

---

# Château Palmer 2020

CSPC# 791629

750mlx6

14.1% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**  
**Appellation**  
**Classification**  
**Website**  
**Sustainability**  
**General Info**

48% Merlot, 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot

Margaux

3ème Cru Classé

<https://www.chateau-palmer.com/en/file/2489/download?token=VfvZJIPV>

Biodynamic, Organic

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 Frédérick 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**  
**Vintage**

Thomas Duroux

At the end of February, the onset of the vines' budburst almost two weeks ahead of schedule signaled the launch of what would be a very early vintage. March brought heavy rainfall, which made working the soil considerably more difficult, only to be followed by a damp spring with mild temperatures, conditions all too conducive to the spread of mildew.

Throughout April and May, the vineyard would require superlative care to keep us on course for a healthy harvest. In mid-May, a return to warm, dry weather would set the stage for an ideal flowering period, raising hopes of a lovely vintage indeed.

In June, the summer weather arrived and settled in to stay. By the end of July, the berries had begun their colour change under a bright and constant sun, allowing for an early synthesis of polyphenols. Although the heatwaves of August subjected the vines to a good deal of hydric stress, intense thunderstorms brought a welcome breath of fresh air: the Merlot grapes gorged themselves while the Cabernet, which weren't as far along in their cycle, retained their small size. The return to dry weather at the end of August fostered the



<b>Vintage</b>	<p>concentration of the tannins and marked a promising conclusion to the ripening process. The harvest began on September 15th, with the Merlot picked in the cool of dawn and the Cabernet gathered between the drops of thundershowers. The harvest ended two weeks later on September 29th. 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.</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 Günst 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>	15/09/2020 TO 29/09/2020
<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.</p> <p>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. This vintage, for the first time, the estate used all native yeasts for the fermentation. The blending process took place before malolactic fermentation this year, which is not very common. Winemaker Thomas Duroux is also decreasing his sulfur additions, with his first addition of SO<sub>2</sub> occurring relatively late in the processing this year—not until the end of blending at the end of February. The wine is put into barrels immediately after malolactic fermentation, fining with egg whites, racking by gravity</p>
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	<p>Complexity. That of a terroir, expressed in the wines of Château Palmer. Parcel by parcel, the estate's teams must nurture it daily. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot, protected and enriched by nature in all its diversity, develop notes of fruit, flowers, and spice. Never exuberance – on the contrary, with each passing year, ever greater harmony, and length omnipresent. Aromatic richness, powerful tannins, and between them – velvet.</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. 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.</p>
<b>Production</b>	10,000 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2027-2065
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>94 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023  <b>97 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023  <b>97+ points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023  <b>98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023  <b>98 points / Editor's Choice</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2023  <b>97-99 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021  <b>18+ points</b> - James Lawther, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021  <b>98 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023  <b>99 points</b> - PK, Decanter.com - April 2022  <b>97 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021  <b>97 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - February 2023  <b>97 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - December 2022  <b>97 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - December 2021  <b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023  <b>95 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021  <b>97 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - December 2022</p>

**Scores/Awards** **95 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023  
**97 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023  
**97 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023  
**95-97 points** - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021  
**98 points** - Vert de Vin - May 2021  
**97 points** - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021  
**95-97 points** - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021  
**98-100 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022

**Reviews** *"Nicely packed, with a mix of black currant, plum and blackberry compote flavors at the core, all supported by bay leaf, tobacco, and roasted cedar notes. Shows good energy throughout, along with a swath of freshly plowed earth and an underlying hint of cast iron on the finish, providing range and character. Just misses the tension and drive to be classic. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot. Best from 2029 through 2039. 10,000 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Aromas of raspberries, cassis and cherries mingle with hints of violets, raw cocoa, and hints of truffle in a perfumed bouquet. The 2020 Palmer is a full-bodied, layered, and seamless wine that's deep and concentrated, with a vibrant core of beautifully pure and perfumed fruit, lively acids, and ultra-refined tannins. This suave but authoritative Palmer is one of the high points of the vintage. Thomas Duroux continues to produce singularly textural, powerful wines at this historic Margaux property, where he has introduced a new focus on parcel-by-parcel viticulture and vinification, as well as pioneering biodynamic methods, over the better part of the last two decades. Today, cover crops are the order of the day, much of the vineyard isn't hedged, and fruit trees are being planted in the rows as part of an agroforestry initiative. The core of Palmer derives from the plateau around the château, where soils consist of a millefeuille of sandy gravel, clay-rich gravel, sandy gravel again and then a meter of pure clay. It's old-vine Merlot, planted on these soils, that lends Palmer its richness and flesh. There are other parcels dotted around the appellation, of course, including a large block of coarser gravel surrounded by trees, not far from Bel Air Marquis d'Aligre."*  
- WK, Wine Advocate

*"The 2020 Palmer, composed of 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 48% Merlot, and 4% Petit Verdot, is deep garnet-purple in color. It is completely shut down on the nose to begin, needing a lot of patient coaxing to bring out scents of preserved cherries, creme de cassis, blueberry compote, and cedar chest, followed by wafts of lilacs, clove oil, and fertile loam. The medium to full-bodied palate delivers mouth-coating black fruit preserves layers with a rock-solid, grainy texture and just enough freshness, finishing long with loads of savory and earthy nuances."*  
- LPB, Wine Independent

*"Great aromas of blackcurrants, black truffles, blueberries, lead pencil and hints of cedar. Full-bodied and powerful with fantastic tannin backbone giving it great length and power. Muscular. Toned. Flexing. This needs time."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Massively rich already with density and opulence, this powerful wine is half-and-half Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The dark tannins presage aging for many years. \*Editors' Choice\*."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"This wine's floral perfume is matched by generous tannins that surprise by their strength. The fruit flavors offer a mix of black and red berries. They are finely structured and concentrated, balanced by tightly woven acidity. Made from organic and biodynamic grapes. Barrel Sample: 97-99."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 48% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot. Cask sample. The Merlot provides the broad sweep and touch of sweetness on entry, the Cabernet the fine but punchy tannins that drive the wine. Lots of life and persistence, the tannins fine-grained and fresh. Clear potential. (JL) 14.1%. Drink 2028 – 2050."*  
- JL, JancisRobinson.com

## Reviews

*"An irresistible wine from Palmer in 2020, sumptuous and voluptuous, open, and appealing yet with all the elements so very carefully set in their place. Rich and evocative on the nose, dark and brooding with softly perfumed violet and rose aromas but it's the texture that captivates on the palate with soft and seductive velvety tannins that immediately expand in the mouth giving power but also refinement. Mouthwatering and juicy but rich at the same time, so approachable you could drink this right now and just marvel in its nuance, structure, and ease - and the oak integration is seamless. I love the liquorice bite and chalky sensation alongside vibrant black fruit though a sense of heat and menthol, liquorice freshness at the finish reminds you this is a serious wine that is built to last. This really carries the Margaux beauty and charm. A long life ahead but once opened this will disappear out of the bottle instantaneously."*

- GH, Decanter.com

*"Glorious finesse, depth, density, and length. An amazing wine that deserves to be a first growth. Such vivid expression of bright fruit and floral aromatics, seamless integration of the 60% new oak and a palate with racy texture that approaches perfection. The tannins need several years to settle, and that time will increase the wine's complexity as it approaches its optimal drinking window – and it has many years ahead."*

- PK, Decanter.com

*"Vivid colours, and the aromatics grab hold straight away. This is intense and concentrated, elegant, balanced, and classical, all about the texture which is velvety and seductive with softly-grained tannins. Moves oh so slowly through the palate with dozens of layers to get hold of. The overall feel is precise, slow, and seductive, with appellation and estate signature at every turn. Sappy, hawthorn freshness, rosemary, redcurrant, tobacco, cigar box and dark chocolate shavings on the finish. 3.77pH, 78IPT, 55% of overall production, with 13% press wine. Drinking Window 2028 – 2044."*

- JA, Decanter.com

*"Depth, and nuance, with striking liquorice, crayon, cigar box and dark chocolate from the first moment. Combines grip and freshness, understated power, serious yet vivid character to its blue and black fruits, with mint leaf, spiced red pepper, pomegranate, incense, and tobacco leaf. Precise, slow, and seductive, packed with signature Palmer identity."*

- JA, janeanson.com

*"Still in barrel, intense and concentrated, this is sappy, fragrant, full of juicy raspberry and blueberry fruits, with violets, peonies, chocolate shavings and liquorice bud. Muscular but silky tannins rippled and confident. Huge promise, well balanced and seductive. To be bottled July 2020. 55% of overall production in the 1st wine, with 13% press wine, a mix of barrels and large sized oak casks for ageing, 60% new oak. Harvest September 15 to 29."*

- JA, janeanson.com

*"Violets, lilacs, and roses covet their spot in the perfume before you find all of its black, and red cherries, black currants, blackberries, cigar wrapper, and earthy notes. While the perfume is intoxicating, it is on the palate where the magic happens due to its silky, sexy-textures, and layers of pure, sweet, ripe, delicate, yet concentrated layers of fruit. The tannins are the text-book description of refined, leaving you with a seamless finish showcasing its purity, and sensuality for over 50 seconds. I have a sneaking suspicion that with time, my score is going to rise, as it feels like there is a lot more going on here that is still holding in reserve. Drink from 2027-2065."*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*"The 2020 Palmer was bottled in July with the lowest SO2 ever. It has an almost identical bouquet to the one I encountered from barrel last year, with black cherries and iodine, lovely floral scents, quintessentially Palmer from every angle. The palate is medium-bodied with svelte tannins, plush yet structured with an underlying spidity that comes through towards the finish. This just doesn't put a foot out of place - fabulous."*

- NM, Vinous

**Reviews** *“The 2020 Palmer is exceptional. Soft, seamless, and ample, the Grand Vin caresses the palate with stunning depth and intensity. Super-ripe black cherry, licorice, cloves, menthol, and chocolate meld together in the glass. As always, Palmer is made from blocks on gravelly/clay soils (as opposed to the more gravelly/sandy soils for Alter Ego) which gives the wines the breadth and creaminess to match its exotic personality. There is a restrained exuberance here that is so appealing.”*  
- AG, Vinous

*“The flagship 2020 Château Palmer checks in as 48% Merlot, 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the rest Petit Verdot that's aged one year in 50-60% new barrels before moving to foudre. It's another ripe, sexy, yet incredibly pure wine from this team offering loads of black and blue fruits, some iris flower, spice, iron, and obvious mineral nuances, full-bodied richness, velvety tannins, and a great finish. It's easily one of the most opulent, sexiest wines from the Médoc, and while it's already just about impossible to resist, it deserves 7-8 years of bottle age and will evolve for 40+ years.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Ethereal herbal-spices, very ripe-fruity dark berry aromas, impeccably clear, elderberry and blackberry, wet gravel. The palate has an enormous, incredibly fine tannic load embedded in plump, ripe, fruit, integrated acidity, a powerful body with volume and texture, straight yet opulent, saline notes, and tobacco on the finish. A commanding, compelling and convincing wine.”*  
- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*“The nose is fresh, fruity and offers concentration, a fine grain, concentration (elegance) as well as a fine straightness as well as complexity. It reveals notes of small bright/fresh black berries, griots, violet, small notes of wild strawberry associated with touches of wild red ripe fruits, blueberry as well as fine hints of cardamom, dark tea, cherry flower, graphite, a discreet hint of dark chocolate, toasted and an imperceptible hint of cumin. The mouth is fruity, fresh, balanced, all-in precision and offers juiciness, minerality, a nice definition, a certain darkness as well as gourmandize, a nice energy, a discreetly tight structure, an aromatic purity, plenitude/harmony, a nice complexity, a multi-layer side and energy. On the palate this wine expresses notes of juicy/pulpy cassis, bright Boysen berry, small notes of wild strawberry associated with touches of violet, juicy/fresh blueberry, purple bright plum, racy minerality (nearly discreetly iodized), cornflower, Badiane, zan as well as a discreet hint of tabaco, cardamom and liquorish stick. The tannins are elegant, precis, massive but delicate and soft. A very nice/good bitterness in the finish/persistence. notes of chocolate and a hint of caramelization/ ginger sugar in the background/persistence. A very rich wine, in freshness, all in subtlety and harmony.”*  
- Vert de Vin

*“The wine already appears very open and complete, ripe and unctuous fruit with sweet plum, cassis some herbaceous sage and mint with tobacco notes, oak feels very well integrated, and the palate has an impressive polish and definition, rounded and supple, almost a Burgundian texture, yet remaining distinctly Margaux with great complexity and very long persistency.”*  
- AL, Tasted.com

*“Closed, tight, dense to smell, blackcurranty, warm, almost northern Rhône smoky and Côte-Rôtie-like! A rich, generous, ample wine, with a suggestion of Rubens to its profile, yet contained and fresh, too, and very fine in tannin. Notably large-scale Palmer. Ripe, generous, juicy, mouth filling, powerful, and spicy, with great length of flavor, something almost licoricey in its taste, long and warm and vital ... and Rhône-like, and with great resonant length, too. A most individual, grand, and immediately seductive expression of the vineyard. 2030–50+”*  
- MS, The World of Fine Wine