

Château Cantenac Brown 2009

CSPC# 744982

750mlx12

13.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 235% Merlot

Negociant

Ginestet

Appellation

Margaux

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.

Vineyards

The vineyard covers 42 hectares (104 acres) and has the gravelly soils, typical of the Médoc area. The attractive white stones reflect the sun's rays onto the fruit in daytime whilst at night they radiate the heat retained during the day. Grape varieties are 65% cabernet sauvignon and 5% cabernet franc that produce subtle wines with an intense bouquet and are well-suited for laying down. 30% merlot makes up the remainder of the vines and contributes to colour, richness and roundness. The vines, average age of which is 35, are pruned using the double Guyot method. Vine density ranges from 8,500 to 10,000 stocks per hectare and yields 4,500 litres per hectare.

Harvest

The grapes are hand-picked and screened on site before being transported in trays to stainless steel temperature-controlled vats. Between the destemming and crushing procedures, the grapes are screened once again on a vibrating table before being taken into the vat house.

Maturation

Alcoholic fermentation lasts for around ten days and is followed by the Malolactic fermentation in the barrels and vats. The plots are vinified separately according to grape variety and age, which allows for great precision in selection when Château Cantenac Brown is finally blended. After blending, the wine is aged for 12 to 15 months in oak barrels (made of split oak staves from the forests of central France). 50% of the barrels are new whilst the remaining 50% are 1 year old.

Tasting Notes

The nose is lush packed out with ripe black fruits, cassis and a hint of plum. Powerful flavours enrich the palate, lots of concentration, the fleshiness balanced by freshness giving the finish sleekness and length. Drink 2020-2040.

Production

8,915 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2019-2049

Scores/Awards

92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2012

93-96 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2010

90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #199 - February 2012

94-96 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #188- April 2010

90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012

84-86 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2010

93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - Web Only 2012

93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2012

91-93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - September 8, 2010

88-92 points - Ian D'Agata, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2010

16 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 20, 2010



Scores/Awards **15-16+ points** - Chris Kissack, The Wine Doctor - March 2010
17 points/4 stars - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2010
91 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2010

Reviews *"This is perfumy and very pure, with lovely lilac and blackberry aromas followed by plum, cassis and black cherry fruit. The supple finish is caressed with toast that leaves a lingering, perfumy feel. Best from 2013 through 2023. 8,915 cases made"*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Fresh berry and currant, with mint and spices. Full-bodied, with super velvety tannins and a long, flavorful finish. Toasted oak, ripe fruit, everything. A beauty. Best ever. Score range: 93-96"
- JS, Wine Spectator

"Tasted twice in Bordeaux, I must say that whatever was shown to me in cask certainly did not appear to be performing as well from bottle. It could be just that the wine has closed down, but I had thought this was an extraordinary wine and one of the big-time sleepers of the vintage. The tannins have taken hold, and although the wine is still outstanding, any hopes of achieving a mid-90-point score, as I had hoped, seem highly questionable. Dense ruby/purple with notes of graphite, blackberries and forest floor, the wine is full-bodied, powerful, excruciatingly tannic and closed, and that may be why it's not showing as well as I predicted. Certainly, this was the biggest discrepancy between barrel and bottle that I saw in the vintage, but the wine is still outstanding, just not profound. It will be interesting to revisit this wine in a number of years. Forget it for 7-8 years and drink it over the following 30."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The greatest Cantenac Brown I have ever tasted, this monumental effort possesses enormous concentration, with loads of black and blue fruits intermixed with damp earth and forest floor. I have never seen a Cantenac Brown so seamless, so powerful, yet at the same time, so elegant and densely complex. They have certainly done something here that has not been accomplished over the last three decades I have been tasting this estate's wines. Opaque purple in color and full-bodied, this big-time sleeper of the vintage merits serious attention for the first time in my professional career. Kudos to the new ownership and team at Cantenac Brown. This wine should evolve over a 30-year period. (Tasted two times.)"
- RP, Wine Advocate

"Tasted at the Union de Grand Cru in London. This comes across as a little over-extracted on the nose and it consequently lacks some delineation. The palate is medium-bodied and harmonious, supple toasty tannins, improving towards the finish that shows better definition than the nose suggests. I would like to re-assess this in a year and see if the aromatics improve. Tasted October 2011."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Tasted at a negociant. Definite prune aromas on the nose: over-mature: more Languedoc than Margaux. The palate is full-bodied with thick and chewy tannins. It is actually quite a pure, very agreeable Cabernet, but there is no sense of Bordeaux typicite (which is kinda what you and I pay for?) Tasted March 2010."
- NM, Wine Journal

"Firmly structured, dark-fruited wine, very solid and dense. It has weight along with black currant fruits and acidity. It's a wine that is rich but seriously structured for aging."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"91-93 Barrel sample. Sweet, plummy wine, its tannins coming from spiced wood as much as fruit. There is a dry core, but the fruit is so opulent and ripe."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Opaque inky-purple. Flamboyant, exotic nose offers aromas of super ripe black fruits, smoked meat, coffee and dark chocolate liqueur. Then very ripe and soft in style, with creamy flavors of ripe dark fruits supported by soft, polished tannins. Finishes moderately long, with a lingering floral note. Tasted three different times with different impressions, hence the wider-than-usual scoring range."
- ID, International Wine Cellar

Reviews *“Dark crimson. Intense meat extract savoury nose. Then rather loose on the palate with the furry tannins coming in only on the very end. Reasonably dramatic wine, not at all in the classic Margaux mould. A little drying on the finish, and just a slight lack of freshness. But certainly, it has pizzazz and impact. Determinedly modernistic.”*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“This is 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot. A very dense hue, deeply fruited, sweet with the aromas of damson and blackcurrant jam. A very soft start, and then a creamy texture to the midpalate, with supple and rather lush fruit. Well underpinned with structure, although the tannins are rather firm although there is decent acidity. The alcohol here is fairly obvious; this latter aspect dominates the palate. From my 2009 Bordeaux primeur assessment. 15-16+/20”
- CK, The Wine Doctor

“Dense purple red, quite meaty, savoury nose with a good lift of freshness and spice, good extraction and good firm tannins, a fleshy, fragrant wine with a good future.”
- SS, Decanter.com

“There's a fair whack of oak on this Cabernet-dominated blend at the moment, but the bramble and cassis fruit beneath is supple, yet well-structured, too. The tannins are sweet and silky, but there's enough power to sustain the wine in barrel and bottle. 10+ years.”
- TA, timatkin.com
