



## — The 2006 Vintage — Or the wonderful whims of nature...

A surprising year that will be remembered for its unusual weather conditions. 2006 was a fairly dry year with regular rainfall spread evenly over the year, allowing the vines to cope well with the heat.

The vintage was hot overall (hotter than in 2005) with heat waves in June, July and September. August was the exception to this general rule and was cooler. Frequent winds dried up the odd shower and morning dew. The start of September was exceptionally hot, followed by cooler, stormy weather. These unusual weather conditions, occurring at key stages in vineyard development, had a profound and great influence on the quality of the grapes. The combination of these unusual factors proved to be very favourable to the quality of the grapes, ultimately producing excellent results.

### ***The Flowering :***

Early and grouped together, beginning at the end of May.

### ***The Veraison :***

Occurring at the end of July, veraison preceded a rapid halt in vine growth caused by excessive heat and high minimum temperatures.

### ***The Ripening :***

Ripening started off slowly in August then fastened due to exceptional weather during the first half of September. A natural early-ripeners, Merlot was wonderfully ripe at harvest time and successfully took full advantage of these conditions. The Cabernet-Sauvignon developed extreme finesse.

### ***Our Involvement and Expertise:***

2006 is a vintage where we had to work twice as hard in the vineyard – through moderate leaf removal and bunch thinning for instance – to improve ripening in the grapes and take them through to harvest in prime condition. Our efforts were more than rewarded. Although we were worried by rain in mid-September, the grapes were ultimately harvested in sunshine.

### ***The Harvest :***

As is customary, we waited for the tell-tale apricot flavours – the sign of optimum ripening at Fougas – to emerge in the grapes before we started picking. In the vineyard, we doubled our teams to facilitate sorting of the odd grapes with botrytis as soon as they were picked. Grapes were sorted on two sorting tables – the first one located before the destemming machine was manned by 8 people, and the second one, after destemming, by a team of 6. Our winemaking techniques were adjusted to suit vintage conditions and involved 18-day maceration, little punching of the cap and no use of pumps during winemaking, allowing us to make maximum use of the wonderful potential of the grapes entering the tanks. A wonderful array of aromas...

As always in years of mixed weather conditions, Fougas' superlative soils successfully brought out the full complexity of the vintage. The Merlot, picked between September 25 and 28, epitomises this quality with high natural alcohol content nearing 13% ABV, acidity levels that revealed balance in progress, outstanding aromatic potential – a true feature of Merlot in the 2006 vintage – and thick skins with lots of colour (anthocyanins) and phenolic compounds. The Cabernet Franc and Cabernet-Sauvignon grapes harvested from October 9 onwards subsequently added quality and finesse to the substantial aromatic complexity of the Merlots. The harvest was not very productive, at just 39 hl/ha. Fougas Maldoror 2006 is blended from 68% Merlot and 32% Cabernet-Sauvignon. 55% of the wines were aged in new oak casks and the remaining 45% in casks used for one wine. The 2006 vintage is fleshy, fruity and highly aromatic.



---

## CHÂTEAU FOGAS