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# MARGAUX

# 2016

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



SYNDICAT VITICOLE DE MARGAUX

N°15/APRIL 2017

## Setting the bar ever higher!

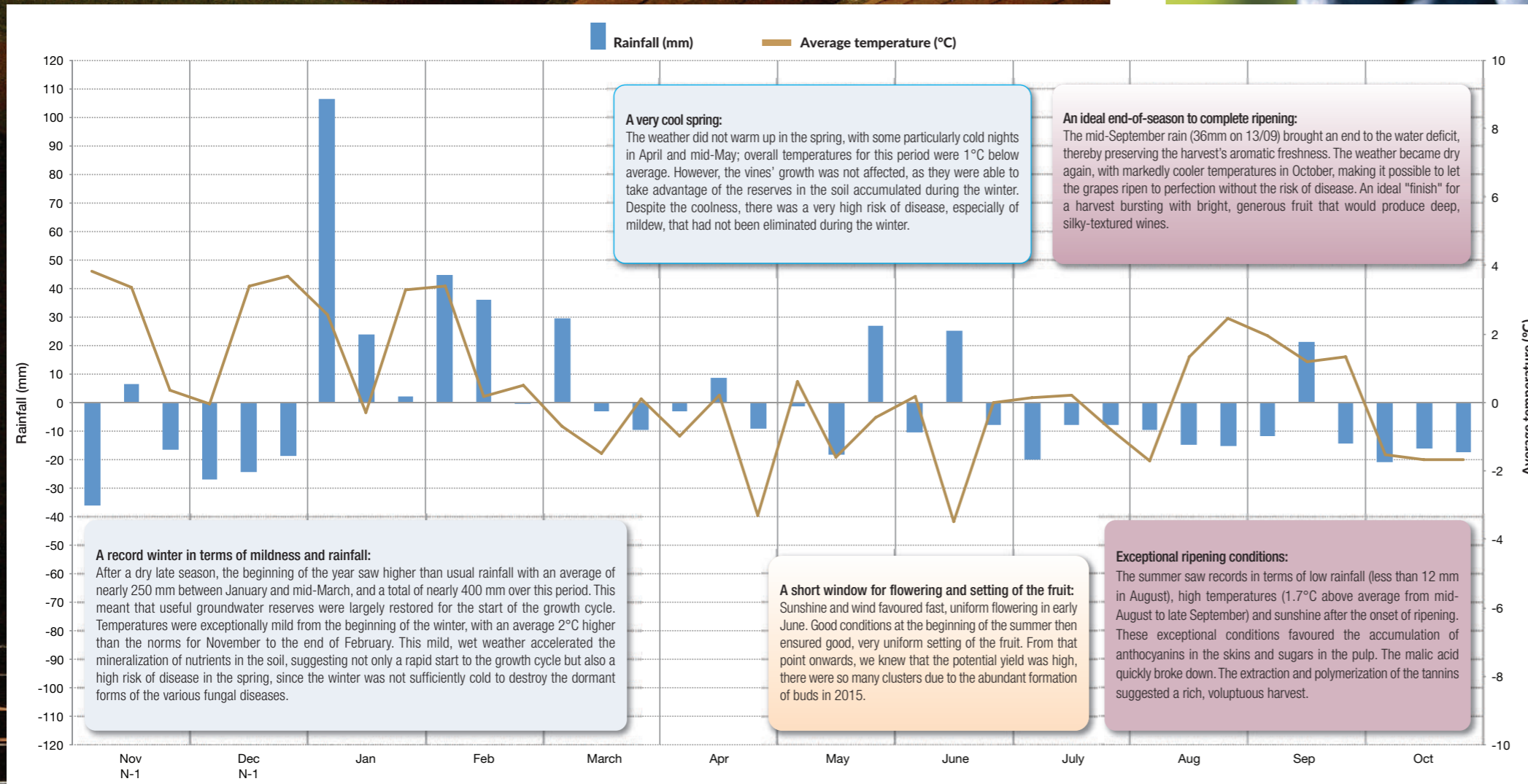


**W**e are familiar with great vintages that come in pairs. This has occurred once again in Margaux with the unforgettable 2015 being followed by a miraculous 2016. 2016's remarkable purity and distinguished tannic texture are sure to make it one of the all-time greats. Both vintages will have their fans and both will contribute to raising the quality of Margaux's wines ever higher.

**Gonzague LURTON**

President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux

Vintage 2016 - Deviation from the average - Margaux Weather Station



ŒNOLOGIST'S COMMENTS

2016 is, without any doubt, a truly great vintage.

How could it not be with such exceptional weather conditions from mid-June to the end of October! Yes, there was an incredible amount of rain between January and June, but we have never come across a case, nor has any vine physiologist, when the ripening of the grapes was affected by the weather conditions before their formation... I am sorry if anyone has any doubts about that! We can say that this was a vintage of contrasting conditions, with no real spring, in which we went directly from wet to dry, and from cool to hot; ultimately, it was not an early vintage, and the alcohol levels in the wines are very reasonable. In other respects, it was quite unusual, but it is likely that the delay in the phenological cycle served us well.

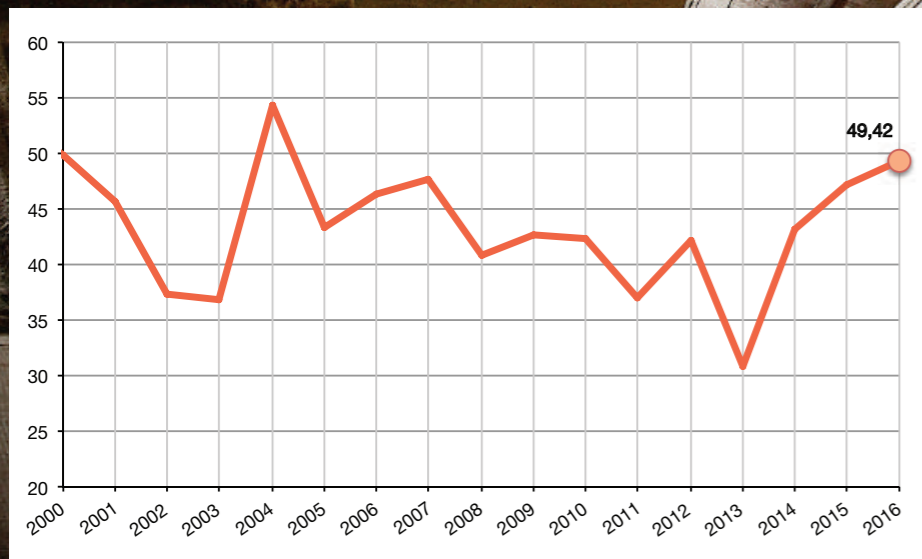
What can be said concerning the degree of water stress? While it was certainly significant, it essentially concerned the young vines and the drier terroirs, which, in the bigger picture are quite marginal. Well-established vines with dense, extensive root systems in the appellation's well-ventilated terroirs, or those on clay soils, were largely able to compensate for the water shortages that had become worrying by the end of August. And so it was that the harvests took place in the sunshine, at a measured pace, perfectly adapted to achieving the objectives for each plot in terms of phenolic and aromatic maturity.

Impatient and intrigued to discover what would result, we vinified powerful yet gentle wines, with very ripe tannins, very well-balanced in acidity and alcohol; these were not the heady, generous wines of 2009 or 2010, but if they had to be compared to one of the great vintages of the last 20 years, then 2005 comes to mind.

**Eric Boissenot**  
*Œnologist, Doctor of Œnology and Ampelogy*



Average yield for the appellation Margaux (hl/ha)



With an average yield of 49.42 hl/ha, the appellation returned to a level of production comparable to the 2000 vintage.

Despite the start of the growth cycle being hampered by a significant risk of disease, the superb development of the bunches and sunshine all through flowering helped Margaux's winegrowers to maintain good yields.

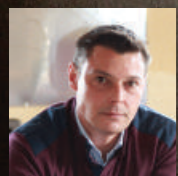
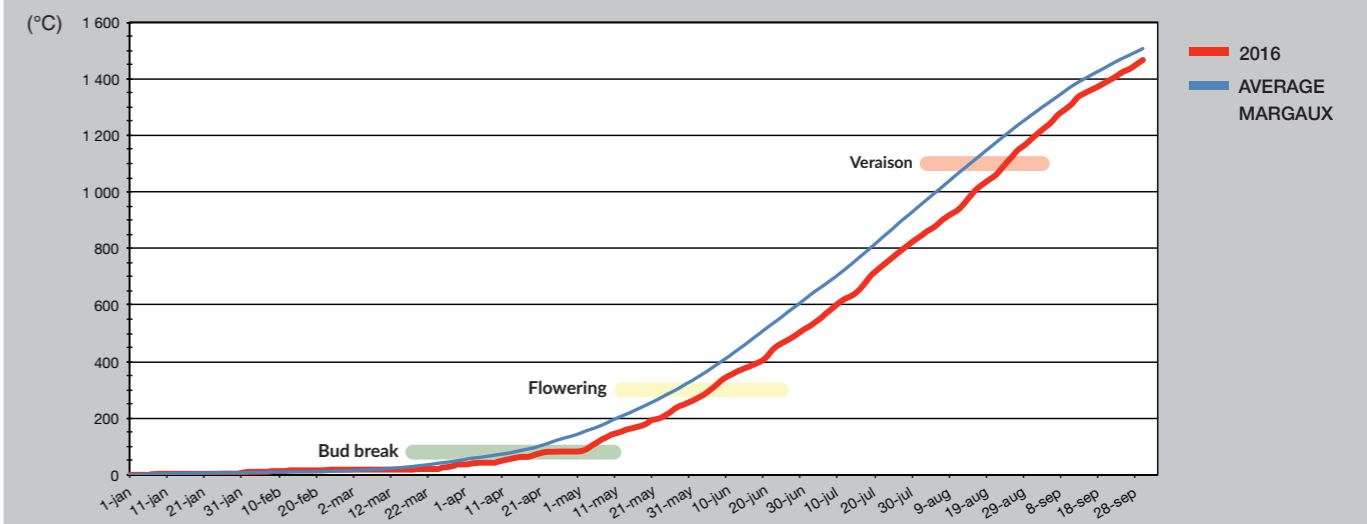
As the harvests approached, the bunches were plentiful and very well distributed. The rapid flowering and onset of ripening were particularly conducive to a very satisfactory homogeneity within each plot.

The late season conditions enabled a perfect completion of the ripening stage in each plot, combining exceptional quality and quantity.

2016, a quirky but exceptional vintage

The record cold temperatures in the spring significantly delayed the 2016 growth cycle compared to the average. The slope of the curve then approaches the average, even showing a clear acceleration after the onset of ripening due to the exceptional summer conditions. The initial delay did not result in it being a late vintage, because the grapes had caught up by late September, benefiting from the ideal late-season conditions.

Sum of average daily temperatures above 10°C



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

# WINEGROWER'S COMMENTS

The winter of 2016 was exceptionally mild. It took a long time for the vines to become properly dormant, and enter the “resting state” that is necessary for pruning. January and February continued with temperatures substantially above norms. The very gentle climate conditions allowed some biological activity to continue in the soil, enhancing its fertility, and hence the availability of nutrients. But this mildness also favoured an early bud break in certain varieties.

Fortunately, the relatively light spring frosts did not do any major damage. Low temperatures usually help to eliminate fungus and other parasites; the mild weather had the opposite effect and encouraged them to spread.

It should also be noted that the exceptionally heavy rain in the spring enabled groundwater reserves to be replenished. This was a year in which measures to protect the vines needed to be applied earlier and in greater force, but their use was always carefully controlled and as respectful of the soil and vines as possible.

The excess water also produced steady, fast, growth in the vines, obliging us to make further efforts to keep up with the rapid pace set by nature. This vitality was reflected in the uniform, generous flowering. It was around this time that nature took back, in some areas, some of what it had given us. The climate constraints that followed did not allow us to intervene as we would have liked during June.



Fine weather follows rain... An extremely dry summer, culminating in a week of heatwave temperatures, triggered water stress in the most well-drained plots. Even though our Médoc grape varieties are very resistant, there were some cases of stoppages in growth, sun-scalding, and grapes withering. This stress caused the vines to draw some water back from the grapes, resulting in a natural concentration effect.

The rain in early September provided relief, and then the mild autumn, a real Indian summer, enabled incredible degrees of ripeness to be achieved. Conditions were so idyllic, with the grapes in such perfect health, that the choice of when to pick them was more a matter of impatience than urgency.

**2016 was without doubt an exceptional vintage, by its complexity and character.**

With the ongoing objective of achieving a harmonious and respectful relationship between nature and humans, the winegrower's task today has regained its true character.

**Léopold Valentin**

Technical Director of Château Durfort-Vivens



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