

Primeurs

2020

DOMINIO DE PINGUS

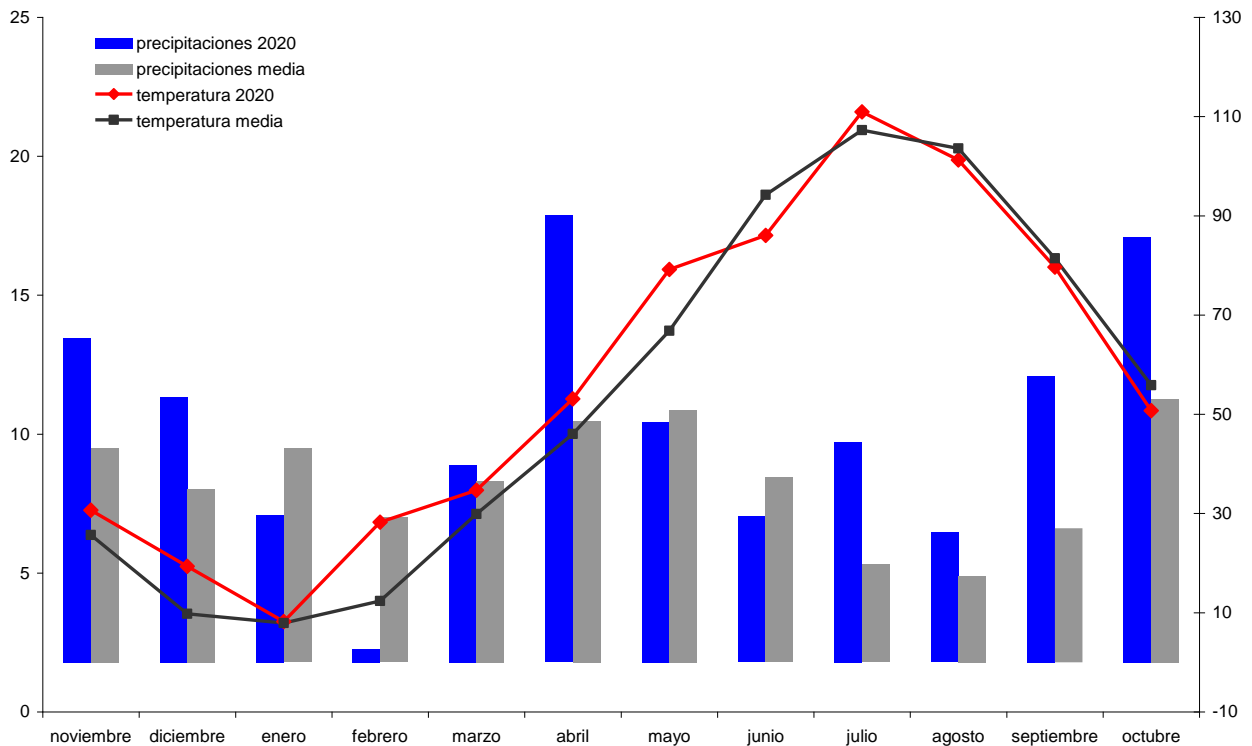
BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS ALNARDO

CHÂTEAU ROCHEYRON

2020 Harvest

The Growing Season

The growing season of 2020 was a fascinating one. We had very good rains in winter/spring. So important for the determination of the style of wine we make. Since 2009 we have seen a change in weather call it whatever you want the growing seasons have become increasingly warm and also early leading to important thoughts about what to do and how to grow your grapes in that new environment.



One of most important aspects have been an increase in alcohol % in the finished wines. In the good old' days it was difficult to find wines with more than 13,5-14 % and in order to achieve that you had to work with very low yields and often harvest quite late. This is what we used to do at Dominio de Pingus in the first 10-15 years of the winery's existence.

Today this is impossible if we did the same today, we would end up with 17-18% alcohol. After the cooler vintages of 2012 and 2013 we started to work on yield levels. 10-15 % yield increase helped to avoid extreme alcohol levels without sacrificing the concentration level. Added to that, early to very early harvest just added to the finish and freshness to wines. To achieve this, we also changed the vinification temperatures we now ferment below 25 C again lowering the excretions levels. Winemaking is a fascinating work of "learning forward and understanding backwards."

The good rains and warm temperatures led to an early bud break and luckily a frost-free start of the year, however the level of ground moisture led to an early and quite dangerous attack of mildew.

Working in Biodynamics mildew is a tough enemy but with very hard work from the vineyard team (this is in the middle of lockdown and the horror of Covid19) we were able to fight off the attack.

Over the worst it was pretty much smooth sailing from there. Because of the great rains and the balance of the fruit I was very early on sure that we would be able to harvest very very early.

And arriving at harvest the low level of malic acid in the grapes convinced me that we could start harvest with only 13,5 % alcohol potential level and still avoid underripe tannins always the danger when you harvest too early.

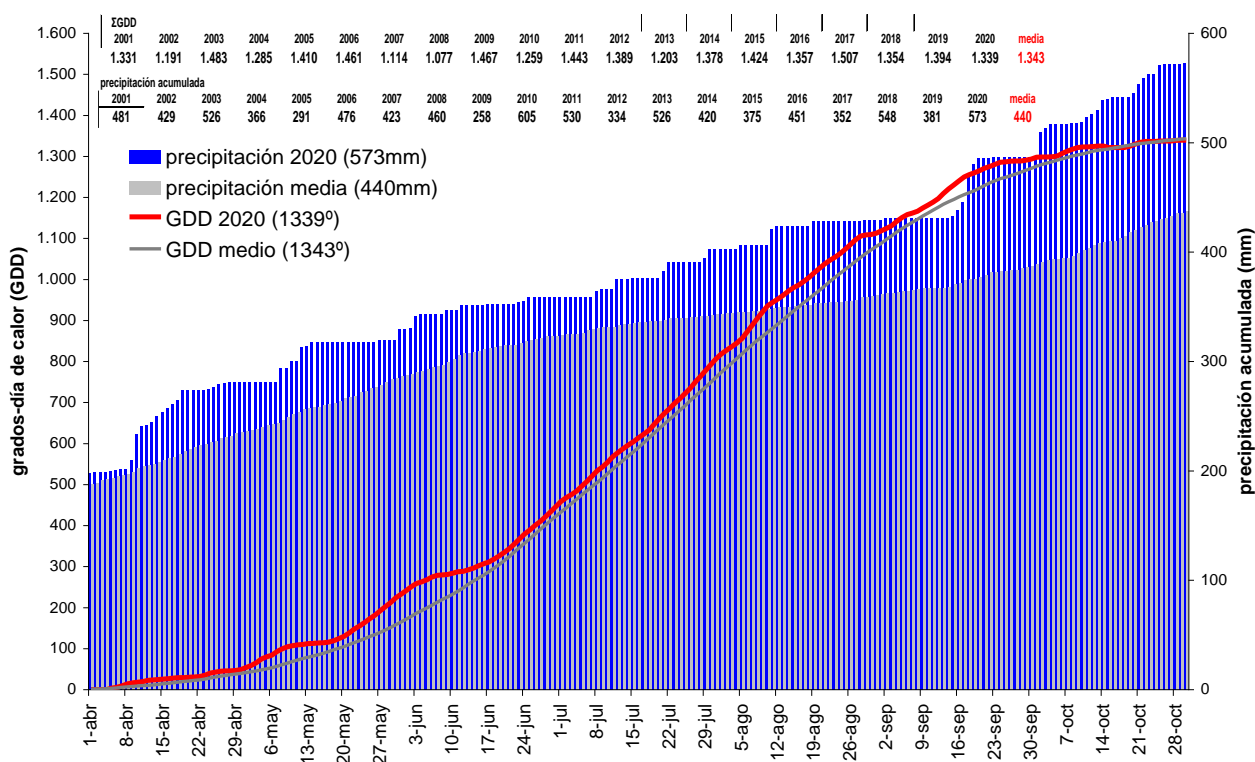
We started the harvest the 7th of September the earliest ever. We had very good ripeness in the San Cristobal vineyard that is the backbone of Pingus.

The fermentations this year were all very easy so we could concentrate on getting the tannin extraction just right.

The day we finished the harvest at Dominio de Pingus 17th of September all hell broke loose. That night we got 60 mm of rain. At that moment 80 % of all the wineries in the region had not even started their harvest!!

At PSI we were not that lucky the grapes from eastern part of Ribera ripens 2-3 weeks later than they do at Dominio de Pingus in La Horra. We were of course relieved that we had the most important part of harvest in the cellar.

The harvest continued at PSI until the 3rd of October and although there was a slight dilution in the grapes we could do a "bleeding" of the tanks and we were able to conclude a very successful 2020 with some beautiful wines.



The Growing season in Bordeaux was complicated in 2020. Like in Spain we had a lot of rain in spring leading to a severe attack of Mildew in May. Although certified Bio from last year it does not protect you against fierce attacks of this nasty fungi, we had to spray the vines almost every second day for 3 weeks. The good thing of course being that we only use "natural" products and so do not harm the environment. But it is devastating for the people who have to work so many hours. The end of the summer was dry and warm (50 days without a drop of rain). Some beneficial rain in August to live up the plants. September leading up to the harvest was also dry. Merlot harvest 21, 22, 23 of September and the Cabernet Franc was harvested on the 3rd of October.

Very easy fermentation using natural yeast. Natural ML fermentation as well. 50 % new oak.

The Wines

Pingus

Pingus this year is a beautiful wine I am so bold to say it is the most beautiful wine we have ever made. It is a wine of a lot of concentration due to the warm and dry summer, but because of the great rains we had in Spring the tannins do not show. Very fresh and with a very complex fruity nose the aging is going to reveal all the beauty of this wine. We are following in the line of recent vintages where no new oak is being used. As the wine is so balanced and complete, we are aging part of the wine in a 2000 L oak vat to slow down the aging process. We have done this in 17, 18 and 19 as well with very good result. I am very hyped up about this wine. Bottling is expected to be July 2022.

Flor

As Pingus, Flor de Pingus is a beautiful wine. A wine slightly less concentrated than Pingus itself but so well balanced. Beautiful violets very difficult to find in normal Ribera del Duero wines lend this wine a very “old world” aspect.

The silkiest tannins lead to a long and smooth finish. The wine is brought up in 25 % new wood it is strange that this is very helpful for Flor de Pingus and not for Pingus. Maybe it has to do with the fineness of the tannins, in Flor de Pingus the new oak really helps to smooth out the wine. A lot of freshness also shows in Flor de Pingus, in this juicy and sexy wine. I really love it.

Psi

Harvest before and after the rains. Initially we were worried that the rains would affect the wine in a negative way, but luckily that did not happen, we did do a small bleeding of the tanks after the rain to help concentrate the grapes a bit.

Fermented at low 23 C the wine has a very good fresh nose, very soft and quite transparent in color, really the opposite of what you expect in a Ribera wine, where the norm has become inky black extracted wines. I really believe Tempranillo is a very “feminine” grape and should be handled with great care and delicate. The 8-10 % Grenache give the wine a lovely touch of strawberries and this juicy watermelon finish. As the aging is done in big oak tanks it is more difficult to judge the wine as the aging is slower at this point. But 2020 PSI is going to be a nudge up on the elegance ladder. If the 2019 was a “warmer” vintage and more generous in style this is really Ribera del Duero from the aromatic and fineness driven side. Very good concentration will give this plenty of aging potential but should be able to hit road running, something we have tried to achieve since the beginning, this year we got it!!!

Chateau Rocheyron - Grand Vin 2020

Tasting Chateau Rocheyron 2020 in early January was a revelation. We have been on a continuing rise in quality since the 2016. 2018, 2019 and now 2020 will mark a great point in our brief story starting with the 2010 vintage.

The wine is very dark and very salty on the nose showing very well the limestone origin of the Terroir. Brought up in 50 % new oak most of the ML was done in cement tanks so the oak is very supple. The 20 % Cabernet Franc is lending a lot of fineness to the very long finish. A strong component of violets (like Flor de Pingus) gives a floral character to wine.

I coincide with most tasters who have tasted the wine that this is so far the BEST Rocheyron we have made. After the mildew attack the long warm and dry summer this is a result that we could only have dreamed of ... Very very happy with, and proud of, this wine!!

Peter Sisseck,

Valbuena de Duero, Valladolid 3rd of June, 2021

