
Château Cantenac Brown 2015

CSPC# 744982

750mlx12

13.6% alc./vol.

Grape Variety
Appellation
Classification
Website
General Info

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot
Margaux

Third Growth. Troisieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.
<http://www.cantenacbrown.com/en/>

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.

Vintage

Simply put, 2015 Margaux is the result of a close to perfect growing season. Everything went right from start to finish. The winter was mild. Bud break and flowering were both quick, easy and uniform. Spring was warm and sunny most of the time. The summer months really helped make the vintage. July was hot and dry with temperatures averaging 10% higher than most vintages over the past 3 decades. The extended hot, sunny and dry conditions continued until late July. In August the thirsty vines were rewarded when the exact amount of rain needed arrived. Before the rains fell, the vines were becoming stressed, grapes were small and growers feared the results of continuing drought conditions for the 2015 Margaux vintage.

The rain triggered the start of the ripening period. From that point forward, the vines enjoyed almost picture-perfect conditions with continued warm, sunny days and cool, refreshing nights right through the harvest. The small amount of rain that fell October 2 ranged from 13mm to just under 20mm, depending on where your vineyard was located. When you compare that with the 100mm that fell in the northern Medoc, especially in and around St. Estèphe, you get the picture on what took place in Margaux, and how it compares to parts of the Northern Medoc. The continued period of pleasant daytime temperatures and cold nights could not have been better. Most growers started picking their 2015 Margaux crop by Monday, September 21, finishing by October 7, with a few stragglers completing their harvest a few days later.

Vineyards

The 54-hectare Bordeaux wine vineyard of Cantenac Brown sits on gravel and sandy soils. Planted to 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, the average age of the vines are 35 years of age. The current blend in the vineyards shows an increase in Cabernet Franc. 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	Each single day, vine stock after vine stock and bunch by bunch, vintners made even better from what Mother Nature had given. Even if some rains at the end of September raised some doubts, the knowledge and experience of our technical team made it possible to keep cold blood. We started harvesting Merlots on October 1st, and finished Cabernets Sauvignons on October 17th. Even if botrytis had been seen in the vineyard, it didn't disturb our decision on what lot to harvest and when. Deleafing and optimized sun exposure of the clusters have been particularly favorable.
Maturation	All grapes have been sorted carefully: First by hand, cluster by cluster, on tables in front of the vat room. Then sorted again, berry by berry, between destemmer and crusher, also by hand or through optical sorting machine. Only good grapes entered into the fermentation vats. We got cheered up by the first pumping overs. First juices were deep colored and had soft tannins. And after ageing and tastings, relief changed to enthusiasm. 53% of the harvest went into the wine. After blending, the wine is aged for 12 -15 months in oak barrels, with 60% new and 40% a year old. The wine is racked 3 to 4 times a year, separating the clear wine from the lees 2012 is a very good vintage, you'll get surprised!
Tasting Notes	Deep color and fruit, some florality, depth, a little four-square but good fruit.
Production	9,583 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2022-2035
Scores/Awards	<p>94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018</p> <p>91-94 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016</p> <p>90+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018</p> <p>92-94 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016</p> <p>94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018</p> <p>93-94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016</p> <p>94-96 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2016</p> <p>93-95 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2016</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - January 2019</p> <p>16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016</p> <p>90 points - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2017</p> <p>95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2018</p> <p>95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 2017</p> <p>94-96 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016</p> <p>93 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - July 2019</p> <p>95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018</p> <p>93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016</p> <p>94 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - February 2018</p>
Reviews	<p><i>"This brims with voluble plum cake, boysenberry and blackberry compote flavors, embedded with brambly structure while keeping a polished feel overall. Alluring black tea, roasted alder and licorice details line the finish. You'll want to jump on this one. Best from 2022 through 2035. 9,583 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"Very fresh, with well-defined red currant and raspberry coulis flavors that stream through, enhanced by a violet note on the mineral-edged finish. 9,583 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2015 Cantenac Brown is medium to deep garnet-purple in color with a nose of cherry cola, cassis and warm plums with touches of spice box and pencil shavings. The medium-bodied palate sports a lot of oak, with very firm and chewy tannins and a woody finish."</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p>

Reviews

"The 2015 Cantenac Brown follows their excellent 2014 with another great Margaux. Here, a nuanced nose that does not come racing from the blocks, but keep your nose in the glass and it reveals detailed blackberry, cranberry and strawberry aromas that are neatly embroidered with the new oak. The palate is medium-bodied with fine, quite tensile tannin. There is breeding interwoven into this Margaux, palpable sophistication, and it finishes with panache, fanning out with lightly spiced red and black fruit. It is not the most ostentatious Margaux in what is a fecund season for the appellation, but I suspect it will surprise a few wine-lovers as its ages."
- NM, Wine Advocate

"Instantly appealing ripe dark berries and plums with graphite and other dark stony notes. Very well-integrated wood here. The palate has a plush, suave and supple feel to it. Great concentration and energy. Really intense yet fresh finish. Try from 2022."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Very structured and muscular with black currant, chewy tannins and a flavorful finish. Full body. Yet polished and intriguing."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"94–96. Barrel Sample. Beautiful dusty tannins permeate this ripe wine. It has a smooth and rich texture, with bright blackberry flavors and a refreshing, vibrant close."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"93–95. Barrel Sample. This wine is rich and opulent, with dense tannins and a smooth texture. Blackberry fruit flavors are coupled with ample acidity to balance the wine's ripeness."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Tasted blind. Light but well-mannered nose. Lots of juice and energy even if without absolute distinction."
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Bright crimson. Very competent representative of the vintage with marked ripeness on the nose but then rather chunky and bitter on the finish – like Oxford marmalade. Not much lift. A tad stodgy."
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Good depth of fruit and a well-expressed, quite broad Margaux style which gets more classic each year."
- JA, Decanter.com

"Just a few months of aging since this was last tasted has added more aromatic development. Now, you find dark, red fruits, chocolate mint, wet earth, flowers, espresso and a touch of mint. Full bodied, concentrated and silky, the wine paints your palate with fruit, velvet textured tannins and freshness. The wine sticks with you as it lingers on your palate."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Clearly one of the top vintages produced here ever, the wine is focused, ripe, deep, long and richly textured. There is volume, freshness, weight, complexity and character."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep, rich violet-ruby in color with a complex array of scents ranging from espresso, violets, truffle, boysenberry, cassis and black cherry, this wine is sensuous, concentrated, opulent and balanced with a long, intense, mouthful of fresh, pure berries. The finish is impressive and lingers with a flurry of sweet, dark, red fruits and even darker chocolate. Easily the best wine since 2009. From 61% Cabernet Sauvignon and 39% Merlot, this wine reached 13.9% alcohol with a pH of 3.7 and is aging in 60% new, French oak barrels. The harvest took place from September 17 to October 8. Only 51% of the harvest was used in the Grand Vin."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

Reviews *"I love the fruit here, with pureed damson and deeply focused, bitter dark chocolate. It has lovely grip and persistency, a wine that you want to take your time with and watch as it develops. It is poised and balanced, with lots of impact and well-extracted, not afraid to push things, but pulls back at the end. 60% new oak. (JA)"*
- JA, *The New Bordeaux*

"The 2015 Cantenac-Brown has a fresh, perfumed bouquet of raspberry, wild strawberry and cedar aromas that feel very focused and cohesive. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy red fruit and gentle grip, and quite saline in the mouth, leading into a spicy, vivacious, almost Saint-Julien-inspired finish. This impressed in barrel just as it does here. Highly recommended. Tasted blind at the Southwold 2015 Bordeaux tasting."

- NM, *Vinous*

"A rich, exotic wine, the 2015 Cantenac Brown is simply stunning. Dark cherry, plum, mocha, espresso, licorice and leather all flesh out in this ample, voluptuous Margaux. A rush of super-ripe dark cherry, plum, violet, lavender and sweet French oak builds as this plush, explosive wine shows off its bold personality. The 2015 is quite concentrated and extracted in style, and yet all the elements are wonderfully fused together. I would give the 2015 at least a few years to assimilate some of its new oak. (AG)"

- AG, *Vinous*

"The 2015 Cantenac Brown is superb. Translucent, weightless and totally finessed, the 2015 offers outstanding purity and exceptional overall balance. Sweet plum, tobacco, cedar, licorice and new leather are some of the many nuances that take shape in the glass, but it is the wine's purity that is most impressive. Hints of lavender, iron and smoke add shades of nuance on the tightly wound finish. Over the two weeks I followed it, the Grand Vin put on considerable depth and power. It will be interesting to see where things end up here, but the 2015 was superb all three times I tasted it. Cantenac Brown is one of the great still affordable wines of the year. Don't miss it."

- AG, *Vinous*

"Readers who need more proof that Margaux was the place to be in 2015 just need to taste the 2015 Château Cantenac Brown. Based on roughly 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot it offers an extraordinary nose of crème de cassis, caramelized cherries, flowers, and spices. This medium to full-bodied effort has plenty of tannins, as well as toasty oak, yet is perfectly balanced and has a great mix of both freshness and richness. It's a tour de force that will be drinkable in 4-5 years and last for 25-30 years!"

- Jeb Dunnuck
