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MARGAUX

2015

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



SYNDICAT VITICOLE DE MARGAUX

N°14/MARCH 2016

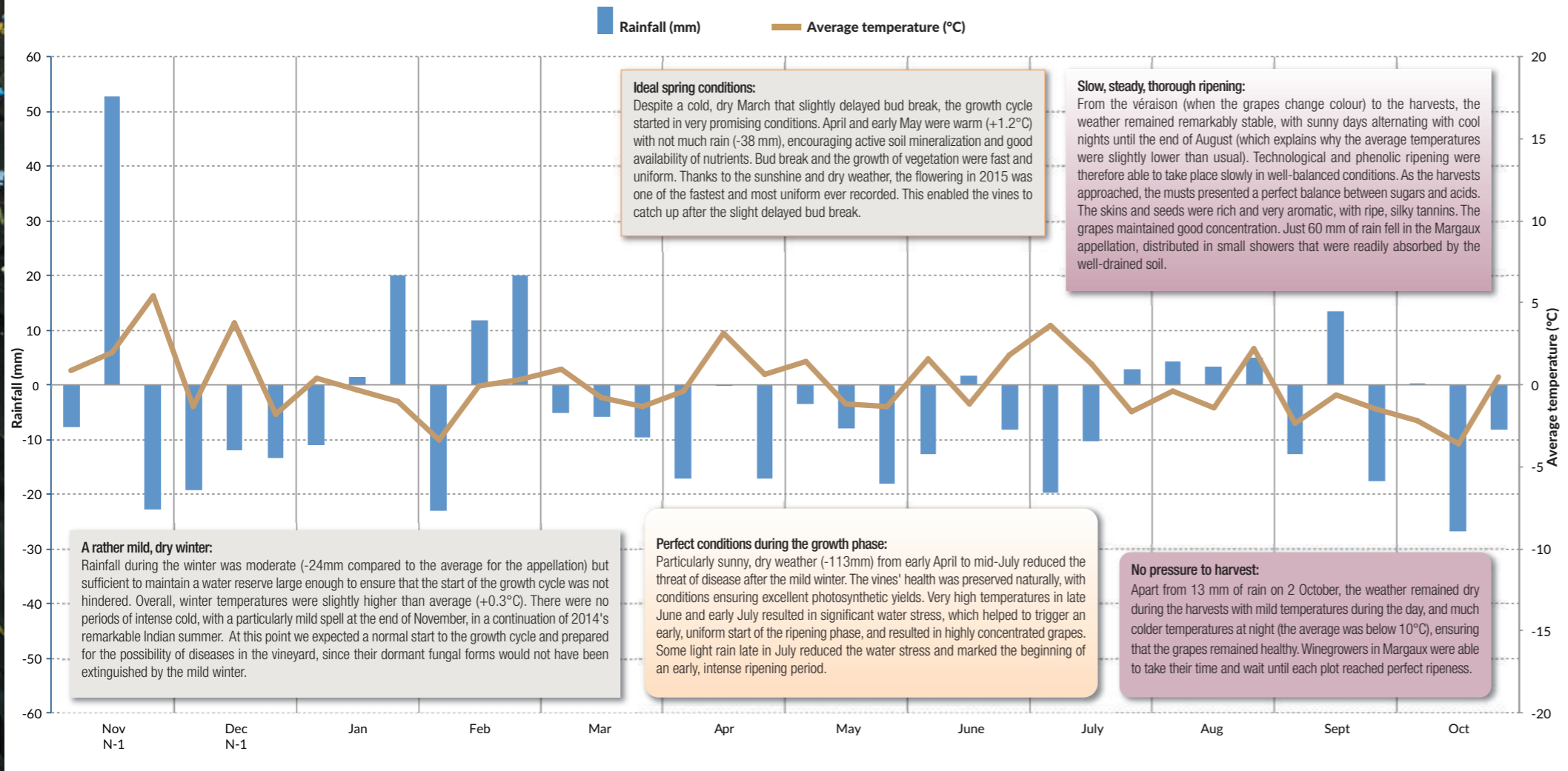


Quietly confident...

One thing to be said about this year is that Margaux's winegrowers are happy! Margaux is always at its best when conditions are balanced, and this has been confirmed once again with the 2015 vintage. Very uniform flowering, without doubt the most regular since 2009, a hot summer, accompanied by just enough rain as the grapes changed colour, and then finally a harmonious ripening period. The harvests took place in perfect conditions, resulting in a vintage that provides each property with an opportunity to really express its character. 2015 is sure to offer an example of that quality in which Margaux remains unrivalled: harmony.

Gonzague LURTON

President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux



OENOLOGIST'S COMMENTS

2015 In Margaux, it could be said that 2015 was an easy vintage from many points of view, and most winegrowers would be happy to see it come round again.

It was characterized by this unusual, very low rainfall between April and the end of July. Temperatures were frequently high, with several days reaching 30°C early in the spring; and that unforgettable day in June when it climbed to 40°C! The vines showed few signs of stress, as they had time to adjust after the start of the growth cycle. Disease was rare and flowering was fast and very uniform. In phenological terms, it was not a particularly early vintage, more or less corresponding to averages for the last 30 years. Fortunately, the regular showers during August, accompanied by temperatures that remained high, ensured a fast, uniform véraison. As the harvests approached, the grapes were small but rarely withered, and remained in perfect health; the skins were often very thick, while the pulp was engorged with sugar and sunshine. The harvests began slowly around 21 September in remarkable conditions, with a few rainy spells that ultimately had very little impact. Good levels of phenolic maturity having been obtained, the Cabernets were picked next, and by 10 October, 95% of the crop was in the wineries.

The wines are rich and generous, with soft tannic matter and impressive flavours. What really characterizes them is the extra sunshine. This is a vintage that highlights the notion of terroir, and its diverse expression. From this point of view, 2015 is a very unusual vintage that is hard to compare with the great years of the past.

Eric Boissenot
Oenologist, Doctor of Oenology and Ampelogy



Average yield for the appellation Margaux (hL/ha)

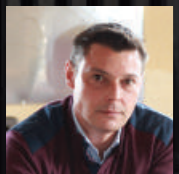


2015 saw a return to satisfactory levels of production in Margaux:

A great year is a year without any extreme weather conditions. This was proved true in 2015 when, unlike other recent years, our vineyards were not exposed to hail, frost, flower abortion, water stress or a risk of botrytis.

There was just enough rain over the summer to compensate for the very hot spell at the beginning. Photosynthesis was not impeded in any way, and none of the grapes withered or dried on the vines.

Finally, none of the vines suffered from rot due to the perfect conditions at the end of the ripening stage and during the harvests with, in Margaux, some very light showers and low night-time temperatures.

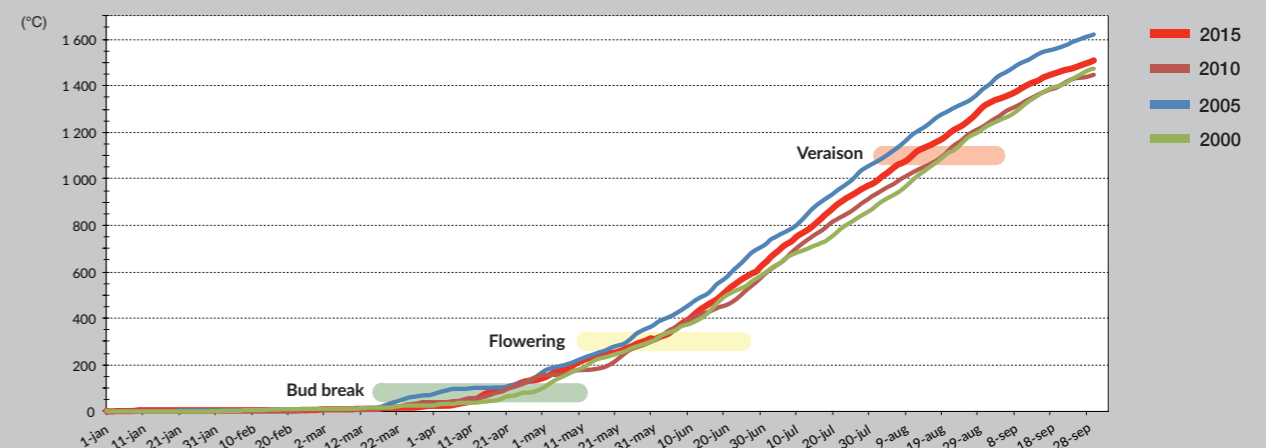


Study led by Jerome Héranval,
Director of Château Durfort-Vivens.

2015, a year in the style of the great vintages of the 2000s

Naturally, when the weather is so favourable, it is tempting to make comparisons with outstanding vintages, with a view to assessing 2015's real potential. We have seen (above) that all the conditions for a great vintage have been supplied, particularly in terms of rainfall. 2015's temperature profile (opposite) clearly positions this year in Margaux among the outstanding vintages of 2000, 2005 and 2010. Only 2005 reached cumulative temperatures greater than 2015 due to a shift at the beginning of the growth cycle after an unusually warm spring. Flowering was rapid and uniform in all of these vintages. The curves present the same profile for the rest of the cycle. 2015 even had an earlier start to ripening than 2000 and 2010. Since the harvest dates are similar, this means that the ripening phase benefited from an extra week to ten days. It is without doubt thanks to this additional maturing time that the harvest was not only perfectly ripe but also expressed all the harmony, finesse and elegance that gives these wines their unique Margaux character.

Sum of average daily temperatures above 10°C



WINEGROWER'S COMMENTS

This was a long-awaited vintage, after the ups and downs of recent years. Thanks to exceptional weather conditions, the vines had everything they needed, from bud break to harvest. Such excitement over the quality of the grapes has not been seen for many years.

2015's special character can be explained by the exceptional weather conditions between April and July. After a rather mild and moderately rainy winter, temperatures were already summery in April. The vines sprang back into life: bud break for the Merlot was very early in April, with the other varieties following a few weeks later. June was sunny, dry, and windy, facilitating the growth of new branches and the shedding of the flowers' protective caps, resulting in rapid, perfectly uniform flowering and good setting of the fruit. The early summer saw the vines covered with beautiful, well-positioned, regularly spaced bunches of grapes. Another special feature of this vintage was the lack of rain between the flowering and the harvest. Due to the extremely high temperatures in late June and early July, the earth gradually became very dry. However, in Margaux, our vines are known for their ability to draw on reserves of moisture deep within the soil. The balance between the vines receiving too little or too much water remains one of the primary factors affecting the success of a vintage, and while growth of the vegetation did stop early (generally a sign of quality), the volume of the berries did not suffer. Against all expectations, some light rain (60 mm), spread over the first twenty days of August, gave the vegetation sufficient vigour, and enabled the ripening process to begin. The grapes changed colour and began to ripen in a uniform fashion.



Looking at the vineyard, it seemed likely that the harvests would be early. Another blessing: the lack of rain during the growth cycle reduced the risk of disease and enabled us to refine our growing practices, minimizing the application of treatments, and respecting the terroir and the environment. In September and October, plenty of sunshine, combined with cool nights, generated the necessary range in temperatures necessary for the development of fine tannins and good phenolic concentration in the berries. We did not have to wait much longer: yields were satisfactory, producing remarkable, concentrated musts, rich in tannins and anthocyanins. The young Merlot vines were harvested first during the wonderfully sunny first ten days of September; they always ripen more quickly than the old vines, which were harvested slightly later. Similar weather conditions enabled us to wait for the Cabernet to become perfectly ripe, which was picked at the end of September. Most of the Petit Verdot grapes were harvested in early October, having reached an exceptional phenolic potential.

The long harvest period was ideal, enabling us, after a month of continuous picking, to harvest each plot at optimal ripeness. The grapes were finally in the vats, and the results were superb! It is an eternal truth that healthy, rich grapes produce excellent quality juice. In the winery, the musts were carefully nurtured. We applied gentle extractions and long macerations, to obtain the fruit and substance that are essential to wines with structure and character.

2015: a vintage true to the Margaux style

Extraordinary balance gives the wine an exceptional profile, harmoniously combining power with precision, and freshness with finesse. It presents the personality of the truly great Margaux. It is sure to age remarkably, due to the excellent balance between fruit, tannins and acidity.

These will be generous, voluptuous wines... for many years to come!

Alexander van Beek

Managing Director / Château Giscours and Château du Tertre



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

