

GRAND CORBIN-DESPAGNE

## THE 2021 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR



Dear friends,

As you most probably know, we are in the process of presenting our latest vintage at the Bordeaux primeurs. It is with great pleasure that we are taking part in this tasting.

The 2021 growing season proved extremely complex to manage, due to the climatic challenges that affected the whole of the physiological cycle of the vine.

The nerve-racking episode of frosts during the first two weeks of April caused us some sleepless nights. The crew at the estate were quick to react to the freezing conditions, setting up anti-frost candles in the vine rows and activating our wind machines. This enabled us to limit crop losses, with only 5% of the vines showing frost damage.

The weather conditions in the month of May were pretty good, with a gradual increase in temperatures. This was in contrast to the beginning of June, when very cool weather returned. Summer arrived along with heavy rainfall which impacted our plots of old Merlot vines, reducing their crops by a half. The alternating spells of sunshine, cool temperatures and rain brought about a tricky flowering process as well as very high downy mildew pressure in a number of our plots.

The resulting episode of fruit set failure in early summer consequently reduced the number of grapes per vine, while summer sunshine didn't show up until mid-August. However, once it did, it enabled the grapes that were spared to ripen very well over the last 45 days of the cycle. These berries were now well nourished, and we were able to begin the harvesting of our young Merlot vines during the last days of September. This was followed by the old Merlot vines during the first days of October and finally our Cabernet Franc in mid-October.



Though the grape-ripening cycle went more slowly, it allowed the grapes nevertheless to reach full ripeness. During the harvest, which took place in fine weather, this complete ripeness was clearly in evidence.

Despite the challenges and continual stress, the season ended with the promise of an exciting vintage. And I'm thrilled that the technical improvements we've carried out at Grand Corbin-Despagne (a densimetric sorting table this year complemented the air-knife sorting line) have enabled us to gain even greater precision in our work.

This 2021 vintage is greatly different from the last three. It is fresher, less rich in alcohol, Atlantic in character, and figures among the classic vintages of the appellation. It is not unlike the 2011. On the palate, there's very good balance, lovely freshness, and very nice acidity. The ageing process in barrel will be managed with precision. It's my job as a winemaker to ensure that this balance is preserved, and this is why a part of the crop is being aged in amphorae. The idea is to keep the freshness of the fruit as much as possible while blending these lots with those aged in barrels in order to maintain a tannic structure.



My dear friends in the wine sector, it's now your turn to discover this vintage and form your own opinions!

Please also make a note in your diaries that next May 9<sup>th</sup> we will be in Paris with the Grands Crus Classés to celebrate our association's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Palais du Luxembourg. On this festive occasion, a game of boules will be held between sommeliers, restaurateurs and Paris wine retailers.

I very much look forward to seeing you again at Grand Corbin-Despagne (as well as at our other estates) and to showing you around the vineyard and winemaking facilities, while offering you a tasting of our wines. It would be great to see you again soon.

Warm regards,

François Despagne



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### Famille Despagne

A Saint-Emilion depuis toujours - Vignerons depuis des siècles

Propriétaire depuis 1812

### Château Grand Corbin-Despagne

Grand Cru Classé

En bio depuis 2004, certifié depuis 2013

**2021** : 210ème millésime de la Famille Despagne

sur le terroir de Grand Corbin

26ème millésime de François Despagne