

CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC

2019





2019 VINTAGE

2019 one of the great vintages at Cheval Blanc.

The weather conditions were perfect for producing a great wine. The year was notable due to the extreme climatic conditions; risks of frost in the spring (up to 6 May); heavy rainfall during flowering in June and a heatwave during July. Thanks to exceptional conditions during the summer and late summer the grapes reached perfect maturity and harvesting therefore was stress-free.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

The first three months of the year were drier than usual and quite mild in February and March. In 2019, April and June were wet months whilst May was dry and mild: +3.6°C higher than usual. July, August and September were dry with record highs recorded in July. Rain at the end of July came at exactly the right time and in the right quantities. September was dry and mild which promoted perfect maturation producing grapes of excellent quality.



WATER LEVELS

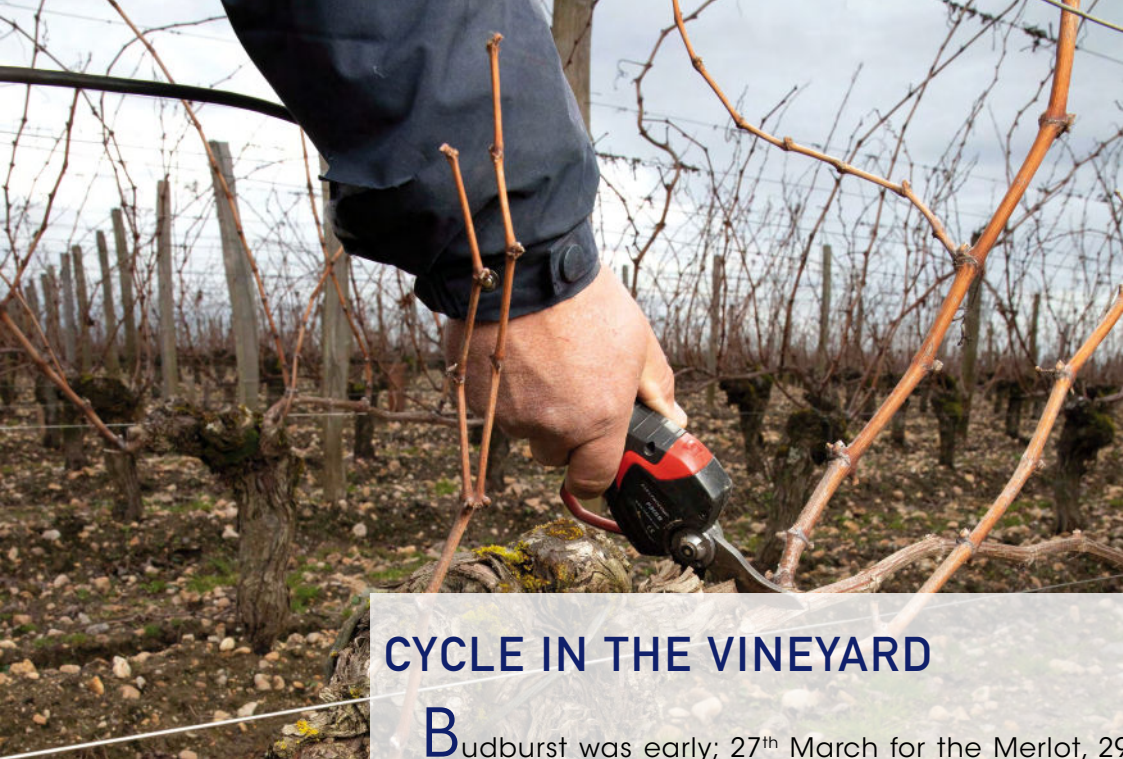
Water stress came into play progressively and earlier than usual in early July thanks to high temperatures and limited rainfall. The dryness had a positive effect producing significant levels of tannins in the grapes. The dry conditions progressed into August and September, without being too severe which allowed the tannins to achieve optimal maturity. To illustrate the hydric kinetics of the vintage, here is the evolution of the water measurements during the season:

At the end of June, the water balance placed the 2019 vintage 19th in ranking in terms of dryness, 11th by the end of July, 7th by the end of August and 4th at the end of September just behind 2005, 2015 and 2010. This illustrates well the potential of the 2019 vintage.

Nitrogen

The levels of nitrogen in the must were similar to those in 2018, a vintage which shared similar climatic conditions. This implies that the levels of nitrogen in the vines was low.





CYCLE IN THE VINEYARD

Budburst was early; 27th March for the Merlot, 29th for the Cabernet Franc and 30th for the Cabernet Sauvignon. Mid-flowering of the Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon took place on 1 June and 2 June for the Cabernet Franc. Surprisingly, heavy rainfall during the first 10 days of June (52 mm) didn't delay flowering. Ripening began on 1st August for the Cabernet Sauvignon, 4th for the Merlot and on the 9th for the Cabernet Franc where the ripening was relatively regular. Sunny spells at the end of the ripening period were essential to the homogenous ripening of the Cabernet Franc.

The composition and balance of the harvest were due to the second part of the vegetative cycle, after flowering. This period was dry and fairly hot throughout. The result was rapid, early ripening and our team began harvesting the Merlot as early as 10 September. Very unusually, the harvest continued and nearly all of the Merlot was harvested before the rain at the end of September. The last of the Cabernet Franc was harvested on 4 October.





HEALTH IN THE VINEYARD

2019 was an uneventful vintage in terms of the threat of disease. Following several bouts of low temperatures at the end of April and even in early May which provoked fears of spring frosts, the team was fearful that the rain in June would see the appearance of mildew if the temperature rose. This wasn't the case and a hot and dry July eliminated any further risk. Thanks to the weather vine growth stopped early and there was no risk of mildew towards the end of the season. Conditions for ripening in August and September were near ideal and the grapes were in perfect health throughout the harvesting period.

GRAPE QUALITY AND COMPOSITION

In this vintage, the expressions of the 3 different terroirs of Cheval Blanc stand out perfectly. Although rich and powerful at 14.4 % vol. the early picking of the Merlot helped to preserve freshness, purity and tension. The slower ripening of the Cabernet helped the grapes to reach ideal phenolic maturity. This is reflected in the wines which have a remarkable tannic presence. This vintage combines freshness and complexity, power and precision, balance and density.





Blending: 58% Merlot
34% Cabernet Franc
8% Cabernet Sauvignon

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Aromatic complexity dominates from the first nose and this wine expresses the elegance brought to it by optimal weather conditions. The significant proportion of Merlot brings particularly intense aromas of red and black fruit. The impressive nose is pure and precise with notes of raspberry, cherry, blackberry and blackcurrant embalmed in balsamic and subtle sweet aromas of pastries. The generosity and complexity of the nose dominate. Clean, pure and precise, this wine is lush and juicy reflecting perfectly the traits of the fresh fruit when it is tasted directly in the vineyard. A full, attractive attack is redolent of the Merlot of this vintage which is unctuous, round and mouth filling. The Cabernet Franc lends a lovely freshness to the mid-palate and gives the wine length on the finish. This wine is both dense and powerful whilst at the same time soft, unctuous and round. Depth, length and balance are the hallmarks of this vintage and form the identity of this wine.



Blending: 56% Merlot
44% Cabernet Franc

LE PETIT CHEVAL 2019

The first nose is notably marked by the Cabernet Franc. Very fresh, precise with lovely spicy notes and black pepper, floral hints and the liquorice notes which are characteristic of the Cabernet Francs of this property. This wine is almost more stylistic of a Cabernet Franc than Cheval Blanc itself. It has lovely juicy red fruits and a delicate attack followed by impressive power. The quality of the tannins is impressive and the wine is well-balanced.