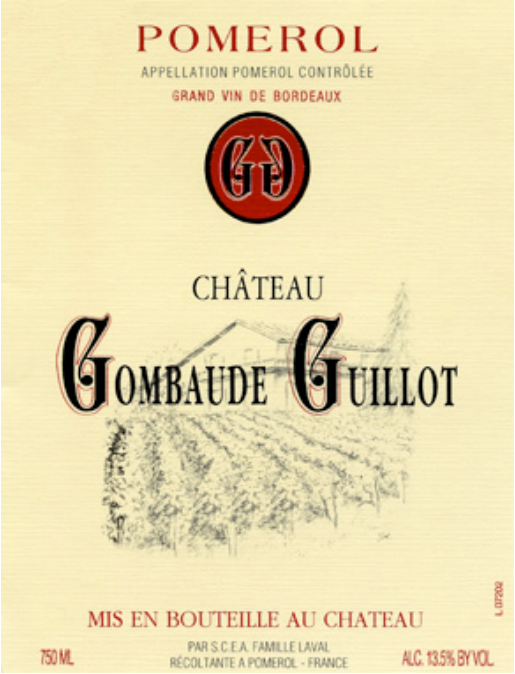
CHÂTEAU GOMBAUDE-GUILLOT



Country: **France**
Region: **Bordeaux**
Appellation(s): **Pomerol**
Producer: **Claire Laval**
Founded: **1868**
Annual Production: **2,500 cases**
Farming: **Organic**
Website: **www.chateau-gombaude-guillot.com**

In the heart of the Pomerol plateau, on the Right Bank of Bordeaux, the vineyards of Château Gombaude-Guillot have been a family property for so long that the current generation doesn't even know when they were first acquired. The Bélevier family was already well established as *vignerons* in Pomerol and Néac when this property was passed down to Marie Bélevier as a dowry in 1868. The "château" itself, which was originally a café where the locals would gather for a drink after church services, was added to the property in 1922. Today, Claire Laval, Marie's great-granddaughter, runs the estate. Claire started her career as an agronomist, specializing in soils best suited for cattle, and had no formal training in viticulture. It is through viticulture, though, that she has refined her expertise in soil management, learning from her own work in the vineyards. Though the estate is already certified organic, she is now pursuing the more stringent requirements of biodynamics. Her dedication to the environment even extends to using local oak for the wines' *élevage*. Claire's reputation among her peers also speaks volumes of her capabilities and work ethic: in 1991, she and only one other woman were inducted into the *Confrerie des Hospitaliers de Pomerol*, a first in this traditionally all-male wine fraternity.

As a recently discovered jewel in the crown of Bordeaux, Pomerol does not have an official classification system, yet the standards set for the *vignerons* here are high. The château's vineyards are comprised of glacial gravel deposits and clay, and vineyard work is focused around soil health, low yields, and maximizing ripeness. Cover crops are planted between vineyard rows to encourage microbiological activity in the soil. No chemical or synthetic herbicides or fungicides are used, and Claire is also careful not to eliminate vineyard pests entirely, citing their importance to the vineyard's ecosystem. The vines average forty years of age and give naturally low yields. The wines of Gombaude-Guillot are classic reflections of Pomerol: rich and supple, with a deep gravel mineral structure. This *vin de garde* has all of the grace and finesse for which the appellation is known, without any of the highbrow pretention or price.

CHÂTEAU GOMBAUDE-GUILLOT**(continued)**

Wine	Blend	Vine Age	Soil Type	Vineyard Area*
Pomerol	85% Merlot 15% Cabernet Franc	40 years	Flint, Clay	7 ha
Pomerol "Clos Plince"	80% Merlot 20% Cabernet (Franc and Sauvignon)	50 years average	Sandy	1.15 ha
Pomerol "Pom 'N Roll"	65% Merlot , 25% Malbec, 10% Cabernet Franc	40 years average	Gravel, Clay	N/A

* "ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- *Terroir*: Surface is gravel and flint with very fine, decomposed clay. The middle strata is clay with a very high iron deposit (rich in orange crystals that are typical in Pomerol). Subsoil is composed of heavy clay lenses.

Pomerol:

- All grapes are harvested by hand
- Wine undergoes natural fermentation in temperature-controlled concrete and stainless steel *cuves*
- Wine is aged in Allier oak barrels, 50% of which are new, although the proportion of new oak varies according to the vintage
- Wine is bottled unfiltered

Pomerol "Clos Plince":

- All grapes are harvested by hand
- Aged in oak barrels, (25% new) for 12 to 15 months

Pomerol "Pom 'N Roll":

- All grapes are harvested by hand, sorted, de-stemmed and lightly crushed
- Wine undergoes natural fermentation in temperature-controlled concrete and stainless steel *cuves* for 3-4 weeks
- Wine is aged in 95% stainless steel and 5% new barrel for 1 year