

## Château Prieure Lichine 2009

CSPC# 749540

750mlx12

14.0% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**  
**Appellation**  
**General Info**

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot  
Margaux

Originally a priory of Benedictine monks who cultivated grapes for service at dinner and at religious ceremonies, practices gradually evolved by the 18th century to establish sales of the wine under the name Le Prieuré de Cantenac. As a consequence of the French Revolution, the property was seized, divided and sold in 1789 to several surrounding estates, including Château Palmer. A portion was bought by Monsieur Pagès who passed on the estate to his widow, when due to its reputation and broker prices received a fourth growth classification in 1855. Several changes in ownership resulted in changes to the name, such as Le Prieuré and Prieuré-Cantenac, and when the late wine writer and authority Alexis Lichine arrived to buy the estate it consisted of 11 hectares of neglected vines.

Alexis Lichine bought the vineyard in 1951 (shortly after having purchased the Margaux estate Château Lascombes with a consortium) and work began to group and reconstitute the property on the ideal slightly-rising ground. With the money he was garnering from the import business and a few partners, Alexis Lichine bought the Prieure for 11,000 pounds, at the time about \$16,000. In 1953, with the help of Count Lur-Saluces of Château d'Yquem, Lichine renamed the Prieuré to Château Prieuré-Lichine.

With the estate renamed in 1953, the following year Cantenac wineries were entitled to use the appellation of Margaux sacrificing quantity for quality, trades in portions of desirable land at a loss of two to one were made with third growth neighbours Palmer, Ferrière, Kirwan, Giscours, Issan, Boyd-Cantenac and second growth neighbours Durfort-Vivens and Brane-Cantenac, adding up to 47 acres (19 ha) of vineyards by the mid-1960s. With an aim to produce a wine well beyond its classification, extensive replanting and repairs and investments were made to the equipment, and by the 1970s the estate amounted to 58 hectares dispersed across the communes Cantenac and Margaux.

After Lichine's death in 1989, the estate was run by his son Sacha for several years, with oenologist Michel Rolland acting as consultant, until the estate was sold to the Groupe Ballande in 1999. The winery currently employs Stéphane Derenoncourt as its consulting oenologist.

**Vintage**

The 2009 growing season will long be remembered by the new Prieure Lichine technical crew for the severe hailstorm that occurred on May 11th, 2009 around the villages of Cantenac and Labarde —areas where the potential for great wines is very high. The scenario appeared identical to 2008 but with two weeks' advance. Fortunately, the rest of the growing season continued without incident. A hot, but never excessively hot summer and a moderate amount of rainfall promised an excellent vintage. The terroirs that hadn't suffered any hail damage required a light thinning out of the bunches to guarantee a complete ripening of the grapes. Then September and October bathed us in luxury, presenting us with a period of weather to make 2009 a truly "hot sunshine" vintage.

**Vineyards**

The Prieuré-Lichine vineyards are naturally, in view of Lichine's many acquisitions, very widely spread across the Margaux commune. Most lie to the north of Cantenac, on one of the gravel ridges that characterise the Médoc. The vines are 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc, and are planted at a density of 8500 vines/ha.

**Harvest**

Merlot: Sept 25<sup>th</sup>-Oct 12<sup>th</sup>; Cab Sauvignon October 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>



<b>Maturation</b>	They are harvested by hand, sorted and crushed before fermentation in temperature-controlled concrete vats with a maceration lasting between three and four weeks. The must is pumped over twice daily to submerge the cap. The wine is then transferred into oak for up to 16 months, with 55% of the oak replaced each vintage. It is racked every three months, before bottling.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	The nose is very tight and tannic firmness tends to overshadow the fruit sweetness on the start of the palate. There is minty cassis on the mid palate all slightly held back by the tannic structure that is there on the finish. There is the feeling that more fruit will show with time.
<b>Production</b>	11,250 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2012-2032
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>91 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012</p> <p><b>89-91 points</b> - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010</p> <p><b>90 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2012</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010</p> <p><b>89(+?) points</b> - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - July 2012</p> <p><b>88-91 points</b> - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010</p> <p><b>17.5-18.5 points</b> - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010</p> <p><b>17 points/4 stars</b> - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"Offers a core of blackberry and roasted plum in reserve, while slightly taut singed cedar, vanilla bean and espresso notes lead the way for now. Yet this leans on the toast rather than purity, with a cocoa note framing the finish. Should hang well enough in the cellar. Best from 2013 through 2021. 11,250 cases made."</i></p> <p>- JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Complex aromas of mineral, blueberry and currant follow through to a full body, with superfine tannins and a long, long finish. This is exceptional. Best of all time. Score range: 94-97"</i></p> <p>- JS, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The soft, sexy 2009 exhibits a dense plum/purple color along with a big, sweet bouquet of raspberries, black cherries, black currants, smoke and forest floor. Opulent and round with an attractive viscosity as well as outstanding purity, depth and length, it should drink well for two decades. While not one of the longest-lived wines of the vintage, it is among the most precocious, flattering and charming at present."</i></p> <p><i>Prieure-Lichine's beautiful, seductive 2009 is one of the finest efforts yet made at this property that was rejuvenated under the late Alexis Lichine. Quality began improving dramatically about fifteen years ago and with the hiring of wine consultant Stephane Derenoncourt things have improved even further."</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Beautiful floral-infused black fruits jump from the glass of this opaque ruby/purple-colored wine. Possibly richer, denser, and even more complete than the brilliant 2005 (although it is still too early to say that definitively), this is certainly a more opulent, succulent style of wine than even the 2005, which had surprising flesh for a wine from that vintage. The Right Bank consultant Stephane Derenoncourt has performed some magic here, as recent vintages attest, and the wines are often fairly priced as well. This full-bodied Prieure-Lichine should drink well for 20-25 years. (Tasted two times.)"</i></p> <p>- RP, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Tasted at the Union de Grand Cru in London. The Prieure-Lichine is fresh and lively on the nose, leaping from the glass with vibrant blackberry and wild hedgerow, hints of crushed stone and sous-bois underneath. The palate is medium bodied with a slight salty tang on the entry, fine tannins with a composed, rounded, generous finish that lacquers the mouth with peppery black fruits and a touch of tobacco. Very fine. Tasted October 2011."</i></p> <p>- NM, Wine Journal</p>

- Reviews** *“Tasted at a negociant and UGC. Tight on the nose at first: earthy black fruits: a touch of briary, fruitcake, cedar and damp moss. Good delineation and quite “classic” in style. The palate is medium bodied with good concentration, the tannins just a little coarse at the moment but that will calm down through its elevage. Good delineation, quite foursquare and not charming at the moment, but will offer its delights after 4-5 years of bottling. Tasted March 2010.”*  
- NM, Wine Journal
- “This is a delicate wine with a very Margaux feel. The delicious red berry fruits and light layers of tannin are in balance, suggesting a wine that will age relatively quickly, and is already drinkable now.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- “92-94 Barrel sample. A shiny, ripe and fresh wine, its tannins neatly merged into the blackcurrant fruits. Delicious and fresh, but also sweet”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- “Good fresh red-ruby. Very ripe nose currently dominated by truffle and musky oak, with the fruit in the background. Fat and silky in the mouth, with good depth to its plum and sweet oak flavors. Finishes with building tannins and sneaky length.”*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar
- “Purple red. Aromas of red berry fruit cocktail lifted by spices and flowers. Ripe acidity gives the wine's red fruit flavors good lift. Finishes clean and persistent, with suave, palate-dusting tannins and lingering berry and mineral qualities. Subtly complex and lively wine.”*  
- ID, International Wine Cellar
- “Very pale rim. Sweet, heady nose. Very sweet start on the palate and perhaps not quite enough refreshment factor? Tannins slightly rustic but there is lots of pleasure here. Date tasted 31st March 2010. Drink 2016-2027.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “This year the assemblage is Cabernet Sauvignon 65%, Merlot 30% and Petit Verdot 5%. A glossy crimson-black hue, with the aromas of blackberry and cream, A soft creamed-fruit substance on the palate, with lots of ripe, supple, velvety tannins and a good core of acidity. Rich, substantial, with a firm grippy finish. It has a sense of balance and it is also very long. This is really good, surely the best young Prieuré-Lichine I have ever tasted? From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 17.5-18.5+/20 (March 2010)”*  
- CK, The Wine Doctor
- “Deep red, fine floral wild roses Margaux nose, very good ripe fruit and harmonious Cabernet-Merlot blend, quite forward, attractive fleshy fruit and will age well. Drink 2014-20.”*  
- SS, Decanter.com
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