

VINTAGE FACT SHEET

2011

THE 2011 GROWTH CYCLE

Weather: it is often extreme weather patterns that shape a vintage, so what happened in 2011?

Drought: in Bordeaux average annual rainfall over the last 30 years has been 980 mm. In the last 12 years it was only 870 mm, while in 2011 we had only 550 mm, i.e. 43% less rain than the 30-year average or 36% less than the average over the last 12 years.

The extremely hot spells that came early at the end of June, when temperatures reached 38°C (100°F), burnt the grapes that were exposed on the west-facing sides of the rows.

Despite this, I feel that the vines handled these extreme conditions better this year than in 2010 even though the severity of the drought is clearly greater. I think the explanation is in the fact that winter brought little rain, which normally asphyxiates the vines' deep-reaching roots, so they were able to resume their activity as soon as spring arrived.

August was also hot with extremely high temperatures on the 20th and 21st of 37 and 38°C (99 and 100°F) respectively. Average daily temperatures in August reached 27.6°C (82°F), which was fine as far as I am concerned! It also rained more than usual in August with rainfall of 80 mm instead of 55 mm, so with these extra bathfuls of water, the grapes having already begun to ripen began to swell and became quite fragile. They were on the point of bursting, but just managed to resist. All this humidity in the air from 25 August to 7 September contributed to the development of botrytis and the grapes whose skins had suffered in the heat at the end of June were the first to be affected. We started to get quite worried, not sure if the fruit would be OK and the warm nights at the beginning of September did not help the situation.

So from 5 to 7 September, we removed the leaves all over the vineyard to let air reach the fruit. It was the right decision, because it improved the immediate surroundings around the bunches of grapes.

On Friday 9 September, the sun dried the vines and on the 10th the wind changed to a southerly breeze for 24 hours, bringing a wave of warm air, which together with the wind stopped the botrytis from any further development. Thank goodness! The temperature was 30°C (86°F).

THE HARVEST

32 pickers with secateurs wove their way along the rows from 19 September to 3 October. The fruit ripened very early and was ready to be harvested three weeks earlier than in 2010, which was an especially late vintage.

The fruit that had been dried out by being burnt in June was cleverly eliminated by our very elaborate sorting system at Laroze, which screens grapes according to their shape, then degree of ripeness by measuring variations in their density.

THE WINE

Because of the initially very dry conditions, the vines came into condition earlier for the fruit to ripen and led to an unusually early vintage with gentle tannins supported by good acidity. The Cabernet Franc grapes survived the hot weather at the end of June much better and produced normal yields. As a result, they represent 40% of the volumes harvested this year.

Alcohol levels remained reasonable between 13 and 13.5°, and acidity was good, with sufficiently low pH levels to make this vintage aromatically fresh and provide it with all the characteristics it needs to age well over time.

The tannins are gentle and clear-cut; the wine has very good body and plenty of fruit that is still fresh and ripe.

2011 facts and figures

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| MID-FLOWERING DATES | Merlots: 12 May | Cabernets: 15 May | |
| MID-VERAISON* DATES | Merlots: 23 July | Cabernets: 30 July | |
| HARVESTING DATES | Merlots: 19 to 23 September | Cabernets Francs: 23 to 27 September | Cabernets Sauvignons: 3 October |
| WINE YIELD | 40 hectolitres per hectare | | |
| LENGTH OF BARREL AGEING | On-going | | |
| % AGE OF NEW BARRELS | 50% new barrels | 50% 1-year-old barrels | |
| BOTTLING | 2013 | | |
| NUMBER OF BOTTLES expected | First wine: bottles | Second wine: bottles | |
| %AGE 1 st and 2 nd WINE expected | First wine: % | Second wine: % | |
| BLEND (approximate) | 60% Merlot | 40% Cab. Franc | % Cab. Sauv. |

*The date at which 50% of the grapes in each bunch have changed colour, indicating that ripening has begun.



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