

Pomerol, 5th January 2018

AB Everyone on the Right Bank seems to have finished their malos very early. Was it the same at VCC?

Guillaume Thienpont Exactly.

AB How did that Cabernet Franc you hung on to pick at the end of September turn out?



Guillaume Thienpont Amazingly well. The Cabernet Franc is not always as homogeneous as it was in 2017. That was very satisfying.

AB Does that homogeneity show in all the lots you've tasted since the malos were completed?

Guillaume Thienpont Absolutely. We've got a very fine, classic vintage with good consistency.

AB Would you describe this vintage as a 2014 plus, as some of your colleagues are saying?

Guillaume Thienpont They've got a point. 2014 is a fresh vintage with good acidity, similar to 2017. However, I'd say that in 2014 there was more tightness. 2017 has more flesh, which gives it something of the 2015. And there's more Cabernet in 2017.

AB The Cabernet is superior in 2017?

Guillaume Thienpont All the lots are good in 2017. In 2014, only two-thirds of them were really good.

AB What about your Merlot in 2017?

Guillaume Thienpont It was a completely trouble-free year for our Merlot. Homogeneous too. It really was a year of consistent quality across the vineyard.

AB No problems at all as far as volume is concerned at VCC then?

Guillaume Thienpont **We've comfortably achieved our normal yields, which are around 40hl/ha, very similar to 2014, 2015 and 2016.**

AB **What were the results at Le Pin in 2007? Did they differ in any way to Vieux Château Certan?**

Guillaume Thienpont **Very similar. It was a fine, classic vintage at Le Pin, too.**

AB **And of course there's no Cabernet Franc planted there!**

Guillaume Thienpont **Apart from the odd vine that's always been there. No.**

AB **At this early stage, how highly do you rate the 2017 vintage at Vieux Château Certan?**

Guillaume Thienpont **The first impressions are that 2017 is of a comparable quality to 2015 and even 2016. Here at Vieux Château Certan the reference is the 2010 vintage, and I don't think 2017 has quite reached that level.**

AB **And how would you compare it in style?**

Guillaume Thienpont **Again, I'd say that 2017 is between 2014 and 2015.**

AB **How tannic is it?**

Guillaume Thienpont **In IPT, it's quite high. Around 75. But that's a rough figure. I can be more precise when we've done the final blend.**

AB **And how does that IPT compare with 2010?**

Guillaume Thienpont **A bit lower. 2010 was about 80.**

AB **So, moderate alcohol, good acidity and high but not over-high tannins. Sounds like a classic, balanced vintage...**

Guillaume Thienpont **Balanced, classic and homogeneous are the words that sum it up. And a Cabernet year.**

AB Did your Cabernet Sauvignon also perform well in this vintage?

Guillaume Thienpont Good question! It was excellent. Even the youngest vines, which were planted in 2012, gave really good results. There will almost definitely be some in the First Wine.

AB Are you putting more Cabernet Sauvignon in the final blend nowadays?

Guillaume Thienpont Well, last year it was a bit trickier for the Cabernet Sauvignon, but the 2017 vine cycle was longer, which helped it ripen fully. It has tremendous fruit character to offer in 2017.