



## 2009 vintage, even better than the rest



Understanding the harvest of dry white wine or red wine is fairly simple.

2009 is a year of perfect ripeness of grapes. Water stress in late July-early August came at the perfect time.

Explaining the vintage of Sauternes and the extreme quality of its wines is also quite simple if we understand the botrytis contamination.

To make a great Sauternes, we need four conditions;

- Perfectly ripe, early-maturity grapes; it is the least requirement to produce a grand cru wine. Thus, we harvested our G, dry white Château Guiraud, between July 11 and September 14 morning.
- The presence of botrytis, underlying, in the grape. Our strategy is to make the grape have a lot of botrytis just ready to develop at maturity.
- A little moisture (dew, fog, light rain) and warm nights ( $T > 12^{\circ} \text{C}$ ) provide optimal conditions for the fungus to grow quickly.
- Sunny and hot weather to concentrate everything.

We couldn't anticipate these last two conditions! And only careful monitoring of the progress of the phenomenon gives us an insight.

### Tuesday, September 29, the day when everything changed

We started picking a very few botrytised grains in the afternoon of September 14 until 17, which gave us a small amount of quality but not exceptional. I like to hit "point zero" of botrytis.

In the vineyard, nothing moves. We see that the grapes are ripe, very palatable, the skin is freckled but we lack the moisture to initiate noble rot.

The botrytis is there but does not break out!

### Finally the rain!

It rains between 2 and 3 mm on September 15th and 37mm from September 18th to 21st with 20 mm Sunday, September 20.

The nights are hot now. The botrytis is developing very fast. In three days three-quarters of the vineyards are contaminated. This is a critical period when the botrytis is evolving and where the concentration is not. We spend a week following the evolution.

I plan to resume harvesting September 28 but the concentration is slow in coming, the weather is wet with a fog very slow in lifting and warm nights.

Tuesday, September 29th morning: the grapes are completely rotten. The fungus is very active. This sight in the morning worried us a little.

But the afternoon is quite another thing!

We are finally seeing the grapes shriveled! The sun is beginning to concentrate the grapes and the botrytis is blocked. I decide to wait another two days.

Meanwhile, we see the grape drying before our eyes, the concentration is accelerated and the grapes take on a brilliant purple tinge. We gain two degrees of potential alcohol between Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday evening.

On Thursday 1 October, ten days of madness start; we work on Saturday and Sunday, we requisition two additional presses the following Monday. Every day gives us lots of wonderful quality, aromatic, as concentrated as one could wish for, a wonderful raw material.

We conclude on the evening of October 15 with a wonderful harvest!

The wines ferment remarkably well, the balance is perfect with a very expressive aromatic complexity.

The tastings for the assemblies will be taking place in December this year!