

Bordeaux, Thursday 1st October

Bordeaux 2009: A magnificent vintage

First observations as harvesting is in progress



Weather conditions this year have been particularly favourable for the vine's growth cycle and the grapes' ripening process.

The months of July and August saw high temperatures and a generous amount of sunshine. This fine weather continued into September, with an alternation between cool nights and warm daytime temperatures, which encouraged a concentration of aromas and an increase in anthocyanins

(pigments).

The grapes ripened ideally and harvest dates are now being staggered. Crops being gathered are perfectly healthy. It is too early to make an estimate about harvest volume.

We should keep in mind that hailstorms during the month of March caused significant damage to 19 000 hectares of vines (15% of the total Bordeaux winegrowing region). The extent of this damage varied considerably from one plot to another in vineyards, but the result is a decrease in production.

. Dry white wines

Harvests of white Sauvignon grapes began on 27th August in the earliest-ripening areas. In September harvesting of this variety became widespread and continued afterwards with the Sémillon variety. Harvests for dry whites are now finished.

. Red wines



Merlot grapes are currently being picked. Harvests of this variety began in mid-September for the earliest-ripening areas. The berries are intensely aromatic, full of flavour, showing excellent concentration in sugar; the pips are crunchy and the skins appear to have marvellous colour potential (anthocyanan levels are high). Acidity levels are low; this is an indication of excellent ripeness.

Harvests will continue with Cabernet Franc in the first days of October, followed by Cabernet Sauvignon, depending on the earliness of certain terroirs and how ripeness has developed.

. Sweet white wines

Gathered by successive stages of manual sorting on the vine, harvests of grapes for sweet white wines have barely begun. Weather conditions at present are ideal for these grapes that undergo the influence of an extremely specific micro-climate. Humidity, in the form of early-morning mists, encourages the work of the botrytis cinerea fungus (noble rot), a vital factor for producing these wines. Very warm daytime temperatures dry out the grapes and concentrate all their flavours. The grapes express remarkable aromatic potential.

The Bordeaux Winegrowing region

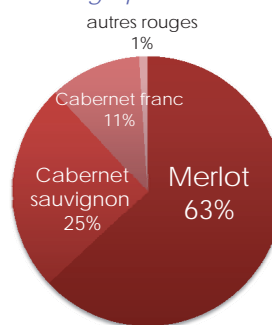
119 000 hectares

Percentages of areas under vine per wine colour:

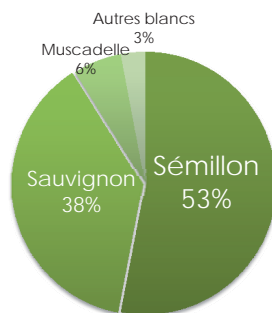
Reds: 89%
 Dry whites: 8%
 Sweet whites: 3%

Percentages of areas under vine per grape variety:

Red grape varieties



White varieties



WEATHER CONDITIONS

Data source: Météo France – Gironde Departmental Center

March : a generous amount of sunshine, temperatures slightly above average and rainfall levels less than half the average of the past 30 years.

In the vineyards: budburst (when the buds open and small leaves appear) began at the end of the month.

April: a mild month, particularly rainy, with a lack of sunshine.

May: fine weather, with summery temperatures and an excellent amount of sunshine; there was, however, a slight lack of rainfall.

Violent hailstorms occurred on 11th, 13th and 25th May. No winegrowing area of the Bordeaux region was spared (Médoc, Graves, Entre-deux-Mers, Saint-Emilion, Blaye, Bourg, Premières Côtes).

In the vineyards: at the end of May, flowering begins. Early and swift, it becomes widespread at the beginning of the month of June.

June: a dry, warm month, with a remarkable amount of sunshine (+ 69 hours) and temperatures 2 degrees higher than the average of the past 30 years.

In the vineyards: on 15th June flowering had finished in the earliest areas. This is the period of berry setting (fertilised flowers turn into tiny grape berries).

July: a warm month (temperatures slightly above average) and a generous amount of sunshine.

In the vineyards: beginning of the véraison period. The berries swell and grape skins begin to change colour.

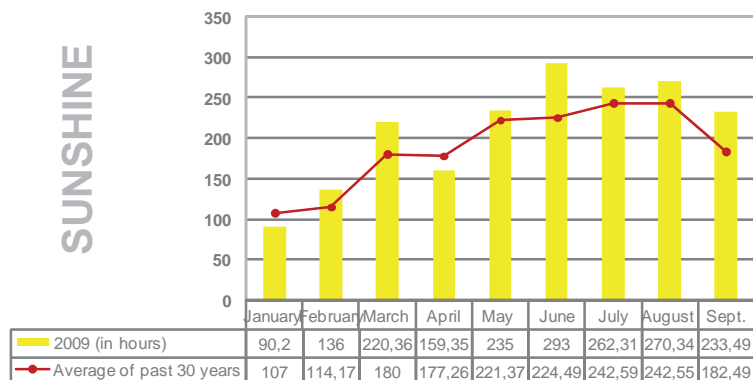
August: extremely good weather, warm and sunny (+ 27 hours of sunshine). There was a slight lack of rainfall compared with the average of the past 30 years.

In the vineyards: ripening is encouraged by excellent weather conditions.

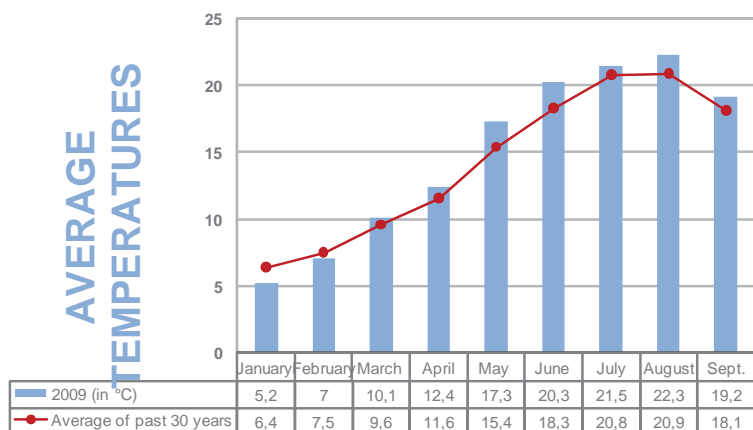
September: a second month of August! Temperatures are slightly above the average of the past 30 years. There is a lack of rainfall, but an extraordinary amount of sunshine (+ 50 hours).

In the vineyards: it's time for the first harvests to begin.

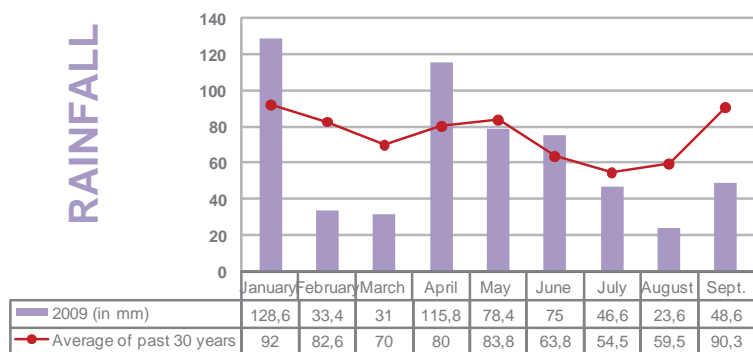
SUNSHINE



AVERAGE TEMPERATURES



RAINFALL



Reminder of harvest dates in 2008

- . Dry whites: 8th September
- . Reds: around 24th September for the earliest-ripening varieties (Merlot) and around 10th October for Cabernets
- . Sweet whites : between mid-September and mid-November