



2008 VINTAGE

“EVERYTHING COMES TO HIM WHO WAITS”

General Conditions:

A rather mild winter gave way to a cool, damp spring, prompting a slow and somewhat delayed bud burst: during the very first days in **April** for the Merlot and over the middle ten days of April for the Cabernet. This represents a delay of around 10 days compared to normal.

Particularly memorable was the severe frost of 7 April on the Merlot, the white varieties in the Graves region and certain sectors of the right bank. Even for the vines that had not frozen, this cold snap considerably checked the start of vegetation.

In **May**, temperatures rose above the seasonal norms, but the vine continued to grow slowly.

Flowering on the most advanced plots began on **2 June** and lasted until the end of the month, with mild temperatures and irregular spells of rain.

Problematic for the Merlot, with *coulure* (failure to set) and *millerandage* (irregular ripening). Fortunately this was faster and more even for the Cabernet-Sauvignon and Cabernet-Franc (cf. figure 1).

Figure 1

Dates of harvesting and vegetative cycle of the vine at Lynch-Bages

VINTAGES	Varietals	beginning of bud burst (March)	A mid-flowering (June)	difference A to B	B mid-veraison (August)	difference B to C	C beginning of harvest	difference A to C	1st veraison of berries	end of harvesting
2005	M	30 Mar	1 Jun	← 64 days →	5 Aug	← 46 days →	21 Sep	110 days	* 13 July	22 Sept
	CF	1 Apr	3 Jun		10 Aug		3 Oct			
	CS	4 Apr	8 Jun	65	13 Aug	52	5 Oct	117		10 Oct
2006	M	3 Apr	2 Jun	← 66 days →	8 Aug	← 41 days →	19 Sep	107 days	* 17 July	21 Sep
	CF	5 Apr	5 Jun		11 Aug		26 Sep			
	CS	10 Apr	10 Jun	64	14 Aug	44	28 Sep	108		4 Oct
2007	M	29 Mar	27 May	← 66 days →	3 Aug	← 52 days →	25 Sep	118 days	* 11 July	27 Sep
	CF	2 Apr	29 May		8 Aug		2 Oct			
	CS	6 Apr	2 Jun	69	11 Aug	53	4 Oct	122		10 Oct
2008	M	3 Apr	7 Jun	← 66 days →	11 Aug	← 49 days →	30 Sep	115 days	* 21 July	1 Oct
	CF	7 Apr	9 Jun		13 Aug		6 Oct			
	CS	11 Apr	11 Jun	69	17 Aug	51	8 Oct	120		16 Oct
Average over the last 13 yrs: 1995-2007	M	21 Mar	1 Jun	← 66 days →	5 Aug	← 45 days →	18 Sep	112 days	* 12 July	23 Sep
	CF	25 Mar	3 Jun		10 Aug		25 Sep			
	CS	31 Mar	6 Jun	67	12 Aug	47	26 Sep	114		8 Oct



A poor bud burst ensuing from the previous year and a problematic flowering had a marked effect on the yield. The harvest has already been described as poor.

The month of July was dry with 3 consecutive weeks without rain. The heat set in from the second week, with day temperatures exceeding 30°C, and cool nights of around 15°C. The berries swelled thanks to the high luminosity, and therefore formed thick skins, rich in tannins and anthocyanins. Parasite pressure also reduced in intensity.

Green harvest management was carried out with new-found optimism, under very good conditions.

The first berries in veraison appeared towards **20 July**. This period of fine weather lasted until mid-August. There then followed a period of cool, damp

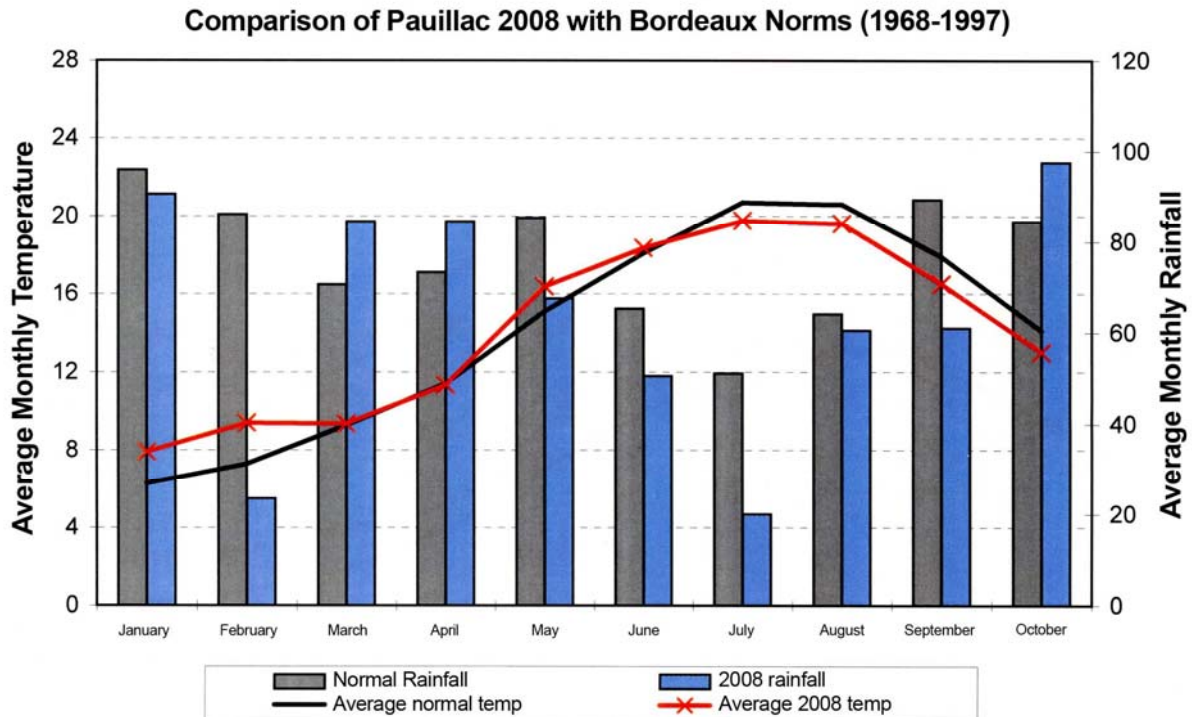
weather, which prevented any recuperation of the vegetative delay that had accumulated before the flowering.

Mid-veraison, around 15 August, therefore saw a delay of roughly ten days compared to normal.

Faced with a lack of sunshine and a shaky sanitary state, we decided to resume green harvest management, in particular, a systematic leaf thinning along the second side of the rows, eliminating the clusters showing delayed ripening, or any dubious aspect to their sanitary state.

The weather showed no improvement over the first fortnight of September and our anxiety increased as harvesting approached (cf. figure 2). Initial analyses of the progress of ripening were somewhat discouraging and confirmed a definite delay.

Figure 2





Luckily, an unexpected anticyclone set in from **14 September** and stayed with us throughout the harvest, until **20 October**.

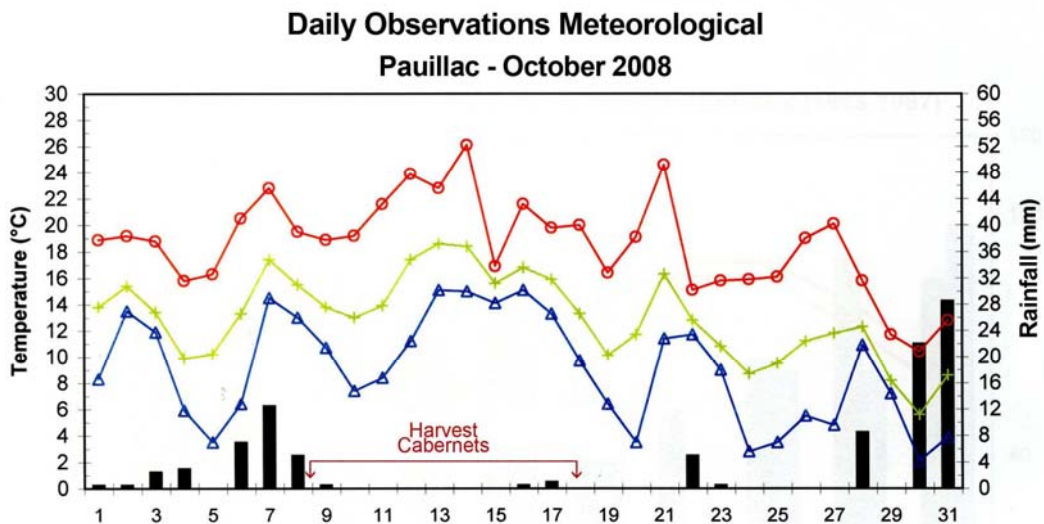
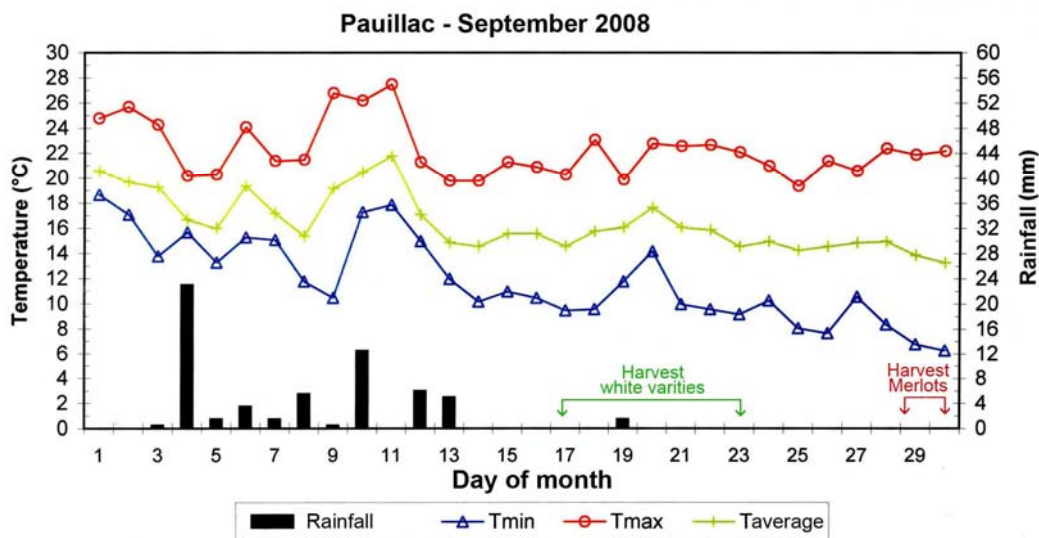
A north wind, day temperatures above 25°C and cool nights then prevented the development of botrytis and prompted a rise in the potential degrees. The phenolic maturity of the red grapes, like that of the whites, progressed rapidly, the fine weather restoring hopes and allowing us to wait for the plant to complete its cycle.

Gradually, the grapes swelled and reached complete maturity, confirmed by the changes shown in the phenolic analyses.

This year once again, we saw that large terroirs coupled with interventionist viticulture gradually produced remarkable rich grapes.

It is noteworthy that there was only 20 mm of rainfall in one month – which is unusual for late autumn (cf. figure 3).

Figure 3





The sap having retreated with the first cold spells, the skins weakened and it could not take long for the acidity levels to rise.

Once the grapes had reached a satisfactory maturity, we then decided to begin picking on **30 September**.

At Lynch-Bages, over 200 grape-pickers were at work. It was no longer a matter of waiting but of acting fast, before over-ripeness and raisining could set in; this would have been detrimental to the freshness of the berries. The sanitary state was perfectly preserved and the result seemed beyond our hopes.

The working conditions were excellent: thanks to the clear break between picking the Merlot and the Cabernet, we had not a single day of rain during the harvest. The

flavour balance of the grapes was remarkable, resulting in musts with high potential degrees of alcohol and very ripe tannins.

With a huge sigh of relief, and filled with satisfaction and astonishment, we finished before the first frosts on **19 October**. The ripening kinetics had once again foiled all expectations, proving that it was possible to atone for a lack-lustre summer with a particularly mild late autumn.

Far from being a sign of global warming, 2008 is classed among the late, cold, and slow-ripening vintages.

It shows the difference that an elitist viticulture applied to the best terroirs can make on the production of grands vins, and without a doubt confirms the proverb: “Rome wasn’t built in a day”.



LYNCH-BAGES 2008

As with any cool and late vintage, it was necessary to take action to protect the vineyard and to carry out much canopy management throughout the season: suckering, shoot clipping, leaf thinning and crop thinning – the aim being to preserve an active leaf surface and to ensure an optimum leaf/fruit balance.

Following the return of the anticyclone with the new moon in mid-September, we began harvesting in sunshine, with a 4-day time lag compared to 2007.

At Lynch-Bages, the Merlot was harvested in two days, from 30 September to 1 October.

Following a long 8-day gap and after the grapes had progressed dramatically towards perfect maturity, on 8 October we resumed the picking of the **Cabernet** and, on 12 October, the **Petit -Verdot**, which were ready at last.

The **fermentations** lasted around ten days, and already revealed deep colours and a high phenolic potential. The **cuvaisons**, lasting around twenty days on average, and adapted to the potential of each plot, took place at temperatures ranging from 28°C to 30°C.

The first devaluations confirmed a high anthocyanin content, and the Cabernets were outstanding for their homogeneity and concentration.

The yields were reasonable at Lynch-Bages this year, albeit diminished by the difficult flowering conditions: **49hl/ha**.

The malolactic fermentations, of which 2/3 were carried out in vats and 1/3 in barrels, were all completed by the end of the year.

Château Lynch-Bages 2008

65% of the harvest

Blending: 78% Cabernet-Sauvignon
7% Cabernet-Franc
13% Merlot
2% Petit-Verdot.

Ageing: 75% new wooden barrels
Alcohol: 13.1% vol; Acidity: 3.9 g/l;
PH: 3.73; IPT: 80

Tasting Note (April 2009):

The colour is deep, and the nose is currently marked with the freshness of ripe fruit blending subtly with the new wood.

The attack is solid, and the mouth, both ample and elegant, reveals a fine balance of maturity and concentration. The tannins are ripe and delicate, with a refreshing length in the finish that suggests good keeping potential.

A promising vintage that is nevertheless slow to reveal itself.

Echo de Lynch-Bages 2008

35% of the harvest

Blending: 52% Cabernet-Sauvignon
10% Cabernet-Franc
38% Merlot

Ageing: barrels of one wine
Alcohol: 12.9% vol; Acidity: 3.7 g/l;
PH: 3.72; IPT: 75

Tasting Note (April 2009):

The wine displays an attractive colour, offering a delicate, finely wooded nose. The palate, supple and round, combined with the unctuous tannic structure promises an earlier opening than the premier vin.



LYNCH-BAGES BLANC 2008

The harvesting of the whites was preceded by considerable canopy management, allowing us to compensate for the deficiencies of a rather cool, damp season, and to achieve the right balance of maturity without compromising the sanitary state of the grapes.

We therefore began harvesting late, on **17 September**, or about ten days later than usual. This went on until **23 September**, and was carried out mostly in the mornings, owing to the high temperatures that gradually set in.

Constant sunshine from 18 September enabled us to observe a noticeable daily drop in the acidity coupled with a positive change in the alcoholic potential of the grapes.

Harvesting began on 17 September with two successive triages of the **Muscadelle**. The following day, we carried out a first selection process on the Sauvignon in the zones that appeared the most advanced. The **Sémillon** were picked from 19 September.

Finally, after a break of a few days, we finished on 23 September, with some of the later Sauvignon that had at last reached maturity.

After transportation in low-capacity tanks to our vat room, some of the grapes were pressed immediately. The others were stored at low temperature in a refrigerated lorry as soon as they were picked off the vine, to undergo a subsequent pellicular maceration in the wine presses. This maceration usually lasted for one night, until the pressing the following morning.

Lower than usual this year, the average yield from our plots was **42 hl/ha**.

The wines achieved satisfactory alcoholic content, often supported by marked acidity. The Sémillons brought richness and body, and the sweeter Sauvignons expressed themselves this year in a very citric aromatic register, with notes of lime and citrus fruit.

The fermentation periods ranged from 3 to 4 weeks. For the first time, we controlled the temperature of each barrel individually, thanks to a new regulating system. We could therefore carry out fermentations at low temperature (between 19 and 20°C), which favour a better preservation of the varietal aromas.

Thanks to this method, we returned to having the majority of lots vinified in barrels (70%), of which 80% were new barrels. The wines were aged on their lees and regularly stirred, in order to soften the acidity. Bottling will take place before the summer.

Blending: 50% Sauvignon
45% Sémillon
5% Muscadelle

Alcohol: 12.9% vol; Acidity: 4.8 g/l,
PH: 3.10

Tasting Note (April 2009):

The Lynch-Bages white offers striking and intense aromas, dominated by citric notes, citrus fruits and boxwood. The refreshing attack gives way to richness and body on the palate, where the dominant notes of the Sauvignon Blanc can be detected.

Later than its predecessors, this vintage is characterized by cooler maturing conditions, resulting in better preservation of the primary aromas under cover of a very present acidity.



ORMES DE PEZ 2008

At the Ormes de Pez, we gathered the **Merlot** in 4 days, from 30 September to 3 October. After a gap of 5 days, we harvested the **Cabernet** between 8 and 17 October.

Although two teams of 50 people were needed to pick the Merlot at their optimum maturity, we reverted to just one group of harvesters to gather the Cabernet. We also took the time to allow the less advanced plots to ripen as far as possible in the fine October sunshine.

It is worth noting that this year we harvested the grapes 12 days later than in 2006.

Just as at Lynch-Bages, the vineyard underwent much care and attention during this season, particularly canopy management. Over 80% of the plots underwent a selective manual leaf thinning, which facilitated the progress of the harvesters.

The most northerly zones of the appellation, with their more clayey soils, were harvested last, and the sanitary state of the grapes was perfect. The maturing of the Cabernet took place slowly and has given the wines an exceptional constitution.

The Petit-Verdot, with their longer vegetative cycle, were harvested on 10 October, and displayed an impressive phenolic content.

At around an average of **47 hl/ha**, the yields at the Ormes de Pez were low.

It is noteworthy that this year for the first time we were equipped with a double filling line in the vat room. This enabled us at any time to optimize the vatting to suit the quality of the grapes, and thus to refine our plot selection.

The fermentations take place in very good conditions and the wines are currently matured in barrels.

Blending: 51% Cabernet-Sauvignon
8% Cabernet-Franc
39% Merlot
2% Petit-Verdot

Ageing: 50% new wooden barrels
50% barrels of one wine

Alcohol: 13.1% vol; Acidity: 3.9 g/l;
PH: 3.70; IPT: 75

Tasting Note (April 2009):

Ormes de Pez 2008 offers a very intense garnet robe. On the nose, delicate notes of red fruits and sweet spices mingle with a well-incorporated woodiness.

The refreshing attack develops on a fairly full-bodied and powerful palate.

An attractive touch of tannins for a vintage that is still holding something back. A fine finish supported by the marked acidity that underlines the characteristics of the vintage.

A racy Saint-Estèphe with remarkable length.



CHATEAU VILLA BEL-AIR 2008

Château Villa Bel-Air Rouge 2008

Harvesting began during the **first few days of October** with the picking of the Merlot, where the low quantities of clusters fostered a good skin maturity and a perfectly respectable amount of sugar.

The continued fine weather enabled the Cabernet-Sauvignon to be gathered at maturity between 10 and 15 October – which represents the latest harvest ever carried out at Villa Bel-Air.

Blending: 50% Merlot
40% Cabernet-Sauvignon
10% Cabernet Franc

Ageing: 20% new wooden barrels

Alcohol: 13% vol

Yield: 28 hl/ha

Tasting Note (April 2009):

The wine displays an attractive and very intense deep-purple colour. The nose is marked by toasted and chocolate-flavoured woody notes, and aromas of violet and black-current.

On the palate, it offers a good tannic structure and a finish on liquorice notes.

Château Villa Bel Blanc 2008

Picking began on **20 September** with the Sémillon harvest; it was marked by low numbers of clusters, and a good sanitary state of the grapes, offering a high alcoholic potential.

The Sauvignon were then picked from 29 September, and displayed good acidity.

Ageing took place in barrels, with regular batonnages.

Blending: 50% Sauvignon
50% Sémillon

Ageing: 20% new wooden barrels

Alcohol: 13%

Yield: 25 hl/ha

Tasting Note (April 2009):

The wine reveals a well-developed aromatic potential, subtly woodied on the nose, offering notes of milk caramel and fresh butter. The palate is complex and unctuous, offering notes of citrus fruit, and finishing on very crisp notes.