2022 DOWN INTO THE EARTH

Photography: Olivier Metzger & Nathalie Mohadjer

A FEW DAYS AFTER THE START OF THE HARVEST, we tasted the first vats of Merlot and realized that the wines in this vintage would be different to anything we had expected.

In our experience, dry, scorching summers produce powerful, bright, expressive wines. And while Château Palmer and Alter Ego 2022 both embody these characteristics, they also have a certain harmony, delicate nature and freshness that continue to surprise us even as we introduce them to our friends across the world.

But why?

Winegrowing has changed significantly over the last 15 years. Palmer's soils are alive, the organic matter is stable, and the roots run deep. Our vineyard plots are more than 40 years old on average, and we no longer trim the tops of our vines. The high temperatures in June helped them to prepare, while the rains at the start of the summer almost certainly made a big difference.

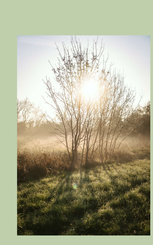
All these factors played a role, of course. But the vineyard has retained a certain mystery that we may never be able to explain entirely.

The X factor, perhaps?

— THOMAS DUBOUX, CEO OF CHÂTEAU PALMER

"ALTHOUGH WE WERE EXPECTING THE EFFECTS OF THE CLIMATE TO CARVE OUT A PATH OF DESTRUCTION, THE TERROIR REMAINS THE UNDISPUTED MASTER IN THE EXPRESSION OF OUR WINES' COMPLEXITY"

AFTER A DANP LATE FALL, a moderately rainy winter brought an alternation of warmth and cold to the vineyard. The vintage launched on March 22 with the homogeneous budding of our Merlots. From April 2 through 5, spring opened with a series of black frosts that arrived earlier than in 2021, and which had a limited impact on the vines' growth and the rate at which the buds opened. The rapid-fire warmth that followed gave rise to very strong growth, with rapid flowering starting on May 18 in a hot, dry context.



IN LATE JUNE, welcome storms broke a first heatwave that already heralded a scorching summer with no significant rain until mid-August. The threat of mildew abated while water scarcity set in. Despite the heat and drought, the first signs of veraison appeared in early July. However, our youngest vines bore the brunt of temperature spikes above 104°F (40°C) between July 17 and 18. The rains in mid-August proved beneficial, and the grapes finished ripening in consistently hot conditions.

THE HARVEST BEGAN ON SEPTEMBER 7 for a month-long race. With overall grape weight down by a quarter, the skins revealed a bold tannic presence. Driven by a well-developed phenolic maturity, the fermentation was fluid and offered a near-miraculous balance. Standing as testament to the clarity of the Palmer terroir, the winemaking team chose to vinify everything in 100% new oak after just two seasons. Despite a contrasted climate, this 2022 vintage bears the promise of powerful wines, a precise texture, and a harmony capable of holding its own.

CHATEAU PALMER
Merlot 46%
Cabernet sauvignon 51%
Petit verdot 4%

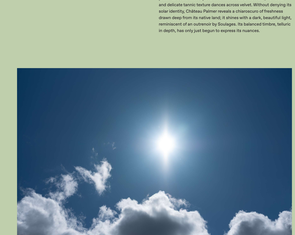
ALTER EGO
Merlot 51%
Cabernet sauvignon 43%
Petit verdot 6%

HARVEST DATES
From 07 september to 06 october 2022

YIELD
22 hl / ha

ALTER EGO 2022

The radiance is recognizable in an instant. This vintage's sunny appeal is concentrated in the grapes' generous flesh. Yet the most moving aspect of Alter Ego 2022 is its harmony. The assemblage offers a pitch-perfect rendition of the earth from which it was born: the light, Margaux soil, shifting and combining to form the finest of matters. Bringing its life a floral character and a powdery tannic structure. Rooted steadfastly in its terroir, this Alter Ego opens in a display of intense refinement.

CHATEAU PALMER 2022

At the smallest movement of the glass, the rich fabric of this Château Palmer 2022 immediately heralds a singular creation. The palate welcomes an explosion of fruit in black and blue: the suave and delicate tannic texture dances across velvet. Without denying its solar identity, Château Palmer reveals a chiaroscuro of freshness drawn deep from its native land. It shines with a dark, beautiful light, reminiscent of an outmeuve by Soulages. Its balanced tritine, telluric in depth, has only just begun to express its nuances.