

## Château Branaire Ducru 2020

CSPC# 848121

750mlx6

13.7% alc./vol.

<b>Grape Variety</b>	58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc.
<b>Appellation</b>	St Julien
<b>Classification</b>	Fourth Growth. Quatrieme Grand Cru Classe in 1855.
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.branaire.com/">http://www.branaire.com/</a>
<b>General Info</b>	Château Branaire-Ducru is situated on the opposite side of the road from Château Beychevelle in the south of the St-Julien appellation. The Château has its origins in the 17th century, when it formed part of the estate of Château Beychevelle. After the latter's owner died in debt, the land was parceled up and sold off, with Jean-Baptiste Braneyre acquiring the Branaire hectares in 1680 (the name has metamorphosed across the centuries). Braneyre's daughter married Pierre de Luc and the estate was passed down through the De Luc family and later the related Ducru family for over 140 years. The last family members to own it were three noble nephews who are represented by the crowns on today's Branaire label. In 1919, Branaire-Ducru was sold to the Tapie family, but its modern renaissance had to wait until 1988 and the influences of the Maroteaux family, under whose direction the wine's quality has surged. Patrick Maroteaux has invested heavily in new plantings as well as installing a spanking new cuvier and an ultra-modern chai.
<b>Winemaker</b>	Cellar Master: Mr. Campadiou
<b>Vintage</b>	The winter of 2019-2020 was exceptionally rainy, leading to a complete replenishment of the soils' water reserves. The vines budded early and uniformly, 10 days sooner than average, thanks to the mild temperatures. The mild and wet spring was favourable to mildew, which required special attention. The flowering benefited from a short, warm, and dry period: the fruit set was ideal. From June, 19th onwards, dry conditions set in, but they remained cool until mid-July. The summer temperatures were then significantly warmer leading to a progressive, high level of water stress in the vineyard. These conditions help form a good build-up of anthocyanins and tannins in the berries, as well as the development of varietal aromas. At the beginning of September, the high temperatures were very favourable to phenolic ripening, which will be particularly successful.
<b>Vineyards</b>	Château Branaire-Ducru is tucked away in the south-eastern most part of the St Julien appellation, close neighbours being Beychevelle, which lies between Branaire-Ducru and the <i>Gironde</i> , and Château Saint-Pierre. The vineyards run west-east in several plots close to the <i>château</i> , over typical Médoc terroir of Quaternary alluvial gravels. There are 52 hectares in all, planted with 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and just 5% Cabernet franc and 3% Petit Verdot, with an average age approaching 40 years, although there are many vines approaching a century.
<b>Harvest</b>	September 14th-30 <sup>th</sup> . Average yields were 40 hl/ha.
<b>Maturation</b>	Aging in oak barrels for 16 to 20 months with 60 to 65% of new oak. Woods selected in various French forests according to their flavours and tannins quality. Light toasting respecting the wine's fruit and aromatic purity
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	Already very expressive nose of lovely, ripe fruits. After some aeration in the glass, it offers fine, spicy notes and overall freshness. The palate is very well balanced. Fleshy and yet delicately smooth, with elegant tannins. A long, impressive finish. From the beginning to end, the tasting unfolds with a beautiful sense of harmony. This vintage is a blend of all the grape varieties.
<b>Serve with</b>	Chateau Branaire Ducru is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Young vintages can be decanted for 2-3 hours. This allows the wine to soften and open its perfume. Older vintages might need very little decanting, just enough to remove the sediment. Chateau Branaire Ducru is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, stewed, and grilled dishes. Branaire Ducru is also good when served with Asian dishes, hearty seafood or fish like tuna, mushrooms, pasta, and cheese.
<b>Serve with</b>	
<b>Production</b>	12,000 cases made.



**Cellaring  
Scores/Awards**

Drink 2026-2038

**94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023  
**94 points** - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023  
**91-93+ points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021  
**95 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023  
**93-94 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021  
**93-95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021  
**16.5++ points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com (score only) - November 2021  
**15.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021  
**17 points** - Richard Hemmings, JancisRobinson.com - April 2021  
**95 points** - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023  
**92 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - December 2022  
**93 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021  
**95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023  
**93-95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021  
**92 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021  
**91-93 points** - Farr Vintners - May 2021  
**94 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023  
**92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021  
**95+ points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023  
**94-96 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021  
**93+ points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023  
**92-94 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021  
**18+ points** - Matthew Jukes - April 2021  
**94 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023  
**95-96 points** - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2021  
**95-96 points** - Vert de Vin - May 2021  
**95 points** - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021  
**91-93 points** - Michael Schuster, The World of Fine Wine - May 2021  
**18 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021

**Reviews**

*"This has a lovely floral lead followed quickly by a very pure and precise beam of cassis and bitter plum fruit. Shows ample structure but this is fine-grained and almost silky in feel, while subtle dark tea, savory, and iron notes peek through on the lengthy finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038. 12,000 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"The 2020 Branaire-Ducru will require more patience than the supple, sensual 2019, but it is another strong effort for this overperforming estate. Wafting from the glass with aromas of crème de cassis, plums, pencil shavings, petals, burning embers and discreet hints of new oak, it's medium to full-bodied, deep and layered, with a concentrated core of vibrant fruit and fine but youthfully firm tannins that assert themselves on the gently chewy finish. 2027 – 2055.*

*Branaire-Ducru occupies 60 hectares of deep gravel soils, in 80 or so different parcels, on the plateau of Beychevelle. Cabernet Sauvignon dominates, but plantings of Petit Verdot on good soils are also a particularity of Branaire. When the Maroteaux family purchased the estate in 1988, a new winery followed a few years later; and now, another is under construction, which will almost double the number of fermentation vats, permitting more precise parcel-by-parcel vinification (some of these vats, incidentally, were online by the 2021 harvest and are surely part of the reason why Branaire has performed so well). Winemaking is very classical, and maturation is in around 60% new oak, with three or four traditional rackings. There are no smoke and mirrors at this address, just extremely good, age-worthy Saint-Julien that's always elegant and impeccably balanced."*  
- WK, Wine Advocate

*"The 2020 Branaire-Ducru displays a deep garnet-purple color and pronounced blackcurrant cordial, plum preserves, and boysenberries scents, plus hints of sautéed herbs, unsmoked cigars, and graphite. The medium-bodied palate has a lot of verve, delivering appealing tension among the tightly wound black fruits and grainy tannins, finishing with an herbal lift. (LPB) 91-93+."*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

- Reviews** *“Plenty of blackberry, blueberry, lead pencil and violet aromas here that follow through to a full body, with ultra-fine tannins that run the length of the wine. So integrated and polished. Thoughtful young red. Try after 2027.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “A polished, creamy red with blue fruit, such as blackcurrants, and pretty, ripe and fine tannins that fill your mouth.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com
- “Rich, juicy and with dense tannins, this wine is full of generous blackberry fruit flavor. The tannins and impressive structure are what show promise for the future. Expect this wine to age well.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast
- “The 2020 Château Branaire-Ducru is vivid purple in color, with a classy, slightly exotic nose of blueberries, plums, violets, and orange blossom, and a kiss of marine-like iron emerging with time in the glass. Medium to full-bodied, nicely concentrated, and focused on the palate, it’s not massive by any means yet shines for its balance, purity, and length.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Full bottle 1,350 g. 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc. 18 months’ ageing. Deep crimson. Pale rim. Rather luscious fruit initially but a bit tart on the finish and just a little skinny on the mid palate. Relatively short. 13.5%. Drink 2027 – 2042.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Bramble fruits plus tomato leaf and herbs. Finely tannic giving smooth texture. Finishes with a lovely violet scent. Pristine fruit that finishes with dark, savoury persistence.”*  
- RH, JancisRobinson.com
- “An intensely perfumed nose with soft cocoa powder aromas. The texture is alluring, juicy and ripe but lifted, quite dense but also linear, a push-pull of direct fruit and chalky, plump tannins. Rich but not as supple as 2018, a bit more angular. Black cherries, plums, and currants on the palate with both a nice sweetness and salinity. Not so easy to taste and understand today, it’s thought provoking with lots going on. Great potential for a long life and one to watch!!”*  
- GH, Decanter.com
- “Rich black cassis fruits with a gourmet charm from the start and showing very well now. This is lovely, one of the best in terms of readiness to drink over the next few years. And yet you would miss out on its clear future if you did. Lovely depth to the fruit, with the Cabernet and Petit Verdot dominant. A vintage to really recommend, with a more succulent St-Julien character, emphasizing a dark black pepper spice alongside the cedar and menthol. 3% Cabernet Franc finishes the blend. Drinking Window 2022 – 2036.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com
- “Blueberry, blackberry, damson, and hawthorn, this has juice and tannins with an elegance and really excellent St-Julien character; A lovely Branaire, well placed. Unfussy, this is still not overly exuberant, but it has a real sense of sappiness, lift and sinew. 3% Cabernet Franc completes the blend. Drinking Window 2027 – 2042.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com
- “Quite perfumed, the complex nose offers cigar box, tobacco, spearmint, wet earth, mocha, spice, black currants, and dark cherry aromas to get things going. Medium/full-bodied with a silky, fresh, refined character to its layers of ripe, sweet, mildly-spiced, red pit fruits on the palate, the finish is complex, as well as refined and currently discreet. Clearly, this is one of the top vintages from Branaire Ducru that fans of the estate should definitely have in their cellar. Drink from 2026-2055.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

## Reviews

*“Cedar, tobacco, red and black currants, mocha, spice, and smoke come through loud and clear in the nose. Soft, silky, and supple, the fresh red fruits are already quite expressive creating a refined, medium/full-bodied, silky, wine with purity, character, and precision. This will drink well with 7-8 years of aging and will age and develop quite nicely.”*

- JL, [thewinecellarinsider.com](http://thewinecellarinsider.com)

*“58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot and 3% Cabernet Franc in 2020, with a yield of 40hl/ha. Bright ruby in colour. Full of red fruit and cherry blossoms on the nose. The palate is zippy and bright, with fresh red fruit and an herbal tone layered by a hint of sweet spice. The tannins are fine and crunchy, in keeping with the midweight fruit. Elegant through to the finish.”*

- Farr Vintners

*“The 2020 Branaire Ducru takes some time to unfurl in the glass and so I afford it 10 minutes to open with rigorous swirling. It repays patience with a tightly-knit, quite intense and disarmingly pure bouquet with blackberry, bilberry, loamy and light minty aromas. The oak is nicely integrated here. The palate is medium-bodied with finely-chiseled tannins. As I remarked out of barrel, there is more weight on the back palate than older vintages, greater density, and backbone. This has created a more satisfying Branaire Ducru with plenty of freshness on the finish. Bon vin.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2020 Branaire Ducru has a tightly wound bouquet of blackberry, wild hedgerow, freshly tilled loam, and distinct sea spray scents, all well-defined, albeit 15–20 minutes after opening my sample bottle. The palate is medium-bodied with grainy tannins, and very cohesive, displaying a keen thread of acidity. Unlike previous vintages, there is impressive density on the midpalate where it once was a little lean, and plenty of energy and tension conveyed by the finish. Excellent. 2028-2048.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2020 Branaire-Ducru was so alluring en premier but is very shy today. That said, some of that youthful exuberance has given way to the characteristic Branaire finesse. Dark red cherry, spice, grilled herbs, menthol, and licorice emerge, but only with great reluctance. Sweet floral and spiced notes lift the finish nicely. The 2020 is going to need the better part of a decade to come around.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The 2020 Branaire-Ducru is utterly magnificent. A wine of extraordinary depth and dimension, the 2020 possesses tremendous intensity right out of the gate. Inky dark fruit, chocolate, new leather, licorice, cloves, and lavender build as into the explosive, palate-staining finish. I don't think I have ever tasted a Branaire quite like this.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“Showing beautifully, the deeper purple/ruby-hued 2020 Chateau Branaire-Ducru offers a deep, masculine bouquet of blackcurrants, plums, smoked tobacco, and iron. This carries to a medium to full-bodied, concentrated, nicely balanced Saint-Julien with plenty of mid-palate depth, ripe, integrated tannins, and a great finish. Give bottles 4-5 years and enjoy over the following two decades or more. Best After 2027. Rating: 93+.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“The 2020 Château Branaire-Ducru is vivid purple in color, with a classy, slightly exotic nose of blueberries, plums, violets, and orange blossom, and a kiss of marine-like iron emerging with time in the glass. Medium to full-bodied, nicely concentrated, and focused on the palate, it's not massive by any means yet shines for its balance, purity, and length.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“This is a fine vintage for Branaire, but it is an atypical one, too. Usually velvety and charming, the classic Branaire flavours are here but they are tense, angular, and rather introverted. The acidity is biting fresh, and the tannins are lined up ready for combat, but these two elements do not dare to interfere with the fruit. The oak is lovely, too, and so I am confident that this will be a hugely enjoyable wine down the line, but you will have to wait not only for the tannins to soften, but also for the fruit it drops its shoulders, too.”*

- Matthew Jukes

**Reviews** *“Deep ruby, opaque core, purple reflections, discreet brightening on the rim. Delicate nougat, fine black forest berry compote, a hint of herbs, black cherry. Juicy, ripe plums, silky, well-integrated tannins, mineral, good freshness. Already harmonious, good potential.”*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*“On the nose it is elegant, fresh, racy, it offers an exemplary sense of the terroir for which the estate is known. It reveals the notes of fresh/pulpy blackberry, strawberry and more lightly bright redcurrant combined with touches of bright cherry, fine hints of blueberry, hints of the zan, flowers, sweet spices, a subtle hint of fresh hazelnut and a discreet touch of timut pepper. On the mouth it is elegant and offers a nice brightness of the fruit, gourmandize, delicacy, juiciness as well as a tangy frame, tension, a nice definition, a fine content, richness (but all in excellence / delicacy), a nice structure, delicacy, concentration, power (but all in delicacy) and a nice fruit. The wine express bright/fresh raspberry, fleshy/juicy strawberry and slightly fresh blackberry notes combined with hints of juicy/fresh currants as well as hints of blueberry, racy minerality, fine hints of lilac, graphite, sweet spices, subtle hints of vanilla and toasted almond. The tannins are elegant and mellow. Fine chew, gourmandize/sapidity on the persistence. A fine wine! Congratulations!”*

- Vert de Vin

*“Floral and elegant with plenty of wild berries, cassis, fine oak, tobacco. Very good volume, rounded and silky with super fine tannin, crushed raspberry, and fine spice flavours with a long and lingering finish, really nicely done.”*

- AL, Tasted.com

*“(58% CS, 32% M, 7% PV, 3% CF; 40hl/ha) Pleasing nose, softly, freshly rich, subtly gravelly; very nicely balanced, medium-full, fresh to lively in acidity, very fine in tannin, a touch of the slightly “crisper” 2020 St-Julien style; but lovely red- and black-fruit flavor, mineral-infused, a gentle flesh at the core, a very restrained mid-weight style, with a beautiful texture, gravel-marked, and with excellent length. Beautiful wine, fine St-Julien. 2030–50.”*

- MS, The World of Fine Wine

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