

CLOS FOURTET

1st Great Classified Growth

2003 Vintage

The vines :

Bud-break occurred on the 21st March in the Merlot. The mid-flowering point was reached on the 25th May in pleasant weather conditions with a minimum temperature of 10°C at night and 20°C during the day, with practically no rain, which allowed us to have a very evenly grouped flowering. The colour change in the grapes was early and was completed by the end of July.

The weather conditions :

July, and especially August, were extremely hot at the time of crop thinning. We carried out just one light de-leafing on the east side of the rows. However, we did not do any de-leafing on the opposite side at the end of August ; the temperatures were so high that any further de-leafing would have exposed the bunches to the risk of being burnt by the hot sun.

The fact that we kept all the leaves on the south-facing side of the rows and that we had grown grass in the rows, allowed us to produce grapes with freshness and good fruit flavour. During the summer period, the vines were never under stress from lack of water in the soil since they were regularly showered with rainfall of 15 to 30 mm every two weeks.

The vinification :

Our cellar has been completely renovated and equipped with vibrating sorting tables with which we are able to carry out a double sorting, one before de-stemming and the other after. We have chosen to use small boxes for the conveying of the grapes from the vineyard to the vat cellar, which avoids any risk of damaging the berries en route. We also have small-sized double-walled stainless steel vats holding 50 and 70 hectolitres, enabling us to vinify plot by plot and to handle the grapes with the utmost respect.

This type of vat with a large opening at the top enables us to punch down the cap of skins manually, thus helping us to achieve a gentle, efficient extraction.

At the end of the maceration period, at the time when the wine is run off, the wine is put into barrels for the malo-lactic fermentation and the subsequent ageing process.

Average yield :

31 hectolitres per hectare

Blending :

- 85 % Merlot
- 10 % Cabernet Sauvignon
- 5 % Cabernet Franc

Tasting:

The Clos Fourtet displays a dense, deep colour for the vintage. Its distinguishing feature is its rare aromatic precision with a nose of black cherries, blackberry liqueur and liquorice subtly mingling with mineral notes and violets.

Full and fleshy in the attack on the palate, it develops gently and sensually. The acidity is low. The tannins are dense and silky, and the lingering finish is fresh with mineral notes coming through.