

LE PIN 2011: FUTURES TASTINGS

2011 was a rollercoaster vintage: it needed lots of courage and led to periods of calm contentment as well as several worrying moments before arriving at its destination; a journey not without excitement or attraction.

The winter was dry and cool and the spring even drier but warm. Do you remember how we were all surprised by the warm, sunny weather during “en primeur” week last year? Flowering took place under ideal conditions at the end of May; two weeks earlier than normal - so early that we feared we would be harvesting in August. At the end of June there was a violent heat wave with temperatures around 40°C. Luckily in July the temperatures dropped considerably (the coolest July in 30 years) which helped us save the vintage. August brought rain at the beginning and at the end of the month and between these two periods it was hot and sunny. The big decision now was when to begin harvesting.

At Le Pin we picked on Monday 12th and the morning of the 13th September under sunny, blue skies. For the first time the wine was made in the new winery created by Belgian architect Paul Robbrecht. The 2.70 hectares were divided between seven small stainless steel vats varying in size from 15 to 45 hectoliter capacity. These small temperature controlled vats allowed us to reach a level of precision in the selection of the various parcels which we have never before experienced at Le Pin. The irregularity of the vintage, due to the vagaries of the summer weather, obliged us to do a very strict berry by berry selection of the grapes.

Le Pin 2011 was vinified as always using a very gentle extraction and a short maceration period of two weeks. The wine is currently aging in 100% new oak barrels from Seguin Moreau and Taransaud. At this stage of its development, we note an attractive freshness, a good intensity of red fruit aromas and great balance between the silky tannins, medium alcohol and fresh acidity.

Vital statistics:

Blend: 100% Merlot from five small contiguous parcels

Crop thinning and deleafing on the east side of the rows: 27th to 29th July

Harvest: Monday 12th and morning of Tuesday 13th September

Yields: 35 hectoliters per hectare pH: 3.7

Total acidity: 3.30 Alcohol: 13.3°