
Château Palmer 2014

CSPC# 791629

750mlx6

14.1% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

50% Merlot, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot

Appellation

Margaux

Classification

3ème Cru Classé

Website

<https://www.chateau-palmer.com/en/millesimes/2015>

General Info

3rd classified growth in 1855. Palmer could easily claim to the rank of a second. The vine stock of merlot occupies about half of the vineyard, what is odd in Margaux, and that explains in good part the round and smooth character of the high-class wine which sometimes makes it compare with a Pomerol. But do not think incorrect, Palmer has the depth and the complexity of the great Margaux.

The birth of Chateau Palmer dates back to 1814 when Colonel Charles Palmer arrived in France with the army of the future Duke of Wellington. The owner of the Margaux estate at that time was the recently divorced Madame de Gascq. She was trying to sell the Bordeaux wine producing property. When she met Palmer, she told him, "The Bordeaux wine we produce is as good as Château Lafite!" Palmer must have agreed as he quickly soon took over the Margaux estate and renamed it Chateau Palmer. Palmer believed in the Bordeaux wine he was producing. He began expanding the vineyards of Chateau Palmer. Between 1816 and 1831, the estate acquired more land and buildings throughout the Cantenac, Issan and Margaux sectors.

In 1843, Palmer, now a Major General was forced to sell Chateau Palmer. Emile and Isaac Pereire, two brothers had always wanted to purchase Chateau Palmer. They did not come from the Bordeaux wine trade. They were involved in railroad lines and banking. In 1853, they became the new owners of Chateau Palmer.

The brothers replanted and restructured the vineyards. In 1856, they constructed the legendary château and the village outbuildings of Chateau Palmer. Due to the phylloxera epidemic, wars and the great depression, the Pereire brothers' descendants were forced to sell Chateau Palmer.

In 1938, four families of some of the wealthiest Bordeaux wine merchants joined forces to buy equal shares of Chateau Palmer; Ginestet, Mialhe, Mahler-Besse and the Sichels. Their direct descendants are the major current owners of Chateau Palmer today. Two of the families left the company, but, for the Mahler-Besses and the Sichels, it remains an important asset.

The two majority shareholders of Chateau Palmer are both négociants. The Mahler family comes from the Netherlands. Successful in the wine business, they were joined by the Sichel family from England. The Sichel family were also very successful wine merchants. After World War II and the deterioration of the château by German troops, the 1950s saw the regeneration of the vineyard under the management of Jean Bouteiller (1913-1962), the son-in-law of Frédéric Mähler, the majority shareholder at the time.

Having spent forty-two years as the director of Chateau Palmer, Bouteiller retired and was replaced by the young, energetic agronomist and oenologist Thomas Duroux in 2004. This allowed Duroux to return to Bordeaux after spending time managing estates in Italy.

Vintage

Since 1945, only the 1965 vintage wasn't up to the quality of the vintages ending in 5. So, we were "statistically" expecting an excellent harvest in 2015. And we haven't been disappointed... The beginning of the vine's growing season was characterised by a relatively dry climate. The vegetative development was extremely regular and the flowering conditions perfect. The rainfall that followed the fertilisation of the flowers enabled good berry growth. At the end of June, temperatures rose, and the dry weather settled, favouring an early end to vegetative growth, the thickening of the skins of the berries, the concentration of the tannins and the rapid growth of the pips. From the end of July, the weather conditions changed radically as we were



Vintage	<p>faced with a succession of rainy periods of moderate intensity. At first, the rain triggered the beginning of the <i>véraison</i> (grape ripening), which was quick and homogenous in its second part, after a very slow start. Additionally, the grapes developed to reach a more classic size. The Margaux appellation enjoyed especially favourable weather conditions throughout September. With only 30 mm of rainfall, Margaux was the driest part of the Medoc.</p>
Vineyards	<p>Palmer, with its gravel, sand and dirt terroir has deep roots, which is one of the keys to the wine's unique quality and style. Most chateaux plant merlot in clay soils. At Palmer, the merlot is planted in gravel soils. This is part of the reason for the elegance in the wines of Palmer. Located next to Chateau Margaux, Palmer can produce a wine of equal quality in select vintages. The 55-hectare Bordeaux wine vineyard Chateau Palmer is located in Cantenac. Most of the plots are situated on the plateau with a terroir of thin gravel from the G\ddot{u}ntz period along the water. The vineyard is planted to 47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Petit Verdot with vines that average 38 years of age. The vines are planted to a density of 10,000 vines per hectare.</p>
Harvest	<p>09/22/2015 to 10/07/2015. We harvested a few young vines of Merlot on September 15th, but the harvest started in earnest on September 22nd. The Merlot were magnificent, aromatic and beautifully ripe. The Cabernet Sauvignon and the Petit Verdot followed and were just as promising. The 2015 harvest came to a close on October 7th. The relatively high alcoholic content of the 2015 vintage is balanced out by a dense tannic structure without any rustic notes, thanks to perfect phenolic maturity of the pips and skins. At this time, this outstanding balance leads us to believe that 2015 will be in line with recent great vintages, of 2010, 2009, 2005.</p>
Vinification/ Maturation	<p>The vat rooms and Chai were entirely refurbished in 1995, its 42 temperature-controlled, conical, stainless steel vats were designed to provide optimal conditions for precision winemaking. Chateau Palmer is equipped with two cellars. The so-called "first year <i>chai</i>," holds the barrels containing the most recent vintage for the initial year of ageing before being replaced by a new harvest and moving on to the recently renovated "second year <i>chai</i>." Work is once again taking place in the vat rooms. In 2010, Palmer began work on installing a new harvest reception area of 350 square meters which should be finished by 2012. The old pumping system will be replaced by gravity force. They will also build a small cellar devoted to experimental winemaking projects like producing white wine and even vin de paille. A new barrel cellar will allow a vintage to age without being moved. The Palmer village was also refurbished. The fruit is always hand harvested and sorted 3 times. In the vineyard and the vat room before and after destemming. Palmer vinifies using temperature-controlled, cone-shaped stainless-steel vats. This is done on a parcel by parcel basis and by grape variety. The wine is put into barrels immediately after malolactic fermentation, fining with egg whites, racking by gravity.</p>
Tasting Notes	<p>The relatively high alcoholic content of the 2015 vintage is balanced out by a dense tannic structure without any rustic notes, thanks to perfect phenolic maturity of the pips and skins. At this time, this outstanding balance leads Chateau Palmer to believe that 2015 will be in line with recent great vintages, such as 2010, 2009 and 2005.</p>
Cellaring	<p>Drink 2020-2050</p>
Scores/Awards	<p>96 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018 98 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018 95-97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016 97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018 100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018 99-100 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016 98 points / Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018 97-99 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016 18 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016 96 points - Decanter.com - April 2016 97 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017 100 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018 97-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016 96-98+ points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2016</p>

94 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016
17.5+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2016
93-95 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016
96 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016
97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018
94-97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016
98 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018
18.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016
96-98 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016
18 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016
18.5 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016
18 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - June 2016

Reviews

"This is dark and muscular in style, brimming with bramble, warm tar and paving stone notes that are matched by the deep layers of fig, blackberry and cassis fruit. A gorgeous bittersweet chocolate detail adds spine to the finish while violet and iron elements lurk in reserve. Another large wave of fruit and dark earth courses through the finish. Best from 2025 through 2045."

- JM, Wine Spectator

"Bottled relatively late in mid-September 2017, the 2015 Palmer is...Medium to deep garnet-purple colored, it offers vibrant red currants, black cherries, wild blueberries, earth and mineral characteristics to begin, with slowly unfurling floral notes of violets and dried roses plus compelling baker's chocolate and fragrant earth layers. Medium to full-bodied, generously fruited and possessing firm yet very, very fine-grained, mind-blowingly ripe tannins, the multifaceted palate features something of a skip in its step, in terms of freshness, while it goes beguilingly earthy on the finish with some mineral hints. Very classy, elegant and sophisticated, this vintage is downright regal in its juxtaposition between poise and audaciousness. Think 2005 Palmer with a tick more fruit intensity, perfume and passion."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"The 2015 Palmer has a wonderful bouquet with layers of dark cherry, boysenberry, a faint hint of dark chocolate and minerals. There is superb delineation here. The palate is medium-bodied, but this constitutes a decidedly more structured Palmer than I have encountered in recent years, perhaps a little more masculine due to the slightly higher Cabernet content. This is a classic Palmer made by winemaker Thomas Duroux, symmetrical in some way, poised and effortless on the finish. Those who like the more showy Palmer might not warm to this 2015, but this has real class and sophistication, a Palmer that will repay those with the nous to cellar it for 10-15 years. Expect it to reside at the top of my banded score."

- NM, Wine Advocate

"The 2015 Palmer with around 14.1% alcohol, a little higher than usual. It is much more backward on the nose than the Alter Ego and demanded coaxing from the glass, eventually revealing scents of blackberry, cassis, boysenberry, crushed stone and a touch of vanilla pod, beautifully defined with a brooding sense of power. I suspect that this will be no shy and retiring violet when it reaches full maturity. The palate is medium bodied with svelte tannins that caress the mouth on the entry, and it is a voluminous Palmer, not heavy but multifaceted. Black fruits are laced with oyster shell, hints of allspice and crushed stone, delivering a crescendo toward an intense finish that this château has specialized in under winemaker Thomas Duroux. It will require at least a decade in bottle, but I probably agree with the estate that it will last many decades. Superb...but only for the patient."

- NM, Wine Journal

"I am breathless with the dark-berry, lavender and burnt-orange aromas. Some salt. Just so formidable and deep. Stunningly sexy on the palate with a density and power, yet it leaves things so clean and bright. You want to drink it and enjoy it now, but it has the structure to last forever. Drink in 2022."

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"A wine with incredible character and style with black ink and blueberry aromas and flavors. Full body,

Reviews *extremely fresh and structured with riffing tannins. It is muscular and powerful. White pepper, sea salt, mineral, stone character. A wine built for the long term. The making of the new 1961."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Generous, rich and powerful, this is a sumptuous wine. With just a slight preponderance of Cabernet Sauvignon, it has structure as well as clean, clear black-currant flavors. Produced from biodynamically grown grapes, it delivers an explosion of fruit as well as serious tannins. Drink from 2027."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"97-99. Barrel Sample. This wine is structured and extraordinarily dense. Powerful tannins and a hint of chocolate from extraction give the wine concentration. The richness of the wine is right there, just suggesting alcohol. There is freshness at the end that brings a final, delicious lift."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"A really massive step above Alter Ego on the nose. Really fresh and polished. Lovely bramble fruit. Not that dense but really complete and beautifully balanced. Silky tannins. Real drive and lift towards the end. Very Margaux."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Superb bouquet of black fruits with dry spice, tobacco and liquorice. Densely textured palate with incredible backbone: '2015 has all the charm we had in 2009 but more precision to make a serious wine without being severe,' says CEO Thomas Duroux."

- Decanter.com

"There is a real consistency and signature of expression between the Palmer and the Alter Ego this year. It's hard not to be seduced by the exuberance of the vintage once the wine has opened up, but it is extremely well measured. It takes just a moment in the glass before the aromatics start to take off, and a minute more before the flesh gets laid on the bones, layer after layer, from savoury liquorice root to fleshy blackberry and cassis, shot through with a whiff of gun smoke and a saline twist on the finish. A careful focus on phenolic maturity in the vineyards ensures a depth to the texture and a sense of outwards expansion through the palate. In terms of production, there is a 50/50 split between the two wines. Extremely precise, a beautifully accomplished wine. (JA)"

- JA, Decanter.com

"This is extraordinary. The wine is so silky, it is effortless to taste and drink. The fruits paint your palate. But the wine is light on its feet. Sensuous, sexy and racy, the fruit offers a mélange of red and black cherries, plums. In the finish you find a griotte sensation that sticks with you for close to 60 seconds. This perfect mix of elegance and purity should age effortlessly for decades."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Rich in color, the attention-seeking nose pops with truffle, tobacco, black cherries, cigar box, plum and cocoa. Silk and velvet textures with polished tannins, juicy, sweet, fresh, pure plums and a finish that builds as it lingers. This sublime wine...14% alcohol with a pH of 3.85. Currently being aged in 65% new French oak barrels, the wine represents 50% of the harvest, which took place between September 22 and October 7. The second year produced using only 100% biodynamic farming techniques has created one of the great vintages for Palmer of all time! With age, like all the top vintages for the estate, this will prove to be an extraordinary wine! 97 - 98 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and saturated colour; very healthy looking; colour tight to the rim; intense and jam packed on the nose; tight seam of fruit; very pent up ball of fruit here; some violet lift on aeration; great palate – very full; concentrated but with great suppleness to the tannins; this is concentrated; super concentration and power but without any sense of over extraction; excellent length. Drink 2023-2040. 96-98+"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Floral, appealing and remarkably loose knit and open at this young age, this is a very appealing rather than a profound Palmer, with succulent red berry fruit, notes of tobacco and cedar wood and good underlying structure. Needs to put on a bit more weight in barrel. Drink: 2022-30"

- TA, timatkin.com

Reviews

“Traditionally the finest wine of the Médoc after the 1st growths, Palmer slipped a bit in the 1980's but has returned to top form recently, rejoining the super-second mini league alongside Las Cases, Cos d'Estournel, Ducru, Pichon Lalande, etc. The talented winemaker is Thomas Duroux who always produces a pure, smooth and elegant wine with (for the Médoc) a high proportion of Merlot in the blend. Since 2014 the vineyard has been certified biodynamic. The 2015 blend was 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot with a yield of 37 hl/ha from vines averaging 40 years of age. Less than 50% of the vineyard's total production. Vibrant purple colour and an amazingly aromatic nose that fills the room. Blueberry, violets, blackberry and blackcurrant, this nose is both ripe and floral, with just a touch of vanilla pod. The palate is concentrated and ripe with dense fruit, but retains a fleet-footed, svelte mouthfeel as the flavours move from ripe black fruits to more lifted, floral notes. Elegance and subtlety build on the finish with supremely polished, fine-grained tannins. Ethereal and very long.”

- Farr Vintners

“The nose has a fragrant floral freshness the palate brooding richness with the black fruits backed by chocolate and coffee. The tannins are fine the mid palate supple but there is balance with fresher black fruits give a lighter feel on the back palate the finish is long lighter and elegant.”

- Derek Smedley MW

“Subtle, exotic nose of savory middle eastern spices, violets and roses. A wonderful Palmer with both freshness and intensity - the flavors are intense, focused and very deep, complex. There is energy and freshness in this vintage with a wonderful balance and a long finish. A wine that combines power and finesse.”

- JCL, asianpalate.com

“The 2015 Palmer is a wine of total refinement and class. All the elements are wonderfully meshed together, as they always have been from the very start. Dark black cherry, plum, mocha, licorice, spice and leather notes are all seamless in the glass. The tannins are present, but they are silky and pretty much buried by the sheer luxuriousness of the fruit. Palmer is one of the most complete and harmonious wines of 2015. This is a brilliant effort from Thomas Duroux and his team. 2025 – 2055”

- AG, Vinous

“A dark, voluptuous beauty, the 2015 Palmer is just as beautiful today as it was from barrel a few months ago. Mocha, plum, black cherry, tobacco and cedar are fused together in an effortless, racy Margaux endowed with real pedigree. Sweet tannins round out the plush, seamless finish, but they are there. This is a hugely promising Palmer. The blend is 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot.”

- AG, Vinous

“While the second wine from this esteemed Château, Alter Ego, focusses on fruit ripeness, Grand Vin Palmer focusses on phenolic ripeness and this is clearly evident in this elite wine. There is marked concentration, depth and intensity making this Nureyev to Alter Ego's Fonteyn. There is sublime freshness on the nose of this wine. Winemaker Thomas Duroux explained that his careful biodynamic approach might have slowed this wine down and unlike many others which seem fairly precocious and eager, this is a wine stuffed with active energy as opposed to layered with passive energy. I cannot agree enough with this ascertain because this is a Palmer with brooding power and a very long life ahead of it.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com

“One of the gems in Margaux is unquestionably the 2015 Palmer. Possessing more elegance and purity, as well as concentration, than the Alter Ego, it offers up a gorgeous bouquet of crème de cassis, caramelized cherries, charcoal, and graphite, with just a hint of spring flowers in the background. A final blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot that was brought up in 70% new oak, this full-bodied, ripe, incredibly polished 2015 is already hard to resist given its elegance and purity yet should be at its best from 2023-2043. If you have more than one bottle, it's sensational today as well. 2023 – 2043”

- Jeb Dunnuck