

**2004 Vintage**  
**Château Fougas Maldoror**  
**Château Riou de Thailas**

**2004: a late developer and a nice surprise**

After a cold spring, the vegetation cycle got off to a late start this year.

After a very dry month of July and a grey, damp August, we enjoyed an excellent month of September and a perfectly normal Bordeaux October.

We focussed a lot of attention on grass-cover techniques, mowing the grass regularly in July to favour development of the grapes despite the dry weather. In August, and then again in October, we let the grass grow to absorb as much moisture as possible. Leaf-stripping was conducted on both sides of the rows – on the east-facing side in spring and the west-facing side in August, to allow good air circulation around the grapes and make sure they dried quickly when there was rain.

Given the abundance and size of the bunches on each vine, extensive green harvesting was carried out (more than half of the grapes were removed before 15 August).

When harvesting time arrived, the grapes were in perfectly healthy condition. High anthocyan levels gave the wine a very rich colour, almost black rather than red. The beautifully ripe skins made for nice concentrated flavours.

The wines were very well balanced with good acidity.

The Merlot is dense and rich in colour with supple tannins and a lovely fresh sensation on the palate.

The Cabernets seem to be colourful, powerful and tannic.

Aromatic potential is surprising.

**Harvesting**

These were our 28<sup>th</sup> harvests, and certainly some of the smoothest we have ever had. They were late and spread over a period of four weeks (quite exceptional), and the grapes were in perfect condition from beginning to end.

**Harvesting Dates:**

5- 6- 7 October at Riou de Thailas (later than Fougas, for the very first time)

28-29 September for the Merlot and 11-18 October for the Cabernets at Fougas.

**Vinification.**

***The vinification process took its time:***

More than 15 days of maceration in cold conditions.

Very long alcoholic fermentation.

The last malolactic fermentations finished in January 2005 (usually, it is all over by early December).

The results of the analyses are every bit as remarkable as the results of tasting (confirming just how interesting the wines are).