

2007
CHATEAU
GRAND CORBIN-DESPAGNE
GRAND CRU CLASSÉ
SAINT-EMILION

This was a vintage to test the vine-growers. It needed careful observation, patience and the ability to react quickly to circumstances.

Although the year was very challenging, in the end it was a real pleasure when finally all the hard work was rewarded with wines that turned out to be fruity, fleshy and perfectly balanced. Our vine-growing methods have been environmentally-friendly for over ten years now. We have set up a think-tank to reflect on sustainability and wine-making effluent treatment. The vineyard has been granted *integrated crop management* status (la lutte raisonnée), and we have obtained a charter for sustainable economy (Terra Vitis). As from the 2007 vintage, new ground was broken with the introduction of organic vine-growing methods. This vintage was also the cue for the introduction of a different sorting system and the acquisition of new sorting tables, including an automatic table which sorts the grapes using an air knife in order to eliminate any unwanted berries.

Growing season

A very hot April caused the vines to begin shooting (bud-break) very early. The flowering process was very even, taking place around 24th May. Despite unsettled weather there was very little problem with fruit setting. The vine cycle was then subjected to a phase of downy mildew threat, due to damp conditions during May and June.

Close monitoring of the vineyard was essential to preserve the potential crop size. Each vine's crop load was then adjusted at veraison (the optimal moment for crop thinning). A few rain showers at the end of August gave some cause for concern for the health of the grapes. Fortunately, the sunniest and driest September of the last 60 years ensured an excellent completion of the ripening process.

Harvest

Getting the dates right for the harvest was crucial for a successful vintage. Taking into account the last sixty years, the average time between the flowering and the harvesting is 110 days. Tasting the berries on the vines enabled us to harvest each plot's grapes at optimal quality and in perfect health well beyond this average time span.

Vinification

Each plot, each batch and each vat was vinified according to its potential with numerous short pump-overs to extract a fine tannic structure. The duration and the frequency of the pump-overs were adapted to the constitution of the grape skins.

First impressions during the wine's ageing

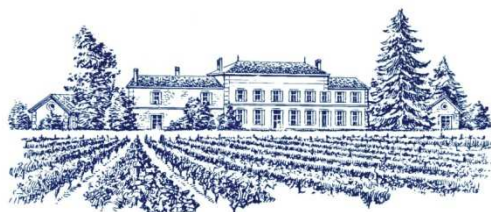
Many lots displayed lovely balance. Potential alcoholic degree was lower than in previous years (around 12.5°). Aromatic expression was superb. Tannins were present and firm –the ageing process would bring the necessary flesh to balance them.

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Consorts Despagne
PROPRIÉTAIRE À SAINT-EMILION

2007 vintage

The 196th vintage of the Despagne family on the Grand Corbin terroir.

Harvesting dates :

- 25/09/2007 for the Merlot
- 08/10/2007 for the Cabernet-Franc

2007 blend :

- 77% Merlot
- 22% Cabernet-Franc
- 1% Cabernet-Sauvignon

Ageing :

- 40% new barrels
- 60% second-fill and third-fill barrels

Yield : 38 hl/ha

Production :

460 half-bottles
75,597 bottles
2,411 magnums
25 double-magnums
10 impériales

General technical data

Family-owned estate since 1812

Location : In the north of the Saint-Emilion appellation, adjacent to Pomerol

Appellation : Saint-Emilion Grand Cru

Classification : Grand Cru Classé

Surface area: 26.80 hectares (66 acres)

Soils : Siliceous-clay over iron deposits and ancient sands over blue clay

Average age of the vines : 45 years

Rootstocks : 101-14, 3309, Riparia

Density of plantation : 6,000 to 7,000 vines per hectare

Vine-growing methods : Ploughing or a grass cover crop without any use of weedkillers.

Approved as a vineyard using integrated vine-growing practices, under the supervision of AFAQ-AFNOR, certified by Chartre Terra Vitis.

Canopy management work : De-budding, removal of double shoots, de-leafing, crop thinning, removal of lateral shoots

Harvesting : By hand in small crates with 4 successive sortings

Vinification : Different operations that can vary according to plot batches and vintage : numerous short pump-overs, rack and return (délestage) and punching down of the cap (pigeage)

Bottling : 21 months after the harvest

Annual production : 70,000 à 100,000 bottles depending on the vintage

Second wine : Petit Corbin-Despagne
Saint-Emilion Grand Cru