



B O R D E A U X V I N S S E L E C T I O N

2022, A VINTAGE FOR THE AGES



This is a vintage which is getting a lot of praise. It defied predictions. Some are already speaking of a historic vintage, like a 1947. While it is still a baby, no one doubts its extraordinary potential. The first impressions reveal wines of great character: deep purple colours, delicate fruits, power, concentration, refinement, harmony. It is also a consistent vintage on both banks.

A look back at an exceptional climatic year which in the end put the winegrowers to the test more than the vines.

BORDEAUX VINS SÉLECTION 波爾多精選佳釀



A MILD WINTER AND A TENSE SPRING

The seasons aren't what they used to be. After a few relatively cool days, the month of February was rather hot (2°C above seasonal averages) and not rather dry (200mm). There was already a water deficit of 30%. These climatic conditions led to an early bud burst. For the first days of April, a cold snap was forecast. Negative temperatures, from -4°C to -7°C on the night of April 2nd-3rd, were recorded. Depending on the zones (most often, bottom of plots, proximity to woods) and appellations, the frosts caused considerable damage (up to 50% loss of harvest). Many winegrowers fought fervently to protect their vineyards by using anti-frost towers and candles. However, the damage was much less severe than in 2017. In some properties, these early frosts delayed the emergence of buds, in others counter-buds developed quickly, which often means a drop in yield.

A mild and humid spring without too much worry of disease. The first flowers appeared in early May. A rapid flowering under favourable conditions, dry and warm. Early June, a few rainy episodes, especially the night of June 2nd-3rd (25mm of precipitation) in the Médoc. Then, a change of scenery with a first wave of intense heat (22°C on average compared to 19°C in 2020), which ended on the evening of June 18th with a hailstorm of rare violence. June was the wettest month of the growing season (110mm on average).

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A SUMMER UNDER THE HEAT WAVE

The first veraisons were observed at the beginning of July. The new wave of heat from July 10th to 18th (40°C in the shade) caused veraison to be blocked in places. The month of July was the driest recorded since 1959: only 9.7 millimetres of rain fell compared with 90.8 mm in 2021. The same was true for the month of August: continuous sunshine and drought with a third heat wave episode between August 1st and 13th and twenty days with temperatures in the shade above 30°C, punctuated by some welcome rainfall between August 12th to 17th. For some, it was thunderstorms.

However, the consequences of these extreme climatic conditions have not had the same consequences as in the past. On the one hand, the plant has acclimatised since June to the continuous drought and heat and has developed a natural resistance. The thermal amplitude, with relatively cool nights between 19°C and 20°C, also reinforced its metabolism. On the other hand, viticulture today, always more precise and efficient, knows how to adapt through better management of the vines and organic matter. The vineyards have therefore gained even more resistance, in particular through the work of plant cover which protects against heat shocks. No leaf stripping helped to facilitate shading of the bunches. Trimming made it possible to avoid leaf density and contain evaporation. Thus, the vine was able to remain green and functional. Another consequence: the grapes, admittedly small, are less dehydrated, and the aromas have retained a surprising freshness.

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HISTORICALLY EARLY HARVESTS

The harvest of the whites began in mid-August and generally terminated at the end of August; rapid harvests due to uniform maturity and impeccable sanitary conditions. The dry whites revealed a freshness carried by reasonable acidity levels and beautiful aromatics because the phenolic maturity caught up as well. With regards to the reds, at the beginning of September there was a great disparity between technological, phenolic and aromatic maturity. The skins, still thick, had to soften. During this decisive period, it was a question of the balance between the alcohol which was rising and the skins which could still remain hard.

Thanks to ideally mild and dry weather, the harvest took place peacefully. This year, many consultants say that they had to push the winegrowers to harvest as the weather conditions were favourable. However, very precise harvests were possible depending on the grape varieties and the differences in maturity, sometimes even within a plot. Whether it is Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot or Cabernet Sauvignon, they all get praise: excellent ripeness and concentration are often mentioned.

The only downside: yields are generally lower than the ten-year average: the grapes, small in size, necessarily had less voluminous pulp. The less fortunate saw their harvest decrease by a quarter to a half after the hailstorm that occurred on June 20th.

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GENTLE VINIFICATION

Measure and balance, above all else. It was necessary to avoid over-extraction so as not to threaten this beautiful natural harmony. The main goal was to preserve the structure and the acidity and the rather fresh aromatics that we had at harvest time. In the same way, it was necessary to build a frame and a texture in the mid-palate to counterbalance the sometimes high alcohols. However, the degrees were somewhat lower than previous “hot” vintages thanks to vineyard management adapted to the conditions of the vintage: lowering the height of the trellis to limit photosynthesis. The teams, always more informed and responsive, made decisive choices: no excessive leaf stripping, less vigorous rootstocks, more grass cover. This viticulture, less interventionist but more specialized than before, made it possible to face the unusual climatic conditions.

THE IMMENSE QUALITY OF THE 2022

No one would have predicted such a success: Bordeaux, in its great diversity, delivers an exceptional vintage in terms of concentration and aromatic richness. A creamy texture, an aromatic explosiveness, a refinement that one does not usually associate with sunny vintages.

A very accomplished wine, made for ageing, like the 1947, 1961 or 1982.

A vintage which has another virtue - namely putting into question what we thought we knew. Indispensable in our business. We have to think now about the extent of the work to be done to make the vines more and more resilient and develop management strategies to cope with climate change.

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Jean-Sébastien Philippe, International Director Châteaux at Domaines Barons de Rothschild



“First of all, it is necessary to dissociate the vintage from the wines. From a meteorological point of view, we had an exalted vintage, sometimes too hot, sometimes too dry; the vine has been pushed to its limits. You could say she was able to move mountains. What is truly incredible is that, faced with these extreme conditions, she behaved like a marathon runner. Training, resistance, performance. Thanks also to human expertise, the wines do not reflect the excesses of this year. In the cellar, we had to take the opposite course and act gently and slowly so as not to rush the grapes. We accompanied them as well as possible in their fermentation, with very flexible extractions. The presses were more crucial than ever this year! In Pomerol, where the climatic impact was more brutal than elsewhere, the blends proved decisive; no less than ten tastings were necessary to achieve accuracy and balance. We worked with Sauternes, by taking batches according to the exposure of the plots (east vs west) and by multiplying the vinifications within the plots. And, finally, the feared “sunburn” turned into a harmonious tan. The charm is much greater than we imagined.

In our Médoc estates, we were amazed by the tannic mass and the grandiose freshness of the juices. We have never reached this level of precision. The classic grape varieties in the great terroirs spoke, particularly the Cabernets, which made up a record high percentage of the blends.

The only downside: a significantly lower harvest due to the small size of the berries (-20%).

But nothing can temper our enthusiasm: the 2022 exceeds the vintages ever produced on the property and possesses the magic of the 2016, 2005, 2010.”

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Edouard Vauthier, co-owner of Château Ausone

CHATEAU AUSONE
Premier Grand Cru Classé Saint-Émilion "A"



“An atypical vintage that made us sweat, in every sense of the word! The high temperatures set in from June. We had never experienced four peaks of heat in the growing season. And, against all odds, a happy ending; the period of growth was rather peaceful, without pressure from diseases. The work of the soil was carried out in serenity. We had some fears because we are in organic conversion. In our terroirs, limestone acts like a sponge and provides water in times of drought. Our vines were not tired and stressed.

Another rarity: we started the harvest early. On August 28, the analyses revealed high sugars and low acidities. Four days later, same observation; it was then thought that the vine was suffering and that it had stopped its growth process. We started the harvest on September 5, a record for the property, because the grapes had a lot of taste, certainly thanks to the thick skins that acted as natural protections. They ended on the 22nd; we gave ourselves four-day slots to wait for certain plots.

The instructions recommended during vinification: gentler extractions than in previous years. The alcoholic degrees had risen quite high.

In the end, we have a wine that holds up wonderfully well, with an airy balance, perfectly ripe and silky tannins, and a lot of substance on the palate. Great elegance. When tasting there are no sensations of over-ripeness or hotness. A quality that blew us all away. 2022, a very good vintage, for sure. Similar to 2003. Quality and quantity – we couldn't ask for more»

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

François Despagne, Propriétaire du Château Grand Corbin-Despagne



"« Un millésime ô combien enthousiasmant, d'autant que nos craintes étaient nombreuses, et ce dès le mois de juin. Les chaleurs intenses pouvaient altérer floraison puis nouaison et entraîner, selon les secteurs, une baisse de rendements. En fait, la vigne s'est adaptée très rapidement à ces conditions inhabituelles, chaudes et sèches, pour mieux les supporter par la suite durant toute la saison. La plante est allée puiser très tôt dans les réserves d'eau. Nos sols d'argiles bleues se sont révélés bienfaiteurs pour notre vignoble qui est resté vert, actif. Il y a eu également des pluies opportunes entre le 15 et le 31 août ; au total, 35 mm de précipitations qui ont permis au végétal de mieux respirer comme des températures fraîches la nuit. Grâce à nos argiles, extraordinaires réserves d'eau, point de stress hydrique car aucun dysfonctionnement d'ordre physiologique n'a été constaté. En ce qui nous concerne, il serait plus approprié de parler de contraintes hydriques, ô combien qualitatives.

Conséquences ? Des raisins très riches, avec beaucoup de tanins, présentant une quantité de sucres élevée mais aussi une belle acidité, à la différence du 2003. Les vins sont puissants, vifs, colorés.

Des rendements classiques, voire généreux. A Saint-Émilion, une grande disparité, quelquefois même entre deux propriétés voisines (du simple au double).

L'enseignement ? Une meilleure maîtrise des millésimes solaires ; le vigneron a su adapter ses pratiques culturales. Point d'effeuillage outrancier, ni de recherche de surmaturité. La Nature nous dit ce que l'on doit faire et non l'inverse. Au niveau des vinifications, des extractions modérées ont été continûment préconisées.

Au jeu des rapprochements, je dirais que ce millésime présente des similitudes avec le 2010 ou 2005 mais avec plus d'acidité, de tanins, de couleurs. Même profil que le 2020 mais sensiblement plus puissant ».

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE



Guillaume Pouthier, Director of Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion

"In Bordeaux, we have been very lucky with the 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020 and now the 2022, which is part of this lineage and will undoubtedly position itself among the iconic and legendary wines. This cuvée also possesses an element of mystery; today, we control a large number of wine-making techniques, but there is also everything we don't know, such as the extraordinary plant and mineral resilience of the vine. On the eve of the harvest, we were astonished to see how the vines were so "dapper" despite the anarchic episodes throughout the cycle! We could call this vintage "paradoxical" because it has balance and freshness.

Thanks to the perfection of its tannins, it is sublimely drinkable. It can be drunk young or waited for a long time.



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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Bernard Magrez, Owner of Châteaux Pape Clément, Fombrauge, La Tour Carnet, Clos Haut-Peyraguey, Les Grands Chênes

Excellent news for Bordeaux: this vintage seems to have seduced wine lovers around the world, whether French of course, but also American, Chinese, Singaporean. The 2022 has the harmony of very great wines. A gluttony of fruit, smoothness, refinement, irresistible seduction make up its personality. According to professionals, it is one of the five best vintages of the last fifty years. When I am asked about a direct comparison with other older vintages, I answer 1929. A monumental vintage that I had the chance to taste several times.

The lesson of this vintage? The resilience of the vine of course, but also our ability to anticipate, to erase, to correct the potentially dangerous consequences of the climate. Our technological research and development manages to detect, for example, hail clouds 33 km away thanks to our balloons. Similarly, the monitoring of our drones ensures precise management of the incipient impacts of mildew using very precise maps. In the past, their cameras could detect up to 170 types of attacks, today more than 1700. Early detection that protects us from irreversible damage. In another register, these drones, covered with sensors provide us with absolute precision, an idea of the vigour of the plants and the degree of ripening of the bunches, grape by grape. Remarkable progress.

Quality but also quantity this year, particularly at Fombrauge. This vintage sends a very positive signal for the image of Bordeaux, which the world press today repeats ad nauseam that Bordeaux wines are no longer sold. Something to please our competitors abroad... We have to move the goal-posts and study what can be improved. Let's not forget that the consumer seeks innovation. They want to discover products, have new emotions. It is up to us to anticipate their expectations and support them in their choices. In Bordeaux too, the profession must reinvent itself.



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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Nicolas Glumineau, director of Château Pichon Comtesse



“Enorme - this is the word that sums up my feelings about this vintage. The 2012-2022 vertical tasting, which we have just completed, does not leave the slightest doubt; it allowed us to put 2022 into perspective with the ten previous vintages. Quite frankly, I'm impressed with the high quality of the 2022. Either way, the wine will speak for itself during the tastings. I would say that this vintage brings together the best of both worlds: on the one hand, typically Pauillac, imbued with power and minerality, earthy, with a flinty nose; on the other hand, very “comtesse”, floral, expressive but reserved, with a nobility that you have to seek out.

A real technical satisfaction that I share with my team; satisfaction in tasting but also in memory of what we have gone through in terms of worrying climatic episodes this year. This is where we have to thank the river that protects us; its proximity makes it a valuable ally. Its interplay of air flow and water averages temperatures during frost episodes and protects us from hail, as was the case in June this year.

On the other hand, like everyone else, we could not avoid drought and heat waves. Due to very high temperatures and the absolute lack of rainfall in June, July and September, yields dropped considerably between the beginning of July and the harvest.

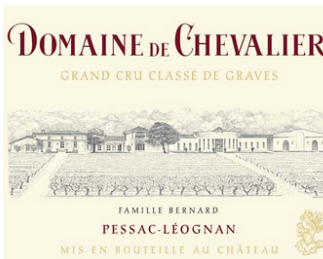
However, the juices have gained in concentration. At the end of August, we thought we would make an extraordinary wine, even a Bordeaux with Californian accents. However, the blended wines present a great balance between power and freshness, between concentration and refinement. In the purest expression of the grands crus of Bordeaux, with climatic conditions that do not resemble those of Bordeaux. Today, I like to say, while remaining objective and analytical about the quality of the wines, that I have never felt so much satisfaction when tasting a new vintage. A feeling of fullness. 2022 has everything, in the most beautiful of harmonies. »

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Olivier Bernard, Owner of Domaine de Chevalier



"Everything is superlative in this vintage: the climate, the drought, the juice content, the quantity of berries per vat, the colour, the taste intensity... However, the terroir, the old vines and our precise choices have conferred a magnificent freshness and superb balance.



Observing this climatic story, we understand the condition of the grapes at the time of their harvest: small, not very juicy grapes and sometimes tired bunches. However, when tasting the berries, the balance is there; everything is delicious with even a surprising freshness! The sugars are not too high and the pips of the red grape varieties are crunchy with an almond and hazelnut flavour. A very good omen for the high quality of the tannins...

In view of the maturity and concentration of the grapes this year, we opted for gentle vinification so as not to lose balance. The Merlots are intense in aromas and flavours, the tannins dense, tender and fleshy. They are already expressing themselves with finesse and delicacy. The Cabernet Sauvignons, with impressive potential, are unquestionably exceptional.

As for the whites, they are fleshy, full, with a great intensity of flavours and an astonishing freshness. Very fine, delicate flesh. The specific aromas of each plot are perfectly respected. This is sure to be a great Domaine de Chevalier.

The first tastings leave us in awe, revealing an extraordinary intensity. Domaine de Chevalier rouge 2022, an anthology vintage that will mark the history of the Domaine »

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Julien Viaud, consulting Oenologist & Agronomist
Associate of Laboratoire Rolland & Associés



“The consequences of this scorching summer will not be at all the same as in 2003. Viticulture has since evolved enormously; it had to adapt to the new climatic situation. The teams are now concerned with balance, seeking to recreate life in the soil, to structure the organic matter for better plant nutrition, to create a favourable clay-humic complex so that the soil is aerated and not too compacted. Obviously, the vines whose soils were worked in this spirit resisted heat shocks much better. The grapes are thus more balanced and less dehydrated with fresher aromas and no over-ripeness.

The vine certainly has a faculty of adaptability and resistance to climatic stress, but this resilience must be coupled with increasingly precise and specialized viticulture.

The 2022 vintage gives a rich, dense wine, with a certain power and smoothness, but which does not seem heavy to me, as the hot vintages of yesteryear sometimes were. In 2022, we tried to preserve the structure and the acidity and the rather fresh aromatics that we had at harvest time. We remained vigilant during the vinification; we did not want to unbalance the wines which had a natural acidity. We prolonged the macerations to find the charm, we built a frame and a texture in the middle of the mouth to counterbalance the sometimes higher alcohols. I really believe that it is a vintage made for keeping, as we have already seen in the past with the 1982 for example. »

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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE VINTAGE

Michel Rolland, oenologist-consultant

“Nature will always have surprises in store for us, sometimes pleasant, sometimes painful. This year is no exception. A few episodes of spring frost affected certain areas; hail bruised the vineyards in almost all of Bordeaux. However, for most properties, a good harvest remained in anticipation, which augured well. Then, we experienced a period of historic drought. Everyone has already talked about this and I will not repeat it....



I would like to focus on two points. First of all, the vineyard withstood the episode of drought in an exceptional way. A month after the harvest, the vines were still green, with impeccable foliage. Decidedly, this Mediterranean plant adapts particularly well to heat. The other surprise in these difficult conditions are of course the wines produced. It should be added that oenology has progressed and allows us to work the raw material better and find the right extraction, the precise maceration. Only one regret: small grapes which caused us to lose a little production.

What is a great vintage? Wines which lack nothing. Consistency across all grape varieties and all regions. The 2022 is distinguished by its exuberant aromas, with a surprising freshness given the climatic conditions. Its full, round, fleshy mid-palate has retained an acidity on which we would not have bet. Its tannic texture is of high quality. A harmony between power, elegance and silkiness.

Very great wines have everything and more. Vintages such as these have made history in Bordeaux. »