

CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC

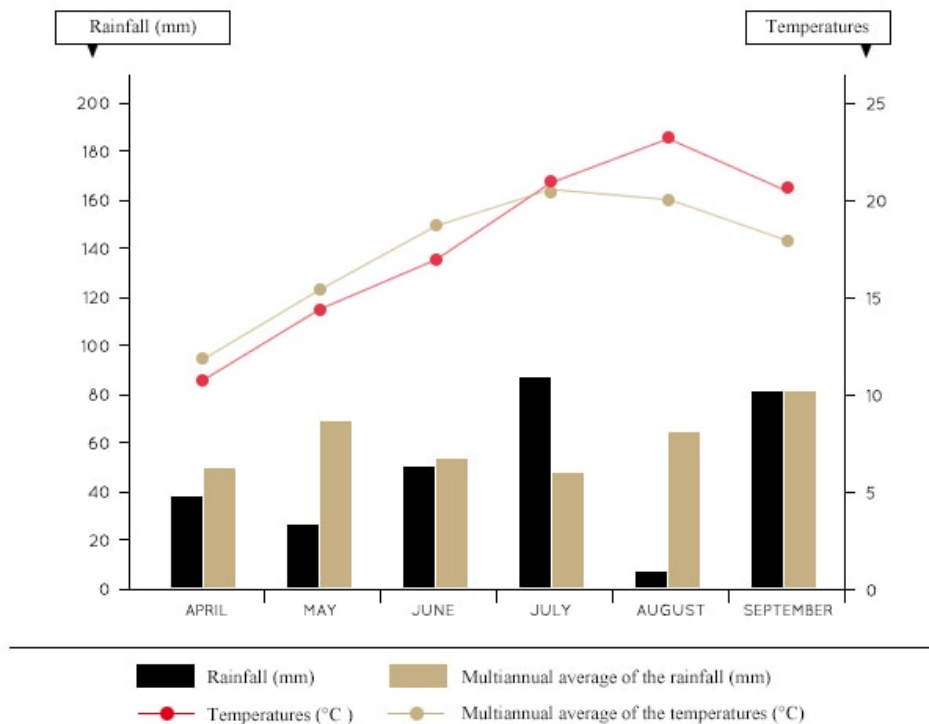
1991

1991 will be long remembered, but not for a good reason. A frost on the 21st of April wiped out 95% of vine shoots, resulting in a crop of just 7 hectolitres per hectare. Preferring to produce a good Petit Cheval rather than a grand vin beneath its usual level, no wine was sold under the Cheval Blanc name in 1991.

TEMPERATURES AND RAINFALL

The heavy frost on the 21st of April left its mark, destroying nearly all existing shoots, which were 10-15 cm long at that time. Thereafter, the weather was cool, but rather dry until late June, then warm and wet in July. Fine, dry weather set in during the month of August, lasting until the 20th of September. It was rainy at the end of that month, but a lull in early October enabled the harvest to take place under good conditions.

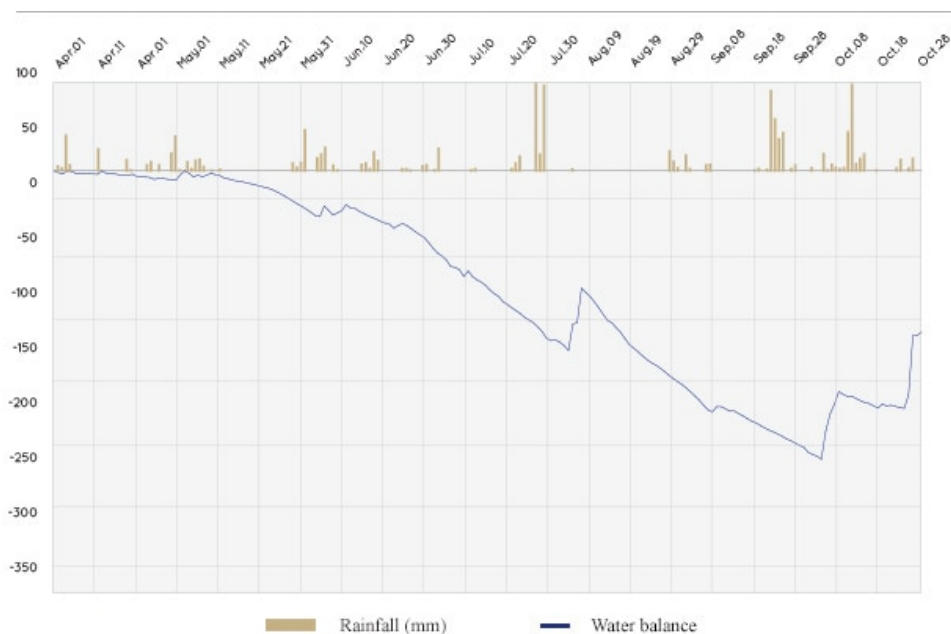
1991 : TEMPERATURES AND RAINFALL COMPARED WITH NORMAL VALUES IN SAINT-EMILION



WATER BALANCE

There was a water deficit in July, and this increased as time went on, despite showers in July, so that the soil was quite dry by late September.

1991 WATER BALANCE



GROWING SEASON

Thanks to a very mild month of March, bud break was early (the very end of March for Merlot). The frost on the 21st of April wiped out 95% of the young shoots. Growth did not start up again until the last ten days of May due to cold, disturbed weather. Flowering was spread out over one month (10th of June – 10th of July), as was véraison. The harvest took place from the 30th of September to the 2nd of October for Merlot and from the 7th to the 9th of October for Cabernet Franc. Ripeness was very uneven from one bunch to the next. However, 1991 might have been a very good vintage if there had not been the terrible frost in spring.

	Merlot		Cabernet franc	
	Begin	End	Begin	End
1991 harvest dates	September, 30th	October, 2nd	October, 7th	October, 9th
Average harvest dates (1986-2014)	September, 19th	September, 27th	September, 27th	October, 5th

RIPENING AND YIELDS

Overripe bunches from the first generation and underripe bunches from the second side by side called for very rigorous sorting. This was enhanced by the arrival of a sorting table at Cheval Blanc in 1991. Only four vats were filled, for an average yield of just 7 hectolitres per hectare. Sugar content in Merlot was satisfactory, but this was not the case for Cabernet Franc. Total acidity in the latter was also somewhat higher than usual. While the low yields led to good concentration of phenolic compounds, the underripe tannin had a level of methoxypyrazines (molecules responsible for the aroma of sweet pepper) above the perception threshold.

1991 yield (hl/ha)	Average yield (1946 to 2014)
6.9	33.9