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MARGAUX

2018

H I S T O R Y O F A V I N T A G E

N°17/APRIL 2019



A victory over nature!

Danger: Recurrent rain during the winter and spring amply replenished groundwater reserves but caused winegrowers concern, particularly with the approach of flowering and the summer. At the end of June, the rain eased off and fine weather returned. A final hail storm struck in the south of the Médoc on 15 July, the day of the World Cup final. As a result of all the rain, there were extremely virulent outbreaks of mildew in the region, the like of which had never been seen before.

Relief! A lull at the end of May enabled rapid flowering. Water reserves were in place. The summer was hot and dry; the grapes began to change colour in early August, depending on the grape variety. Having survived these particularly challenging periods of turbulent weather, the winegrowers could finally breathe a sigh of relief!

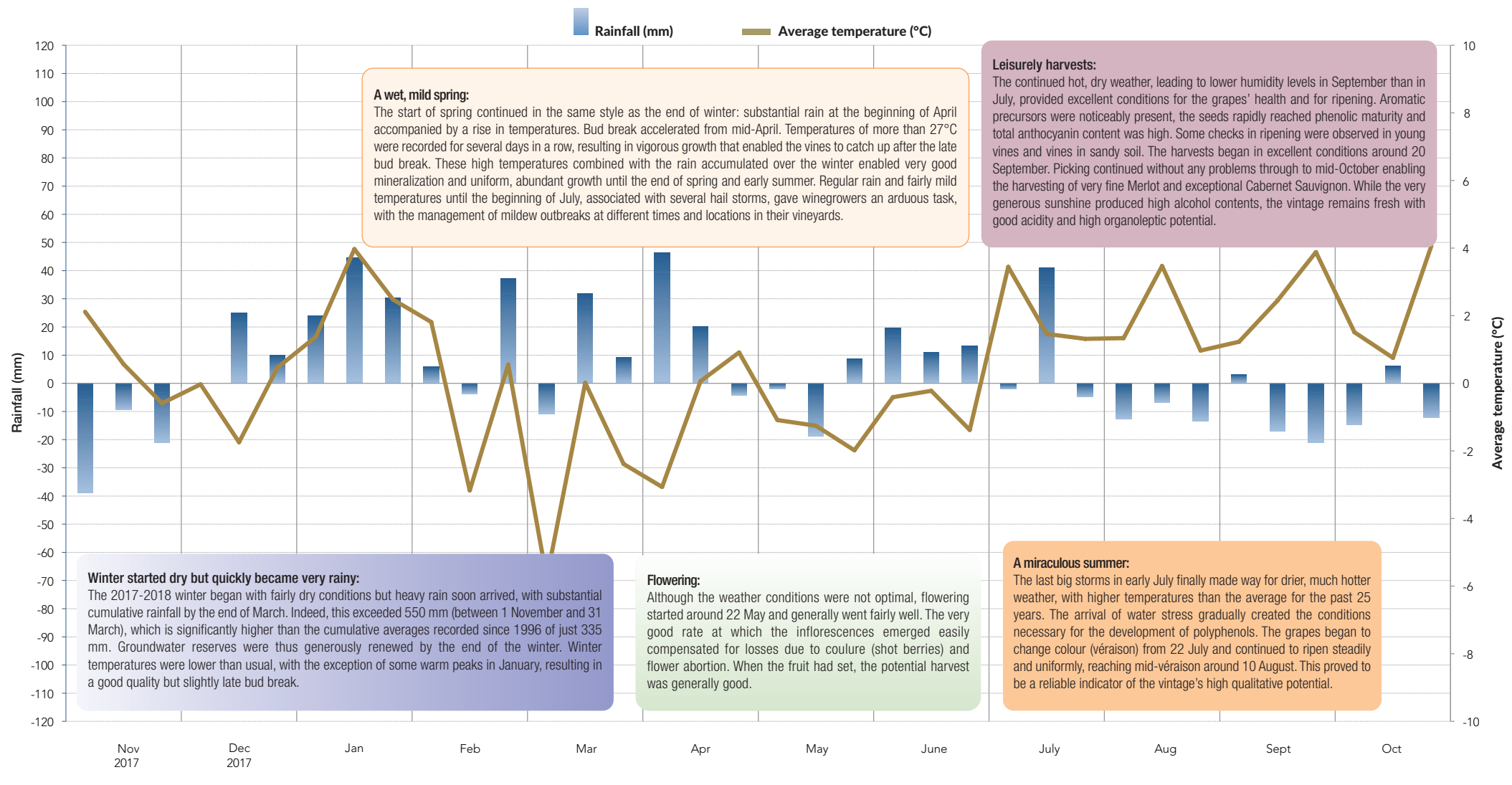
Joy: The exceptionally long, hot summer dried the earth and enabled a superb concentration of the sun-drenched grapes. Perfectly ripe, the grapes were harvested in magnificent autumn weather that allowed all of the grape varieties to achieve perfect balance. This difficult, dramatic year ultimately produced an exceptional vintage, on a par with the excellent 2015 or 2016 produced in the Margaux appellation.

Edouard MIALHE

President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux



SYNDICAT VITICOLE DE MARGAUX



OENOLOGIST'S COMMENTS

2018 is a vintage which will undoubtedly be remembered... On the one hand because it was very difficult to manage the vines and keep them in good health. A wet spring and an exceptional threat of disease were followed by equally extreme summer conditions with prolonged sunshine. Some areas in the Margaux appellation and more generally the Southern Médoc suffered from summer storms, which reduced the impact of the water stress created by the magnificent hot summer weather. Musts with complex fermentation potentials (high alcohol and low concentrations of malic acid) kept winery teams under pressure right up to the end of vinification.

The quality of the resulting wines presents a quite remarkable character and softness. From the first days of vinification, the pumping over containers filled the wineries with generous, intense aromas, suggesting rich, full-flavoured musts. This was confirmed by tastings at the end of maceration that revealed powerful, concentrated wines. Despite high alcohol contents, levels of acidity remained moderate, allowing the wines to keep a surprising freshness. In aromatic terms, the wines are expressive and precise, the palates offer powerful yet silky tannic structures.

Comparisons with other vintages immediately recall outstanding years... 2009 for the richness and generosity of its sunny character, 2016 for the power and smoothness of this vintage's tannic structure, indicating a remarkable capacity to age. A vintage that offers the best of both worlds: a precise mixture of classicism and generosity.

The Boissenot laboratory

THE 2018 VINTAGE

One cannot talk about the 2018 vintage without mentioning the challenge to the winegrowers and their techniques: management of the vineyards was extremely demanding and complex. Early mildew, encouraged by the wet, mild spring, required permanent vigilance. The high ambient humidity, caused by the heavy rain in winter and spring, and the warmth at the beginning of the summer maintained the threat of mildew until the beginning of ripening. We were finally able to let down our guard at the end of July.

Since water reserves had been so amply replenished, the grapes did not show any symptoms of suffering from the dryness until late in the season; young vines with shallow roots were mainly affected.

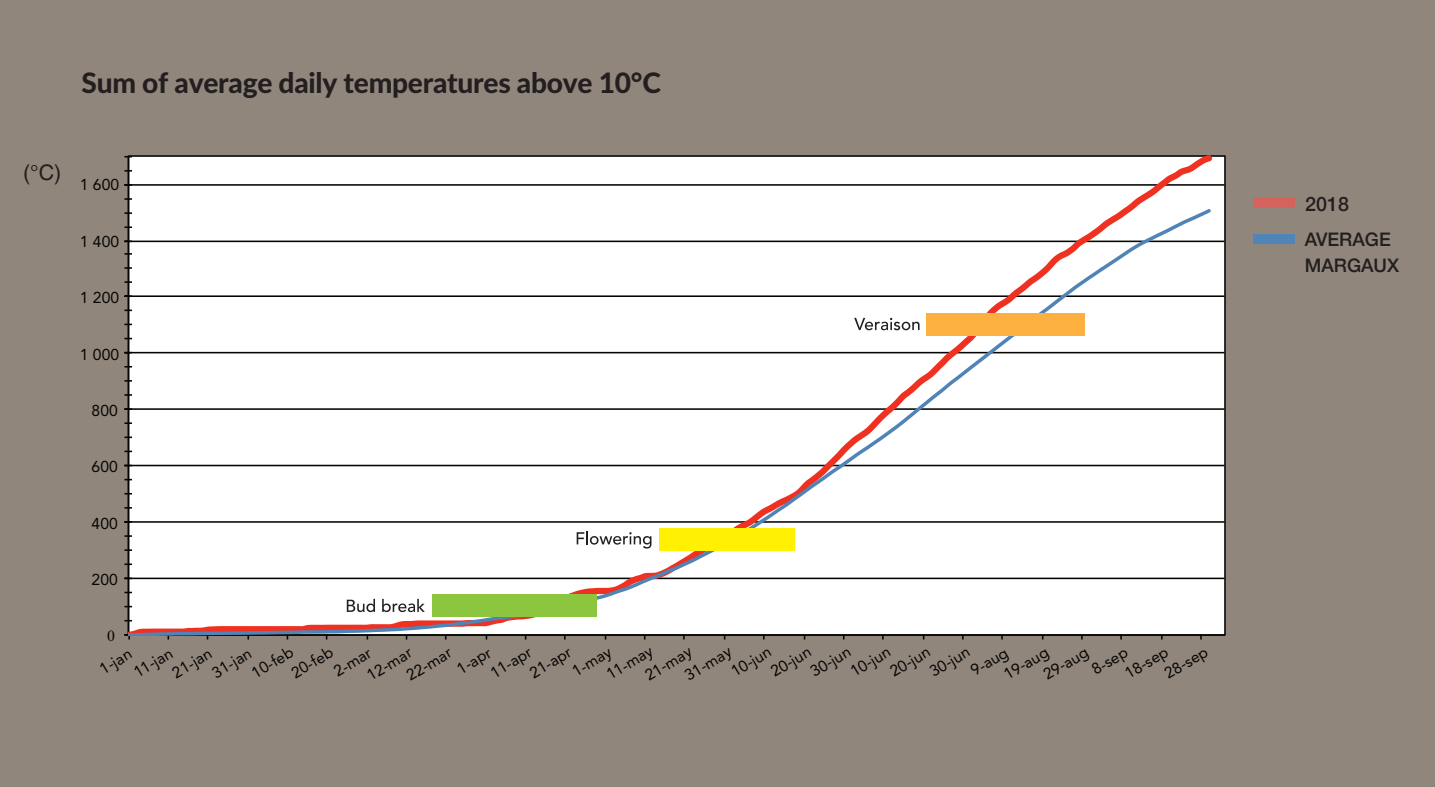
The water stress that is desirable at the end of the season appeared with perfect timing. Accompanied by a significant variation between day and night-time temperatures from mid-August, the ripening phase took place in ideal conditions.

Quickly developing a remarkable phenolic richness, the grapes presented fruity characteristics very early on. Naturally, during the very summery weather in September, ripening progressed at various rates, depending on the nature of the soil.



Study led by Nicolas Pejoux, Technical Director of Château Rauzan-Gassies.

The sun stayed with us throughout the harvests, enabling us to take our time and select each plot as it reached maturity, while preserving crisp fruit and freshness. And we were rewarded! Rich, powerful, “sunny” wines with silky tannins. And yet also offering fruit and elegance, demonstrating once again the consistency of our great terroirs.



WINEGROWER'S COMMENTS

2018, A VINTAGE OF VIGILANCE

The winter was mild, one of the warmest since 1900.

During the first six months of the year, significant rainfall enabled the vines, which like water, to display vigorous growth. The heavy rain also obliged winegrowers to be extra vigilant with regard to the threat of disease. All had to keep a close eye on the vines during their growth; knowledge of one's terroir and a quick response to disease was essential.



After flowering, which was fast, the weather changed dramatically, with the arrival of a hot, dry sunny period that continued for four months, from the end of June to the end of the harvests.

This exceptional summer spell, combined with the ample groundwater reserves, enabled the grapes to undergo a complex, refined ripening phase, without becoming overly stressed by the lack of rain.

The first bunches were picked in the first week of September with significant differences of course between châteaux and terroirs. The harvests took place in the sunshine, with no pressure to pick quickly. The grapes were absolutely perfect, remaining exceptionally healthy and reaching optimal ripeness. All the elements were present for the production of an exceptionally fine vintage.

While storms had a severe impact in some areas in neighbouring appellations, especially in the Haut-Médoc, the Margaux appellation was spared.

The 2018 vintage displays a rarely achieved level of quality and is characterized by notes of ripe cherries and spices with superb concentration and exceptionally silky tannins.

In the final analysis, as in all vintages, the weather played an essential role in forming the character of this excellent 2018 vintage.

Laurent Fortin

Director of Château DAUZAC



SYNDICAT VITICOLE DE MARGAUX

7, place la Trémoille - 33460 MARGAUX - Tel.: +33 (0)557 887 082 | Fax: +33 (0)557 883 827

email: syndicat.margaux@wanadoo.fr

