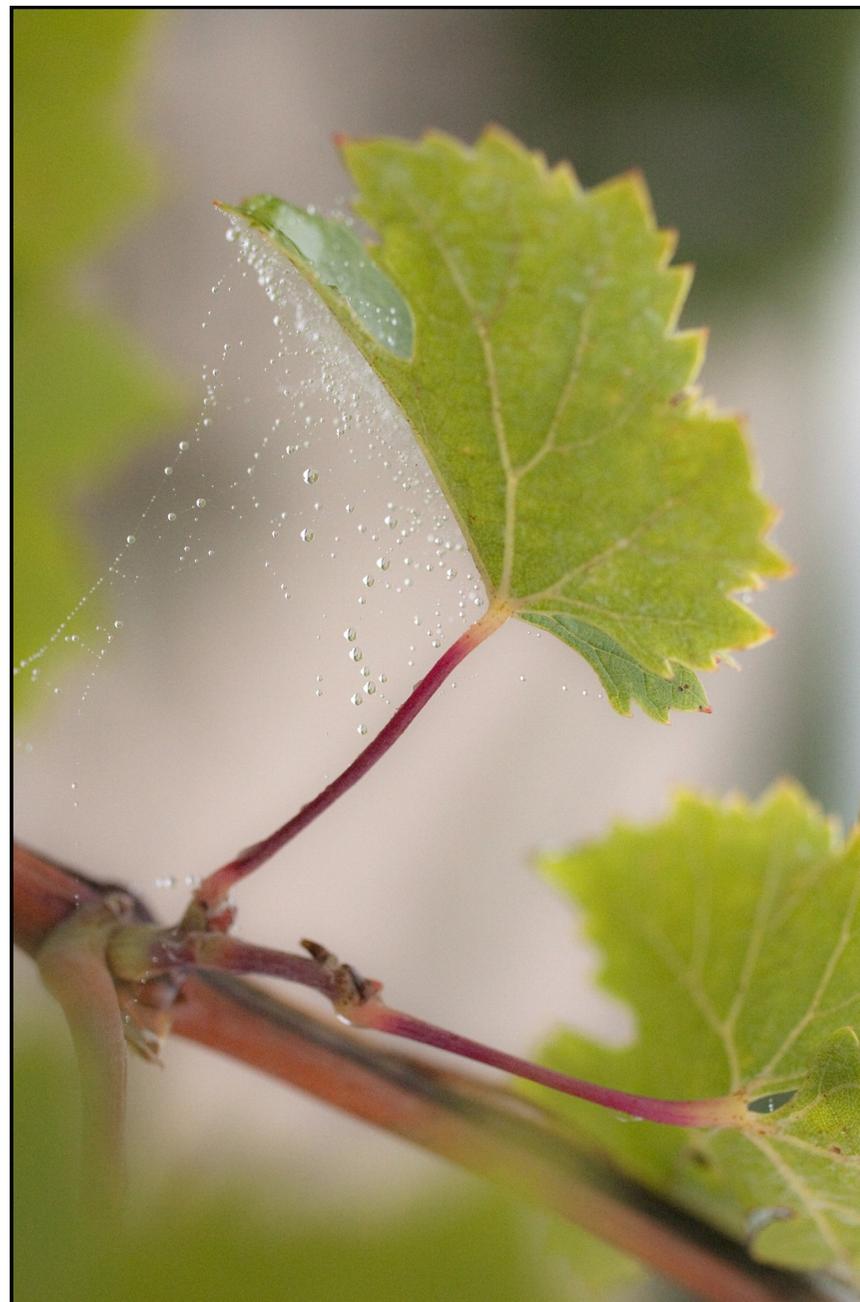


Tasting comments:

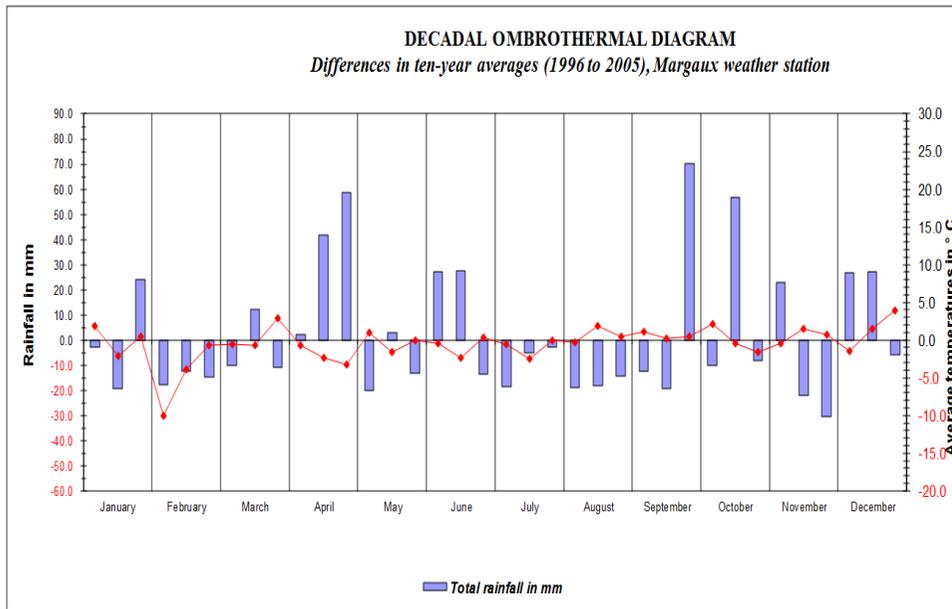
Photo : Patrick DURAND



The 2012 vintage at Brane-Cantenac

Weather conditions :

- A mild autumn, then a harsh, dry winter, especially during February (-10°C compared with the seasonal average over the last decade)
- Cool and very rainy weather in April as vines began shooting.
- An abnormally wet month of June and start to the summer.
- The hottest August since 2003.
- A severe summer drought: total rainfall between August 1st and September 22nd was only 7mm (0.27 inches).
- A wet end to the month of September, with heavy rains.



In the vineyard :

- A slow shooting of the vines in April, because of cool and rainy weather conditions
- Uneven vegetation growth was observed among Merlot vines.
- A quite late flowering on May 26th.
- Some problems of coulure (shot berries) on old Merlot vines planted in gravel soils.
- A very high risk of downy mildew and powdery mildew during the month of June.
- Vine canopy management work was adapted to the vigour of each plot of vines.
- Water deficit was accentuated by the absence of summer rainfall, bringing about uneven veraison on some bunches, which were eliminated manually at the end of August.
- 18 hectares (44 acres) of the vineyard grown organically, which represents 25% of the surface area.

Harvest and vinification :

- The picking began with the youngest Merlot on September 27th. It continued with the old Merlot vines from October 1st to 4th. This grape variety gave very round, very aromatic wines.
- The Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested from October 5th to 15th. The wines are powerful, balanced and dense.
- The Cabernet Franc suffered from the vintage's weather conditions. Though harvested late (October 12th), it wasn't included in the blend for the Grand Vin on account of unsatisfactory levels of ripeness.
- The Carmenère, which was harvested on October 16th, didn't ripen as well as in 2011, because of the wet weather conditions.
- The harvesting went ahead at a lively pace, enabling the crop to be brought in before the heavy October rains could affect the perfect health of the berries.
- Extraction was enhanced through délestages (rack and return) and the use of Parsec vinification robots.

Yield: 45.5 hectolitres per hectare

The 2012 harvest :

	Merlot	Cab. Franc	Carmenère	Cab. Sauvignon	% Vol	TA	pH	IPT	% Production
Brane-Cantenac	32	0	0	68	13.0	3.6	3.86	74	32
Baron de Brane	33	7	0	60	12.8	3.5	3.75	70	38
Notton/Margaux	69	0	0.6	30.4	12.9	3.6	3.78	68	30

Summary of the 2012 vintage :

To fully understand this 2012 vintage, we need to ignore the adverse spring conditions and focus on the very favourable summer weather. The conditions in the vineyard were not dissimilar to those of 2010 and especially to those of 2000. Getting the harvesting date right was crucial in order to get the very best out of fully ripe grapes, without endangering their health by allowing the rain at the end of September and in October to take its toll. Any overconfidence or willingness to harvest in extreme conditions of over-ripeness was severely punished. This year once again the great early-ripening terroirs came out on top and produced wines of high quality.

Henri Lurton's analysis of the 2012 vintage :

The fact that we included 68% of Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend of Brane-Cantenac bears witness to its beautiful maturity, thanks to the 'early' terroir it grows on, and to the work that was done in the ahead vineyard. But it is also the proof that the technological choices we made regarding the picking, hauling and sorting of the harvest, favoring a perfect selection, not to mention the swiftness of the operations, were indeed excellent.