseron stressed that the extraction here was "all natural." Deep ruby-purple colour. Peppery, oily steeped cherries burst through on the nose that has real spice and a stony graphite underlay. Richly tannic but equally ripe with boysenberry and damson fruit. This is another idiosyncratic Pontet Canet, offering smoky black forest fruit and pithy, chalky, enveloping tannins. The finish is quite earthy and savoury, contradicting all the sweet fruit before. It is in keeping with recent vintages of Pontet Canet and will certainly appeal to lovers of this style. The bright acidity lingers on the finish and keeps everything in check."
- TP, Farr Vintners

"The 2021 Pontet Canet, which contains a little more Petit Verdot than usual, was bottled in July. It has a very attractive bouquet with pure black fruit, cedar, and light iris flower scents. It is not powerful, yet there is elegance here. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins and a crisp line of acidity. Just a hint of mocha lurks in the background, but there is a satisfying, almost citric freshness toward the finish. Suggestions of graphite linger on the aftertaste. I have not spared Pontet Canet from criticism in recent vintages, but that said, I really warmed to this 2021, and it should age with style."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2021 Pontet Canet is quite perfumed on the finely delineated nose of blackberry, briar and pressed iris flower, a touch of inkwell coming through with time. The palate is medium-bodied with a pinch of white pepper on the entry and gentle grip. Not as enormously deep as other vintages, as you would expect, but it displays a fine bitter edge and a graphite-infused finish. This should drink earlier than other vintages yet has the substance to mature in bottle."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2021 Pontet-Canet is a soft, open-knit, attractive wine, but its light structure is impossible to look past. Graphite, dried herbs, menthol, and licorice fill out the layers. The 2021 is a fairly accessible Pontet Canet that will drink well with minimal cellaring. Harvest took place from September 24 through October 12. Yields were 34 hectoliters per hectare."
- AG, Vinous

"The 2021 is the most classically Pauillac Pontet-Canet I have tasted in modern times. Medium in body, with striking aromatic presence, the 2021 screams with character. Grilled herbs, incense, leather, lavender and plum open with a bit of coaxing, all framed by beams of tannin and bright, salivating acids that give the wine shape and real sense of direction. There's a bit more Petit Verdot in this year's blend, and that comes through in the wine's intensely savory profile. Aging is 50% in new wood, 35% in amphora and 15% in one year-old barrels. The 2021 was impressive all three times I tasted it."
- AG, Vinous

"Ripe blue fruits, spring flowers, violets, tobacco, and some graphite notes all emerge from the 2021 Château Pontet-Canet, a richer, medium to full-bodied Pauillac that has polished, building tannins, terrific overall balance, and outstanding length. It picks up more classic Pauillac lead pencil notes with time in the glass (I was able to taste this on multiple occasions) and is a fleshy, beautifully textured 2021 that will benefit from 4-5 years of bottle age and evolve for two decades. The 2021 is based on 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, and 6% Petit Verdot that was raised 50% in new oak barrels, 35% amphora, and the balance in once-used oak."
- Jeb Dunnuck

"The 2021 Château Pontet-Canet is rock solid in the vintage and certainly shows the vibrant, vivid style of the estate today with its bright, exotic blue fruits, violets, and graphite-like aromatics. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, I love its mid-palate density, it has notable freshness and purity, some chalky tannins, and outstanding length. The 2021 checks in as 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 6% petit Verdot, and the rest Cabernet Franc, and the aging consists of 50% in new barrels, 35% in concrete amphora, and the rest in second-fill barrels."
- Jeb Dunnuck

Reviews

“Vintages like 2021 play havoc with biodynamic operations, and Justine Tesson explained that despite the desperately rainy weather in June, and the accompanying mildew pressure, the viti-team at Pontet-Canet earned their spurs in 2021. They have built a new ‘tisanerie’ (herbal tea room in which they make their biodynamic preparations), and this has meant that there is no time delay when they need to react to inclement weather. In addition, and this was not the only time this year when the conversation turned to tractors, P-C has bought one more tractor, and they now have 15 members of staff, fully-trained as tractor operators. This might sound somewhat mundane, but when Mother Nature turns on the waterworks and you are left helpless in a soggy vineyard, you might as well pack up and go home. Pontet-Canet has proved that you can make a jaw-dropping wine in a vintage like 2021, thanks to the tea and tractors at this illustrious property! This is an all-enveloping wine that is open, expressive, perfumed and possesses a stunning colour (I never write about colour, but P-C’s was captivating). Justine said that these arresting characters emerged extremely early during fermentation. There is delicious exoticism here over a black cherry theme, and the tannins are vital, raspy and frictional, and they perfectly offset the exuberant fruit. 18.5.”

- Matthew Jukes

“Vivid dark ruby, opaque core, fading to purple at the rim. Ripe blackberries, fresh plums, a hint of black cherries, subtle hints of vanilla and precious wood; inviting bouquet. Medium-bodied, elegant dark berry fruit, notes of black tea, fresh acidity, with a fine leafy note from Petit Verdot on the mineral-salty finish. Still a little closed at this early stage.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“The nose is fruity, elegant, racy and reveals a nice purity of fruit, delicacy in its concentration, a very nice finesse of grain, complexity. We find notes of bright blackcurrant, violet and more slightly fresh Morello cherry combined with touches of fleshy/juicy violet plum, liquorice, fine caramelised notes, graphite, racy minerality, subtle hints of crushed berries, discreet hints of bergamot and cherry blossom. The palate is nicely managed, delicate, precise and shows purity, juiciness, freshness, a nice definition, a nice work on the bitter taste, depth, minerality, a nice energy, an acidulous spine, a nice crunchiness/juiciness. On the palate this wine expresses notes of pulpy/juicy cherry, fresh/crisp Morello cherry and more lightly of purple plum, crisp/juicy raspberry as well as fine nuances of bright wild berries, liquorice, liquorice, vanilla, subtle hints of bergamot, subtle hints of fresh flowers, fresh rose, subtle hints of cardamom, fresh hazelnut, subtle hints of bourbon vanilla. The tannins are supple. Good length. A nice success, a classic wine.”

- Vert de Vin