

CHATEAU SMITH HAUT LAFITTE

GRAND CRU CLASSÉ



THE 2016 VINTAGE

2016: the catastrophe that never was...
As with politics, nothing happened as expected,
but in our vineyard everything turned out well in the end!

Despite the risks of spring frost, June showers, major attacks of mildew, drought conditions in summer, and grape worms in early September, our old vines managed to do well thanks to their medium-strong vigour, a symbiotic relationship with the soil, deep rooting, and only moderate sensitivity to mildew... On the other hand, our plots of young wines on the plateau, with roots closer to the surface, tended to suffer from both mildew and drought. In fact, we had a rather pessimistic view of the vintage until mid-September.

After a difficult and nerve-racking month of April, I could only see the negative side of things (stressed young vines, a large number of grape worm eggs, etc.), before I noticed that the older vines were doing rather well, with good resistance to mildew and a sufficient water supply after June showers... We were delighted to see that all our efforts with organic viticulture to encourage deep rooting, combined with the excellent interaction between vines and the soil in a healthy environment, produced excellent results. Our vines are now sturdier and less sensitive to insect pests and the vagaries of the weather than before...

I had a very different and much better appreciation of the growing season after the storm on the 12th of September! The white wine grapes were decidedly more aromatic and the red wine ones tastier with each passing week, ending up virtually perfect when it came time to pick!

We only fully realised the immense quality of the vintage very late in the season. Despite all our knowledge and state-of-the-art methods, Mother Nature always has some wonderful surprises up her sleeve...

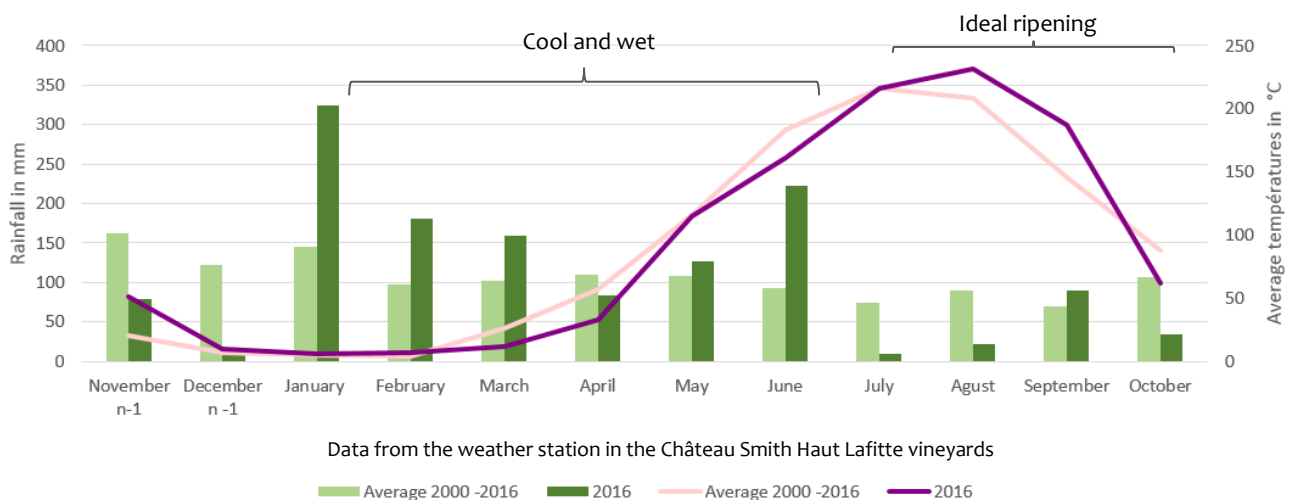
Comments from Fabien Teitgen, Managing Director



Overview of the weather

2016: a year of misleading factors

- The beginning of winter was unseasonably dry and warm, then cold and wet from January to March. Bud break was early.
- The weather in April was very cold and cause of much worry. There were several frost warnings, especially on the morning of the 29th of April. Vine growth remained stagnant...
- May and June: temperatures were normal, but it rained a great deal. Growth picked up again, but there were attacks of mildew.
- Summer was very dry and rather hot. Mildew fortunately did not spread, the vines perked up, the ripening process began, and we became optimistic... The only thing that troubled us was the lack of water with the young vines.
- September and October: some rain, lots of sunshine, and no grey rot – perfect conditions for ripening and optimum quality.



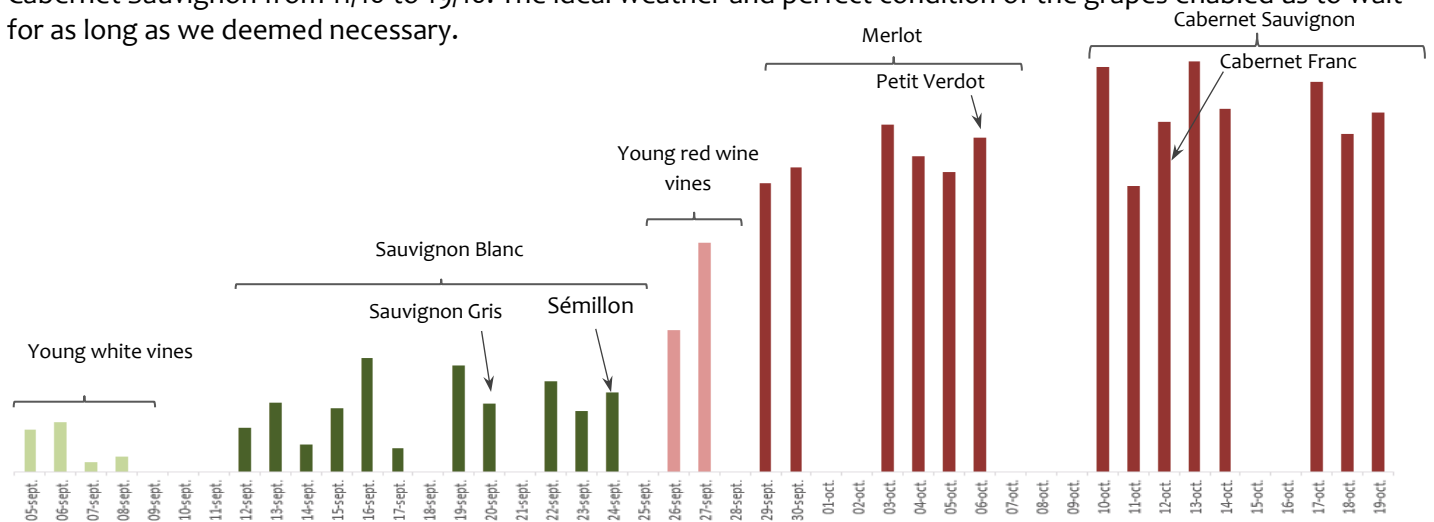
Phenological stages

	2016	
Bud break	Beginning of April	} Early bud break, late (but quick and even) flowering of all varieties at the same time, followed by slow, late véraison (colour change)
Flowering	June 8	
Véraison	August 15	

Readings taken by Pierre Personnic, Vineyard Manager at Château Smith Haut Lafitte.

The harvest

The weather was perfect, with no threat of fungal diseases... The rain on 12/09, combined with cool nights, give a second wind to ripening, while preventing the onset of grey rot. The aromatic development of the white wine grapes was altogether astonishing from then on. We started picking Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris, and finished harvesting Sémillon on 24/09. We were also delighted with the spectacular progress made by the red wine grapes in the following three weeks. The grape skin tannin became much riper and the juice developed superb body and aromas. We picked Merlot from 29/09 to 10/10, Petit Verdot on 6/10, Cabernet Franc on 12/10, and Cabernet Sauvignon from 11/10 to 19/10. The ideal weather and perfect condition of the grapes enabled us to wait for as long as we deemed necessary.



Fermentation

Reflecting Smith Haut Lafitte's intricate terroir, **grapes from each plot were separately fermented** and extraction adapted accordingly. Like a painter with a large palette of colours to choose from, our painting – i.e. our blend – is complex, precise, elegant, and faithful to the excellence of our terroirs.

The grape reception area is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, including a vibrating destemmer and optical sorting machine. Further sorting is done by hand to retain only perfect berries for the fermentation vats.

- Red wines: the whole grapes were transported to truncated-cone-shaped oak vats by gravity flow and fermented at a temperature of 29°C with regular *pigeage* (punching down the cap). Each lot will be aged separately in barrel for 18 months.
- White wines: The grapes were directly pressed in a neutral atmosphere to prevent oxidation and lock in the fruit's aromatic potential. This was followed by fermentation in barrel and the wine will be aged on the lees for a total of 12 months with *bâtonnage* (lees stirring).
- Average yields: **30 hl/ha for the whites and 35 hl/ha for the reds** (average total).
- The barrels are produced on site at the château cooperage using selected oak from the finest French forests.

Grape varieties at Château Smith Haut Lafitte

	Cab. Sauv.	Merlot	Cab. Franc	Petit Verdot	% new barrels
Château Smith Haut Lafitte	65	30	4	1	60
Les Hauts de Smith	40	60	-	-	20
Le Petit Haut Lafitte	60	40	-	-	20

	Sauv. Bl.	Sémillon	Sauv. Gris	% new barrels
Château Smith Haut Lafitte	90	5	5	50
Les Hauts de Smith	100	-	-	50
Le Petit Haut Lafitte	80	20	-	50

2016 Château Smith Haut Lafitte Red

2016 red Château Smith Haut Lafitte has a dark, almost black colour and a deep bouquet. The suave, elegant nose is quintessentially Graves. It combines red and black fruit (blackberry, black cherry, raspberry), delicate floral aromas, sweet spice (star anise), smoky nuances, flinty overtones, etc. What tremendous complexity!

The wine is powerful and refined on the palate. Subtle, utterly charming, beautifully concentrated, and tremendously well-balanced, 2016 Smith-Haut-Lafite is altogether rich and suave, with a wonderful texture.

It displays depth, power, elegance, sophistication, smoothness, and intense flavours... What more could one possibly want from a wine?!

2016 white Château Smith Haut Lafitte

2016 white Château Smith Haut Lafitte is a brilliant wine with a pale yellow colour and a very expressive nose. The bouquet is bursting with citrus and yellow fruit aromas, as well as hints of pink grapefruit, citron, fresh mango, vineyard peaches, acacia blossom, and a touch of gunflint...

The wine is particularly balanced and elegant on the palate, as well as fresh, concentrated, and with a superb texture. It is rich, subtle, extremely vivacious, and very long, with a remarkable saline finish. This great wine faithfully reflects its Graves terroir with flinty nuances.

"Bio-Précision"

This French term encompasses both precision winemaking and organic methods. Unique to Château Smith-Haut-Lafite, this philosophy combines innovative viticultural and winemaking techniques with the great respect for the vines, the soil, and the environment. This approach encourages biodiversity and a balanced ecosystem, entailing the planting of hedges, green cover, the use of organic compost, and ploughing with horses. It also strives to maintain genetic diversity in the vineyard and to enhance the complexity of the wine thanks to mass selection and the use of selected root stock from a specialised nursery on Île de La Lande.