

The 2023 winter was quite cold, particularly during the first three weeks of December 2022, and then between mid-January and early March when there were a large number of early-morning frosts (36 morning frosts in all occurring during the winter period). February was very dry with just 33 mm of rainfall.

The vines began budding in late March.

On 4th and 5th April, we had 2 early-morning frosts, which luckily caused little damage to the new shoots.

The spring weather was unsettled and cool in the lead-up to the flowering with north-east winds which brought frequent storms in the late afternoon.

With the arrival of very hot weather, the flowering began on 22nd May. By the Whitsun weekend of 27th, 28th and 29th May, the flowering was in full swing and was subsequently completed quickly and evenly.

Grape bunches were large in size and abundant.

The month of June was hot with frequent rain showers (81 mm rainfall), which led to high downy mildew pressure.

Bunch thinning was carried out on a large part of the vineyard just after fruit set, between mid-June and mid-July, to protect the health and quality of the fruit for the harvest.

The first berries changed colour on 10th July, and the first shoots acquired their woody bark on 13th July.

The veraison process went smoothly and quickly, and by the end of July all the grapes had changed colour.

July was fine and dry (23 mm rainfall). August was very hot from 8th to 24th (with temperature highs of between 30 and 40°C) and was rainier than July due to the occasional storm (69 mm).

In early August, a second bunch thinning was carried out in some plots as they neared veraison completion. Bunches that were behind in their ripening were discarded in order to ensure even fruit ripeness.

In late August the crop was in excellent condition and health. Our vines had escaped damage from frosts, storms and disease, and the flowering and veraison had taken place in optimal conditions. Fine August weather was a key factor.

On 1st September, a heat-wave arrived with temperatures reaching 35-37°C, along with warm nights of around 17-20°C. These conditions continued up till 11th September, before temperatures eventually returned to normal from 14th September on.

As from 8th September (after we had started the picking), a few signs of defoliation and withering berries began to appear.

The harvest began on 6th September with the picking of our young Merlot plots, in which the grapes showed no sign of withering. We continued harvesting at a leisurely pace up till the 12th, by which time we had completed the picking of over half of the earlier-ripening vines.

Then, after a break of one week, temperatures returned to normal, nights became cooler and the later-ripening vines reached ripeness. The harvest resumed, from 19th to 22nd September, and the last of the Merlot was brought in.

The Cabernet Franc was picked on 26th September.

The harvest was now finished, the vats had been filled, and our hearts were full of joy. The vinifications, which would turn out to last as long as the picking, could now begin.