

## Vieux Château Certan 2010

CSPC# 757379

750mlx6

14.5% Alc./Vol.

### Grape Variety

86% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon

### Appellation

Pomerol

### 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. The estate vineyard is today made up of 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. This varietal mix enables the best possible balance to be sought in each vintage between the Merlot and the Cabernet Franc. The latter performs exceptionally well in this terroir and reaches perfect ripeness levels. 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 100% new French oak barrels and aged for 18 to 22 months.

### Vintage

Everything came together perfectly this year to make this vintage successful. A very cool and sufficiently wet winter followed by a lovely, bright and sunny start to the spring that brought about a fast and even budding. Summer was hot and dry but with cool nights; and then by the end of the growing season the dry weather had caused substantial water deficit in the soils.

It was a concise year, with low yields: small berries that were all well nourished by perfectly healthy vine canopies with maximum photosynthesis potential.

### 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

Harvest preparation and preliminary sorting of the bunches on the vines from August 4-18, 2010. The actual harvest was carried out in fine, sunny weather from September 27 to October 5, 2010. Yield 35 hectolitres per hectare, resembles in its blend composition the excellent 1998, or going back much further, the legendary 1950.

### Vinification

Vinification of Vieux Chateau Certan takes place in 21, traditional, temperature controlled, large, oak and stainless steel vats. Each of the varieties are vinified separately in different fermentation vessels before blending. The Merlot is vinified on average at 32 degrees Celsius. The vats range in size from 40 hectoliters, 50 hectoliters, 60 hectoliters, 77 hectoliters and all the way up to 125 hectoliters. The range of vat sizes allow for vinification on a parcel by parcel basis, as well as for each grape variety to be vinified according to its needs.



<b>Maturation</b>	The Merlot undergoes malolactic fermentation in barrel. A different course is taken for the Cabernet Franc at Vieux Chateau Certan. The Cabernet Franc is vinified at 30 degrees Celsius. The Cabernet Franc undergoes malolactic fermentation in vat. On average, the wine of Vieux Chateau Certan is aged in 50% new, French oak barrels for about 20 months, depending on the character and quality of the vintage. The yearly production ranges from 4,000 to 5,000 cases of Vieux Chateau Certan per vintage. There is a second wine, La Gravette de Certan, which made its debut in 1986. La Gravette de Certan takes its name from a parcel of vines purchased in 1946.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	2010 is a ripe, tannic, balanced wine with amazing fruit and wonderful acidity. The Merlot is dense, vinous, suave, full, and with breed. It simply rolls around the palate. The smaller proportion of Cabernet Franc that has been selected for the first wine is all lace-like in texture, ripe, complex, flavoursome and very lingering on the palate. The Cabernet Sauvignon is lively, delicious to taste and savoury. Even in such small proportion, it brings that touch of freshness that is necessary in the final blend.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2017-2040
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>98 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2013</p> <p><b>96-99 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2011</p> <p><b>99 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #205 - February 2013</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #194 - May 2011</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2013</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2011</p> <p><b>100 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2013</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2013</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2011</p> <p><b>18.5 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2011</p> <p><b>19 points/5 stars</b> - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2011</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin - March 2011</p> <p><b>100 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 11, 2012</p> <p><b>98-100 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 30, 2011</p> <p><b>99-100 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 21, 2011</p> <p><b>96-97 points</b> - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2011</p> <p><b>90 points</b> - Gilbert &amp; Gaillard - April 24, 2011 (score only)</p> <p><b>19.5 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p> <p><b>18.5 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2011 (score only)</p> <p><b>90-92 points</b> - Chuck Hayward, JJBuckley Wines - April 2011</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"A stunner, this marries structured tobacco, ganache and loam notes to a glorious core of raspberry, blackberry and plum coulis flavors, accented by coffee, roasted mesquite and black tea aromatics. A terrific minerality courses throughout, with the finish letting power and refinement play out almost endlessly. Best from 2017 through 2040."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Super broad and muscular, with lots of dark fig, currant and chocolate notes. A smoky tobacco edge on the back end is starting to emerge, and this begins to gush linzer torte and cassis with air. A very big wine. One of the stars of the appellation in 2010. 86 percent Merlot, 8 percent Cabernet Franc and 6 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, almost the same as 2009. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 96-99"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2010 Vieux Chateau Certan, a blend of 86% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon, tips the scales at 14.5% alcohol. Production was lower than in 2009 and the alcohol slightly higher, but the pH is 3.7, which is surprisingly reasonable given the lofty power and alcoholic clout this full-bodied wine possesses. Dense purple-colored, the 2010 displays a vivid yet astonishing array of spice box, red, blue and black fruits, crushed rock and spring flowers. The oak is well-concealed behind the lavish concentration and richness. Exceptionally pure, this unbelievable wine flirts with perfection. Unfortunately, there is 20% less of it than in 2009, and the tannins warrant a good 8-10 years of cellaring, as I suspect it could actually close down. This is another 40- to</i></p>

**Reviews** *50-year effort in 2010 that should elicit considerable interest from wine consumers. Thienpont thinks he has produced three wines - 2008, 2009 and 2010 - that are the greatest trilogy in the history of Vieux Chateau Certan, rivaling what this estate did in 1947, 1948 and 1949.”*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*“Alexandre Thienpont thinks 2010 is even more powerful and tannic than 2009. This is certainly a big wine, dominated by its Merlot component (86%, with the rest mostly Cabernet Franc). The natural alcohol level is 14.5%, slightly above 2009, but the pH is a healthy 3.7, and the wine, like so many 2010s, is a paradox. The alcohols are often the highest ever yet the acidities are fresh and lively, and the wine crisp and refined. This is a deep purple-colored wine, with loads of opulence and fat, a voluptuous texture and tremendous purity. The style is a modern-day version of what they probably achieved in 1947, 1949 and 1950. Thienpont attributes the wine’s freshness to the lack of any real heat wave, the drought, and the very cool nights in September. This wine should drink well for 20-40 years.”*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*“The 2010 was, as Alexandre mentioned, a “merlot” year and there is 25% less Cabernet Franc in the blend. If I am being truly honest (and that has got me into a lot of trouble this year) I am missing that component on the nose. For sure, it has wonderful purity and focus, subtle raspberry and cranberry notes that are incredibly well defined, but I just miss that edginess that the Cabernet Franc imparts. Still, I cannot deny there is superb minerality here. The palate is quite broody on the entry: good density, a little softer than I expected, but with lovely spicy notes intertwined in the black, slightly tarry fruit. It is a little “gawky” after bottling so it will gain more harmony and composure. The finish is masculine, typical of the vintage, with a long tertiary aftertaste. Very fine...of course. Tasted November 2012.”*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*“A blend of 86% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 7% Cabernet Sauvignon cropped between 27th September and 5th October, the Vieux Chateau Certan delivers 14.5% alcohol with a pH of 3.7. It is presently being raised in 75% new oak. The nose is very refined with touches of blackberry, raspberry, black truffle and dark cherries with wonderful delineation considering the alcohol level. The palate is very well balanced with beautiful poise, perhaps more focused than the 2009 at this stage. Wonderful mineralite, there is superb precision and energy in this nascent VCC. Just superb. Tasted April 2011.”*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*“A perfect wine with perfect purity of fruit. It shows gorgeous aromas of blackberries, currants and cedar with hints of chocolate. Full body, with a lovely sweetness of fruit and ripe tannins. It goes to chocolate, hazelnut and spices. Nutmeg too. Sexy and incredible. It has so much depth of fruit and density. Better in 2020.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“A beautiful, velvety smooth wine, unusually for Vieux Château Certan dominated by Merlot. It has tannin, to be sure, but these are conveyed through the ripe fruit and the sweetness of the blackberry flavors. It is opulent, although never too much, retaining its elegance. Age for many years.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Very small crop - 35 hl/ha (compared to 42 hl/ha in 2009). A Merlot vintage; only 8% Cabernet Franc. Average IPT is 90, with lots of acid. Very dark crimson. Pretty floral and scented and pretty. Very concentrated and intense. Lots of minerals on the finish. Lovely rich satisfying undertow. Hint of ripe pears oddly enough. Lovely completeness. Great balance and build. Very, very long. The strongest right-bank wine so far. Excellent layers. Very serious - a marvellously intellectual Merlot! 18.5 out of 20.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“More or less the same parcels and blend as '09 (86% Merlot, 14% Cabernet) but a different style. Less opulent and more classically defined. Lovely 'natural' fruit, huge concentration, more alcohol (14.5%), long, powerful tannins and the freshness that marks the vintage. A harmonious whole. Huge potential. Drink 2020-2060. (19 points) “*  
- JL, Decanter.com

**Reviews** *"2010 Vieux Chateau Certan, resembles dark, purple ink. Exotic liqueur aromas, plums, truffle, flowers, chocolate and spice aromas are found with little effort. The mouth filling wine paints your palate with sexy, ripe, liquid silk sensations. Spice, rich black licorice, pure plum and blackberry flavors coat your taste receptors. The long, seamless, intense, pure finish was too good to spit. When Alexandre was not looking, I put the wine where it belonged, twice! Sadly, this will not be cheap. However, if you're seeking a historic Pomerol legend in the making, this is the wine to buy. 99-100 Pts"*  
- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"The color of purple ink, truffles, black plums, chocolate fudge, fresh picked flowers, licorice and black raspberries filled your nose. Full bodied, mouth filling, expansive, deep and long. Finesse, power, silk, velvet and pure fruit. It's important to look at the makeup of this wine which is 86%Merlot and equal parts 8% Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. This is even more dominated by Merlot than the 2009, which came in at 84% Merlot. While the wine reached 14.5% alcohol, there is no sensation of heat in this stunning Bordeaux wine. 98-100 Pts*  
- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Vieux Chateau Certan The chateau produces wine in vintages that favor Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, or Merlot. 2010 as well as 2009 are vintages where the Merlot clearly excelled and became the preponderance of the blend. The assemblage in this vintage is 86%Merlot, 8% Cab Franc 6% Cab Sauvignon. This is even more dominated by Merlot than the 2009, which came in at 84% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Cabernet Franc. Shaped by low yields and high alcohol, the wine clocked in at 14.5% alcohol. The IPT levels are equally high at 90. As a point of reference, this level of IPT recorded in 2010 is the same as the chateau recorded in their press wine a decade ago. . 2010 Vieux Chateau Certan resembles dark, purple ink. Exotic liqueur aromas, plums, truffle, flowers, chocolate and spice aromas are found with little effort. The mouth filling wine paints your palate with sexy, ripe, liquid silk sensations. Spice, rich black licorice, pure plum and blackberry flavors coat your taste receptors. The long, seamless, intense, pure finish was too good to spit. When Alexandre was not looking, I put the wine where it belonged, twice! Sadly, this will not be cheap. However, if you're seeking a historic Pomerol legend in the making, this is the wine to buy. 99-100 Pts"*  
- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"The 2010 Vieux Chateau Certan has notes of ripe plums, blackberries, cedar and spices, and amazing concentration and depth on the palate, with a gorgeous array of dark berry fruit characters. Owner Alexander Thienpont says that the 2010 enjoyed maximum photosynthesis and the grapes had both phenolic ripeness and fresh acidity. This is a gorgeous, rich and intricately-layered wine with great freshness and beautifully handled velvety tannins."*  
- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

*"Intense colour. Concentration and extraction are key themes on the nose which proves to be quite warm. More of the same on the palate û a massive, powerful wine still backward in expression. Only time will allow it to open up and show more appeal."*  
- en.gilbertgaillard.com

*"86% merlot, 8% cabernet franc, 6% cabernet sauvignon. Forward yet restrained aromas of blackberry and stone leap out of the glass. On the palate, there is a core of blackberry jam with dark chocolate that melds into an almost creamy, viscous texture. But this beautifully poised wine maintains finesse and does not become overripe. The great length is beautifully proportioned and ends with tannins which have presence without being overbearing in texture. An artisanal Pomerol and a great expression of the vintage. Best in 20 years."*  
- CH, [JJ Buckley Wines](http://JJ Buckley Wines)