

## Château Fleur Cardinale 2015

CSPC# 790548

750mlx12

15.0% alc./vol.

CSPC# 814411

750mlx12

15.0% alc./vol.

### Grape Variety

75% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon

### Appellation

Saint Emilion

### Classification

Grande Cru Classe in 2006

### Website

<http://www.fleurcardinale.com/en/>

### General Info

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.

### Winemaker

Jean-Philippe Fort. Michel Rolland consults.

### Vintage

2015 St. Emilion has it all going on. Frankly, I could sum this article up rather quickly by just saying, "2015 Saint Emilion Rocks!"

Across the board, 2015 St. Emilion was lucky. Vineyards in the cool clay soils that harvested late made stunning wines. But so, did the estates on the limestone plateau, in the gravel soils and properties on the more sandy terroir were also quite successful. That does not mean buyers do not need to be choosy. Some estates pushed the pedal to the metal a bit too far. There are overly extracted wines, and wines that are aging in too much new oak. But generally speaking, the level of quality here is homogenous. 2015 St. Emilion is the product of a hot, dry summer, with drought conditions. April was hot. June was hotter. July was scorching, and the lack of water exacerbated those conditions. What made this unique was that this level of heat is usually experienced later in the growing season. That was not the case with 2015. Fortunately, the rains in August arrived in the nick of time, providing enough nourishment to allow the growth cycle to continue.

### Vineyards

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

### Harvest

100% hand-harvested from 5-20 October 2015

### Maturation

Once in the vats, cold maceration at 5° takes place over 5 or 6 days followed by alcoholic fermentation then warm maceration for 2 to 3 weeks. All the pumping over is done by gravity, which avoids "stirring up" the musts and "stressing" the yeasts. The fermenting cellar was built ecologically and is equipped with 22 small thermo-regulated stainless-steel vats. This means the vinification can be done by plot, while in the ageing cellar the wine can be aged 12.5 months in barrels of new French oak (the wood comes from the Forests of Tronçay, Bertranges, Jupille and Limousin). 100 % new French oak barrels

### Tasting Notes

The wine displays a deep, dense-colored hue, while on the nose there are powerful ripe fruit aromas mingling with floral notes. Feminine in style, the wines have a seductive, rich mouthfeel, underpinned by elegant, silky tannins. The finish is long and harmonious, promising very long ageing potential in bottle. These specific tasting characteristics, immediately recognizable to its growing number of followers, are the hallmark of Chateau Fleur Cardinale.

### Serve with

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.



**Production** 9,583 cases made  
**Cellaring** Drink 2022-2032  
**Scores/Awards** **93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018  
**90-93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016  
**90 points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018  
**90-92 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016  
**92 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018  
**96 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018  
**90 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2017  
**16 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016  
**91 points** - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2016  
**94 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 2017  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016  
**93 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - May 2016  
**93 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018  
**90-93 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016  
**94 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018  
**92-94 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016  
**15.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016  
**16 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016

**Reviews** *"Delicious dark fig and boysenberry confiture flavors run from start to finish here, with a graphite spine embedded along the way. Flashes of anise, tar and singed mesquite add range. Not shy but has the cut to pull it off. Best from 2022 through 2032. 9,583 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Shows very pretty fruit, with boysenberry and raspberry confiture notes rolling along, picking up hints of anise and fruitcake. There's lush toast and velvety structure, but the energy is good enough to let it all play out harmoniously. Score range: 90-93"*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"The 2015 Fleur Cardinale is a blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon matured in 100% new oak barrels for 13 months. Deep garnet-purple in color, it has a nose of fragrant violets, cedar chest and rose hips over a core of chocolate-covered cherries, plum preserves, and blueberry pie. The medium to full-bodied palate is rich and plush with plenty of layers and great length."*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

*"The 2015 Château Fleur Cardinale is a blend of 70% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon matured in 100% new oak. It offers sweet dates and figs tincturing the dark cherry and blueberry fruit on the nose. Heady perhaps, yet there is more delineation here than I have discerned in other vintages. The palate is full-bodied with lush ripe black cherry fruit, blueberry and cassia coming in behind, fanning out towards a plush finish that just needs a little more precision to come through."*  
- NM, Wine Advocate

*"The 2015 Fleur Cardinale has a very pure bouquet with red cherries, boysenberry jam and violet aromas that are neatly integrated with the new oak. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannin and layers of ripe black and red fruit, but fortunately there is the acidity to maintain freshness and the silky finish is very seductive. It will require 4 or 5 years in bottle, but this is a Fleur Cardinale that should age with style."*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*"Super-rich baking spices across ripe dark plums in a very suave and attractively styled nose. The palate has incredible depth and succulently seductive, fleshy plum flavors. Wow. Try from 2022."*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Bold and fruity, this wine is rich with smooth tannins and a fine ripe texture. Powered by its structure and its dark fruits, it is a wine for serious aging. Drink from 2022."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

- Reviews** *“Blackish crimson. Very sweet - too sweet? Smells of fermented blackcurrant pastilles. Vieux jeu! But there is a bit of freshness here. Some liveliness and drive on top of pretty ripe fruit.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “One of the latest to harvest in St-Emilion. Rich, plush and modern – oozes fruit. Tannins are ripe and firm with chocolate notes from the oak. Successful in that seductive, come-hither style”*  
- JL, Decanter.com
- “We are stepping up a gear with this wine from the late-ripening side of the plateau. It is showing extremely well but is still very young. One of the more interesting wines to taste in bottle, because the final blend was only selected in March 2017. Expect seductive, well fleshed out fruit. Contemporary in style and extremely enjoyable. Consultants are Jean-Philippe Fort and Jean-Luc Thunevin. (JA) “*  
- JA, Decanter.com
- “Is there a better wine for the money in St. Emilion today? I don't think so! This sexy little beast is loaded with juicy dark fruits, chocolate, licorice, espresso, and plums. This should offer pleasure early and age for years as well.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “It's the texture that reels you in and rolls you over. A lavish, satiny cloud of luscious fruits, flowers, coffee bean, juicy plum liqueur and sweet black cherries coated in chocolate keep you involved with this wine. Concentrated, rich and round, the wine was produced from a blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Reaching 14.5% alcohol with a pH of 3.47, the wine is aging in 100% new, French oak barrels.*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Lovely, well defined red with lifted cassis and red berry fruit along with violets and sweet spices. Balanced, elegant and fairly long.”*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com
- “The 2015 Fleur Cardinale is terrific. Exotic and flamboyantly ripe, it exudes richness and depth in all of its dimensions. Blackberry jam, grilled herbs, mocha, leather, and menthol are all amped up in a dramatic, full-bodied wine that is long on personality. As always, Fleur Cardinale shows the more opulent side of Saint-Émilion. A burst of red cherry jam, spice, new leather, spice, lavender, and French oak punctuates the unctuous finish. Tasted three times. (AG)”*  
- AG, Vinous
- “The 2015 Fleur Cardinale has been a bit inconsistent en primeur, but my most recent example suggests the wine may be settling down a bit. Ripeness is pushed to the edge in a dark, voluptuous Saint-Emilion endowed with superb depth and intensity. The flavors are inky and jammy to the core, with plenty of blackberry preserve, menthol, licorice, plum, dark spice and chocolate notes that flesh out on the wine's sweeping, ample frame. The 2015 is currently aging in 100% new French oak barrels. The Decoster family prefers a relatively short 12 months in oak for Fleur Cardinale. Taking the wine out of oak at the right time will be critical in ensuring the 2015 retains the seductive charm it has today. Tasted five times.”*  
- AG, Vinous
- “The 2015 Château Fleur Cardinale is beauty in the vintage and checks in as a blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon brought up all in new oak. Offering sensational notes of black cherries and currant fruits, toasty oak, graphite, and licorice, it's medium to full-bodied, concentrated, and gorgeously pure and elegant on the palate. It has fine tannin emerging on the finish and is made in a straight, structured, classic style. Give bottles a year to two and it should drink beautifully over the following 15+. I was able to taste this wine three separate times and, surprisingly, it showed best from a bottle purchased here in the US. It has the purity of fruit that's the hallmark of the vintage and is a gem, readers should seek out. This wine is an exclusive of American Jeffrey Davies.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck