

CHATEAU-FIGEAC

PREMIER GRAND CRU CLASSÉ

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ST ÉMILION

2010

Henry Mammon

Harvesting dates:

Merlot : Sept 27, to Oct 1st,
Cabernet Franc : Oct 7, to 18,
Cabernet Sauvignon : Oct 5, to 18

Figures for the vintage:

Duration of ageing: 18 months
Ageing : 100% new barrels
French oak

Blend : 1/3 Merlot,
1/3 Cabernet Franc,
1/3 Cabernet Sauvignon,

Yield : 33 hectolitres per hectare

Alcoholic degree : 14°

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Appellation :
Saint-Emilion Grand Cru

Classification :
1st Great Classified Growth
since the classification was first
set up in 1954

Area :
54 hectares including 40 of
vines

Landscape relief : 3 mounds
Soil type: Guntzian gravel

Grape variety composition :
35% Cabernet Sauvignon,
35% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot

Average age of the vines : 40

Hand-harvested
Traditional ageing
Oak and stainless steel vats

Weather conditions

Heavy rainfall at the end of 2009 topped up the water tables before a period of very dry and cold weather set in during the winter of 2010. Bud-break occurred in the vineyards at the beginning of April, as it did in the 2009 vintage. Cool weather made shooting slow but homogeneous. The flowering process began on May 24 for the Merlot and the Cabernet Sauvignon, and May 29 for the Cabernet Franc. Adverse weather conditions in June meant careful vine monitoring was required, while fruit-setting was slow to reach completeness. Then, fine weather with very low rainfall set in, helping the berries to develop more concentration. There was more good weather to come: July and August had diurnal temperatures that varied by as much as 15 degrees, bringing about excellent polyphenol synthesis. Veraison set in quite quickly, while the stop in vine vegetation growth coincided perfectly with the veraison.

From this moment on, it became clear that the wonderful phenolic quality of the grapes and the excellent health of the vines would produce an outstanding 2010 vintage

Grape constitution at ripeness

At ripeness, the grapes showed prodigious constitution. Because of the good balance between pH, sugar, and acidity, the high alcoholic degrees were well integrated by the wines. The typicity of the fruit offers great complexity with aromas of fresh, ripe fruit that will enable the wine to keep lovely freshness. The high concentration in extractable anthocyanins in all three grape varieties favoured very deep colour, while very ripe skins and pips allowed long vatting periods with no risk of extracting astringent tannins.

Harvesting

Traditional picking and the added quality brought by painstaking manual harvesting are today enhanced at Figeac by new technology. Conditions this year were ideal for programming a manual harvest, in which the timing of the picking took into account the exact stage of ripeness of each of our plots. We always lavish great care on the grapes while sorting and handling bunches, and in 2010 we also used an optical sorting line. This enabled us to perfect the process of eliminating those berries that are not perfectly healthy and ripe.

Vinification

A protocol in keeping with the magnificence of the vintage was set up. The high potential alcohol levels required extremely careful monitoring during the vinification. The main extraction was done at the beginning of the fermentation. The pigeages (punching down of the cap of skins) were adapted to the individual character of each plot. The typical Figeac vinification technique of macerating with the cap of skins plunged below the surface of the wine in wooden vats, led to a natural infusion and lovely softening of the tannins. The quality of the care and attention given during the wine-making enabled the malo-lactic fermentations to finish before Christmas.