



2024

MILLÉSIMÉ

**A HIGH WIRE ACT
REQUIRING BRAVERY AND SELF-SACRIFICE**



**DERENONCOURT
VIGNERONS
CONSULTANTS**



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EDITORIAL

by Frédéric Massie, Julien Lavenu, Simon Blanchard and Romain Bocchio

In Bordeaux, nothing is ever impossible

In the following pages, we take you through much more than a simple technical journey through the wine-growing calendar. Every year, as we recount the adventure of a new vintage, we invite our readers to enter for a brief moment into the beating heart of the Bordeaux vineyard. While on the one hand we observe the facts from a technical viewpoint, we also relate the story of the men and women, whose passion, love and carnal attachment to the land must necessarily be taken into account.

It seems that the emotional aspect involved in the creation of wines is less appreciated by the general public when it comes to Bordeaux than it is for other wine regions. Yet the success of our region is dependent on that aspect, particularly in a vintage like this one.

At a time when Bordeaux needs to win back the favour of some of its followers, most of its growths are suffering from a weakness of image; they fail to convey emotion. The quality or the profile of our wines is no longer the main issue. Bordeaux achieved a revolution in record time, and this is something that should be lauded. It was brought about through technical expertise and unquestionable savoir-faire but also, and most of all, by the drive and ebullient creativity of all the players on the Bordeaux wine-growing stage. They embody the very qualities that seem to be lacking in our image.

To appreciate these qualities, we need only to taste the depth and fabulous complexity of the great wines of our region. These attributes didn't come from the injection of investors' money or from modern technology. They were the consequence of a pursuit of excellence spearheaded by the most skilled teams, who have combined knowledge with technical skill and the latest technology with precision. Today these wines outshine the finest jewels. Their successful distribution in the international wine market has been driven by the passion of the people behind them.

Everyone should have the opportunity to taste the wines of the many family-run estates in Bordeaux; these growths are the lung of the land. They are produced by people who never count the hours they spend in their vines, only stopping work when the sun has disappeared from the horizon. It's this heritage of place, savoir-faire and faultless self-sacrifice that has enabled Bordeaux to offer the best value and prices.

Everyone should also be able to discover Bordeaux's new wave. These are bold producers who are shaking things up and challenging the status quo, while offering a new range of tastes and innovative distribution channels. Proponents of an ethical winemaking approach, they are producing stunning wines, the profiles and qualities of which are as amazing as the stories behind them.

So let's take a look at Bordeaux through this 2024 vintage. Not just through an organoleptic lens in order to describe this vintage's deep colour or texture of tannins, but from a broader viewpoint. Through this 2024, the signs of a reconquering appellation can be observed. We see how, in spite of relentless spells of adverse spring weather conditions, a region's vignerons can today overcome the technical difficulties and adapt, and ultimately offer a whole range of products that cannot be described in just a few lines. One can but taste them to discover them.



THE KEY FACTS AND FIGURES BEHIND A HIGH-WIRE ACT VINTAGE

WINTER

MILD WINTER

+ 1.7°C average temperature between January and March.



HIGHEST RAINFALL SINCE 2000

900mm (35in.) between October 1st and March 31st.

SPRING

BUDDING



Early and even.



Vegetation growth slowed by excess water.

CLIMATE



Cool and wet.

FLOWERING



Slow and uneven.
Between May 22nd and June 13th.
Coulure and millerandage in old or virus-affected Merlot.

UNPRECEDENTED DOWNY MILDEW PRESSURE



Very early and aggressive initial outbreaks.

SUMMER

VERAISON



Uneven and long drawn-out.
From July 22nd to August 15th.

DELAYED END TO VEGETATION GROWTH



HARVEST

Oceanic conditions

Between September 4th and 17th for the dry whites.
From September 18th to October 7th for the Merlot.
Between 30th September and October 16th for the Cabernets.

RIPENING IN TWO STAGES



The first in summer weather conditions
The second in stormy, rainy weather.

AUTUMN

OCTOBER

EXCESS WATER
the wettest winter since 2000



MARCH

EARLY BUDDING

bud-break for the earliest vines from March 20th
and then generally from April 1st



APRIL

COOL WET SPRING
fungal disease pressure and slowed
vegetation growth

MAY

FLOWERING

advance lost:

22nd May for the earliest
then generally during the first week of June

JUNE

HAIL
June 17th to
19th



JULY

WATER DEFICIT
beneficial for quality between the
bunch closure and veraison stages

AOÛT

VERAISON

between July 22nd and August 15th



SEPTEMBER

RIPENING
cool, wet conditions;
ripening begins in favourable water
supply situation
then finishes in stormy weather

OCTOBER



THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

"The 2024 vintage was a high wire act, which never let up. Patience and agility were key in order to maintain balance."

The vigneron's presence and intervention were needed on a constant basis both in the vines and the cellars in this vintage:

IN THE VINES

- * To ensure faultless protection against vine disease (de-suckering, raising the trellising wires and carrying out vine canopy tasks at the right moment).
- * To harness the commitment and capacity to respond quickly of a dedicated team.
- * To be able to re-spray the vines at any given moment.
- * To space out the grape bunches to optimum effect.
- * To carry out the appropriate soil management work in each area of the vineyard:
 - To reduce the period of humectation,
 - To facilitate the use of tractors and farm equipment in the vineyard rows to repeat spray treatments against vine disease,
 - To limit/contain the compacting of the soils.

IN THE CELLARS

- * To carry out a rigorous sorting of the crop.
- * To adapt the extraction process to the potential of the grapes.
- * To anticipate the fermentation kinetics and to adapt the physical and thermal interventions.
- * To propose virtuous corrections.
- * To preserve aromatic brightness.
- * To adjust the extraction process to the tannic potential in the grapes.
- * To avert fragility.
- * To adjust the type and period of ageing.



2024



WAS A HIGH WIRE ACT REQUIRING BRAVERY AND SELF-SACRIFICE



2024 will go down as an “extreme” Bordeaux vintage. It proved to be a tough challenge for vigneron, who were constantly living on the edge as they sought to maintain a delicate balance in the face of chaotic weather conditions.

Winter and spring: a perilous balance

It was about 25 years since we’d last had such a rainy winter. Cumulated rainfall reached as much as 900mm (35in.) in some zones between October and March. With as much as a year’s rain in 6 months, the tone of the vintage was set.

Despite this deluge, the beginning of the year was very mild, and the budding was early and even, beginning on the first day of spring -some ten days or so ahead of normal schedule. The mild spring weather also brought with it early signs of a good potential crop size. But these hopes were soon dashed since these warm temperatures also had a flip side: downy mildew outbreaks began to appear in the vines as from April 20th –an unprecedentedly early date!

From then on, everyone had their hopes pinned on dry weather for the rest of spring. But conditions took a turn for the worse both for the vines and for those working in them, as rain continued to fall. The rows became waterlogged, making it difficult for vigneron to carry out their work efficiently. By now, so much rain had fallen that vine vegetation growth had been adversely affected, and working the soils and spraying the vines became complicated tasks. In this battle against the elements, some vigneron in the Fronsac, Saint-Estèphe and southern Médoc areas saw all their efforts reduced to nothing by devastating hailstorms.

In May, temperatures suddenly dropped, and the spread of downy mildew, which had already done considerable damage at some estates, began to slow. This cool spell also slowed down vegetation growth and delayed the flowering process, which stretched out from May 22nd until June 13th.

The advance observed at the time of bud-break had now been lost. As the flowering took place, the vines struggled to grow, their energy having been sapped.

“ 2024 will figure among the extreme Bordeaux vintages. It proved to be a tough challenge for vigneron, who were constantly living on the edge as they sought to maintain a delicate balance in the face of chaotic weather conditions. ”

“ In this high-wire act situation, the decisions taken often determine whether the outcome of a vintage will be a good one or a bad one. ”

Poor fruit set (both coulure and millerandage) impacted the crop size in old or virus-affected plots, leading to yields that were uneven and sometimes well below expectations.

Several questions arose as to what should be done: should the vigneron plough the soils to aid the vines -but at the same time risk making it more difficult for tractors to get into the plots? Should they continue to thin out fruit-bearing shoots to ventilate the vines, while downy mildew was already rife and impacting the potential crop size?

In this high-wire act situation, the decisions taken often determine whether the outcome of a vintage will be a good one or a bad one.

Summer: a lull in the storm

After this period of incessant rain, a sustained spell of summer sunshine set in at the beginning of July.

While the late-June storms had left the growers fearing yet another outbreak of downy mildew, this dry sunny summer weather brought some welcome relief. The vines could relax, and the grapes took advantage of the sunshine and loaded up with polyphenols. The vigneron could at last breathe again.

With beneficial moderate water constraint in the vines, the Bordeaux growers could once again look forward with optimism, though the rain of the previous 9 months was difficult to erase from their memories.

The end of vegetation growth was slow in arriving, while the veraison was sluggish and resulted in uneven ripening. Inevitably, careful sorting of the fruit would be necessary at harvest time.

Ripening and harvest: the tipping point

The beginning of the ripening phase took place in summery weather conditions. The white grapes took advantage of this fine weather and were harvested at full ripeness as from September 7th, while the reds continued to develop their phenolic ripeness.

Unfortunately, the weather changed once again on September 20th, and the Merlot and Cabernets completed their ripening in stormy conditions. The grapes swelled, botrytis came uninvited to the party, and harvesting became a high-wire act requiring patience and agility.





“ This vintage illustrates once again the technical excellence and determination of the Bordeaux region's vigneron to get the best out of each campaign. ”

THE TASTE OF 2024

The whites made the most of the fine weather conditions during the ripening phase. The wines offer explosive aromatics, full ripeness and reveal a generous and diverse palette of aromas. Their brightness of character and energy come to the fore, reflecting the meticulous work put in and a judicious interpretation of the unique features of the vintage.

The reds ripened in more contrasting conditions. While maintaining the health of the vines had often guided the vigneron's decision-making in this vintage, essential painstaking sorting of the fruit on its arrival at the cellars succeeded in producing a crop of harmonious quality. This precision work enabled vegetal sensations to be lessened and took advantage of the very good ripeness of the pips. Alcoholic degrees were moderate and helped preserve a lively freshness. The absence of excessively hot weather during the last stage of the cycle enabled a dynamic acidity to be maintained, which enhanced the wine's intensity and aromatic complexity. The wines are therefore expressive and approachable with fresh fruit aromas coming to the fore along with floral nuances and delicate spicy notes. On the palate, the texture of the tannins is fine, elongated and very elegant.

Variations in terroir and ripeness brought subtle nuances in the density, depth and finesse of the tannin grains, but the technical choices implemented (careful sorting, use of whole unstemmed bunches, gentle extractions) enhanced the raw material of each location and brought out its full potential.

This vintage illustrates once again the technical excellence and determination of the Bordeaux region's vigneron to get the best out of each campaign.







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