

Vieux Château Certan 2016

CSPC# 814286

750mlx6

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	85% Merlot, 14% 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>
Winemaker	Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont
Vintage	<p>2016 was a year of great climatic contrasts. A very mild winter was followed by a very rainy spring, which helped restore the soil's water reserves. This water enabled the vines to cope well with very sunny and extremely hot conditions until late in the growing season.</p> <p>Thanks to a few rare days of fine weather in mid-June, the flowering process went quickly and evenly and provided an early indication of the satisfactory future crop size. With the grapes in an excellent state of health during the whole of the summer, the harvesting dates could be pushed back as far as possible, allowing the vines to benefit from a couple of rain showers which rehydrated the vines and enhanced ripening. The vigour of the old vines was favourably slowed, and as a result, they produced wines with amazing deep colour, concentration and balance.</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	The 2016 Vieux Chateau Certan is a blend of 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon that was picked at 40.50 hectoliters per hectare, in three stages of picking: 3-7, 10-11 and 17-18 October
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	Vieux Château Certan 2016 displays a deep, ruby hue of exceptional intensity and reveals aromas of black fruit and Royal Ann cherries. With opulent Merlot, the wine rolls over the tongue. The balance between freshness and concentration is superb. Velvety, seductive and flavoursome, this wine exhibits all the traits of a great, long-ageing vintage.



Serve with	Vieux Chateau Certan is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes. Vieux Chateau Certan is also good when matched with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms and pasta.
Production	3750 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2021-2070
Scores/Awards	<p>97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2019</p> <p>100 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - November 2018</p> <p>95-97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017</p> <p>99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019</p> <p>98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017</p> <p>98 points/Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2019</p> <p>97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2017</p> <p>19 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017</p> <p>95 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017</p> <p>96 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2017</p> <p>18 points - Farr Vintner - February 2017</p> <p>95-98 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017</p> <p>100 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>100 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>97-100 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017</p> <p>100 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - November 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"A horse of a different color among its peers in this vintage, featuring an extremely vivid core of pastis-soaked plum, cassis and blackberry fruit streaming forth. Muscular yet imbued with racy cut, the finish ripples along the edges, with sweet tobacco, warm gravel and ganache notes. A violet hint glistens here and there for added effect. Power and vivacity make a thrilling combo. Best from 2023 through 2040. 3,750 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2016 Vieux Château Certan is blended of 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. Deep garnet-purple in color, it leaps from the glass with pristine, vivid notions of candied violets, chocolate-covered cherries, blackberry compote and mulberries with fragrant touches of raspberry leaves, crushed rocks, licorice, cumin seed and yeast extract plus a waft of red roses. Medium to full-bodied and beautifully elegant, the palate builds from a quiet intensity to an incredibly well-sustained aria of crunchy red and black cherries notes plus tons of floral undertones, framed by exquisitely soft yet firm tannins and seamless freshness, finishing very long with lingering mineral and floral sparks. How does this 2016 compare to the also amazing 2015 vintage? Stylistically they are very different, as my notes on each should convey, but beyond this I am struck by the incredible harmony and seamlessness of the 2016 along with its amazing depth and energy this year. Bravo! Bottled at the beginning of June 2018 using a new, dedicated on-site bottling line, this 2016 vintage of Vieux Château Certan is the most hauntingly vivid and achingly beautiful expression of this vineyard I have ever tasted. When I asked Alexandre Thienpont and his son Guillaume about how they came to achieve such a remarkable wine, they explained the extraordinary efforts taken this year. "We worked a lot this year on vigor," Alexandre explained. "Tannin ripeness was the key. Finally, the rains in September gave the vines enough energy to push the tannins through." Other measures included de-leafing in two passes, crop thinning and meticulous sorting in the vineyards and winery. "We marked the vines that suffered from the dry conditions and did not include them in blends." The results of this duo's extraordinary efforts combined with an already great growing season is pure perfection that will make your heart race from the moment you take that first transfixing sniff."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2016 Vieux Chateau Certan is a blend of 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon that was picked at 40.50 hectoliters per hectare, in three stages of picking: 3-7, 10-11 and 17-18 October. It has a high IPT of 82 and a pH of 3.77. It has a very refined bouquet with blackberry, briary and morello cherries that are tightly wound at first, but open gradually with aeration. The Merlot is fully in control aromatically; this is not a VCC governed by the Cabernet Franc this year, consistent with the 2016 vintage. The palate is medium-bodied with fine-grain tannin. There is plenty of dark berry fruit laced with hints of earl grey and bay leaf, a complex and cerebral Pomerol with a long, precise and (to put it banally) delicious finish. This is another outstanding wine from Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The ripeness in this wine is incredibly balanced and perfect with plum and orange-peel character, buttressed by the ripe seeds of the grapes that give a hazelnut and coffee undertone. Turns to violets. Full body with firm and very sexy tannins that are perfectly balanced and polished. Some chocolate and dried black tea-leaf character in the aftertaste. Wonderful finish. Needs five to six years to soften, but already a joy to experience. Try after 2025."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"The balance and finesse to this wine are really beautiful with ultra-fine tannins and beautiful fruit. It's full and structured yet so long and intense. It's a wine that seduces you with every sip — already. Great selection here. Quite simply turbocharged at the end."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This big, rich wine has perfumed Cabernet Franc flavors to give shape to the dominant Merlot. It is a well-structured wine, elegant and with juicy acidity. It displays power and concentration along with restraint and style. Drink this wine from 2024."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"A higher proportion of Merlot than usual in the blend has given this fine wine its sumptuous character. In contrast, it has a classically perfumed character and fine black-cherry fruit. It is structured, with a firm base of generous tannins. Beautifully balanced, it is obviously for the long haul. (RV)"

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. Sumptuous nose. Great lift. Real race and dancing stuff. Good structure and line. Nothing sweet or fleshy about this but lovely ripeness and nobility. Amazing persistence and elegance in claret mode."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"This is a muscular, big wine, more so than in some years, but it is so precise and intellectual, and one of the more austere takes on the vintage at this early stage. The 2015 was more of a crowd-pleaser perhaps, but this has such a gripping, thrilling sense of well-drawn out fruit wrapped up in fresh, floral layers. The tannins have an IPT of 82, but are extremely ripe, totally delicious and beautifully constructed. They found more difference between young and old vines compared to the previous year, because of the stress in the summer, so 66% of production made it into the grand vin compared to 75% in 2015. 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. Drinking Window 2027-2050"

- JA, Decanter.com

"Grab fresh flowers, buy truffles, pick a bushel of fresh plums from the market and you get the idea of the aromatics. Full bodied, silky, plush and sensuous, the wine shows freshness coupled with ripe, juicy, fresh, dark fruits and concentration. Even with the concentration and tannins, the wine is a dancer -- light on its feet, balanced and fresh-faced. Blending 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine reached 14.5% alcohol with a pH of 3.77. Picking took place October 3 to October 18, making this latest harvest in the history of Vieux Chateau Certan."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"A 2010 plus," is how Guillaume Thienpoint describes this powerful, rich, dense VCC, made with slightly less Cabernet Franc than usual because of the summer heat wave. Bold, grassy and plush, with masses of underpinning tannin and satanic, dark berry fruit. 2026-40"

- TA, timatkin.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. 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon in the vineyard. Harvested over three stages from the beginning to the middle of October. The 2016 is a blend of 85% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon and Alexandre Thienpont thinks the 2016 is akin to 2010 in the same way as 2015 is like 2009, but he believes the 2016 is better than any of those that preceded it. Perfumed on the nose with rose and violet layered by herbal thyme, cherry, plum and cassis notes. Firm with a graphite edge on the palate, the purity of cool, but ripe bramble fruit is framed by ripe, chalky-textured tannins that freshen the finish. Spicy toast and pepper notes linger in harmony with the fruit on a long finish.”
- Farr Vintners

“Ripe black plums the nose is packed with sweet fruit the palate rich and ripe. The tannins are wrapped round with fruit the mid palate plush depth of flavour. Bramble and bilberry towards the back-give freshness balance with the sweet rich fruit filling out the finish. 2027-46”
- Derek Smedley MW

“The 2016 Vieux Château Certan is the first vintage to be entirely bottled by the estate’s own bottling machine (just in case that ever comes up in a wine quiz). Alexandre Thienpont mentioned that he assiduously left out the stressed vines, and he places this above his more hedonistic 2015. The wine takes a few minutes to open in the glass, but boy, is it worth the wait: it reveals pixelated red fruit (crushed strawberry and raspberry) and crushed stone, plus a hint of graphite emanating from the Cabernets. The palate is medium-bodied with fine, slightly chalky tannin that frames pure black and red fruit infused with graphite and almost flint-like notes. This is one of the most mineral-driven VCCs that I have encountered in over 20 years, with dizzying precision on the finish. A very intellectual Pomerol, in the realm of the profound. Drink 2024-2060”
- NM, Vinous

“I have been fortunate to follow the 2016 Vieux Château Certan almost from the beginning, starting with a tasting of several lots from barrel in early January 2017, in which Alexandre and Guillaume Thienpont showed me the wines in a sequence arranged by the year of planting of various parcels. Even then, it was clear, the 2016 had the potential to be a majestic wine. Now, from bottle, it is every bit as captivating as early tastings suggested it would be. Sweet red/purplish berry fruit, lavender, rose petal and spice infuse this exquisitely beautiful, layered Pomerol. Alexandre Thienpont adds that the harvest was saved by September rains that gave the parched vines just enough water to restore some of the balance that had been lost earlier in the season. Put simply, the 2016 VCC has it all. Drink 2026-2066.”
- AG, Vinous

“The 2016 Vieux Château Certan is a wine of extraordinary beauty. Rich, seamless and voluptuous in the glass, it exudes sensuality in all of its dimensions. Tasted as a hypothetical blend, the 2016 is less expressive than the separate lots were when I tasted them a few months ago. A rush of dark cherry, inky blue/purplish fruit, crushed rocks, lavender and rose petal infuses the creamy, voluptuous finish. The 2016 manages to be dense and rich, but with no excess weight. It is quite simply a remarkable wine.”
- AG, Vinous

“Just as good, yet in a different style, the 2016 Vieux Château Certan shows cooler notes of crème de cassis, tobacco leaf, underbrush, graphite, violets, and crushed rocks. Deep, incredibly full-bodied and powerful, yet like the 2015, weightless and sensationally textured, it glides over the palate with no sensation of weight or heaviness. Expansive, deep, beautifully concentrated, and flawlessly constructed, it builds incrementally on the palate and has a finish that lasts for over a minute. It’s another legendary wine from this estate to enjoy over the coming 30-40 years.”
- Jeb Dunnuck
