

Château Cantenac Brown 2012

CSPC# 744982

750mlx12

13.6% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot

Appellation

Margaux

Classification

Third Growth. Troisieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

Website

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

General Info

Cantenac-Brown estate once formed part of Boyd-Cantenac, founded by Irishman Jacques Boyd in 1754 and later passed on within the family to Scottish socialite John Lewis Brown - who unfortunately became bankrupt. Designed by Brown in a traditional Tudor style, the château was host to the grand parties the owner was renowned for, highlighting his love of good wines. Sold in 1843 to a banker (Gromard), the owner in 1855, when the estate was granted a Grand Cru classification. Cantenac-Brown, also building the striking brown-brick château. Hard times were around the corner (phylloxera, war, depression) and by 1968, the estate was quite ready for the overhaul the Du Vivier family gave it. Rejuvenation continued under AXA Millésimes (they bought in 1998) and is ongoing today under British businessman Simon Halabi. 150 years later the Simon Halabi family has given new impetus to the estate with the ambition of raising it to the highest echelons.

Vintage

Afterward, it is always easy to explain qualities of a vintage: At first, the 2012 vintage was to be difficult: whether our oceanic climate would have been forgotten in the last few years, we've been definitely reminded of our location, which is indeed rather good to produce great quality wines, but sometimes also quite humid.

The vineyard had seldom needed such an amount of work, and all along the season, we kept going all through the vineyard. On the first 2 weeks of July, to compete the lack of sun, over 140 people came to "écharder" 100% of the vineyard.

End of August, as we wanted to definitely homogenize the maturity, it's been decided to "clean" clusters from each single still green and pink berry, in order to only keep the best.

Finally, thanks to such a precise work and naturally low yields, maturity was reached only 1 week later than usual.

Vineyards

The 54-hectare Bordeaux wine vineyard of Cantenac Brown sits on gravel and sandy soils. Planted to 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, the average age of the vines are 35 years of age. The current blend in the vineyards shows an increase in Cabernet Franc. The terroir is gravel and sand. The vines are planted to a density of 8,500 vines per hectare. Yields are high, averaging 55 hectoliters per hectare. The estate takes a sustainable approach to their Left Bank vineyard farming techniques. This approach means only plant-based fertilizers are used.

Harvest

Each single day, vine stock after vine stock and bunch by bunch, vintners made even better from what Mother Nature had given. Even if some rains at the end of September raised some doubts, the knowledge and experience of our technical team made it possible to keep cold blood. We started harvesting Merlots on October 1st, and finished Cabernets Sauvignons on October 17th. Even if botrytis had been seen in the vineyard, it didn't disturb our decision on what lot to harvest and when. Deleafing and optimized sun exposure of the clusters have been particularly favorable.

Vinification

All grapes have been sorted carefully: First by hand, cluster by cluster, on tables in front of the vat room. Then sorted again, berry by berry, between destemmer and crusher, also by hand or through optical sorting machine. Only good grapes entered



Maturation	into the fermentation vats. We got cheered up by the first pumping overs. First juices were deep colored and had soft tannins. And after ageing and tastings, relief changed to enthusiasm. 53% of the harvest went into the wine. After blending, the wine is aged for 12 -15 months in oak barrels, with 60% new and 40% a year old. The wine is raked 3 to 4 times a year, separating the clear wine from the lees 2012 is a very good vintage, you'll get surprised!
Tasting Notes	This shows a lot of oak on the nose, but the fruit is sweet and ripe. More reined back in terms of ripeness than in recent years, this remains a modern style that will need time to enable the wood to integrate.
Production	8,500 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2015-2030
Scores/Awards	<p>93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015</p> <p>91-94 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013</p> <p>88+ points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015</p> <p>90-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013</p> <p>89-91 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013</p> <p>92-94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 25, 2011</p> <p>90-91 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013</p> <p>88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2013</p> <p>16 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013 (score only)</p> <p>16.75 points - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2011</p> <p>91 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)</p> <p>87 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only)</p> <p>93 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013</p> <p>90-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 18, 2013</p> <p>86-88 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013</p> <p>86 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 6, 2013</p> <p>90-92 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 16, 2013</p> <p>17.8 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)</p> <p>90-92 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)</p> <p>17 points - Gault & Millau (score only)</p> <p>16.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)</p> <p>17 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This red, offers beguiling aromas of bergamot, roasted sandalwood and black tea, before giving way to a well-endowed core of plum, blackberry and raspberry reduction notes. The structure is remarkably fine-grained, showing seamless integration through the long finish. A really great showing. Best from 2017 through 2025. 8,500 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Pure, ripe and engaging, with lovely notes of floral and bergamot leading to a core of succulent plum, boysenberry and blackberry fruit. A good underpinning of iron is buried on the finish. Score range: 91-94"</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"A rather firmly structured, masculine style of wine in 2012, with a dense, opaque ruby/purple color. The wine reveals a certain angularity, with hard tannin, but medium body and excellent purity. This is certainly a very good 2012 that should age nicely for 12-15 years."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2012 Cantenac Brown, one of the most impressive Margaux I tasted, is the complete package – from the initial attack to the layered, rich finish. Dense ruby/purple-hued with notes of licorice, mulberries, black currants, asphalt and spring flowers, this medium to full-bodied, concentrated, rich effort does not reveal an excess of rusticity or astringency. It should drink well for 10-15 years. This under-the-radar chateau never receives much attention even though it is the beneficiary of a new, conscientious proprietor."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"Tasted from a barrel sample at en primeur. A blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot, the Cantenac Brown has plenty of blackcurrant and raspberry fruit on the nose with fine definition and nicely integrated oak. The palate is medium bodied with slightly chalky, rigid tannins. It is quite a masculine, almost Saint Julien like Margaux but there is certainly respectable persistency on the peppery finish. Tasted April 2013."

- NM, Wine Journal

"92-94. Barrel sample. A solid effort, this is a wine with great fruit and firm structure to support it. Ripe and full in the mouth, it's a firm and complex wine with a delicious juicy aftertaste."

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Solid core of berry and dried fruits on the palate with chocolate, coffee bean and spices. Full body, with chewy tannins and a long finish. Intense"

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Bright medium ruby. Inviting aromas of blueberry, blackcurrant, dark plum and coffee, along with a strong mineral quality. The palate delivers excellent cut and precision, showing a hint of wildness to the dark berry and mineral flavors. Finishes with fine-grained tannins and refreshing acid lift, on a very pure blackcurrant note. Cantenac-Brown is riding high: starting with the 2008 vintage, I find all the wines made here to have been of outstanding quality."

- ST, International Wine Cellar

"Soft textured, with sweet cherries, floral notes, plum and earth, the wine ends with a mélange of red and black fruits. 90-93 Pts (18-Apr-2013)"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"High intensity, some purple-deep red, quite intense aromatically also, very much black spectrum cassis and fig, some good smoky bacon oak. Tiny bit sour on the mid palate but actually I quite like this, happy that they have gone for dark spectrum of fruits, and a very pleasing level of ripeness, just poised not prune. Can definitely see the potential here. Needs to soften, one of the few that you feel is not an early drinker. 93 / 18. Highly recommended. Drink 2023-2040."

- JA, The New Bordeaux

"Dense colour, masses of ripe cassis fruit, ripe tannins, a robust flavourful wine."

- SS, Decanter.com

"Deep and saturated colour; tight to the edge; chalky, mineral nose; wet rocks; some plushness; slightly green streak somewhere; a plusher and lusher sample than before; not as tannic as before but green streak. Inconsistent notes. 86-88? Tasted Thursday April 11, 2013. [Earlier note] Deep and very extracted looking; lots of oak [someone remarked it smells like a white wine]; quite sublimated in feel; very thick and extractive palate – wow – Merlot 60% new oak – loads of tannin; feels very recipe wine making for me. Very dry and astringent on the finish. May settle but will always be chunky and lacking finesse. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot. 86-88. Tasted UGC Tuesday April 9, 2013. Drink 2020-2030"

- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Juicy, forward Margaux with vibrant plum and cassis fruit. The tannins are supple and well handled with a mid-palate that is firm but not substantial. Moderate length. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (06-Apr-2013)"

- JCL, asianpalate.com

"Subtle nose of spice and black fruits with refined oak. Easy-drinking, fruit-forward palate with notes of morello cherry and roasted coffee. Lengthy finish. (16-Apr-2013)"

- en.gilbertgaillard.com