

# Château Ducru Beaucaillou 2011

CSPC# 744969

750mlx12

13.1% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot

## Appellation

Saint Julien

## Website

<http://www.chateau-ducru-beaucaillou.com/>

## 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

Winter 2010-2011: This year again, winter was dry, one of the driest in the decade. The winter chill was indeed present from December to February... for the benefit of our ecosystem.

Spring 2010-2011: The sharp rise in temperature in March resulted in an early budding of the vines at the beginning of April. Then, Bordeaux enjoyed a quite exceptional spring from April to June, with a severe drought and historically high temperatures. We thus experienced 40 days with maximum temperatures exceeding 25°C and a heat wave (with temperatures of 37 to 39°C i.e. +/- 100°F) on the 26th and 27th of June.

At first, the spring conditions

- promoted a precocious growth cycle (budding, flowering, fruit setting)
- limited the vegetative expression of the vines in favour of the fruits.

In summer, however, we returned to more traditional Atlantic conditions with a few wet and cool days between the 14th July and the 15th August. Ultimately, rains, throughout, the cycle remained within the seasonal average for Bordeaux. An important fact: if, at the outset of summer, the vegetal cycle was three weeks ahead in comparison with 2010, the mediocre weather conditions at midsummer slowed down the process and erased much of the precocity acquired in the spring. This extension of the cycle was an undeniable qualitative element.

## 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

Ultimately, more than 25% of the grapes that appeared on the vines in April / May were eliminated, resulting in the smallest Ducru-Beaucaillou harvest in the last 25 years (even less than in 2003, when we were beset by drought, heat and hail storms). This "hyper selection" resulted in:

- a very healthy harvest and perfect homogeneity of the grapes,
- ripe and perfectly matured skins,

That favoured a qualitative extraction of tannins during the vinification process.

We ended the picking of the Merlots on the 16th September and started the Cabernet Sauvignon on the 18th September. Clusters were quite small but perfectly ripe, healthy and very tasty!

## Maturation

Aged for 18 months in 95% new French oak barrels, other 5% of barrels are one year old. The barrels are all made from oak of French origin that is dried naturally outdoors. Regular topping-ups are carried out during the first six months of ageing. The wines, which are racked every 2 to 3 months, undergo a total of



**Maturation** seven rackings during their élevage. They are fined in barrel by the traditional method. Bottling takes place under sterile conditions using inert gas. Only carefully selected first quality 54 mm-long natural corks are used. Our bottles, engraved Ducru-Beaucaillou, are laser marked and bear a label protected by a hologram.

**Tasting Notes** Each vintage is unique, and we love it for its intrinsic merits without trying to compare it to any another. Each vintage does more than reflect the climatic conditions in a given year: it depends as much on the general conditions prevailing in the vineyard (clones, age, viticultural methods...), as on the level of team motivation, advanced technology, financial capacity of each property, and the sense of ethics and aesthetics of each owner. And we are certainly proud of our 2011, which is one of the greatest achievements of the past 25 years. I dared draw a parallel:

- between the voluptuous sensuality of our 2009 and that of Beyoncé Knowles,
- the absolute academicism of our 2010 and Charlize Theron ...
- and I believe that the 2011 has something of... Nicole Kidman!

Profound violet robe. Aromas of black cherries, with hints of vanilla and notes of peach buds. The palate is round and luscious. A big structure with ripe and suave tannins, fresh with good acidity. Power, richness and elegance. Very harmonious. The finish is fleshy, fruit filled, and very persistent.

**Cellaring** Drink 2018-2028

**Scores/Awards**

**94 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2014

**93-95 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012

**92-94 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2012

**93 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2014

**94-95 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2012

**94-96 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - May 11, 2012

**91-93 points** - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - April 2012

**17.5 points** - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012

**18 points/4 stars** - Stephen Spurrier, Decanter.com - April 2012

**95 points** - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2012

**93-95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 23, 2012

**18.5 points** - Simon Staples, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirits Merchants

**92-96 points** - Derek Smedley MW - April 2012

**18.5 points** - Farr Vintners - April 2012

**92 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2012

**93 points** - Falstaff Magazine - April 2012 (score only)

**18 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2012 (score only)

**17.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

**18 points** - Gault & Millau - April 2012 (score only)

**Reviews**

*"This is rather well-endowed for the vintage, with thickly layered ganache, currant paste, fig sauce and blackberry confiture notes still grappling with one another, while briary grip and dark spice fill out the toast-fueled finish. Very long, showing a level of power that belies the vintage. Best from 2018 through 2028."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"One of the vintage's stars, the 2011 Ducru Beaucaillou is a riveting blend of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Merlot. It boasts an inky/blue/purple color as well as an extraordinary nose of creme de cassis, licorice, subtle wood smoke and spring flowers, a surprising, full-bodied mouthfeel, and stunning intensity, purity, symmetry and length. Production at this estate used to be 12,000-15,000 cases, but after instituting a strict selection in addition to the smallest yields ever at this vineyard, it is down to 9,000 cases. The 2011 has considerable tannin, but it is soft and well-integrated. It should drink well for 20+ years. Readers should also be aware of just how sensational the second wine can be.*

*If you haven't noticed yet, it's time to jump on Bruno Borie's bandwagon for the two wines being produced from separate parts of the Ducru Beaucaillou vineyard."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

## Reviews

*"The Grand Vin is a blend of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot that is being aged in 95% new oak. It has a broody, introspective bouquet compared to the 2009 and 2010 as one would expect, although it is well defined with fine minerality, a seam of dried herbs, a touch of rosemary and thyme underneath a patina of black fruit. The palate is medium bodied with a fresh, citric entry. There is a slight hardness to the tannins although that will soften in time, although it is still struck through with a tensile streak. The finish has a firm tannic backbone, hints of soy and a saline touch towards the finish. This is an intriguing Ducru that should repay extended cellaring. Tasted April 2012."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"This sweet white is quite oily, with dried-pineapple and mango character. It's full-bodied, very sweet and juicy on finish. Thick and rich. Drink now or hold."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"Fabulous aromas of blackberries, plums, meat and rose petals. Full body, with special richness for the vintage with a sweetness not seen in many wines. Velvety tannins that are polished and beautiful. 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot. Little more Merlot than normal."*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*"94-96. Barrel sample. This wine is big, dense and impressive with plenty of concentration as well as acidity. It is balanced, bringing the big, ripe black-fruit flavor and firm tannins together with great style."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"(85% cabernet sauvignon and 15% merlot; 25 h/h): Opaque purple-ruby. Intense, perfumed nose combines blackberry, fresh herbs and coffee liqueur. Sweet and suave in the mouth, showcasing pure flavors of blackberry and blackcurrant. Finishes quite long, with lovely mineral tang, a note of blackberry syrup and peppery, youthfully chewy tannins"*

- ID, International Wine Cellar

*"Smallest Ducru harvest in the last 25 years, with 25% of the fruit that appeared in April/May eliminated. A vintage Bruno Borie likens to Nicole Kidman (cf Beyoncé in 2009). 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot. 95% new oak. pH 3.6. Deep dark cherry crimson. Seductive fruit on the nose. Warm and dry and the tannins have great finesse and zero dryness. Puts the many dry Margaux tasted this morning into perspective. Dense but really supple and has a juicy flourish on the finish. Long. And very pure cassis through the middle."*

- JH, JancisRobinson.com

*"The 2011 Chateau Ducru-Beaucaillou Saint-Julien offers strikingly floral Cabernet ripeness, finesse and purity, lovely texture, beautifully expressive wine almost Margaux style, total opposite to Leoville Las Cases."*

- SS, Decanter.com

*"This isn't quite as good as the 2010 and 2009 Ducru's, but it's not far behind: a concentrated, yet very polished St Julien from the lowest yields ever at the château. Sweet and intense, with hauntingly floral aromas, notes of cassis, plums and currant, fresh acidity and rich, yet silky tannins leading to a bright, refreshing finish. Powerful yet restrained, this is a keeper. 15+ years."*

*"Truly sensational" was how I described this wine after tasting. It is quite stunning and romps over several of the First Growths again this year. It's about harmony and grace but backed up with true weight and depth. Sexy is not a word we used often this year, but this really is sexy. Bruno Borie describes his 2009 as Beyoncé, 2010 as Charlize Theron and 2011 as Nicole Kidman, a demure, sophisticated femme fatale.*

*Now, I hold nothing against the ginger persuasion (some of my best friends are that way "blessed") but I think he's doing his beauty a slight disservice. I put 2011 Ducru in the Salma Hayek, Dusk till Dawn (pre vampire turn of course) category. Heavenly with more curves than the Nürburgring. If you can afford to treat yourself to one true "Super Second" this year this would be the one I'd go for, and, with any luck it might be affordable. Come on Bruno, you can do it, next year could be Hattie Jakes!*

- SS, Berry & Rudd Wine & Spirit Merchants

**Reviews** *“The nose has lots of fruit deep rich and sweet. Black cherry and cassis fill out the start of the palate damson and sloes enrich the middle all quite chewy and chunky lots of damsons. The tannins are firm but feel ripe giving structure but not holding back the fruit.”*  
- Derek Smedley

*“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. There is 30% less volume here than in 2010 as the yield was only 25hl/ha. 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot. This is a big and bold expression of Cabernet Sauvignon. Very concentrated and quite a block of a wine. Strong, rich and powerful with firm tannins and a long finish.”*  
- Farr Vintners

*“Produced from a blend of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot, which reached 13.10% alcohol, the wine will be aged in 95% new oak for 18 months. With the lowest yields in 25 years, production will be close to 25% less than in the previous vintage. Deep ruby in color, with purple accents around the rim, blackberry, truffle, tobacco, earth, cassis, smoke, licorice and black cherry scents are found with little effort. Plush, ripe, silky tannins and a fresh, ripe blackberry, black cherry and spicy plum finish are the hallmarks of this wine. 93 – 95 Pts”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“This is a very attractive wine with a perfumed nose of violets, blackberries, spices and a palate that reveals complex layers of flavours. Yield at Ducru in 2011 was only 25 hl/ha, very low by any standards. A full-bodied, dense wine that shows the elevated, plush tannins of this vintage but with freshness and nice depth. Very long length. This wine will age beautifully. Tasted in Bordeaux, France. Maturity: Young.”*  
- JCL, asianpalate.com

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