

Château Branaire Ducru 2011

CSPC# 749538

750mlx12

13.08% alc./vol.

Grape Variety 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% 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 Due to an unusual warm and dry weather in spring 2011 the growing season started very early. The unprecedented lack of rain reduced the development of the vines and the berries. It favoured a good synthesis of the polyphenolic components and a good richness of the berries. In the summer the rainfall went back to normal. However, the rainfall was far too low to make up for the important lack of water that year leading to a harvest of 37 hectoliters per hectare. The moderate summer temperatures helped to produce a good aromatic freshness of the wine. The autumn was warmer than normal, and the persistent lack of water allowed a ripening of the berries in good conditions.

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 was early in 2011. We started harvesting on 14th September and we finished picking our grapes on 29th September with a nearly ideal weather. The sanitary state of the grapes was satisfying.

Maturation 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

Tasting Notes As far as aromas and tannins are concerned, 2011 is a rich vintage. The dry weather conditions allowed to produce Cabernet-Sauvignon grapes of great character. They represent 67% of the blend along with 24% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc.

Cellaring Drink 2017-2035

- 89** **92 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2014
90-93 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2012
89 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #212 - April 2014
91-93 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #200 - April 2012
88-90 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2012
92-93 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2012
94 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 1, 2014



Scores/Awards **92-94 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - November 11, 2012
88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer, ST's International Wine Cellar - April 2012
16 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2012
16.5 points/4 stars - Decanter.com - April 2012
92 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2012 (no review)
90 points - Jean Marc Quarin - April 2012 (no review)
91 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - February 16, 2014
91-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 13, 2012
91-93 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 13, 2012
91-92 points - Jane Anson, The New Bordeaux - April 2012
88-90 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2012
90-91 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2012
90 points - Gilbert & Gaillard - May 10, 2012
17.5 points - Vinum Wine Magazine - April 2012 (score only)
16 points - Gault & Millau - April 2012 (score only)
92 points - Falstaff Magazine - April 2012 (score only)

Reviews *"Offers mouth filling layers of plum sauce, blackberry compote and warm ganache, all lined with a charcoal note that adds texture and length. Delivers depth and polish on the finish, with the fruit echoing pleasantly. Best from 2016 through 2027."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"A very elegant style, with a violet frame to the supple red currant, blueberry and black cherry fruit flavors that mingle with high-toned spice on the finish. Offers fine-grained structure. Score range: 90-93."
- JM, Wine Spectator

"A top-notch effort from this estate, the 2011 exhibits an exotic perfume of lead pencil shavings, white chocolate, raspberry jam and red as well as black currants. Loads of fruit, a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel and velvety tannin suggest this beauty will drink well for 15+ years. It is one of the stars of the appellation in this vintage. Bravo!"
- RP, Wine Advocate

"A dense blue/ruby/purple color is followed by notes of raspberries, incense and spring flowers, supple tannins, medium body and excellent elegance as well as purity. The result is a suave, savory 2011. While it does not possess the size or richness of vintages such as 2009 and 2010, the 2011 has plenty of charm and appeal. Drink it over the next decade."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The 2011 is a blend of 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc that was picked between 14th and 29th September at just 37hl/ha. It has a straightforward bouquet of light fresh red berry fruit laced with orange rind and graphite, focused but not powerful. After five minutes there is a brine or fish scale note. The palate has a chalky entry with crisp acidity, just a little hardness in the mouth but the finish is softer. There are notes of blackberry, pain grille and graphite with a dry, crisp finish. Fine. Tasted April 2012."
- NM, Wine Journal

"A very pretty red with flowers, blackberries, and blueberries. Full and silky with racy tannins and a long finish. Some hints of cocoa and pleasant bitterness. Well structured."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"With dense fruit and a powerful, complex structure, this is one of the best wines from this chateau. Blackberries, black plums and a rich, generous character are all here, along with fine tannins. Drink this great success from 2018."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"92-94. Barrel sample. This wine is based on tannins, yet it also has weight and a complex fruit structure. Its power lies in the density of its texture."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

- Reviews** *“Opaque deep purple-ruby. Penetrating, perfumed blackcurrant, mint and balsamic vinegar aromas are complicated by a candied violet note. Enters the mouth very fresh and smooth, then turns richer and fuller in the middle, with bright acids lifting the ripe, sweet black fruit flavors at the back. Finishes with building tannins and considerable freshness--not to mention sneaky concentration and excellent balance.”*
- ST, International Wine Cellar
- “Deep black cherry colour. Perfumed with cassis, vanilla and spice with a slight green note. More dry and savoury on the palate but there's a cool freshness and balance that leaves the mouth fresh.”*
- JR, JancisRobinson.com
- “Very good depth of Cabernet-cassis fruit, good middle sweetness and firm natural tannins. Will show very well. Drink 2015-2028.”*
- Decanter.com
- “Forward and fresh, with a medium bodied, open, black raspberry, earth, spice and espresso bean nose, the clean finish delivers an elegant, polished display of fresh dark cherries. You can drink this young, or age it for a few years. This is another wine that is better than you might think for the vintage.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider
- “From an assemblage of 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Petit Verdot, the wine reached 13.08% alcohol. Yields were about 10% lower in 2011 than what the estate produced in 2010. With mocha, black cherry, truffle, smoke and earthy aromas, this medium-bodied, soft-textured Branaire Ducru is dominated by cherries and finishes with a fresh, sweet chocolate and black raspberry finish.”*
- JL, thewinecellarinsider
- “Rich, vibrant, silky smooth, Hugh Hefner. Sour plum on the nose. Liquorice and full on blackcurrant puree, pretty good actually, good freshness, but just pulled up short on the finish. Still, 91-92.”*
- JA, thenewbordeaux.com
- “Deep and saturated; nice pure blackcurrant seam, some fruit compote notes; leaner than Léoville Barton. Cool, fresh stalky blackcurrant. Pretty complete and maybe a bit slow burn. Cool blackcurrant palate; loads of structure and acid; tannin well handled. Grippy. Will work and Branaire not usually the most expressive en primeur. Tasted twice at UGC. 88-90”*
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com
- “This is a full-bodied wine with attractive aromatics of fresh blackberries and red plums. The flavours are supported by generous tannins and fresh acidity. Fairly long finish. A serious wine that will age well. Wait at least 5+ years before opening.”*
- JCL, asianpalate.com
- “EN PRIMEUR - Intense garnet-red. After swirling, a measure of heat and notes of cooked plum and chlorophyll. Slightly lean tannins. Fruit is present but the whole is not yet fully integrated.”*
- en.gilbertgaillard.com
-