

# Château Prieuré Lichine 2020

CSPC# 888356

750mlx12

13.6% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

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

## Appellation

Margaux

## Classification

4th Grand Cru Classé

## Website

<https://prieure-lichine.fr/en/the-prieure-lichine-wines/chateau-prieure-lichine/>

## Sustainability

Château Prieuré-Lichine, certified high environmental value in 2019, is engaged in a sustainable certification procedure.

## General Info

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 Prieuré 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.

## Winemaker

Étienne Charrier winemaker, Stéphane Derenoncourt consultant

## Vintage

3 key factors marked the 2020 growing season all of which impacted significantly on the profile of the wines:

- A rainy spring,
- Persistent drought conditions in summer
- An earlier than average vine cycle

The 2019/2020 winter was very rainy in November and particularly mild in February. Bud-break occurred early, around the middle of March, followed by even shooting and the promise of a large crop.

Very wet spring weather in April and at the beginning of May brought about severe downy mildew pressure, which the vineyard crew fought to keep at bay with multiple interventions in the vineyard. The flowering took place in fine weather conditions.

As from mid-June, the weather pattern changed, and summer temperatures set in with highs being reached around July 19th and throughout the first ten days of August. Drought conditions were extreme with 0mm of rainfall from 18th June to 11th August. The young vines at the estate showed clear signs of suffering, while the old vines with their deep roots coped with the extreme conditions better.



<b>Vintage</b>	The ripening process went quickly, although unevenly from one plot to the next, and the skins remained thick. The storm that broke on 15th August brought relief to the suffering vines, but the downpour flowed mostly away and failed to make up for the shortfall of water in the soils.
<b>Vineyards</b>	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.
<b>Harvest</b>	With another hot spell forecast, we decided on 14th September to immediately start the harvesting of the Merlot. The hot dry summer had impacted on the grapes, leaving them with low levels of acidity. Because the ripeness dates varied over the four communes, we were constantly in the process of harvesting and brought in grapes that displayed very good conditions of health. The picking was completed on 1st October with the last of the Cabernet. - Merlot: 14th-22nd Sept. - Cabernet Sauvignon: 23rd Sept. – 1st Oct.
<b>Winemaking</b>	Transferring the fruit to the vat by gravity-flow enabled us to avoid any detrimental forcing of the berries. The vinifications went smoothly with reasonable alcoholic degrees being registered, particularly for the Cabernet Sauvignon. Maceration times for the top vats were around 28 days and resulted in wines with a tannin-rich, velvety profile. The tulip vat room and pigeage system were used to great effect. The wines offered good levels of ripeness, a silky, velvety mouth-feel, and a wide aromatic palette centered on black fruits and spice, with the expression of Prieuré-Lichine's great terroir clearly showing through. Aged in 40% new barrels and 60% 1-yr old barrels.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	The 2020 Chateau Prieuré-Lichine presents a ripe profile. Silky and velvety palate, with a bouquet of black and spicy fruit, affirming this great terroir.
<b>Winemaker's Notes</b>	Medium to deep garnet-purple in color, the 2020 Prieuré-Lichine offers up notes of fresh redcurrants, blackcurrant pastilles, boysenberries, and dried Provence herbs, plus wafts of tobacco leaf and pencil shavings. Medium-bodied, the palate delivers a great intensity of pure black and red fruit flavors, framed by grainy tannins and a lively backbone, finishing long with a refreshing herbal lift.
<b>Serve with</b>	Prieuré Lichine is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes. Chateau Prieuré Lichine is a perfect match with Asian dishes, hearty fish courses like tuna, mushrooms, and pasta as well as cheese.
<b>Production</b>	14,000 cases made.
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2022-2034.
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>92 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p><b>95-96 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p><b>16.5 points</b> - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>91 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>91-94 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p><b>89 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Yves Beck - June 2021</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - July 2021</p> <p><b>93-94 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseauve (score only) - July 2021</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>

## Reviews

*“Ripe and focused, with a violet and alder frame that marries well to the core of lightly steeped plum and black currant fruit flavors. The alder edge asserts itself on the finish, though the fruit keeps pace just a half-step behind. This should settle in with some cellaring. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2036. 14,000 cases made.”*

- JM, Wine Spectator

*“Medium to deep garnet-purple in color, the 2020 Prieuré-Lichine offers up notes of fresh redcurrants, blackcurrant pastilles, boysenberries, and dried Provence herbs, plus wafts of tobacco leaf and pencil shavings. Medium-bodied, the palate delivers a great intensity of pure black and red fruit flavors, framed by grainy tannins and a lively backbone, finishing long with a refreshing herbal lift.”*

- LPB, Wine Advocate

*“Black cherries, blackcurrants, tobacco, cacao, and some licorice on the nose. Firm yet creamy, with very fine tannins that spread across the palate. Medium to full body. So long and beautifully balanced. Best after 2026.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This is really something with pure blackberry and blueberry character. Chewy yet ultra fine tannins. It goes on and on. Could challenge the great 2016.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This wine already shows a luscious side with its ripe black fruits and rich tannins. The obverse shows structure and acidity. Both these elements will together give a wine for aging.*

*Barrel Sample: 93-95.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Plenty of juicy dripping autumnal fruit, cassis, and blueberry with a crack of black pepper and a good lick of saline freshness on the finish that makes you want to take another sip. One of the clear successes, intense and concentrated with balanced tannins and acidity if some bitter almond overtones.”*

- JA, Decanter.com

*“Flowers, dark, red pit fruits, mint, and just a hint of chocolate create the perfume. The wine is silky, fresh, plush, and polished with an elegant, vibrant finish that does not want to quit. This is already stellar in your glass, and with some time in the cellar, it is only going to get better with age. Drink from 2024-2047.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Dark garnet with purple around the edges, the wine pops with spearmint, vanilla, spice, black, red, and blue fruit on the nose. Plush, soft, and silky, round, and full-bodied, the layers of ripe, polished fruits that coat your palate do not want to quit. This is a solid vintage for Prieuré Lichine.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“The 2020 Prieuré-Lichine was picked at 32hl/ha and matured in 40% new oak. It has quite an intense nose of black plum, blueberry, and violet scents, though missing some terroir expression and mineralité. It’s high-toned at the moment, but it needs more bass notes. The palate is medium-bodied with slightly chalky tannins and a fine bead of acidity. Very fresh, with fine salinity on the finish. It actually meliorates as it goes on, leaving you wanting more. This has very good potential.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2015 Prieuré-Lichine has really come together over the last two years. Sumptuous, bold, and racy, with no hard edges or angular contours, the 2015 is all class. The purity of the flavors is striking. Bright floral and spice notes perk up the red stone fruit nicely in this sensual, silky Margaux. All the elements simply fall into place. This is the first vintage Stéphane Derenoncourt and his team made in the new cellar. In 2015 Prieuré-Lichine, is a total knock-out. Don’t miss it.”*

- AG, Vinous

**Reviews**

*“The 2020 Prieuré-Lichine opens with very pretty floral and spicy overtones. Pliant, silky and nuanced, the 2020 is all charm. The purity of the red/purplish berry fruit is compelling. Readers will find an understated, classy Margaux full of character. I can't wait to taste this from the bottle. A bit clenched today, but that should not be an issue with time. The Prieuré-Lichine finishes with notable freshness and savory intensity.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“Tasted on two separate occasions, the 2020 Château Prieuré-Lichine has a solid perfume of redcurrants, blueberries, smoky oak, and chocolate that shows more and more floral nuances with time in the glass. Nicely textured on the palate, with medium to full-bodied richness, it has solid mid-palate depth, ripe tannins, and a great finish.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“The ruby/purple-hued 2020 Château Prieuré-Lichine offers a medium- to full-bodied, plush, layered style that carries beautiful red and blue fruits, notes of sandalwood and flowery incense, outstanding overall balance, ripe tannins, and a great finish.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Deep ruby, opaque core, purple reflections brightening on the rim. Nuances of cassis and liquorice and black cherries, fine oak spices, and a tobacco touch. Complex, dark berry fruit, nougat, taut tannins, mineral finish, fine salty nuances, good length. Has ageing potential.”*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*“Pure, intense and refined nose showing wild raspberry, violet and some darker fruit notes with stylish oak, a rather Burgundian, and supple texture with fine roundness elegance and length.”*

- AL, Tasted.com

*“Interesting, this nose which stands out a bit and which is quite pleasant. Blood oranges, cherries and blackcurrant notes followed by spicy hints. On the palate, the wine is fine, balanced and slightly creamy. It is slender with elegant and well-integrated tannins. Fruity and refreshing finish. A pleasant and elegant Prieuré-Lichine. 2024-2040].”*

- Yves Beck

---