

Château Brane-Cantenac 2020

CSPC# 888284

750mlx6

13.7% alc./vol.

Grape Variety 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot, 1% Carmenère

Appellation Margaux

Classification Second Growth. Deuxieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

Website www.brane-cantenac.com

Analysis Alc. degree: 13,7% TA: 3,60g/l pH: 3,71

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.

Winemaker Henri Lurton

Vintage 2020 was characterized by capricious weather that necessitated ceaseless vigilance in the vineyard. The very mild winter and the rather warm spring favored a very early budding and flowering (2 to 3 weeks in advance). Summer was exceptionally hot and dry, the water stress got intense, and the maturation of the grapes took place without constraints.

The exceptional terroir of the Brane plateau combined forces with meteorological conditions that suited it perfectly to produce an extraordinary Château Brane-Cantenac. Exceptional and utterly concentrated, the 2020 vintage is the product of an outstanding terroir.

Vineyards Henri Lurton, the proprietor here, has been working to improve quality in the vineyard by regrafting of Merlot to high quality Cabernet Sauvignon as they look to keep freshness and structure in the wines. 72 hectares in AOC Margaux with 30 hectares planted on the "Terrasse" n°4, on the quaternary era-deep gravels. 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40 % Merlot, 4% CabernetFranc, 0,5 % Petit Verdot, 0,5% Carmenère. Average vine age is 35 years old.

Harvest The Brane-Cantenac was picked from 14 – 30 September.

Winemaking The vinification of all the batches was carried out using a R'Pulse system, allowing in particular for the elimination of pumping, a better immersion of the marc and an optimization of the concentration and roundness of the wine. Use of 13% high quality press juice. Aging in barrels is complemented by aging in amphorae. 18 months in French oak barrels, with 100% new.

Tasting Notes Beautiful garnet color, deep and shiny. The nose is intense, complex, and fine, exhaling aromas of flowers, black fruits and hints of spices giving an impression of freshness. On the palate the wine is harmonious and long. It is full-bodied and endowed with sweetness. It is ample, soft, spherical, powerful but all in finesse. Freshness dominates with pleasant aromas of fresh black fruits and spices. This wine never seems to disappear as it's finish is long and persistent.

Serve with Chateau Brane Cantenac is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Brane Cantenac is a perfect match with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, salmon, mushrooms, and pasta as well as cheese

Cellaring Drink 2027-2060

Scores/Awards **94 points** - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023

91-93 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021

94 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023

93-95+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023

98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023

96-97 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021



Scores/Awards **95-97 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021
97 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023
94 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021
95 points - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - January 2023
97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023
96-98 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021
90 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021
94-96 points - Farr Vintners - May 2021
96 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023
95-97 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021
94-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021
97 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023
94-96 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021
97 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023
95-96 points - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2021
93-95 points - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021
97 points - Terres de Vins - September 2021
95 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021
96 points - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021
93-94 points - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021
96-97 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021
19 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021

Reviews

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac has turned out nicely, offering up aromas of blackberries and crème de cassis mingled with notions of licorice, pencil shavings, violets, and subtle hints of smoked meats. Medium to full-bodied, rich, and fleshy, with a lavish core of fruit, ripe acids and sweet tannins that assert themselves on the savory finish, it can't quite match the purity and sensuality of the 2019, but it's a strong effort. The 2020 Brane-Cantenac follows in the footsteps of the excellent 2019. Having grafted over Merlot vines to Cabernet Sauvignon, Henri Lurton and his team are now able to craft a balanced blend derived solely from the plateau of Brane, the estate's finest terroir. And the result is a wine with all Brane-Cantenac's signature elegance, but supplemental mid-palate depth and texture when compared with the wines of yesteryear.”
- WK, Wine Advocate

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac is composed of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Carménère and 1% Petit Verdot. It weighs in with 13.7% alcohol and a pH of 3.71. Deep purple-black colored, it has a beautifully expressive nose of fresh redcurrants, blackcurrant jelly, kirsch and rose oil, plus hints of tobacco leaf, wild sage, and crushed rocks. The medium-bodied palate is elegantly styled with a plush texture and plenty of freshness supporting the red berry and earthy flavors, finishing fragrant. 2024 – 2040.”
- LPB, Wine Advocate

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac is deep garnet-purple in color. It gallops out with energetic scents of black and red currant preserves, fresh boysenberries, and candied violets, plus wafts of bay leaves and graphite. The medium-bodied palate shimmers with vibrant black and red berry flavors, supported by firm, grainy tannins, finishing long and earthy.”
- LPB, Wine Independent

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac is made from 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot, and 1% Carménère. Deep garnet-purple colored, it gives up notes of cedar, cinnamon, and sassafras over a core of cassis, lilacs, and garrigue. Medium to full-bodied, it is firm and grainy with just enough freshness, and a bright, shiny finish. This was tasted as a barrel sample.”
- LPB, Wine Independent

“Blackberries, plums, currants, tobacco, and violets on the nose. Bitter chocolate and mocha, too. It's refined and focused, with a medium to full body and firm, tightly-knit tannins. Very long, laser-focused, and polished. Very classy. Best of the trilogy. Try after 2027.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

Reviews *“Extremely floral and beautiful with blackberry and blackcurrant aromas that follow through to a full body with a solid core of fruit and loads of dark fruit, sweet tobacco, bark, and earth. Chewy, fine tannins. Perhaps the best of the trilogy years.”*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“From what is one of Margaux's leading estates, this wine is structured and initially firm. Then it reveals luscious black fruits and succulent acidity that gives the wine a fine perfumed character, dense texture, and the promise of some serious aging.”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“Full bottle 1,325 g. Cask sample taken 19 April. 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% each of Petit Verdot and Carmenère. Cabernet Sauvignon was picked 17 to 28 September, Merlot 14 to 18 September, Cabernet Franc 18 to 25 September, Petit Verdot 21 to 22 September, Carmenère 30 September. Deep, dark purple. Very fragrant with hints of bergamot. Decidedly aérien on the nose and then super-gentle on the palate. Much lighter than most of its peers but by no means vapid. The tannins are almost negligible – apparently – but they dig in on the end of the palate. Very long. A decidedly graceful wine. 13.7%. Drink 2026 – 2042.”
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“Heady and expressive on the nose, seductive tones of ripe fruit and perfumed flowers. Gorgeous intensity on the palate, rich, round, and ripe - gently chewy - but cool and refreshing too. This has a dynamic undercurrent with tannins that are fine but firm giving a slightly narrow frame. It's a bit more serious than some, brooding, but clearly well made with definition. There's a confidence here, vibrant, and detailed fruit with an excellent lingering impression of the terroir in the slightly salty, chalky, graphite touch. Layered and well-built with supreme classicism. A top buy. I'd like to own this one!”
- GH, Decanter.com

“Violet-edged, lovely vibrant colour. A low-yield wine that has kept an impressively fresh core, with expressive fruits and a vibrant grip through the centre of the wine. Powerful, tight tannins and the concentration becomes clearer in the glass, a ton of bilberry, sage, and rosemary aromatics, with a generous helping of graphite and crushed stone. All of these wines are going to need very careful ageing - although the reasonable alcohols should help. A yield of 31hl/ha. 18 months ageing in a mix of new oak barrels and amphoras. 1% Petit Verdot and 1% Carmenère complete the blend. Tasted twice. Drinking Window 2028 – 2044.”
- JA, Decanter.com

“There is an exuberance to the 2020 vintage at Brane Cantenac, with rippling depths to the damson fruit, along with liquorice, graphite, cocoa bean, fine tannins, white pepper, sage. Feels fully ripe but well restrained, very Margaux. 100% new oak with 28 different parameters, including forest origin, level of toasting, width of the grain and time of seasoning the oak staves before barrel construction. Just such a meticulous approach, and no doubt helps deepen the complexity in the final glass, as do choices such as the touch of Carmenère in the blend (and the increase in Cabernet Sauvignon over recent years). Eric Boissenot consultant, 31hl/ha yield.”
- JA, janeanson.com

“With pungent notes of flowers, tobacco leaf, blackberry liqueur, creme de cassis, smoke, and wet earthy nuances, the perfume is in full force. The fruits on the palate offer purity, elegance, lift, and silky tannins, which is a good thing, because you want as much of these gorgeous, sweet, pure, red fruits as possible. The velvet and silk finish are a treat to taste and experience. This is another stellar vintage for Brane Cantenac, an estate that has been on a non-stop roll. This is a wow wine that fans of the estate should run, not walk, and buy as for now, prices are still more than reasonable. Drink from 2025-2055.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews

“Blackberry liqueur, creme de cassis, violets, tobacco leaf and earthy nuances create the attention seeking nose. Dark in color, with equally dark, palate-coating fruits with layers of velvet-textured, sensuous, sexy, deep red berries. The fruits display a majestic sense of purity. The elegant, silky finish remains with you for close to 60 seconds, expanding and building in intensity. This is a wow wine that fans of the estate should run, not walk, and buy as soon as it’s offered. The wine blends 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot and 1% Carmenère 13.7% ABV pH 3.71. The harvest took place September 14-September 28.”

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“The 2020 blend is 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot and 1% Carmenère. The ageing will take place in a mixture of oak barrels and amphoras for 18 months. Delicate extraction techniques were used to get highly refined tannins. Bright ruby in colour. This has a superb aroma already, mixing floral cherry blossom and violet tones with ripe red cherry fruit and a hint of dried herbs. The palate is pure cashmere, with supremely refined tannins gently framing cool black fruit at the core. Despite the silky elegance, the fruit bursts through with intensity. This is a deep, harmonious wine with a very persistent finish. An excellent Brane Cantenac and one of the highlights from our tastings this year.”

- Farr Vintners

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac was bottled towards the end of July, a little later than usual, partly due to the logistics. It takes time to open in the glass, offering gorgeous blackberry, pencil box and tobacco scents that gain intensity with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with very fine tannins and outstanding delineation. Very cohesive, this is a supremely focused Brane-Cantenac that lives up to the billing after such an impressive showing en primeur. So precise on the finish, with light graphite notes lingering on the aftertaste. Wonderful.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac was picked September 14–28 and includes 13% vin de presse. It has exactly the same blend as last year since Henri Lurton and his team did not limit the Grand Vin to the 30-hectare plateau, a similar approach to Pichon-Baron when they reorganized their own vineyard. I allowed my sample an hour to open (during which I was discussing the wine with Lurton over Zoom). It has a beautifully defined bouquet of blackberry, wild hedgerow, fresh mint, and light bay leaf scents. I have sometimes found a little greenness on the nose, but there is none in 2020. The palate is very well balanced with finely chiseled, precise tannins and beautifully judged acidity. Harmonious and poised, this is an absolutely fantastic Brane-Cantenac, in my mind superior to the previous two vintages, exuding wonderful mineralité on the finish. A must-buy.”

- NM, Vinous

“The 2020 Brane-Cantenac is deep, fleshy, and savory. Strong Cabernet accents open first, leading to a core of inky dark fruit, lavender, spice, mint, and chocolate. There is some new oak that needs to integrate, but time should take care of that. I especially admire the sense of classicism and energy here. This is a superb showing from Brane-Cantenac, and the team led by Henri Lurton. Drink from 2028 to 2050.”

- AG, Vinous

“This estate has been on a roll, and their 2020 Château Brane-Cantenac is another brilliant wine that readers will love. Largely in the mold of the 2019, it has a deep purple hue as well as an incredible bouquet of blackcurrants, black cherries, freshly sharpened pencils, tobacco, and flowers. This medium to full-bodied, richly textured, concentrated, yet remarkably elegant 2020 has the vintage’s fresher, focused, elegant profile but still brings plenty of flesh and opulence. Beautifully done, it’s going to evolve for a solid 30 years in cold cellars and offer incredible pleasure all its life.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Deep purple-hued, the 2020 Château Brane-Cantenac is another remarkable 2020 in the making. Beautiful blackberry and cassis fruits as well as notes of chocolate, lead pencil, and flower all define the nose, and it has the vintage’s pure, focused, surprisingly fresh profile while still being concentrated and textured. The balance is spot on and the tannins are polished as well, so it should have some up-front appeal, yet smart money will be on giving this at least 4-6 years of bottle age.”

- Jeb Dunnuck

“Spicy and floral on the nose, very typical for the Château, some wet gravel, malt as well as red and black currant. On the palate there is fine-grained, shapely tannin, mineral acidity, much juiciness and an extreme elegance, mineral pithy finish. In the background, however, despite the elegance also quite plump. Very good length.”

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

“On the nose concentration, freshness, fruit, a nice berry, and a certain controlled intensity. Notes of pulpy blackcurrant, strawberry and more lightly of bright small red fruits (red currants...) associated with touches of violet, blond tobacco, discreet peppercorns (in the background) as well as a subtle touch of nutmeg and cinnamon. The palate is racy, balanced and offers freshness, fruit, good definition, minerality, elegance, airiness, fat, roundness, fine grain, gourmandize, a little unctuousness, a contained richness as well as a little stretched side. The wine expresses the notes of pulpy/juicy blackberry, bright/fresh cassis and more slightly bright/fresh cherry combined with hints of fresh/juicy red berries, licorice, violet/cornflower as well as hints of toast, chocolate, a subtle hint of racy minerality/graphite, black tea, and vanilla. The tannins offer a little mellow. Good length. Fine chew on the finish/persistence.”

- Vert de Vin

“Intense, complex, and layered nose, really fine oak toast and mocha notes with ripe and pure fruit. Lovely balance on the palate, very pure cabernet flavours, ripe black currant, dark plum and tobacco with super polished but present and refreshing tannin, layered with a fine spiciness and very long supple finish.”

- AL, Tasted.com

“(70% CS, 26% M, 2% CF, 1% CARM, 1% PV; 35% harvest, 13.7% ABV)

Dense, lightly “dry” blackcurrant Cabernet, markedly and very finely mineral; rich, full, concentrated but absolutely without excess, lightly oaky in aroma and texture, deep and subtly juicy, darkly ripe Cabernet fruit, long and close-grained to taste, very mineral, with a feel of effortlessly contained richness and wonderful black fruit and mineral persistence. And for all the ripe fruit, a delicious freshness, too. Classically proportioned, complete and beautiful. 2028–60+.”

- MS, The World of Fine Wine

“Surgical precision presents itself on a nose with both fresh and deep, where the notes of incense and graphite combine with black fruit. “A summary of composition”, for a nod to Cioran – or else an architect’s wine for those who want to look sky. The mouth is vertical, in suspension, dressed in high-definition tannins, held by a very nice frame. It is a model of elegance, anchored, combining subtle aromas of a stick of liquorice, tobacco, and mocha. Very salivating in final. A great textural wine.”

- Terres de Vin