

Pomerol, 17th January 2019

AB You predicted at harvest-time that your 2018 would show a mix of classicism and opulence due to the contrasting weather conditions of rain in spring and drought in summer. Many of your colleagues on the Bordeaux right bank today appear to be describing their 2018 vintage in a similar way. Now that the malos are finished, how do you see the Beauregard 2018?



Vincent Priou This vintage has actually surpassed all my expectations. It's an extraordinary vintage, and I mean that literally. I've never known a Beauregard like it.

AB You were kind of comparing it in October to the 1998 Beauregard, a vintage which you have always loved and which for you has almost legendary status. Will it really be as good as that?

Vincent Priou I'm convinced. And you know, I'm not the only producer in Pomerol making comparisons with legendary years. Some are talking about 1982. Apparently, the berries were tiny in that vintage too.

AB Do you draw that parallel too?

Vincent Priou I wasn't in Pomerol at that time, I was too young. But it would appear that there are similarities. Michel Rolland has agreed on that.

AB If I remember correctly, the crop was bigger in 1982.

Vincent Priou Yes, 2018 was a smaller harvest.

AB And vine-growing and wine-making methods were less sophisticated...

Vincent Priou With all the precision we've introduced today in the vines and in the cellars, we can really watch the development of the 2018 with real excitement and optimism.

AB And is the Merlot as extraordinary as the Cabernet Franc?

Vincent Priou Without a shadow of a doubt.

AB Only two years ago, Bordeaux producers were raving about the 2016. How can the 2018 be even better than that?

Vincent Priou 2016 was a terrific vintage, but to my mind 2018 is a notch above.

AB In what way?

Vincent Priou It has the qualities of the 2016 but with extra flesh and a touch of opulence. That's how I see it today. It's only January, and we never totally know how a wine will evolve, but the signs are hugely promising. When a vintage is so good at this early stage, it rarely, if ever, disappoints later.

AB I'm just wondering about the style of this Beauregard 2018. When the new owners took over, your brief was to preserve the fine, elegant Beauregard style but to bring out in the wines a denser mid-palate, a fleshier body. You've apparently achieved that in 2018. But is it a result of the vintage and its conditions, or is it due to a different winemaking approach?

Vincent Priou It's a trait of this vintage, that's for sure. But it's not just that. In order to bring out those characteristics in the balanced and precise way that we seek it also depends on the work done in the vines and the cellars.

AB Was it easier to do that in 2018?

Vincent Priou It was easier in 2018 than in 2017, yes.

AB In such a great vintage, aren't you tempted to forget the Second Wine and put the whole lot into the First Wine?

Vincent Priou Not in the slightest. Beauregard and Benjamin are two distinct terroirs with two different profiles: the first richer and denser, the second very fresh and a bit fruitier in its youth, but less full and fleshy. However, the quality of the Benjamin 2018 will almost certainly be on a par with certain vintages of the First Wine.

AB You anticipated a lower than average yield, because of the drought conditions. Around 35hl/ha?

Vincent Priou It was a shade lower, in fact. It was 34hl/ha. I would have loved 38hl/ha in such a great year. But I'm not complaining!

AB Were both the Merlot and the Cabernet Franc crop sizes affected?

Vincent Priou Yes, yields were a bit lower in both.

AB How about the acidities in the end? Were the pHs around 3.70 as you forecast?

Vincent Priou Actually a bit higher, around 3.75/3.80. The acidities were a bit lower than we expected.

AB Which for Pomerol is par for the course, isn't it?

Vincent Priou Absolutely. And in terms of taste, the lots are beautifully fresh and balanced.

AB Was there anything that surprised you after the malos, apart from the high quality of the vintage?

Vincent Priou The nice surprise was how pleasantly the lots were already tasting.

AB Isn't that what producers said about the 2016 vintage?

Vincent Priou That's right. And I believe that during the primeurs, the 2018 will be absolutely delicious to taste. How can it not be with its combination of 2016 freshness and aromatics and 2015 flesh and opulence?

By the way, the Pomerol UGC primeurs tasting will be held this year at Château Beauregard. Pomerol Séduction will be at Château La Conseillante.