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MARGAUX

2023

THE STORY OF A VINTAGE

N°22/APRIL 2024



2023, a vintage full of surprises!

2023 was a remarkable vintage in the Margaux appellation, characterised by fairly heterogeneous production, ranging from opulence for some properties to scarcity for others. The storms in late spring and early summer resulted in a threat of downy mildew, with various degrees of severity depending on the vineyard, creating a unique dynamic within the appellation.

A fine July was followed by an equally fine August, with well above-average temperatures, culminating in a heatwave from 16 to 24 August, resulting in exceptionally concentrated grapes. The harvests began around 10 September and ended with some magnificent Cabernet Sauvignon in the first week of October. The grapes were of exceptional quality, suggesting that 2023 will be a vintage with an excellent capacity to age.

However, 2023 was also a year in which two major figures in our appellation's history left us. We pay tribute in this edition to Lucien Lurton and Philippe Raoux.

We thank you for your loyalty to our appellation, and invite you to savour this fine 2023 vintage to the full.

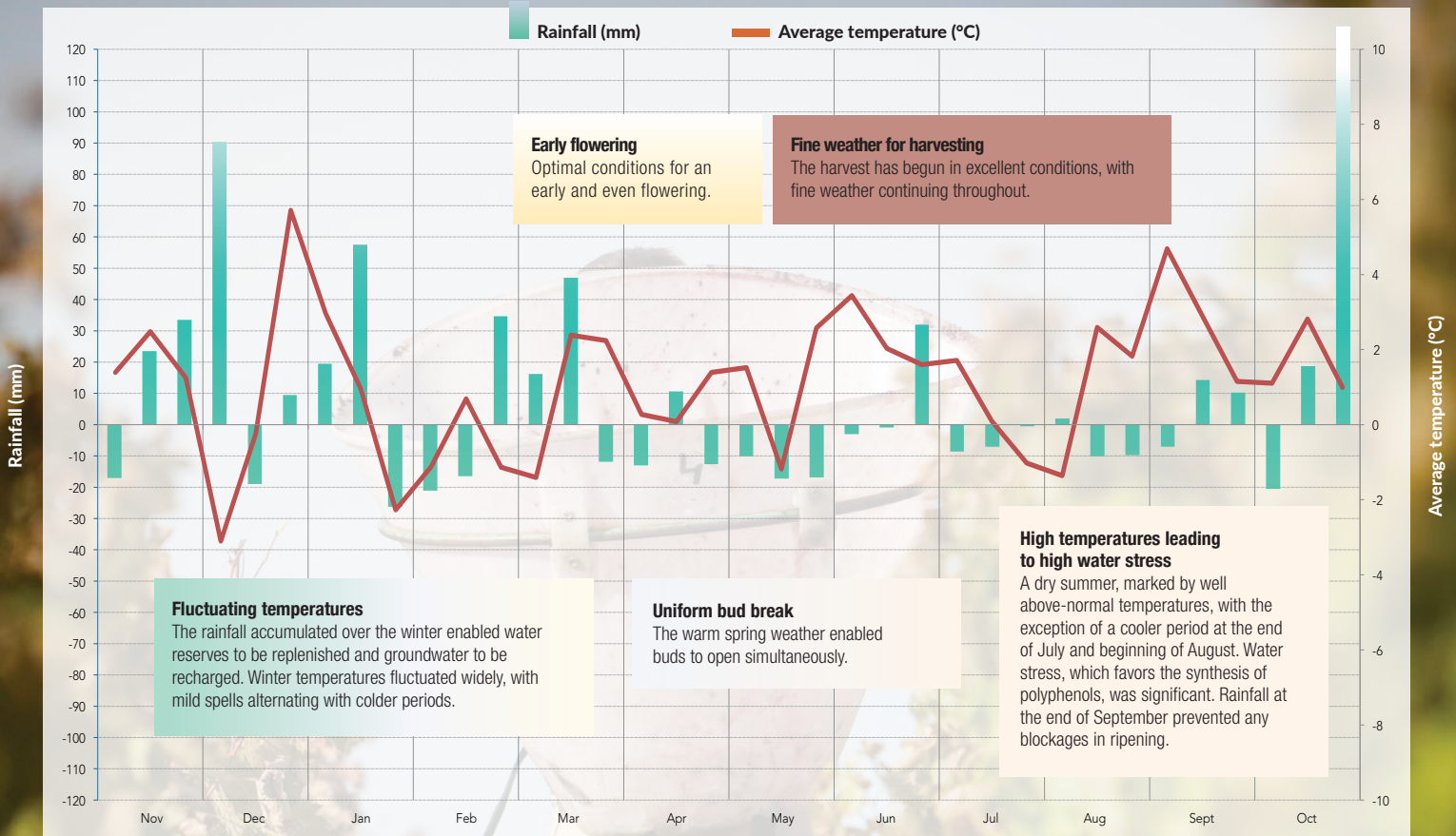
Edouard Mialhe

President of the Syndicat Viticole de Margaux

MARGAUX



2023 - Deviations from the average - Margaux Weather Station



Sum of Average Daily Temperatures above 10°C



2023 Vintage

Hot, humid weather conditions significantly accelerated the vines' growth cycle. It started as a classic vintage but became earlier and earlier as the months went by. The harvest promised to be abundant, but this was not true in all cases. In the end, the snip of secateurs began on the same dates as 2022, an early vintage.



The harvests progressed at an uneven pace, over a relatively long period. The very hot, alcoholic Merlot rubbed shoulders with the fresher, well-balanced Cabernets, which the September rain helped to finish ripening after the very hot, dry end of summer.

This strong contrast between the grape varieties is compensated by the blend in a great vintage that is rich, dense and extremely promising.

Éric Boissenot
Oenologist,
Doctor of Oenology and Ampelology

2023 Winegrowers' comments

A year of change at Barraillots

2023 was a rollercoaster year, just when everything seemed to be going well, Nature reminded us who was in charge: a spring frost in April weakened part of our vineyard, but did not cause any serious damage. Throughout the rest of the season, the rain and morning dew resulted in an exceptionally high risk of outbreaks of downy mildew, threatening the vines, foliage and grapes. The threat was so great that our objectives were put in doubt. The use of plant preparations, biocontrol products and prophylactic measures (trimming and topping) more frequently than in previous years enabled us to combat this mildew.



The decision to start harvesting was very fast, as our Merlot was having trouble withstanding the heatwave at the end of August and the beginning of September. We started on 8 September, but picking continued until 27 September. The vintage's exceptional quality quickly

became apparent during the vinification process, causing us to forget the previous challenges! For the first time in the château's history, we were even able to carry out vinifications entirely in the barrel for a small, carefully selected plot.

This 2023 in barrels is now just waiting to be bottled to reveal its quality, reflecting the commitment and efforts of all our vineyard workers.

Yannick MARTIN-BRUNET

Owner-winegrower. Château Les Barraillots

The 2023 vintage will always be remembered

The 2023 vintage will always be remembered because while the growing season required a great deal of effort in the vineyard, ultimately, the harvest was excellent and enabled us to produce some very fine, powerful wines.

More or less continuous rain in the spring and early summer led to an exceptionally high risk of disease for the vines: a constant battle was waged in the vineyard between early May and late July. However, from early August to mid-October, very good weather enabled the grapes to reach perfect ripeness, with the harvest spread out over late September.

Overall, the 2023 harvest was perfectly ripe and healthy, with superb complexity. Furthermore, and this was a pleasant surprise, yields for the 2023 vintage were above the ten-year average.



The first blends for the 2023 wines reveal a powerful balance with a finely structured palate. The period of ageing in French oak barrels has begun: this will soften the tannins and support this diamond in the making with complementary aromatic notes.

Mélanie FABRE

Winegrower. Château Bellevue de Tayac

Stress: from a little to a lot, to none at all... I love this vintage!



Despite dry conditions in the spring, high temperatures and high air humidity led to a significant threat of downy mildew. Human and technical resources, preventive measures, knowledge of the vineyard and responsiveness, particularly at weekends, were the keys to resisting this threat, especially during the storms at the end of June. And this was true for both organically and conventionally managed vineyards.

Just as important, the dry, hot summer, with a heatwave after 15 August, speeded up the ripening process, with the result that we had to pick the young, struggling vines very early, but this ensured perfect ripeness for the other plots, even with high yields. After several small harvests, 2023 illustrated and rewarded all our efforts, especially in the vineyard, because that's where it counts... this year, and in future years.

Philippe DELFAUT

Managing Director. Château Kirwan

Tributes

Lucien Lurton

Lucien Lurton, one of the Médoc's greatest vineyard builders, passed away in 2023. Lucien Lurton arrived in the appellation in 1954. As a young married man, he lived with his wife Marie-Jeanne at Château Brane-Cantenac, a property acquired by his grandfather Léonce Récapet in 1925, the same year that Lucien was born.

The family, who owned property in the Entre-deux-Mers region, had recently sold their 40% stake in Château Margaux because of economic difficulties. Two world wars and the Great Depression of 1929 had taken their toll on the Médoc's great estates. He had barely started when most of the vines in the region were destroyed by the great frost of 1956. A cultivator of vines at heart, and a former student of the Purpan School of Agriculture, he used an old propagating technique (couchadis) to maintain a low level of production and quickly replanted the estate in the years that followed. 1956 also saw the birth of Louis, the first of the couple's eleven children, followed by Bernard, who sadly died at the age of 5, Denis, Brigitte, Henri, Marie-Laure, Sophie, Gonzague, Thierry, Edwige and Bérénice.



Lucien Lurton never stopped improving his vines and acquiring more of them by buying numerous properties. He began with Durfort-Vivens in 1961, followed in the 1970s by Châteaux Climens, Doisy-Dubroca, Villegeorge, La Tour de Bessan, Haut-Nouchet, Camarsac, Duplessis, Bouscaut and Desmirail. Of the eleven properties he passed on to his children in 1992, four are in the Margaux appellation. Château Brane-Cantenac, Château Durfort-Vivens, Château Desmirail and Château La Tour de Bessan are now owned by Henri, Gonzague, Denis and Marie-Laure respectively. After handing over the reins of his estates and spending some time nurturing his desire to travel and explore the great open spaces of the world, he decided to put his extensive knowledge of terroirs to work in their defence. He began with an epic battle against the gravel merchants who had moved into our communes due to economic difficulties, and were transforming thousand-year-old layers of gravel into lakes. Then, under the presidency of his son Gonzague, he and the geologists Pierre Becheler and Jean-Marie Viaud carried out a titanic task of sampling and analysing the soil with a view to redefining our appellation's boundaries.

In recent years, he could be seen walking in the mornings, slightly hunched over, observing the vines as they changed with the seasons and chatting happily with anyone he met. Lucien Lurton died four years after his wife, on 25 March 2023, surrounded by his family and friends at his home in Brane-Cantenac.

Henri Lurton for the Lurton family

Philippe Raoux



On 20 October 2023, Philippe Raoux, who began the restoration of Château d'Arsac in 1986, passed away in tragic circumstances. Born into a family of winegrower-merchants in Algeria, the story of his life was intimately linked to that of the château. His achievement was crowned in February 2020, when the château was awarded Cru Bourgeois Exceptionnel status. A dedicated manager, he worked for 37 years developing the property and gaining recognition for its quality in the Bordeaux wine world. Throughout these years, he maintained a determination to push boundaries and constantly innovate to progress. Despite the fact that wine sales are more complicated today than at the start of the project, he finally achieved the objectives he had set himself.

Everyone at Château d'Arsac would like to thank him for his legacy and the person he was, and will continue to work to ensure that the château retains its exceptional status and that the memory of Philippe Raoux is honoured and his vision respected. As he said in his conclusion in 2020, "we are indeed a living château!"

The Château d'Arsac team

