

Château Ducru Beaucaillou 2012

CSPC# 744969

750mlx12

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot

Appellation

Saint Julien

Classification

Second Growth. Deuxieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.

Website

<http://www.chateau-ducru-beaucaillou.com/site2006-va/index.html>

General Info

Classified 2nd growth in 1855. Château Ducru-Beaucaillou is named after the beautiful, large stones found in its unique wine-growing terroir. The exceptional ecosystem produces fine, elegant, tasty wines, with a long finish - in short, archetypal Saint-Julien wines. Perched on an exceptional site with incomparable views over the Gironde estuary, in the centre of a hundred-year-old park, Ducru Beaucaillou is a majestic Victorian-style castle which has, over time, become one of the great symbols of the Medoc. Unusually for Bordeaux, it is built directly above the barrel cellars, enveloping its owners, who have lived here for over sixty years, in the sumptuous aromas of their wine. Today, the estate is managed by the company Jean Eugène Borie SA, which is owned by Mrs. Borie, her daughter Sabine Coiffe and her son Bruno-Eugène, CEO since 2003, the third generation of the Borie family to head the estate.

Vintage

A very cold, dry winter, a humid and chilly spring, with here and there unexpectedly high temperatures - the 2012 Vintage started with mixed weather which lasted until mid-July, until bunch-closure in fact.

Throughout the entire vegetative cycle total vigilance was absolutely necessary, together with unflinching and constant presence in the vineyards, to watch out for and contain all fungus attacks (mildew, oidium, Botrytis) and reduce to a minimum the disparity between bunches, caused by a slow, difficult and protracted flowering.

The fine, hot and sunny days of August and those vital ones of September, together with a certain amount of summer drought, allowed the grapes on the best terroirs, and in the perfectly worked vineyards, to attain a fine concentration of sugar and a great richness in their phenolic composition.

At the end of the cycle, rain allowed the grapes, whose maturation process had been halted by the drought, to continue to ripen. Just before the picking started, a period of considerable temperature differences between hot days and chilly nights helped to increase both the aromatic intensity and the synthesis of the anthocyanins in the grapes.

Thus, after an uncertain start, came a happy ending! In the final analysis we achieved, at the beginning of October, a truly promising potential, which it was vital to preserve by not leaving the bunches on the vines too long

Vineyards

Soil: Günz gravel dating from the early quaternary period; Area: 75 hectares
Average age of the vines: 35 years; Density of the vines: 10000 feet per hectare:

Harvest

The harvesting of the Merlot grapes on the plateau of Ducru Beaucaillou took place from the 3rd– 5th October and that of the Cabernet Sauvignons from the 6th – 10th of the same month.

Our 150 pickers were divided into 3 teams, each one supplied with a manual sorting table on which at least 6 persons were put to work. The entire crop was transported in the 9 brand-new, hydraulic trailers with variable suspension acquired by the property, thus guaranteeing the perfectly unspoiled passage of the grapes from the vineyards to the fermentation cellars. On arrival, unloading by vibration onto one of our two reception lines avoided any compacting or crushing of the grapes before destalking. Each of these two reception lines is made up of a destemmer "Winery" (Pellenc) and of a tri-optical sorting machine (Selective Process Vision [Pellenc]), joined by two successive, mechanical sorting tables.



**Vinification/
Maturation**

Already reduced by shot berries, millerandage and a difficult flowering, the net yields (after green pruning and thinning as well as different degrees of manual, mechanical and optical sorting) were extremely low: 30 hectoliters/hectare. Together with the 2011 vintage this is the smallest crop at Ducru Beaucaillou during the last 25 years.

The above explained hyper-selection resulted in the perfect homogeneity of the grapes that went into the vats, which allowed us, during the vinification, to extract only the finest tannins. Finally, the pressing in our new, vertical, hydraulic, Bucher JLB presses permitted us to considerably improve the quality of our press wines. Their high quality was particularly valuable in the final blend of the 2012 vintage. Analytically, the alcohol by volume is 13%, total acidity is 3.5 grams of H₂SO₄, and the pH is 3.7. The anthocyanin levels (800mg/litre) and the IPT's (70) are both good.

It is important to recall that these are much higher levels than those of the mythical vintages of the Fifties or Sixties. 2012 is archetypal "claret".

The 2012 wine will be matured for 18 months in oak barrels: 95% in new ones, the remainder in one-year-old barrels. Our barrels are of certified French oak, naturally open-air dried. Regular topping-up is done during the first 6 months of maturation. The wine is racked through the bung holes every 2 or 3 months and undergoes a total of 7 rackings during its barrel maturation. The traditional fining with egg white is done in the barrel. Bottling is carried out under sterile conditions under inert gas. Only finest quality corks made from natural cork are used and measure 54mm in length. Our bottles, engraved with the name Ducru Beaucaillou and laser-marked, carry labels incorporating holograms.

Tasting Notes

Deep, vivid purple. Beautiful bouquet. Blackcurrant with notes of violets. Plenty of fruit on the palate. Smooth tannins. Good acidity. Well structured, and very elegant. Finesse and elegance. The finish is very good - persistence and long in the mouth. Overall well balanced. Archetypal "claret". Slinky, very stylish, great distinction.

Cellaring

Drink 2017-2037

Scores/Awards

- 93 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015
- 93-96 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013
- 90-92 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013
- 92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013
- 92-93 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013
- 95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 1, 2015
- 94-96 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 11, 2013
- 90-93 points** - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2012
- 18 points** - Jancis Robinson., JancisRobinson.com - April 2012
- 18.25 points** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2013
- 94 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2013
- 93 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 15, 2015
- 93-95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 23, 2013
- 90-94 points** - Derek Smedley MW - April 2013
- 17.5 points** - Farr Vintners - March 2013
- 17.5 points** - Simon Staples, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirits Merchants
- 92 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013
- 93-95 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only)
- 18 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)
- 17 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)
- 17.5 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)
- Review only** - Justerini & Brooks Wine Merchants - April 2013

Reviews

"Offers an almost lavish feel, with layers of warmed fig, blackberry paste and raspberry coulis lined with ganache, anise and fruitcake flavors. A rock-solid graphite note lines the finish, showing just the slightest twinge of the vintage's austerity. A very admirable effort. Best from 2018 through 2027."
- JM, Wine Spectator

Reviews *“The plum, currant and blackberry fruit is well-integrated already, with taut anise, singed spice and apple wood notes. Sleek and refined, lacking the telltale sinew of the vintage. Very stylish through the finish, revealing a persistent anise note. Tasted non-blind. Score range: 93-96”*

- JM, Wine Spectator

“The color is a healthy deep ruby/purple and the wine smells beautiful, exhibiting lots of floral, creme de cassis, licorice and graphite notes. Medium-bodied but slightly deficient in the mid-palate at present, it picks up speed and finishes with serious authority and power. This 2012 should be outstanding, but it is difficult to favorably compare the 2012 to the prodigious wines produced at Ducru in 2009 and 2010. The 2012 will require 4-6 years of cellaring and should drink well for 15-20 years. The charismatic Bruno Borie has produced a 2012 Ducru Beaucaillou made from 81% Cabernet Sauvignon and 19% Merlot (about 50% of the total production). The harvest began right after the deluge that occurred the weekend of October 7, 8 and 9. A lot of dry tannins were present the day I tasted this wine, but I think they will soften and become manageable as the wine continues its upbringing in barrel for another 12-14 months.

- RP, Wine Advocate

“The Grand Vin is a blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Merlot, delivering 13% alcohol and a pH of 3.68 (IPT of 70.) The Merlot was picked between 3rd and 5th October and the Cabernet Sauvignon between 6th and 10th October. It is being aged in 95% new oak for 18 months. It has a very pure bouquet with small black cherries, blackcurrant with a pleasing mineral component and fine delineation. The palate is well balanced with fine tannins. It is not a powerful Ducru but there is good degree of finesse and freshness thanks to the earlier picked grapes, plus there is a pleasant spice/black pepper note right on the finish. This is one of the finest Saint Julien wines. Tasted April 2013.”

- NM, Wine Journal

“A very clean and pretty Ducru with fine tannins and a mineral floral character. Full body, yet racy and delicious. Pure and very elegant. Juicy and enticing.”

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“This is a wine with big tannins and big fruit. You can feel the wood rather than taste it, certainly smell it initially before the black currant aromas kick in. Impressive and sumptuous, it has a solid density that layers with the smoky character of the fruit and wood. Rich and complex, it needs to age. Drink from 2025.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“94–96. Barrel sample. This is a glamorous wine with acidity and structure surrounded by a ripe fruit character. The palate is powerful, and already quite complex, with both great fruitiness and a solid feel.”

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“(a blend of 91% cabernet sauvignon and 9% merlot; 5.5 g/l total acidity, 3.7 pH; IPT 70; 13% alcohol; 60% new oak): Dark ruby-red. Perfumed aromas of blackcurrant, violet, licorice and graphite, plus a whiff of minerals. The flavors of blackcurrant, graphite and minerals are delicate, pure and refined. Finishes fine-grained, suave and firm, with excellent breadth. It's also one of the longest wines of the vintage, and for my money one of the top four or five from the Left Bank in 2012. When I asked Bruno Borie how this could be, given the very high percentage of cabernet sauvignon in the blend, he mentioned the intensive work required to achieve this result: he added two sorting tables directly in the vineyards and installed an optical sorting system in the cellar. He also noted that the cabernet sauvignon vines are very precocious in his terroir (gravelly clay right next to the river, where daily temperatures can average roughly 3°C more than vineyards in Saint-Julien's interior. Moreover, he harvested between October 3 and 5 and from October 6 through 10, escaping the brunt of the rain showers. According to Borie, the 2012 reminds him of the estate's 1964, an excellent vintage for those properties that harvested before the rains. “

- ID, International Wine Cellar

Reviews

"91% Cabernet Sauvignon! Bruno Borie had a vat that represented 0.75% of the total blend and Bruno claims you could taste the difference between whether it was included. Brilliant crimson. Just a hint of green leaves. A bit of meat extract. Great texture. Transparent. Really rather delicate – more so than other St-Julien. Chapeau! Very distinctive. Fresh and delicate. Good interpretation of the vintage."

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

"Superb colour, vibrant and velvety, perfectly expressed 91% Cabernet fruit, a beautifully "feminine" St-Julien with finely-grained tannins for the future."

- SS, Decanter.com

"An English vintage that needed gentle handling" is how Bruno Borie describes 2012. If so, it was all for the good, for this is a pretty, elegant, carefully defined Ducru, that's stylish and well balanced, with leafy, cassis fruit and a touch of St Julien structure and tannin on the finish. Comparatively forward in style. Drink: 2020-35"

"The complex, earthy, campfire, tobacco, cedar and dark berry filled nose opens to a wine with round tannins and a sweet, fresh, spicy dark fruit filled finish."

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Produced from a blend that includes the highest percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon recorded in the history of the estate at 91%. The remainder of the blend is Merlot. Reaching 13% alcohol, the wine has a pH of 3.61. Smoke, licorice, boysenberry, coffee, and tobacco leaf notes produced a refined wine, which relies more on elegance than power. The wine offers good freshness in its medium-bodied, red and black fruit-filled finish. Bruno Borie, who has started comparing the style of his wines to various beautiful women, likened this wine to Fan BingBing, the famous Chinese actress. Her style was slinky and sensuous and, according to Borie, accurately describes the 2012 Ducru Beaucaillou. 93-95 Pts"

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Ducru is on top form these days. Bruno Borie has made some very serious wines at Ducru in recent vintages with many vats previously destined for the grand vin now being used for the second label. From 2003 onwards production of the first wine has been reduced from 15,000-20,000 cs to 9,000-11,000 cs. There is now more second wine - La Croix de Beaucaillou - than there is Grand Vin. Bruno's policy is now to only select fruit from the heart of the Ducru vineyard, overlooking the estuary for the Grand Vin. Ducru is clearly back where it belongs at the top of the super-second league. This year the yield was only 30 hl/ha and the blend is a strapping 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot. A deep colour. Masses of black cassis fruit here. Hints of charcoal, cedary cigar box, and pain grillé. Sumptuous and deliciously smooth on the palate despite the impressive depth of blackcurrant and blackberry fruit. Bruno Borie describes the wine as "slinky". There is fresh acidity, spice and minerals and a long, precise finish. Very classy indeed and touching first growth quality.

- Farr Vintners

"The nose is very cassis driven with an attractive freshness. It fills out in the middle with firm black cherry and ripe black plum. The freshness comes through again towards the back with cassis and black cherry giving complexity on the long finish. 2018-35."

- Derek Smedley

"How on earth can a Grand Vin of Bordeaux, with 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, have the poise, grace, sheer elegance and sophistication of one of the finest Grand Cru Burgundies? This 2012 Ch. Ducru-Beaucaillou certainly does. Don't get me wrong, it doesn't taste like Pinot Noir, it just has those ethereal qualities about it. A heady red fruit perfume entrances you into the glass, followed by a mesmerizing, beautifully layered palate that caresses your taste buds before a beguiling, fresh finish dances off, slowly, into the distance leaving you wanting more! If this is affordable, it will be one of the few bottle, magnum and double magnum purchases of the vintage. Utterly fabulous. Drink 2020-2040."

- SS, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

Reviews *“This vintage of Ducru-Beaucaillou is likened to Fang BingBing according to Bruno Borie. It is a feminine wine with layers of floral notes, red currants and spices. This wine is seductive and balanced with a gentle character that is a departure from Ducru's previous years. An approachable style with wonderful balance and grace. The grapes were harvested in early October. There is freshness and lift here along with the substance and backbone to age for a few decades. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young. (11-Apr-2013)
- JCL, asianpalate.com*

“Bruno Borie calls his 2012 Ducru a 'homage to Fan BINGBING'. From the year of the Dragon, its 'fresh and fruity bouquet, its charm and grace, its slinky construction, all suggest the delicious curves of the undulating, iconic Fan BINGBING...'. I know I'll be called out of touch by the rest of the J&B team, but I don't have a clue who this Fan BINGBING is. But, if she's caught Bruno's eye, she's probably a bit of a cracker. And so, it the 2012 Grand Vin. Sorting in the vineyards and on three optical sorting tables eliminated any imperfect fruit; the raw materials were excellent, so then it was down to vinifying with enough understanding and precision to extract colour, flavour and tannins without marring the wine with anything aggressive or forced. The team should be very proud, they have got the tone spot on; rich, decadent, voluptuous, sleek and will age beautifully - much like Miss BINGBING I'm sure... Pure crème de cassis interspersed with little red berries; mineral and classical. This is very suave, sexy and pure in an understated way. The classical lines continue on the palate; this is almost paradoxical giving the impression of an ultra-modern, super svelte wine, but at the same time possessing all the hallmarks of great classic St Juliens with its inky well of minerals and bittersweet fruit. Deeply mineral, perfumed, fresh, pitch perfect and beautifully balanced; this is without doubt one of the stars of the vintage. 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Merlot.”

- Justerini & Brooks Wine Merchants
