Harvests 2026 – Château Fourcas Hosten – Médoc - Bordeaux

The Hottest and Driest Vintage in Bordeaux Since 1893

Château Fourcas Hosten completed its harvest on Tuesday, September 22, later than in many other estates from the Médoc thanks to their later-ripening terroir. The harvest stretched out over time—a real luxury in 2026—allowing the winemaker to focus on ripeness without the risk of bad weather. This year, ripeness levels are exceptionally advanced, and the wines are shaping up to be concentrated yet magnificent. The only downside is the very small crop.

The winter was generally mild, apart from a few periods of sub-zero temperatures at the end of December and during the first week of January. In terms of rainfall, both winter and spring were relatively wet, with rain continuing until mid-May. Budbreak occurred very early.

Two events resulted in an initial loss of crop:

1. **Frost during the night of March 26–27** devastated five hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon planted on gravel soils, when the buds were at the "budburst" stage.
2. **Flowering coincided with the first May heatwave**, causing the flower caps to fall prematurely. As a result, not all of the inflorescences were successfully fertilized, producing loose clusters due to the reduced number of berries.

After mid-May, conditions became dry, with very high temperatures regularly exceeding 30°C. Cumulative rainfall amounted to just 20 mm in June, 17 mm in July and 20 mm in August. This rain sometimes fell over as many as ten very light showers, which neither cooled conditions nor compensated for the high level of evapotranspiration from the soils.

Véraison progressed well, but the harvested berries are small. Cabernet berry weight has fallen to just 0.75 grams, compared with the usual 1.2 grams.

The result is an exceptionally low yield. Nevertheless, the vintage promises highly concentrated wines, with outstanding levels of ripeness—levels that have never been achieved so fully across all grape varieties.

The parcels situated on Listrac's clay-limestone plateau proved somewhat more resilient to the extreme conditions, and the estate deliberately waited for the grapes to reach full maturity before harvesting.

Eloi Jacob has been surprised by the vines' ability to withstand such exceptionally hot and dry weather. He is also very pleasantly surprised by the quality of the musts, which show no trace of jammy or heavy characteristics. One possible explanation is that the first heatwave arrived particularly early, in May. This may have allowed the vines to adapt by activating mechanisms that helped them withstand the subsequent periods of extreme heat, limiting berry shrivelling and sunburn.

To adapt to these climatic conditions, canopy trimming was kept to a minimum this year in order to provide greater shade for the grape clusters. In the grass-covered vineyard soils, the vegetation was used as much as possible to create a natural mulch—even if relatively sparse—to reduce reflected heat and preserve as much soil moisture as possible.

Looking further ahead, new Cabernet Sauvignon plantings on the gravel soils of the Fourcas lieu-dit are being established using rootstocks selected for their ability to withstand drought.