



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.

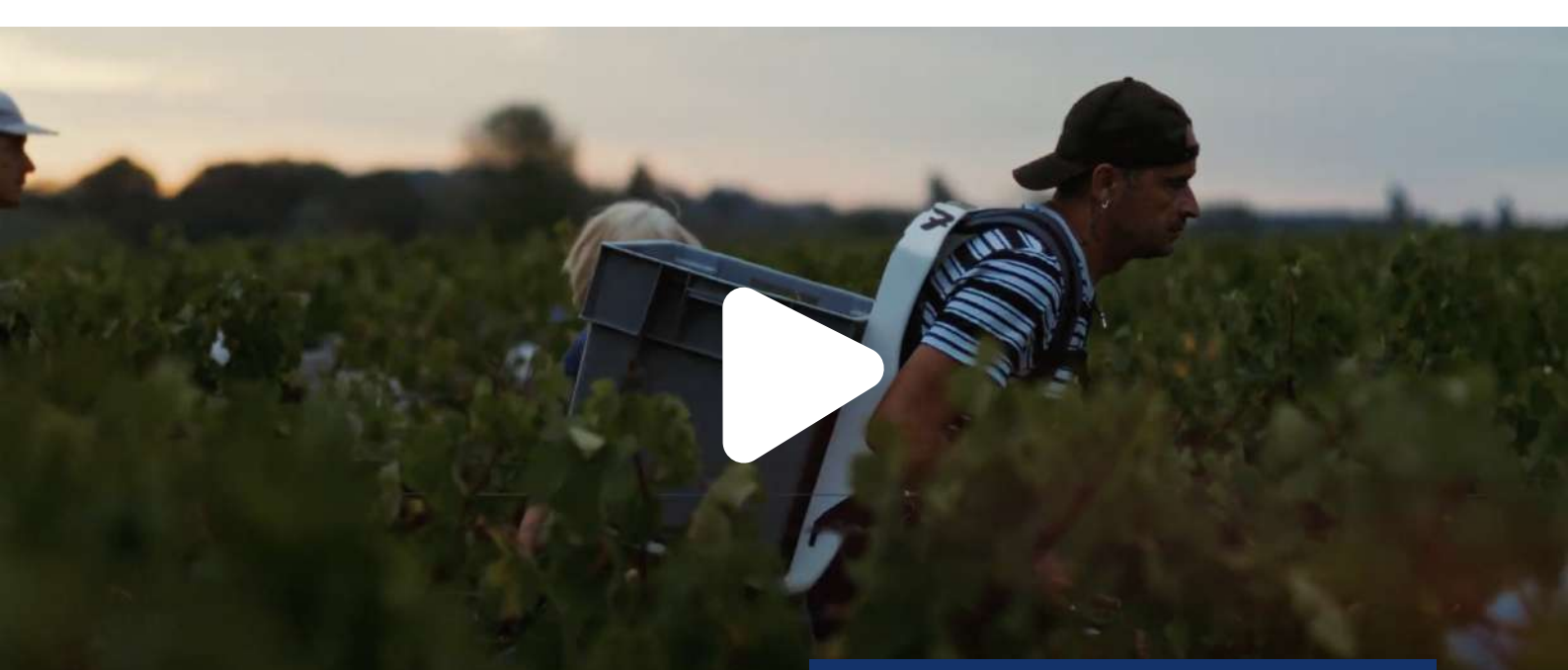
During the summer, only a hundred or so 3-year-old vines, out of a total of 164,964 vines that make up the vineyard of Grand Corbin-Despagne, experienced water deficit stress, which caused their leaves to fall and led to a premature halt in the growth cycle of these vines. During defoliation, the vine 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**

Other news from the estate

On September 8th, the INAO released the new classification of our Saint-Emilion Grand Cru appellation; and I'm delighted to have maintained, with the help of my teams, Grand Corbin-Despagne at the rank of Grand Cru Classé. It was also very pleasing to see that our work in the area of terroir, vineyard management and the quality of the vintages made from 2005 to 2019, had been so highly evaluated.

In the meantime, the vine cycle hands over to another annual cycle -that of my trips to our different markets, when I can look forward to the great pleasure of meeting up with you and being able to chat to you about my wines. After London in September and tastings in Taiwan and South Korea, we'll soon be off to Luxemburg, Belgium, as well as the Netherlands.

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

2022 : the 211st vintage of the Despagne family
in the Grand Corbin terroir
The 27th vintage of François Despagne