

THE 2003 VINTAGE

The surface area in production in 2003 is 74 ha in Saint-Julien and 12.6 ha in the Haut-Médoc appellation.

2003 was marked by temperatures higher than average for the thirty-year period with a heat wave in the first half of August reaching 38/40°C. Overall rainfall seemed low, but well distributed throughout the season, which helped to protect the vines from drought and heat.

The first bunches were seen on the Merlot from 1st Avril onwards, followed by the Cabernet Sauvignon a few days later. The Merlot began to flower on 12th May, the Cabernet Sauvignon around 20th May, which was about a week earlier than the previous vintage. Flowering took place in good conditions. However, the marked drop in temperatures around 19th to 20th May caused widespread flower abortion in the early Merlot. Veraison took place around 10th July, about a fortnight earlier than 2002. The very violent storm on 15th July damaged a large part of the vineyard, between 6% and 12%.

Milder temperatures during the last half of September were very helpful in bringing about a successful final maturation, mainly for the Cabernet Sauvignon.

Grape-picking began on 11th September and finished on 25th September, in excellent sanitary conditions and with beautiful weather. Once again, the grapes were rich in sugar and very high in alcohol content, 13% vol for Merlot and Petit Verdot, 12.8% vol for Cabernet Sauvignon.

In the same way as for the previous vintages, 30% of top-potential volume was put in new barrels from November onwards. The rest of the production was matured in French oak barrels, 50% new for the *grand vin*, 21% for Amiral de Beychevelle and 16% for Brulieres de Beychevelle (Haut-Médoc).

The 2003 vintage is blended in the following way :

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| CHATEAU BEYCHEVELLE | 53% Cabernet Sauvignon 34% Merlot 8% Cabernet Franc 5% Petit Verdot |
| AMIRAL DE BEYCHEVELLE | 75% Cabernet Sauvignon 25% Merlot |
| BRULIERES DE BEYCHEVELLE | 55 % Cabernet Sauvignon 45% Merlot |

The yield was very low at 39.5 hl/ha in Saint-Julien and 36.8 hl/ha in Haut-Médoc, the production is as follows:

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| CHATEAU BEYCHEVELLE | 20 600 cases |
| AMIRAL DE BEYCHEVELLE | 6 600 cases |
| BRULIERES DE BEYCHEVELLE | 4 600 cases |

With a degree of maturity hitherto unknown, the 2003 vintage is very fruity (black berries, cherries) without any vegetal aromas, fleshy, very well-balanced with a good length in the mouth. The tannins are ripe, without marked astringency. It should gain in fleshiness and roundness with maturing.