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# MARGAUX

# 2020

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

#19/MARCH 2021



## A subtle alliance with the terroir

2020 is the fifth excellent vintage in the past six years. It should be emphasized that so many fine vintages in a row is exceedingly rare. The climate was favourable, giving us a rich, complex vintage, but also one that was far from generous in terms of quantity. Our appellation, like the Médoc in general, picked some of the lowest volumes of grapes in recent years. A beautiful hot, dry summer, followed by rain in mid-September, produced well-rounded, rich, opulent Merlot, and refined, delicate Cabernet Sauvignon that, surprisingly, did not benefit from the rain in September.

At the start of 2021, we are still living with the Covid-19 pandemic which is violently impacting the world economy, and the Bordeaux wine crisis continues; and so I would like to share a quote from Winston Churchill, who knew how to galvanize people and lead them to victory: *"The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty."*

Let us use these difficult years to question the way we do things and to come out of them stronger.

Happy tasting to you all.

**Edouard Mialhe**  
President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux

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## 2020 - Deviations from the average - Margaux Weather Station



### Sum of average daily temperatures above 10°C



## The 2020 vintage

Another phenomenon in the incredible series of wines produced in recent years: one of the few good things to come out of this otherwise terrible year!

The winter and spring were mild with the result that the vines' growth cycle began early. There were no weather disasters, but employees were sometimes restricted by having to take unfamiliar health precautions. A rainy spring made it difficult to prevent outbreaks of downy mildew. Flowering went moderately well and flower abortion, while difficult to measure, definitely had an impact given the very low yields.



High temperatures and dry weather arrived from 19 June, and continued until 11 August. The vines began to show signs of severe water stress. They then received 100 mm in just 3 days; this restarted the ripening process and enabled them to hold out until the harvests in weather that returned to being hot and dry.

The harvests took place in September for almost all properties. An early year... Although at the beginning of the month the grapes seemed quite bland; perhaps diluted by the 100 mm? With the daily heat, everything came together around 8 September: taste, aromas, and flavours.

The wines are tannic with such flavour-packed tannins that the blending of the batches gave us incredible length on the palate. The style is not overpowered by alcohol, it is tightly structured, and very classic. 2020 does not resemble 2018 or 2019 but certainly seems reminiscent of 2016.

**Éric Boissenot**

*Œnologist  
Doctor of Œnology and Ampelography*



## 2020, a vintage characterized by complexity



In vine growing, spring is the most intense and delicate period. When the weather is against us, as it was in 2020, we have to redouble our efforts against downy mildew. The latter was stopped by the cold north wind combined with early leaf removal.

This saved us from subsequent losses. It is a vintage that will remain in the collective memory, with very complicated management of the tasks and teams.

In September, the grapes benefited from beautiful sunny days and cool nights, excellent for ripening. The 2020s are very homogeneous, bursting with colour, the wines are subtle and generous.

If I had to sum up the vintage in two words, they would be "permanent adaptability".

### Christelle Sorge

*Winegrower  
Château Deyrem Valentin*

## Two vintages in one harvest



The 2020 harvests... in the plural, particularly for this vintage! Early Merlot with extraordinary levels of potential alcohol, harvested in the heat, then Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot, rebalanced by the rain, and cooler temperatures. Hope, forecast, be

surprised. This year we thought that there would be good yields and, on the strength of this, we carried out a fairly severe green harvest. These harvests resulted in quantities lower than our forecasts but of spectacular quality!

Adapt. The first vinifications of these fiery Merlot grapes proved challenging: we struggled to cool them down and promised ourselves to improve our cooling techniques.

Blend. A seriously thrilling moment where the exuberance of the Merlot perfectly matched the elegance of the Cabernet Sauvignon and the majesty of the Petit Verdot.

### Patrice de Bortoli

*Owner-Winegrower  
Château Moutte Blanc*

## A year that will be remembered



Who would have believed that 2020 would be another great vintage! This was something of a historic year: fortunately, activity at properties was able to continue despite the lockdowns, which only served to strengthen team solidarity. The spring was challenging, with some frosts, and was followed by particularly hot, rainy weather, ideal for downy mildew. Our biodynamic vineyards successfully met this challenge, and the management of controlled grassing made it possible to treat the vines despite the waterlogged soil.

The rain finally stopped in mid-June, and a hot, sunny summer kept up our hopes that it would be a great vintage. The dry summer and occasional rain in September, which was very welcome, made it possible to produce a great wine characterized by its concentration and high-quality tannins, despite the small yields, mainly due to the small size of the grapes.

### Claire Villars-Lurton

*Owner-Winegrower  
Château Ferrière*

## 2020, what a year!



The weather conditions were chaotic: a mild winter, a rainy spring and a hot, dry summer. A combination that presented a series of challenges for our technical team. Thanks to a sustained effort, the threat of downy mildew in the spring was kept under control.

We harvested the Merlot on 8 September; the berries were juicy and very expressive, with thick skins and no vegetal notes. The Cabernet Sauvignon revealed tremendous finesse, concentration and structure.

Our team remained united, despite the pandemic distancing, and this is our greatest achievement: the fact that 100% of the technical team remained present in the vineyard to create a great vintage. This collective motivation enabled us to be responsive, to make precise decisions and to maintain our production philosophy, using only organically approved products. And today, we have a magnificent vintage. 2020 was a difficult year, but in the end, a year full of promise.

### Nicolas Audebert

*Directeur Général  
Château Rauzan-Ségla*

## 2020 Winegrowers' comments

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Terroir de biodiversité



The heritage aspect of this collective *Margaux Terroir de Biodiversité* initiative concerns the landscape of the four communes in the Margaux appellation (7500 ha). Vines (1665 ha or 22% of the total area) are bordered to the east by the estuary, to the west by woodland (34%), and to the north and south by marshland (21%), with 11% urbanization, including roads. While vines do not constitute the majority at the scale of all four communes, they are locally very concentrated, and the challenge identified here is to encourage ecological connections between the various natural environments that surround them.

Between 2016 and 2019, thirty winegrowing properties in the Margaux appellation were involved in actions to encourage biodiversity, which were listed and monitored in a cartographic database. These landscape actions were initially carried out around the edges of the vineyards.

From 2018 to 2020, the PhytAE research project refocused the biodiversity issue on the soil constituting the plots of vines. Twenty-three properties participated, providing twenty-seven plots for the study of the effect of practices on biological life in the soil.

To continue these programmes committed to biodiversity and consistent with the challenges for the sector on a larger scale, the *Margaux Terroir de Biodiversité* initiative has joined the regional Vitirev project with a view to helping Aquitaine's vineyards progress towards practices that respect both people and the environment.

**2016- 2019: 350 actions** that help protect soil from erosion, stimulate biological activity, and provide refuges and food sources for insects and small animals

- 150 ha of late mowing
- 42 ha of fallow plots
- 5 ha of wildflower meadows
- 10 km of hedges
- 1.3 ha of copses

**2018: VITIPOLL project**  
32 "local plant" flowering borders sown by the communes (16) and winegrowers (16)

**2018-2020: PhytAE project**  
**Soil Biodiversity Study:**

- Auxiliary predators (103 species of spider, 52 species of ground beetle)
- Decomposers (springtails and mites)

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