

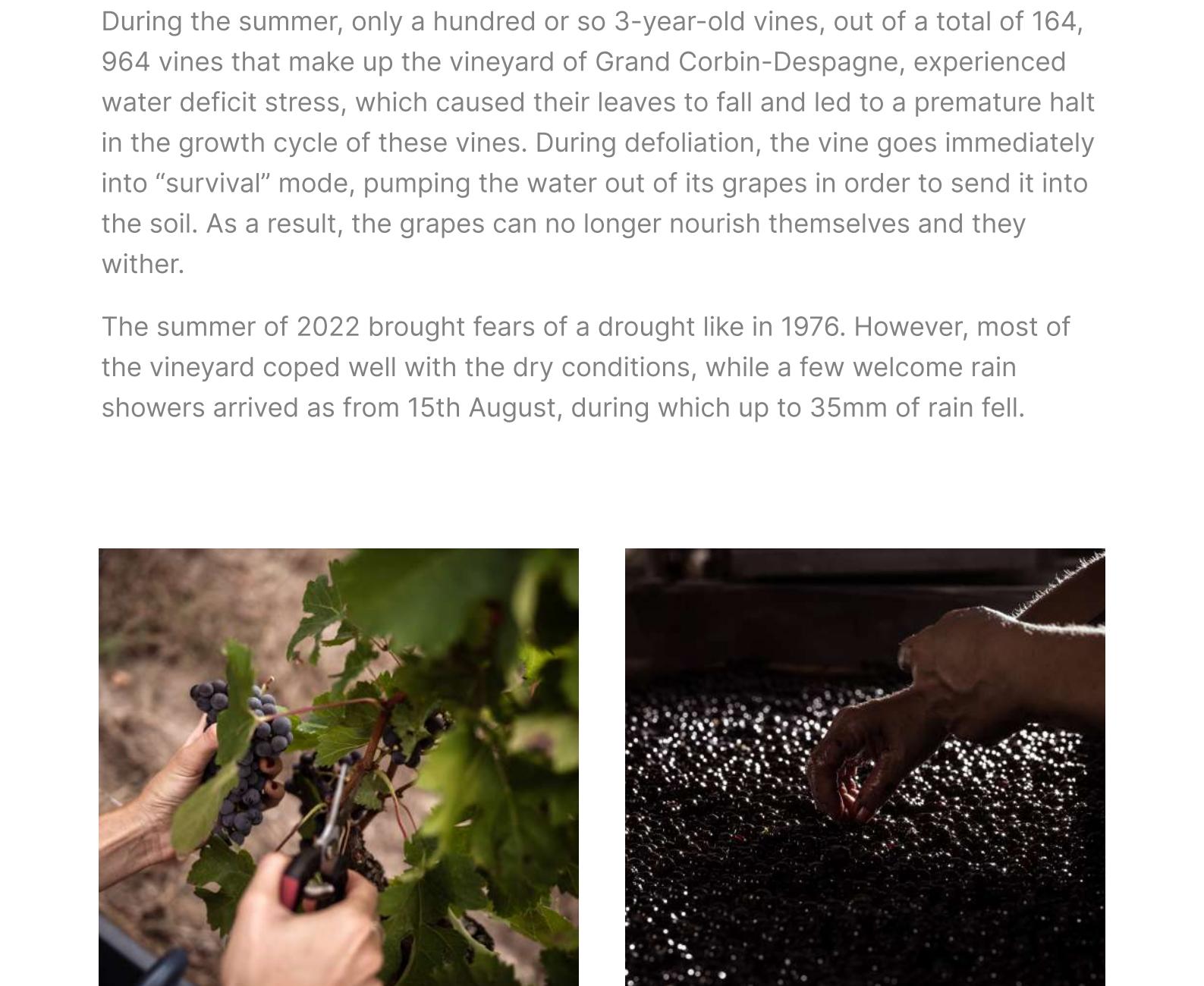


GRAND CORBIN-DESPAGNE

Newsletter No. 8

Dear friends,

As the harvest has now been completed, and the quality of the grapes brought into our new concrete vat room has proved highly satisfactory, I wanted to bring you up to speed with the vine cycle of this 2022 vintage, which can now be qualified as unprecedented.

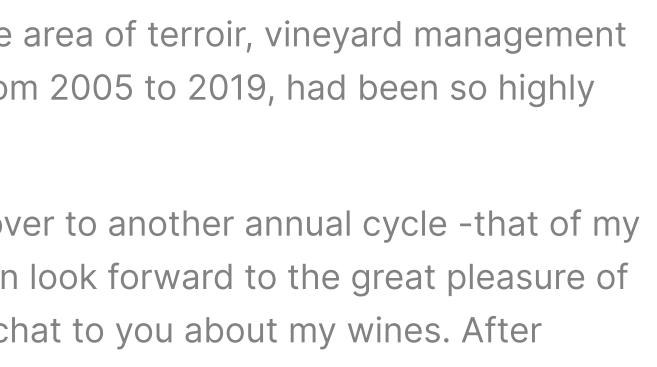
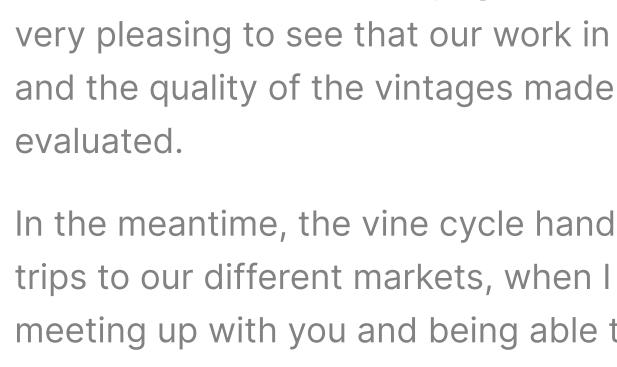


After an especially mild winter, we had one or two episodes of spring frost, which caused no damage since they only occurred in an area of the vineyard where the vines had not yet budded. The relatively mild winter conditions coupled with low rainfall brought about an early flowering of the vines from 20th to 22nd May, in advance of the normal flowering dates, which are in early June.

Spring began with a dry month of May, followed by several spells of rain in early June. Hot weather then set in, which periodically turned into heatwaves that began from 18th June, 18th July and then over several days in August, during which the weather turned scorching hot. While these dramatic temperature highs got the better of us humans, the vines, on the contrary, appeared to adapt well. This is hardly surprising given that the original cradle of the vine plant was in Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean basin. It was a demonstration, if ever one was needed, of the vine plant's love of hot weather.

During the summer, only a hundred or so 3-year-old vines, out of a total of 164, 964 vines that make up the vineyard of Grand Corbin-Despagne, experienced water deficit stress, which caused their leaves to fall and led to a premature halt in the growth cycle of these vines. During defoliation, the vine goes immediately into "survival" mode, pumping the water out of its grapes in order to send it into the soil. As a result, the grapes can no longer nourish themselves and they wither.

The summer of 2022 brought fears of a drought like in 1976. However, most of the vineyard coped well with the dry conditions, while a few welcome rain showers arrived as from 15th August, during which up to 35mm of rain fell.



We launched the harvest during the first days of September, some ten days ahead of the 50-year average, with the twin goals of bringing in grapes with balanced juices and stabilising the pHs, so as to preserve as much freshness as possible in our wines.

The first juices showed a very dense, dark, almost black hue, a concentration of colour and tannins that was brought by the "hot weather" character of the vintage and by grape berries whose average weight this year was 1 gram rather than the usual 1.5 grams. These juices exploded with fresh fruit flavour and, on completion of the maceration process, displayed superb balance. The degree of polyphenol concentration in the skins (anthocyanins and tannins) and the quality of the pips required us to carry out extremely gentle macerations. Naturally, the ratio of juice to solid matter was quite small, as we might have expected considering that the berries were 30% smaller than usual. We have therefore been careful to avoid too much extraction from the skins and pips in order to prevent any harshness appearing in the wines. This technical and demanding vintage was therefore vinified in a subtle and gentle manner.



A look back at the 2022 harvest

2022 : the 211st vintage of the Despagne family

in the Grand Corbin terroir

The 27th vintage of François Despagne

2022 Château Grand Corbin-Despagne

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