

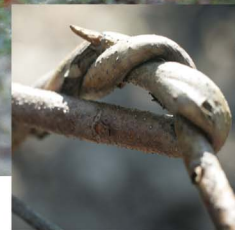
MARCH 2010

MARGAUX 2009

History of a vintage

Like many of the other vineyards in Bordeaux, the Margaux appellation produced one of those rare wines in 2009 that will go down in legend. Without going back too far, the wonderful vintages of 2000 and 2005 come to mind. And a study of the data shows that such a comparison may well be justified. For all three of these harvests, the ripening process was very similar, particularly after July. On tasting, the wines suggest a compromise between the terrific class of 2000 and the power of 2005: a style of vintage in which the wines of Margaux are incomparable.

Gauzague Lurhon
Chairman
of the Margaux Wine Syndicate.

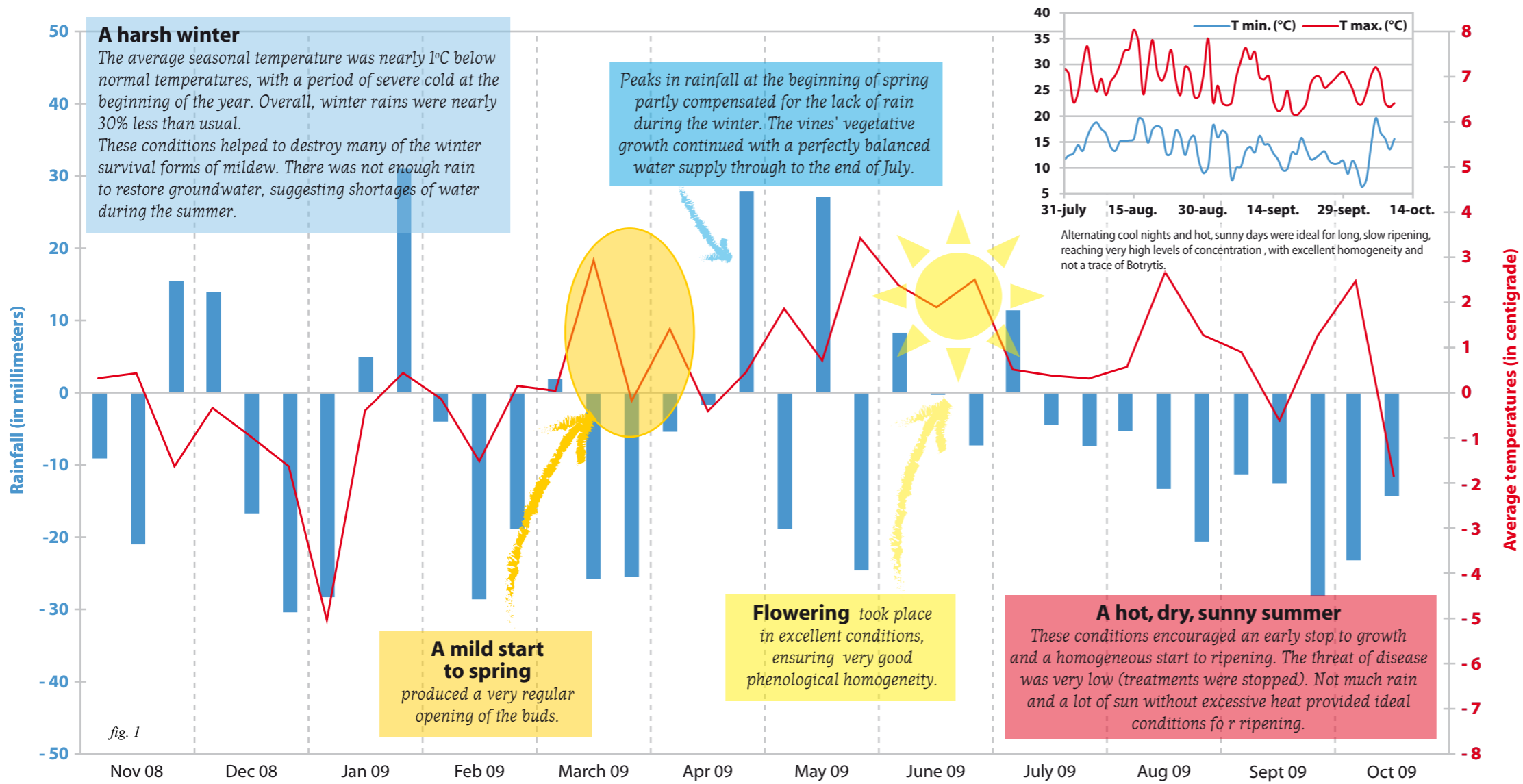


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2009 Vintage : Divergences from thirty year averages

Margaux weather station: ten day averages



The Oenologist point of view

The summer heat and dry weather started in June. This continued through August, September and the first ten days of October. The signs of water constraints were already visible at the end of July. However, the vines continued to develop at a normal pace, with the grapes patiently ripening towards a joyful harvest. And patience was necessary because, as we know, hot temperatures gradually increases the gap between phenolic ripeness and the ripeness of the pulp. The fine weather persisted and, in the end, the perfect health of the grapes greatly facilitated our task. The harvest conditions were unbelievable; there were no constraints and we all picked extraordinary, perfectly ripe, sweet, fresh grapes at a steady pace from the beginning to the end of the harvests. One might have feared flabby, alcoholic wines, but nature delivered fresh, tannic wines, that are dense, fruity, rich and balanced.

Eric BOISSENOT - Oenologist (Ph. D Science).

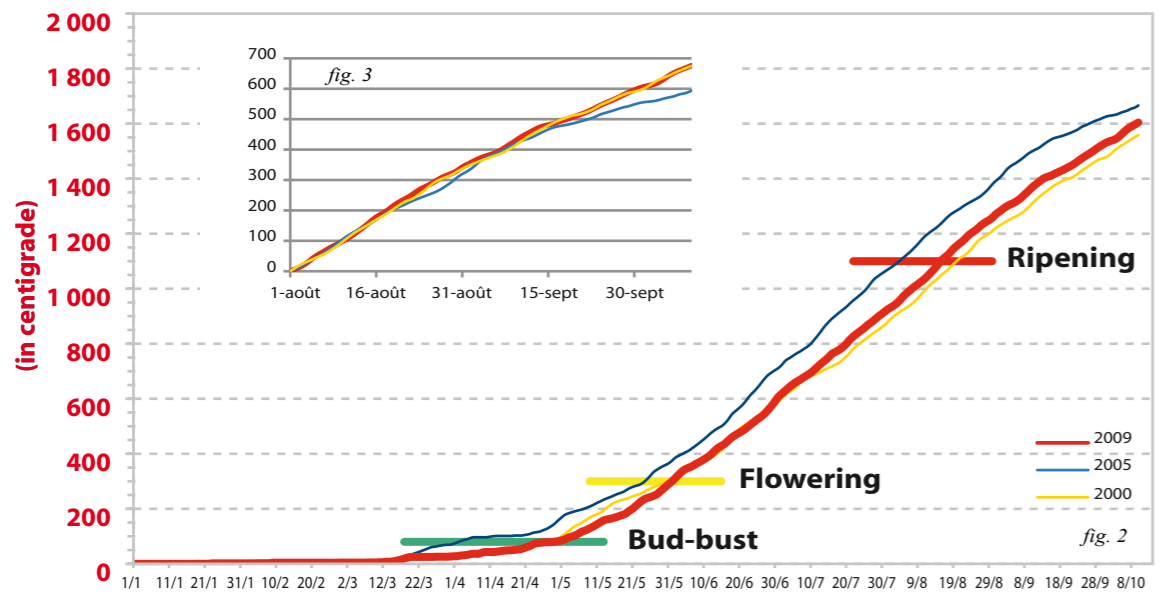
Degrees of ripeness reached for the 2000, 2005 and 2009 harvests for various types of soil in the appellation.

Evolution of sums of average daily temperatures above 10°C : (fig. 2)

Compared to 2005, the growth cycle started late due to the severe winter. The mild spring and summer heat then accelerated growth and the vines gradually caught up with 2005 with an evolution that was very similar to 2000.

From the beginning of ripening (fig. 3), the data for 2009 places this vintage on at least the same level as the top years of 2000 and 2005.

The buds thus opened later in 2009 than in 2005 but the vines then benefited from exceptional conditions during both the vegetative phase and the ripening of the grapes, very much like 2000.



- TA:** Total Acidity expressed in (g/L H2SO4)
- MA:** Malic Acid concentration (g/L)
- ApH:** Total anthocyanin concentration (mg/L)
- ApH_{3,2}:** Extractable anthocyanins (mg/L)
- TPI:** Total Polyphenols Index (DO 280)
- SM%:** Ripeness of seeds (the lower this value, the riper the seeds)
 - Merlot : 25 < Mp (%) < 35
 - Cabernet : 5 < Mp (%) < 25

| Plot | Soil type | Year | Probable percentage | TA | MA | ApH ₁ (mg/L) | ApH _{3,2} (mg/L) | TPI | SM (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Merlot noir | Clayey gravel | 2000 | 13,10 | 3,95 | 1,2 | 1 765 | 912 | 57 | 36 |
| | | 2005 | 13,09 | 3,90 | 1,0 | 2 058 | 1 080 | 65 | 33 |
| | | 2009 | 14,90 | 2,55 | 1,9 | 1 975 | 1 022 | 66 | 33 |
| Merlot noir | Sandy gravel | 2000 | 13,50 | 3,10 | 1,0 | 1 782 | 927 | 58 | 32 |
| | | 2005 | 14,06 | 3,00 | 0,6 | 2 214 | 1 165 | 62 | 24 |
| | | 2009 | 13,77 | 3,00 | 1,2 | 1 958 | 1 038 | 60 | 31 |
| Cabernet sauvignon | Clayey gravel | 2000 | 11,90 | 4,65 | 2,5 | 1 407 | 817 | 45 | 27 |
| | | 2005 | 12,69 | 5,05 | 3,0 | 2 662 | 1 302 | 68 | 23 |
| | | 2009 | 13,77 | 3,15 | 2,7 | 2 626 | 1 291 | 56 | 8 |
| Cabernet sauvignon | Sandy gravel | 2000 | 11,55 | 4,20 | 3,5 | 2 197 | 1 174 | 56 | 16 |
| | | 2005 | 13,03 | 3,95 | 1,9 | 2 984 | 1 492 | 70 | 14 |
| | | 2009 | 13,43 | 3,15 | 2,0 | 2 579 | 1 491 | 68 | 12 |

The table above clearly indicates that 2009 is in the same mould as the legendary vintages of 2000 and 2005 in terms of the levels of maturity reached. Ripening occurred over a long period with perfect amounts of sunshine and hot days alternating with cool nights (fig.1). As a result, phenolic compounds and sugars reached record levels. Acidity has substantially decreased in the grapes, including the Cabernets, with total acidities well below those for 2000 and 2005 at harvest. However, levels rose slightly during vinification, re-establishing alcohol/acidity balances and ensuring an excellent capacity for ageing. Ripening conditions were very favourable for the polymerisation of the tannins in the skins and seeds (with record levels for the Cabernets) and for the extractability of the anthocyanins (ApH_{3,2}) and other compounds in the skins. Winemakers were able to bring out the best in this magnificent raw material. The wines have very quickly presented a density and smoothness that is rare at this stage, at the same time preserving all their power and freshness, supported by very rich, complex aromatic expression.

The Viticulturist's *point of view*

There is no doubt that 2009 will remain in our memories as one of nature's masterpieces, with its fair share of suspense, tension, generosity and excitement, all culminating in a supremely happy ending.

The very severe winter had delayed the start of the vegetative cycle and we were not sure what the consequences would be. However, a long period of good weather slowly but surely reduced the effect of this slight delay.

We were able to control the threat of disease throughout the season to arrive at the harvest with grapes that were free from grape worms and botrytis and perfect picking conditions.

The only shadow in the picture was the hailstorm on 11 May; it was less violent than the one in the previous year (28 May 2008) but the same areas were affected. There were considerable losses on the Cantenac plateau but fortunately we were able to keep an excellent level of leaf area due to the growth of lateral shoots (usually removed).

We will also remember the amazing way that the grapes seemed to get riper and riper every day, becoming increasingly flavourful, with richer skins and more sugar. The flavours released by crunching the seeds became more and more pleasant, with that unmistakable sign of ripeness: a flavour of nougat.

We were, in fact, ready to harvest very early, being sure that we would have to act quickly after such a magnificent August and the impressive results of the first ripeness tests. There was great excitement, and we were so eager to gather in this wonderful harvest that the wait was almost frustrating.

Good sense and patience were finally rewarded a hundredfold. What a joy it was to begin turning these delicious, rich grapes, full of colour and concentration, into wine!

Just as during the ripening process, the wines evolved steadily during maceration, becoming deeper in colour, powerful, smooth and rich. We were surprised by the incredible balance which gave the wines great elegance despite their strength and concentration.

Such glimpses of how generous nature can be, underline the importance of remaining humble and doing everything that we can to respect nature, and to preserve it.

Jérôme Hérarval - Director of Château Durfort-Vivens.

