

2015 VINTAGE

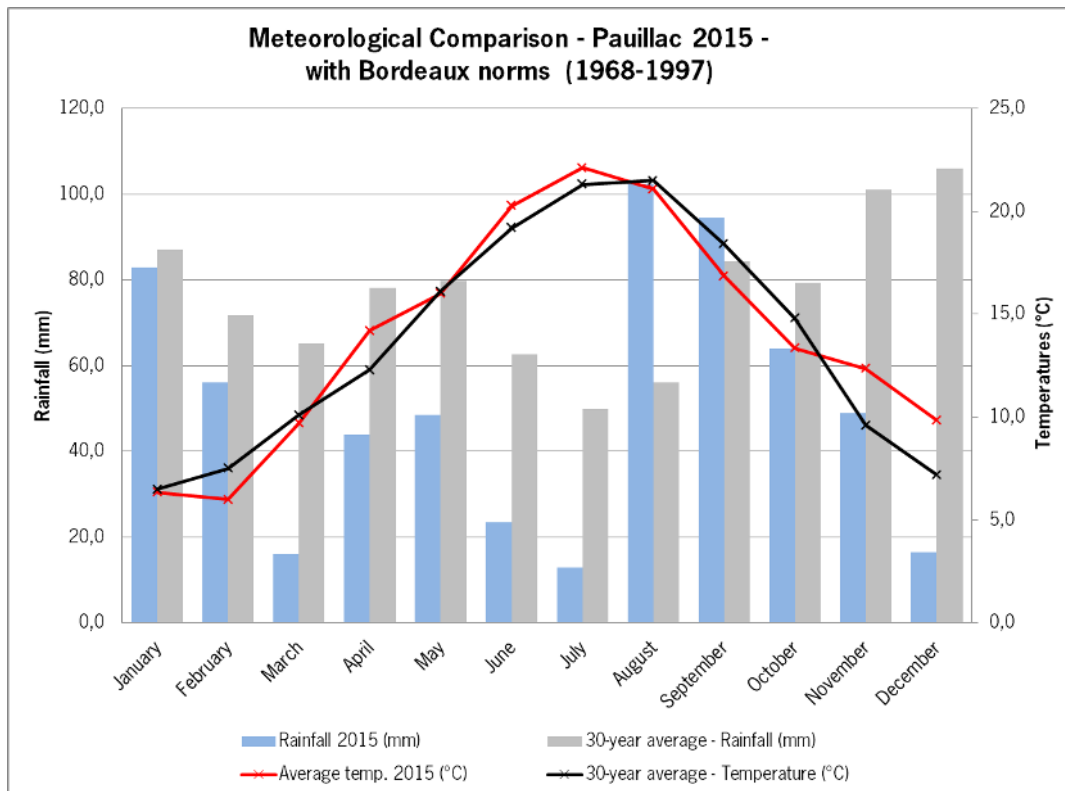
VINTAGE REPORT

Take five



This 2015 vintage was preceded by a relatively cold winter and normal rainfall that replenished the soil's water reserves, laying the best possible foundations for the year to come (see Figure 1). Bud break was homogeneous, although in some cases slightly late (6 April for the first Merlot, 10 April for the first Cabernet Sauvignon), and took place in good weather conditions ensuring healthy crop development.

Figure 1



There was little rain in March, a phenomenon that continued into the beginning of April. In the first half of the month temperatures warmed up, with maximums sometimes reaching summer levels (27–28 °C). Canopy growth began to speed up, but the last weeks of April saw some relatively cold minimum temperatures that slowed things down.

The first ten days of May were mild and rainy, with approximately 50 mm of rain recorded between 30 April and 3 May. The vine's vegetative growth took off again and the phenological stages followed their natural course. During this period the vintage was as precocious as that of 2014, and the vineyard made up for time lost.

In terms of sanitary conditions, this moisture required us to be more vigilant in order to avoid mildew in the plots.

The vineyard's very first flower was seen on 23 May (like in 2009). In the last week of May, mild temperatures followed by more summery weather (over 35 °C recorded on 3 June) triggered the rapid and complete flowering of all varieties (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Dates of harvesting and crop development in the vineyard at Château Lynch-Bages

VINTAGE	Varieties	Budburst began (March)	A Mid-flowering (June)	Difference A to B	B Mid-veraison (August)	End of veraison	Difference B to C	C Start of harvest (LYNCH-BAGES)	Difference A to C	Start of veraison	End of harvest
LYNCH-BAGES 2009	M	29-Mar	5-Jun	63	5-Aug	17-Aug	48	23-Sep	111		29-Sep
	CF	3-Apr	6-Jun ← days →		9-Aug	← days →		5-Oct	days	16-Jul	
	CS	7-Apr	9-Jun	66	12-Aug	24-Aug	55	7-Oct	121		12-Oct
LYNCH-BAGES 2010	M	6-Apr	7-Jun	62	7-Aug	18-Aug	50	27-Sep	112		30-Sep
	CF	8-Apr	9-Jun ← days →		11-Aug	← days →		6-Oct	days	19-Jul	
	CS	15-Apr	11-Jun	65	14-Aug	25-Aug	55	9-Oct	120		14-Oct
LYNCH-BAGES 2011	M	28-Mar	12-May	62	25-Jul	7-Aug	48	13-Sep	110		14-Sep
	CF	2-Apr	14-May ← days →		28-Jul	← days →		20-Sep	days	30-Jun	
	CS	6-Apr	18-May	65	1-Aug	13-Aug	51	22-Sep	116		28-Sep
LYNCH-BAGES 2012	M	30-Mar	1-Jun	73	14-Aug	24-Aug	50	4-Oct	123		5-Oct
	CF	1-Apr	2-Jun ← days →		16-Aug	← days →		11-Oct	days	23-Jul	12-Oct
	CS	4-Apr	4-Jun	76	20-Aug	30-Aug	53	13-Oct	129		18-Oct
LYNCH-BAGES 2013	M	8-Apr	13-Jun	66	19-Aug	29-Aug	42	1-Oct	108		4-Oct
	CF	10-Apr	17-Jun ← days →		21-Aug	← days →		7-Oct	days	3-Aug	8-Oct
	CS	18-Apr	19-Jun	68	27-Aug	5-Sep	38	6-Oct	106		13-Oct
LYNCH-BAGES 2014	M	20-Mar	30-May	68	8-Aug	20-Aug	46	24-Sep	114		30-Sep
	CF	27-Mar	5-Jun ← days →		12-Aug	← days →		30-Sep	days	15-Jul	2-Oct
	CS	31-Mar	10-Jun	64	14-Aug	27-Aug	52	6-Oct	116		11-Oct
LYNCH-BAGES 2015	M	6-Apr	1-Jun	62	3-Aug	15-Aug	50	23-Sep	112		24-Sep
	CF	10-Apr	3-Jun ← days →		8-Aug	← days →		1-Oct	days	18-Jul	2-Oct
	CS	15-Apr	8-Jun	62	10-Aug	23-Aug	52	2-Oct	114		8-Oct
19-year average (1995-2014)	M	25-Mar	3-Jun	66	8-Aug	← days →	46	24-Sep	113		27-Sep
	CF	29-Mar	5-Jun ← days →		12-Aug	← days →		1-Oct	days	19-Jul	
	CS	2-Apr	8-Jun	68	15-Aug	← days →	48	3-Oct	116		9-Oct

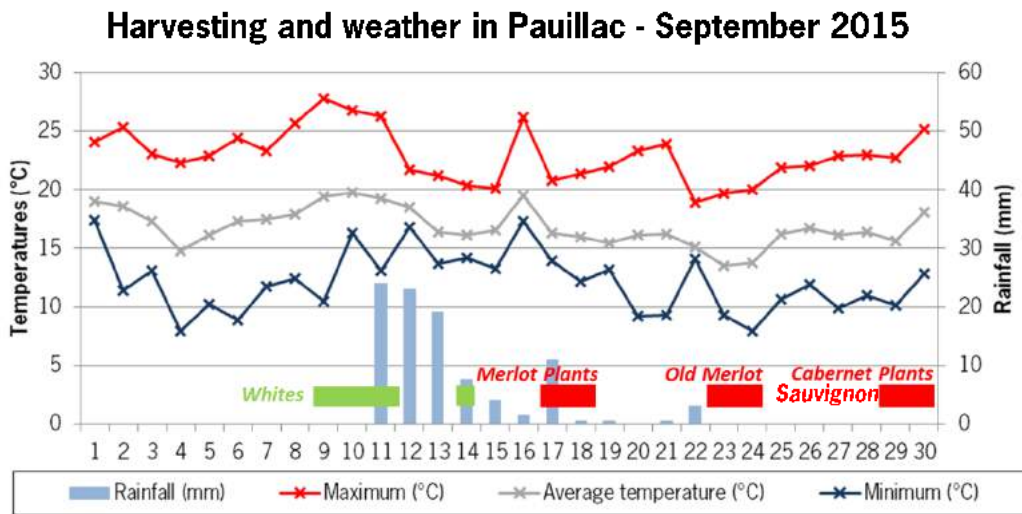
The summer weather took hold in June in the Médoc, and the soil water deficit steadily grew. Some plots began to show signs of this lack of water. The vine stocks nonetheless bore quality bunches in quantities while not excessive quite satisfactory, promising a good future harvest.

In terms of phytosanitary conditions, the vineyard was very healthy with just a few spots of mildew and signs of oidium and very little black rot. However, high temperatures in the last week of June, in particular on 30 June, scorched some bunches and/or leaves. Some leaves were partially dehydrated here and there, and the skins of berries exposed to the sun turned slightly brown in places.

Berry veraison was first reported on 16 July, like in 2009. The rain returned at the end of July, effectively resolving the water situation which had become complicated, in particular for the younger vines (discolouration, wilting berries, etc.).

The berries generally got bigger and sugar concentration increased satisfactorily. Berry acidity did however remain very high. Cryptogamic diseases like mildew and *Botrytis cinerea* thrive in these kinds of damp conditions. This prompted a second leaf thinning in the few plots of sensitive whites in order to improve grape ripening conditions, as well as the sanitary cleaning of botrytised berries in the last days of August. The reds became engorged with juice, in particular the Merlot, and their veraison ended rapidly.

Figure 3



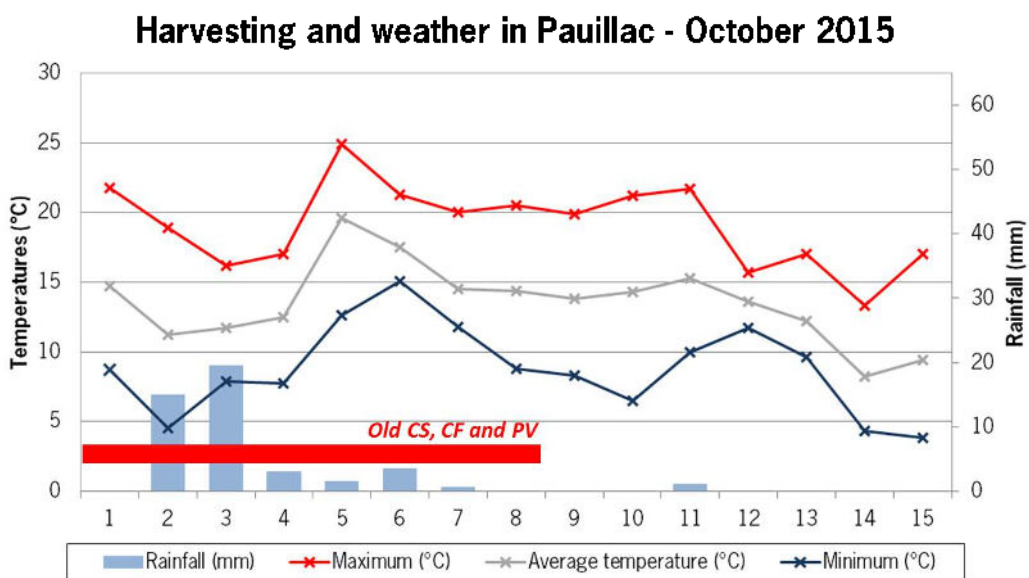
Harvesting of the whites began normally, on 9 September, and ended on 14 September after four days of picking (Figure 3).

Following the rainy weekend of the *Marathon du Médoc*, harvesting of the Merlot began as planned on 17 September. Then, after a week of warm summery weather, harvesting continued on 23 and 24 September with a team of 120 picking the old Merlot.

Two weeks of stable and warm weather followed, during which the Cabernet matured nicely, and harvesting resumed on 29 and 30 September with the picking of the young plants.

The 60 hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon were then harvested in a remarkable sanitary state between 2 and 8 October, marking the end of harvesting at Château Lynch-Bages (Figure 4). Harvesting ended serenely.

Figure 4





CHATEAU
LYNCH  BAGES
2015

Harvesting took place in excellent conditions, except for one very rainy day in October. The grapes were healthy and of a high quality, promising a good vatting. In total 30 vats were filled, for a yield of 46 hl/ha.

2015 was marked by a good grape concentration, an absence of green and vegetative flavours and a remarkable tannin ripeness; these three factors will raise it to the rank of a great vintage.

Grape sugar content was sometimes high, but alcoholic fermentation was completed rapidly and the wines had a low volatile acidity. Then followed post-fermentation maceration, which gave the already harmonious wines some fatness and volume. The aromas were at last able to show their full complexity. The 2015 vintage is rich, ripe, velvety and already has silky tannins. In terms of variety, although diluted slightly by the September rain, the Merlot nevertheless gives the wine a lovely freshness and beautiful fruity aromas. The Cabernet and Petit Verdot express rarely-reached notes of fresh, ripe fruit.

Running off took place after around 20 days of vatting. It began on 13 October and ended on 1 November with the beautiful vats of Cabernet Sauvignon from the plots surrounding the chateau, which lived up to their promise.

The traditional press-wine tastings were organised in early November, to sort the batches into three qualities: A, B and C.

As for previous vintages, one third of malolactic fermentation took place in vats and two thirds in barrels. Fermentation was quite quick, and by the end of November it had ended for all the chateau's batches.

Blending tastings were then organised for the first half of December, to move the new vintage to the barrels as early as possible.

So 2015 is characterised by its elegance and great homogeneity. Its tannin ripeness is perfect, and its wonderfully balanced acidity enhances the aromatic freshness of the fruit. The 18 months of ageing that follow will leave the wine time to develop its full structure and radiance.



CHATEAU
LYNCH  BAGES

2015

Château Lynch-Bages 2015

Blend:

70% Cabernet Sauvignon
24% Merlot
4% Cabernet Franc
2% Petit Verdot

Analyses: Alcohol: 13.5% by vol.; Acidity: 3.7 g/l of H₂SO₄; pH: 3.62; ITP: 76

Ageing: 75% new oak

Tasting note (March 2016):

Lynch-Bages 2015 has a brilliant, deep colour with purple hues. Its nose clearly expresses aromas of cassis and dark fruit, mixed with the empyreumatic notes that come with ageing. It has a straightforward attack and a voluminous yet supple mid-palate.

The wine has a marked but silky tannic structure, and a persistent finish illustrative of a particularly ripe vintage.

Echo de Lynch-Bages 2015

Blend:

66% Cabernet Sauvignon
34% Merlot

Analyses: Alcohol: 13.3% by vol.; Acidity: 3.75 g/l of H₂SO₄; pH: 3.59; ITP: 68

Ageing: One-wine barrels

Tasting note (March 2016):

It has a bright, vivid colour and a nose expressing aromas of dark berries mixed with peppery notes. It has a refreshing attack, with a grain of tannin that is still slightly coarse but which the barrels will polish promising a beautifully harmonious wine after ageing.



CHATEAU
LYNCH  BAGES

2015

Blanc de Lynch-Bages

The weather conditions for the vegetative cycle of the white plots on the cool soils of Saint-Sauveur were favourable. Bud break took place around mid-March, after which the vine developed rapidly. Growth was at first explosive due to a number of rainy episodes, before then slowing down as a result of increasingly dry and stressful conditions.

In July leaf thinning was carried out on the rising-sun side, creating optimal bunch ripening conditions. The hot and extremely dry spell of weather stopped at the end of July, and was followed by a series of showers providing the vines and bunches with water during veraison.

The alternation of rain and hot, dry weather in August promoted a rapid and relatively homogeneous veraison.

Maturity controls began on 26 August. With the return of the sun, the berries gradually became more concentrated and their sugar levels increased, although the acidity remained high. After a second control on 1 September and a third on 7 September, the decision was made to begin harvesting the whites on 9 September, with a first sorting of the Muscadelle, since the grapes had matured rapidly in the very sunny first week of September. The green harvests were beneficial, and the grapes picked for this 2015 vintage were nice and healthy. There followed a first sorting of Sauvignon Blanc, then of a very well-structured Sémillon. Harvesting ended on 14 September, after four days of picking, with the sorting of a very high-quality Sauvignon Blanc. If the first tastings are anything to go by, the vintage will be of a good quality, no doubt making up for the modest 29.8 hl/ha yield explained by stressful weather conditions due to the lack of water between June and July.

As in 2013 and 2014, the technique chosen for handling the grapes as they arrived at the cellar depended on the variety and berry quality: direct pressing without de-stemming, direct pressing with de-stemming, or pressing after cold maceration for 12 hours using dry ice. In the majority of cases, pressing took place after cold skin maceration, because it gives the wine a certain fatness and complexity. One third was fermented in vats and two thirds in barrels, followed by maturation on lees from November. Future blend tastings have revealed batches of a very high quality, mixing freshness, roundness, dynamism and very sharp aromas. It is a great white wine in the making.

Blanc de Lynch-Bages 2015

Blend:

50% Sauvignon Blanc
33% Sémillon
17% Muscadelle

Ageing: 50% new oak

Analyses: Alcohol: 13% by vol.; Acidity: 4.3 g/l of H₂SO₄; pH: 3.08

Tasting note (March 2016):

Brilliant, pale yellow in colour, Blanc de Lynch-Bages 2015 has a nose revealing floral notes and citrus aromas. On tasting, it has a lively attack and a mid-palate of great magnitude. The wine stands out for its volume, freshness and remarkable aromatic persistence.



2015

The vine's vegetative cycle was very similar to that seen for the 2015 Château Ormes de Pez and Château Lynch-Bages vintages.

Bud break was average to late, the vine's vegetative growth was at first explosive before then slowing down, flowering was rapid and uniform, and water stress conditions increased gradually from June as a result of the hot, dry weather. The vineyard's soil is more clayey than elsewhere, and it resisted well to the lack of water at the beginning of the summer. The main difference lay in the amount of rain that fell on Saint-Estèphe between August and September; while Pauillac received 195 mm over the two months, 217 mm were recorded at Pez. This had a strong impact on berry size and ripening, resulting in more abundant volumes at harvest.

Harvesting of Ormes de Pez took place in very good conditions, and grapes were picked at optimum ripeness after 14 and a half days of harvest.

The Merlot was picked in six and a half days between 23 and 29 September. To finish, the Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot were harvested in seven full days and two half days between 29 September and 8 October. The grapes were healthy and of a high quality, promising a good vatting. They yielded 55 hl/ha, which is higher than in 2014.

This year, we used two new techniques that changed the way the grapes were received. The first, which proved a great success, involved use of 200 kg containers which preserved the integrity of the grapes during their journey from the vineyard to the cellar. The second was a cutting-edge optical sorting technique that analyses images to eliminate "waste", including not only bits and petioles but also immature berries. These two days of testing proved extremely satisfactory.

Finally, and for the first time since we began testing, our own selected wine yeast strain was tried in a vat of Ormes de Pez Cabernet Sauvignon. The first tastings have already revealed a quality observed in Lynch-Bages' most recent vintages.

Sugar levels were average to high, depending on the variety, and vinification took place in good conditions and, after about three weeks of vatting, the running off and pressing operations could begin. Post-fermentation maceration added fatness and volume to what were already well-balanced wines. The Merlot is generous, offering beautiful aromas. The Cabernet and Petit Verdot are both well-balanced and tannic.

Blending took place in December, and for the first time in more than 15 years there is a higher percentage of Merlot than Cabernet Sauvignon. It nonetheless remains a "traditional" Ormes de Pez blend.

Château Ormes de Pez 2015

Blend:

44% Cabernet Sauvignon
49% Merlot
6% Cabernet Franc
1% Petit Verdot

Ageing: 45% new oak

Analyses: Alcohol: 13.2% by vol.; Acidity: 3.65 g/l of H₂SO₄; pH: 3.57; ITP: 63

Tasting note (March 2016):

This Ormes de Pez vintage, with its intense colour and aromas of dark fruit, is powerful yet balanced, characterised by a generous palate and beautifully ripe tannins.