

**1996 vintage  
....An exceptional year**

***Weather conditions***

An average winter. Temperatures were close to the average for the previous thirty years, apart from January, which was warmer, and February, which was 2°C (36°F) colder. Apart from a particularly dry October and especially wet December, rainfall was close to the average.

***Growing conditions***

Rapid flowering, followed by very variable conditions. The month of May was cold and slowed down the growing season. Flowering took place very rapidly during a very sunny spell between 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May. Following this hot period, when we recorded temperatures of up to 34°C (93°F) between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. June's weather then returned to normal before another hot period in July, followed by cooler weather with the arrival of storms. By 8<sup>th</sup> August, the vines were at the mid-veraison stage, following which we had cold and rain and then a magnificent month of September.

***Grape harvest***

They took place from 20<sup>th</sup> September for the Merlot vines. We harvested everything before the heavy rains of the Equinox. We inaugurated our sorting table this year. The grapes were all perfectly ripe with very high potential alcohol and good acidity levels.

***Vinification and maturing***

This year, we were looking for "substance" – introduction of enzymes, removal of all the juice from the vat on a number of occasions to raise the temperature of the pomace, total immersion of the pomace following alcoholic fermentation, etc....Time in the vat was long. These techniques allow optimum extraction of tannins, which are soft and elegant....

***With Folin ratings between 62 and 88 (!!!!), total acidity between 3.75 and 4.30 and pH from 3.53 to 3.72, the 1996 Maldoror is manifestly a very powerful wine.***