



Vintage report 2022





The weather

The 2022 vintage will remain unforgettable and unique, it was the hottest and driest year since 1950.

The winter season was characterized by a significant water deficit. The groundwater supply was disrupted and their level only reached 3/4 of the usual level at the end of winter.

By the beginning of April, we avoided the frost episode that had affected us so much in 2021. However, we were confronted with three episodes of hail. June and July hails brought minor damages, but the third wave of hail, on August 14th was much more harsh. The damage was relatively heavy, but it was nothing compared to badly damaged areas of the appellation.

The paradox is that the drought persisted, because hailstorms do not systematically mean large inflows of water.

Thanks to a strong Mistral wind and dry and hot weather as well, the berries, ripe and full of sugar, were able to heal, which allowed us to avoid infestations of gray rot.





The phenology

The year 2022 was quite atypical. The maturity of the grapes was reached two weeks earlier than usual.

The bud burst was perfect and the bunches came out generously. The extreme heat of May and June engendered the first growth arrests of the apexes, signs of strong water stress and disturbed photosynthesis.

The phenological stages followed one another very quickly, which announced the probable earliness of the 2022 vintage.

By mid-August it was evident that some plots were two weeks ahead of the ten-year average.





Vineyard works

In the vineyard, the dry weather allowed us to carry out all the spring works: disbudding, lifting of the vine shoots, tying up the small vines and green harvesting on our white grape varieties and some Grenaches.

This year, because of the drought, we resorted to irrigation for several weeks. So, we were able to minimize or even avoid maturity blockages. The foliage having developed well, it protected the bunches during the hailstorm of August 14th.

We have also set up lifting wires on a young very vigorous plot of Grenaches, in order to ventilate the area of the bunches. This work allowed us to find a good balance between fruit quality and leaf volume.

The grass cover trial set up during fall of 2021 was more than conclusive. It developed well and we were able to destroy it before flowering period in order to add organic matter to the soil. Our objective is to preserve humidity and increase soil biodiversity.

In October 2022 we continued this experiment by sowing an additional hectare, thus bringing to 6 hectares the area that will have a grass cover in 2023.



The environment

The environment is a concern that the estate has incorporated into its strategy for several decades. The 35 hectares of the estate are divided into 32.5 hectares cultivated, 2.5 hectares of woods and copses to which are added more than a kilometer of hedges. In 2022, this length of hedges was increased by another 200 meters.

There is a great diversity of flora and fauna. For example, the avian fauna (migratory birds included) is quite diverse. It is possible to observe more than 30 species of birds. In 2022, in order to promote bat population, we had a specialist install 10 shelters distributed around our woods and along the hedges..

We have been TERRA-VITIS and H.V.E. certified for several years. We do not use herbicides or insecticides (mating disruption strategy).

In 2022, in order to prevent diseases in the vineyard, we have introduced biocontrol products with the aim to protect plants through the use of mechanisms and interactions that manage relationships between species or that stimulate plant defences. The principle of biocontrol is based not on eradication but on managing the balance of populations of bio-aggressors. These products are either macro-organisms or plant protection products including micro-organisms or else chemical mediators such as, for example, sex pheromones or even natural substances of animal, vegetable or mineral origin.



The harvest

The consequences of the drought, although offset by irrigation, were visible in terms of the earliness of the harvest and for the bunches in terms of the size of the berries. In mid-August, the vines were in good health and this foreshadowed high polyphenol levels and therefore high levels of concentration.

The hail of August 14, affected part of the Château Fortia vineyard, in particular the trellised vines as they were more exposed.

The harvest began on August 22 with the white grape varieties. We continued on August 31 with the first Syrah plots which were affected by hail. The grapes that were spared remain very qualitative.

The 2022 vintage gives us a two-part score: the plots harvested early give concentrated, rich and warm wines; the other give us supple, fine and balanced wine profiles, rich from complete maturation.

We consider ourselves lucky to have lost only 15% of our harvest as this is nothing compared to the other estates which were hit hard by the hail.

In the end, and this is the most important thing, we had a very qualitative harvest.



The wines

The hailstorm did not facilitate the vinification. We had to redouble our efforts in the cellar, be very meticulous and patient.

The alcoholic fermentations were very fast with good extractions right from the start. The red wines very quickly showed an important color and the whites their fruitiness.

The malolactic fermentations also went smoothly and the last rackings were completed at the end of November. We must now let the wines rest while waiting for the blending next spring.

At this stage, the white wines are remarkable aromatically. Roussannes have aromas of lychee and peach. They have a nice tension and are rich. Clairettes are much more mineral with aromas of honey and white flowers.

The red wines show a nice freshness and a good balance despite a fairly high alcohol content. The Grenaches have lovely aromas of raspberry, coffee, small red fruits with already well-integrated tannins. The Syrahs express all their power and their delicacy thanks to good concentrations and the Mourvèdres are very spicy.

To be followed of course. In at the end, the 2022 vintage looks very promising.





The 2020 vintage in pictures

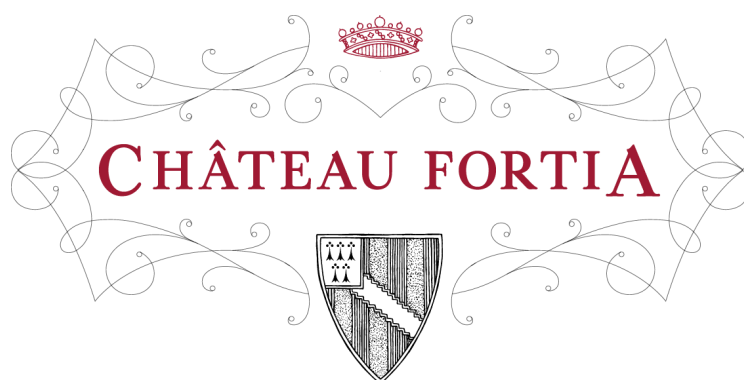












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