



VINTAGE FACT SHEET

2018

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CULTIVATION YEAR IN 2018

December & January: abundant rain in December and January replenished groundwater reserves.

February, March & April: thus far, the seasons were clearly discernible in their weather and chronology.

May: not much rain in the first three weeks, but excessively wet, stormy weather after this, just at the onset of flowering. 90 mm of rainfall from 26th to 28th May! With the ground so wet it was very difficult to protect the vines against disease, and flowering is a time, when they are particularly vulnerable!

5th June: the weather for the first week of June was very changeable and stormy. The first spots of mildew appeared and I became concerned for what would follow. The temperatures remained steady between 14°C (57°F) at night and 23-25°C (73 to 77°F) during the day with no sudden changes. As a result, despite all the heavy rain, flowering went quite well, thanks to the regular temperatures.

13th June: with the new moon came a change in the weather. The storms retreated and gave way to lasting fine weather.

29th June: a succession of hot days reduced the threat of mildew, but the harm had already been done. We had lost about 50% of the bunches of Merlot, but the Cabernet Franc, which is less susceptible, was much better looking. 40% of the Cabernet Sauvignon were also lost. On 30th June the maximum temperature rose to 33.9°C (93°F).

End of July: the mildew on the bunches was still progressing and every time I went into the vines, I could see how the harvest was diminishing. I estimated it to be around 40% of a normal year's harvest, despite the many operations we had carried out to combat mildew!

The initial change of colour heralding grape ripening (*véraison*) was only beginning. Throughout July, we had record-breaking hot spells. Rainfall was normal at 45 mm.

August: the very hot weather continued with a maximum of 38.5°C (101.3°F) until the 7th August, causing damage to the young vines.

13th August:

The harvest estimation today forecast a loss of 55% (80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc), which we would be able to verify at harvest time.

20th August: the initial colour change in the Merlot grapes has been very prolonged because of lack of water for five weeks. No storms on the 14th July or the 15th August.

31st August: we had very hot days but cool nights – 35°C (95°F) during the day and 15°C (59°F) at night! Excellent to hold on to fruit aromas and to ripen the tannins.

The first grapes we tasted had no green taste, but lots of colour, which was very promising.

Thursday 6th September: we had just had 35 mm of rainfall the previous night. Delighted, I listened to the raindrops falling through my slightly open window. The fruit was going to be able to ripen properly to the end.

The harvest: picking took place from 26th September to 11th October, i.e. ten and a half days with five days when we didn't pick over two weekends.

Average grape weight was down by 25%. The average loss of harvest was 70% of the Merlot and 20% of the Cabernet Franc.

Small grapes with very thick skins and very ripe pips were the result of the heat and drought. We had all the ingredients to make a great vintage!

November: vatting did indeed take ages; up to 35 days even for the Cabernet Franc, which kept its soft tannins because the pips were so ripe.

In our misery, we nevertheless got what we were after: fine Cabernet grapes, beautiful in fact like we will most likely never see again. On 12th November just before the end of pressing, the result looked very promising.

To sum up

2018 was emblematic for different reasons: the extreme weather, which was beneficial, the mildew which took the grapes before us, especially the Merlot, and cheated us of 60% of our harvest. Cool nights even after the hottest days in August, and an exceptionally long end to the growth cycle with plenty of sunshine, but not too much heat. Very concentrated fruit with grapes weighing in on average 20% lighter. Outstandingly ripe pips and an exceptionally long soak for up to 35 days. Cabernet Franc grapes that will go down in history, with soft tannins that will stand out when this fabulous vintage is tasted, because they contribute the unusual proportion of 60% to the final blend.



2018 facts and figures

MID-FLOWERING DATES	Merlot: 30 th May	Cab. Franc: 30 th May	Cab. Sauvignon: 4 th June
MID-VERAISON* DATES	Merlot: 3 rd August	Cabernet Franc: 12 th August	Cab. Sauvignon: 5 th August
HARVESTING DATES	Merlot: from 26 th Sept. to 3 rd Oct.	Cabernet Franc: from 4 th to 10 th October	Cab. Sauvignon: 11 th October
WINE YIELD	22 hectolitres per hectare		
LENGTH OF BARREL AGEING	18 months		
%AGE OF NEW BARRELS	100%		
BOTTLING	2020		
NUMBER OF BOTTLES	1 st wine: 45,000 bottles		
%AGE 1st and 2nd WINE	1 st wine: 100 %		
BLEND	47 % Merlot	46 % Cab. Franc	7 % Cab. Sauv.
PERCENTAGE OF ALCOHOL	14 %		
DATE OF BOTTLING	April 2020		

*the mid-point of the period when the fruit begins to change colour



Château Laroze

Grand Cru Classé

33330 SAINT EMILION

<http://www.laroze.com>

info@laroze.com

Tel: +33 557 247 979