

Pomerol, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019

**AB** In October, you were clearly delighted with the quality of the 2018 vintage. Are you still saying it's on a par with 2016?

**Marielle Cazaux** Yes, I am. It's definitely a great vintage like 2016.

**AB** Would you still say that the 2018 La Conseillante has similar qualities to the 2016?

**Marielle Cazaux** Yes and no. In some ways it bears a similarity, especially in terms of aromatics, precision and overall balance, but it's also different.



**AB** In what way?

**Marielle Cazaux** 2018 is in fact a big wine. It has more concentration with bags of tannins. 2016 had great tannic structure, but amazingly the 2018 had a tannin index of 100, which is very high and in fact unparalleled at La Conseillante.

**AB** Was this because of the lower yield?

**Marielle Cazaux** In fact, the profile of the wine was determined both by the long rainy period before the summer, which ensured fresh, fruit aromatics, and the severe summer drought and hot weather, which brought about concentration in the berries. When you compare the 2018 vine cycle with 2016, the rainy weather was similar, but the drought was less marked in 2016. And then towards the end of the 2018 vine cycle, we had a dry east wind which concentrated the juices further, and the result was of course a lower yield. It was interesting to observe our trials of integral fermentation. We usually ferment one barrique of Merlot and one of Cabernet Franc. In 2018 we needed the equivalent of 3 barriques to make 2, because the juice was so little.

**AB** How low was the yield?

**Marielle Cazaux** At harvest-time I had predicted 35 hl/ha rather than the usual 38 hl/ha. The final yield was in fact just 32 hl/ha. By the way, this wasn't all due to the drought because some of our Merlot vines suffered from poor fruit setting.

**AB** These characteristics of concentration and tannins, do they come to the fore when you taste the wine today?

**Marielle Cazaux** No, the tannins are beautifully integrated. The sensation you get is one of freshness and at the same time opulence and richness. The tannins are suave and velvety. When my boss tasted the wine the other day he just went "wow!" It's so good and delicious to taste even now. It's really aromatic and already seductive.

**AB** It sounds like a vintage that has all the qualities to age a very long time but which is already delicious to taste now. The perfect wine! Why do you say it's only on a par with 2016? Surely it's better, isn't it?

**Marielle Cazaux** That's a difficult judgement to make. It would be very pretentious of me to say that when 2016 is also such a great year. It will be interesting to hear what the primeurs tasters say. They are the ones to make that judgement.

**AB** Never in your wildest dreams would you have imagined back in June that you'd be considering that 2018 might be better than the 2016!

**Marielle Cazaux** We really had to battle with the conditions, and maybe that's why we all feel very special about this vintage and may not be objective enough to judge its quality compared with 2016. However, what I must add is that Michel Rolland, who is coming here to taste again in February, believes the 2018 is as good as the 1947; and he should know pretty well the quality of the 1947 because it's his year of birth!

**AB** You mentioned the 1947 a few months back, because of similarities between the two vine cycles...

**Marielle Cazaux** I'm really looking forward to investigating further and comparing the weather conditions in greater detail, it could be revealing. Michel however is only comparing the two wines -their opulence, fullness and intensity.

**AB** It's curious that the opulence you now find in the 2018 wasn't obvious during the vinification. Vintages never cease to surprise!

**Marielle Cazaux** I certainly expected the tannic power in the 2018, because of the data from the lab, but the opulence and flesh of the 2018 was a surprise for me.

**AB** And a nice one!

**Marielle Cazaux** Yes because when you have tannic power without the velvety texture it's not as seductive. In 2018, we have both qualities.

**AB** Could you say then that the 2010 had the power but not the sexy charm of the 2018?

**Marielle Cazaux** 2010 was a terrific vintage, and it's true that it had some austerity when it was young. I believe that today we would vinify the 2010 differently and go for less extraction to try and bring out a more seductive side in its youth. But that's easy to say in hindsight.

**AB** Balance has certainly come back into fashion since 2010!

**Marielle Cazaux** That's great for consumers because they can now enjoy great Bordeaux vintages when they are relatively young. Actually, it was amazing to see on Instagram at Christmas people enjoying vintages as young as 2015 from top properties. Our aim should be to make wines drinkable at all stages of their development –at primeurs time, also when they are young in bottle, but they should be capable of ageing a very long time too. We can often achieve that. 2018 will be a great example to follow.