

THE 1999 VINTAGE

The winter of 1998/1999 was characterised by the fairly even distribution of rainfall and clement temperatures, getting the vegetation cycle off to an early start – about 15 March for the Merlot and 23 March for the Cabernet Sauvignon.

Heavy rainfall in April slowed down the development of the vines while avoiding the risk of springtime frosts.

Weather conditions in May led to an explosion in vegetation growth. Flowering of the Merlot vines began on 25 May, with the Cabernet Sauvignon starting three or four days later.

The fruit-bearing potential was very great (a large number of large bunches of grapes) and so green harvesting was carried out in July on about 35 hectares of the Saint-Julien appellation.

High temperatures in July, severe storms at the beginning of August and then the hot, dry weeks in late August / early September produced very ripe grapes with high alcohol content (up to 14 ° for the Merlot).

The harvests started on 16 September and ended on 5 October (71 hectares of Saint-Julien and 13 hectares in the Haut-Médoc appellation). Despite difficult picking conditions, the quality of the grapes harvested was very good and the wine seemed most promising with its very dense colour and very powerful tannic structure.

With yield of 57 hl/ha in Saint-Julien and Haut-Médoc, the breakdown of production is as follows:

CHATEAU BEYCHEVELLE	22,000 cases
AMIRAL DE BEYCHEVELLE	16,500 cases
BRULIERES DE BEYCHEVELLE	7,500 cases

The blends for the 1999 vintage were as follows:

CHATEAU BEYCHEVELLE

43% Cabernet Sauvignon

43% Merlot

8% Cabernet Franc

6% Petit Verdot

AMIRAL DE BEYCHEVELLE

69% Cabernet Sauvignon

31% Merlot

BRULIERES DE BEYCHEVELLE

57% Cabernet Sauvignon

43% Merlot

The opinion of Philippe BLANC, Estate Manager: The 1999 vintage is very fruity, pleasant and fleshy with high alcohol content thanks to the very ripe Merlot grapes (14 ‰). The tannins are ripe, mild and nicely-pronounced. This vintage appears to be of a comparable level to 1998 and perhaps 1989 with its high alcohol content, relatively low acidity, or similar

to 1983 for its pleasant character. It should, however, offer better ageing potential than the 1983, thanks to the stricter selection process applied in production.

