

CHATEAU - FIGEAC

PREMIER GRAND CRU CLASSÉ

2019

Weather Conditions and Features of the Vintage:

Early budding slowed by the return of cold weather

Record mild temperatures at the end of winter led the vines to emerge from their dormant period at an early stage. Further encouraged by subsequent favourable weather, **the first leaves formed rapidly** and were clearly visible by mid-April on our three grape varieties. **A cold snap** then arrived **which slowed down vegetation growth considerably** and brought with it the **threat of frost** on several nights.

The whole FIGEAC crew rallied round on the freezing nights of 13th and 14th April and again on 5th and 6th May and successfully protected the vines. In vine-growing memory there has never been such a late frost at the estate. Up till the middle of June, **conditions then alternated between spring-like and winter-like weather**. The mid-flowering point was reached between 2nd and 6th June. Pollination was sometimes only partial, and the fruit-set, especially that of the Merlot, boded a smallish crop.

From mid-June, a stunning reversal in weather conditions occurred while canopy management choices were implemented favouring the great Figeac terroir.

From 17th June on, there was **a stunning change in the weather pattern**. Summer set in with scorching heat from mid-June till the end of July. Drenched in intense sunshine, **the vines quickly caught up on their cycle**. On no fewer than 22 days in July, there were temperature highs of over 30°C! These dry conditions suited the 3 grape varieties fine, because of their deep rooting systems that enable them to reach down about 7 metres into the blue clay of the subsoil, which is a real reservoir of moisture. Smaller-sized berries than usual appeared in certain plots, and for some parts of the vineyard which were most exposed to the scorching heat of the sun, the decision was taken not to de-leaf.

On 26th July, a welcome downpour brought 40mm (1.57 inches) of rain in one single day, rehydrating the vines and lowering the temperatures. This kick-started the veraison in our three grape varieties.

From mid-August on, **the ripening process took place in optimal conditions**. Temperature swings of up to 15°C between day and night and glorious sunshine intermixed with a light rain shower every ten days quickened polyphenol synthesis, ensuring a future wine with a silky texture and deep colour. The slow, gradual ripening of the grapes worked in favour of aromatic concentration, while freshness of flavour had been preserved by only exposing the grapes moderately to sunshine. Conditions subsequently became more arid and **another downpour on 9th September (12mm/0.47 inches) was welcome relief** for the vines that had begun to undergo some water deficit constraint.



A strategic choice of harvesting dates

Harvesting began early at FIGEAC. The strategic choice to pick some parts of the vineyard early was made in order to ensure a **predominance of aromatic freshness in a number of batches**, thus helping to maintain *Figeac's hallmark* balance. The harvest began on 13th September with the picking of the young vines and continued on 19th September with the Cabernets. The rainy spell at the end of September (40mm/1.57inches between 22nd and 25th) enhanced the ripeness of the last Cabernet batches, which we continued to bring in until 7th October. **After 4 weeks of harvesting, the crop, though small, was of beautiful quality.**

Gentle, precision vinification methods

In the vat room, the vinification was carried out gently and without addition of sulphites. Each vat was equipped with its own individual extraction programme, set according to the ripeness of the must. The first musts tasted showed potential for an **outstanding vintage at Figeac** and displayed a range of intense aromatics in which floral and fruity notes mingled in all three of our grape varieties.

As the wine was run off the skins, the 2019 vintage confirmed its superb balance and freshness.

The Merlot revealed wonderful volume on the palate. The suave, floral Cabernet Franc will go down as among the best harvested of the last 20 years. While the Cabernet Sauvignon exhibited its spicy notes and a mineral texture that was already amazingly silky from the ripeness of its tannins.

The unprecedented weather conditions which shaped the 2019 vine cycle and the strategic choices of our team have together crafted a great FIGEAC.

This wine expresses, through its classic blend, the unique character of our terroir.

Harvesting Dates: from 13th September to 7th October 2019

Blend: 2019 Château-Figeac
Merlot 30%
Cabernet Sauvignon 34%
Cabernet franc 36%

First Tasting Impressions:

The colour of the 2019 with its deep, brilliant, amaranthine red hue and bright purple glints testifies to the beautiful ripeness of this vintage. The nose is intensely aromatic, pure and reveals great finesse. Our Cabernets find their full expression through notes of flowers and fruit, such as blueberries and Mara Des Bois strawberries. Delicious and dense on the entry to the palate, the wine develops harmoniously on the mid-palate with the gentle, enveloping texture of the Merlot. Showing exceptional length of favour, the wine maintains a balance that follows right through to the finish, in which the fine, mineral texture of the Cabernets is elevated by the freshness of the fruit flavour. 2019 will go down in the history of Château-Figeac as one of its benchmark vintages.