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## Clos de l'Oratoire 2013

CSPC# 749564

750mlx12

13.2% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**  
**Appellation**  
**Classification**  
**Website**  
**General Info**

95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc  
St Emilion

Grand Cru Classe in 2006

<http://www.neipperg.com/index.php?act=1,10,3>

Clos de l'Oratoire is located on Saint-Emilion's north-east slope.

The origins of Clos de l'Oratoire lie in the Peyraud estate, which was established by the Beylot family, a firm of *négociants* based in Libourne, in the middle years of the 19th century. This was a substantial estate which required extensive planting by the proprietors, who were also responsible for the construction of the *château* which still graces the vineyards today. Its division, in which some of the best parcels were cleaved off to create Clos de l'Oratoire, occurred following the first classification of the St Emilion vineyards in 1955. The Beylot family made the split in good time for the 1969 reclassification, seeing the smaller of the two classed as *Grand Cru Classé*. The larger part, by then known as Château Peyreau, remained unclassified, and both parts stayed under the tenure of the family.

Just a few years later, however, came a significant change in ownership with the arrival of the Neipperg dynasty. Today the property is owned by Stephan von Neipperg, although it was in fact his father, Joseph-Hubert, Graf von Neipperg, a descendant of Franconian nobility, who acquired the property. Joseph-Hubert was one in a long line of successful winemakers in his homeland, Württemberg, which is now part of Baden-Württemberg, a southwest German state. He had made his first investment in Bordeaux in 1971, with the purchase of Canon-la-Gaffelière, and it was only the following year that he added Clos de l'Oratoire to his portfolio. Nevertheless, it is Stephan, his son, who is today the driving force behind Clos de l'Oratoire, as well as Château Peyreau, which also came under the direction of the Neipperg family. Contrary to what is sometimes said, the plots comprising Clos l'Oratoire were not acquired in 1991, but in 1971 (at the same time as the von Neipperg's four first vineyards in Saint-Emilion).

During the 2nd revision of the Saint-Emilion classification, in 1969, the owner at the time had already selected the best plots of Château Peyreau and submitted them for classification. His request was accepted, and Clos de l'Oratoire was born in that year. However, major efforts undertaken to achieve Clos de l'Oratoire's full potential date from 1991.

2013 saw probably the most challenging growing season on record, starting with a late, cold spring which put the vines on the back-foot right from the beginning. Budding and then flowering ran some three weeks behind schedule, with flowering occurring in the last half of June during very unsettled weather - a hot sunny day at 30oC would be followed by a stormy, wet one at just 14oC, the antithesis of perfect flowering weather. The result was substantial coulure and millerandage (fertilized flowers which then fail to develop or abort), particularly affecting old Merlot vines, and the vigneron knew already that they had a small harvest on the horizon, up to 30% smaller than average. July was very hot, around 3oC higher than the norm, and all seemed fine until the last weekend of July when the weather broke with a spectacular hail-infested storm which decimated the Entre Deux Mers and some outlying St Emilion properties like Château Puy Blanquet, in some cases destroying the entire crop.

Following the break in the weather, August proceeded cooler and slightly damper than usual, a few degrees below the norm, allowing grey rot, which had been hanging around the vineyards since flowering, to get a new foothold amongst the vines.

Normally, the labour-intensive vineyard work starts to wind down in mid-August



<b>Vintage</b>	whereas in 2013 most producers stepped up their vineyard patrols at this time, excising rotten and under-ripe grapes as soon as they became apparent. This was clearly a vintage where the small producer had the edge over the larger estates as they could visit all their vines on a daily basis, keeping an eye on every small change and reacting accordingly. Every trick in the viticultural book was deployed - green harvesting, despite the small load on the vine, to ensure that the vines weren't carrying more than they could ripen given the late season; leaf-thinning to increase air circulation and inhibit rot; the removal of later-ripening grapes which would have been hard to spot come harvest time - not to mention preventative spraying against the rot. It was an all-out battle between the farmers and the elements.
<b>Vineyards</b>	The 10.32 hectares of vines grow on Fronsac molasse covering a layer of sand with a clay subsoil. Average vine age is 35 years. This terroir is ideally suited to the blend of Merlot (90%), Cabernet Franc (5%), and Cabernet Sauvignon (5%) grapes. Merlot contributes roundness and opulence to the wine, whereas Cabernet Franc is responsible for power, aromatic complexity, and length.
<b>Harvest</b>	Handpicked from 6 to 10 October
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	In wooden vats for 30 days. Extraction by pneumatic pigeage (punching down the cap). Malolactic fermentation and barrel ageing: In new oak barrels (55%) on the lees for 15 months. No fining
<b>Production</b>	2333 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2014-2019
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>90 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2016</p> <p><b>88-91 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2014</p> <p><b>84-86 points</b> - Robert M. Parker Jr., Wine Advocate #214 - August 2014</p> <p><b>87-89 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2014</p> <p><b>15.5 points</b> - Richard Hemming, JancisRobinson.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>18 points</b> - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2014</p> <p><b>89 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only)</p> <p><b>88-91 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 28, 2014</p> <p><b>87-89 points</b> - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2, 2014</p> <p><b>86 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)</p> <p><b>88-90 points</b> - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2014</p> <p><b>16.5+ points</b> - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2014</p> <p><b>89-92 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous (score only)</p> <p><b>85 points</b> - Lea &amp; Sandeman Wine Merchants - April 2014</p> <p><b>88-90 points</b> - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p> <p><b>16 points</b> - Gault &amp; Millau (score only)</p> <p><b>89 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseauve (score only)</p> <p><b>14.5 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"This packs in solid fig, boysenberry and blackberry fruit flavors along with notes of pain d'épices, dried anise and ganache. A bit amped-up in style but successful nonetheless, no easy feat in this vintage. Best from 2018 through 2023. 2,333 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Lively, with pomegranate and cherry notes backed by a perky blood orange hint, giving way to high-toned spice accents on the juicy finish. Fresh and engaging. Score range: 88-91."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"This is normally one of the go-to, most consistent wines consumers can look for, given the impeccable ownership and administration by Stephan von Neipperg. The 2013, which was tasted three separate times, is soft and dilute, light, with medium-ruby color, and licorice, olive tapenade and herbaceous notes. It has light tannin and not much concentration or finish. Yields were tiny, at 17 hectoliters per hectare, but that didn't help produce a wine with concentration in the final blend, which is 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. Drink it over the next 4-5 years."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p>

- Reviews** *“The Clos l'Oratoire 2013 is a blend of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc picked from 6 to 10 October. It has a pure and Burgundy-like bouquet that is floral and perfumed. The palate is medium-bodied with light tannins, forming an easy drinking and slightly pointed Saint Emilion with a fine citric edge, if not the length of previous vintages 87-89”*  
- NM, Wine Journal
- “Really constrained nose, but better liveliness on the palate, with juicy red fruit and decent tannin. Ripe but understated and short. Most likely the best possible result given the conditions. (RH) Drink 2016-2019. 15.5”*  
- RH, JancisRobinson.com
- “Sweet, round and supple. Little toasted oak apparent. Less power but firm, fine structure. Drink: 2017-2025. 16”*  
- JL, Decanter.com
- “Cigar box, licorice and black cherry fruits are quickly followed by a soft, medium-bodied finish with sweet red and black plum. From 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, the wine reached 13.2% alcohol. From yields of 17 hectares per hectare, the wine is aging in 40% new French oak. 88-91 Pts”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Mid depth; purple edge; quite seductive aromatics; black fruits, some meat and spice; oak present on the palate; material and chew; sweet fruit; has all the elements. Good finish. Some chew and wood. [95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc 17hl/ha 55% new oak]. Drink 2018-2029. 87-89”*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com
- “Fresh red fruited the nose is quite light, but the palate feels richer with a greater depth of flavour. There is a balancing freshness at the back with lots of re fruits on the finish. 2016-2026. 88-90”*  
- Derek Smedley MW
- “From the one tasting this seems to be a rare miss for Clos de l'O. In 'prise de bois', so may recover, but tastes gripped, of charcoal and caramel, a touch of sweetness overwhelmed by bitter dryness. 85”*  
- Lea & Sandeman Wine Merchants
- “(95 Merlot, 5 Cabernet Franc) 55% new oak. Structured and noble with a long finish and decent balance. There is a nice dusting of spice and even some peppery notes, too, which while unexpected are not unattractive. Dry on the finish but not harsh. 16+”*  
- MJ, matthewjukes.com
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