

Alter Ego de Palmer 2021

CSPC# 771453

750mlx6

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot.

Appellation

Margaux

Classification

3ème Cru Classé

Website

http://www.chateau-palmer.com/alter_ego.php?millesime=2012&langue=en

Analysis

pH: 3.76

Sustainability

Respect for the unique terroir that breathes life into its wines is the central component of Palmer's philosophy. Environmental sustainability and protection of the flora and fauna indigenous to the region is an obligation taken seriously by the team here, and the estate was certified 100% biodynamic in 2017

General Info

Château Palmer is named after a British officer, Major General Palmer, who settled in Bordeaux in 1814. It is the top estate of the Margaux appellation after Château Margaux. It is located in the centre of the Margaux appellation, and its vineyards (Cabernet Sauvignon 55%, Merlot 40%, Cabernet Franc 5%) lie on a sparse gravel plateau. Palmer is classified as a 3ème Cru Classé and was established as a Super Second long before Léoville Las Cases, Ducru-Beaucaillou and Pichon-Lalande, and in some years (1961, 1966, and 1983) it is as good as any wine in Bordeaux. Palmer's relatively high Merlot content makes Palmer the closest in style of any leading Médoc properties to the great wines of Pomerol and St-Emilion.

Winemaker

Thomas Duroux, Winemaker. Eric Boissenot consults.

Vintage

While the summer put the vines on a path to greater growth, a sunny September enabled us to pick grapes bursting with promise. 2021 is a vintage in which the talents of our team made the difference, demonstrating the passion and cohesion of a collective effort.

While January heralded a cold winter, February promised kinder temperatures and nourishing rains. The return to dry weather fostered consistent budding across the vines. The spring frosts from April and May slowed growth. Flowering eventually began on May 28, in a warm, dry climate. The fruit set accelerated, and a handful of our most earliest ripening Merlots were affected by coulure. Rainfall was followed by a sharp rise in temperatures in June, leading to explosive vegetative growth. Shortly after a torrential storm on June 19, the arrival of mildew required meticulous monitoring.

A half-hearted summer until August 15 exacerbated vine growth, sparking fears of low numbers of grapes. In late August and early September, four weeks of dry weather thankfully dispelled a lot of the water and the ripening process resumed as normal, just in time for the harvest. Threatened by botrytis, the Merlot harvest started on September 24 while the Cabernets finished on October 15. Despite more modest yields than expected, the harvest was healthy with ripe grapes, and the tasting revealed a remarkably fine tannic texture.

The assemblages were finalized in early December, reflecting an ever-clearer perspective of the Château Palmer plots. This 2021 batch offers exceptionally fulfilled wines, rooted in moderation and harmony, harking back to the vintages of the previous century.

Vineyards

The Palmer vineyards cover 55 hectares in the commune of Cantenac. Most of the plots are concentrated on a plateau of thin gravel from the Günstz period on the top of the rises of the Margaux appellation. The gravely soil consists of stones with complicated, poetic names, like lydite, quartzite, and chalcedony, which come down to us from the distant past – from the Quaternary era, to be precise. Swept by the flow of the Garonne River, pieces of rock from the Pyrénées were deposited along the banks of the Gironde estuary. Moving inland, a number of geological folds form a series of parallel rises. The Palmer plateau is situated on these first gravely terraces along the edge of the estuary. As the saying goes in Bordeaux, the great terroirs overlook the river.

Harvest

From 24th September to 15th October 2021



Vinification/ Maturation	In the vat room, the fermentations proceeded smoothly, and the blending was carried out over two sessions in mid-November, for the most part during the run-off. Marked by the year's eminently favourable climate, the 2020 vintage of Château Palmer is on par with 2018 in terms of structure, boasting sunny Merlot, fine and powerful Cabernet, and a terroir of brilliant clarity. The batches chosen for Alter Ego are then blended and put into barrels to age for 18 months. The fruitiness and aromatic intensity are preserved by the use of a moderate percentage of new oak barrels (25% to 40%).
Tasting Notes	Alter Ego 2021, more marked by Cabernet Sauvignon than in previous vintages, magnificently reflects the essence of the Margaux appellation, between subtlety and aromatic persistence. Influenced by an Atlantic vintage, it fully respects its terroir, revealing a grain of beautiful finesse and a persistence in the mouth revealing its potential. Made this year from a blend of more Cabernet Sauvignon than usual, this is a delicious, approachable wine where the Cabernet has the leading role traditionally played by the Merlot (which suffered from the frost) with good alcohol, soft, round cassis like fruit and ripe, full tannins. Good power and lively, crunchy flavours of autumn fruit, this is so attractive and well-made, with excellent structure and a fine, fresh acidity on the finish.
Serve with	Chateau Palmer 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	6,000 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2027-2041
Scores/Awards	<p>88 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2024</p> <p>92 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p>91-93 points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p>87-89 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com (score only) - June 2022</p> <p>93 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p>93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p>89-90 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p>90 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>90-92 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>93 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p>92-94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p>90-92 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p>17.5 points - Matthew Jukes - August 2022</p> <p>93 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022</p> <p>92 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p>95 points - Vert de Vin - July 2022</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Offers a good, albeit light-bodied, core of black cherry compote, while black tea, anise and violet notes hang in the background. The finish is relatively gentle, with just a wisp of cedary grain. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2026. 6,000 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Bursting with aromas of blackberries, mint, violets, and pencil shavings, the 2021 Alter Ego de Palmer is medium to full-bodied, rich and layered, with impressive density and ripeness for the vintage, its deep core of fruit framed by sweet, powdery tannin. Like the grand vin, it's a very strong effort this year."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2021 Alter Ego de Palmer is a somewhat unusual blend, in that it's fully 60% Cabernet Sauvignon this year, the estate's Merlot having suffered in the April frosts. Exhibiting aromas of cherries, sweet berries and plums mingled with hints of spices and pencil shavings, it's medium to full-bodied, ample, and polished, with a charming, seamless profile founded on beautifully refined structuring tannins. Tasted twice."</i></p> <p>- WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Savory black and salted-olive character with oyster shells and black licorice. Fine, almost powdery yet firm tannins. Medium body. Excellent density and structure for the vintage. Second wine of Palmer."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p>

Reviews

"Cigar box, tobacco, cedar and cinnamon - really gorgeous savoury tones with smoked earth and dark chocolate mingling with the black fruits. High acid, touching on sharp and slightly sherbety but there is a lovely chew to the fruits, mouth filling, mouthwatering and appealing with the freshness from the higher percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. Smooth and delicate with a layer of seduction in the richness of the fruit and the overall depth. Wide flavours in the mouth, expansive and open with bright strawberry and red cherry juice at the end, so sweet and succulent and moreish. Not so exuberant but full of easy enjoyment, a successful second wine in 2021."

- GH, Decanter.com

"Deep plum in colour, with silky cassis and plum fruits on the attack. This is savoury, with sappy acidity that is mouthwatering rather than biting. This isn't exuberant and doesn't have huge flesh to the fruit, but it is a truly enjoyable and engaging wine that is one of the '2nds' of the vintage. More black fruit in this than the Palmer in many ways. Higher Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend than usual after frost affected the Merlot, giving it more of a classical Margaux balance than you find in most vintages of Alter Ego, which tends to be generous. 3.76ph."

- JA, janeanson.com

"Crushed stones, flowers, red with black cherries and a marine influence sets the tone in the perfume. On the palate, the medium-bodied wine is soft, silky, and vibrant, making the perfect backdrop for all of the wines sweet, ripe plums, mint and spice notes in the refined finish. The wine is a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot, making this the highest percentage of Cabernet ever used in any vintage of Alter Ego. Drink from 2025-2040."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Flowers and black cherries on the nose open the wine. On the palate, the medium-bodied wine is soft, juicy, fresh, clean, and forward, with a polished, spicy, cocoa-dusted currant and plum finish. The wine is a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot, making this the highest percentage of Cabernet ever used in any vintage of Alter Ego. Drink from 2023-2038."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2021 Alter Ego, which contains slightly more Cabernet than usual and was bottled in late July, has manifested a little more composure on the nose since tasting it from barrel: black fruit, touches of melted tar and that background scent of shucked oyster shell. The palate is medium-bodied with a juicy opening, yet there is backbone and a mineral-driven finish behind this Alter Ego. Impressive in terms of persistence, don't be afraid to tuck this away in your cellar for three or four years."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2021 Alter Ego has quite a penetrating bouquet with an accentuated marine/oyster shell aspect that combines with the vivid blue and black fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with crunchy black fruit, certainly a more structured Alter Ego than usual with a fine line of acidity and graphite/cedar notes furnishing the finish. This will require some bottle age, but it should mature extremely well."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2021 Alter Ego is a bright, savory wine driven by Cabernet Sauvignon from light, sandy soils. Intensely aromatic, the Alter Ego is a bit clenched today, but that should not be an issue in a few years' time. Dark red plum, mocha, new leather, spice, and cedar build in the glass, lifted by bright acids and a kick of blood orange that adds vibrancy."

- AG, Vinous

"Palmer's 2021 Alter Ego is fabulous. Dense and rich in the glass, with positively explosive energy, the 2021 dazzles from start to finish. A rush of dark cherry, plum, spice, blood orange, menthol and licorice infuse the palate with tremendous intensity. Hints of rose petal and pomegranate appear later to round things out. The 2021 possesses tremendous textural richness that is evident from the very first taste. The aromatics alone are especially present today."

- AG, Vinous

Reviews

“The 2021 Alter Ego, based on 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot, is a terrific second wine that should easily be outstanding. Medium-bodied, fresh, and lively on the palate, with good acidity and fine tannins, it has darker, almost blue fruits, notes of flowers and violets, terrific balance, and the fresher style of the vintage front and center.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“While they lost 20% of the crop due to the inclement conditions, resulting in a 22 hl/ha yield across the estate, it might have been 5hl/ha more without the frost. I feel for biodynamic estates in vintages like these, and while yields are always low, it is often the case, certainly among the top producers, that the wines are rather delicious. This is a super-precise Alter Ego, and while winemaker Thomas Duroux was worried, he would end up with a hole in the palate and hard tannins, he has made a wine that is entirely the opposite. Petit Verdot acts as a marriage counsellor, keeping the other two grapes together, and the results are astounding. Soothing, silky, refined, and crunchy, this is a lesson in trusting your vines and also your instinct. Thomas thinks the timing of the ripening of the grapes contributes to the lovely, green floral note found in the finest wines. He describes this as “not unripeness, but just-ripeness”, and who am I to argue. 17.5”

- Matthew Jukes

“Deep dark opaque ruby core, purple hues towards the rim. Fine herbal savouriness, dark berry fruit, ripe plums, a hint of cassis, a touch of fresh coriander. Juicy, elegant, ripe black cherry fruit, fine tannins, blackberries and nougat, mineral, due to the vintage with an unusually high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“(60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot) The nose is fruity and reveals juiciness, precision, and a certain sincerity. There are notes of fairly ripe/full-bodied wild blackcurrant, crushed wild strawberry and, more slightly, crushed red berry, violet, combined with fine touches of cherry blossom, liquorice, discreet hints of fresh berries, a subtle hint of minerality and terroir. The palate is fruity and shows minerality, precision, accuracy, tension, straightness, a nice mineral/saline structure, aromatic purity. On the palate this wine expresses juicy/chunky blackcurrant, pulpy/fresh raspberry and more lightly blackberry notes combined with hints of fresh/juicy strawberry, lily, racy minerality, fine hints of star anise, almond, toastiness and a discrete hint of chocolate (in the background). Good length. The tannins are precise, mellow, and powdery. Very fine chewiness on the finish/persistence.”

- Vert de Vin
