



VINTAGE SHEET

2008

THE WINEGROWING YEAR : 2008 featured a fine summer that followed a wet spring. It was back to usual weather patterns after an atypical 2007. The vegetation began growing relatively slowly in the cool, damp conditions making this year no earlier than average. However every year has its own excesses and 2008 brought abundant rain in May and June, practically three times the average for May which was good to built water reserves in the soils.

This wet weather at flowering time led to poor fruit set then 'hens and chickens', which significantly affected the potential of the harvest.

July was dry with three consecutive weeks without rain and became hot in the second week with temperatures higher than 30°C and cool nights of around 15°C. The strength of this vintage is that the grapes took on size in bright light and with a lot of heat, so the skins are thick and rich in tannin. There was a lot of water in the ground, so the vines were well irrigated. Only the young vines showed signs of 'thirst' before 15 mm of rain fell on 28 July unfortunately in the form of a violent storm with large hailstones. Quite marked damage appeared on one third of the vineyard with fruit losses ranging between 5 and 30%. The very hot weather in August helped to heal the wounds. By 6 August, groundwater reserves had diminished considerably, highlighted by mid-August by a situation of hydric stress that set in for the benefit of fruit quality. The initial colour change heralding the onset of ripening became apparent on 30 July, reaching its mid-point at around the middle of August in the Merlots.

The first three weeks in August were lacking in overall warmth with cool nights of 11°C and residual humidity with the result that the estate gardens remained green all summer. This significantly slowed down the onset of ripening, which was very spread out in the Merlots, taking a full month. Only in the last week of August did we return to real summer heat. Rainfall in August turned out to be average for the season. The hail damage on the grapes stopped them from turning colour. They remained hard and round and will doubtlessly go into the lowest quality fruit. This led us to make an unplanned investment and change our grape sorting machine acquired in 2002. We replaced it with the more recent model, which can also be used to sort the round grapes according to density and thus isolate the least ripe fruit that had been hit by the hail. We spent an extra €85,000 on the quality of our 2008 vintage, which is decidedly a lot. At this time we didn't know about the level of quality of this vintage but our will is that each bottle of Château Laroze must simply be delicious. So this is money well spent to ensure the quality of our brand.

At the beginning of September, the skies covered over and temperatures did not go over 26°C. We removed leaves on the second side of the vines facing south and west. We also removed small sections of bunches that were late in changing colour and would never be ripe for the harvest.

The first fortnight in September had regular, average rainfall that maintained ongoing humidity and cool temperatures, which did nothing to speed up ripening. By 15 September the full moon brought us an anticyclone with higher temperatures around 25°C and fine weather.

THE HARVEST: The anticyclone set in for the duration and the Merlots finally ripened. We picked a few on Thursday 9 October, then left them for the beautiful weekend on 11th and 12th which contributed significantly to quality. This was the point at which the grapes tipped over and became perfectly ripe. The grapes took 15 more days than usual to achieve the perfect maturity. They remained clean and disease-free, and we harvested all the Merlots and Cabernets between 13 and 20 October. There was no need to wait any longer; now we had to work fast, because the grapes were ripe. We harvested in the Indian summer, enjoying fine weather and temperatures up to 23°C on certain days.

However, on Sunday 19 it froze in the morning!

This was the first year that we harvested when the Autumn colours had arrived, which gave us a powerful shot of nostalgia.

The Cabernets Francs were as sweet as a treat.

This difficult year ended on a note of Nature's generosity by giving us an exceptional autumn.

Yields are low, around 28 hectolitres per hectare of the top quality must.

THE WINE: This vintage gives us an exceptional wine with a powerful sweat tannicity well balanced by a good level of acidity which are a guaranty for a long aging.

The vintage in figures

MID-FLOWERING DATES	Merlots: 23 th May	Cabernets: 23 th May	
DATES FOR MID-POINT OF COLOUR CHANGE	Merlots: 1 st August	Cabernets: 5 th August	
HARVESTING DATES	Merlots: from 09 th Sept to 15 rd October	Cabernets: from 16 th 20 th October	Cabernets Sauvignons: oct 17th
WINE YIELD	4,100 litres per hectare		
Percentage of NEW BARRELS	74 % new barrels	26 % 1-year-old barrels	
LENGTH OF BARREL AGEING	15 months		
BOTTLING	June 2010		
NUMBER OF BOTTLES	Laroze : 83 000 bottles	Lafleur-Laroze : 17 000 bottles	
Percentage 1 st and 2 nd WINE	Laroze : 83 %	Lafleur Laroze : 17 %	
Blend Laroze	71% Merlots	23% Cab. Francs	6% Cab. Sauv.
Blend Lafleur Laroze	90% Merlots	10% Cab. Francs	



Château Laroze

Grand Cru Classé

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