

2000 Vintage

Weather conditions

The mild, wet spring encouraged early budburst. April was warm and very wet resulting in a fierce attack of downy mildew, which was eradicated by the end of May. The second half of May was dryer with considerable amounts of sunshine. Although there were fewer sunshine hours from April to the end of August than the average for the previous thirty years, temperatures were higher (apart from July). The end of the season was clement with an 'Indian summer', which helped the ripening process and the health of the crop.

Growing conditions

Flowering began 23rd May at Riou de Thailas and 30th May at Fougas, which was considerably earlier than the average for the past thirty years (average = 11th June). Veraison began 25th July and lasted a week in the Merlot vines. It was longer and came later for the Cabernets, with the difference being about two weeks. In view of the rainfall, we thinned the leaves out around the bunches before veraison, to keep this part of the vine dry and stop foreseeable attacks of downy mildew. In common with usual practice, we tidied up around the base of the vines by removing all non fruit-bearing canes and also proceeded with a green harvest.

Grape harvest

Picking took place on 13th and 16th September for Riou de Thailas; the 22nd, 23rd and 25th September for the Merlot and 10th and 11th October for the Cabernets at Fougas.

Vinification and maturing

These wines are worthy of all the symbolism associated with the 2000 vintage. The excellent maturity of the grapes produced supple, round and balanced wines with good acidity and elegant, compact tannins. The Folin ratings vary between 65 and 75. At Riou de Thailas, vinification was in wooden vats and we practised the ancestral technique of punching down, which involves breaking up the cap to encourage maximum extraction of tannins and aromas.