



Château Branaire - Ducru

GRAND CRU CLASSÉ EN 1855
SAINT-JULIEN



2022

Assemblage/Blending

60,5% Cabernet Sauvignon - 31,5% Merlot - 5,5% Cabernet Franc - 2,5% Petit Verdot

Climatologie

L'hiver 2021-2022 est moyennement arrosé, mais il permet une bonne recharge en eau des sols. Le débourrement de la vigne est légèrement plus précoce que la moyenne.

Début avril, un épisode de gel affecte légèrement les parcelles les plus précoces.

Le printemps plutôt chaud permet un développement rapide de la vigne. Fin mai, la floraison se déroule dans des conditions sèches favorables.

Le mois de juin est bien arrosé par plusieurs orages. De la grêle accompagne celui du 20 et occasionne des dégâts localement. Les pluies permettent cependant de refaire des réserves d'eau fort utiles pour la suite de l'été : ce sont des conditions durablement sèches qui s'installent dès la fin juin.

L'été est rythmé par plusieurs vagues de chaleur forte. Les contraintes hydriques se développent et deviennent rapidement marquées. Le vignoble semble s'adapter aux conditions très chaudes : le millésime est très « solaire », mais les plantes apparaissent peu marquées, hormis les plus jeunes. Les baies de raisins sont cependant très petites, cela garantit une belle richesse. Les pépins sont bien mûrs, le potentiel phénolique élevé.

Vendanges

Les vendanges s'étalent du 12 au 24 septembre dans de belles conditions.

Les raisins sont d'une belle maturité, mais les vins présentent en fin de fermentation des équilibres d'acidité parfaits.

Tous les cépages montrent une belle réussite : même les merlots, que l'on aurait pu craindre marqués par la chaleur, sont très expressifs et développent des tanins élégants. Les cabernets sauvignons sont très aromatiques, denses et d'une finesse remarquable. Les parcelles les plus tardives profitent pleinement du beau temps durable.

Les rendements sont moyens : 34,5 hl/ha, du fait de la très petite taille des baies.

Synthèse

Le millésime 2022 est né dans des conditions assez exceptionnelles de par le niveau des températures de l'été et des contraintes hydriques. Les raisins ont cependant conservé une fraîcheur remarquable et nous offrent un vin exceptionnel, qui combine une vraie richesse avec un magnifique équilibre. Le millésime 2022 est certainement l'un des plus grands de ces vingt dernières années.

Climatology

The winter of 2021-2022 was moderately wet, but it allowed for good water replenishment of the soil. The budburst of the vines was slightly earlier than average. At the beginning of April, a frost episode slightly affected the earliest plots.

The rather warm spring allowed the vines to develop rapidly. At the end of May, flowering took place in dry conditions.

The month of June was well watered by several storms. Hail accompanied the one on the 20th and caused some local damage. However, the rainfall allowed for the replenishment of water reserves that were very useful for the rest of the summer: permanently dry conditions set in at the end of June.

The summer was punctuated by several strong heat waves. The water constraints developed and quickly became severe. The vineyards seemed to adapt to the very hot conditions: the vintage was very « sunny », but the plants were not very severely affected, except for the youngest ones. The grape berries were very small, however, which guaranteed a nice richness. The pips were very well matured and the phenolic potential was high.

Harvest

Harvesting took place from the 12th to the 24th of September in good conditions.

The grapes were very ripe, but the wines had a good balance of acidity at the end of fermentation.

All the grape varieties were very successful: even the Merlot, which we might have feared would be badly affected by the heat, was very expressive and developed fine tannins. The Cabernet Sauvignon is very aromatic, dense and remarkably fine. The latest parcels took full advantage of the long-lasting good weather.

The yields are average: 34.5 hl/ha, due to the very small size of the berries.

Summary

The 2022 vintage was born in rather exceptional conditions due to the level of summer temperatures and the hydric constraints. However, the grapes have retained a remarkable freshness and offer us an exceptional wine, which combines a real richness with a magnificent balance. The 2022 vintage is certainly one of the greatest of the last twenty years.



“ ... the best vintage of Branaire-Ducru ever produced! ”

The Wine Cellar Insider - 96/98 - May 2023

Deep in color, the wine displays its bouquet of flowers before getting to all of its dark, red fruits, spice, mocha, nutmeg, vanilla, and black cherries. While the aromatics are enticing, it is on the palate, with all of its silky-textures, creaminess, energy and most importantly, purity of fruit and concentration that provides you with the best part of the experience. The finish has never been this defined, elegant and concentrated in any previous vintage of Branaire-Ducru. This is an entirely new level of quality here. Clearly, this is the best vintage of Branaire-Ducru ever produced!

Château Branaire-Ducru

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lasuiteteller - Photo © F. Genest

Dégustation en primeur

À la dégustation, Branaire-Ducru 2022 montre une couleur profonde. Le nez est très expressif, complexe, riche en fruits noirs d'une belle maturité, mais sans lourdeur aucune. L'élevage relève délicatement l'ensemble de fines notes épicées.

L'attaque en bouche est généreuse, souple et charnue, mais tenue par une acidité équilibrée. Le vin se développe tout en complexité et montre une belle profondeur. La finale persistante est très aromatique.

En primeur tasting

On tasting, Branaire-Ducru 2022 displays a deep colour.

The nose is very expressive, complex, rich in black fruits of a beautiful maturity, and not at all harsh. The maturation delicately enhances the whole with fine spicy notes.

The attack in the mouth is generous, supple and fleshy, but held together by a balanced acidity. The wine develops in complexity and shows great depth. The persistent finish is very aromatic.

“ ... among the must-purchase wines of the 2022 vintage ... ”

RobertParker.com / William Kelley - **95/97** - May 2023

A brilliant wine that's the finest young vintage I've tasted at this Saint-Julien estate, the 2022 Branaire-Ducru wafts from the glass with aromas of violets, blackberries, sweet cassis, licorice and pencil shavings, followed by a medium to full-bodied, layered and multidimensional palate that's succulent, sapid and perfumed, framed by supple tannins and concluding with a long, mouthwatering finish... Why is it so good this year? In addition to the quality of the vintage, the new gravity-flow winery means fruit can be handled more gently, and picked more precisely, sub-block by sub-block, as the team now have fully 63 vats at their disposal, almost double their capacity through 2020. Given the Maroteaux family's sensible approach to pricing, this is likely to number among the must-purchase wines of the 2022 vintage, and it comes warmly recommended.

“ ... Fantastic definition to this. ”

JamesSuckling.com - **96/97** - May 2023

The fine and intense tannins are very impressive because they fold beautifully into the wine, with blackcurrants, black cherries, hints of chocolate and hazelnuts. It's full-bodied with tight and focused fruit and a long and classy finish. Fantastic definition to this.

“ ... a conspiracy of excellence ... ”

The World of Fine Wine - **95/96** - June 2023

Deep, welcoming crimson, then equally friendly aromatics of crushed raspberry, pepper, and mint leaf. Cellarmaster Jean-Dominique Videau feels that the quality of the Merlot is the distinguishing feature that lifts the 2022 above its immediate forebears, adding an element of mid-palate texture that may not have been evidenced before. This, allied to the purity, ripeness, yet restraint, of the tannins and elegant, harnessing acidity, plot a conspiracy of excellence. And one should not forget the new gravity-fed winery, which allows vinification by plot for the first time. The château itself, beautifully harmonious and elegant, but actually lacking architectural depth, despite its ornate interior, should therefore lend only a limited symbolism. This wine certainly does not lack for depth! A credit to all concerned.

« Ma meilleure note donnée à ce cru ... »

Jean-Marc Quarin - **97** - Mai 2023

Ma meilleure note donnée à ce cru en Primeur. Couleur noire et pourpre. Nez intense, fin, fruité, subtil et noble. Moelleux en entrée de bouche, moelleux au milieu, avec de l'éclat dans la saveur, le vin évolue juteux, savoureux et même complexe en finale lorsqu'il gagne un éclat superbe. Profil dense et fondant. Une grande réussite.

Château Branaire-Ducru

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2022

“ ... upward trajectory... ”

Vinous / Neal Martin - **95/97** - May 2023

This feels refined and focused on the nose with plush red berry fruit, dried rose petals and orange rind scents.

Classic Branaire. The palate is fresh on the entry with pliant tannins. It's very well structured to the degree that it conveys a sense of symmetry. Lightly spiced toward the finish with notes of graphite lingering on the aftertaste, this represents an excellent Branaire Ducru that will age over many years and will surely appeal to those seeking more classical Saint-Julien. Tasted three times and was more impressive each time.

Branaire-Ducru continues its upward trajectory under proprietor François-Xavier Maroteaux.

“ One of the standouts of the vintage ... ”

Decanter - **97** - May 2023

One of the standouts of the vintage that impressed equally on three different occasions.

Fragrant and expressive on the nose, lovely scents and dark fruits. Smooth and crisp, silky but concentrated, such precision and detail straight away with succulent and juicy acidity. There's concentration no doubt, it's ripe and intense, the dark perfumed blackcurrants and black cherries give a serious backbone and tension to the wine, while the minty, stony freshness carries the flavour and gives the energy and definition.

Excellently weighted on the palate, with structure and a mouthwatering sensation that comes in once the weight settles. So well constructed with a beautiful texture and overall integration of all the elements. Exceptional quality and drinkability on offer with a delicious salty, graphite and flint finish that puts you at the estate. Overlook this at your peril.

“ The 2022 Branaire-Ducru is a powerhouse ... ”

Antonio Galloni - **94/96** - May 2023

The 2022 Branaire-Ducru is a powerhouse, almost unnaturally so for this Saint-Julien, which is usually a more understated wine. A blast of dark plum fruit makes a pretty strong first impression. Licorice, cloves, spice, menthol and chocolate fill out the layers. Readers should expect a concentrated, virile Saint-Julien with compelling aromatic presence. In this warm, low-yielding vintage, Branaire is quite the brooding powerhouse.

It will be interesting to see if more finesse develops in time. Impressive. Tasted two.

“ ... Congratulations to the team ... ”

Matthew Jukes - **18,5+** - May 2023

This is another beautiful vintage for Branaire. In textbook style, it follows this Château's template of a rich, all-encompassing nose, darker-hued fruit than neighbouring estates, an indulgently layered mid-palate, and a controlled, perfectly-oaked backbone. In addition, a degree of swagger and confidence is compelling, making this more than just a tasty wine. In 2022, Branaire-Ducru has an aura of grandeur that kicks it up a level into 'Gold-score-territory'. Congratulations to the team here because every element of this wine has been sensitively augmented without overstepping the mark. The result is a wine I want to drink now and for the next couple of decades!

“ ... excess and exuberance ... ”

Jane Anson - **96** - May 2023

This is an estate that can be so understated as to almost miss its complexity, but this vintage, with its excess and exuberance, does a wonderful job of drawing it out. The concentration is impressive, but there you'll also find a softness and balance that is juicy and enticing. Great job Branaire Ducru. Francois Xavier Maroteaux owner. I honestly think the best example of this château that I have ever tasted En Primeur (and god I hate it when critics say that).

“ ... merits serious attention. ”

Jeb Dunnuck - **95-97** - May 2023

An absolute gem of a Saint-Julien... Pure cassis, black raspberries, spicy wood, and dried flower notes all define the aromatics, and it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, a silky, elegant, beautifully balanced mouthfeel, and terrific tannins. In addition, it has a sense of freshness and purity that keeps you coming back to the glass.

It's clearly the finest wine I've tasted from this château, which going forward merits serious attention.

« ... une valeur sûre ... »

La Revue du Vin de France - **94/95** - Mai 2023

Branaire est une valeur sûre et le confirme avec ce 2022 qui exprime l'élégance habituelle du cru, avec des tanins fondus et soyeux. Une belle matière l'enrobe et il se déploie bien. L'élevage est, à ce stade, totalement intégré.



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