



— The 2008 Vintage — A surprising vintage !

Despite the 20-year gap between them, weather conditions (average temperatures, sunshine and rainfall), phenolic stages, harvest dates and yield forecasts are very similar for the 1988 and 2008 vintages.

Mixed weather conditions: this year, the vine's growth cycle and progress in grape ripening had to cope with weather conditions that constantly played yo-yo with sudden changes occurring, from heavy rain to sunshine and cold spells to periods of hot weather.

The Flowering :

From May 30 to June 10

The Veraison :

Around July 27

The Harvest :

Ripening progressed very slowly. From the beginning of September onwards, the broad day-night temperature range was conducive to aroma and anthocyanin synthesis. Harvesting began on September 27 and ended on October 7 for the Merlot. Picking of the Cabernet Franc and Cabernet-Sauvignon started on October 11. There were very few pips, one to two per grape at most. Unlike tannins in the skins, those contained in the pips make the wines more rustic. The vintage can therefore be expected to show great refinement. The grapes were beautiful. The grape skins were very aromatic and thick with lots of colour components and tannins. In mid-autumn, the fruit was perfectly healthy and there was therefore no rush to harvest – everything was picked by hand with a team of fifteen people. Yield was low at 28 hl/ha because, despite rainfall in the spring, there was very little juice in the berries. Château Fougas' conversion to organic viticulture in a year when weather conditions were unpredictable was extremely successful. The main thing is to be attentive to the vines and provide a sensitive response.

Our Winemaking techniques :

Brought to the winery whilst still cool, the grapes benefited more from the pre-fermentation soaking periods. Good levels of natural acidity reduced the amount of sulphur required so that the best compromise could be achieved between protecting the must and laying the groundwork for successful malolactic fermentation. Maceration management completed the harmonisation phase – the great response to micro-oxygenation was particularly noteworthy. Three or even four weeks of post-fermentation soaking brought greater density and volume, adding fat to counterbalance exuberance. The wines also developed wonderfully powerful aromatic length. 2008 was a "slow" vintage. It took time, for the fruit to ripen, for the soaking and the fermentation.

The wines are harmonious and show a good compromise between finesse and power. Ultimately, 2008 is one of the finest vintages of the turn of the century. After giving us cause for concern, nature took its time to give us all the components needed to make the wine both delicious and endowed with promising ageing potential.



CHÂTEAU FOGAS