

# Château Pape Clément 2015

CSPC# 790277

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety** 53% Merlot, 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 0,5% Petit Verdot, 0,5% Cabernet Franc

**Appellation** Pessac-Léognan

**Classification** Grand Cru Classe Graves

**Website** <http://www.bernard-magrez.com/en/content/chateau-pape-clement>

**General Info** The red wine of Château Pape Clément is a classified growth. The vineyards were first planted in the 13th century by Bertrand de Goth, the youngest son of a noble family from Bordeaux. He was elected Pope in 1305, during the reign of Philippe le Bel, and took the name of Clément V. Château Pape Clément belonged to the Archbishop of Bordeaux until the French Revolution. Wine has been made here continuously for 7 centuries. Château Pape Clément is one of the brightest stars in the extensive range of vineyards Bernard Magrez owns worldwide. Based in Bordeaux, the great owner has made quality his personal battle, his strength in facing the increasing competition in the wine business. Hence, the care lavished on this land to exceptional qualities of which have made Pessac's reputation for over seven centuries. Pruning and leafing according to unusually demanding standards, hand destemming, vinification and maturation in accordance with the strictest rules, all implemented so that Nature can freely express the best she has to offer. With his grand Cru Classé de Graves, Bernard Magrez gives us a rare elegance and strength of which reminds us how unequalled the Bordeaux tradition remains. The production of the white Château Pape Clément has been increased some years ago. It is in general dry, rarely heavy, with spicy notes which are typical for graves from Pessac.

**Vintage** 2015 Pessac Leognan is easily the best red wine vintage for the appellation since 2010. 2015 Pessac Leognan springs from a mild winter and a dry, sunny and warm spring. Bud break took place in the middle of April and the flowering that occurred at the end of May was fast and easy. 2015 Pessac Leognan was like the rest of Bordeaux during the summer as June and July were hot, dry months. Very little if any rain fell in the region. The lack of water blended with the hot, dry conditions in some vineyards caused stress to the vines, which in turn shut down their growth cycle to protect themselves. While this was not a replay of 2003, it looked like the drought was going to cause problems for the growers.

However, the late July rains saved the day for 2015 Graves and Pessac Leognan wines and things began returning to normal. The weather in August was cooler than usual, helping preserve the aromatic potential of the grapes. The rain that fell August 3 and August helped produce grapes that were perfectly ripe and healthy. August ranged from warm to cool temperatures during the day with cold nights, helping the grapes gain much needed freshness. It is also important to note that in Pessac Leognan, the months of September and October were drier than much of Bordeaux, especially in the northern Medoc. In fact, Pessac Leognan actually received much less precipitation than usual on an annualized basis.

**Vineyards** The vineyards today account for 32.5 hectares of the Pessac-Léognan *vignoble*, with three distinct *terroirs* across the estate as a whole. Over a limestone bedrock which originated in the Oligocene and Miocene eras, there are the gravels that typify the region as a whole, as well as areas of clay and sand. The vineyards to the west are sandier, with a deep seam of gravel, whereas as those to the east have an increasingly significant amount of clay, and those to the north of the estate the soils are particularly thin and poor. The red vines, which cover 53 hectares, are 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 46% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot, 1% Cabernet Franc. Here

**Vineyards** knowledge of the *terroir* is important, as the former variety is planted mainly to the gravelly areas whereas Merlot is selected for those soils with more clay. The majority of these vines have more than 27 years of age, and many are over 40.

**Harvest** From 25th September to 15th October 2015



**Maturation** First sorting in the vineyard, manual harvest in crates. Manual destemming berry by berry and use of a sorting table. Transfer into 30-70 hl wooden vats by gravity flow. Low temperature pre-fermentation maceration. Manual punching down. 30-40 day maceration. The wine is run off into French oak barrels by gravity flow. Malolactic fermentation in oak barrels. Aging for 18 months in oak barrels.

**Tasting Notes** A wine of good density ruby red, with brown, mahogany, biscuit hints. It has maintained its luster and clarity. The rim is fairly thick. The tears are fine, clear, abundant and regular. At once expressive, forthright and complex. There are notes of all families of fragrance: fruit, flowers, and spices. Taste: The attack is forthright, round and suave, soothing even. The intense aromas initially recall the complexity of the nose. There is leather and lightly charred wood, and roasted notes. The beauty of the vintage is revealed by its elegance rather than its full-flavor. The wine has an attractive aromatic range with a finish of remarkable elegance.

Blend:

**Cellaring** Drink 2022-2035

**Scores/Awards**

**95 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018

**93-96 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016

**96 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018

**95-97 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016

**96 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018

**99 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018

**97-98 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016

**95 points / Cellar Selection** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018

**93-95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016

**17.5 points** - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - October 2017

**16.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016

**95 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017

**96 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018

**95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 2017

**94-96 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016

**94-96 points** - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2016

**88 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016 (score only)

**16.5 points** - Farr Vintner - March 2016

**03-92 points** - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016

**89 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016

**96 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018

**93-96 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016

**97 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018

**17.5+ points** - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016

**93-95 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016

**19 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016

**18 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016

**17 points** - Gault & Millau (score only) - June 2016

**Reviews**

*"Ripe and lush, with flashy anise, apple wood and mocha notes forming the frame and ample cassis, cherry paste and plum sauce flavors at the core for balance. Shows lots of sweet spice details through the finish, with the apple wood edge holding sway for now. A bold, glossy version that will please fans of the style after some time. Best from 2022 through 2035."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Big, broad and overt in style, with a thick frame of espresso and roasted apple wood around a core of dense plum paste and cassis flavors. Strides along authoritatively, as melted licorice and fruitcake notes fill in on the hefty finish. Shows more style than terroir but pulls it off. Score range: 93-96"*

- JM, Wine Spectator

*"The 2015 Pape Clement is blended of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc, matured in 80% new and 20% one-year-old French oak barrels for 18 months. Medium to deep garnet-purple, it opens with profound notes of crushed red and black currants, black cherries and cassis with touches of mocha, baking spices, menthol and lavender plus a hint of new leather. Medium-bodied, firm and concentrated with tons of*

**Reviews** *tightly wound black fruit and earth layers, it has a grainy frame and refreshing lift on the long finish.”*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

*“The 2015 Pape Clement is a blend of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc. It was cropped at 40 hl/ha between 25 September and 15 October with berry by berry destemming. It has a drop-dead gorgeous bouquet that continues the ever-greater finesse that has been imparted into this Pape-Clément in recent years. It is extremely precise, almost crystalline. The palate is underpinned by fine tannin, pitch-perfect acidity, a sense of cohesion and harmony that is outstanding. There is not a hair out of place on this barrel sample and it will doubtless evolve into one of the best wines this state has produced since the 14th century, when Bertrand de Goth was planting its first vines. This comes highly recommended - a Pape-Clément that will reward those who can resist temptation and cellar this wine for 10+ years. Tasted on four separate occasions”*  
- NM, Wine Advocate

*“The 2015 Pape Clement, a blend of 53% Merlot, 46% Cabernet Sauvignon and a “few” bunches of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, has a very pure and seductive bouquet with cranberry, blackberry, cedar and graphite, plusher than its peers but well defined with a sense of succulence that Pape Clement often conveys in great vintages. The palate is medium-bodied with saturated tannin, finely boned Pessac-Léognan with a complex, lightly spiced finish laced with tobacco and white pepper, a hint of clove on the aftertaste. This is a terrific Pape Clement that is showing much more sophistication and class than say, the 1998 Pape Clement that I tasted alongside. However, it deserves a decade in bottle to show what it can really do. Chapeau!”*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*“The clarity to this wine is impressive. Wealth of dark-plum and black-fruit essence not to mention orange citrus. Everything is dialed up to the limit here but then dialed in on the palate. Such impressive depth and suave, ripe, fluid tannins that deliver impressive length. Great wine. Such polish. Superb. Try from 2022.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Shows amazing depth of fruit with fabulous polish and length. Electric acidity. Full body, very integrated and refined tannins. Phenolic finesse shows here. Great finish. It lasts for minutes. Best young Pape Clément I have tasted. Grows in the glass.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Dense and concentrated, this wine is fully structured and also has great fruit. It is dense, showing the ripeness of both tannins and fruit in this vintage. It will power through its development to be a very fine wine from 2025.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“93–95. Barrel Sample. Powerful and with a sense of dark extraction, this is a concentrated wine. It has chocolate as well as dark plum flavors that offer a dense counterpoint to the fresher aftertaste”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Deepish crimson. Seductively ripe damson fruit. Rich and chewy, full-bodied and firmly structured for the long term. Much better balance than some previous vintages I have tasted. (JH)”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.coM

*“Very dark. Sweet yet fresh - very beguiling initially but maybe a little overdone. Intense and almost as though concentrated. Rather dry on the end. Hard work on the end.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“Clear reductive environment, saving the best nose for the consumer and not for en primeur. A lovely richly textured wine –really velvety with gorgeous purity to the damson and black cherry fruits”*  
- JA, Decanter.com

## Reviews

*"With a solid depth of color, it is easy to find the layers of dark, deep, sweet, ripe, lush, velvety, juicy fruits. Full bodied and concentrated, the wine shows sensuous textures and a smoky, dark cherry, licorice, truffle and chocolate edged finish. This is good now, and with time, it has all the right stuff to age into an even better wine. Give it at least 12 years in the cellar."*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Dark, deep and intense, there is ample, smoky, chocolate covered, black cherries, plum and espresso in the nose to keep you busy, Full bodied and fat on the palate, the finish keeps on going with all its fruit. "*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Deep, dark hues lead you to a chocolate covered, black cherry, smoke, caramel and coffee bean set of aromas. Fat and rich with power, density and lush textures on the palate, this wine was produced from a blend of 56% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Petit Verdot. Reaching 14.2% alcohol with a pH of 3.85, the picking took place from September 25 to October 15. The grand Vin represents 60% of the harvest."*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*"Deep and saturated look; ripe fruit; some earth; lifted and attractive; glossy but real substance; caressing palate; nicely done; black cherry; some oak but wonderful ripe fruit and tannin. Plenty of extract and density. [56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 14.5% alc]. Tasted UGCB 7/4/16. Drink 2020-2032. 94-96+"*

- JW, [winewordsandvideotape.com](http://winewordsandvideotape.com)

*"Owner Bernard Magrez has made serious investments here since the late 1990's and recent vintages have been outstanding thanks to extremely low yields, labour-intensive sorting of grapes and modern wine-making techniques. Quality bears no relation to the weedy wines of the early 1980's and before. The 42 hectares are planted with 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Merlot. This year there is more Cabernet in the final blend (60%) with 40% Merlot. Deep and viscous purple in the glass, this wine has a very smoky, toasty, creamy nose of blackcurrants and blackberries. The palate leads with kirsch and barbecued black fruits as the tannins grip the sides of the mouth. This is a blockbuster with lots of power, with the retention of enough acidity and graphite lift to find a smoky balance on the long finish."*

- Farr Vintners

*"Ripe on the nose the palate has a fleshy richness supple in the middle. There is balance with bramble freshness behind the rich ripe black plum and although full and ripe on the back palate the finish is lighter and fresher."*

- Derek Smedley MW

*"Round, charming and quite supple in texture - clearly well-made but not very complex or detailed. This is a full bodied, generous red that can be enjoyed young and should age well over the next 10 years."*

- JCL, [asianpalate.com](http://asianpalate.com)

*"One of the stars of the vintage, the 2015 Pape Clément is fabulous. Dark and beautifully resonant, it captures all the natural radiance of the year in the Pape Clément style. Super-ripe black cherry, plum, mocha, chocolate, new leather and spice effortlessly fill out the wine's ample frame. Soft contours and an open knit, inviting personality are just two of the reasons the Pape Clément is going to be virtually impossible to resist, even in the early going. The blend is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. Tasted two times. 2022 – 2035"*

- AG, [Vinous](http://Vinous)

*"The 2015 Pape Clément is stunningly beautiful. Rich, ample and powerful, the 2015 exudes richness. As always, Pape Clément is one of the most overt wines in Pessac, but the move towards picking a bit earlier gives the wine more energy than was the norm a decade ago without fundamentally altering the style Bernard Magrez and Michel Rolland favor. Dark red cherry, plum, menthol, licorice, blood orange and exotic spices are all very much alive. The purity of the fruit here is striking. This is one of the best recent vintages of Pape Clément I have tasted. The 2015 is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot, done in about 80% new oak. Tasted four times."*

- AG, [Vinous](http://Vinous)

**Reviews** *“Massively inky and powerful, but ever so moreish and chewy, this is an example of a potentially over-the-top wine which manages to keep its feet on the ground and capture the essence of the vintage and also its property very accurately.”*  
- MJ, matthewjukes.com

*“As with the white, the 2015 Château Pape Clément is up at the top of the hierarchy and is a tour de force in Red Bordeaux that should be snatched up by readers. Coming from a 50-hectare parcel of the gravelly soils and harvest between September 25th and October 15th, it’s a blend of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc that saw a long maceration (30-40 days) and 18 months in 80% new French oak. With a deep ruby/plum color and awesome notes of currants, black cherries, truffles, chocolate and graphite, this beauty hits the palate with a massive, full-bodied, opulent, sexy, yet never heavy style. With terrific concentration, perfect balance, and ripe tannin, as well as plenty of oak, give bottles 4-5 years of cellaring and enjoy over the following 2-3 decades. Tasted three times. 2023 – 2053”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

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