

Château Fleur Cardinale 2016

CSPC# 744977

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

74% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, 8% 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

Caroline Decoster

Vintage

2016 St. Emilion did not get off to a good start. Frankly, the initial part of the growing season started off wet, and cloudy. The massive amount of water in the vineyards and cooler temperatures set things back. Vignerons already knew 2016 Saint Emilion would be a late vintage. Bacchus must love Bordeaux because at the beginning of June, the rain stopped, the sun came out and the flowering took place during one of the few breaks in the rain. At least now, growers had a glimmer of hope. The quantity was going to be there, but would the quality come as well? The official start of summer changed everything. The rains were gone and sunny, warm summer days with the all-important shift to cold, nighttime temperatures arrived. Now, growers needed to decide how much, or even if they should deleaf. The vignerons that were careful not to remove too many leaves, for fear of too much sun made the right choice. Indian summer conditions continued. But as the summer wore on, the extreme dryness of the 2016 Saint Emilion vintage began to have an effect on the vineyards. Young vines shut down or died. The older vines were in danger of shutting down their growth cycle as well, to avoid starvation. But September 13 and September 14 brought about 44mm of rain, the perfect amount of moisture was delivered to the thirsty vines, and at the exact, opportune moment! The continued cold nighttime temperatures kept everything in check and growers were able to wait as long as they wished, for the grapes to achieve full maturity. Another shot of rainfall took place the night of September 30, or the morning of October 1, (depending on your point of view) and it was off to the races! The 2016 St. Emilion harvest conditions could not have been better. Some growers reported 125 days of hang time. Other produces reported spending 4 weeks picking their fruit. And why not as conditions were perfect with warm sunny weather and an extended growing season.

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

Harvest from 13- 25 October 2016. Yields: 35 hl / ha.

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



Maturation	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	Deep purple with purple hues. Intense, complex bouquet, revealing mineral and fruity notes. Cocoa bean, blackberries, blueberries. Silky, full-bodied appetizer. The body has fat, fruit and balance thanks to a beautiful symbiosis between tannins and structure. Beautiful fruity intensity. The tannins appear slowly and have a very fine grain. They are in symbiosis with the structure that gives freshness and vigor. A great success with promising potential.
Production	8,333 cases made.
Cellaring	Drink 2020-2040
Scores/Awards	<p>92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018</p> <p>92-95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2017</p> <p>91 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - November 2018</p> <p>92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #230 - April 2017</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2018</p> <p>94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2017</p> <p>92 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2019</p> <p>89 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 2018</p> <p>17- points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2017</p> <p>92 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - October 2018</p> <p>92 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2017</p> <p>95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2017</p> <p>94 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2017</p> <p>90 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>93 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - January 2019</p> <p>92-95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2017</p> <p>95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2019</p> <p>94-96 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2017</p> <p>17-18 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - April 2017</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"Good brambly energy leads off here, with a mix of cassis, bitter cherry and plum puree flavors entwined with red licorice and floral notes. The juicy finish pulls everything together. Best from 2021 through 2034. 8,333 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Well-endowed, with dark plum and blackberry puree notes forming the core, while a hefty dose of licorice-accented toast frames everything. Lush mouthfeel, though there is some energy rippling underneath. The fruit is copious and alluring, though this leans to the power/extraction side of the ledger. Score range: 92-95"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The deep garnet-purple colored 2016 Fleur Cardinale (composed of 74% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon) offers up bold scents of Christmas cake, fried Indian spices, dried mulberries and preserved plums with nuances of balsamic, mocha and lavender. Full-bodied, rich and firmly textured with grainy tannins, it has loads of savory layers and great length."</i></p> <p>- LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2016 Fleur Cardinale is a blend of 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon aged in 100% new oak. Now this is a more restrained take for Fleur Cardinale, very pure and refined with red cherries, wild strawberry and light cassis notes, the oak neatly integrated (better than the 2015). The palate is medium bodied with a gentle grip on the entry, a fine bead of acidity, crisp and structured with a tightly wound finish that suggests that it will need four or five years in bottle. I suspect this will surpass the 2015 Fleur Cardinale - this is very fine."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Quite earthy and savory on the nose, the fruit only emerging slowly. However, on the palate, this has a very attractive fleshy quality and a moderately dry, long finish of some real sophistication. Easy to drink now but will hold. A blend of 74 per cent merlot, 18 per cent cabernet franc and eight per cent cabernet sauvignon."</i></p> <p>- JS, JamesSuckling.com</p>

Reviews *“A dense and layered red with blackberry and blueberry character. Hints of stones and minerals. Full body and chewy tannins. Serious potential.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“Dense and full of dark fruits, this wine has a solid structure and big tannins. Smoky and ripe with juicy, opulent berry flavors, it offers power and concentration. The wine needs to soften over many years before it reaches its full potential. Drink from 202”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“This generous and fruity wine, the equivalent of a third wine from this property, is richly structured and has firm tannins. The structure goes along with the full black-fruit flavors and acidity to give a wine that has good potential. Drink from 2021.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Dark crimson. Fresh, quite vital nose. Pretty dense and with a finish that is much more dry than sweet. Quite noble and ambitious rather than a quick route to sweet oaky stardom. Real structure here. Throbs on the end.”

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“The grapes are sourced from a lovely vineyard owned by the Decoster family, located on cooler soils to the east of the appellation, where the late harvest of 2016, through to 25 October, is not unusual. There's plenty to enjoy here, with bitter chocolate, fresh menthol notes and rich, tight tannins. It has well expressed cassis and blackberry flavours and a silky texture. 2024- 2040.”

- JA, Decanter.com

“Dominique and Florence Decoster know how to make textured, complex, silky wines that err on the side of big and bold. It's a style that has some natural tempering in 2016, and there is some mouthwatering salinity on the finish. The mid-palate is closed down right now, and the tannins are sizeable. 35hl/ha yield from 23.5ha planted to 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Aged in 100% new oak. (JA)”

- JA, Decanter.com

“Luscious textures with purity of fruit, this wine is all about the chocolate-covered plums and black cherry with their licorice and floral accents. The tannins are soft, the texture is velvety, and the dark red fruits, anise, smoke, cocoa and earthy personality really shine in the finish.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“An attractive, beautiful St Emilion red with supple, ripe tannins, vibrant, fresh mixed berry fruit and freshness. Balanced, succulent with well-managed, very high tannins. April 2017.”

- JCL, asianpalate.com

“The 2016 Fleur Cardinale has a riper, more ostentatious bouquet than the Croix Cardinale, without the same delineation and poise. The palate is ripe and generous on the entry, coating the mouth in pastille-like black cherry and blueberry fruit, and a little heady in style, just missing some delineation on the finish. Fine, though it does not match the promise it showed in barrel. Side by side, I prefer the Croix Cardinale. Drink 2023-2038”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2016 Fleur Cardinale is a sumptuous wine. There is no shortage of richness or volume here, that much is obvious. Sweet tobacco, leather, espresso and cherry abound. The 2016 is exotic and flamboyant in style, and yet the new oak is overdone to the point that the early signs of oxidation are already present. I very much like the intensity here, but the reality is that the 2016 could have and should have been an even better wine.”

- AG, Vinous

Reviews *“The 2016 Fleur Cardinale is utterly magnificent. Rich and sumptuous on the palate, it brings together luxurious, super-ripe fruit and striking aromatic freshness to balance things out. This is a stunning vintage for Fleur Cardinale in which all the elements come together to yield a complete, deeply satisfying and delicious Saint-Émilion. Jean-Philippe Fort is the consultant. Tasted two times.”*
- AG, Vinous

“A blend of 74% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, and the balance Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2016 Château Fleur Cardinale spent 14 months in new French oak. Deep ruby/purple-colored, with a stunning nose of smoked black fruits, classy oak, violets, and camphor, this beauty hits the palate with full-bodied richness, beautiful purity, ripe, present, polished tannins, and a great finish. It's a beautiful wine from this tip-top estate that has the class to keep for two decades or more.”
- Jeb Dunnuck
