

# Château Branaire Ducru 2005

CSPC# 749538

750mlx12

14.8% alc./vol.

## Grape Variety

70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

## Appellation

St Julien

## Website

<http://www.branaire.com/>

## General Info

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 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.

## Vintage

The most memorable weather feature in 2005 is the drought: rainfall was 40% below normal levels from November 2004 to the end of August 2005. However, one or two storms at opportune times in the vine's growth cycle prevented a total stoppage of physical development. 2005 was quite a hot year, but there was no heat wave. The sum of daily temperatures was lower than in 2003, higher than in 2002 and 2004, and the same as in 2000. Hydric stress in the vineyard remained sufficient to produce ripe and concentrated fruit, but at the same time yields were generally poor, due to the smallness of berries. The first ten days of September were hot, then the temperatures cooled down, making ideal conditions for slow, progressive final ripening.

## Vineyards

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 *Gironde*, and Château Saint-Pierre. The vineyards run west-east in several plots close to the *château*, 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.

## Harvest

The harvest began on 20th September with the earliest Merlots and finished on 5th October. Two 2-day interruptions made it possible to harvest every plot at the optimal time.

## Maturation

Aging in oak barrels for 16 to 20 months with 60 % 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

## Tasting Notes

The powerful bouquet displays complex aromas of very ripe berries mixed with fresh fruit. The wood from 60% new barrels is completely incorporated into the wine. The palate is extremely dense and fleshy. The very full tannins are in no way aggressive and leave attractive freshness on the finish with very long aromas.

## Production

12,000 cases made

## Cellaring

Drink 2017-2035

## Scores/Awards

**92 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2008

**92-94 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - June 30, 2006

**95 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #176 - April 2008

**94-96 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #170 - April 2007

**94-96 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #164 - April 2006

**92 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2012



**Scores/Awards** **93 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - January 2011  
**91 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - July 2009  
**92 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - July 2008  
**89-91 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - April 2006  
**95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 1, 2008  
**93-95 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 20, 2006  
**94 points** - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2008  
**17.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - February 18, 2009  
**17.5 points** - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2006  
**17.5 points/4 stars** - Decanter.com - November 2008  
**17.5 points/4 stars** - Decanter.com - April 2006  
**94 points** - Jean Marc Quarin (no review)  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - November 17, 2012  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 1, 2012  
**94 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 24, 2010  
**95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 14, 2009  
**42 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - January 20, 2008  
**16 points** - Farr Vintner - April 2006  
**17.5 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2011 (score only)  
**18 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)  
**1 star** - Le Guide Hachette des Vins - 2009  
**91 points** - Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine (no review)

**Reviews** *"Very floral, showing blueberry, licorice and mineral on the nose. Full and very silky, with beautifully polished tannins. Long and caressing. This is always very well done and good value for the quality. Best after 2010."*  
- JS, Wine Spectator

*"Very pretty flowers, berry and cherry on the nose, with just a hint of currant. Full-bodied, with big velvety tannins and a medium finish. Lots of fruit and focused character. We will see if it equals the 2003. Score range: 92-94."*  
- JS, Wine Spectator

*"As usual, the 2005 Branaire-Ducru is one of the more distinctive wines of St.-Julien. Proprietor Patrick Maroteaux has turned out another classic. While not as opulent or fleshy as the 2003, and it remains to be seen if it will eclipse the 2000, the 2005 is a big, structured, intensely rich effort with raspberry, blueberry, and spring flower garden characteristics, stunning purity, full-bodied power, and good underlying acidity as well as harmony. The hard tannins suggest 8-9 years of cellaring will be beneficial; it should last for three decades. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2030+."*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*"Proprietor Patrick Maroteaux has been doing everything right since the late nineties, and, along with the monumental 2003 and 2000, the 2005 is one of his crowning achievements. It exhibits a dense ruby/purple color along with a sumptuous nose of raspberry liqueur interwoven with blueberries, crushed rocks, lead pencil shavings, and spring flowers. A big, structured St.-Julien revealing layers of fruit and glycerin, fabulous purity, and full-bodied power and richness, it will be long-lived, but is more backward than either the 2003 or 2000. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2030+."*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

*"Branaire, which has been ratcheting up the quality level over the last 5-6 years, made such a great 2003, I am hesitant to suggest the 2005 is as good, or even better. It will undoubtedly come down to consumer's personal preference, with the 2003 more exotic and flamboyant, and the 2005 more structured or "classic." In any event, the 2005 is one of the top Branaire's ever made. Its inky/ruby/purple color is followed by sweet aromas of spring flowers interwoven with black cherries, cranberries, cassis, plums, and hints of forest floor, wet rocks, and new oak. With wonderful purity, full body, terrific fruit intensity, a beautiful, expansive texture, and a stunning 45-50-second finish, it should be at its peak between 2011-2030."*  
- RP, Wine Advocate

**Reviews**

*"Tasted at BBR's 2005/2009 tasting in London. The Branaire '05 does not quite have the vitality of Beychevelle '05 on the nose with briary, a touch of vanilla pod and sous-bois, but all tightly coiled at the moment. The palate is medium bodied with powdery tannins on the entry: raspberry, tobacco, a touch of graphite, very linear and foursquare at the moment with a peppery finish that would not be seen out dead without a tie. Very fine. Tasted July 2011."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"Ex-chateau bottle tasted at Roberson's Branaire-Ducru tutorial. The nose is tightly coiled at the moment, but it has great delineation with blackberry, black plum and a touch of vanilla, a saline accent just in the background. The palate is medium-bodied and very well balanced, silky smooth, a mid-weight Branaire with fine tension. Fine acidity, lively and almost peppery towards the finish that clams up quickly. Great potential, an '05 finally coming into its own. Drink 2015-2030+ Tasted October 2010."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"Tasted single blind at Southwold. This has a more feminine, understated nose with scents of black cherries and griottes. Nice definition but a little 'obvious'. The palate is ripe and succulent, lavish, supple and corpulent with a polished toasty finish. Blackberry, raspberry and a touch of pain grille and yet like before it does not fan-out into a peacock's tail of flavours likes some of the other Saint Juliens. Still, there is great potential here. Drink 2013-2025. Tasted January 2009."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"This has a delicate, well-defined nose with a lovely hint of iodine. Very feminine and seductive with beautifully entwined new oak. The palate is silky smooth upon the entry, superb acidity, very focused, very polished but not overly so. This has a real vibrancy and tension from start to finish. Pure black fruits on the poised finish. Good length but quite linear on the finish when I want it to fan-out. Perhaps it will with time? Still, fulfilling my prediction that this would improve once bottled, this Branaire-Ducru has great potential. Tasted April 2008."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"Others were more enamored with this wine than I, principally because it lacked a little freshness on the nose and the acidity should have been a little sharper on the palate, to cut through those thick, meaty black fruits. Just a little unrefined but given Branaire's pedigree it would not surprise me to find it improved after bottling. Tasted April 2006."*

- NM, Wine Journal

*"This is opulent, but with restraint. The fruit is rich, black and delicious. Touches of spice and wood are present, lending complexity to the ripe fruits and balanced tannins. Impressive."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"93-95 Barrel sample. A huge, generous, opulent wine, with cedar aromas, a touch of toast and immense black fruits. And it still keeps a delicacy and elegance: very Saint-Julien."*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*"Dark red-ruby. Plum, chocolate and some exotic smoky oak on the nose. Lush, smooth and sweet but not at all over the top; offers unusual volume and breadth for Branaire. The exotic aspect carries through on the palate, and yet this wine is holding plenty of material in reserve. Finishes with building tannins and excellent length. Offers superb potential for aging."*

- ST, International Wine Cellar

*"Neat, well-balanced nose. Not the most concentrated but satisfying. Very harmonious and very 2005 even if the finish shows the acid and tannin pretty forcefully."*

- JR, JancisRobinson.com

- Reviews** *“Relatively pale crimson. Frank, direct, simple Cabernet aromas. Nice limpid texture. Good dry oak. Very relaxed and at ease. Lovely silkiness on the front and marked dryness on the finish. Absolutely not forced. Neat finish. Drink 2016-22.”*  
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Multi-dimensional nose, offering keen fruits, a mineral note and smoky oak. Luscious, alluring, with red berry fruits, refreshing acidity and balance. Drink from 2012.”*  
- Decanter.com
- “Fine concentrated colour and lovely cassis fruit with purity and elegance, plus a dimension of ripeness and depth, lots of charm as well as length. Drink 2010-25.”*  
- Decanter.com
- “Absolutely charming and surprisingly open with its tobacco, cassis, coffee bean, licorice, blackberry, earth and cocoa scents nose. Silky and polished on the palate, there is a lot of room for improvement as it's still a very young wine.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Tobacco, earth, cigar box, black cherry aromas lead to a wine that is on a more rapid path of development than anticipated. While not mature, this polished, rich style of Branaire Ducru is already starting to be fun to drink. I'm holding mine, but to quote the owner, Patrick Maroteaux, "It's still young, but it would not be criminal to have it at a dinner now.””*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Deep ruby in color, this wine opened with tobacco, smoke, earth, fresh berries, soil and forest scents. Concentrated with ample fresh fruit, coupled with a solid structure, this has the potential to be one of the longest-lived vintages of Branaire Ducru. The round textured wine ends with fresh berries, cassis and spice. I'm waiting another 5 years before opening my case.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “You can smell, taste and feel the perfectly ripe fruit this wine is made from. Add a kiss of blackberry and cassis, sweet oak and mocha and you're off to the races. This full-bodied wine offers a juicy mouth full of Cabernet. Elegant tannins, concentration and depth of flavor keeps everything in balance. This is without a doubt the best Branaire Ducru ever made. Give it 12 years in the cellar, if you can keep your hands off it.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “Plush, stylish, balanced and charming. Packed with elegant, ripe, black fruit, mocha and spice. I like this better than their 2003.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com
- “A reliable property in recent vintages that produces wines of classic St Julien class and structure. Proprietor Patrick Maroteaux told us that he believes this to be the best Branaire he has ever made - even better than the highly regarded 2000. Lovely fresh aromatics of exotic fruits and eucalyptus with a seamless texture on the palate and red berry fruit on the long finish. RECOMMENDED.”*  
- Farr Vintners
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