

Pomerol, 11th October 2021

CHÂTEAU GAZIN

Harvesting dates: 21st September to 7th October 2021

AB The harvesting stretched out longer than usual. Did some plots need some extra time?

Mickaël Obert Exactly that. The ripeness was a bit uneven from plot to plot. We were lucky with the weather. We had some rain, a couple of showers, but not as much as the weathermen forecast.



AB Was there no danger of botrytis then?

Mickaël Obert Just after the rain, there was a very small outbreak, but after a couple of days of dry weather there was no more risk.

AB Rain left a mark on this 2021 vintage, particularly in May, June and July. What was the overall rainfall figure?

Mickaël Obert Between 1st November 2020 and 30th September 2021 we got 780mm. Which is not a huge amount for the region, but we had 101mm of that in May, 178mm in June and then 42mm at the start of July. These are figures for Gazin; elsewhere, rainfall might have been higher or lower. Some areas also suffered thunderstorms, which we escaped. But obviously these conditions had an effect on the flowering in the last week of May and early June and caused outbreaks of disease.

AB How satisfied are you with the quality of the crop you brought in?

Mickaël Obert During the build-up to the harvest, we didn't know what to expect. We wondered if it would be ripe enough. I think we were all a bit apprehensive. In the end, the result was pretty good. The grapes eventually gained in ripeness, while we waited. And as I said, the pessimistic weather forecast turned out to be wrong. We're satisfied with the quality. We've been lucky.

AB The grapes were eventually ripe, but did they reach the usual levels of ripeness?

Mickaël Obert The degrees are lower. They range from 12.3 to 13.

AB **How do you interpret that?**

Mickaël Obert **Well, it's a long time since we've had such low alcohol levels. It's still a good vintage though. But it's not a great one.**

AB **Less sugar doesn't always mean a poor wine. Years ago, great vintages were made with 12.5° alcohol.**

Mickaël Obert **Yes, and in fact, in 2013, which was considered a lesser vintage, at Gazin we actually had higher alcohol levels than we have this year. But 2021 is far better in quality than 2013.**

AB **The disappointment almost everywhere in Bordeaux is the small yield...**

Mickaël Obert **That's the story at Gazin too. We've got half the size of a normal crop.**

AB **What was the main reason at Gazin for this low yield?**

Mickaël Obert **Various factors. We had spring frosts in the low part of the vineyard. Then there were fruit set problems, particularly in the old Merlot vines, because of the unsettled weather during the flowering, and finally there was an outbreak of downy mildew.**

AB **So, a small crop, which presumably needed sorting too?**

Mickaël Obert **Not that much actually. We used a densimetric sorting line to eliminate any unworthy grapes, but we didn't discard much.**

AB **What do you estimate your final yield to be in hectolitres per hectare?**

Mickaël Obert **Just 17hl/ha unfortunately. That's small when compared with our average yield of 38 hl/ha. We'll know for sure once the wine is run off the skins. But there's no doubt that we have a small crop.**

AB **But what of the quality? How would you describe the profile of Gazin 2021?**

Mickaël Obert **It's in a different register from what we've become used to. It's a wine with lively fruit character. Aromatic, fresh, attractive. A wine with plenty of energy and tension.**

AB **And the tannins?**

Mickaël Obert **There are plenty of anthocyanins, so there's good depth of colour. The tannins in 2021 needed to be carefully managed during the vinification, so as to maintain a harmonious balance. We'll be looking to produce a wine with coated tannins. Right now there's a lot of malic acid coming to the fore, but I expect everything to settle down nicely after the malolactic fermentation.**

AB **In recent years there has been concern about high alcohol and falling acidity. Not so this year then...**

Mickaël Obert **That's right. 2021 is a very different profile. There's plenty of bright red berry fruit and freshness. Really aromatic but of course less power.**

AB **The berries were generally quite large. One would have expected dilution. Are the wines less concentrated?**

Mickaël Obert **You're right about the berry size. The grapes were heavier than normal. However, there was no dilution. The wines are relatively concentrated. It's an interesting phenomenon. We extracted a bit more intensely during the initial stages of the fermentation, and this may have helped the concentration. With a lower alcohol level we had a greater margin for extraction and have been able to lengthen maceration times.**

AB **How do you see the proportions of the Gazin 2021 blend? You traditionally have a very high proportion of Merlot...**

Mickaël Obert **It will be predominantly Merlot. But this is because we're waiting for our young Cabernet plantations to mature. Within the next five years we expect to increase the proportion of both Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. But for this vintage there will be a very large majority of Merlot again.**