

CHATEAU  
CANTENAC BROWN  
MARGAUX

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MEDIA KIT





# A SCOTTISH CASTLE IN MARGAUX





# A Scottish origin

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## THE BROWNS, A SCOTTISH FAMILY

Approaching Château Cantenac Brown through the park, with a spring mist hanging low over the shifting reflections in the ponds and the ochre shades of the foliage, you can easily understand how a family felt driven to reproduce a corner of Scotland in the heart of the Médoc. Let's step back in time to the early 19th century: a few riders, John-Lewis Brown in the lead with his relatives trotting behind, meander through the trees until they reach a majestic building that they themselves have created.

## THE FIGURE OF JOHN-LEWIS: HIS WORK AND HIS HIGH STANDARDS RECOGNISED IN 1855

Originally from the Colstoun clan, near Edinburgh, he came to Bordeaux like many other bold entrepreneurs who crossed the Channel to succeed in the wine trade. John-Lewis Brown had not only a will of iron, but also the sensitivity to elegance that leads to great achievements. Also, and above all, he could recognise the finest wines: he selected the best Margaux terroirs amongst plots on the gravelly Cantenac outcrop and the Margaux plateau. A few decades later, Cantenac Brown wines were included in the prestigious 1855 Grands Crus Classés classification.

## A SCOTTISH IMPRINT: A DEEP AWARENESS OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY VALUES

John-Lewis Brown came with goals and values specific to his family and to his clan. The owners who succeeded him at the head of Château Brown Cantenac inherited this team spirit and dedication to work. It is clear, through the clan motto, Floreat majestas, that this is a place where one reaps what one sows. This never-ending story, begun by John-Lewis Brown, is part of the Château's lifeblood.



# A balance of influences

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## A SPECTACULAR TUDOR-STYLE CASTLE

When this splendid castle in pure Tudor style was built in 1806, people from the Médoc area and wine merchants from all over the world flocked to see it. The steeply pitched roofs with tall stone chimneys, the narrow mullioned windows and the contrasting red brick and stone façade are reminiscent of a college chapel in Cambridge or Hampton Court Palace. An architectural feat marked by elegance.

## AN ARTISTIC NEXUS AT THE FOREFRONT OF IMPRESSIONISM

The Château still contains paintings by the grandson and namesake of the founder, an artist who straddled the line between Naturalism and Impressionism. John-Lewis Brown, who was friends with Degas, Manet, Pissarro and Toulouse-Lautrec, left emotionally-charged paintings in which nature is omnipresent. Cantenac Brown was an inspiring playground during his childhood, and was later to become his artistic haven. A square in the city of Bordeaux is named after him, consecrating the painter who made Cantenac Brown an artistic nexus at the forefront of Impressionism.









# The pursuit of a legacy

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## TRISTAN LE LOUS

### A PASSION AND QUEST FOR AN IDEAL

The new owner, Tristan Le Lous, felt a natural affinity with this lineage. He acquired the estate with the firm intention of sustaining and nurturing the Cantenac Brown name and Scottish heritage that shines equally through the elegance and nobility of the wines and the place itself. The Le Lous family's roots go back to the Trégor region of Brittany. As a child, Jean Le Lous, Tristan's grandfather, spoke only Breton. His teacher soon noticed the boy's extraordinary abilities and encouraged him to go to secondary school. He became a pharmacist in the army before taking over a chemist in Burgundy. *"It started out as a simple drugstore and my grandfather was supported by many winegrowers who invested in his business. As they were close acquaintances, he naturally had some*

*very fine bottles in his cellar, and that's how I was introduced to wines",* reveals the grandson. Years later, over the course of travels and tastings, Tristan Le Lous fell under the spell of Château Cantenac Brown, from its signature wines to the château itself, unlike any other. Together with his father and brothers – still at the head of the company founded by his grandfather – he became owner in 2019. *"The delightful wines, the verdant setting, the moving architecture of the building which evokes the Scottish origins of the Brown family, and lastly the personality of the managing director José Sanfins, were what made it irresistible",* sums up Tristan Le Lous.

## JOSÉ SANFINS

### A STRONG BOND WITH CANTENAC BROWN

For José Sanfins, the adventure with this Margaux Grand Cru Classé began in 1989, when the château still belonged to AXA Millésimes.

A young intern at the time, he has since produced more than thirty superb vintages. José Sanfins, whose family originates from the Douro vineyards, grew up in contact with nature on the island of Patiras, a strip of land in the middle of

the Gironde estuary. His parents, both winemakers, passed on their know-how and attachment to these wine-growing regions to him.

Years later, after completing his studies, he put his skills and tenacious energy to work for Château Cantenac Brown, on the left bank of the estuary.

# EXACTING STANDARDS OF WINE-MAKING







## Creation in motion

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### PRECISION-DRIVEN WINES

*"It takes several decades to understand a vineyard; my successors will reap the essential benefits of what I plant today"*, sums up José Sanfins. The first phase of work consisted of draining the soil once again and replanting the vineyard in the early 1990s. Harvest practices were re-evaluated using anthocyanin analyses to obtain the best possible maturity. This precision continued in the winery with gentle extraction in stainless steel tanks for perfect temperature control. Very early on, the gravity flow principle was adopted at Cantenac Brown so as not to fatigue the wines. A maturation cellar received new barrels, and a second wine was also created at the end of the 1980s.

### THE CIRCLE OF 30 MEMBERS OF THE CANTENAC BROWN CLAN

The notion of family or clan, to use an idea close to John-Lewis Brown's values, is a lingua franca that lingers over Château Cantenac Brown. From the vines to sales, from the grapes to park maintenance, the team comprises around thirty employees, some of whom have been at the estate for 40 years and could almost blend into a John-Lewis Brown painting. *"Loyal to the Brown clan's ethos, we are focusing on the long term, and the team's commitment to a purpose and a philosophy. I like to know where we come from, where we are now and where we're going. It's an honour to champion the name of Cantenac Brown"*, emphasises José Sanfins, whose background is the perfect illustration of these values. *"This Château is a collective adventure, we feel comfortable here and this is reflected in the wine"*, adds the keeper of the flame.



# One approach, three wines

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## CANTENAC BROWN'S SIGNATURE WINES

Château Cantenac Brown, Troisième Grand Cru Classé 1855, is a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon (which represents between 65 and 70% depending on the year). It may contain a hint of Cabernet Franc. Reflecting the character of a great terroir, this is a wine for laying down: brilliant, fleshy and velvety. Château Cantenac Brown is remarkable for the freshness of its fruit, its density and its very fine tannins. At their peak, the vintages express freshness, an elegant bouquet of red and black fruits, and opulence and tension on the finish with spicy notes.

Brio de Cantenac Brown was created in 2001. A balance between Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot

with around 10% Cabernet Franc, it can be enjoyed when younger, *"Determining the plots was the starting point for Brio; it has a true identity, which explains the wine's renown"*, says José Sanfins.

First produced in 2011, Alto de Cantenac Brown is an exclusive white wine produced from just 2 hectares of vines. With 90% Sauvignon Blanc and 10% Semillon, it is a mineral wine, smooth and vibrant, with notes of flint and white fruit. A superb match for haute cuisine.





THE POWER  
OF THE EARTH







## A warm, approachable and proud clan

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### FROM CLAN TO CLUB

A history that incorporates a share of Scottish culture, combined with an exceptional location, a Tudor castle, impressive grounds and a prestigious Margaux vineyard, has naturally inspired the Cantenac Brown clan with a desire to open up the château to wine lovers from all over the world. *"We are so close to Bordeaux, and our site lends itself to a customised welcome, in small groups"*, explains Tristan Le Lous.

Cantenac Brown's gold labels bearing the château's prestigious name can be found all over the world. Aficionados form a club that will be able to visit the estate to learn all about this rich past and unique territory, and to meet the family behind these great Margaux wines. They will be given a warm welcome, as sincere as the clan presiding over the destiny of the Grand Cru Classé 1855, at the production facility. *"From my first meeting with Tristan Le Lous, I felt that the new owner was establishing a durable overall strategy, in the interest of those who work at the château as well as visitors"*, explains José Sanfins. This approach includes an offer of charming bedrooms for wine professionals during the Primeurs event, or for exclusive tastings.



## VISITING THE NEW WINERY: AN INTIMATE DIALOGUE

As part of an increasingly meticulous approach in which nothing is left to chance, a new winery will be built with 70 vats, increasing the potential for plot-by-plot vinification tenfold with the goal of making ever more precise wine. This well-thought out project is a tribute to the land and to Cantenac Brown's connection to nature. The will to create from what is there, with what nature offers to this terroir. This philosophy is embodied in the project for an eco-responsible winery made entirely of raw earth. Visitors will follow a circuit as close as possible to nature, allowing them to understand the whole process from the vine to wine, using all their senses.





# Pride in the terroir

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## A VINEYARD

The vineyard, covering about sixty hectares, is spread over the prestigious Margaux and Cantenac plateaux. It lies at the heart of the appellation, famous throughout the world for delivering wines that are both balanced and elegant, with lacy tannins that continue to develop over time. The grape varieties planted, which are specific to the identity of the Margaux appellation, are predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon (up to 65%), Merlot makes up 30%, and the rest is Cabernet Franc with also a few hundred square metres of Petit Verdot and Malbec.

## THE LAND OF GRAVEL

The choice of grape varieties was dictated by years of observation, by tasting and by an in-depth study of the nature of the soils. The estate can be divided into three zones, namely 5 to 6 hectares of clay-limestone terroirs, 16 hectares of small gravel deposits and finally 34 hectares of deep Günzian gravel on the Margaux and Cantenac plateaux, which form the backbone of Château Cantenac Brown's wines, as this is precisely where Cabernet Sauvignon is predominant.

*"This mosaic of terroirs makes it possible, whatever the impact of the weather, to produce great wines every year. The trend is to further increase the proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon, which, with global warming, gives excellent maturity",* explains José Sanfins.

The white grape varieties were planted on clay-limestone plots.







# Preserving the beauty of the earth

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## THE PARK AND ITS BIODIVERSITY

Each season enhances Château Cantenac Brown with a changing palette of colours that made John-Lewis Brown's eyes shine when he arrived at the estate on horseback. The vineyard, the château and the park present striking tableaux that would enchant any wine lover, wherever they come from. Cantenac Brown is an atmosphere. About thirty Scottish sheep keep the grass down in the meadow between the park and the front of the château. Swans, ducks and rodents inhabit the ponds. The park is home to herons, kingfishers, jays, foxes, deer and wild boar. Bees buzz around the property's own hives, which produce local Cantenac Brown honey. *"And the park contains a real collection of rare species: sequoias, Spanish firs and red oaks, amongst others. It's a true, living heritage from the arboretum planted in the 19th century by John-Lewis Brown. Using the plans of the time, we are going to replant new rare specimens and reconstruct the garden as it was originally designed"*, adds Tristan Le Lous. The landscaped garden and an orchard of heirloom fruit trees have been recreated in partnership with the Conservatoire Montesquieu to reproduce John-Lewis Brown's original plan as closely as possible. This Margaux Grand Cru Classé 1855 estate is home to a biodiversity that we are responsible for protecting and passing on.

## SHARING THIS HAVEN

Aware that wine and hospitality go hand in hand, the team at Château Cantenac Brown has designed an immersive experience that, like the wines, reflects simplicity and elegance. *"After visiting the facility, if people are enjoying themselves and want to stay and wander around the park on their own they will be able to do so. Most of the visitors already know our wines, they come to find the atmosphere that our place exudes"*, notes José Sanfins. Marked by this unique ambience, enthusiasts will continue to be ambassadors and members of the club – or more precisely, of the clan. This haven can be enjoyed in small groups, who together can savour a wine, a place and an atmosphere, in the shade of Château Cantenac Brown.





## Being aware of the gifts of nature

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### RESPECT FOR THE LAND

There are some very special places that command admiration and respect. *“The first day I arrived at Cantenac Brown, my gaze stopped on this ocean of vines that forms the Cantenac plateau. That morning there was a “bride’s veil”, as the morning mist is called that creeps over the Médoc landscape when nights are cold. There was a mysterious atmosphere, and finally this castle in brick and stone emerged from the mist. Elegant. And impressive, too”,* recalls Tristan Le Lous, convinced that ownership of property is a duty before being a pride. From the first glance, the château’s Scottish heritage shines through in its wide-open spaces, and remains the model, the guiding principle in performing this duty, just as the vineyard has been run for decades, as naturally as possible. Based in a flourishing and breathtakingly beautiful setting, Château Cantenac Brown’s tiniest elements deserve special attention. *“We want to preserve the wild, unspoilt character of the park; we need this ecosystem to keep its balance. Nature regenerates itself, from the humus in which the flora grows to the regulation of fauna”,* says José Sanfins.



## AN UNPARALLELED RAW EARTH WINERY

The spirit of Scotland is yet again perceptible in the project to build a new winery in place of the old one. *"I am referring to values of the land, the unsullied landscapes that make up this area, these are the images that it reflects"*, explains Tristan Le Lous. This raw earth cellar is one of a kind, with one-metre-thick rammed-earth walls for optimal thermal inertia and hygrometric regulation for the stability and ageing of wines in barrels. Built in compressed earth, the winery's low vault will be a technical feat. There have only been two other examples throughout history: a palace built for a Persian king in Ctesiphon in the 3rd century AD, and a utopian construction in the experimental city of Auroville in India.

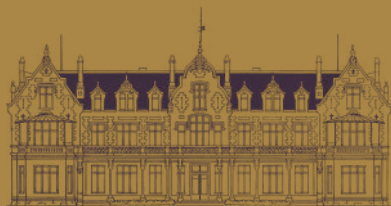
Elevating vats will provide a gravity flow process for the grapes, in order to preserve their full potential. Thanks to the thermal inertia of the winery, induced by the raw earth, air-conditioning can be avoided, thus offering a perfect atmosphere without energy consumption.

This cement-free project, using raw earth and timber – materials that are bio-sourced and untreated – has a long-term perspective. It celebrates a philosophy of regionalism with a local supply of materials and a traditional building where the workers will crush the earth in situ.

This rammed earth structure was designed by the architect Philippe Madec, globally acclaimed for his original works which are always in keeping with their environment, from the ecological district of Casablanca to the Conservatoire Botanique National in Brest. *"We wanted something that would fit discreetly amongst the existing buildings, with the lowest possible carbon footprint as well. We must be exemplary in terms of eco-responsibility; the wine and the place where it's made both deserve this consideration"*, asserts Tristan Le Lous, whose first tasting of Château Cantenac Brown wine remains in his memory like a Proustian experience.







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