



2020, a cliff-hanger... with a happy ending

2020 resembles a thriller movie setting: the hottest year in world history, devastating fires across Australia and California, 36°C in Siberia and a global war against COVID19. Thankfully, the scenario ends well...

At the beginning of the year, the vines started to grow earlier than usual. The winegrowers hastened to complete their winter chores and attack their spring work. In parallel, we had to adapt our way of working in compliance with health recommendations.

2 weeks ahead of usual schedule

April and May were hot and humid and the presence of downy mildew was worrying. We still had the damage of 2018's downy mildew fresh in our minds. Fortunately, the second half of May was dry and the flowering stage went even better than we had hoped for, 2 weeks ahead of schedule. **However, as of 19th June, things changed: not a drop of water fell until 11th August. Nothing better to stop the mildew. We then experienced a really hot and dry summer, which lasted through until the harvest period.** So dry, that the youngest plantations had to be watered regularly so as to survive.

Veraison occurred in July and not in August as it usually does. **2020 was set to be a premature year.** Drought and water stress could be felt as of the end of July; the vines slowed down, appearing tired and lacking in breath. While everyone was away on vacation, the heavens opened and we had a stormy episode in mid-August. The plants got their energy back and maturation began. At the same time, our thoughts were with the Californian vineyards and the fires raging through them. The impossible had become a reality.

A historical drought with a real impact on yields

In Bordeaux, **heat and drought marked the end of the ripening process. The berries were to remain small and their weight even decreased, raising fears of unusually low yields.** Water stress slowed down the end of maturation slightly and, as a result, we chose to delay the start of the harvest by a few days. We started picking the Merlots on 14th September, 9 days earlier than back in 2019. The last Cabernets were picked on 25th September.

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The grapes were rich in phenolic compounds, tannins and colour, the degrees were higher than in 2019 and almost as high as those of 2018. Aromas, colour and structure

became rapidly apparent in the juices. **The vinification was simple, there was no need to push the extraction, 15 to 20 days of maceration were enough to obtain the perfect balance between freshness, fruit, body and structure.**

After early barrelling in new barrels for 50% of the collection, aging produced its effect over time and racking. The outset's impetuous concentration gave way to a noble and unctuous flesh.

Bottling took place early June 2022 after 19 months of aging. The wine has everything necessary to stand the test of time.

A few figures

Harvesting: 14th to 25th September 2020

Blend:

■ **51 % Cabernet sauvignon** ■ **28 % Merlot** ■ **14 % Cabernet franc** ■ **7 % Petit verdot**

Aging: 19 months in barrels, 50% new.

Degree: 14 % vol

PH: 3.64

Yield: 33 hl/ha

TASTING

A beautiful deep garnet colour is the forerunner of an ideal concentration level. The nose is both rich and delicate, blending notes of black fruit, sweet peony pepper, vanilla and cinnamon. The attack is soft and fresh accompanied by a pleasant acidity. The tannins appear gradually in the middle of the mouth, they have a tight grain but no aggressiveness. They actively contribute to the length, as does the tasty saline character which enriches the finish.

It looks like this vintage has learned from previous lessons. It appears to have the concentration of 2018 and the finesse of 2019.

Ph. Delfaut, General Manager. Nov 10, 2022