
Vieux Château Certan 2012

CSPC# 763559

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

SOLD OUT

Grape Variety	87% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc, 1% Cabernet Sauvignon
Appellation	Pomerol
Classification	Bordeaux AOC (<i>Appellation d'origine contrôlée</i>)
Website	http://www.vieuxchateaucertan.com/vieux_chateau_certan_uk.html
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.
Vintage	2012 was a challenging vintage in Bordeaux. But many winemakers in Pomerol, the appellation located within Bordeaux's Right Bank, were able to produce wines of depth, complexity, and character. Like the rest of Bordeaux, Pomerol experienced chaotic weather in 2012. The spring was unpredictable and the summer brought heat and drought. Fortunately, the soils of Pomerol were able to hold on to moisture — and most producers were able to harvest their grapes just before rain showers hit in late September and early October. So the yields were naturally low. And the grapes produced wines of beautiful concentration and complexity.
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	The harvest took place between October 1 and 11, producing 33 hectoliters per hectare.
Vinification/ Maturation	The grapes are picked by hand and sorted meticulously at the end of each row of wines. 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.
Tasting Notes	Initially perfumed, with fragrant floral notes, morello cherries, raspberries and fine herbs. The Merlot plots next to Petrus have produced wonderfully silky, svelte fruit with a cashmere, velvety texture and plushness. The Cabernets add complexity and a touch of freshness and bring total harmony to the blend. This is a really refined, marvellous Vieux Chateau Certan from a 'great Merlot vintage'. Paradoxically classical yet decadent.
Production	2,830 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2013-2028



Scores/Awards **94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015
92-95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013
92-94 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013
95-97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013
94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2015
93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013
95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2015
94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 9, 2013
90-92 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2013
18 points - JancisRobinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013
18 points - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013
17.75 points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2013
95 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only)
90 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
93-94 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 18, 2013
94-96+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013
17.5 points - Farr Vintner - March 2013
93-95 points - Derek Smedley, MW - March 2013
91 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013
18 points - Adam Bilbey, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants - April 2013
91-93 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)
17.8 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)
17 points - Gault & Millau (score only)

Reviews *"Very distinctive, with a terrific smoldering tobacco and charcoal frame around a core of steeped fig, blackberry and plum fruit. The fruit drapes beautifully across the finish, while the charcoal edge extends on and on, picking up warm stone, chestnut and alder notes along the way. Shows serious grip, and should be among the longest-lived wines of the vintage. Best from 2018 through 2030. 2,830 cases made."*
 - JM, Wine Spectator

"Very fresh, with lots of brightly defined red currant, damson plum, anise, violet and white pepper notes. The lacy but persistent structure and energetic acidity lead to a long, tobacco-filled finish. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 92-95"
 - JM, Wine Spectator

"A top success, the 2012 Vieux Chateau Certan is composed of 87% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. Deep mulberry, plum and black cherry fruit notes intermixed with touches of graphite and subtle smoke lead to a medium-bodied wine with beautiful intensity, well-integrated oak, a velvety opulence and a long, impressively pure finish. A strong effort, it should drink well for 15 or more years. Alexander Thienpont continues to turn out brilliant wines from this property situated on the high Plateau of Pomerol. The harvest took place between October 1 and 11, producing 33 hectoliters per hectare. The 2012 achieved 13.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.8 and an index of polyphenols as high as the 2010, which was somewhat surprising. It is not nearly as powerful or rich as the 2010 or the 2009. All the old vine parcels of Merlot made it into the final blend."
 - RP, Wine Advocate

"This is a Merlot year for Alexandre and his son Guillaume: the 2012 a blend of 87% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc and just 1% Cabernet Sauvignon (the latter due to a parcel being replanted at the moment.) The nose is very well defined and lively, real "energy" coming from the glass. There are crisp scents of blackcurrant, wild strawberry and a tangible stoniness – very expressive of its terroir. The palate is superb: real tension and purity here, crisp acidity, tensile tannins that lend this VCC edginess and race. The fruit is black rather than red with a sense of poise and superbly assimilated oak on the nervous finish. What a great Pomerol for the vintage! Tasted April 2013"
 - NM, Wine Journal

- Reviews** *"So complex and pure with mushrooms, tobacco, chocolate and berries. Full-bodied yet refined, fresh and lively. The texture is so silky and intense. A real beauty and balance that both make you want to drink it."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "A dense VCC with beautiful fruit of chocolate, blackberries, blueberries. Full body and velvety, with lovely richness and balanced. So juicy and yummy already. A round and voluptuous young red. One of the top wines of the vintage but not quite 2011 VCC, which benefited from outstanding Cabernet Franc."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "This wine is already so delicious, it's initially hard to find the structure. Packed with black fruits, it has velvet tannins that only slowly reveal their power. Layers of generous Merlot give the ripest black plum flavors. The wine is rich and the tannins well integrated, yet everything will age well. Drink from 2024."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "94–96. Barrel sample. Perfumed, elegant wine with an unusually high proportion of Merlot at the expense of Cabernet. Spicy, fruit cake and dried fruits go with a stylish blackberry character. Complex and set for a long aging."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "Good full ruby. Cool, medicinal aromas of blackcurrant, blackberry, violet and mint. Then silky and deep on the palate, offering pure dark berry and floral flavors and an attractive combination of stuffing and energy. Finishes perfumed and very long, with suave, fine-grained tannins. Another very successful VCC in the making."*
- ST, International Wine Cellar
- "(Deep, dark cherry colour. Certainly no shortage of colour in the 2012s on the right bank. Alexandre Thienpont describes 2012 as 'a Merlot vintage of pedigree and balance', and this year only 12% Cabernet Franc (a third of the total), and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, went into the grand vin...Approx 75% new oak. High level of coulure, and very strict selection, giving rise to one of the lowest yields in the last 20 years.) Strong graphite aroma on the nose even though there is less Cabernet Franc than in some years. Silky tannins pull you along to a dry, polished finish. Cool and fresh with sweet blueberry fruit on the mid palate and a touch of earthiness adding savour. Very fine tannins. Earlier drinking wine than 2009 or 2010. Drink 2017-2025. 18/20 points."*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- "Strong graphite aroma on the nose even though there is less Cabernet Franc than in some years. Silky tannins pull you along to a dry, polished finish. Cool and fresh with sweet blueberry fruit on the mid palate and a touch of earthiness adding savour. Very fine tannins. Earlier drinking wine than 2009 or 2010. (JH)"*
- JH, JancisRobinson.com
- "Great wine but doesn't quite hit the heights of 2011. 12% Cabernet Franc compared to 30% in 2011. Fresh, floral and fragrant on the palate and nose. Great purity and finesse on the palate."*
- JL, Decanter.com
- "Alexandre Thienpont describes the Merlot in his 2012 as "simple", saying that it needs the Cabernet Franc for complexity and palate length, but I think he's being too hard on his own wine. This isn't another 2010 VCC, but it's still a delight: perfumed, grassy and supple with bramble and green pepper notes, silky tannins and well handled oak. A château enjoying a rich vein of form. Drink: 2020-35"*
- TA, timatkin.com

Reviews *“Alexandre Thienpont described 2011 as a year for lean cats. That is not the case with the 2012. Harvested from October 11 through October 12, with yields of just 33 hectoliters per hectare, the wine reached 13% alcohol. Blending 87% Merlot with 12% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, the wine pops with truffle, coconut, flowers, wild strawberry and cherry. Silky in texture, medium-bodied and fresh, 2012 Vieux Chateau Certan is a wine of finesse and refinement. According to Alexandre Thienpont, some vintages of Vieux Chateau Certan favor Cabernet Franc, while other years are better for Merlot. 2012 is a Merlot vintage. The wine is refined, fresh, pure and elegant in style. It’s a vintage that focuses on the aromatics and purity of the fruit. It does not display the power of 2009 or 2010, instead it focuses on the refined, perfumed qualities of Vieux Chateau Certan. 93-94 Pts (18-Apr-2013)”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Deep colour; pure at edge, fresh and healthy looking; lots of red and blue fruits; great Merlot; lots of black cherry, sweet plums and perfume; very pretty; palate very balanced with real delicacy and verve. Structure and density there too. Fresh and ripe. 87% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon 94-96+ Tasted at the Chateau Friday 12 April 2013”

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

“Alexandre Thienpont has been making sensational VCCs for several years from the venerable old vines of this exceptionally well situated vineyard. The youngest Merlots were planted in 1959 and the youngest Cabernet Francs in 1948. This is one of the great properties of Pomerol and it normally has a high percentage of Cabernet in the blend. This year however, the blend is 87% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and only 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. The harvest was the latest ever here. Lots going on here with a very powerful, dense, layered, structured character. A big wine but there is great purity. Long, sweet and velvety but tannic intensity too. Impressive and serious.”

- Farr Vintners

“There are lots of brooding black fruits on the nose and depth and richness on the palate. Black plum fleshiness is backed by slightly fresher black cherry all underpinned by fine ripe tannins. Towards the back dark chocolate enriches and this combined with the ripe fruit gives fleshy suppleness on the finish. 2020-40.”

- Derek Smedley MW

“This is an opulent, velvety-textured Pomerol with 87% Merlot in the blend. A gorgeous wine with great concentration which is surprising given the difficult weather conditions. The alcohol is a reasonable at 13.5% and the Cabernet Franc (12%) adds good structure and depth along with the ripe, generous Merlot. There is freshness in the fruit with vibrancy and energy showing ability to age easily for decades. One of the most successful wines of this vintage in Pomerol! Small yield at only 33hl/ha and only 2,800 cases made. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (09-Apr-2013)”

- JCL, asianpalate.com

“Vieux Château Certan is always gorgeous to taste when in barrel and 2012 is no exception. There is surprising density here and, oh boy, I just love the gorgeous lift, freshness and floral notes that combine with the blueberry and redcurrant fruit. This is a nose that you just want keep on going back to. The palate is not lacking in weight either, with layers of plump red fruit. The tannins are super-fine and, along with the acidity, hold everything perfectly in place. There is an overriding freshness and purity to this wine that belies the serious intensity here. 2012 continues VCC’s legendary role of vintages. I doff my chapeau to Alexandre Thienpont.”

- AB, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants