The 2024 vintage in Bordeaux

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In the northern hemisphere, the most famous vineyards are generally located at the northern limit of where the cultivated grape varieties can be successfully ripened. Here, the latter ripen at the end of a long growing season and can, at the cost of considerable winegrowing efforts, produce complex and characterful wines. Furthermore, these regions are subject to a strong vintage effect, with the year's weather conditions profoundly influencing the style of the resulting wines. Bordeaux perfectly illustrates this and the 2024 vintage once again shows that the characteristics of wines are intrinsically linked to the weather during the growing season. It is therefore very tempting to indiscriminately categorise the general success of a vintage in a given region based on weather indicators and even personal feelings.

It is undeniable that Bordeaux winegrowers had to endure very challenging weather conditions in 2024, with abundant rainfall, particularly during key moments of the vine cycle. In this context, it would be naive, or even dishonest to rank this vintage alongside the greatest successes of recent years, such as 2022 or 2020. However, the relentless work of the winegrowers in a delicate economic context, the sometimes drastic selection undertaken by estates, or simply the taste of certain wines makes it worth reflecting, with attention and nuance, on this year and its specificities. The aim of this report is precisely to examine the weather conditions of the 2024 vintage objectively and to provide some quantitative analysis on the composition of the grapes in order to shed light on the taste and style of the resulting wines while refraining from drawing any hasty conclusions.

After a mild and wet winter, bud break was observed in early April on average, under sunny conditions which accelerated the start of the growth cycle. After a brutal drop in temperatures, a few frosty spells were noted in late April, with significant localised damage observed in the most sensitive areas. Due to persistent rainfall, especially in the form of showers, the first symptoms of mildew were observed from the third week of April onwards. This exceptional earliness of the disease foreshadowed the threat which persisted in the vineyards for several months. At the end of a wet month of May with little sunshine, the Bordeaux vineyards were in a bad shape, due to the spread of mildew, as well as root asphyxia which appeared in waterlogged soils. Flowering was late and spaced out, and unfolded in wet conditions leading to *coulure* (shot berries) and *millerandage* (abnormal fruit set), particularly for the Merlot. While the weather, plus the aspect of the foliage, improved significantly at the

start of summer, mildew continued to develop due to sometimes intense storms, with consequential attacks on bunches in certain places. At the end of July, when the vines were still growing, warm and dry conditions finally set in and helped the phased outbreak of *véraison* (colour change). Its sluggish completion, sometimes during the third week of August, marked the end of the mildew threat and was a tremendous relief for winegrowers in the Gironde. At the end of the month, after another spell of fine weather locally interspersed with storms, there was a renewed sense of hope in the vineyards. September was cooler and rainier than average, and not conducive to the continuous ripening of the grapes. The Merlot grapes were picked around 20 September under mixed conditions. The careful observation of the plots, the quick response of the teams and the sorting capacity were key to the success of this vintage, addressing the emergence of grey rot which threatened to compromise the harvest. Most Cabernet grapes were harvested just after Merlot grapes, under more clement conditions until mid-October.

The first white grapes intended to make dry wines ripened in Sauternes during the last ten days of August, but the harvest got into full swing early September. The absence of extreme heat combined with minimal water stress during the summer helped preserve the acidity and aromatic potential of the grapes.

September and October 2024 were marked by alternating wet and dry periods, the essential prerequisite for producing great botrytised sweet white wines. Rainfall in late August and early September was propitious to the spread of *Botrytis cinerea* in ripe grapes with a good level of acidity. While the unsettled weather conditions led winegrowers to fear a deterioration in the quality of the grapes and the risk of dilution, in the end the berries became concentrated due to a window of dry, sunny and windy weather. Generally harvested in three passes, they had complementary profiles and were pure, highly aromatic and candied while remaining acidic.

A mild and exceptionally rainy winter marked by little sunshine, which delayed bud break and limited access to vine plots

The start of the 2024 vintage was marked by exceptionally high and frequent rainfall. The weather station in Bordeaux did in fact record 478 mm of cumulative rainfall from December to March (compared to an average of 323 mm), plus 436 mm of rainfall from October to November 2023 (Table I, Figure 1).
This rainfall, which was almost relentless from October onwards, significantly hindered vineyard operations in winter.

The winter of 2024 was also mild. With the exception of a spell of cool weather between 6 and 14 January combined with a few rare nights of frost in February, temperatures recorded were above average. After 2022 and 2023, the hottest years on record, the start of 2024 seemed to confirm this trend (Table I).

Nevertheless, bud break was not particularly early. The average date was 6 April in our reference vineyards, two days later than in 2023, in almost summerlike conditions, coinciding exactly with the ten-year average (Figure 4). Yet, once again this year, we observed significant variations in bud break dates. The increasingly widespread practice of late pruning, which modulated the bud break date and limited the effects of spring frost, largely explains this discrepancy.

Table I

Weather indicators for 2024, compared to the 1991-2020 average

Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

	Sunshine (hours)		Rainfall (mm)		Average minimum temp. (°C)		Average maximum temp. (°C)	
	2024	1991-2020 average	***2024***	1991-2020 average	***2024***	1991-2020 average	***2023***	1991-2020 average
January	71	90	43	*87*	4.7	*3.7*	11.1	*10.5*
February	68	117	143	*67*	7.0	*3.6*	13.8	*12.0*
March	139	170	164	*63*	7.4	*5.8*	16.3	*15.5*
April	204	186	53	*76*	8.5	*8.0*	19.4	*18.0*
May	172	221	126	*71*	11.3	*11.4*	20.0	*21.7*
June	201	238	93	*70*	14.8	*14.6*	24.9	*25.0*
July	244	256	15	*48*	16.9	*16.2*	27.8	*27.1*
August	260	249	46	*57*	16.6	*16.3*	28.4	*27.6*
September	166	209	120	*81*	13.4	*13.3*	22.0	*24.2*
October	118	150	87	*83*	12.6	*10.7*	20.4	*19.6*

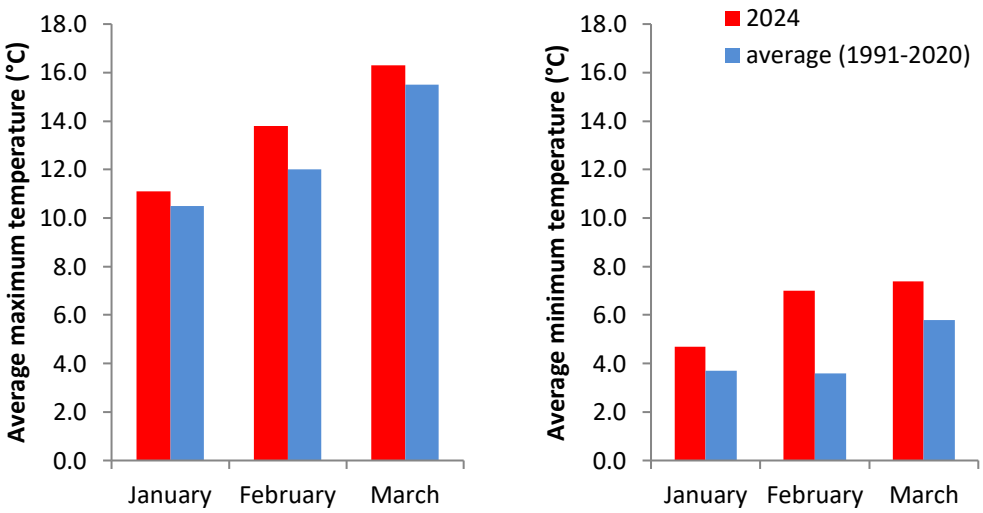

Figure 1

Average maximum and minimum temperatures in the winter of 2024, compared to 1991-2020

Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

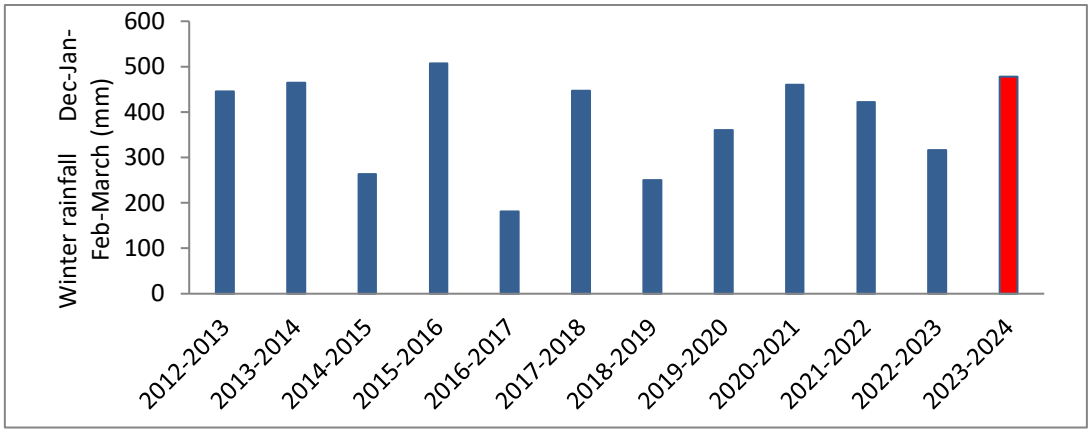

Figure 2
Cumulative winter rainfall (mm) from December 2023 to March 2024, compared to the past 13 years
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Rapid early phenological development followed by a significant slowdown due to cool and rainy weather from mid-April onwards

April started off wet with average temperatures until the morning of 3 April. Southerly winds then set in, leading to an unusual increase in temperatures until 14 April (Figure 4). For instance, 30.5°C was recorded in Bordeaux on 13 April. Minimum temperatures were higher than ever. In these conditions, the vine reached the stage of "3 leaves separated" in less than a week (Figure 4).
A radical change in the weather conditions occurred during the second half of April. From 15 April onwards, cool conditions set in. Morning frost was observed on 19, 22 and 23 April (Figure 3). The damage was moderate overall, except for the east of the department where more significant or even total destruction was recorded in frost-prone areas.

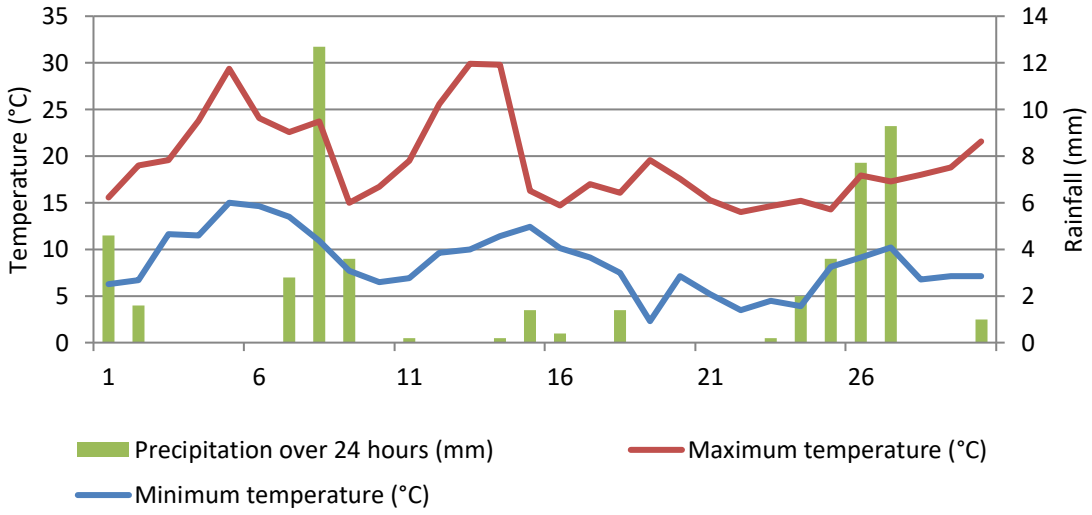

Figure 3
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in April 2024
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

These conditions significantly slowed vine growth, with only one leaf developing per week (Figure 4).

Despite sustained rainfall, with frequent spring showers of varying intensity (up to 3 April, then from 7 to 9, 15 to 18, and from 24 April onwards), cumulative rainfall in April was below average (Table I, Figure 3), allowing the soils to momentarily dry up again.

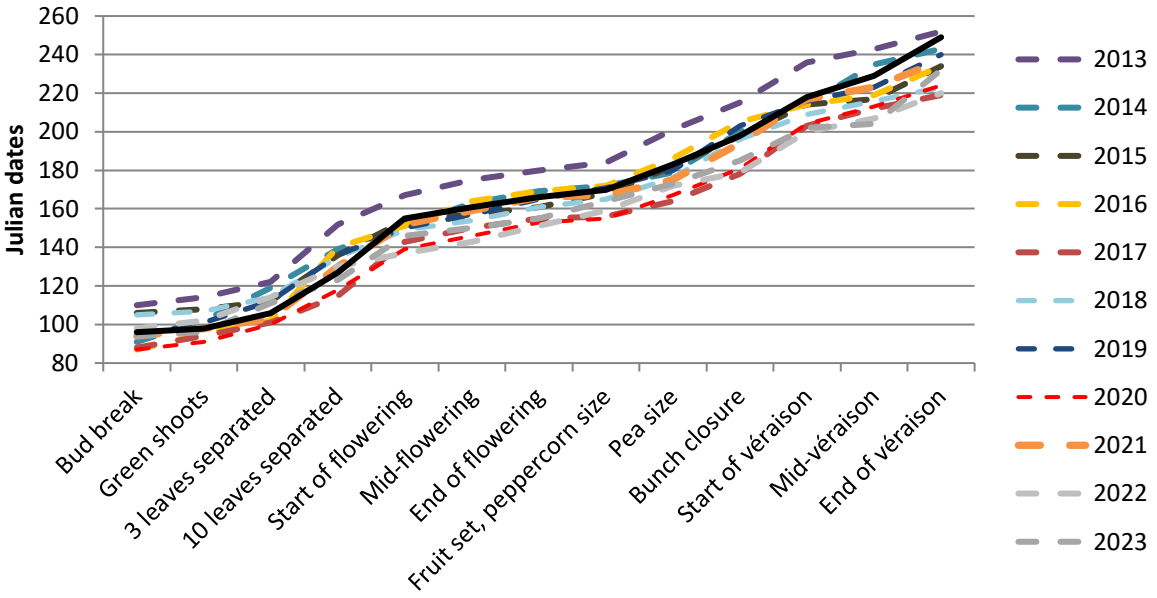

Figure 4
Development of phenological ripeness in 2024, compared to the past 10 years
(Data from SRAL and ISVV)

A rainy month of May, often cool and lacking in sunshine, which kept vine growth slow and irregular

After the rain abated in April, precipitation during May 2024, like in February and March, was extremely abundant, 80% above average in general (Table I).

Average maximum temperatures were below the seasonal norm while minimal temperatures were around average. There was also a 20% to 30% shortfall in sunshine over the month in the Gironde.

At the end of spring, cumulative rainfall was far higher than normal with 1,095 mm measured from October to May, compared to 750 mm on average. From March to May 2024, cumulative rainfall was 133 mm (i.e. 38%) higher than normal. Rainfall in April was below normal levels, but March and May were well in excess (Table I). As such, the spring of 2024 ranks third for volume of rainfall since 1959, with 343 mm recorded, behind 1979 (403 mm) and 2008 (386 mm).

During the month of May, in Bordeaux, nine days saw less than three hours of sunshine and four observed no visible sun. The lack of sunlight can be attributed to the frequent rainy and very overcast days.

The average maximum temperature for the month was 1.7°C below normal, despite a drier, sunnier period from 8 to 13 May (Table I, Figure 5).
May 2024 was in fact the first month recording temperatures below normal since January 2022. It put an end to 26 consecutive months of higher-than-average temperatures compared to the reference values.

Vine growth remained moderate in May. The leaves were pale and leaf reddening, a sign of root asphyxia, was sometimes observed. At the end of the third week of the month, the phenological stage of "10 leaves separated" was only just reached (Figure 4). Excess water, combined with variable spring temperatures and insufficient sunshine, considerably affected the plant's mineral assimilation and therefore the vine growth. These weather conditions also led to a very high threat of parasites. Mildew spread extremely fast, with a series of contaminating events from the beginning of the month. More than ever, maintaining healthy plants was of utmost priority in the vineyards.

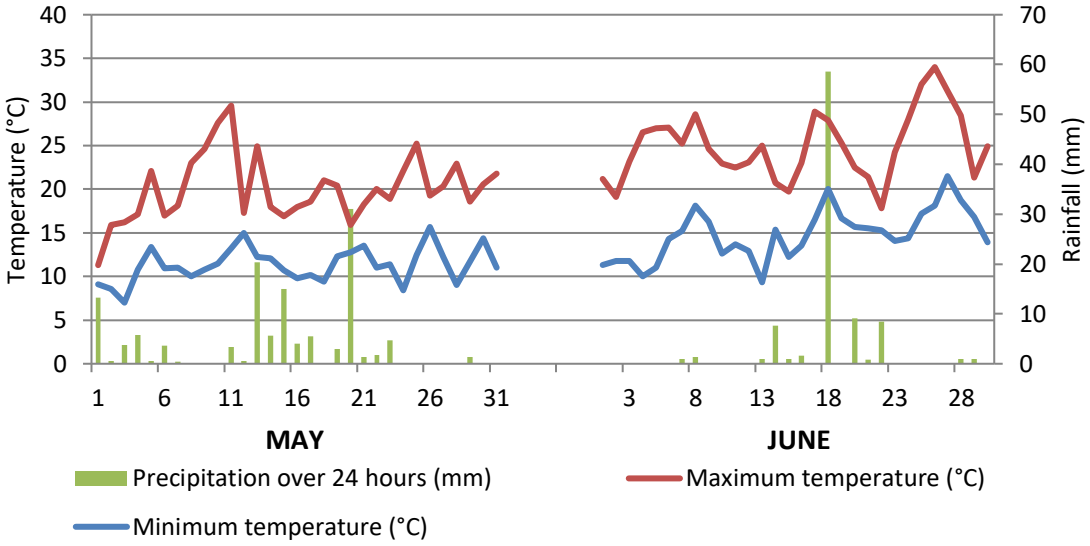

Figure 5
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in May and June 2024
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

A rainy June, too, resulting in difficult flowering in a context of high mildew threat

Until 24 June, the average regional temperature remained slightly below seasonal norms. After a relatively calm first week with no heavy precipitation, there was a series of adverse weather conditions over the following two weeks (Figure 5), sometimes accompanied by abundant rainfall (notably on 18 June).

The first flowers were seen in the earliest plots in the last few days of May. However, the average mid-flowering was observed on 10 June (Table II, Figure 4), as in 2016 and 2021, and one week later than in 2023.

The rainy conditions from 10 to 20 June disrupted the fall of flower caps. Furthermore, the soil was still not dried out, and the nutritional state of the vines was sometimes

insufficient. These elements accentuated competition between the growth of the leaf canopy and pollination, thus conducive to *coulure*.

Together, they explain the localised high rate of *coulure* and/or *millerandage* in 2024, especially in the early-ripening plots.

The last week of June was much drier and hotter. Overall, the month of June was quite rainy with a cumulative total of 93 mm (Table I). Spells of stormy weather explain the heterogeneity of rainfall from one region to another (northern Médoc on the night of 17-18 June, Fronsac and Pomerol the next day). Average temperatures stayed within the normal range, but there was a lack of sunshine. Growth remained vigorous in these conditions and the "pea size" stage was reached by the end of the month.

The real concern at the start of the summer was the major threat of mildew throughout the vineyards. There was widespread leaf damage and the first attacks on bunches were visible.

Table II

Mid-flowering and mid-*véraison* dates in 2024 compared to the past 10 years and the 20-year average

Period	**Mid-flowering**	**Mid-*véraison***
2000-2020	4 June	6 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
2023	3 June	23 July
2024	**10 June**	**16 August**

A rather dry summer, but a late and spaced out *véraison* due to high water resources in the soil

The month of July began with a week of fairly cool temperatures. This was followed by spells of sometimes stormy weather alternating with high pressure conditions (Figure 6). Temperatures varied accordingly, sometimes higher than normal, sometimes lower, after the cold fronts and storms.

The last ten days of July were dry and temperatures rose: summer weather was finally here. From 28 July, a short heatwave encouraged the very first berries to change colour in the earliest plots.

However, the high water reserves in the soil, due to the excess winter and spring rainfall and the July storms, precluded the gradual and early onset of water stress, which is necessary for *véraison*. It was not until the end of the first week of August that the full start of colour change was observed.

In August, calm, sunny and hot weather set in. Rainfall was rare except for a few localised storms from 13 to 17 August (Figure 6). Temperatures were close to seasonal norms (Table I), if we exclude a short heatwave between 10 and 12 August.

Véraison was therefore slow to set in. The first signs of colour on the berries were observed at the beginning of August for Merlot and mid-August for Cabernet Sauvignon. In our reference vineyards, the average date of mid-*véraison* was estimated as 16 August for all grape varieties and regions, i.e. three weeks later than in 2023 (Table II). The average difference between Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon was four days (14 August for Merlot, 18 August for Cabernet Sauvignon). The last week of August marked the end of *véraison* for the Merlot grapes whereas a few green berries remained in the latest ripening plots of Cabernet Sauvignon.

The threat of mildew was very high until the end of *véraison*. The risk of contamination decreased from 10 August, but brown rot continued to spread until the berries on the previously contaminated plots dried out.
This phenomenon, combined with *coulure*, explains the sometimes very low yields achieved this year.

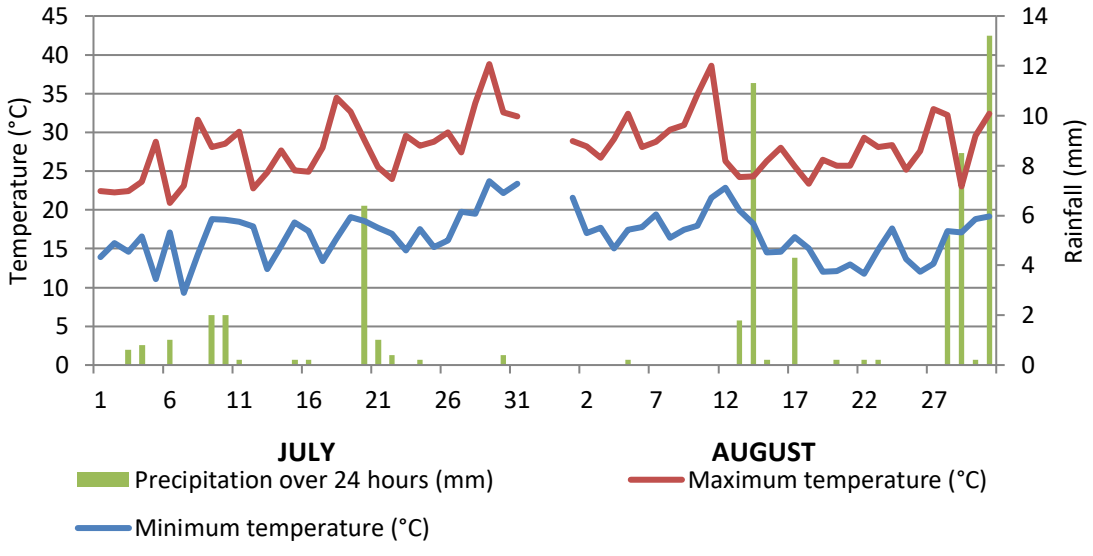

Figure 6
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in July and August 2024
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

A start to ripening from late August, before the sudden arrival of autumn in September

A close eye on ripeness showed that the technological maturity of the red wine grapes began around 25 August, about ten days later than in 2023. At this stage, average sugar levels were 178 g/L for the Merlot grapes and 164 g/L for the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes (Table VI), i.e. slightly down compared to 2023.

The low rainfall in August 2024 and the summer temperatures of the last days of the month (over 30°C) contrasted with the rainy, cool weather conditions of the first ten days of September (Figures 7, 8). Thirteen days of rain were recorded in September 2024, 3.7 days more than normal, divided into two major periods, between 1 and 10 September (58 mm, three times the average), then after 21 September.

The average maximum temperature during this month was around 2°C lower than normal (Table I, Figure 7), despite short spells of over 25°C, on the first two days of the month, and then between 18 and 20 September (Figure 8). These temperatures contrast with the particularly high values recorded in September 2022 and 2023. During the 21st century, only 2017, 2015, 2008 and 2001 have seen Septembers with such low average values.

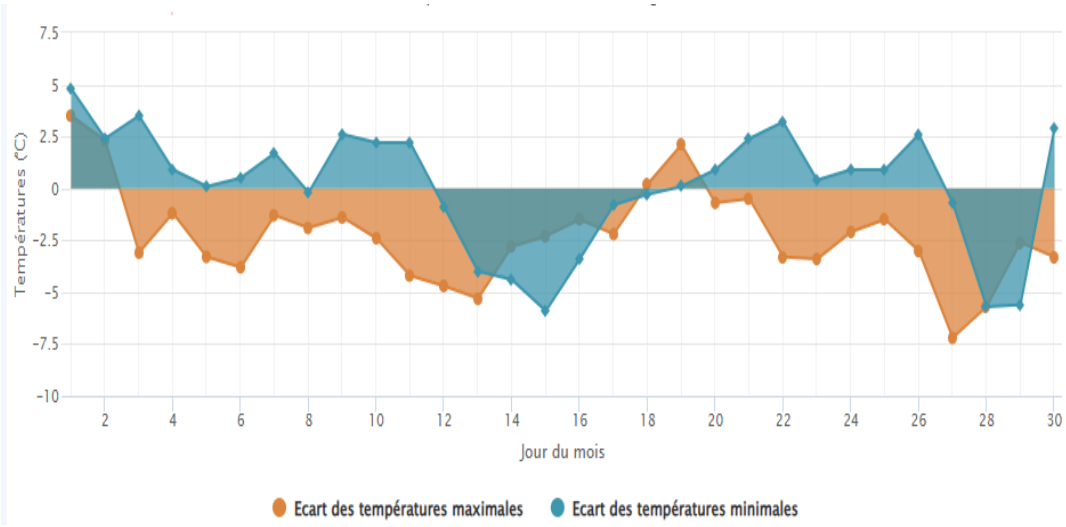

Figure 7
Maximum and minimum temperatures in September 2024, compared to normal values.
Data from Mérignac (Infoclimat)

The ripening of the red wine grapes was clearly affected by this succession of rainfall. The fact that growth did not clearly halt, combined with cool temperatures during rainy spells, prevented the steady accumulation of sugars. Despite that, the acid levels, particularly malic acid, gradually decreased, although they remained higher than those measured in recent years (Table VI, Figure 9). The asynchronous development of berries is notable, leading to a high degree of heterogeneity within bunches.

The significant vegetative growth of the vines this year also stimulated the accumulation of IBMP (isobutyl-methoxypyrazine, the molecule responsible for the aroma of green pepper) in the bunches. However, contrary to fears, the IBMP levels in the berries at

harvest were lower than the olfactory detection threshold (15 ng/L) for all the plots monitored (Table III).

Table III
Variations in IBMP levels (in ng/L) in 2024

		26/08/2024	16/09/2024	30/09/2024
Plot 1 Médoc	Cabernet Sauvignon	23.2	10.6	7.1
Plot 2 Médoc	Cabernet Sauvignon	14.6	8.2	
Plot 3 Pessac-Léognan	Cabernet Sauvignon	18.0	12.6	6.3
Plot 3 Pessac-Léognan	Merlot	7.7	3.8	
Plot 5 St-Emilion	Cabernet Sauvignon	16.2	11.1	7.6
Plot 4 E2M	Cabernet Sauvignon	50.8	28.4	10.0
Plot 4 E2M	Merlot	11.8	5.2	

The anthocyanins began accumulating in the berries very early on in the season (Table VI). This continued until mid-September and reached a plateau during the second half of the month (Figure 10). The extractability of these anthocyanins rose dramatically between 10 and 20 September. The skin deterioration, which also occurred during this period, likely weakened the berries, making them more susceptible to contamination by *Botrytis cinerea*.

Harvest schedules disrupted due to a spell of rain from 20 September

The return of heavy rain associated with cooler-than-normal daytime temperatures (Figure 7) hastened the harvest of the Merlot grapes, which had stopped ripening. The harvest began on 18 September for the early-ripening plots and a few young vines, in what had locally become worrying conditions due to the early September rainfall and damage caused by grape worms. The weight of the berries measured at harvest was close to that of 2021, and among the highest of the last five vintages. Sugar levels remained moderate, and acidity was maintained (Table VI, Figure 9). The fruity notes which appeared very early on in the season intensified up to harvest.

The Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, harvested later, were less affected by the rainy spells. Thanks to a few consecutive days without rain, the harvest was able to continue until mid-October (Figure 8). While the analytical data remained relatively stable during this period, the taste of the grapes evolved considerably. The fruity character intensified and the impression of acidity was significantly toned down. Tasting the grapes proved once again to be decisive in choosing the harvest date. As for the Merlot grapes, the sugar levels at harvest were close to those in 2021 (Table VI, Figure 9).

The first Sauvignon Blanc grapes were picked in Sauternes on 20 August, around ten days later than in 2023 (Table IV). In the other regions, rain fell on 28 and 29 August,

prompting the winegrowers to delay the start of the harvest until the very first days of September.

The large water reserves in the soils, due to the abundant rainfall in winter and spring, associated with a lack of very high temperatures during the summer, led to the harvest of well-balanced white wine grapes in satisfactory condition. The *Botrytis cinerea* outbreaks caused by the wet conditions late August stabilised at the beginning of September thanks to cooler temperatures.

Table IV

Harvest dates for dry white wine grapes in the Bordeaux region from 2014 to 2024

	Sauvignon Blanc	**Sémillon**
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 - 2 September	13 August - 9 September
2023	12 August - 6 September	14 August - 10 September
2024	**20 August - 12 September**	**28 August - 19 September**

Notably less sweet and more acidic than previous vintages with the exception of the 2014 vintage (Table V), the white wine grapes presented intense aromatic potential this year. Fruity, complex, with a particularly low pH, they bore the characteristics of very good, dry white wine vintages. The finest successes were found – as they often are – on the limestone or clay-limestone terroirs. On this type of soil, the diluting effects of the year's heavy rainfall were greatly reduced. The Sémillon grapes were picked around one week later than the Sauvignon Blanc grapes, from 28 August onwards. The were also fresh and well-balanced. Their delicate aromas of pear and apricot contribute to the aromatic brilliance of this vintage's white wines.

Table V

Composition of Sauvignon Blanc grapes from a plot with limestone soil in the Graves region from 2014 to 2024

	Potential alcohol (%)	Total acidity (g/L)	pH
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
2023	13.2	4.4	3.2
2024	**12.3**	**5.4**	**3.1**

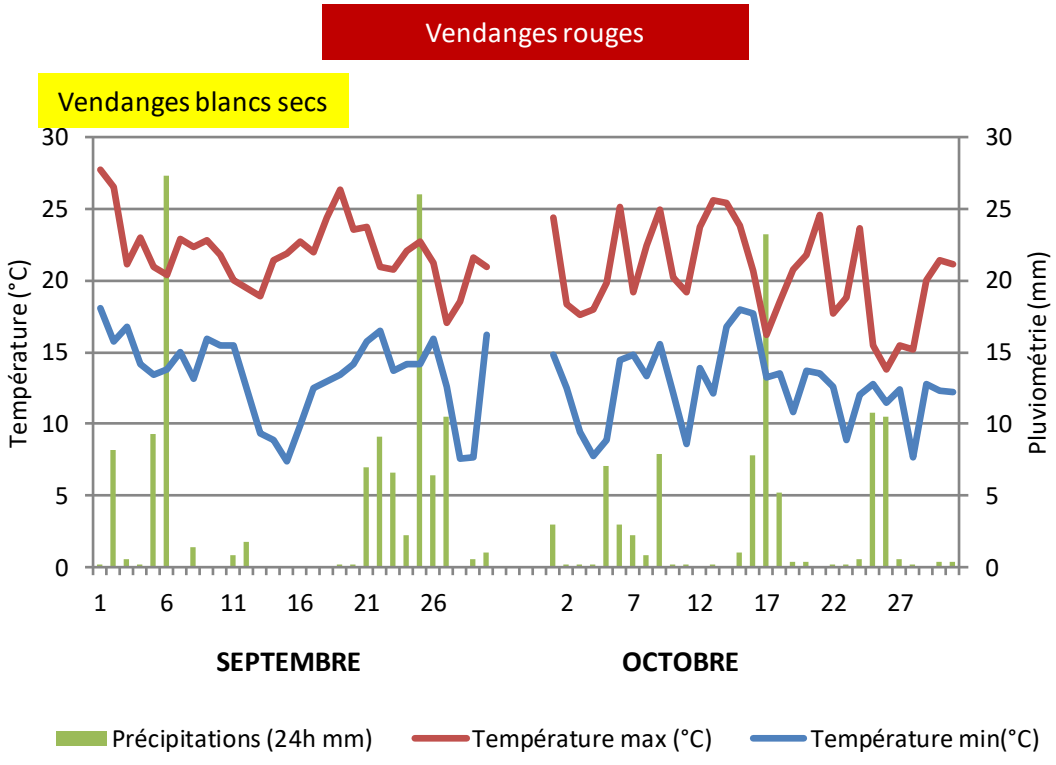

Figure 8

Harvest periods and daily variations in temperature and precipitation in September and October 2024.

Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Table VI

Variations in sugar and acidity levels of red wine grapes during ripening in reference plots (*véraison* + 8 days and last monitoring sample)

	Weight per 100 berries (g)	Sugar (g/L)	TA (g/L H_2SO_4)	Total anthocyanins (mg/L)
2024				
26/8 Merlot	147	178	5.6	1665
02/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	96	168	6.8	1680
23/9 Merlot	172	213	3.1	1873
30/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	107	205	4.6	2158
2023				
28/8 Merlot	159	211	3.9	1734
Cabernet Sauvignon	113	191	5.5	2103
04/9 *Merlot*	154	222	3.3	1770
11/9 Cabernet Sauvignon	113	222	3.1	2343
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	1.901

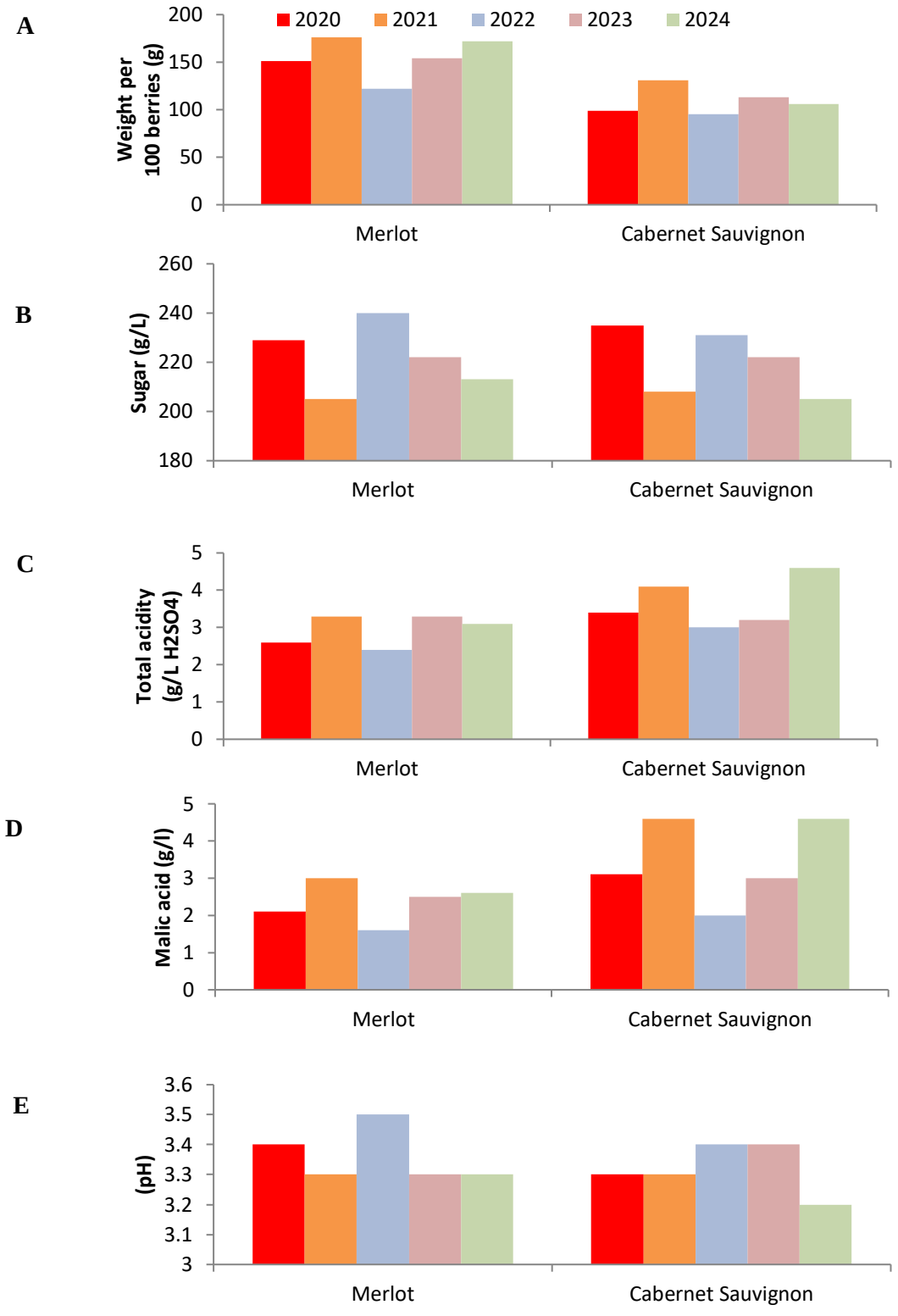

Figure 9

Analytical characteristics of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes at harvest time in reference plots in the 2024 vintage, compared with the four previous vintages

A: Weight per 100 berries (g) – B: Sugar content (g/L) – C: Total acidity (g/L H_2SO_4) – D: Malic acid content (g/L) – E: pH values

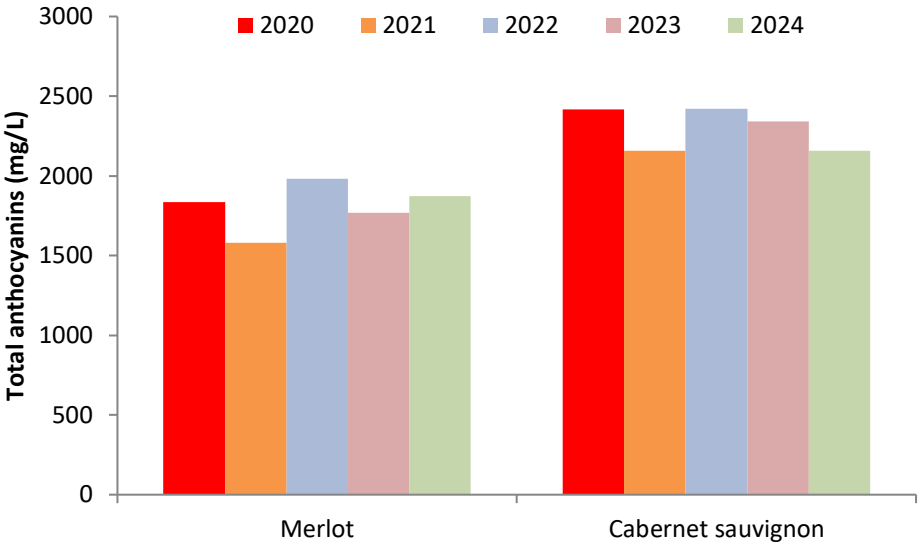

Figure 10
Total anthocyanin content (mg/L) of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in reference plots in 2024, compared with the four previous vintages

In Sauternes, alternating dry and wet weather which helped the onset of *Botrytis cinerea* followed by concentration of the grapes

Thanks to the summer's weather, the grapes intended for sweet white wines were perfectly ripe and in good condition from the end of August. Contrary to some recent vintages, such as 2022, 2020 or 2018, *Botrytis cinerea* developed rapidly in 2024. Nearly 100 mm of rain were measured in a fortnight from 29 August, enabling the fungus to spread quickly and extensively. With this first stage over, the Sauternes winegrowers then hoped for a dry spell, conducive to the concentration of the grapes. This was indeed the case from 12 September and a relatively abundant first pass was possible before 25 September for most plots (Figure 11). Although the concentration was moderate, perfectly botrytised grapes with a good level of acidity were picked. They add freshness and sparkle to the blends.

Late September, the winegrowers' morale wavered in the face of alarming weather forecasts. The expected downpours risked diluting the grapes and damaging them. Fortunately, the rainfall was far less abundant than feared and, thanks to another window of good weather, a second pass was made at the beginning of October. The richer and more powerful musts obtained certainly go towards forming the qualitative core of the sweet white wines of 2024.

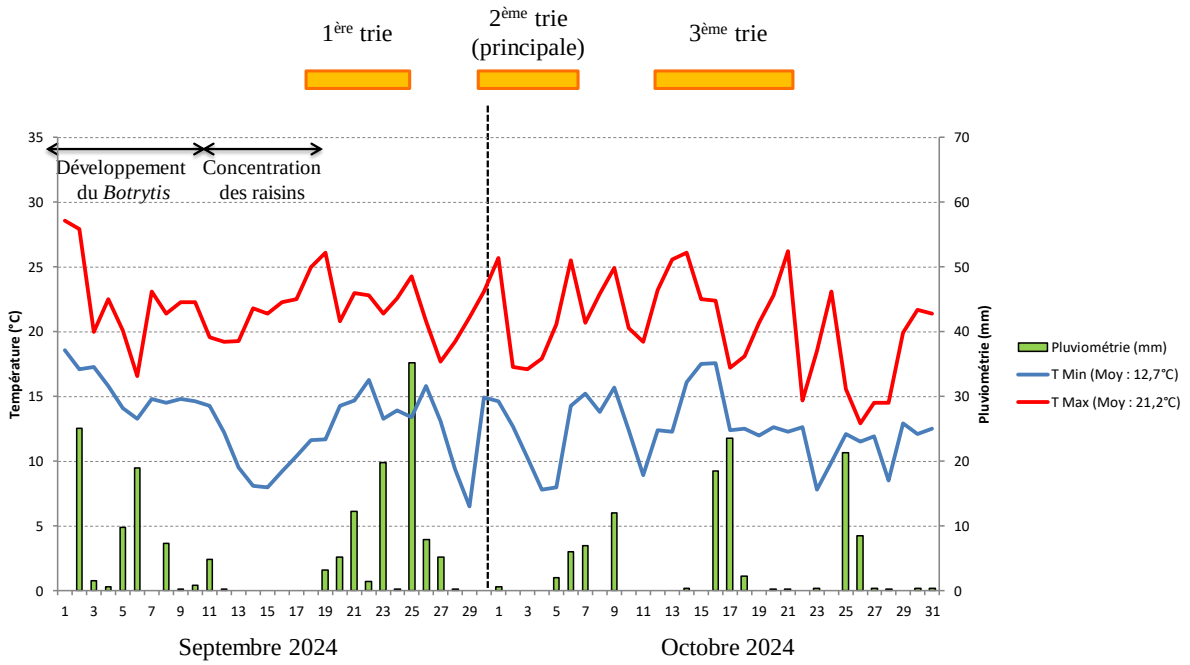

Figure 11

Daytime temperatures and precipitation in September and October 2024 in Sauternes

Chronology of the development of noble rot and dates of passes (example)

Once again, rain and fine weather alternated in slightly cooler conditions and pockets of sour rot started to appear in the vineyard. The last grapes were harvested in the second half of October and required rigorous sorting (Figure 11).

The wet conditions at the end of summer 2024 led to the early onset of noble rot and some providential windows of fine weather allowed the picking of satisfactory volumes of perfectly botrytised grapes. At the end of the harvest, the musts were pure and aromatic, not excessively rich and with varying levels of acidity.

Fresh, fruity red wines including some great successes on the finest terroirs, very good dry white wines, polished and expressive, and pure and well-balanced botrytised sweet white wines

Although perception and reality may sometimes differ regarding the assessment of the weather, the indicators confirm, in a factual manner, that 2024 was a rainy year. This served as a reminder of how demanding winegrowing is in a region subject to a strong oceanic influence. When it comes to making an initial assessment of the year for the great wines of Bordeaux, it is important to highlight the difficulties encountered, but above all the efforts made by Bordeaux winegrowers throughout the vine cycle. From late April until the end of *véraison*, they had to fight relentlessly to contain the damage caused by mildew. As is often the case, the results vary greatly, depending on the type of soil, rainfall, plus the economic, material and human resources available. In addition to this historical vine disease threat, *coulure* and *millerandage*, the consequences of rain during flowering, also had a substantial effect on the quantitative potential of the harvest. And lastly, grey rot, a well-known scourge

in Bordeaux which the last vintages had managed to avoid, also struck in various ways, depending on winegrowing practices, the choice of harvest date and the intensity of the September storms. It meant meticulous sorting, sometimes eliminating a substantial share of the harvest. These three factors combined explain the high variability of the yields.

Once again, the informed observer should therefore refrain from making a general – inevitably simplistic – judgement on the success of the 2024 red wines. Only by careful tasting will it be possible to accurately assess the style of the wines produced, while trying to perceive the choices made by the winegrowers during the year, as well as the risks taken when deciding on the harvest date. The drastic selection, both of the grapes going into the vats and of the batches making up the blends, has certainly proved to be a major key to success in this unique vintage.

As they begin the ageing process, the Merlot wines appear fruity and aromatic overall. They do not have the density nor the power of the last vintages, but they show themselves to be pleasant and easy-going. The best terroirs of the Libourne region generally provide additional body and smoothness. In the late-ripening plots and on waterlogged soils, herbaceous notes and a form of dilution are often observed.

When the harvest could wait, the Cabernet Sauvignon wines benefited from the respite at the beginning of October. They provide colour, structure and depth to the blends. Precision viticulture generally avoided their green pepper character, particularly in early-ripening areas. On the finest gravel terroirs, the Cabernet has undeniably achieved some beautiful wines in 2024.

The lack of a long heatwave in the summer and the presence of water reserves in the soils were advantageous for the aromatic potential of the white wine grapes. The Sauvignon Blanc wines are expressive with notes of lemon zest and white flowers, enhanced by a beautiful acidity. Sémillon, a very fashionable grape variety in Bordeaux, is capable of the best and the worst, and 2024 is a good illustration of this. On its preferred soils, the wines are fragrant, fleshy and flavoursome, whereas elsewhere, their mid-palate lacks density.

On the whole, the sweet white wines have a high degree of purity and botrytised aromas characteristic of early and widespread development of noble rot. Moderately concentrated, they are well-balanced and delicious.

To conclude, it is clear that 2024 will not be remembered as an exceptional vintage for Bordeaux wines. Nevertheless, thanks to the considerable efforts undertaken in the vineyards and the technical progress that winegrowers now benefit from, the quality of the wines produced this year bears no comparison to the rainy vintages of the past. While it was obviously easier to make very good dry and sweet white wines, it would be a mistake to systematically overlook the red wines. Their profile, which differs from that of recent years, should not be compared to any other in a futile and vain attempt to rank them, but considered in its own right. Therefore, given that enthusiasts seem to appreciate fruity, fresh red wines that can be enjoyed young, it would be abrupt to automatically snub the 2024 Bordeaux wines on the pretext that they do not match the standards of the greatest vintages.