



GRAND CORBIN-DESPAGNE

Newsletter No. 14

2024 vintage - Chin up!

Dear friends,

The 2024 vintage will be remembered at Grand Corbin-Despagne as one of the trickiest ever; and that sentiment, I believe, is shared not only across Bordeaux but also in other regions usually less prone to the effects of climate change.

For my part, I wasn't spared a thing. As well as miserable weather conditions, which considerably unsettled the growth cycle of the vines, I also had issues to deal with in my teams. My vineyard manager was unable to drive a tractor for 3 months following a road accident, while his assistant was off work for 2 months also for medical reasons. This run of bad luck forced us to adapt our way of working, as is our custom, and it was the junior members of the team that stepped up to the plate to ensure that the different tasks in the vines were successfully carried out. This period of intensive learning for them enabled one or two to speed up their process of integration at the estate. As they say, every dark cloud has a silver lining!



The rain came relentlessly: 1,250mm (49 inches) of it fell between 15th October 2023 and 30th June 2024. By way of comparison, in a so-called normal year over the same period, average rainfall is "only" 600mm (23 inches). And along with excessive rainfall comes high vine disease pressure. Once again the teams managed to pull out all the stops to spray the vines each and every time it was necessary. Naturally, this was an unsettling period for me as a wine grower, and the challenges gave me much to ponder. Fortunately, the month of August turned out to be one of the hottest and driest of the last 80 years, and after de-leaving the vines on the east-facing side of the rows, I chose to do the same on the west-facing side in anticipation of the rain that returned at the end of the month. This enabled the vines to dry out quickly and keep at bay any outbreaks of grey rot.



Thanks to the comprehensive knowledge I have of my vineyard, where I live daily with my family, we were able to ensure yields of a normal size, even in these extreme conditions. When we are successful in adapting to the conditions, the vines respond with amazing resilience, as they did in withstanding the water deficit stress of 2022, and as they did again in 2024 in giving their very best despite repeated spells of rain. We are lucky enough to have our vineyard growing on the unique blue clay soils of the Grand Corbin plateau, and this may well be a factor too in the performance of our vines.



The harvest took place from 24th September to 8th October, spread out over a period of two weeks -a testament to the health of the grapes, which were thus able to reach their ripeness in their own time without us ever resorting to anti-botrytis sprays. Though the rainfall had been heavy, the berries didn't burst and remained intact.

As I write, we are finishing the vinification and macerations. The juices offer attractive fruit aromatics and an amazing freshness reminiscent of the 2008, 2012 and 2014 vintages. Easily digestible and fresh, this vintage, which will no doubt continue to offer us pleasant surprises, should resonate in the market with current consumers.

For my part, I'll soon be setting off on my trips abroad, firstly with the AGCCSE to the USA and then independently to the UK and the Benelux countries.

With very best wishes,

François Despagne

Famille Despagne
Ever-present in Saint-Emilion
Owners since 1812

Château Grand Corbin-Despagne
Grand Cru Classé
Organic since 2004, officially certified since 2013

2024 : the 212nd vintage of the Despagne family
in the Grand Corbin terroir
The 29th vintage of François Despagne