

## Bordeaux - the 2010 vintage so far

28 Jul 2010 by Jancis Robinson

To judge from the number of views (nearly 18,000) and the number of posts (more than 200) on our [Are you buying 2010\(sic\) bordeaux?](#) thread in Members' forum, many of you are pretty interested in bordeaux. The quality and quantity of the 2010 vintage in Bordeaux is likely to have an effect on demand for, and price movements of, the 2009s. I also have a personal vested interest in the quality of the 2010 crop. If it's not particularly good quality then it will signal an end to my beloved [Rule of Five](#), which has remained intact for 25 years.

So, I solicited some input from the Gironde on the state of the Bordeaux vineyards so far. Christophe Coupez of the Chambre d'Agriculture in Pauillac sent some particularly topical reports last night, supplemented by information supplied by l'Adar du Médoc.

**Timing** 2010 is just a few days late compared with 2009 but is very close to 2004, 2005 and 2008. The first coloured berries, signalling the very start of veraison, were seen last week.

**Vine health** Excellent - better than any recent vintage except for 2005 when *oidium* (powdery mildew) was a little more common and *mildiou* (downy mildew) was a little less common at this juncture. The moth population is low and the likes of cochylis and eudemis are not expected to contribute to any evolution of botrytis (the moth larvae make holes in the berries and open the door for botrytis).

**Quantity and quality** Flowering saw a huge quantity of flowers, but the weather during flowering was not propitious with low temperatures and rain resulting in millerandage and coulure, and therefore a loss of production. After flowering, there was considerable variation in size among grapes.

As ripening proceeds, these differences usually diminish, but vigilance will be needed when the time comes to check ripeness levels. Water stress is already visible in the vineyards, which is taken to be a good sign for the quality of 2010.

Total likely quantity is described by the locals as 'comfortable'. Coupez pointed out that 'with patience and good management in the cellar (by *saignées*, for instance) we know how to make a good vintage with a lot of grapes (we could taste good 2004s, couldn't we?). To sum up, I am quite optimistic about 2010, although I am not convinced that nature will give me the opportunity to write the same report as in 2009. But I promise you that if I am wrong and discover a good surprise during the maceration, I will write it with pleasure.'

Sophie Thierry of Ch Kirwan in Margaux (pictured, shuttered) also reported last week that things are looking good so far. As we experienced at the [MW Symposium in Bordeaux](#), a period of hot, dry weather followed a flowering that resulted in some millerandage and coulure for the Merlots. (Indeed, Fiona Morrison MW of Le Pin reported on 9 Jul '42° in Pomerol - poor vines!')

At Kirwan they are pleased that the vines have been suffering some water stress and since mid July they have been deleafing that side of the vines that gets the least sunlight in order to promote aeration and exposure of bunches to sunlight. They also report that they are now at the same stage in their growing season as they were at this time in 2009. At Kirwan the start of veraison, when grapes change from green to purple, is expected next week and they expect the harvest to start at the end of September.