

# Château Fleur Cardinale 2020

CSPC# 814411

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

<b>Grape Variety</b>	77% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon
<b>Appellation</b>	Saint Emilion
<b>Classification</b>	Grande Cru Classe in 2006
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://fleurcardinale.com/en/les_vins/chateau-fleur-cardinale-2019/">https://fleurcardinale.com/en/les_vins/chateau-fleur-cardinale-2019/</a>
<b>General Info</b>	The estate was bought in 2001 by Florence and Dominique Decoster, and it has benefited from major investments which have made Château Fleur Cardinale one of the top names of the appellation. It is located to the east of the village of Saint-Émilion, on one of the high points of the appellation and it extends over 20 hectares. With its great value for money, and showing great consistency in its quality, Château Fleur Cardinale was promoted to "Saint-Emilion Grand cru classé" in 2006.
<b>Winemaker</b>	Jean-Philippe Fort from Rolland Laboratory consults.
<b>Vintage</b>	2020, with its cold, rainy spring, and a record dry summer, was a year of climatic contrasts. After 5 days of much-needed rain, which enabled the grapes to reach optimal ripeness, the signal was given for harvesting to start!
<b>Vineyards</b>	The vineyard is planted in a clay-limestone soil in the middle of the plateau on a pleasant late producing terroir. The two properties owned by Florence and Dominique Decoster extend across a 23.5-hectare area for the Château Fleur Cardinale, and a 4-hectare area for the Château Croix Cardinale. The two vineyards are planted on clay-limestone soil in the middle of the hillsides, and they enjoy an identical harvest, notable for its 75% dominance of Merlot together with 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Surface area in production: 44.46 acres (18 ha); Density of plantation: 6000 vines/hectare Average age of vines: 35 years old; Yield after sorting: 30 hl/ha The vineyard is farmed using organic, self-sustainable farming techniques. In 2013, Fleur Cardinale was awarded their certification by the Environmental Management System (S.M.E.).
<b>Harvest</b>	From 17 September to 2 October 2020. Yields: 43hl/ha. 100% by hand in small crates. First sorting in the vineyard, de-stemming of the bunches, sorting by densitometry and then a final manual sorting is done Vat-filling by gravity.
<b>Vinification &amp; Maturation</b>	Vinification takes place in 20 small, thermoregulated, stainless steel vats. The number of vats is equal to the various parcels of vines. This allows the vinification to be done on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The vats range in size from 21 hectoliters up to 52 hectoliters. Made in a mix of tanks and wooden vats. There are 10 wood vats of 500L. Vatting time is 28 days. Malolactic fermentation takes place in 100% new oak barrels and in tank. Aged for 12-14 months in Old Merlot and old Cabernet Franc barrels, plus two 750-litre Tava amphoras
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	From new winemaking facilities at this Grand Cru Classé château comes this 75% Merlot dominant blend that also includes Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Rich and sublime aromas of hedgerow wild fruit—blackberries and raspberries—as well as layers of earth. In the mouth this is a layer cake of juicy surprises, including acidity with flavors of clementines, a dark mocha/aniseed matrix mid palate and a finish with a hint of cherries and mint. Rich, juicy acidity and firm though unobtrusive tannins. Once opened, this wine will not last long. A fun though seriously crafted wine—pair with lamb and mint sauce, even oysters with tabasco, or a dessert of carrot cake with cream cheese frosting.
<b>Serve with</b>	Chateau Fleur Cardinale is best paired with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Fleur Cardinale is also good when matched with Asian dishes, rich fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta.
<b>Production</b>	105,000 bottles made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2025-2045.



**Scores/Awards** **93-95+ points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021  
**94 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023  
**96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - December 2022  
**95-96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021  
**17 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021  
**94 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021  
**94 points** - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - December 2022  
**95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023  
**93-95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021  
**92 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021  
**92 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023  
**91-93 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021  
**93 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - December 2022  
**93-94 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021  
**93 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023  
**92-94 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021  
**17.5+ points** - Matthew Jukes - April 2021  
**93 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2021  
**93 points** - Yves Beck - January 2023  
**92-93 points** - Yves Beck - June 2021  
**93-95 points** - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021  
**95 points** - Terres de Vins (score only) - May 2021  
**95 points** - Vert de Vin - May 2021  
**92 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - September 2022  
**92-93 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - April 2021  
**16.5 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021

**Reviews** *“Composed of 77% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, with an alcohol of 14.5% and a pH of 3.57, the deep purple-black colored 2020 Fleur Cardinale bursts from the glass with powerful notes of crushed blackberries, stewed black plums and Morello cherries, plus suggestions of star anise, pencil shavings and black truffles. The medium to full-bodied palate is chock-full of softly textured, juicy black fruits, countered by fantastic tension, finishing with great length and loads of earthy layers.”*  
 - LPB, Wine Advocate

*“Attractive aromas of blueberries and mulberries with graphite, dark licorice, and crushed stones. Dark chocolate, too. Full-bodied. Impressive quality to the tannin structure that starts gently and glossy and continues to build, gaining power throughout the palate. Deep and dense with a velvety dark-fruited core. Really long, tense, and persistent. 77% merlot, 18% cabernet franc and 5% cabernet sauvignon. Try after 2026.”*  
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Vivid and lively with blackberries, earth, and some flowers. It’s full and layered with tannins that spread across the palate. Broader form to this young Bordeaux. Lots of tannins at the end.”*  
 - JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“Full bottle 1,345 g. Cask sample taken on 7 April. QR code gives a ton of background information such as that this is the first vintage vinified in their new cellars. They are experimenting with microvinifications and have bought two large 'amphorae'. The assemblage of the 2020 is 77% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. They are reforesting, in the RSE sustainability programme and collaborating with Franco-Senegalese poet Souleymane Diamanka. Ain't modern technology grand?! Very dark purplish crimson. Mellow, appetising, layered nose. Really very distinctive and luscious with those tannins very beautifully disguised beneath interesting, cashmere-textured fruit with some mineral notes on the end. Very successful. It certainly isn't soft, but you could almost drink it tonight. Exciting and flattering. Lots of energy.”*  
 - JR, JancisRobinson.com

*“A ton of depth and body to this wine, you feel the cool blue fruit of a later-ripening terroir, plenty of tannic grip and bite, curls up with graphite, cigar box, liquorice root and a tiptoe balance of slate and baked earth. Plenty of juicy acidity on the finish, this is precise and elegant with a punch, and continues the run of successful vintages at Fleur Cardinale. A yield of 43hl/ha. 100% new oak. New cellar just finished up at the estate.”*  
 - JA, Decanter.com

**Reviews** *“Well balanced, with momentum and energy from beginning to end, thoroughly enjoyable wine that layers on pristine black and blue fruits with crushed rock, sage, and fennel spice. A 23.1ha estate in one of the cooler sections of St Emilion, owned by the Decoster Family, with Jean Philippe Fort consultant. 43hl/ha yield. 100% new oak. First year in new cellar.”*

- JA, [janeanson.com](http://janeanson.com)

*“Deeply colored, the wine struts its chocolate-covered, black cherries, plums, licorice, flowers, and espresso character with ease. Rich, full, lush, and long, the layers of fruit express length, purity, balance, and complexity, leaving with a long, supple-textured, fruit-packed finish. As I wrote when tasted in barrel, this is the best Fleur Cardinale I have tasted in a few years. The wine blends 77% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink from 2024-2045.”*

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

*Dark in color, the wine is all about its dark red fruits, licorice, smoke, wet earth, and tobacco leaf characteristics. On the palate. The wine is rich, lush, ripe, and voluptuous, with a finish that packs in layers of espresso, black fruits, licorice, and dark chocolate. Full-bodied, concentrated and long, this is the best Fleur Cardinale I have tasted in a few years.”*

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

*“The 2020 Fleur Cardinale has a ripe and opulent nose with black cherries, kirsch, and sous-bois; violent and inkwell touches emerge with time. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins and fine delineation, though it hasn't entirely captured the complexity I felt it could have achieved from barrel. Still, it should age well in bottle, and a second tasting displayed a bit more nerve.”*

- NM, *Vinous*

*“The 2020 Fleur Cardinale has a well-defined and intense bouquet of black cherries, crushed strawberry, star anise and light floral scents, gaining more composure as it opens in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent tannins, graphite-tinged black fruit and a thumping, powerful finish that leaves a peppery aftertaste. This will require 3–5 years in bottle just to shave some of its edges and is likely to need several years in the cellar. Tasted twice with consistent notes.”*

- NM, *Vinous*

*“The 2020 Fleur Cardinale is packed with dark fruit, chocolate, new leather, menthol, and generous sweet oak. The 2020 has gained in body and complexity with élevage, exactly what is supposed to happen over time. Moreover, the 2020 has plenty of energy to balance its more exuberant leanings.”*

- AG, *Vinous*

*“The 2020 Fleur Cardinale is elegant and refined from the first taste. Bright red berry fruit, spice, blood orange and cedar lend terrific brightness. In 2020 Fleur Cardinale is elegant, polished, and restrained. All the elements come together so gracefully. I imagine the 2020 will flesh out a bit over time. Today, it is a bit restrained, but that is not at all a bad thing. A second bottle was even better. The 2020 could very well turn out to be a jewel of a wine.”*

- AG, *Vinous*

*“A solid step up, the Grand Vin 2020 Château Fleur Cardinale checks in as 77% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. This 22.5-hectare estate has been in the Decoster family since 2000 and consists of mostly clay over limestone soils and is located in the Saint-Etienne de Lisse region of Saint-Emilion. From healthy yields of 43 hectoliters per hectare, with malolactic fermentation in tank followed by 13 months in 90% new French oak, it has a juicy, pure, medium to full-bodied style that shows the classic, elegant style of the vintage beautifully. Offering lots of cassis-like fruit, notes of truffly earth, spring flowers, and violets, well-integrated acidity, and tannins, and just a beautifully balanced mouthfeel, it's going to benefit from just 2-4 years of bottle age and will evolve nicely through 2040. It's another beautiful wine from this estate.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

**Reviews**

*"I tasted the 2020 Château Fleur Cardinale from three separate bottles, all of which showed brilliantly. Offering lots of red and black fruits as well as dark chocolate and rocky, earthy minerality, it's a full-bodied, firm yet promising wine with terrific overall balance and length as well as purity of fruit. Short-term cellaring is the name of the game here, but it's going to shine for at least two decades. It's well worth seeking out."- Jeb Dunnuck*

*"Very impressive and layered with a darker tone than expected and lovely, sooty oak notes as well as rich, earthy back-bone. The dark fruit is very lusty and precocious, and it looks plush and deep. I am very taken with this wine, and it wins a correspondingly impressive score."*

- Matthew Jukes

*"Deep dark ruby garnet, opaque core, violet reflections, subtle ocher edge. Black forest berries with a delicate tobacco underlay, nuances of cherries, fresh blueberries, a pleasant note of precious wood. Juicy, good complexity and freshness, integrated tannins, mineral-lemony touch on the finish, salty finish, has length and potential for development."*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*"The nose is aromatic and offers power, a nice finesse of the grain, power (in control), complexity as well as intensity. It reveals notes of luscious wild blackcurrant, wild blackberry and slight notes of small berries associated with touches of violet, lily, small red berries (strawberry, cherry) as well as hints of plum blossom, d spices, graphite, discreet hints of tobacco and a subtle hint of pepper (in the background). The palate is fruity, all-in precision/accuracy, racy and offers juiciness, tension, aerial power, a certain purity of the fruit, minerality, a nice definition of the fruit as well as a juicy/fresh fruit /brilliant, precision, purity, delicacy, and controlled power. On the palate, this wine expresses notes of bright blackcurrant, purple plum and slight notes of crushed wild blackberry associated with touches of raspberry, wild berries, violet, plum blossom, and hints of tonka bean, cardamom, sweet blond tobacco, and discreet hints of bourbon vanilla bean. Good length. The tannins are precise, structuring and well managed."*

- Vert de Vin

*"Fleur Cardinale advances a little more towards its terroir each year. It gains in authenticity, in character. The bouquet, for example, reveals chalky nuances while the palate is distinguished by its finesse and fine-grained tannins. Only the fruity expression, at the taste level, is set back and not persistent enough. A passage in the cellar will help to optimize all this. A well-defined Fleur Cardinale with an optimal symbiosis between freshness and density."*

- Yves Beck

*"Lots of finesse in this bouquet which reveals subtle fruity and mineral nuances. On the palate, the wine is well supported by fine-grained tannins and a refreshing tension, right through to the finish. A balanced wine that could show a little more race, nerve, depth but which stands out for its elegance."*

- Yves Beck

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