

# Viticulturist's comments

## The 2011 vintage

was extremely unusual both in terms of weather and the events that occurred during the growth cycle. Bud-break took place at the end of March at a date close to the norm. But the particularly dry, hot conditions in April led to a dramatic acceleration in the vines' growth. In Margaux, the accumulated rainfall for April (7 mm) was ten times less than normal. The amount of sunshine was comparable to a typical July. These summer conditions continued throughout the spring. Flowering began on 10 May. Work in the vineyard advanced at a steady pace.

At the beginning of June, at which point the vines were a good three weeks ahead in their development, a violent hail storm caused significant damage in some of the appellation's vineyards.

The dry weather continued and began to limit the growth of the branches. Scorching temperatures on the 26 and 27 June resulted in sun-scalding on vines that had not developed much foliage or where the direction of the rows favoured this phenomenon. Observation has to be the rule when determining the nature of operations to be carried out in the vineyard. It was necessary to work on a plot-by-plot basis, in an almost surgical manner. The risk of attacks from parasites was extremely low this year due to the weather conditions.



At the start of the summer, it was obvious that the 2011 vintage would be particularly early, and the red grape harvests were scheduled for the end of August. However, a marked coolness in July and rain during August slowed down the ripening process. 2011 was, nonetheless, the hottest year since 1900, on a par with 2003, with an annual average temperature that was 1.6°C above the norm.

As the harvests approached, ripeness tests suggested that the grapes were of excellent quality. The harvests started early, at the beginning of September, confirming the vintage's earliness. It was clear that sorting was an important issue, with the removal of berries that were green, scalded or withered. The phenolic richness of the Merlot and its extractability were excellent. There is no doubt that the Cabernet Sauvignon was once again the star of the vintage. It produced wines with a rich aromatic potential and a very fine structure on the palate.

Characterized by very early development, with very hot, dry conditions in the spring, preceding a cooler, wetter summer, the 2011 vintage required meticulous sorting to remove any immature, shrivelled or damaged grapes. Vinification enabled the superb phenolic and aromatic potential to be revealed in a vintage that is hard to compare to any other.

**Christophe Capdeville**

Directeur d'exploitation, Château Brane-Cantenac

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N°10

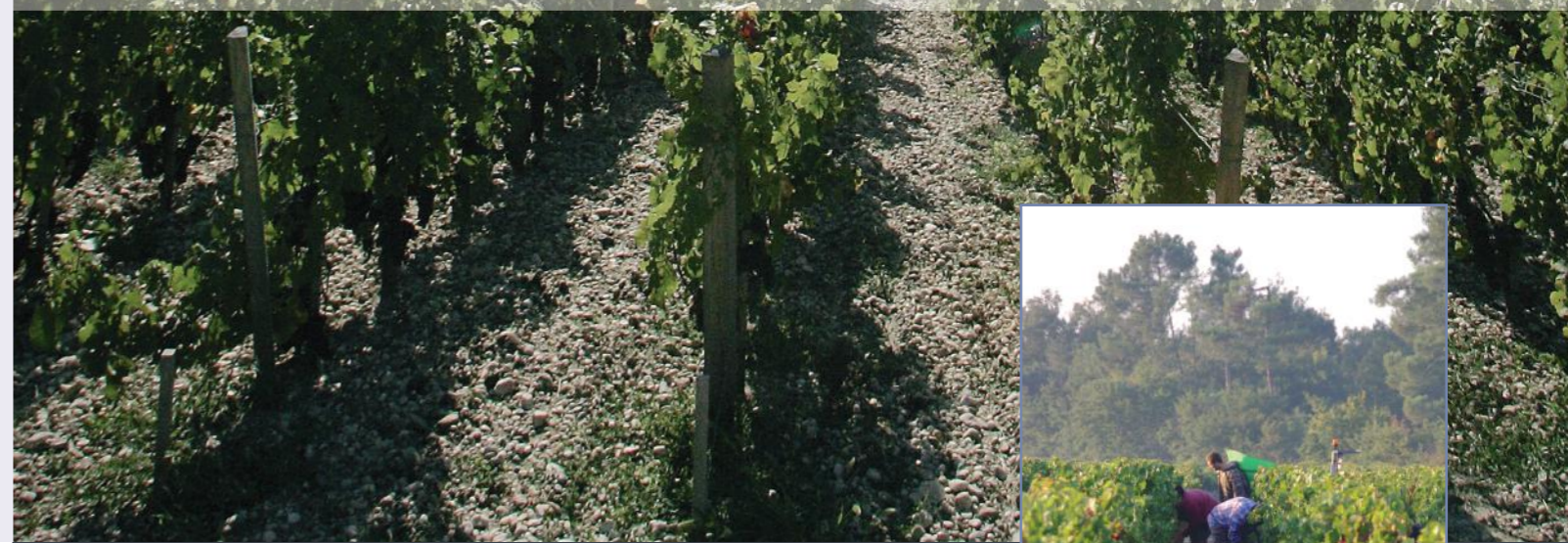
Here the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of our annual presentation of the Appellation's latest vintage. We wanted to provide a reference document that would be useful for both professionals and wine enthusiasts, that goes beyond a simple positive or negative evaluation, but that also does not indulge in excessive praise or unfavourable comparisons. We have therefore offered very factual data, guaranteeing the objectivity of the observations; we have also endeavoured to present the human aspect of our work through the various viewpoints, as each would be meaningless without the other.

The 2011 vintage was extremely early and proved to be more difficult to manage than we thought it would be. A hail storm in early June affected part of the appellation. The spring and the summer were particularly dry and the grapes were harvested quickly and early. The results were surprising: strongly coloured, very aromatic wines, with fine tannic structures. A vintage that, in a different style, will compare very favourably with the two giants that preceded it.

**Gonzague Lurton**

President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux

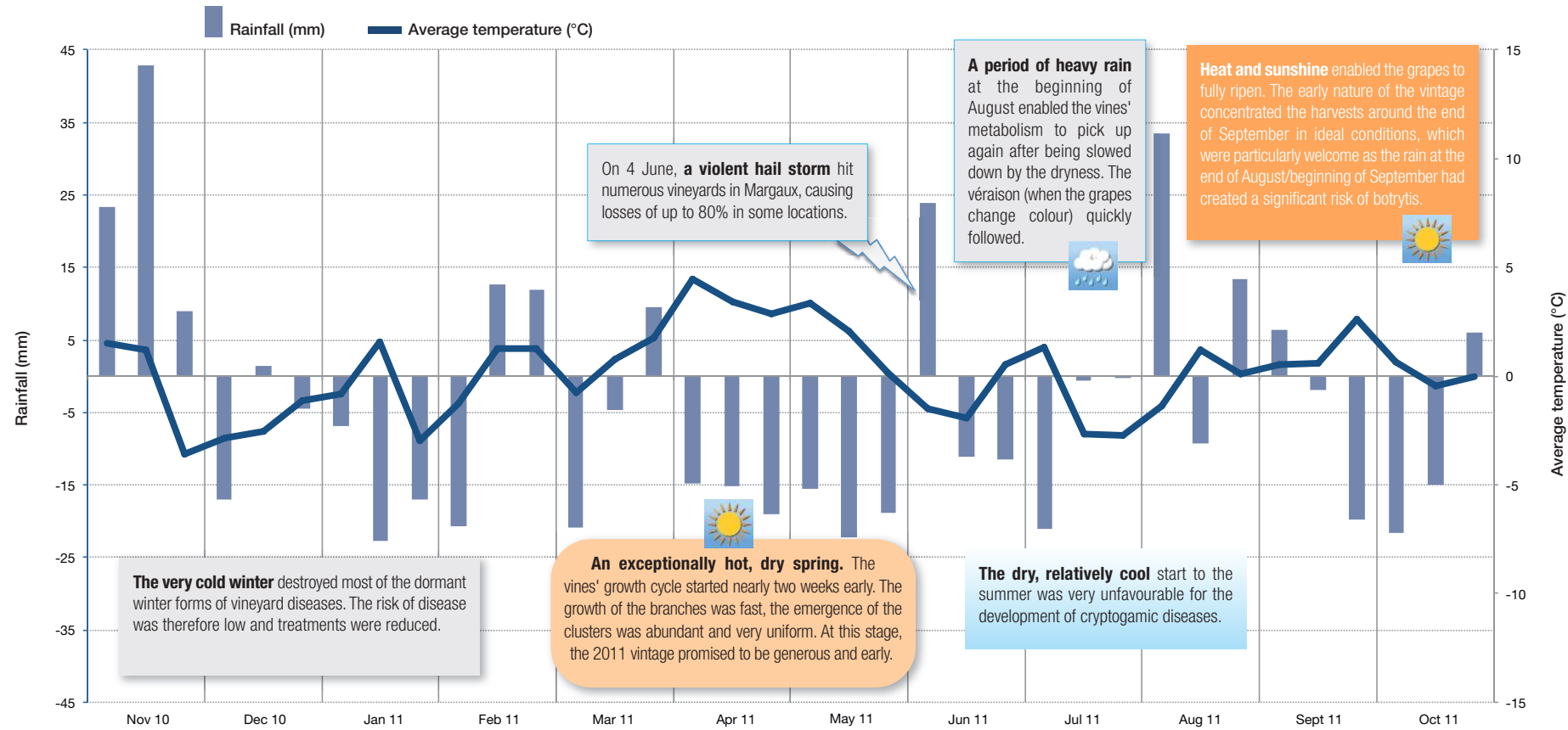
# MARGAUX 2011 *History of a vintage*



SYNDICAT VITICOLE DE MARGAUX



## Vintage 2011: Divergences from the averages 1996 to 2010 - Margaux weather station



# MARGAUX 2011

*History of a vintage*

## Oenologist's comments

2011 was a very early vintage with severe, difficult conditions. Yields were very low and the care applied to our selections was greater than ever. It was however an extremely interesting vintage, requiring a great deal of attention and rigour. In this context the incredible quality of the Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc should be emphasized. The wines of 2011 do not have the opulence of the two previous years, since comparison is inevitable, but they are, in my opinion, great wines, full of charm and what they may lack in power they make up for with personality and complexity.

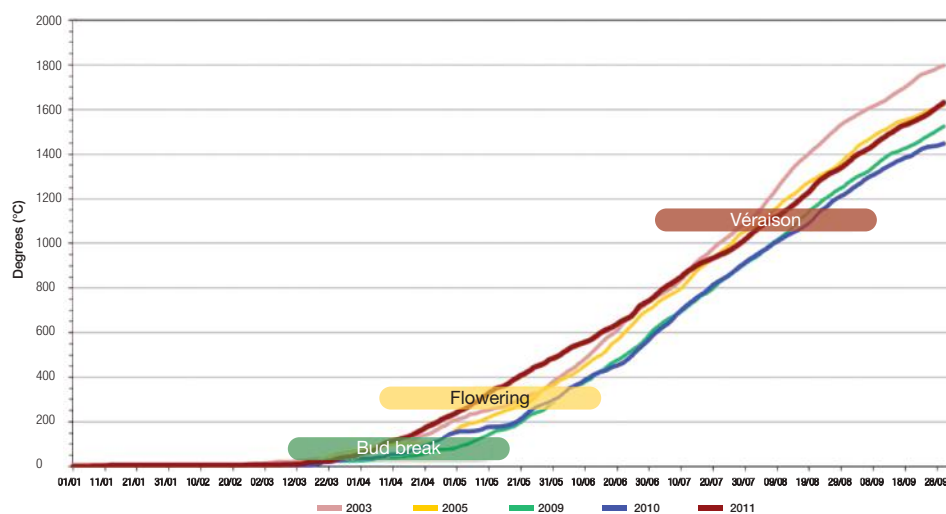
**Eric Boissenot**  
*(Enologist, PhD Science.)*



## The ripeness of the grapes: an early year

These were the earliest harvests for the past 20 years, apart from 2003. Unlike 2003, whose earliness was caused by a heat wave, 2011 was early from the start of the growth cycle in the spring. Rather than an acceleration of ripening, we observed a much earlier start, with the véraison occurring approximately two weeks earlier than in recent years. The grapes therefore ripened at a uniform pace over a normal period of time (see graph of the sums of temperatures above 10°C) preserving the balances of sugar/acids and colour/tannins that we are used to achieving in our vineyards.

## Sum of average daily temperatures over 10°C



The graph opposite illustrates the dynamic of the early nature of the 2011 vintage from the start of the growth cycle. After the véraison, 2011's temperature evolution was almost exactly the same as that of 2005, and comparable, although earlier, to 2009 and 2010. This earliness was welcome this year due to the considerable threat of botrytis. We could not have waited much longer in order to harvest certain plots when the grapes were fully ripe.

	Harvest date	Probable Alcohol (%Vol)	P200b (g)	TA (gH <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub> /L)	pH	Marc/Juice	ApH <sub>1</sub> (mg/L)	ApH <sub>3,2</sub> (mg/L)	TPI	Mp (%)	MA (g/L)
Merlot	08-sept-03	13,14	315	3,70	3,68	200	1890	1068	62	31	1,3
	28-sept-09	14,46	301	2,65	3,63	139	1838	1001	58	31	1,3
	30-sept-10	13,71	271	2,60	3,45	139	2413	989	57	31	1,6
	<b>13-sept-11</b>	<b>13,03</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>3,40</b>	<b>3,30</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>1870</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1,1</b>
Cabernet sauvignon	16-sept-03	11,71	275	4,00	3,48	132	1435	893	48	26	2,8
	05-oct-09	13,43	248	3,40	3,64	171	2144	1325	64	17	2,6
	05-oct-10	12,51	286	3,45	3,36	151	2671	1259	57	11	2,8
	<b>20-sept-11</b>	<b>12,51</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>3,50</b>	<b>3,48</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>2121</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3,2</b>

ApH1: Total anthocyanin concentration  
 ApH3,2: Extractable anthocyanins (mg/L)  
 Mp (%): maturity of pips  
 MA: Malic Acid concentration (g/L)