

# Château Brane Cantenac 2012

CSPC# 771843

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot

## Appellation

Margaux

## Classification

Second Growth. Deuxieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

## Website

www.brane-cantenac.com

## General Info

Château Brane-Cantenac was for many years the home of Lucien Lurton - it is now owned and run by his son Henri. Its vineyards are located west of the village of Cantenac in the Margaux appellation. Brane Cantenac was perceived throughout much of the 70s and 80s as an underperforming property. Since Henri took over, there has been extensive investment in the cuverie and chai, as well as vastly improved vineyard management techniques. Consequently, the wines at Brane Cantenac now show more weight and concentration, although they still possess that haunting bouquet and quintessential elegance that characterise the wines of Margaux. It is classified as a 2ème Cru Classé.

## Vintage

- A mild autumn, then a harsh, dry winter, especially during February (-10°C compared with the seasonal average over the last decade)
- Cool and very rainy weather in April as vines began shooting.
- An abnormally wet month of June and start to the summer.
- The hottest August since 2003.
- A severe summer drought: total rainfall between August 1st and September 22nd was only 7mm (0.27 inches).
- A wet end to the month of September, with heavy rains.

To fully understand this 2012 vintage, we need to ignore the adverse spring conditions and focus on the very favourable summer weather. The conditions in the vineyard were not dissimilar to those of 2010 and especially to those of 2000. Getting the harvesting date right was crucial in order to get the very best out of fully ripe grapes, without endangering their health by allowing the rain at the end of September and in October to take its toll. Any overconfidence or willingness to harvest in extreme conditions of over-ripeness was severely punished. This year once again the great early-ripening terroirs came out on top and produced wines of high quality.

## Vineyards

Brane-Cantenac's 75 hectares of vineyards are planted with Cabernet Sauvignon (55%), Merlot (40%), Cabernet Franc (4.5%) and Carmenère 0.5%, and lie on fine, gravelly soils.

## Harvest

The picking began with the youngest Merlot on September 27th. It continued with the old Merlot vines from October 1st to 4th. This grape variety gave very round, very aromatic wines. The Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested from October 5th to 15th. The wines are powerful, balanced and dense. The Cabernet Franc suffered from the vintage's weather conditions. Though harvested late (October 12th), it wasn't included in the blend for the Grand Vin on account of unsatisfactory levels of ripeness. The Carmenère, which was harvested on October 16th, didn't ripen as well as in 2011, because of the wet weather conditions. The harvesting went ahead at a lively pace, enabling the crop to be brought in before the heavy October rains could affect the perfect health of the berries. Extraction was enhanced through délestages (rack and return) and the use of Parsec vinification robots.

## Maturation

Vinification includes up to 18 months' wood ageing, using 60-70% new oak.

## Tasting Notes

The fact that we included 68% of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend of Brane Cantenac bears witness to its beautiful maturity, thanks to the 'early' terroir it grows on, and to the work that was done in the ahead vineyard. But it is also the proof that the technological choices we made regarding the picking, hauling and sorting of the harvest, favoring a perfect selection, not to mention the swiftness of the operations, were indeed excellent.



**Production** 9,250 cases made  
**Cellaring** Drink 2015-2035

**Scores/Awards** **90 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015  
**90-93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013  
**91 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015  
**90-92 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013  
**88-90 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013  
**90-91 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013  
**92-94 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 12, 2013  
**87-90 points** - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - April 2013  
**17 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013  
**17.5 points** - Steven Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013  
**87-88 points** - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2013  
**93 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013  
**92 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)  
**90-92 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 19, 2013  
**88-90 points** - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013  
**88 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013  
**93-95 points** - Gilbert & Gaillard - April 16, 2013  
**17.5 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2013 (score only)  
**88-90 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only)  
**16.5 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)  
**16.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)  
**17 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)

**Reviews** *"Plush yet focused, with a loam-tinged structure carrying dark plum, blackberry coulis and tobacco notes. Cuts a broad swath through the finish, with an echo of freshly drawn espresso. Solid, with a pleasant old-school twinge. Best from 2016 through 2022. 9,250 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"Plush, with a legitimate structure buried in the core of steeped plum and blackberry fruit. A warm stone note lurks in the background. Well-rendered. Score range: 90-93"*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"It is hard not to give kudos to proprietor Henri Lurton, as he's done such a great job at this famous estate in Margaux. The 2012 has an opaque ruby/purple color and beautifully sweet, velvety tannins. It had to be more difficult achieving this level in the Médoc in 2012 than in Graves or the Right Bank sectors of Pomerol and St.-Emilion. With a lush, supple texture, medium to full body, and beautiful flowery blackcurrant and black cherry fruit, this opaque wine is pure and impressively endowed. Another beauty from Lurton, it is soft enough to be drunk early on, but promises to age well for 15-20 years."*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*"A beauty from Henri Lurton, the 2012 Brane Cantenac exhibits classic notes of spring flowers intermixed with black raspberries, black currants and damp forest floor. This medium-bodied, sweet, ripe, quintessentially elegant, medium-bodied Margaux is nicely concentrated as well as sexy. Enjoy it over the next 10-12 years."*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*"Tasted thrice at chateau, UGC and negociant, the Brane-Cantenac 2012 is a blend of 32% Merlot and 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and represents 32% of production. It has a slightly muted bouquet with light graphite and mineral notes that need several minutes to really unwind. The palate is medium bodied with rather abrasive tannins that encase blackberry and raspberry notes with hints of sea salt. It is a conservative Brane-Cantenac and it feels a little raw at the moment. Then again, it often tastes exactly like this en primeur before improving in bottle, so let us see. Tasted April 2013."*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*"A wine with currant and berry character. Full body, with chewy tannins that are polished and juicy. Solid core of fruit yet harmonious for the vintage. Like it better than 2011"*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

- Reviews** *"92–94. Barrel sample. With marked acidity as well as black fruits, this is a wine with weight and richness. It has a dark core of firm tannins, although the aftertaste maintains the juiciness."*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- "Superb colour, fine floral bouquet, very smooth extraction of fruit and fine, classy, very Margaux texture and length."*  
- SS, Decanter.com
- "Deep red-ruby. Blackcurrant, licorice and a whiff of smoke on the nose. Fresh, expressive flavors of redcurrant, tobacco, fresh herbs and bitter chocolate are enlivened by good vinosity. Finishes with building but ripe tannins, a delicate herbal touch and a restrained sweetness."*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar
- "Dark crimson, firm, fully ripe palate. Spreads across the palate. Quite lip smacking, and well judged. Not too sweet and, just not too oaky. Broad. 2020-2034"*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- "One of the best wines in Margaux, as it often is, Henri Lurton's 2012 is typically fragrant, subtle and well judged, expressing its terroir rather than imposing a style on it. Tobacco and cedar wood are balanced by medium weight, granular tannins and refreshing mineral, cassis and red fruit flavours. Drink: 2020-30. "*  
- TA, timatkin.com
- "Like the cedarwood, soft plum on the nose, good anthocyanin extraction. A little less cohesive overall than their 2011, although I have no doubt that this will be excellent value, and one that will give great pleasure in the medium term. I have a touch of heat on the finish which makes things a little abrupt. 87-88/ 16.25-16.5. Recommended. Drink 2017-2025."*  
- JA, The New Bordeaux
- "Blending 68% Cabernet Sauvignon and 32% Merlot, the wine reached 13% Alcohol with a pH of 3.86. With a cassis, anise, floral, tobacco and earthy personality, the medium-bodied wine is bright, fresh, elegant and crisp with a sweet cassis- and blackberry-filled finish. 90-92 Pts"*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- "Very good colour; deep and saturated; dense to edge; violets, layers, very composed and excellent manners; lushness too; quite tight on the palate but obvious depth and layers; some earth, little undergrowth; structure beneath but very attractive overall; grip and chew on the end. Consistent notes. 92-93+ UGC Thursday April 11, 2013 [Earlier note] Deep and saturated colour; very fresh and elegant; vivacious on the nose; real delicacy here; very attractive; palate very flattering with real delicacy and lush flavours from what appears to be extremely attractive Merlot in the blend; very good wine with some grip at the end. Nicely done. 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot. 92-93+ Tasted UGC Tuesday April 9, 2013. Drink 2017-2027"*  
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com
- "Soft, supple red that is easy to enjoy with no rough edges and elegant flavours. Balanced with freshness, a style that Henri Lurton at Brane-Cantenac excels. This elegant wine follows the style of the vintage, with gentle extraction and no rough edges. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (06-Apr-2013)"*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com
- "Subtle, elegant and refined nose of morello cherry, spices and black fruits. Stylish, elegant and easy-drinking palate showing supple fruit aromatics with roasted coffee notes. Lovely tannic framework. (16-Apr-2013)"*  
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
-