

The 2022 vintage in Bordeaux

Pr. Laurence GENY, Elodie GUITTARD, Dr. Valérie LAVIGNE and Pr. Axel MARCHAL

*Institute of Vine and Wine Sciences of
Bordeaux University, Oenological Research Unit*

in conjunction with
N. Alvarez, C. Baz, V. Teninge, L. Riquier and A. Rabot

When it comes to assessing the 2022 vintage in the Bordeaux vineyards, it is important to distinguish the general climatic context from its impact on the quality of the wines. Extreme weather conditions, both in terms of high temperatures and low precipitation, as well as their consequences, unfortunately highlighted the reality of climate change and gave rise to serious concerns regarding the future of our planet. This report simply aims to shed light on the weather conditions and growing season over the course of the year, and the characteristics of the resulting wines, without hiding or minimising these concerns. However, after a 2021 vintage full of contrasts, we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of declaring that, even this early in the ageing process, the wines produced in 2022 already seem quite exceptional and remarkable!

Considering the unprecedented weather conditions last year, we shall skip the usual introduction to this vintage report, reviewing the five prerequisites for a great red wine vintage in Bordeaux. These prerequisites were met in 2022 and will be mentioned later on in this report. After a slightly drier winter than usual, several cool nights in March resulted in bud break occurring as expected for the time of year and later than in 2021. Thanks to the delayed growth cycle, frost in early April caused significantly less damage in the vineyards compared to 2021, although yields were impacted in localised areas. April was the only month of the year that recorded near-average temperatures, slowing down vine growth. However, summery conditions set in from May onwards with daytime temperatures already exceeding 30°C. Vine growth accelerated from its previously average pace, and took on the characteristics of an early vintage. Flowering, beginning in mid-May, was quick and even, with few signs of *coulure* (shot berries) or *millerandage* (abnormal fruit set). Winegrowers' nerves were once again put to the test during the second half of the month, due to violent storms. Hail damage, which was quite severe in some cases, fortunately remained localised. June once again saw high temperatures, with the first heatwave of the year, and was the only month in 2022 to record above-average rainfall. Precipitation, mainly during storms in the second half of the month, varied significantly from one region to the next, without significantly increasing the threat of vine diseases. The rainfall strongly impacted how the vines coped with the summer drought, depending on local variations in intensity. The hot weather continued, and even intensified, with a second heatwave in July. Around the same time, water stress set in, slowing grape development. The early character of the vintage was confirmed, with the berries beginning to change colour from the second half of July, while vine growth had already stopped. This chronology of events was highly propitious to the quality of the red wine grapes.

The progress of *véraison* (colour change) depended mostly on the type of soil and water reserves after rainfall in June: while good overall, it was sometimes slow in the best-drained soils. The first signs of scorching were observed in late July and vineyard practices were adapted accordingly, particularly leaf thinning, which turned out to be particularly important. The month of August was once again hot and dry, while overnight temperatures remained reasonably cool. A few showers fell, without any notable impact on vegetative growth or the size of the berries, which remained particularly small. These conditions were conducive to the ripening of the red wine grapes, particularly the accumulation of phenolic compounds. The first red wine grapes were picked in early September, and weather conditions during the harvest made it possible for winegrowers to pick each grape variety at optimum ripeness, without fear of dilution or rot.

Hot, dry vintages are generally not ideal for white wine grapes. While the high summer temperatures actually resulted in low acidity and high sugar levels, the June rainfall nevertheless helped to preserve a certain freshness and above all, unexpected aromatic potential, especially on clay and clay-limestone soils with high water reserves. The white wine grapes were harvested historically early in perfect condition, thus avoiding the high temperatures in late August and early September, and their overall quality is good.

Sweet white wine producers' nerves were once again put to the test in 2022. While the grapes were already ripe and perfectly healthy from mid-August onwards, drought conditions prevented the development of *Botrytis cinerea*. The first grapes, concentrated by raisining, were picked during the second half of September, but were considered unsuitable for the premium blends of sweet white wines. Long-awaited rainfall finally arrived at the end of the month, triggering the rapid development of *Botrytis cinerea*. Unfortunately, the fine weather, which had lasted so long, failed to return. It took the winegrowers a lot of nerve to wait for sufficient concentration, at the risk of losing their entire crop. The desired conditions were reached rather abruptly in mid-October, thanks to the return of warmer weather and a providential easterly wind. Estates that chose to wait patiently were rewarded and hurried to pick grapes with remarkable richness and purity, giving personality, balance, and depth to the 2022 fine sweet white wines.

A fairly dry winter and a frosty start to spring resulted in bud break occurring at an average date

Autumn was dry (-51 mm in October and November) and cool (-2.5 °C in October and November), followed by a mild, wet winter, particularly in December (+0.5°C), with rainfall 54 mm above average. January and February were dry and sunny (Table I). January temperatures oscillated between almost springlike conditions (similar to New Year's Day) and frequent spells of frost in late January, with overall monthly temperatures remaining close to normal for the time of year (Table I, Figure 1). Warmer temperatures in February meant that 2022 was the 4th year running to record milder than average temperatures during this month (1981-2000). Temperatures fell below 0°C on only 6 days.

In March, a series of low-pressure systems at the start of the month gradually gave way to springlike conditions. Overall temperatures were one to two degrees above average, despite mediocre sunshine for the first two weeks (Table I) and several frosts under clear skies after March 20th. Low rainfall during the month led to cumulative precipitation in winter 2021-2022 being slightly below average (Figure 2).

These conditions delayed the onset of bud break. Bud break began in localised areas at the end of March and intensified during the first week of April, but rather unevenly depending on the sector (Figure 3).

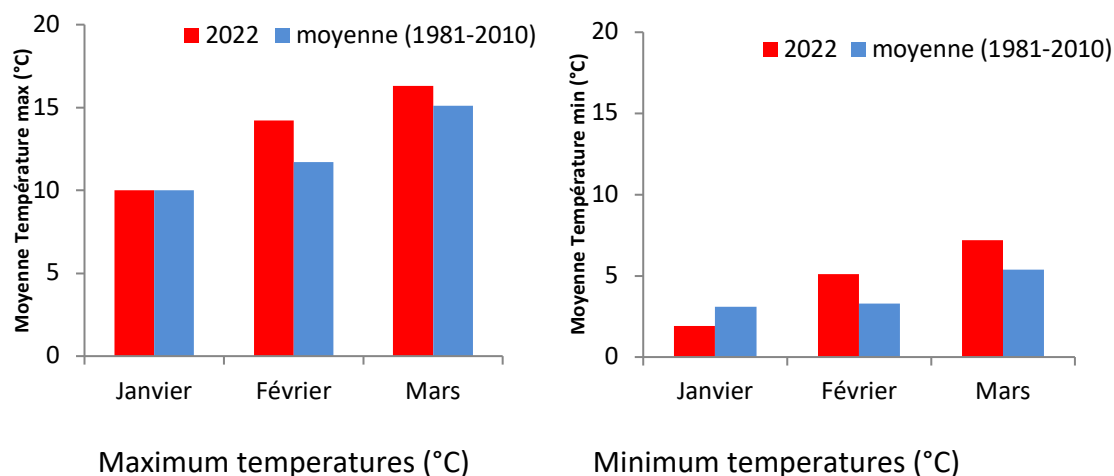


Figure 1
Average maximum and minimum temperatures in the winter of 2022, compared to 1981-2010
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

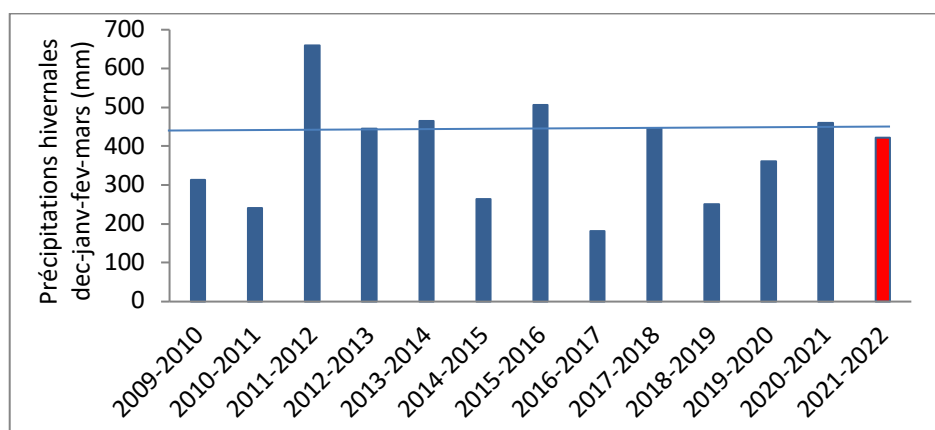


Figure 2
Cumulative winter rainfall (mm) from December 2021 to March 2022, compared to the past 10 years and the 20-year average
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Table I
Weather data for 2022, rainfall and temperature (compared to the 1981-2010 average) and hours of sunshine (compared to the 1991-2010 average)
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

	Sunshine (hours)	Rainfall (mm)	Average minimum temp. (°C)	Average maximum temp. (°C)
	1991-2010 average	1981-2010 average	1981-2010 average	1981-2010 average
2022		2022	2022	2022

January	135	96	40	87	1.9	3.1	10	10.0
February	125	115	49	71	5.1	3.3	14.2	11.7
March	156	170	35	65	7.2	5.4	16.3	15.1
April	176	182	64	78	8.1	7.4	18	17.3
May	284	217	19	80	13.1	11.0	25	21.2
June	247	239	100	62	16.2	14.1	27.5	24.5
July	350	249	3	50	17.4	15.8	31	26.9
August	204	241	26	56	18.8	15.7	31.8	27.1
September	231	203	39	84	14.2	12.9	25.8	24.0
October	124	147	57	93	14.7	10.4	23.8	19.4

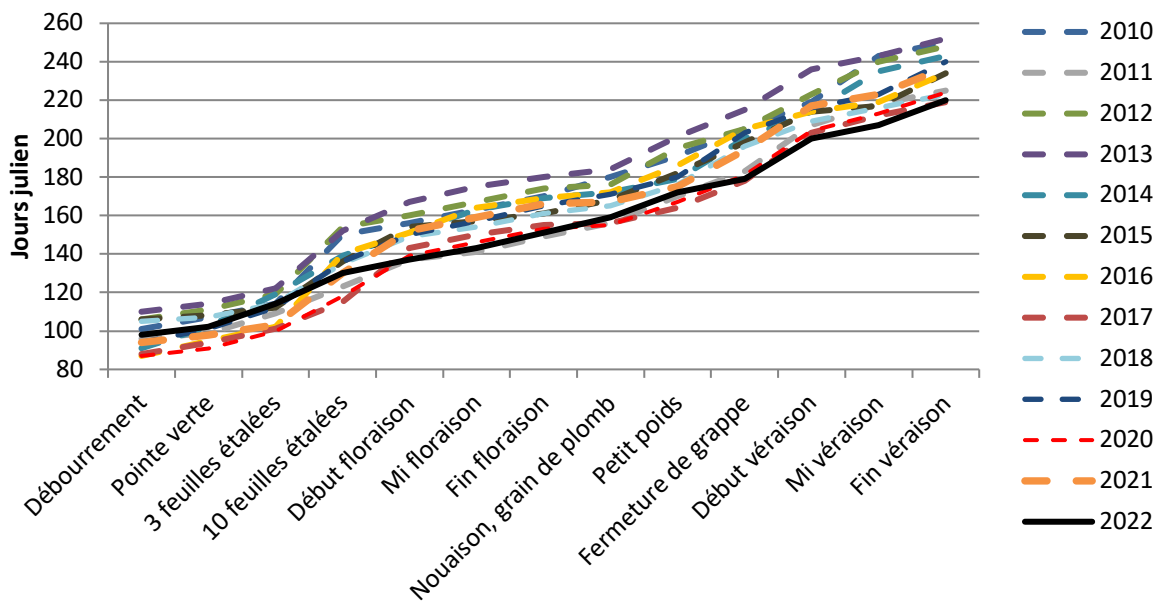


Figure 3

Development of phenological ripeness in 2022 compared to the past 11 years (*Data from SRAL and ISVV*)

April frost struck again

April began with two spells of frost between the 2nd and 5th, then again during the night of the 10th. In 2022, frost struck the vineyards at earlier stages in the vine's development, with local variations, unlike in 2021, when it occurred later and was more severe. The damage was therefore more difficult to evaluate, and also varied greatly depending on the stage of bud break and the implementation of frost-protection systems.

After a spell of fairly wintry weather, warmer conditions set in on the 10th and lasted throughout the month, with temperatures close to normal. Rainfall, concentrated between April 6th and 10th, was sometimes heavy, yet remained below average, accentuating the winter water deficit (Table I).

These conditions slowed down vine growth until the middle of the month, delaying the emergence of secondary buds in plots affected by frost. In plots unaffected by frost, vine growth was also slow at the start of the month before accelerating from mid-April onwards, thanks to above-average temperatures. At this stage, vine growth was comparable to the ten-year average (Figure 3).

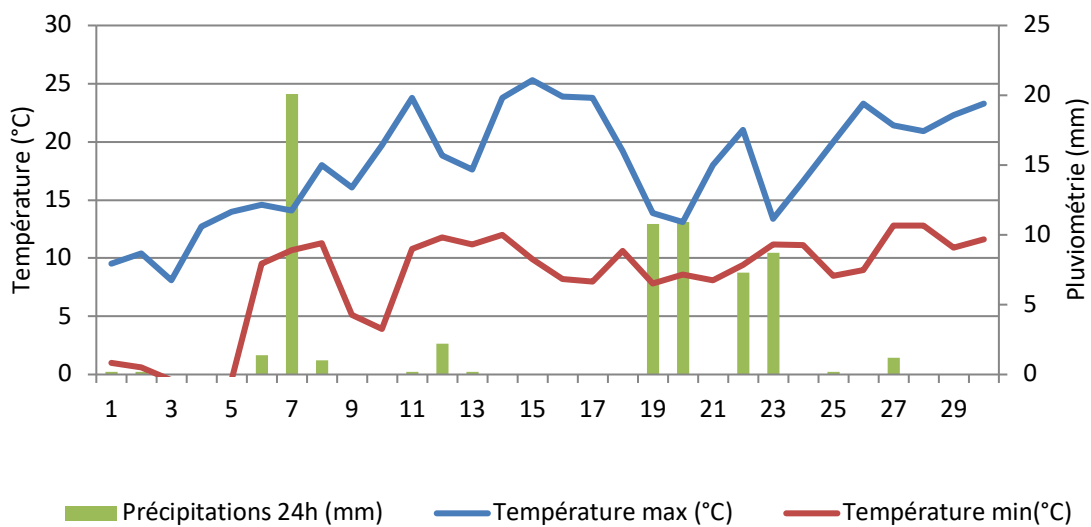


Figure 4
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in April 2022
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

A warm, dry May, conducive to vine growth, and quick, even flowering

Springlike conditions in late April gave way to summery weather in May. The first hot spell of the year was observed between May 8th and 22nd, with daytime highs 4.3°C above average and several days recording temperatures above 30°C (Figure 5). It was the warmest May since 1950. Consequently, thunderstorms broke out between May 15th and 24th, sometimes accompanied by hail. The resulting damage was extremely localised. The water deficit nevertheless remained significant (Table I) and cumulative rainfall was very uneven throughout the vineyards (up to 60 mm in La Brède (source: CA33)). With only 4 days of rainfall in the Bordeaux region in May, there were, on average, 5 to 10 fewer days of rainfall than usual.

These weather conditions were propitious to vine growth, with the phenological stages developing rapidly and weekly growth reaching up to 30 centimetres (source: BSV), resulting in an early vintage.

The first flowers appeared in mid-May, two weeks later than in 2021 (Table II). Flowering was quick and even with mid-flowering observed during the last ten days of May. **Favourable weather conditions with no signs of *coulure* or *millerandage* meant that the first prerequisite for a great vintage, i.e. quick, even flowering, was fulfilled.**

Table II

Mid-flowering and mid-*véraison* dates in 2022 compared to the past 11 years and the 20-year average

Period	Mid-flowering	Mid-<i>véraison</i>
2000-2020	4 June	6 August
2011	17 May	21 July
2012	11 June	12 August
2013	18 June	22 August
2014	7 June	13 August
2015	5 June	6 August
2016	11 June	7 August
2017	30 May	30 July
2018	3 June	4 August
2019	4 June	9 August
2020	26 May	1 August
2021	10 June	11 August
2022	23 May	28 July

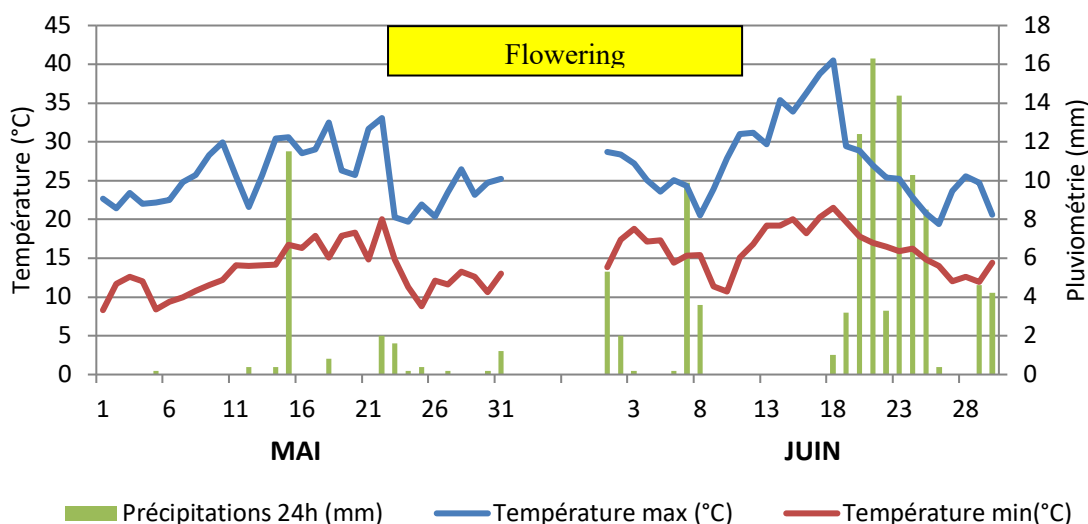


Figure 5
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in May and June 2022
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

A hot, stormy start to summer after fruit set maintained early vine growth and partially reconstituted water reserves in the soil. A second heatwave without rainfall was conducive to early *véraison*.

The hot weather in May intensified in June. June 2022, the fourth hottest since 1947, was particularly remarkable for the number of days with temperatures above 30°C, as well as the earliness and intensity of the heatwave.

After a hot spell in the middle of June (16th to 18th), several storms broke out between the 17th and 26th, accompanied by heavy rainfall for the first time in five months (Figure 5). These intense rainy spells were accompanied by localised hail, in Pessac Léognan on the 18th and in the Médoc on the 20th, causing variable damage.

At this stage, with vegetative growth in full swing, the berries benefited from both the heat and rainfall. Their early phenological development during flowering was thus preserved and bunch closure was observed in the earliest plots before the end of the month (Figure 3).

July was also hot and dry with abundant sunshine (Table I, Figure 6). After the early heatwave in June, a second hot spell set in around the middle of the month. Temperatures were very high, sometimes above 35°C, and the lack of rainfall significantly slowed down berry growth (Figure 3). The first signs of notable water stress were observed from mid-July onwards in plots planted on shallow soils, while vines grown on less well-drained soils benefited from the welcome rainfall in June.

The berries stopped growing at this stage, which partially explains their small size at harvest. *Véraison* began on July 20th, getting off to a slow start before accelerating towards the end of the month (Table II). It was largely dependent on June rainfall and varied significantly from one sector to the next. Overall, *véraison* was quick and even, although

interrupted in plots planted on particularly well-drained or shallow soils, as well as on the youngest vines.

The first signs of scorching appeared around that time. Foliage management, particularly reducing leaf thinning, was key to success in this vintage, by preventing the berries from shrivelling.

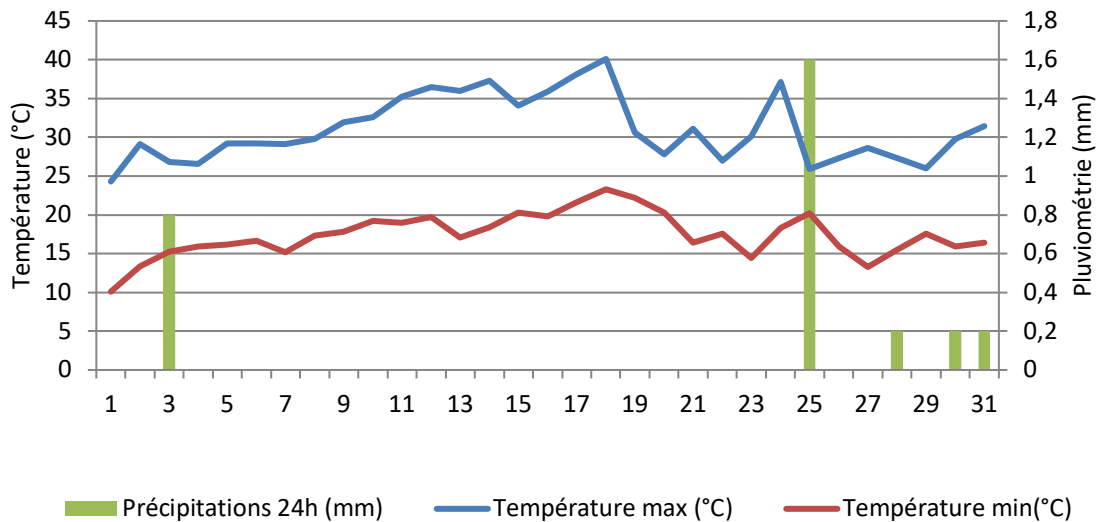


Figure 6
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in July 2022
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Therefore, a stop to vegetative growth before véraison, the third prerequisite for a perfect red wine vintage, occurred earlier than usual, favouring even véraison in the sectors which benefited from June rainfall. However, in certain particularly well-drained and shallow soils, water stress set in too early and severely in localised areas, leading to scorching and interrupted véraison.

A hot, dry end to summer. Ideal weather conditions allowed winegrowers to wait patiently for the optimum time to pick.

In the majority of plots in our sector, *véraison* was complete by August 15th. Temperatures at this stage were close to the seasonal average (Figure 7). A few rainy spells, which had no major impact on the grapes, triggered ripening in mid-August, without significantly increasing berry size.

The hot, dry conditions continued into late August and throughout September (Figure 7). Winegrowers could therefore wait patiently for the ideal time to pick without worrying about the threat of vine diseases.

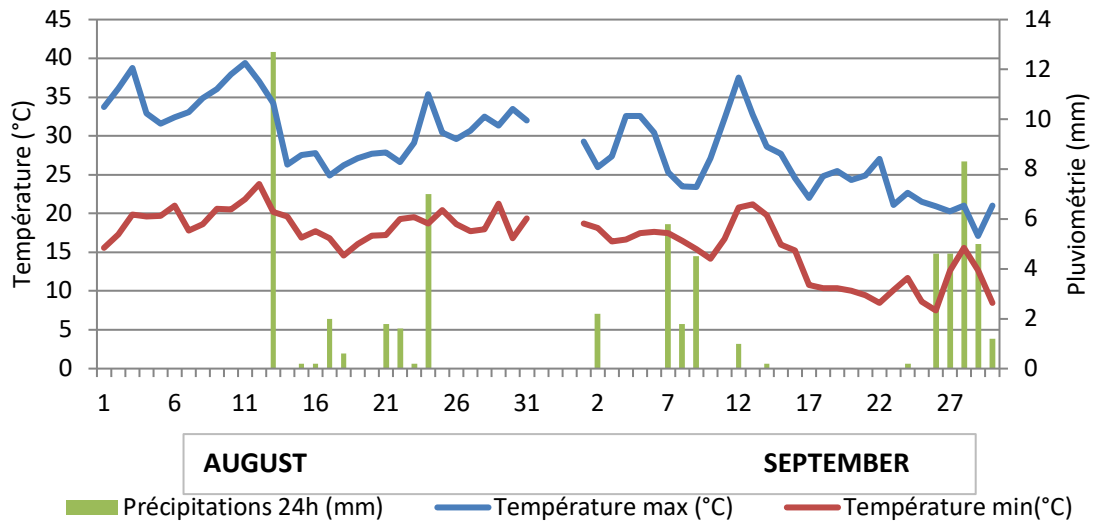


Figure 7
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in August and September 2022
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Due to the most extreme temperatures and drought conditions recorded in Bordeaux since the late 19th century, the Sauvignon Blanc grape-picking started historically early, on August 9th in the Sauternes region, becoming widespread throughout the white wine vineyards in the following week.

Excessively high temperatures during the growth cycle, accompanied by very early water stress, often leads to fears of a lack of aromas and acidity in dry white wines. However, rather surprisingly given the weather conditions during the 2022 vintage, the Sauvignon Blanc grapes were indeed low in acidity, close to levels in 2015 and 2016, yet maintained their promising aromatic potential, while their sugar content was comparable to 2020. In terroirs with good water reserves (clay and clay-limestone), the grape skins remained crunchy until the harvest, with no signs of over-ripening, with excellent concentration on tasting. Storms in late June, bringing up to 130 mm rainfall in localised areas, significantly helped to maintain balance in the white wine grapes, conducive to the production of fine dry white wines.

Picking for Sémillon grapes, which were also very early-ripening, began on August 13th. The grapes were sweet, yet not excessively so, with good concentration. Less sensitive to

excessive temperatures than Sauvignon Blanc, their aromas were intense, evoking white fruit and apricot notes, and contributing to the delicious, smooth character of the blended wines.

Table III

Harvest dates for dry white wine grapes in the Bordeaux region in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021

	Sauvignon Blanc	Sémillon
2013	10 - 22 September	21 - 25 September
2014	6 - 12 September	12 - 20 September
2015	28 August - 6 September	5 - 11 September
2016	2 - 15 September	8 - 18 September
2017	16 August - 7 September	1 - 15 September
2018	23 August - 10 September	5 - 15 September
2019	26 August - 19 September	6 - 23 September
2020	14 August - 5 September	27 August - 10 September
2021	28 August - 18 September	5 - 24 September
2022	9 August - 29 September	13 August - 2 September

Table IV

Composition of Sauvignon Blanc grapes from a plot with limestone soil in the Graves region in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021

	Potential alcohol (%)	Total acidity (g/L)	pH
2013	13	6.4	2.97
2014	12.3	6.9	3.04
2015	13.7	4	3.33
2016	13.4	3.6	3.32
2017	13.2	4.6	3.2
2018	13.7	4.6	3.22
2019	13	4.3	3.27
2020	13.9	4.3	3.28
2021	12.9	5	3.23

2022	13.8	3.5	3.30
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At the beginning of the ripening stage, the average weight of the red wine grapes was low, remaining more or less the same until the harvest (Table V, Figure 8A).

Initial analyses of the grape juice showed that the sugar content was higher compared to the same stage in 2021. In fact, as of late August, all the plots in our sector showed a Potential Alcohol by Volume above 13% (Table V).

Table V

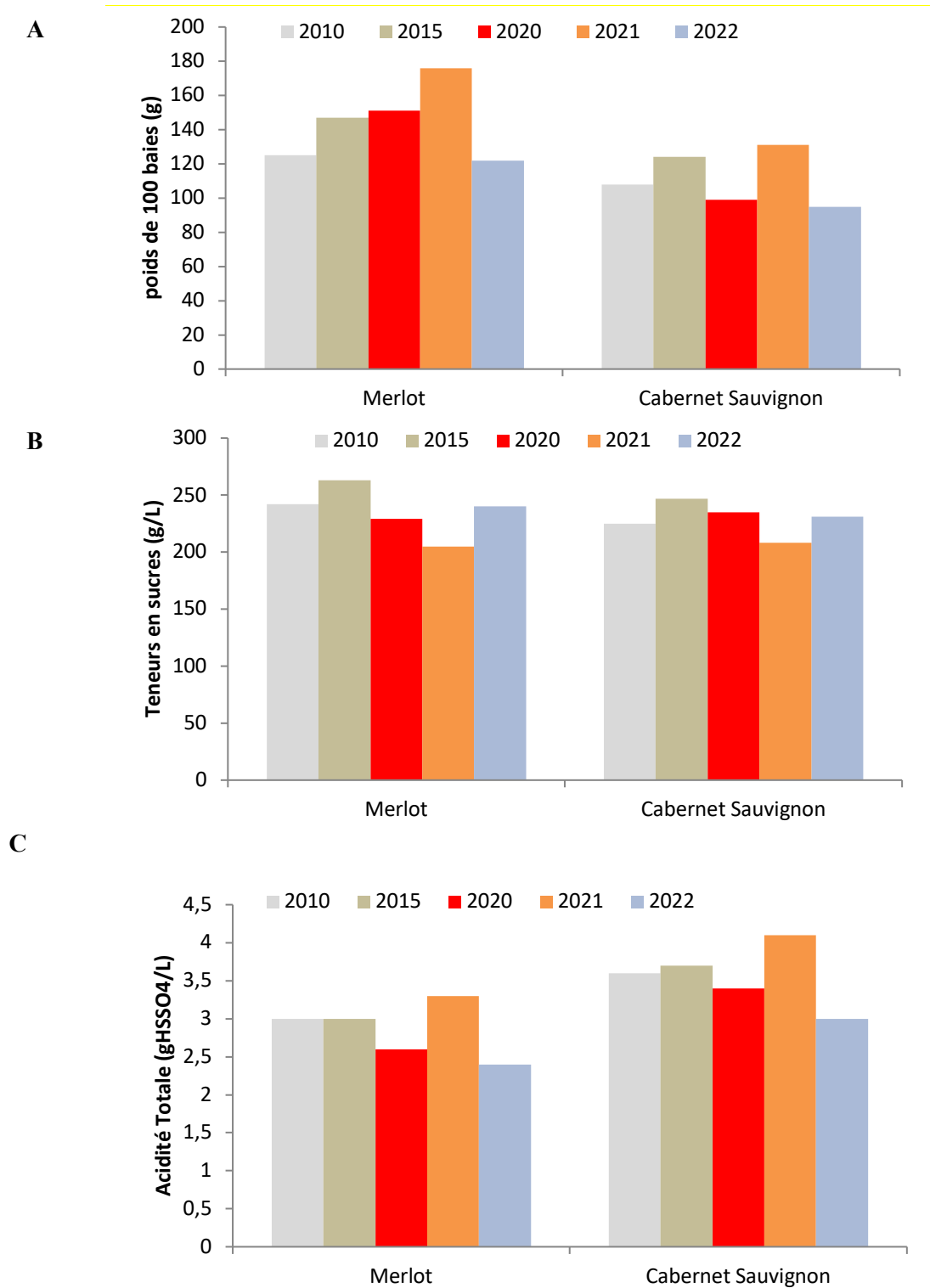
Variations in sugar content and acidity of red wine grapes during ripening in reference plots

	Weight per 100 berries (g)	Sugar (g/L)	TA (g/L H ₂ SO ₄)	Total anthocyanins (mg/L)
2022				
22/8 Merlot	123	208	2.9	1751
Cabernet Sauvignon	92	184	4.2	1745
05/9 Merlot	122	240	2.4	1980
12/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	95	232	3.0	2421
2021				
31/8 Merlot	175	183	5.9	1359
Cabernet Sauvignon	130	175	8.4	1783
27/9 Merlot	176	205	3.3	1780
Cabernet Sauvignon	138	205	4.0	2138
2020				
31/8 Merlot	154	216	2.6	1803
Cabernet Sauvignon	106	201	3.4	2038
07/9 Merlot	151	229	2.6	1835
14/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	99	235	3.4	2416
2019				
26/8 Merlot	119	199	4.7	1160
Cabernet Sauvignon	99	177	7	
16/9 Merlot	127	244	2.7	1780
30/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	105	233	3.3	1901
2018				
27/8 Merlot	142	214	3.3	1656
Cabernet Sauvignon	116	193	4.9	1442
10/9 Merlot	143	233	2.5	1749
24/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	126	230	2.8	1826

Two weeks later, in early September, the Merlots reached particularly high sugar levels, among the highest recorded in the last ten years (240 g/L) (Table V).

Already fairly low at the start of sampling, the level of acidity decreased regularly during ripening, reaching some of the lowest levels recorded over the past ten vintages (Figures 8C and 8D).

At harvest, the average pH of the Merlots was 3.5, compared to 3.4 for the Cabernet Sauvignons. These values were relatively low and unexpected, given the particularly low acidity levels recorded in the grapes at harvest.



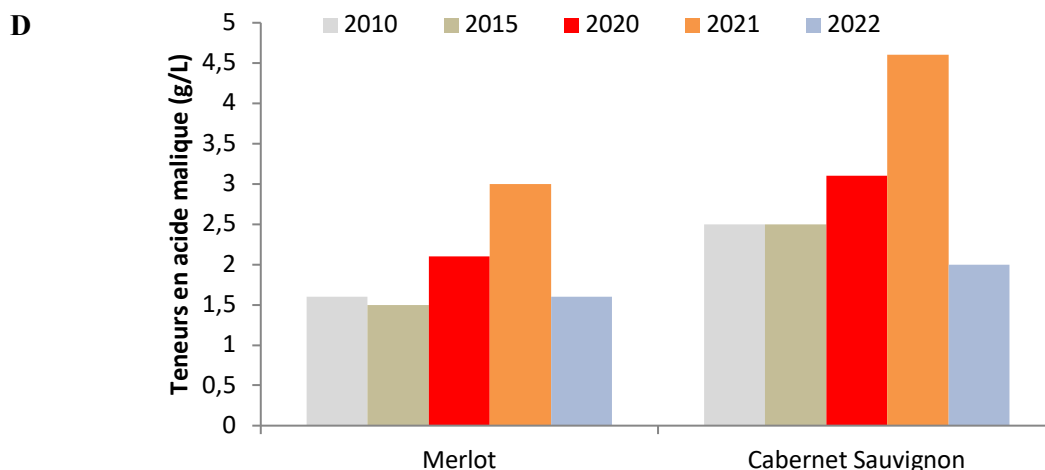


Figure 8

Analytical characteristics of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes at harvest time in reference plots in the 2022 vintage, compared with four vintages from the previous decade
 A: Weight in grams per 100 berries – B: Sugar content (g/L) – C: Total acidity (g/L H₂SO₄)
 – D: Malic acid content (g/L)

In early September, still under ideal conditions (with a total absence of *Botrytis cinerea*), the level of phenolic ripeness was comparable to or already higher than the highest levels recorded in recent vintages (Table V).

From the final days of August onwards, the Merlot grapes were incredibly fruity. No herbaceous notes were observed during tasting, as later confirmed by particularly low methoxypyrazine (IBMP) levels (< 2 ng/L in late August) in the grape juice.

The first Merlot grapes were thus harvested as early as the first week of September, under extremely favourable conditions. The Merlot harvest was relatively rapid everywhere in Gironde. Picking on the plots in our sector finished before mid-September.

Meanwhile, the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes continued ripening throughout September with no threat of vine diseases thanks to prolonged fine weather.

As for the Merlots, the sugar content at harvest was one of the highest recorded in recent years (Figure 8B). The total acidity of the grapes was the lowest observed over the past 12 years, which is unprecedented for a late-ripening grape variety (Figure 8C).

The total anthocyanin content regularly increased during ripening, reaching remarkably high levels at harvest. On the plots in our sector, they were comparable to the highest levels ever recorded (Table V, Figure 9).

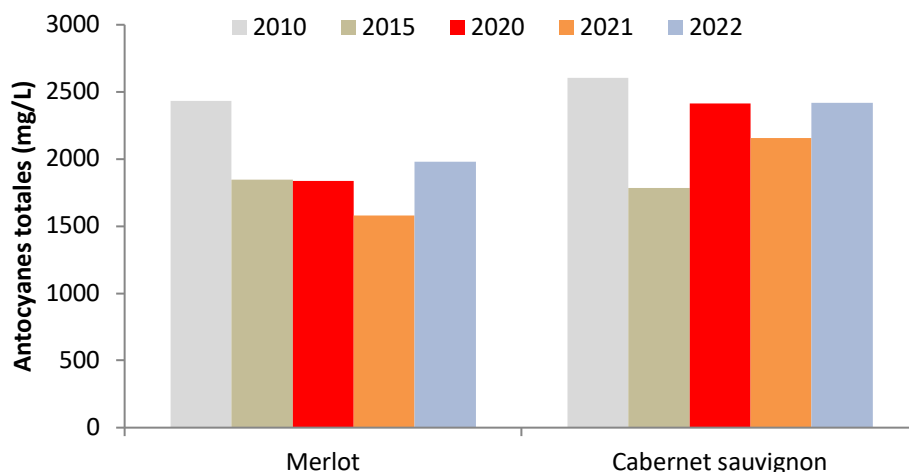


Figure 9

Total anthocyanin content (mg/L) of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in reference plots in 2022, compared with four vintages from the previous decade

Harvesting of the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes began in mid-September and lasted until early October. The excellent condition of the grapes was a source of relief for winegrowers, who could wait patiently for the right time to pick based on organoleptic criteria. As for the Merlots, the IBMP levels were already negligible (around 2 ng/L) as of September 5th and the complexity of the fruity aromas was clearly noticeable from mid-September, when picking began.

The weather conditions in summer 2022 meant that winegrowers could determine the harvest dates according to organoleptic analyses without needing to worry about the condition of the grapes. The Merlot grapes, harvested in perfect condition, presented remarkable analyses at harvest time. Fine weather during September also allowed the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes to finish ripening under optimal conditions.

Undoubtedly, the fourth and fifth prerequisites for a very great vintage were fully met in 2022.

After a late start, *Botrytis cinerea* developed very quickly

Once again, sweet white wine producers' nerves were sorely tested in 2022. In late August, when the extraordinarily early dry white wine harvest drew to a close in the Sauternes region, the grapes dedicated to the production of sweet white wines were perfectly ripe and healthy, with excellent yields. However, as the fine weather continued into September, the winegrowers became worried, since the dry, sunny days prevented the development of *Botrytis cinerea*. In this context, an initial pass was carried out in the vineyards during the second half of September to collect the raisined grapes that would not be affected by noble rot. A spell of wet weather set in on September 24th. While this facilitated the quick, even development of *Botrytis cinerea*, it failed to provide the concentration needed to produce fine sweet white wines. The fear of a total loss of the harvest was on all winegrowers' minds and, as in previous vintages, they used various coping strategies. Some estates decided to collect

the grapes in early October when they were not yet perfectly botrytised, to ensure sufficient production levels, while others decided to take a gamble and wait for favourable weather conditions.

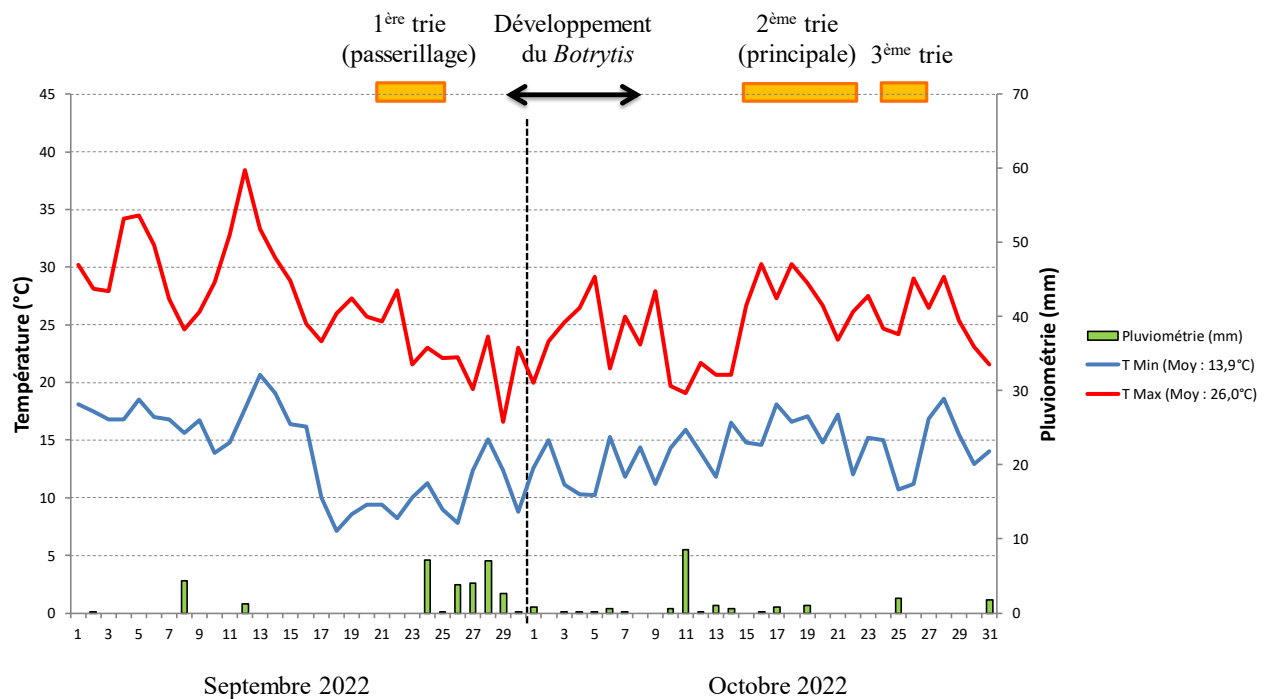


Figure 10

Daytime temperatures and precipitation in September and October 2022 in Sauternes. *Chronology of the development of noble rot and the progression of passes (example)*

By a stroke of luck, from mid-October onwards, the return to warmer temperatures and, above all, an intense easterly wind concentrated the grapes quickly and evenly. The harvesting of superb, botrytised grapes became widespread in mid-October, constituting the lion’s share of the 2022 sweet white wine vintage, both in terms of quality and quantity. The grapes were perfectly ripe, low in acidity, and quickly reached extraordinarily high sugar levels, making picking more urgent. A final pass took place in late October in the earliest plots, yielding lower quantities.

As another challenging growing season drew to a close and nearly three months after the first dry white wine grapes were picked, the harvest was complete, with production volumes varying depending on the strategy chosen, yet higher overall compared to previous vintages (with an average yield of 15 hL/ha for the Sauternes appellation). The fermentation of the grape must, sometimes particularly high in sugar yet pure and highly promising, could finally begin.

Good dry white wines, remarkably rich sweet white wines and, on both banks, extraordinary red wines, which are concentrated, yet surprisingly well-balanced

One man's loss is another man's gain and the weather conditions were, in theory, significantly less favourable in 2022 than in 2021. The overall lower acidity of the grapes, due to the hot summer temperatures, led to a particularly early harvest. Nevertheless, in this context, the nature of the terroirs played a key role and the finest plots, especially those planted on clay and clay-limestone soils, produced surprisingly good dry white wines. The Sauvignon Blancs are fruity, soft, and clear-cut, with citrus and tropical fruit aromas that are sure to win over those who usually do not like their strong varietal character. The Sémillons, sometimes flabby and bitter on second-rate terroirs, developed intense peach and apricot notes. The best ones are flavoursome and well-balanced, with a long aftertaste.

Given the conditions described above and the diverse strategies adopted, the 2022 sweet white wines were very good overall, yet showed some variation both in style and volumes produced. The first batches, made from raisined grapes or those picked in early October, added complexity and freshness to the blend when added in small proportions, but were not suitable for producing great sweet white wines. In contrast, the estates that chose to wait were able to harvest grape musts of unprecedented depth and richness, producing outstanding wines. They are low in acidity, but well-balanced with intense flavours and should age extremely well, like previous great vintages.

The result of a growing season marked by unusual weather conditions and following a 2021 vintage full of contrasts, 2022 Bordeaux red wines are highly anticipated among trend-setters, buyers and consumers, even before their presentation *en primeur*. There is talk in Bordeaux of an exceptional vintage, which everyone loves to compare to such and such glory of the past. Let's leave this difficult task to the experienced tasters who will comment in detail on the wines of 2022. Meanwhile, we will keep our comments factual and save our superlatives for last year's weather. Record-breaking heat, drought and sunshine over several months meant that, by the time the harvest arrived, it was difficult to evaluate the real quality potential of the vintage. One thing for certain, however, is the considerable difference in yields, which was not due, as is often the case, to damage from frost or mildew, but rather to the drought, which varied in intensity, depending on the type of soil, the age of the vines, the intensity of June rainfall, and viticultural choices. Ranging from low to very low on gravelly soils, the volumes produced on some clay-limestone soils in the Libourne region were perfectly satisfactory. Another fact is that the berries were generally very small, even more so than in 2010, particularly for Cabernet Sauvignon, as a direct consequence of the dry conditions during their formation and development. This characteristic had to be taken into account by winemakers, since excessive extraction was likely to produce unbalanced wines. In addition, when the grapes were put into vat, the total acidity level was sometimes worryingly low. However, as is often the case, it naturally increased during alcoholic fermentation to reach more standard values. Winemakers' experience of previous hot vintages was, therefore, beneficial, discouraging them from acidifying the must, which would have irrevocably upset the balance of flavours in the red wines.

At the start of ageing and in general, the 2022 fine red Bordeaux wines appear to be particularly successful overall and even exceptional in many cases. Despite the extreme weather conditions, the 2022 vintage actually benefited from rather favourable conditions at key stages in the growth cycle and during ripening. Of course, as is always the case, it is best not to generalise, but to consider each appellation, and even each estate, individually. Some fairly acute, yet fortunately marginal, cases of water stress were observed on extremely well-drained soils and in young vines, resulting in delayed ripening, defoliation, and shrivelled berries.

The Merlots from the finest terroirs, particularly clay-limestone soils, are outstanding. They are irresistibly charming and classy: fruity yet not overripe and smooth yet well-balanced. Echoing the comments made about the 2020 vintage, its surprising success in a year marked by historically hot, dry weather challenged certain theories or statements suggesting that this grape variety was outdated in Bordeaux. On the finest soils, and provided that viticultural practices are adapted accordingly, Merlot is completely capable of producing remarkable wines. As has been the case for several vintages now, Cabernet Franc is also a great success. Its aromatic intensity adds an extra touch to the final blend, while its characteristic texture, demanding perfect ripeness, contributes to the wines' freshness and balance. The success of Petit Verdot in a dry vintage such as 2022 is particularly down to the nature of the soil. In the absence of excessive water stress, it gives the wines a spicy touch and characteristic smoothness. Finally, Cabernet Sauvignon, which Bordeaux winegrowers have fought so hard in the past to pick at optimum ripeness, continues to benefit from the hotter, drier conditions of vintages over the past decade. Its late-ripening character and the fact that it is often planted in well-drained soils has exposed it to excessive water stress in certain cases. Nevertheless, the finest terroirs produced impressive wines, with a powerful tannic structure, no signs of austerity, and an easygoing character, while remaining highly distinguished.

Despite the extreme weather, the 2022 vintage appears to have produced surprisingly well-balanced, harmonious wines, which are tannic yet fleshy, while preserving the freshness and brilliance typical of fine Bordeaux wines. As always, they will reveal their full potential with age, but at this stage they seem particularly promising and, quite simply, outstanding.