

## Château Palmer 2016

CSPC# 791629

750mlx6

14.1% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

47% Merlot, 47% 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, Miaillhe, 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.

### Winemaker

Thomas Duroux

### Vintage

Despite the trying ordeal that spring held in store for us, when the history of this vintage is written, it will be the exceptional quality of Château Palmer's two wines for which 2016 is remembered. It all began with an unusually mild winter; the first buds of our Merlot vines would awake from their winter sleep a week in advance. Soon, though, the vines' growth was subdued by what proved to be an arduous spring. As humid conditions worsened, coupled with cool temperatures, the vineyards became increasingly favourable breeding grounds for mildew. Between 20th May and



<b>Vintage</b>	<p>20th June alone, overall precipitation would reach 130 millimetres! Never since the estate was first cultivated biodynamically had we been faced with such precarious conditions. Yet thanks to the hard work and unflagging commitment of every woman and man on Château Palmer's vineyard team, we finally rose to meet the challenge. The only rays of sunshine in this fickle spring would shine during the week of 6th June. Thus, in the end, the flowering of the vines, that crucial phase of development, took place in the best of circumstances. Yet a long road still lay ahead...</p> <p>In early summer, promising weather conditions began to rekindle hopes. Water shortages, so crucial for grape concentration, would gradually set in during the month of July. Nonetheless, temperatures remained too mild to help make up the delay in the growth cycle. By 10th August, only partial ripening had been attained, at which point we knew the harvest would be a late one. The continued absence of precipitation in July and August soon raised fears that growth would be stunted in the most sensitive parcels. Fortunately, on 13th September, Château Palmer's rain gauge bounced back with 37 millimetres of sorely needed water. Nary a drop would fall again until after harvest, but our smiles had finally returned. Harvest began on 3rd October, thus marking one of the latest debuts in the history of the estate. In the end, the size of the harvest was relatively modest, but the aromatic intensity of the grapes proved to be nothing less than extraordinary. The tannins were powerful and perfectly ripe, compelling us to extract them with confidence, especially for the vats already exhibiting a distinctly "Palmeresque" profile. After these preliminary months of maturing, it's already clear that the equilibrium of our two wines differs markedly from those of previous great vintages. While the alcohol content is perfectly typical, the tannic structure has revealed itself to be no less than outstanding. More than ever, it's the velvety character of Château Palmer's wines that emerges as our distinctive trademark.</p>
<b>Vineyards</b>	<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 Guntz 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>
<b>Harvest</b>	03/10/2016 TO 18/10/2016
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	<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>
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	<p>Stunning. Despite a mild winter, a rainy spring, a moderately warm summer, and thus a late harvest, the quality of the grapes proved nothing less than extraordinary. Sublimating such ripe, powerful tannins is a cellar team's <i>raison d'être</i>. The end result? An exquisite equilibrium, between structure and silk.</p>
<b>Serve with</b>	<p>Chateau Palmer is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift.</p>

Chateau Margaux is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised and grilled dishes. Chateau Palmer is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms and pasta.

**Production** 9000 cases annually  
**Cellaring** Drink 2024-2060  
**Scores/Awards**

**94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2019  
**98+ points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - November 2018  
**95-97 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017  
**98 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2019  
**99-100 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017  
**100 points/Cellar Selection** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2019  
**99-100 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2017  
**17.5+ points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017  
**98 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - October 2018  
**98 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017  
**97 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018  
**97 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2017  
**96 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2017  
**18.5 points** - Farr Vintner - February 2017  
**94-96 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2017  
**97 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019  
**100 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019  
**95-98 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017  
**100 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2019

**Reviews**

*"This is a very solid rendering, with a core of steeped blackberry, black currant and fig fruit flavors that are juicy and well-defined. The back end picks up lots of graphite, tobacco, anise and violet notes while maintaining focus and energy. Shows latent depth as the fruit echoes steadily. Best from 2023 through 2038"*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"The 2016 Palmer is a blend of 47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Petit Verdot. Opaque garnet-purple colored, it slowly glides out of the glass with compelling notes of blueberry compote, warm cassis and kirsch with emerging hints of violets, cigar box, black tea, sandalwood and Sichuan pepper. Medium to full-bodied, wonderfully rich, concentrated and packed with latent energy, the palate literally grows in the mouth, revealing layer upon layer of black, blue and red fruits and tons of floral sparks, framed by super ripe, incredibly fine-grained tannins and finishing with epic length. It's a wine that makes you wanna drape yourself languidly over a chaise lounge, glass of Palmer in hand, sighing with deep satisfaction, "This is so wonderfully Palmer."  
"We had 2009 and 2010, we'll have 2015 and 2016," Palmer's CEO Thomas Duroux told me, alluding to the comparisons being made throughout Bordeaux to the last great pair of vintages. "But of course," he added, "they are two very different expressions." There was some mildew pressure at Palmer in 2016, which is a larger problem at organic/biodynamically managed estates such as this. Subsequently, the crop was a relatively modest 29 hectoliters per hectare, down from an average of say 35 hectoliters per hectare. "It was a milder summer, not too much heat," Duroux further observed. "So, there was not too much alcohol this year and nothing jammy."  
- LPB, Wine Advocate*

*"The 2016 Palmer is a blend of 47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Petit Verdot cropped at 29 hectoliters per hectare between 3 and 18 October. Matured in 65% new oak (my sample coming from a used barrel), the bouquet is perhaps not quite as intense as some of its peers and takes time to click into fifth gear. Eventually it offers tightly wound blackberry, briary and mineral scents; it is very focused, but maybe less extrovert and more classic in style compared to recent vintages. The palate is medium-bodied with a gentle grip on the entry, quite firm in the mouth with slightly tarry black fruit, hints of black truffle developing towards the finish that feels masculine and linear. It has very impressive length, completing what is an intellectual Palmer, one that I suspect will really blossom in bottle."  
- NM, Wine Advocate*

## Reviews

*“Such attractive fruit and alluring ripeness that it draws you in from the get-go. The discreet power here is delivered with a very astute touch. Assorted dark-berry aromas, as well as red plums, abound on the nose. The richness and depth in the mouth is stunning. The tannins are super polished and layered and they draw pristine dark fruit flavors deep into the finish in effortless mode. This is a star of the vintage. A blend of 47 per cent merlot, 47 per cent cabernet sauvignon and six per cent petit verdot. Try from 2024.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“I wrote that the 2015 was incredible, and this 2016 is again. It’s equally structured and powerful as the 2015, yet there’s an underlying intellectual serenity to this wine. You taste it, and you want to know and experience it even more. Full and tannic yet ever so polished and beautiful. Mesmerizing. Made from biodynamically grown grapes.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Powerful tannins and hugely rich fruit balance together in this superb wine. The velvet texture belies the power behind the concentrated, ripe black-fruit flavor, with vibrant acidity giving ample lift. The wine’s structure will ensure aging for many years. Drink from 2024.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Potentially a 100-point wine, this is beautifully ripe and rich, with sweet tannins as well as opulent black fruit tones. A higher than usual proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend gives the wine its density, sophistication and great sense of presence. (RV)”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot. No sulphur dioxide until after MLF. Very dark, velvety look - really bright. Complex and energetic. Not simple and sweet but quite a step change. Feels a little transitional because it's so different and more energetic than the old style. 65% new oak, as always, but the wine can absorb it better. Some bitter chocolate. Lots of sweetness. Energy and freshness.”*

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“As is always the case with Palmer, the richness, depth and silkiness is just so impressive. Sophisticated and well-constructed, with a vertical lift-off, there's a creamy richness on the palate which supports pencil-lead, liquorice, damson, black cherry and slate. I love the smoky cocoa bean finish. Like the Alter Ego, it's a different style this year but no less impressive, displaying width, heft and incredible persistency. It's a wine that's going to age far into the future and is extremely easy to recommend. The highest ever proportion of grand vin was produced in 2016. Drinking Window 2025 - 2042 (JA)”*

- JA, Decanter.com

*“The grand vin represents 65% of production in 2016, the highest ever. It has many similarities in style with the 2001 and 1986, being a classically styled wine full of soft slate, fern, liquorice and cassis, but from the modern era where you can achieve so much more precision. This is a wine that makes you smile from the first sip, and keeps on getting better, caressing you gently across the palate. There is never any let up through the mid-palate, and the biodynamics that have been practiced here for the past few years are clearly paying off. Elegant, utterly silky and precise, the structure is just effortless with reasonably fresh alcohols that are the result of late ripening. A perfect example of the appellation, it has the florality, density and slow tannic pace that means it takes you right along with it as the flavours build. The blend is 47% Merlot, 47% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Petit Verdot. Intellectual without being overbearing and built to age. This is impressive stuff. Drinking Window 2027 – 2050”*

- JA, Decanter.com

*“The 2016 Palmer was bottled in summer 2018 and matured in 60% new oak. This year it has the same proportion of grape varieties as planted in the vineyard. The gorgeous, extremely pure and floral bouquet features intense black cherries, humidior, crème de cassis and crushed violet. It is quintessential Palmer in every way. The palate is medium-bodied with fine structure and density, matched by perfectly judged acidity. Black fruit infused with pencil lead and hints of black olive gives way to a more cassis-like note toward the finish, which displays superb structure. This is a great Palmer, one from Thomas Duroux’s top drawer. 13.5% alcohol. Drink 2026-2070.”*

- JA, Decanter.com

**Reviews** *"If you are seeking sexiness, purity of fruit, silky textures and an incredible blend of freshness, precision and sensuality that can age for decades, you came to the right place. This is just a great wine."*  
- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"A richly-colored, attention-seeker whose nose pops with truffle, tobacco, black cherries, cigar box, plum and cocoa. Silky, velour textures and polished tannins embrace juicy, sweet, fresh, pure plums and a finish that builds as it lingers. This sublime wine was produced from a blend of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 47% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot, reaching 13.1% alcohol with a pH of 3.75. Currently being aged in 65% new, French oak barrels, the wine represents 50% of the harvest, which took place between October 3 and October 18. This is the third vintage that was farmed using 100% biodynamic farming techniques, allowing Palmer to become fully certified."*  
- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Tighter and much more compact at this young age than the 2015 was at the same stage, this is a serious, focused, age worthy Palmer with dense cassis and damson fruit, stylish oak, refined tannins and pithy acidity. "Intellectual," says Thomas Duroux. 2024-35 "- TA, [timatkin.com](http://timatkin.com)*

*"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 Lascases, Cos d'Estournel, Ducru, Pichon Lalande, etc. The talented wine-maker 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. Much of the crop is used for the second label - Alter Ego. The yield is just 29hl/ha this year, with 47% each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and 6% Petit Verdot. Coconut, black cherry, dried flowers and vanilla on an explosive, seductive nose. The palate is rich and intense, with velvet tannic structure enveloping cool, ripe cherry and cassis fruit. Supreme balance and elegance, with great power and length. Mocha and kirsch on the finish bring a smooth, pure and focused length to the wine. Really sophisticated, precise winemaking."*  
- Farr Vintners

*"Bright and fresh the nose has bramble and bilberry the start of the palate light but there is mid depth concentrated fruit the tannins discreet integrated. Sweet and ripe at the back the finish is full of rich black fruits. 2025-42"*  
- Derek Smedley MW

*"The 2016 Palmer was bottled in summer 2018 and matured in 60% new oak. This year it has the same proportion of grape varieties as planted in the vineyard. The gorgeous, extremely pure and floral bouquet features intense black cherries, humidior, crème de cassis and crushed violet. It is quintessential Palmer in every way. The palate is medium-bodied with fine structure and density, matched by perfectly judged acidity. Black fruit infused with pencil lead and hints of black olive gives way to a more cassis-like note toward the finish, which displays superb structure. This is a great Palmer, one from Thomas Duroux's top drawer. 13.5% alcohol. Drink 2026-2070."*  
- NM, *Vinous*

*"Technical Director Thomas Duroux and his team made one of the most brilliant wines of the 2016 vintage. Palmer is simply exceptional. Rich and dramatically sweeping in the glass, the 2016 is breathtaking. All the elements simply fall into place in a wine of mesmerizing beauty. The counterpoint of dark, sumptuous fruit and floral notes makes for an utterly compelling Palmer that will take its place among the estate's finest vintages. Dark cherry, lavender, spice and mocha are some of the many notes that build into a deep, substantial finish that is truly unforgettable. In a word: magnificent! Drink 2026-2066."*  
- AG, *Vinous*

*"Sophisticated and polished from the outset, the 2016 Palmer is utterly captivating. Dark shades of fruit, accented by hints of smoke, leather and discreet French oak open up in the glass, but it is the wines effortless, gracious personality that stands out most. The 2016 literally hovers on the palate with exquisite grace. I can't wait to see how it ages."*  
- AG, *Vinous*

**Reviews** *“The finest vintage I’ve ever tasted from this estate, surpassing the 2009 and 2010, the 2016 Château Palmer is a blend of 47% each of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with the balance Petit Verdot, all of which was brought up in 65% new French oak. This magical effort reveals a saturated purple color as well as a huge nose of crème de cassis, graphite, crushed rocks, and spring flowers, and it develops beautifully with time in the glass. Full-bodied, deep, incredibly concentrated and powerful, it nevertheless just glides over the palate with flawless purity and balance, present, ripe tannins, and a finish that just won’t quit. This is Bordeaux at its most regal and classic. It will be drinkable with just 4-5 years of bottle age and keep for half a century.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

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