

CHATEAU HAUT-BAILLY

CRU CLASSÉ DE GRAVES

2020

A YEAR OF REINVENTION

2020 is a vintage that was filled with unprecedented challenges, but also highlighted the incredible power of adaptation and our capacity to think on our feet. It was a year in which we faced the threat of spring frosts, resisted mildew in June, drought during the summer, and were spared the hail in May, June and August. It was also a year that required us to respond to new health conditions imposed by the global pandemic. We are particularly grateful for the dedication, vigilance and reactivity of our teams in organising the work in the vineyard, which was a key factor in the success of this year.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

The winter was marked by heavy rainfall from November 2019 to March 2020, although January and February were fairly mild and dry, which facilitated the progress of pruning and vineyard maintenance. Precipitation from March to June broke records. Budburst was particularly early. So when France went into lockdown on March 17th, we went straight to work to manage the rapid and proliferating growth in the vineyard.

Frost hit several plots during the nights of March 25th and 26th and caused localised damage destroying the most developed buds. Straw bales were lit several times to combat this threat, which has become frequent in recent vintages. Warm temperatures at the end of April (25-26°C) stimulated vine growth requiring additional seasonal workers from April 20th onwards. The reinforced team in the vineyard was able to work in safe conditions, respecting health guidelines.

The intense rains from May 1st to 11th were equivalent to two months of rainfall. The soils were saturated and difficult to work. This is when a first miracle appeared: hot, dry conditions allowed for early flowering (two weeks early) for the Merlot between May 10th and 25th, and for the other grape varieties in a more homogenous and grouped manner, from May 18th to 22nd. The first fortnight of June was dreary and vulnerable to mildew. The closure of the bunches ended around June 15th, almost three weeks earlier than usual.

Beginning on June 20th summer finally arrived when the weather changed radically (2nd miracle): hot and historically dry in July, and until August 11th with only 5 mm of rain for more than 50 days, punctuated by peaks of heat (> 40°C) on July 30th, and between August 7th and 12th. This short-lived drought did not affect our plots, whose root system was able to reach the water reserves in the deep layers of soil formed during spring. The early veraison - from July 14th onwards - was heterogeneous.

From August 11th to August 13th, a few thunderstorms finally brought cooler weather and some rain (40 mm), enabling the veraison to be completed and relieving the hydric stress of the young vines.

HARVEST

Early picking (September 9th to 25th) was carried out under exceptional weather. The vines were magnificent. Our harvest team was remarkable for its efficiency, mutual help and solidarity. The joy of picking a promising vintage was palpable.

The grapes were ripe, fruity, full of sugar and very concentrated. Yields are similar to those of 2010.

WINES

The first tastings have shown an incredible homogeneity, with generous colour and density. The wines offer freshness but also complexity, depth, texture and the elegant tannins which characterise Haut-Bailly. Powerful and rich wines are to be expected from a sunny vintage.

Nature, more than ever, in the extraordinary context of the year, was a saving grace for us. It tested our courage and our capability to reinvent, but in the end it was favorable to us. The quality of this vintage leads us to believe that determination, tenacity and passion can be rewarded. An exceptional terroir and skilled winemakers are always a winning equation. We will all remember 2020... and are proud of having produced a very fine vintage!

Harvest: September 9th to 25th

Blend Château Haut-Bailly 2020 :

52 % Cabernet Sauvignon

42 % Merlot

3 % Cabernet Franc

3 % Petit Verdot

Blend Haut-Bailly•II 2020 :

54 % Merlot

46 % Cabernet Sauvignon