

The harvest

The harvest began on 8th October under cloudy skies. Although it rained throughout the harvest, daily levels were not significant.

In fact, it rained only 39.8 mm from 8th to 18th October, averaging a mere 3.61 mm per day. In contrast, on 19th October, the last day of picking, there was a torrential downpour of rain, with 27.8 mm in one day. Fortunately, the best plots of vines had already been picked, leaving just 2 hectares to bring in.

Despite the ideal conditions for botrytis, the grapes were able to resist until the end.

Maturity was homogeneous thanks to the leaf-thinning carried out on both sides of the rows; the grapes were healthy, allowing us to pick according to the optimum ripeness of each plot. The few green berries remaining were eliminated by manual sorting, as well as by our optical sorting machine.

Reminder of key dates:

Budbreak from 29th March to 4th April 2012;

Mid-flowering from 30th May to 4th June 2012;

Mid-veraison from 8th to 26th August 2012.

Harvest dates by grape variety:

Merlots from 8th to 11th October;

Cabernet Francs 16th and 17th October;

Cabernet Sauvignons from 11th to 19th October;

Petit Verdots 10th-11th and 13th October.

Vineyard yield 36 hl/ha

2012 Vintage blend and analyses

Ch. Léoville Poyferré	Ch. Moulin Riche	Pavillon de Léoville Poyferré
62% Cabernet Sauvignon	69% Cabernet Sauvignon	79% Cabernet Sauvignon
32% Merlot	20% Merlot	15% Merlot
6% Petit Verdot	7% Petit Verdot	4% Petit Verdot
	4% Cabernet Franc	2% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol 13.4 % v	Alcohol 13.2 % v	Alcohol 13.2% v
IPT Polyphenols : 82	IPT Polyphenols : 73	IPT Polyphenols : 75
Acidity : 3.40	Acidity : 3.25	Acidity: 3.25
pH : 3.80	pH : 3.80	pH : 3.80

The specific terroir of the 22 hectares devoted to Château Moulin Riche has its own character, quite distinct from that of Léoville Poyferré. The property thus offers two very different expressions of Saint Julien. Thanks to its softer tannins, Moulin Riche is more accessible in its youth.

Château Léoville Poyferré

Château Moulin Riche



Vintage 2012

Winter was cold and dry, particularly in February, causing a significant deficit in rainfall: water reserves were low due to only 314 mm of rain from October to March.

Vine growth was rapid, encouraged by mild, dry weather in March. Budbreak was early, comparable to 2003 or 2011.

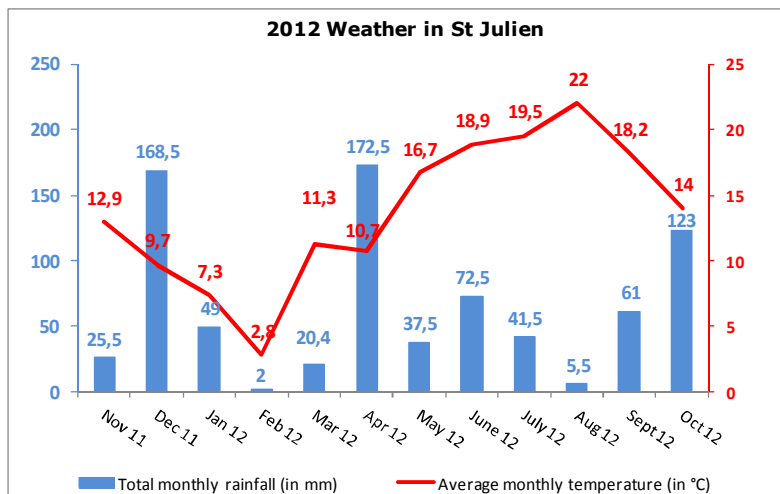
Cold, wet weather during the month of April slowed down vine growth, causing the vineyard to fall behind in its overall development.

Flowering was late and prolonged, similar to conditions in 2006, provoking shatter throughout the vineyard. Veraison occurred late and was also extended, reminiscent of years prior to 2001.

The vineyard was stressed due to significant heat spikes in July and August, as well as a lack of rain. Having fallen three weeks behind in terms of vine growth, momentum was finally regained thanks to 60 mm of rainfall at the end of September.

The harvest began very late. With the exception of 2008, we have to go back more than 30 years to find such a late harvest. Even though rainfall was light, it was ongoing throughout the entire harvest.

With wide ranges in temperature and rainfall, 2012 was a challenging year for the vineyard. After favorable conditions returned mid-July, this vintage, though off to an early start, proved to be late in reaching its optimum maturity beginning on 8th October.



Growth Cycle of the Vines

A cold, dry winter

Although it remained hot until the end of autumn, the month of December was rainy (168.5 mm of rain).

The first frost occurred on 12th January and the last on 7th March. During the winter, the vineyard was able to rest and recharge.

February was quite cold: 18 out the 29 days of the month began with morning frost! Temperatures, not taking into account the wind chill factor, went as low as -7.2 °C, registered on 9th February.

January, February and March were also very dry, with only 49 mm, 2 mm and 20.4 mm of rainfall respectively.

Consequently, water reserves did not increase, but went down slightly. The year began with a serious rainfall deficit (240 mm less than 2011).

Pruning was finished by 2nd March.

Early budbreak followed by cold temperatures

A warm spell beginning on 13th March produced temperatures in the shade of up to 25.8 °C, encouraging the dormant buds to push. Budbreak was completed throughout the vineyard from 29th March to 4th April. The year was off to an early start, reminiscent of 2011.

In comparison, the month of April was very cold and rainy (172.5 mm of rainfall). Vine development began to stagnate as temperatures were not high enough to continue stimulating growth.

This led us to believe that it would be a later vintage than we had first thought; a reality that was later confirmed.

A late flowering

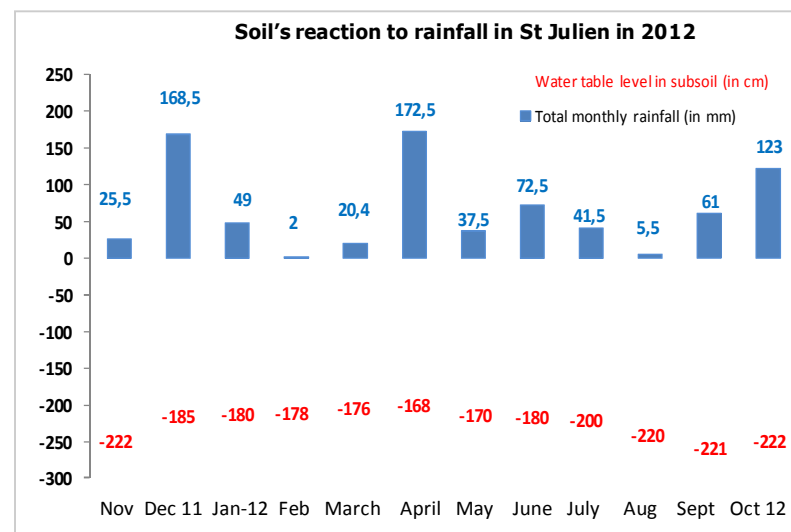
The mid-flowering point was reached from 30th May to 4th June, comparable to 2006.

The vineyard had lost its 18 to 20-day advance, and the likelihood of a late vintage became more evident.

Considerable temperature fluctuations during flowering resulted in significant shatter throughout the vineyard. Fortunately, the berries that did form were homogenous and well-spaced.

During the month of June, 72 mm of rain was welcomed during this period when the water reserves were beginning to go down further.

The time had come to thin the leaves on the northern and eastern sides of the rows, beginning on 11th June, aerating the bunches to increase fruit aromas, etc.



The ripening phase

The month of July was hot with temperatures of up to 36.2 °C in the shade. Rainfall was quite low (only 41.5 mm).

The Merlots reached mid-veraison by 10th August, the Cabernets by 13th August, and the Petit Verdots by 24th August.

By this time, the late character of the vintage had been confirmed : the veraison dates are similar to those of years prior to 2001. Veraison was prolonged and the vines began to suffer from lack of water. Conditions were dry during the entire month of August until 19th September.

Thanks to the leaf-thinning carried out earlier in the season, any green berries still remaining were encouraged to ripen.

Excessively high temperatures in August, including a heat spike of 38.3 °C, resulted in sunburned fruit in some parts of the vineyard.

The dry spell lasted until 19th September. Thankfully, the vineyard received a much-needed 60 mm of rainfall, stimulating the vines and allowing them to finally reach full technological and phenolic maturity.