The 2025 vintage in Bordeaux

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Winegrowing is both a fascinating and thankless task that is subject to numerous vagaries, the scale of which has been exacerbated in recent years due to climate change. In early 2025, the 2024 growing season was still on Bordeaux winemakers' minds, with memories of a very challenging year marked by the difficult weather conditions and the efforts required to make the best of this vintage. Fortunately, every vintage is different, particularly in the northernmost regions. In this regard, as we take stock of the previous year and taste the resulting wines, 2025 stands out as a welcome respite, which generated genuine enthusiasm and fuelled legitimate expectations from start to finish.

After a generally mild and dry winter of 2024-2025, the growing season resumed in early April. A few cold spells in February helped to prevent the buds from bursting too early, thus lowering the risk of frost damage. The mild conditions that set in from mid-April onwards were propitious to steady growth, with the threat of vine diseases generally kept under control without too much difficulty. Thanks to a fine spring, flowering began in late May and was quick and early, conducive to even ripening. Fruit set also took place under ideal conditions, with the first signs of water stress promoting the synthesis of phenolic compounds and limiting berry size. Although potential yields were low at the start of the growing season, the successful fertilisation of the flowers helped to preserve them.

Despite a few scattered thunderstorms, the summerlike conditions endured, confirming early phenolic maturity. Low rainfall allowed water stress to gradually set in, bringing a halt to vine growth before the start of *véraison* (colour change), which, like flowering, unfolded quickly and evenly as of late July. In this context, the grapes ripened in optimal conditions, accelerating after a heatwave that struck the Bordeaux vineyards mid-August. Very early on in the growing season, the grapes were high in sugar and low in malic acid, suggesting that the wines would

have a high alcohol content, as has been the case in recent vintages. On certain well-drained soils, there were fears that water stress could begin to cause damage in the vineyards. However, the situation radically changed in late August, with the arrival of showers of varying intensity depending on the sector. The rain, which was a nightmare for winegrowers in 2024, proved to be a blessing this time. The size of the berries increased while sugar levels decreased, and the berries could ripen in optimal conditions without becoming overripe.

Consequently, the dry white wine harvest began shortly before mid-August and was in full swing by the second half of the month. This early ripening certainly mitigated the effects of the heatwave, as the grapes retained their high acidity and remarkable aromatic potential.

The first Merlot grapes were harvested in early September, in good condition overall, with winegrowers deciding to pick the various plots according to the characteristics of each terroir. Thanks to rainfall in late summer, the Cabernet grapes also reached peak ripeness and, at many estates, were mostly harvested in late September with promising quality.

In Sauternes, alternating wet and dry spells created the optimal conditions required for the development of *Botrytis cinerea* which concentrated the grapes. Several passes ensued from around 20 September onwards, resulting in a harvest of admirable quality and an exceptionally high amount of berries picked.

No early bud break despite a mild and dry winter overall

The autumn of 2024 and the winter of 2025 were generally drier and warmer than usual. Precipitation was slightly above average in January (Figure I) but below the seasonal norm in February and March.

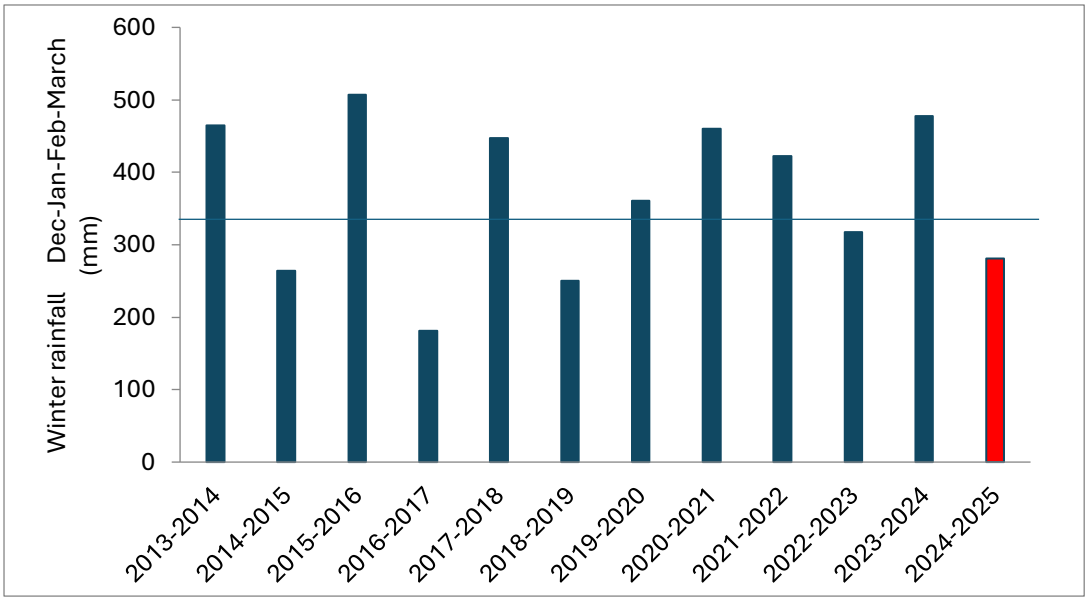

Figure 1

Winter rainfall compared with the 1991-2020 period

Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Average maximum temperatures recorded during the first three months of the year were higher than the 30-year average (1991-2020) (Table I).

Although the winter conditions were generally warmer than usual, they were interspersed with several “gouttes froides” (“cold drops” in English), accompanied by frosts. These brief cold spells, lasting from early February to mid-March, disrupted the pre-bud break stage and subsequently led to delayed bud break. The latter occurred during the first ten days of April, i.e. not particularly early, which significantly reduced the risk of damage caused by spring frosts – a recurring problem in recent years.

April was the last month of the 2025 growing season to record above-average rainfall. Mild and dry conditions then set in from mid-April onwards. Vine growth was homogeneous and in line with the seasonal norm (Figure 2). Unlike in 2024, the abundance of sunshine combined with low rainfall significantly limited the spread of mildew and helped to maintain the leaf canopy in perfect condition. The almost summerlike conditions from mid-May onwards accelerated vine growth, with the first flowers appearing in late May (Figure 2).

Table I

Weather indicators for 2025, compared to the 1991-2020 average

Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

	Sunshine (hours)		Rainfall (mm)		Average minimum temp. (°C)		Average maximum temp. (°C)	
	2025	1991-2020 average	***2025***	1991-2020 average	***2025***	1991-2020 average	***2025***	1991-2020 average
January	**88**	90	**129**	*87*	**3.6**	*3.7*	**11.1**	*10.5*
February	**138**	117	**56**	*67*	**5.2**	*3.6*	**14.5**	*12.0*
March	**175**	170	**29**	*63*	**6.4**	*5.8*	**16.0**	*15.5*
April	**203**	186	**108**	*76*	**9.6**	*8.0*	**20.1**	*18.0*
May	**250**	221	**57**	*71*	**11.9**	*11.4*	**23.0**	*21.7*
June	**277**	238	**55**	*70*	**17.0**	*14.6*	**29.3**	*25.0*
July	**275**	256	**29**	*48*	**16.8**	*16.2*	**28.4**	*27.1*
August	**254**	249	**50**	*57*	**17.2**	*16.3*	**30.7**	*27.6*
September	**165**	209	**51**	*81*	**13.4**	*13.3*	**23.7**	*24.2*
October	**182**	150	**92**	*83*	**10.7**	*10.7*	**21.0**	*19.6*

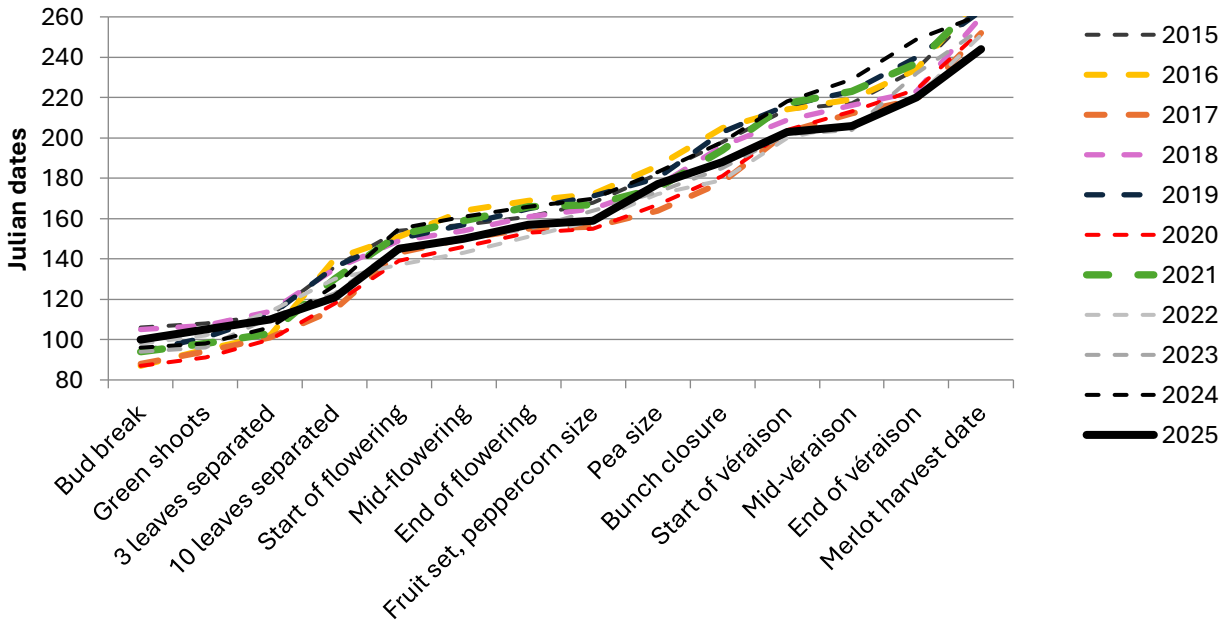

Figure 2

Development of phenological ripeness in 2025, compared to the past 10 years

(Data from SRAL and ISVV)

Early, quick and very homogeneous flowering and fruit set

From the last ten days of May onwards, and even more so in June, the weather conditions – particularly the rise in temperatures (Figure 3) – accentuated the earliness of the vintage.
Flowering began in the earliest-ripening plots during the last week of May and was observed across all our reference plots on 2 June, progressing extremely rapidly and evenly, regardless of the grape variety. No significant signs of shot berries or abnormal fruit set were observed. Fortunately, the reduced yields that winegrowers feared due to the small size of the flower clusters were not exacerbated by poor flowering conditions.
Fruit set occurred under relatively dry conditions, contributing to the early activation of the pathway of phenolic compounds, as well as to the small size of the berries..

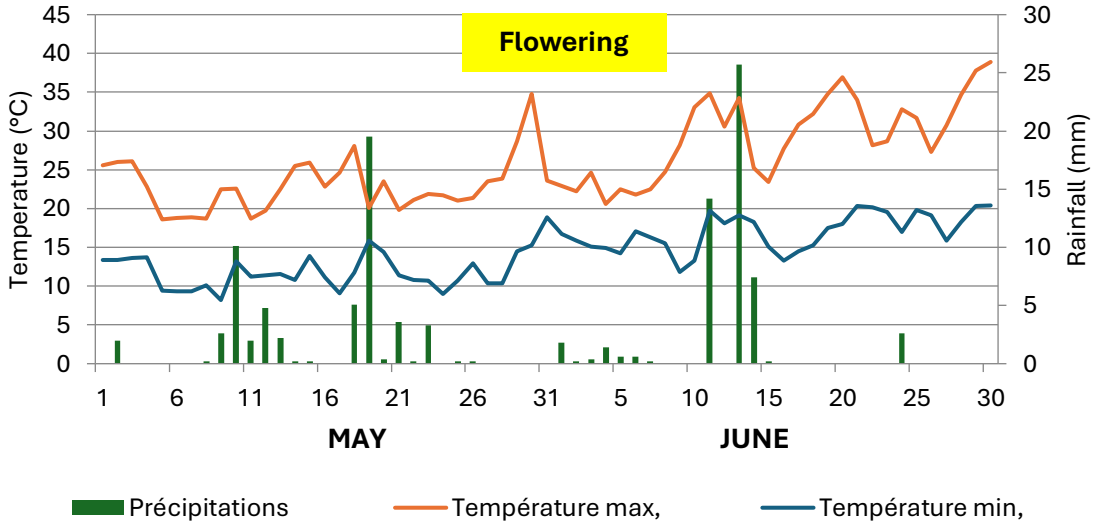

Figure 3
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in May and June 2025
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

The summerlike conditions in June were nevertheless interrupted by a few intense thunderstorms in localised areas (namely the Médoc and Entre-Deux-Mers regions), sometimes accompanied by hail (on 10 and 13 June) which did not cause any significant damage in the vineyards. These variations in rainfall from one region to another had a strong impact on berry size. In the wettest areas, it boosted berry development, in some cases significantly (Figure 4), without compromising either the vine's health or water balance. In contrast, the high temperatures led to the emergence of water stress in the driest sectors and most permeable soils, where it slowed down grape development.

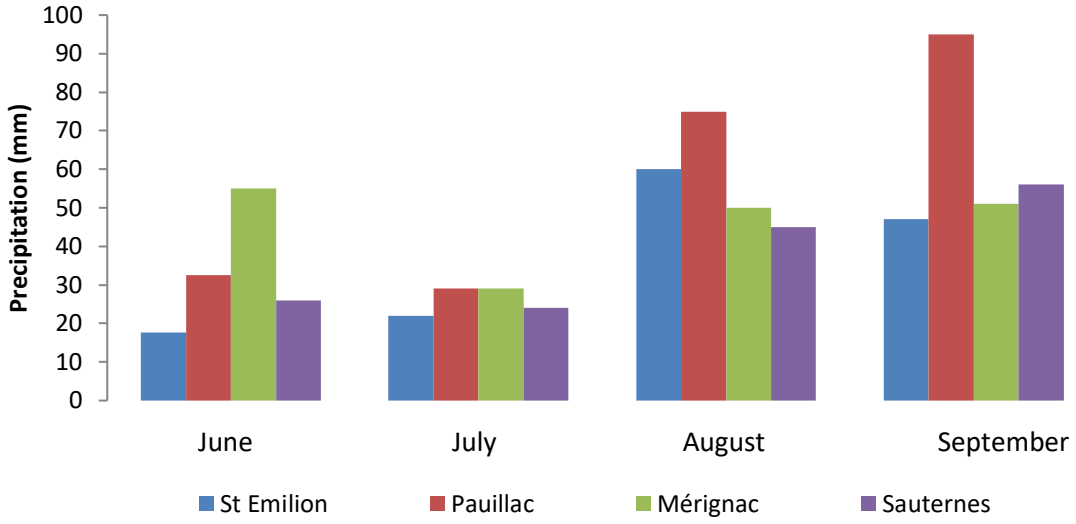

Figure 4
Distribution of summer rainfall by sector
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)

Early and quick *véraison*, suggesting even ripening

The decline in rainfall from mid-June onwards and the first heatwave recorded in early July contributed to a gradual slowdown in vine growth without causing any damage to the leaf canopy, which was in excellent condition throughout the region. Vine growth came to a halt in late July for the Merlot and Cabernet varieties. The first signs of colour change were observed during the third week of July (Figures 2 and 5).

Like flowering, *véraison* was rapid and even. Mid-*véraison* occurred around 26 July, three weeks earlier than in 2024, and lasted approximately ten days (Figures 5 and 6).

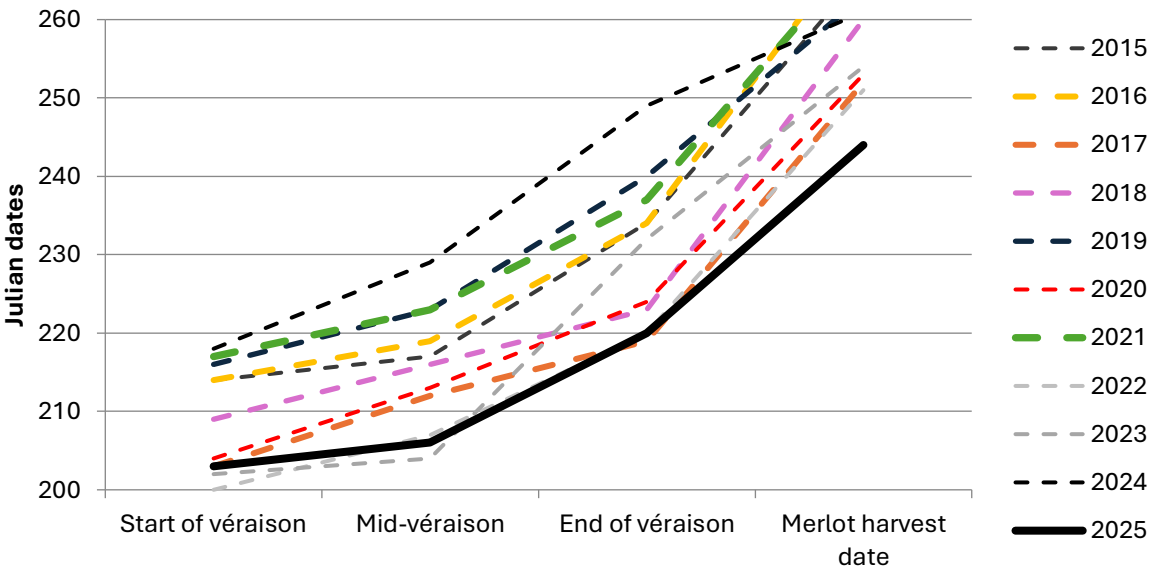

Figure 5
Development of phenological ripeness in 2025 compared to the past 10 years
(Data from SRAL and ISVV)

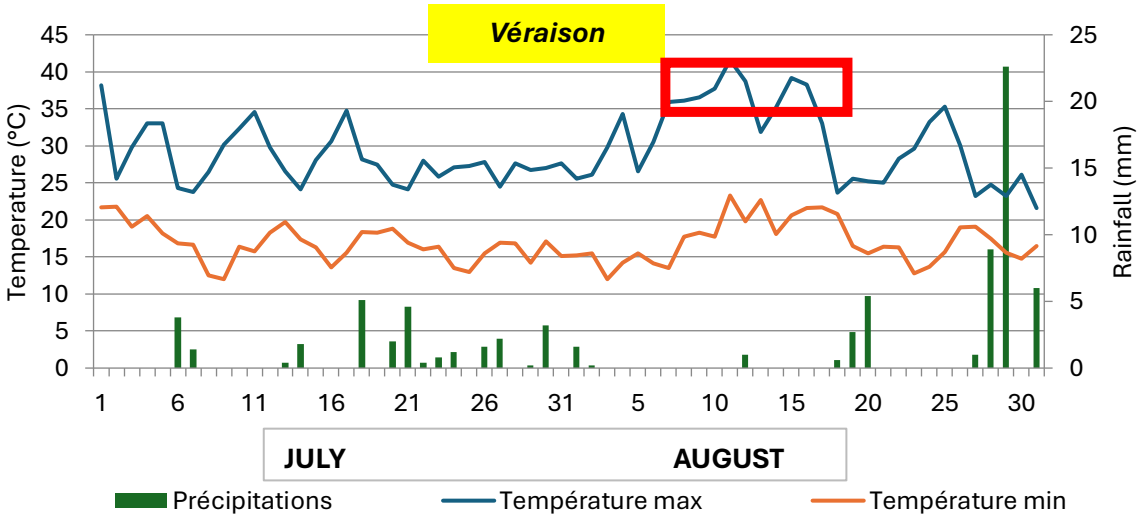

Figure 6
Daily variations in temperature and precipitation in July and August 2025
Data from Mérignac (Météo France)
Heatwave

Véraison occurred in cooler than average and slightly rainy conditions, which allowed grape development to resume, albeit slowly, and triggered the synthesis of the anthocyanins. The sudden onset of a heatwave radically altered the weather conditions and the physiology of the vines: the berries turned darker and their growth was abruptly halted.

In early August, the first analyses of the 2025 harvest revealed particularly low berry weights – the lowest in the past five years (Table II).

Table II

Comparison of the average weight of 100 berries one week after *véraison*

Vintage	**Weight of 100 berries one week after the end of *véraison***	
	Merlot	**Cabernet Sauvignon**
2025	105	76
2024	164	100
2023	156	114
2022	123	92
2021	178	131

Extremely rapid ripening, completed very early

The first analyses conducted on the red grapes after *véraison*, during the second week of August, showed very good potential.

Early, even flowering, dry conditions during fruit set, moderate water stress prior to *véraison* which halted vine growth and high temperatures boosted polyphenol synthesis and significantly limited the accumulation of compounds responsible for the grapes' herbaceous character.

As a result, from 18 August onwards, no herbaceous notes were detectable upon tasting, and the analyses confirmed the near-total absence of IBMP (Table III).

Table III

Concentrations of 3-isobutyl-2-methoxypyrazine (IBMP) (ng/L) as of 18 August 2025

Plots	**IBMP levels (g/L)**
Merlot Pessac-Léognan	Not detected
Merlot Entre-Deux-Mers	2.8
Cabernet Sauvignon Entre-Deux-Mers	Not detected
Cabernet Sauvignon Pessac-Léognan	3.4
Cabernet Sauvignon St-Emilion	2.8
Cabernet Sauvignon Médoc	2.7

From the end of *véraison* onwards, the colour potential, as assessed by the measurement of total anthocyanins (ApH1), was higher than that recorded during the 2024 harvest and the total alcohol potential (TAP) exceeded 12% abv for the Merlot and Cabernet varieties (Table IV). The summer conditions, characterised by a lack of significant rainfall and a series of days with temperatures exceeding 30°C, continued until the end of August (Figure 6). They further accelerated the ripening of the grapes, particularly the Merlots.

Ripe, healthy red grapes from late August onwards, signalling a historically early harvest

Every sample taken during the last three weeks of August confirmed the earliness of the vintage.

Very high temperatures between 10 and 20 August drastically accelerated the technological ripening of the Merlot grapes. An early and significant decline in malic acid levels was observed (Figure 7), as well as an increase in sugar levels up until 27 August. A spell of rainfall at the very end of August then slightly diluted the berries.
Despite the heatwaves, pH levels remained low until the end of August, before rising significantly (by an average of +0.2) towards the end of ripening. The figures recorded at harvest time were close to the five-year average. In the best-drained soils, signs of defoliation, shrivelling and even scorching began to appear as early as mid-August. This severe water shortage and its impact on the vineyards was a cause for concern among winegrowers, who were already worried by the particularly small size of the berries and bunches.

Until 27 August, water stress – although varying in intensity depending on the soil type – limited berry growth (Figure 8) and the ripening of the grape skins. On the last weekend of August, rain fell on grapes that had already reached full aromatic and phenolic ripeness and helped to prevent overripening – a condition that always detracts from the aromatic freshness of the wines – while also limiting crop loss by preserving the size of the berries, which were already small in this vintage (Figure 8).

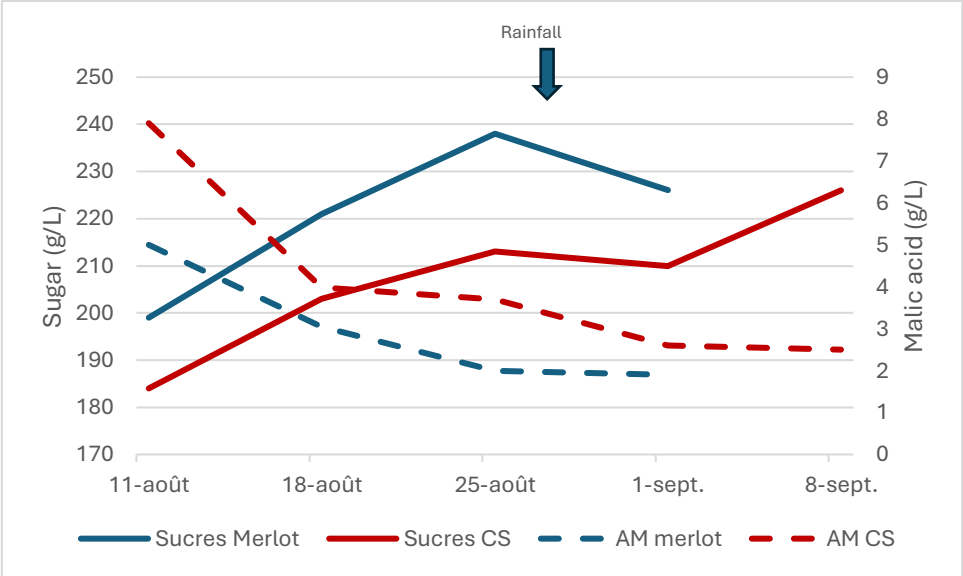

Figure 7
Variations in sugar and malic acid (AM) levels in Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes during ripening
Averages for the 5 Merlot and 5 Cabernet Sauvignon plots in the ISVV reference plots

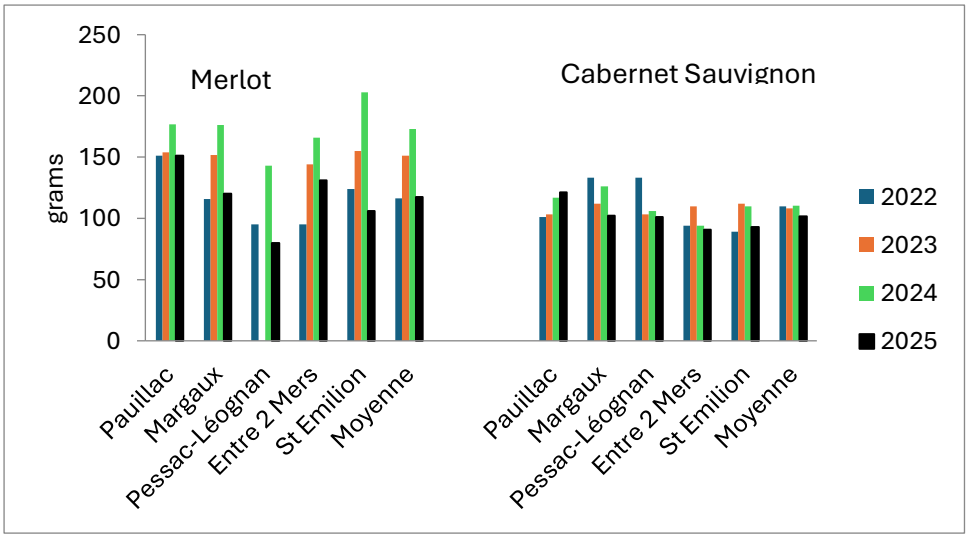

Figure 8
Berry weight of the Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes at harvest time for the last four vintages, by geographical sector

Rainfall during the last three days of August (Figure 4), which was heavy in places, triggered the start of the Merlot harvest. It helped to accelerate the ripening of the late Merlot plots and all Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. It also led to a significant increase in berry size in the week before the harvest (Figure 8) and a rise in sugar levels (+1% TPA) linked to a resumption in the breakdown of malic acid (Figure 7).

In addition, this intermittent rainfall combined with cool nights stimulated the accumulation of anthocyanins (Figure 9) and the development of the grape skins, thereby improving the colour extractability. Anthocyanins reached remarkable levels at harvest time (Table IV).

In mid-September, the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were fresh and fruity. They displayed a striking balance between sweetness and acidity, which was unusual for such a hot year. The pH levels at harvest time were among the lowest in recent years (around 3.3) while the alcohol content was around 13.3% abv. By the end of September, the vast majority of the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes had been picked, confirming the truly exceptional earliness of the 2025 vintage.

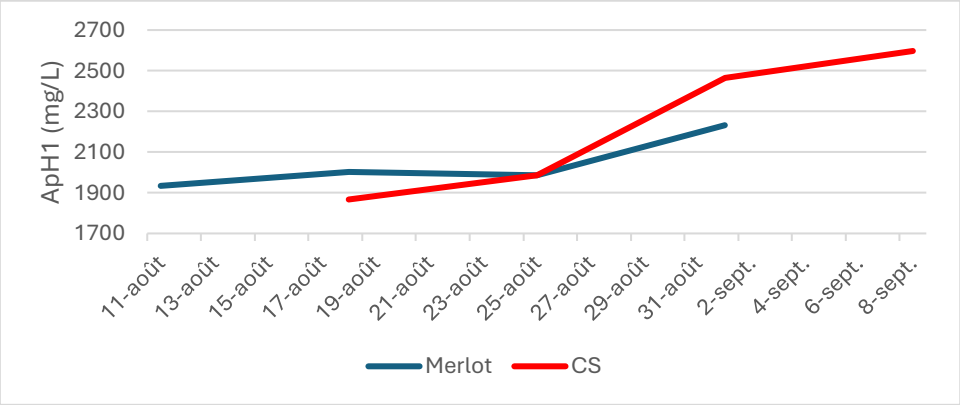

Figure 9
Variations in the total anthocyanin (ApH1) content of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes during ripening
Averages for the 5 Merlot and 5 Cabernet Sauvignon plots in the ISVV reference plots

Table IV

Variations in berry weight, sugar levels, total acidity levels and total anthocyanin levels of red wine grapes during ripening in reference plots (8 days after *véraison* and last monitoring sample)

	Weight per 100 berries (g)	Sugar (g/L)	TA (g/L H_2SO_4)	Total anthocyanins (mg/L)
2025				
11/08 *Merlot*	105	199	6.0	1934
18/08 *Cabernet Sauvignon*	83	203	5.1	1867
01/09 *Merlot*	118	226	2.4	2232
15/09 *Cabernet Sauvignon*	97	224	3.4	2574
2024				
26/08 *Merlot*	147	178	5.6	1665
02/09 *Cabernet Sauvignon*	96	168	6.8	1680
23/09 *Merlot*	172	213	3.1	1873
30/09 *Cabernet Sauvignon*	107	205	4.6	2158
2023				
28/08 *Merlot*	159	211	3.9	1734
Cabernet Sauvignon	113	191	5.5	2103
04/09 *Merlot*	154	222	3.3	1770
11/09 *Cabernet Sauvignon*	113	222	3.1	2343
2022				
22/08 *Merlot*	123	208	2.9	1751
Cabernet Sauvignon	92	184	4.2	1745
05/09 *Merlot*	122	240	2.4	1980
12/09 *Cabernet Sauvignon*	95	232	3.0	2421
2021				
31/08 *Merlot*	175	183	5.9	1359
Cabernet Sauvignon	130	175	8.4	1783
27/09 *Merlot*	176	205	3.3	1780
Cabernet Sauvignon	138	205	4.0	2138

The extreme weather conditions during the summer of 2025 also led to the early ripening of the white grapes.

The first Sauvignon Blanc grapes were thus harvested in the Sauternes region as early as 11 August (Table V), two days later than in 2022 – a historically early ripening vintage. The harvest became widespread throughout the white wine vineyards the following week.

The dry spring – which did little to replenish the soil's water reserves –, combined with excessive temperatures during the growing season, suggested that the grapes would exhibit characteristics similar to those observed in 2022: very sweet, moderately aromatic, and lacking in depth and acidity. This was not the case. The Sauvignon Blanc grapes of 2025 were sweet and surprisingly aromatic with good acidity. The pH levels in the musts were comparable to those recorded in 2024, at around 3.1 (Table VI). Occasional rainfall in late spring (early May and late June), helped to mitigate the severity of water stress, and in turn, preserve the aromatic freshness and flavours of the Sauvignon Blanc musts.

The Sémillon grapes, which were also very early-ripening, were harvested from 14 August onwards (Table IV). Although naturally less acidic than the Sauvignon Blanc grapes, they were nevertheless well-balanced. The intense and complex aromas of the wines are reminiscent of white peach, apricot and pear. They add body and richness to the blends.

The dry white wines of the 2025 vintage boast surprising freshness, brilliance and liveliness on the palate. They really are mouthwatering. The only let-down in this superb white wine vintage was the yields, which, unfortunately, rarely exceeded 20 hL/ha.

Table V

Harvest dates for dry white wine grapes in the Bordeaux region from 2014 to 2025

	Sauvignon Blanc	Sémillon
2014	6 - 12 September	12 - 20 September
2015	28 August - 6 September	5 - 11 September
2016	2 - 15 September	8 - 18 September
2017	16 August - 7 September	1 - 15 September
2018	23 August - 10 September	5 - 15 September
2019	26 August - 19 September	6 - 23 September
2020	14 August - 5 September	27 August - 10 September
2021	28 August - 18 September	5 - 24 September
2022	9 August - 2 September	13 August - 9 September
2023	12 August - 6 September	14 August - 10 September
2024	20 August -12 September	28 August - 19 September
2025	**11 August - 1 September**	**14 August - 5 September**

Table VI

Composition of Sauvignon Blanc grapes from a plot with limestone soil in the Graves region at harvest time, from 2014 to 2024

	Potential alcohol (%)	Total acidity (g/L)	pH
2014	12.3	6.9	3.04
2015	13.7	4	3.33
2016	13.4	3.6	3.32
2017	13.2	4.6	3.2
2018	13.7	4.6	3.22
2019	13	4.3	3.27
2020	13.9	4.3	3.28
2021	12.9	5	3.23
2022	13.8	3.5	3.30
2023	13.2	4.4	3.2
2024	12.5	5.4	3.1
2025	**13.4**	**4.8**	**3.1**

Particularly beneficial conditions for producing great botrytised sweet white wines

In the Sauternes region, the hot and dry conditions described above meant that, by mid-August, the grapes were ripe and in perfect condition. A few bunches of sun-dried grapes, displaying remarkable acidity, were harvested historically early, shortly before 20 August. Against this favourable backdrop, rainfall in late August and during the first half of September came at just the right time to encourage the overall spread of *Botrytis cinerea* while preventing the grapes from deteriorating and developing grey rot. Thanks to drier, windier conditions which concentrated the grapes, the harvest really got under way around 20 September (Figure 10).

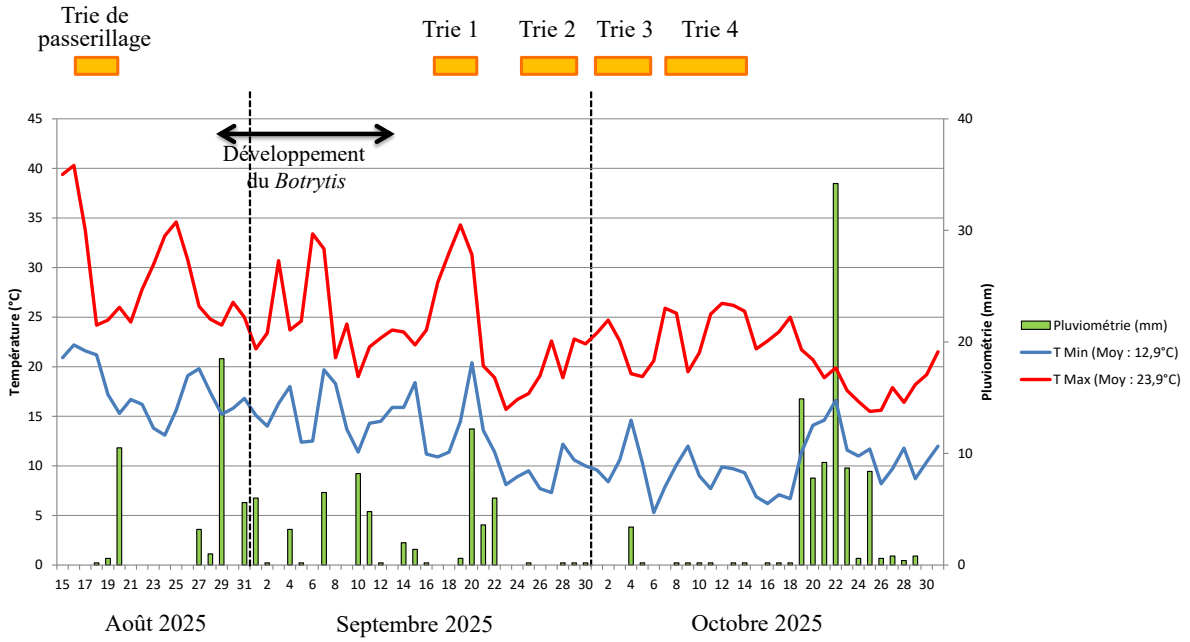

Figure 10

Daytime temperatures and precipitation from mid-August to late October 2025 in Sauternes

Chronology of the development of noble rot and the progression of passes (example)

The grapes were picked in three to four successive passes thanks to ideal weather conditions, with sugar levels varying depending on the terroir and harvest dates. The sweet white wine harvest drew to a close in mid-October and the Sauternes winegrowers were delighted with the results. Although potential yields were initially low, the amount of berries picked was exceptionally high, resulting in thoroughly satisfactory grape volumes. The musts were perfectly clear and boasted great aromatic potential. Their diverse, complementary characteristics foreshadowed blends with excellent complexity.

Brilliant and aromatic dry whites, full-bodied and well-balanced reds and exciting sweet white wines

Following a particularly early and brief harvest, the 2025 vintage appeared to be a resounding success for the Bordeaux wine region. The swiftness of the harvest can be attributed both to even ripening throughout the vineyards and the small quantities picked. Unlike in previous vintages, the low yields were not a consequence of frost, vine diseases or drought. They had been anticipated from the start of the growing season due to the small size of the flower clusters, which resulted from the poor conditions observed during floral initiation in the year prior to harvest.

These low yields somewhat dampened the success of the vintage, but did not affect its quality. It is rare enough to be worth noting that all wine styles are remarkably promising.

Harvested early, the white grapes intended to produce dry white wines withstood the summer heat surprisingly well. Although these wines lack the crystalline tension of the 2024 vintage, their tartaric acid content lends them a liveliness that perfectly balances out their soft texture. The Sauvignon Blanc wines are highly distinctive, with a fairly fruity (citrus, guava) rather than herbaceous profile while the Sémillon wines are full-bodied and vibrant.

The five prerequisites for a great red wine vintage in Bordeaux, which we often mention in our reports – namely early, rapid flowering and fruit set, the end of vegetative growth before *véraison*, full ripening of the various grape varieties thanks to optimum photosynthesis until the harvest, and good weather conditions allowing each plot to be harvested at the desired level of ripeness –, were generally met in 2025. This is certainly something to be commended, and the outstanding overall quality of the vintage's red wines attests to this. Nevertheless, localised showers during ripening and in the run-up to the harvest contributed to fluctuations between regions, appellations and sometimes even within individual estates. As always, only careful tasting will help to avoid making sweeping generalisations. However, a few trends are already becoming apparent at the start of ageing.

Rainfall in late August prevented the Merlot grapes from overripening. They display remarkable fruitiness and plenty of freshness despite their natural softness. On soils with good water regulation (limestone and clay-limestone), some of them develop superb depth. The conditions this year were propitious to the synthesis of phenolic compounds, which, combined with the small size of the berries, produced concentrated, well-structured and distinctive Cabernet wines. In the greatest terroirs, they generally boast a very full body and high-quality tannins. The very best reach an impressive standard, rivalling the finest vintages while maintaining moderate alcohol levels, when excess extraction of the naturally abundant polyphenols was avoided.

In the Sauternes region, the vintage unfolded according to a near-ideal scenario, with the grapes ripening early and in perfect condition. The development of noble rot was rapid and widespread, and although patience was required to allow the grapes to ripen fully (as is often the case), the weather conditions made it possible to harvest the purest grapes in several successive passes. The resulting wines are vibrant, combining aromatic brilliance with hints of candied citrus and white flowers, and underpinned by a refined texture. The final grapes were picked around mid-October, signalling the end of a year that will be remembered as a real success for the Bordeaux wine region.