

Vieux Château Certan 2015

CSPC# 814286

750mlx6

14.6% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	80% Merlot, 19% 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	<p>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.</p>
Vintage	<p>This year, everything combined to make the vintage a success: superb weather allied to a mature vineyard enabled an outstanding vintage.</p> <p>A cool and sufficiently rainy winter, followed by a magnificent spring, brought about a quick and homogeneous budding of the vines. A good flowering followed, helped by fine weather at the end of May and beginning of June.</p> <p>Hot weather during July brought a substantial water deficit in the vineyard. This amazing summer period caused the skins of the grapes to thicken and along with fine end-of-the-season weather this enabled us to look forward to a worry-free harvest. The Merlot was ripe, silky and complete. It brought all its strength to the wine. The subtle Cabernet Franc provided balance by its freshness, and length of flavour through its pedigree. It gave the wine delicacy and spirit.</p> <p>Like the 2009 vintage, the Vieux Château Certan 2015, with its controlled power, offers excellent ageing potential. The balance between its silky texture and its freshness makes this a wine that has breed and great distinction, mirroring its outstanding terroir.</p>
Vineyards	<p>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.</p>
Harvest	17th and 18th September, then 22nd and 23rd September and finally from 28th September to 2nd October 2015.
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	One of the wines of the vintage** Perfumed and very fine with rich black fruits, graphite, liquid minerals, and cocoa powder. Exotic mouthfeel and weight (14.6% alcohol) yet completely in balance. Cashmere from the Cabernet Franc with power from the Merlot. On the palate, this is absolutely seamless, long, and pure. Extraordinary.



Production 3750 cases made.
Cellaring Drink 2023-2040
Scores/Awards **97 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018
98+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018
98-100 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016
99 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018
100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018
98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016
97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016
18.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016
97 points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2016
97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017
100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018
96-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016
94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016
17.5 points - Farr Vintner - March 2016
91-94 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016
97 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016
100 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018
97-100 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016
19.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016
97-99 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016
18.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016
19.5 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016
18 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - June 2016

Reviews *“Expressive and alluring aromas of warm plum reduction and boysenberry puree lead off here, followed by fleshy, seamlessly layered notes of blackberry, black currant, melted black licorice and smoldering tobacco. Shows a lovely tug of dark earth through the finish without sacrificing a sense of polish or giving ground to the waves of fruit. Displays terrific latent energy through the finish. Best from 2023- 2040. 3,750 cases made.”*
- JM, Wine Spectator

“Blended of 80% Merlot, 19% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, the medium to deep garnet-purple colored 2015 Vieux Chateau Certan opens with profound notes of blueberry compote, dried mulberries, black forest cake, licorice, violets and garrigue with wafts of black truffles, sandalwood and rose hips. Medium to full-bodied, very earthy/savory and beautifully layered with very plush yet present tannins, it offers lovely freshness and a very long mineral finish. So very Pomerol!”
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2015 Vieux Château Certan is a blend of 80% Merlot, 19% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, cropped between September 17 and October 2 at 42 hectoliters per hectare. The IPT is healthy 83 and the pH is 3.72, the alcohol 14.6%. Enough statistics. What you need to know is that it is a beguiling Pomerol that will set hearts aflutter. It is bridled with a heavenly bouquet with intense red and black fruit, black truffle and a touch of smoke, opening wonderfully in the glass; the Cabernet Franc is very expressive and imparting a licorice note after ten minutes. The palate is medium-bodied with intensity, with a killer line of acidity that imparts freshness from the very start. There is life-affirming tension interwoven throughout this extremely complex wine from Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont. There are layers, more like a mille-feuille of blackberry, boysenberry, mineral, truffle and a touch of spice towards the finish, just a touch of warmth from the alcohol that merely complements an extraordinary and profound Pomerol.”
- NM, Wine Advocate

“The 2015 Vieux Chateau Certan was bottled in mid-May as usual. This was one of the wines of the vintage out of barrel, and now it has a compelling bouquet with blackberry, smoke and iris. There is wonderful delineation here, a cerebral bouquet that is quite mercurial in the glass, traces of black truffle emerging with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin and just a killer line of acidity, a Vieux Chateau Certan surfeit with energy and joie de vivre. It fans out in glorious, almost swaggering fashion with truffle and white pepper, a touch of truffle on the persistent finish. This is clearly destined to be one among the canon of legendary wines from the estate although it does deserve requisite cellaring. This is one of the wines of the vintage.”
- NM, Wine Journal

Reviews *“The blackberries, blueberries, oyster shell and violets are so mesmerizing. Full-bodied, focused and deep. It takes you to another space and plane. Dried flowers and dark fruit. The tannins are perfectly crafted. Keeps going as you taste it. Drink in 2023 but why wait?”*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“A powerful and rich wine with super concentration and length. Deep and very rich. Glorious blackberry and black chocolate. Full and super velvety. A creamy texture of stone, chalk and lemon rind from the tannins and acidity. Wow. Loving it. The caressing character is so memorable. 80% merlot and 20% cabernet franc.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This is a beautifully fragrant wine that has power along with an elegant acidity. It has wonderful juiciness that cuts through any of the tannins to give great freshness, a silky texture and fruitiness at the end. Perfumed and stylish, this is a very fine wine. (RV)”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Highest alcohol ever: 14.6%. 4,500 cases. Very intense nose with strong mineral notes - lots of Cabernet Franc influence. Massive impact with really luscious ripe fruit but massive tannins too. Very satiny initially but underneath there is massive tannin. Lovely fragrant top note. Beautifully married. Very sophisticated and with many layers. All vineyard not winemaking. Very savoury - very unlike Merlot stereotype.”
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“This is a really complete wine with aromatic complexity, ripe fruit, beautifully suave texture and freshness and persistence on the finish. The tannins are abundant but fine, allowing the wine to build majestically on the palate. Harmonious as well. ‘It’s like 2010 with more Cabernet Franc (19%),’ says Alexandre Thienpont.”
- JL, Decanter.com

“The VCC vineyard is split across 23 plots, with many of them increasingly sub-divided even further, and once again this extreme attention to detail has resulted in one of the most classically structured wines in Pomerol, likely to be extremely long living. Finesse, depth and complexity are all here in abundance. It has a floral attack with touches of wild rose and peony, leading into a palate of liquorice and bilberry with creamy, ripe tannins layered over. It has a welcome tightness, and a dark chocolate character on the finish. Bottled in May 2017. Drinking Window 2023-2040. (JA)”
- JA, Decanter.com

“Like 2010, but with better Cabernet Franc” is how Alexandre Thienpoint describes his wine. It’s certainly an impressive Pomerol, but I preferred the former vintage. This is flirting with over-ripeness at 14.6% alcohol, but has the richness, fine tannins and fruit weight to cope. Sweet, dense and a little figgy with the Cabernet Franc providing an undertone of leafy freshness. Drink: 2022-35.”
- TA, timatkin.com

“Cherry blossoms, licorice, truffle, licorice, cherry liqueur and cocoa have no trouble getting noticed. But it is the voluptuous, decadent, opulent, unctuous mouth feel, with its velvet textures and 60 second finish that steals the show. A candidate for wine of the vintage, this is a future legend in the making.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Fresh flowers, ripe, cherry blossoms, truffle, licorice and cocoa start off the perfume. This wine has volume, concentration and freshness. On the palate, it displays a beautiful sense of symmetry, purity, sweetness and billowy tannins, leaving you with richness of flavor, freshness of fruit and lush, palatial textures. If you’re a thinking man with a penchant for blissful pleasure, this is your Pomerol. Blending 80% Merlot with 19% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, the wine reached 14.6% alcohol with a pH of 3.72. Picking took place September 17 and September 18, September 22, 23 and September 28, finishing October 2. 75% of the harvest was included in the Grand Vin, which is much higher than usual.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

"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 (for the appellation) percentage of Cabernet in the blend. The 2015 blend is, however, 80% Merlot with 19% Cabernet Franc and only 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. "Gentle Strength" is Alexandre's description of his 2015. Deep ruby in the glass with a powerful nose of pain grillé, cedar and plum giving an exotic yet lifted aroma profile. The palate is ripe but sophisticated with cool blueberry and plum fruit laced with succulent black cherry. There are hints of graphite that temper the fleshy fruit core. As the palate moves through the mid-palate to the finish there are fine and ripe tannins lining the structure of this wine and bringing perfect balance to the long finish."

- Farr Vintners

"Sweet and ripe on the nose the start of the palate is rich with fleshy black plum. Lighter in the middle bramble and bilberry and although there is more depth at the back the finish has a light flowing elegance. 2027-40"

- Derek Smedley MW

"An attractive Pomerol with plush, velvety tannins and lovely sweet black fruit and spices. The fruit is fresh, lively and the finish is very long. The alcohol is 14.6% which is the highest alcohol ever made. The blend is 80% Merlot and 19% Cabernet Franc with 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. The vines are on average around 50 years old."

- JCL, asianpalate.com

"Guillaume Thienpont describes this wine as 'La Force Tranquille'. There is no doubt one millisecond after raising the glass to my nose that this is an incredible wine. The depth of fruit on the nose is extraordinary. It is close to perfection when both grapes ripen optimally, and this doesn't always happen at Vieux Château Certan. Clearly, they manage to make fascinating wine year in year out at this property, but in the vintages when both grapes perform, the Thienponts make a 'true' Vieux Château Certan and this is as clear and sonorous as any young vintage I have ever tasted. The palate is complete, and it expands as it travels across the taste buds into a larger, more intense beast. Bigger and more expansive than the 2014 this is an indulgent wine and it never relents in its desire to inform you of its pedigree. Cabernet Franc kept everything in check and this is what has brought the freshness to the Merlot. This is a very structured, powerful Vieux Château Certan with magnificent control and a deep, dense register. 2010 was all about Merlot - this vintage is all about Vieux Château Certan. Thrilling and magnificent, rich and luxurious this is a near perfect VCC."

- MJ, matthewjukes.com

"The 2015 Vieux Château Certan is every bit as magnificent from bottle as it was from barrel. Rich, sumptuous and explosive in the glass, the 2015 is pure class. The flavors are deep and boldly sketched in this sumptuous, spectacularly ripe Pomerol. Inky blue/purplish fruit, spice, lavender, licorice and menthol all develop in the glass, but it is the wine's textural richness and intensity that stand out most. As good as the 2015 is today, it is going to need at least 15-20 years to be at its very best. Is there anything more I can ask of the 2015? No, there is not. This is a tremendous showing. 2030 – 2065"

- AG, Vinous

"One of the most exotic, flamboyant wines of the year, the 2015 Vieux Château Certan is rich, unctuous and seamless, with stunning depth and exceptional textural richness. In 2015, VCC is unusually deep and powerful. A host of rose petal, lavender, mint, spice and plum notes meld together, but it is the wine's overall intensity and spherical structure that stand out most. The 2015 is freakishly rich and likely to require at least 15 years to lose some of its baby fat. It was absolutely stellar on both occasions I tasted it."

- AG, Vinous
