

MARGAUX 2013

History of a vintage

N°12

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Editorial

To borrow a cycling analogy from the famous Tour de France, which passed through Médoc's vineyards three years ago, the 2013 vintage was something of a race against the clock.

The cold and then rainy spring resulted in a considerable delay in the growth cycle and then significant flower abortion. The winegrowers of Margaux, working exceptionally hard in the vineyards, did everything possible to compensate for this initial delay. A particularly hot July followed by a beautiful August gave us renewed hope. September in turn brought good daytime temperatures, favourable for the completion of ripening, but the high night-time temperatures also favoured the development of botrytis.

As a result, the harvests were earlier than most of us would have liked. In such difficult conditions, great terroirs are at a particular advantage, and Margaux is not short of great terroirs.

Gonzague LURTON

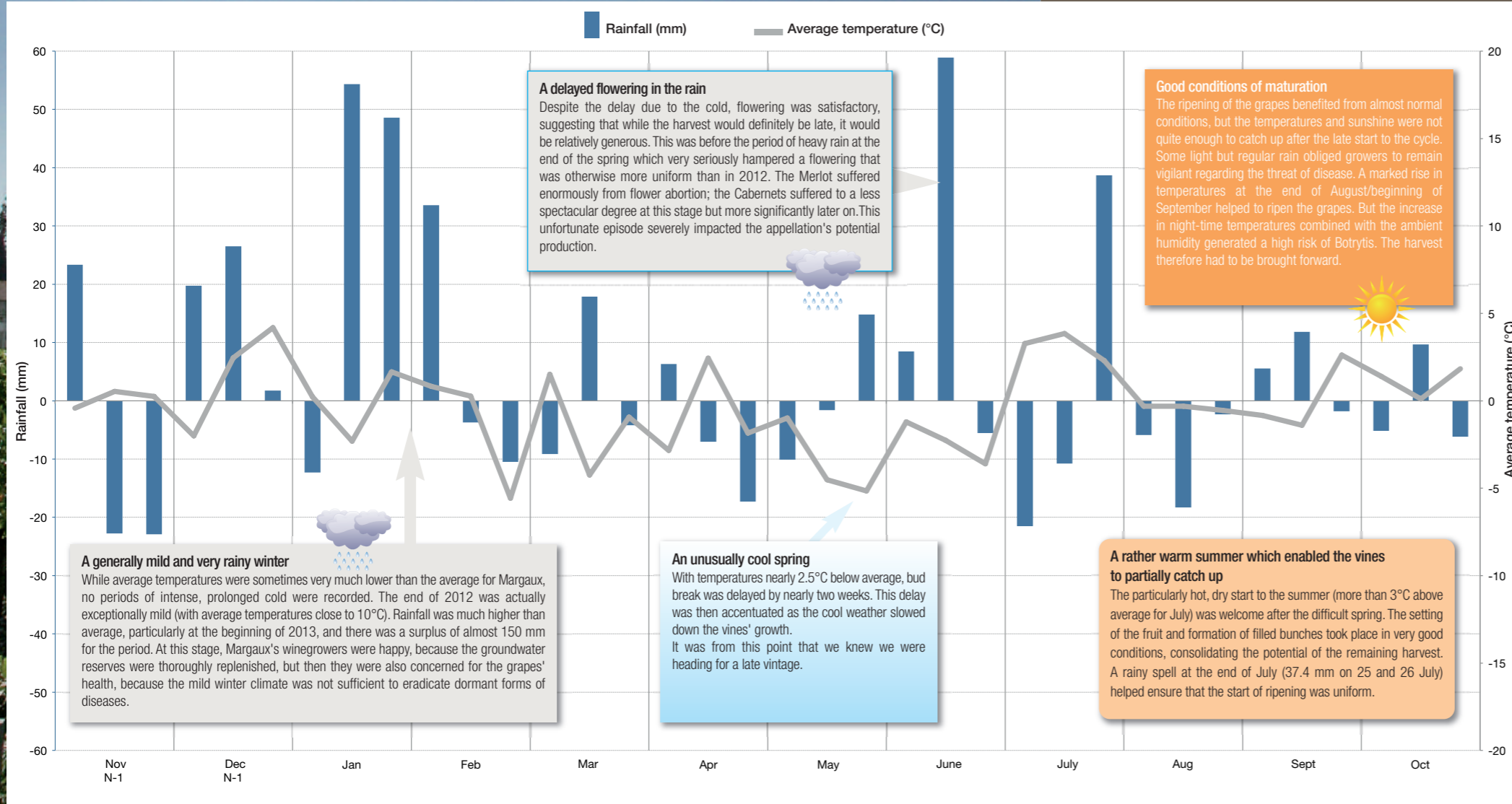
President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux



SYNDICAT VITICOLE DE MARGAUX

www.maisonduvindemargaux.com

Enologist's comments



2013 Everybody knows that the weather conditions in 2013 were difficult for winegrowers. The heavier than usual rainfall will be remembered for years to come.

But it was not all bad, July and August were particularly fine and hot, and let us not forget, those two months are crucial for the grapes and almost determine the quality of the vintage! For this reason we should not be too harsh on this vintage which abounds with pleasant surprises.

On the contrary, it is a chance to discover some superbly subtle wines that were "extracted" from nature through tremendous precision and attention to detail. They may be moderately powerful, but they are also delicate and elegant; our precious Cabernet Sauvignon is not in the least tinged with the character of under-ripe grapes, and once again is the cornerstone of our blends. The Merlot yields were unfortunately dramatically reduced after severe flower abortion, comparable to 1984.

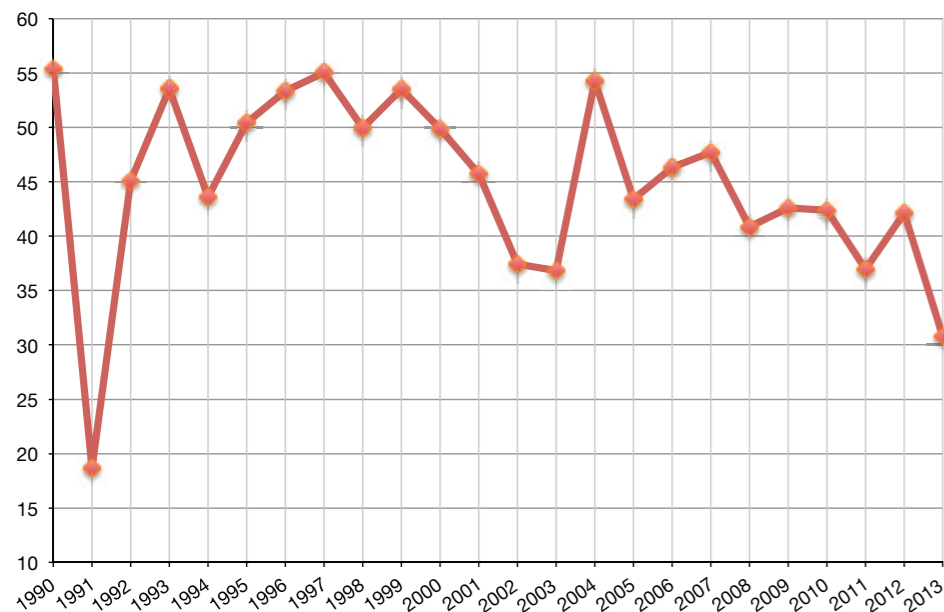
2013 is definitely a vintage of paradoxes, in that we had to harvest a late vintage early, and our blends will consist mostly of Cabernets....

Eric Boissenot
Enologist, Doctor of Enology and Ampelology

2013, an "out of sync" year

Temperatures were significantly lower than average from the start of the spring. This historically cold weather delayed the start of growth by two weeks and then slowed the vines' development up to flowering. By this stage, the delay compared to normal years was nearly three weeks. The marked rise in temperatures at the beginning of the summer enabled the vines to partially catch up, and by the start of ripening they were about ten days behind, but the gap then remained unclosed up to the harvests.

Average yield for the appellation Margaux (hl/ha)



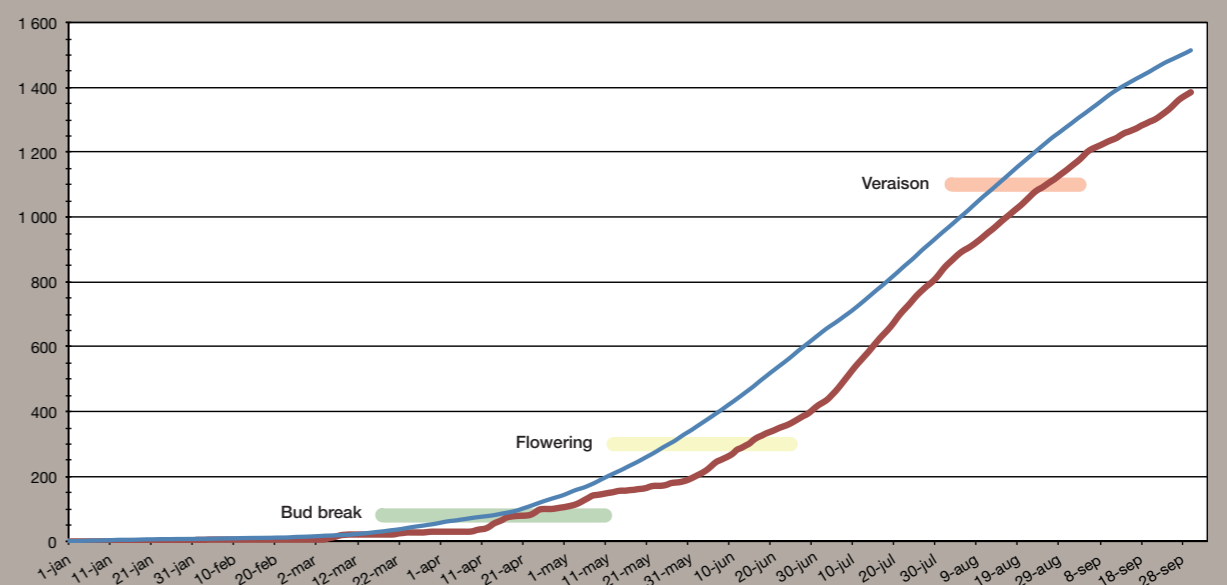
Yields significantly affected by flower abortion and uneven grape size.

The average yield for the appellation was barely 30 hl/ha, the lowest since 1991 ("the year of the frost").

This is more than a third less than the average yield for the appellation over the last 20 years.

Sum of average daily temperatures above 10°C

(°C) Deviations from the average for the last 16 years at the Margaux Weather Station



Viticulturist's comments

People will describe this vintage in many ways, some may say that it was difficult or uneven, while others may say that it was atypical, or even extraordinary. What I will always remember about this vintage is that it came in a difficult economic climate, when we were especially hoping for good news rather than bad, when we wanted growth to resume, for our efforts to be rewarded and for our results to be better... Well that didn't happen! Having been wonderfully generous with the famous vintages of 2009 and 2010, Mother Nature decided to set us a new equation, one that was more difficult to solve, and also to remind us that success is often a matter of luck... Indeed, just a few kilometres apart, some vines would be totally destroyed by a passing hail storm, while others would be left untouched; 30 mm of rain would fall on one vineyard, while only 5 mm would fall on its neighbour. Essentially we are winegrowers, and there can be no doubt that our technical progress since the 2000s and the new focus of attention entirely on fruit and optimal ripening, also obliges us to accept, analyse and react in order to reach our objectives, despite the challenges of Mother Nature.

On this basis, the 2013 vintage set us the following challenges:

- to accept uneven or even catastrophic flowering on certain plots while others required us to remove some of the flowers/clusters because Nature had been too generous, and this was our only hope to obtain satisfactory ripening, given the potential yield. This translates into a very low yield in the winery and has a direct impact in business terms.

- to be ready to respond speedily, given that the windows for taking action were reduced as a result of the extremely capricious weather; the management of the teams had to be stronger than ever to unite workers tired by the cold, wet winter and in despair over the poor flowering, whom we nonetheless expected to respond quickly and efficiently in order to ensure that we obtained the best possible quality grapes.

- to respond to a threat and accept that we had to pick the grapes against our will.

Yes, we wanted to wait another one or two weeks and start the harvests around the 5 October for the Merlot and 15 October for our lord Cabernet. But no, Nature prevented us from doing this by completely derailing the end of September and sending us a tropical climate. The weekend of 28/29 September was one for the record books, with 100% humidity and a temperature above 20°C, even at night! Because our primary task is to bring in a healthy harvest, we had to pick the grapes earlier and more quickly. 2012 had already somewhat prepared us, and we were helped by experience. Our equipment and our troops were once again able to reduce the picking time by 40%, still harvesting all the bunches

by hand and sorting them grape by grape. Again it is largely thanks to our technical progress over the last ten years and more, that we can say today that 2013 will be a fine wine, worthy of our appellations and our brands. Everyone still has to work on their internal selections, their choices to give the consumer a bottle that represents their wine for this vintage that, while certainly simpler, is in the end a typically Bordeaux vintage, in which the winegrower worked constantly to help balance the amount of water and sun that the vines receive! We are at the service of the consumer, proud of what we have been able to produce in extraordinary years, and these more normal years like 2013 serve as a reminder that for something to be exceptional, we cannot have it all the time...

2013 will be a pleasure to drink, that is for sure! The information/disinformation spread by the media on this vintage must have led to apprehension in the minds of consumers; however, tasting is our best weapon and I am sure that the truth will come out. Our consumer will say: *"Oh, that's delicious!"* Then our work as winegrowers will be rewarded, as will our technical, human and financial efforts, for is not our sole objective to offer pleasure to the consumer? *"The world belongs to those who rise early"* was an appropriate motto for the 2013 vintage.

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Managing Director LES VIGNOBLES LABEGORCE



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