

Château Cantenac Brown 2019

CSPC# 848992

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation

68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot
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.

Winemaker

Éric Boissenot

Vintage

The 2019 year started under the rain with warm winter temperatures. As a consequence, the budburst took place 15 days sooner than usual. Flowering happened with slightly low temperatures and few rainy days caused flower abortion and millerandage. On the other hand, these precipitations were beneficial at the beginning of summer and helped us to handle July's temperatures.

During veraison, the sudden dryness locked some berries; we will sort them with manual harvest or with the optical sorting table.

The end of summer was cooler allowing the vineyard to rest. Some showers at the beginning of September arrived right on time to swell the berries ... and our hopes. The harvest date of each plot is the key for this vintage. Regarding the choices we made during the season (leaf removal, plots' age, soil composition, weather condition ...), harvest choice is also crucial and requires a daily control in the vines. Each day, we walk miles and taste hundreds of berries in order to establish the harvest plan adapted to our plots.

We harvested the whites while keeping an eye on the reds! So fresh mornings the first days of September were perfect for two reasons: the white of Cantenac Brown had been harvested in perfect conditions and in the meantime the ripeness of the red grapes evolved phenomenally. Since the first analysis, merlot and cabernet sauvignon show remarkable polyphenols.

Vineyards

The 54-hectare Bordeaux wine vineyard of Cantenac Brown sits on gravel and sandy soils. Planted to 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot & 10% Cabernet Franc, the average age of the vines are 35 yrs of age. 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

The bet is won! Harvest was split over 4 weeks with great conditions despite cloudy periods. The blends with the presence of Tristan Le Lous, have been refined. The first tasting shows a vintage with a lot of class, freshness, density, with present and velvety tannins. The first harvest day was set on September 18th for the youngest vines.

Merlot: September 18th to 21st, 23rd, 25th to 27th & 30th

Cabernet Franc: October 1st

Cabernet Sauvignon: October 2nd to 5th, 7th to 9th

Maturation

French oak barrels 60% new oak barrels 40% one-year-old oak barrels for 18 months.



Tasting Notes The greatest vintages are sometimes the easiest. In this case, 2019 seems to be the perfect answer to this maxim. A vintage with so few problems truly carries the sole expression of nature. It is nature that drives the maturity of the grapes and invites us to harvest our plots when it is perfect. This vintage is also synonymous with the expression of the earth. The latter has considerably contributed to the success of the wine and its strength is about to join our bottles. The Merlots are dense while the Cabernets are fine and delicate. The incredible blend of these grape varieties prefigures a fantastic vintage. It also prepares its successor: the 2020 vintage which will be the first complete vintage of the Le Lous family.

Production 9,583 cases made

Cellaring Drink 2022-2035

Scores/Awards **93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022
94+ points - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022
92-94+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - June 2020
94 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - March 2022
95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2022
93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2020
95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2020
94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - June 2020
94 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022
94 points - Jane Anson, Insidebordeaux.com - January 2022
96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2022
93-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 2020
95 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2022
94-96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - June 2020
92-94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2020
93 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - April 2022
93-95 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2020
92 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - January 2020
94-96 points - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2020
94 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - June 2020
94-95 points - Terres de Vins (score only) - September 2021
96 points - Vert de Vin - April 2020
94 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022
17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2020

Reviews *"Shows the hallmarks of the vintage, with steeped plum, blackberry and boysenberry fruit paste flavors that are broad and lush, while singed wood, violet and anise notes filter in. Features underlying freshness, with finely beaded acidity providing support. A step ahead. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2035. 9,583 cases made."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2019 Cantenac Brown is a brilliant wine from José Sanfins and his team. Unwinding in the glass with deep aromas of wild berries, licorice, loamy soil, burning embers and violets, it's medium to full-bodied, seamless and layered, with terrific concentration, beautifully refined tannins and a seamless, elegant profile. Given its quality, this remains somewhat under the radar and is well worth a special effort to seek out. Best after 2027."

- WK, Wine Advocate

"Displaying a medium to deep garnet-purple color, the 2019 Cantenac Brown wafts sensuously out of the glass with fragrant notes of candied violets, underbrush, and Darjeeling tea over a core of warm cassis, black cherry preserves and wild blueberries with a touch of anise. Medium-bodied, the palate offers generous, mouth-coating black fruits with loads of perfumed nuances and a soft, velvety texture, finishing on a lingering note of exotic spices."

- LPB, Wine Advocate

"Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2019 Cantenac Brown wafts out with notes of rosehip tea, blackberry preserves, and cassis, plus nuances of charcoal, dried herbs, and damp soil. Medium-bodied, the palate has a lively backbone and plush tannins supporting the concentrated black fruits, finishing fragrant."

- LPB, Wine Independent

- Reviews** *"This has subtle aromas of blackcurrants and blueberries with hints of just-picked violets, light vanilla, licorice, and crushed stones. Forest-floor notes, too. Medium to full body, layers of firm tannins and a velvety mouth-feel. Delicious, crushed berries on the palate. Compact with a firm finish. Better from 2026."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "Here is a very pretty barrel sample with crushed berries, walnuts and hints of chocolate and smoke. It's full-bodied and layered with lightly chewy tannins and a rich finish. Muscular for the vintage."*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- "Now under new ownership, but with the same winemaking team, this estate has produced a wine with great concentration. The tannins are generous in feel, showing a dense, dry core that sits well with the powerful black currant fruits. It has great long-term potential."*
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "A ton of tightly packed black fruits are right there on the attack of this wine, along with enticing aromatic power. It's a well-muscled Cantenac Brown with a sleek, carefully controlled tannic hold alongside liquorice and black chocolate notes - good stuff. New owner at this property as of 2019, Tristan Le Lous."*
- JA, Decanter.com
- "Plenty to grip on to with here, with textured damson and black cherry fruit. Feels deft and well-worked, with a confident tannic frame and enticing layers of espresso and black chocolate. Tristan le Lous is the new owner at this property as of this vintage, with José Sanfins remaining as CEO and Technical Director. 60% new oak, with 51% of overall production in this wine. Eric Boissenot consultant."*
- JA, Inside Bordeaux
- "A brilliant Margaux with plenty of signature violet and peony character. Firm tannic structure, a little chalky at this point giving grip and juice, alongside savoury blueberry, blackberry, and bilberry fruits. This is good quality with fresh acidity, delivers on En Primeur promise and will age. Plenty of complexity and depth also with some bitter chocolate shavings. 48hl/ha yield, 60% new oak. Harvest September 19 to October 16. Tasted twice."*
- JA, Inside Bordeaux
- "The best vintage from Cantenac Brown in a while opens with a showy display of flowers, espresso, thyme, black cherries, plums, tobacco and earthy, aromatics. Richly-textured, with soft, polished tannins and a wealth of deep, ripe, sweet, fresh, dark, red fruits, the wine feels as good as it tastes. The round, supple finish delivers loads of fruits and a touch of chocolate in the endnote. Drink from 2027-2055."*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "Situated on the corner of power and roundness, you find layers of juicy, ripe, lusciously textured, fresh fruits, dark chocolate, flowers, smoke, and spice. The tannins are there, polished, and ripe, giving you density and structure, providing the ability age and evolve for at least 2 decades."*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "José Sanfins has overseen a 2019 Cantenac Brown that will give immense pleasure in coming years. The bouquet has tightened up since I tasted the barrel sample (also at the château, in summer 2021): blackberry, raspberry and cedar are now accompanied by just a touch of peppermint. The palate is medium-bodied, taut, and fresh, with sappy red fruit, fine acidity, and a vibrant, harmonious finish. This Margaux brims with confidence and should give 30 to 40 years of drinking pleasure. The insiders' Margaux of choice."*
- NM, Vinous

Reviews

"Winemaker José Sanfins is doing sterling work at this fast-improving Margaux estate. The 2019 Cntenac Brown represents around half the crop, picked 18 September to 9 October, and then matured in 60% new oak. It has a slightly more extravagant bouquet than its peers, more expressive with vivacious blackberry, raspberry and cranberry fruit mingling with cedar and cigar humidor scents. The palate is very cohesive with sappy red fruit, beautifully judged acidity and a harmonious, fulfilling dark chocolate-tinged finish that lingers wonderfully. What an exquisite, well-crafted Margaux with oodles and oodles of charm."

- NM, Vinous

"The 2019 Cntenac Brown is dark, rich, and super-expressive. Even with all of that intensity, Cntenac Brown retains a good bit of nuance and detail. Dark cherry, plum, mocha, espresso, licorice, and menthol add gravitas and pure power. I very much like the balance here, as well as what seems like a move towards more finesse."

- AG, Vinous

"The 2019 Château Cntenac Brown is terrific, surpassing the 2018. Lots of ripe black and blue fruits as well as scorched earth, leather, and crushed stone notes define the bouquet, and it's a rich, medium to full-bodied, juicy wine that has the fresher, lively style of the vintage yet still brings beautiful fruit. It doesn't have the tannin quality of the top wines in the appellation, but as I wrote after tasting it from barrel, it's one sexy Margaux. Give it just a few years and enjoy over the following 20 years. Best after 2024."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"Checking in as 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Merlot that will spend 18 months in barrel, the 2019 Château Cntenac Brown is a beautiful Margaux, offering a deep purple color, loads blackcurrant and blueberry fruits, full-bodied richness, sweet tannins, and notes of chocolate, dried flowers, leather, and spice. This is one sexy, opulent Margaux that does everything right. It's going to be ready to go on release yet should have two decades of prime drinking."

- Jeb Dunnuck

"Dark ruby garnet, violet reflections, subtle lightening of the edges. Nuances of nougat and herbs, dark berries, a hint of precious wood and spices. Juicy and complex, extract-sweet core, elegant, fine, ripe tannins, freshly structured, silky, and persistent, some nougat on the finish, good aging potential."

- Falstaff Magazine

"The nose is elegant, aromatic, delicate and offers power, concentration, complexity as well as a beautifully defined fruit. It reveals notes of bright wild blackberry, juicy/pulpy cassis, small notes of bright violet plum associated with touches of strawberry, violet, lily as well as fine touches of Cuban pepper, almond, nutmeg, "sense of the place" / terroir and tea. The palate is fruity, elegant, beautifully defined and offers precision, subtilty, richness, sapidity, a beautifully fine acidulous frame as well as a beautiful suavity. On the palate this wine expresses notes of pulpy/juicy blackberry, crushed violet plum, bright raspberry, small notes of cherry associated with touches of liquorice, small crushed black fruits, tonka bean, lilac as well as discreet hints of sweet spices and an imperceptible hint of toasted hazelnut. Tannins are elegant, fine, and well-defined. Good length and beautiful persistence."

- Vert de Vin
