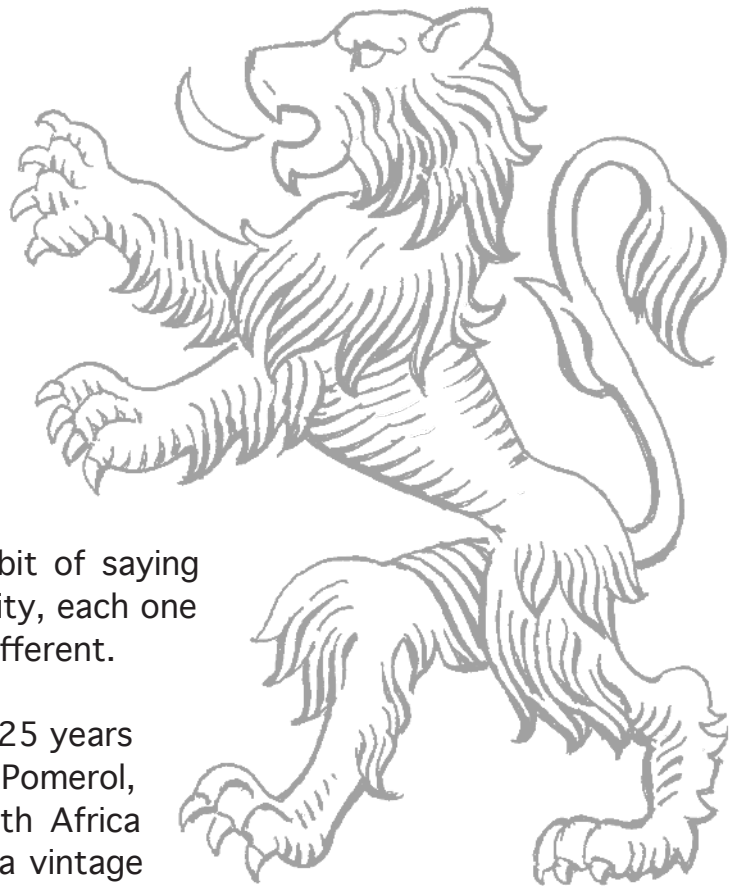


Château Marquis de Terme

2013 Harvests

*«2013: It was...
complicated»*



Winegrowers and winemakers have a habit of saying that every vintage has a certain personality, each one has its own story and that each wine is different.

2013 was extraordinarily complicated. In 25 years of winemaking in France – Bordeaux, Pomerol, Saint Emilion and Margaux – and in South Africa and California, I have never experienced a vintage that had so many questions and uncertainties surrounding the harvest. The challenge was to square the circle, to find a solution to an equation that had numerous variables, with one objective: to produce a Grand Vin.

The list of difficulties that we met over the course of 2013 is long and fairly demoralising: a cold, wet spring, coulure, uneven grape size, downy and powdery mildew, delayed ripening, a growing presence of grey rot and, to cap it all, a very low yield per hectare, with ensuing financial repercussions. One would have to go back decades, to another century, to find a comparable «perfect storm».

The weather leading up to the harvest was changeable, to say the least, and when we finally decided to pick, ripening was late and there was a significant threat of disease. We tried in vain to track the weather fronts and anticyclones sweeping across Europe but things never stabilised. Every morning we hesitated between speeding up the pace of picking or stopping it altogether. The Merlot was brought in from October 2nd to 4th, the Petit Verdot on October 8th and 11th and finally the Cabernet Sauvignon from October 8th to 15th.

I like to remind our team that «we celebrated the end of the harvest on the day that we had intended to start it» – a perfect illustration of the fact that winegrowers have to adapt to the vagaries of the weather and every other factor in the vines' development every year to produce the best wine possible.

2013 was a year of challenges, of big decisions and the need for meticulous care at the technical level. Rarely have the words «selection» and «attention to detail» been so appropriate.

But what can we expect in terms of quality?

All the care and attention we habitually give the vineyard had its effect on the grapes: the removal of excess foliage, the controlled use of fertilizer, the reduced use of treatment products, the environmentally friendly management of the plots and the selection and sorting during the harvest. In other words, the alchemy of the deep gravel soil and the meticulous techniques applied to the vines are invariably deciding factors in the quality of our wines and certainly played their part in 2013.

In addition, the recent investments we have made, particularly the improvement of our system for receiving and sorting the harvest in the winery, mean we have precise control over the grapes going into the vats. There can be no doubt, also, that improvements in vinification methods, with gentler, more natural techniques, have enabled us to reduce mechanical processes and to optimise the texture and silkiness of the tannins. In short, work carried out over the last 20 years to improve vineyard management and progress our oenological approach has enabled us to enhance the expression of Château Marquis de Terme's magnificent terroir.

And this, our Margaux terroir, is probably the most important thing of all, because once again Nature has reminded us that far from becoming an industrial product, wine remains rooted in agriculture. Each vintage, it takes its character from the soil and it is this that gives it the historical and cultural dimension that we strive to protect.

Nature may well have brought us to heel this year but we rose to the challenge of maintaining quality at all costs. Now in the vats, this pleasant, supple vintage is in the process of integrating freshness and balance. It will be a vintage to lay down in the medium term, providing an excellent opportunity to taste the property's recent great vintages of 2009, 2010 and 2011, while we leave 2013 to develop in peace.

Margaux, 10 November 2013
Ludovic DAVID
Director of Château Marquis de Terme
Grand Cru Classé in 1855