



**December 2007**

## **Seasons Greetings to All Our Clients**

We thank you for your business in 2007.

2007 was a landmark year at Chateau Camplazens. Our wines won an impressive list of awards; see "Recompenses 2007" attached.

Thanks to the publicity surrounding these awards and the diligent efforts of the Camplazens Sales & Marketing Team, our client base expanded significantly in 2007. We now have over 50 clients in 22 countries. The Camplazens Brand now has a truly international presence.

The harvest this year yielded less grapes than usual but a significantly higher quality of juice. There is a detailed account attached to this email which has been written by Yann Claustre our Chef du Culture and Winemaker.

We have now maintained many of our prices constant for several years against a background of rising costs in all aspects of our business and significant investment to improve quality. We are therefore raising the prices of some of our wines in 2008. The 2008 Tariff is attached.

To help us with our forward planning, we would be most grateful if you could contact us in the New Year to discuss your requirements for 2008. We will also be most pleased to discuss any support you may require to support and build sales across the range of Camplazens wines.

We will be featuring our wines at Hall 4 at Vinisud in Montpellier, Feb 18-20 and hope to see you there. In the meantime we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

**Susan & Peter Close**

## **The 2007 Chateau Camplazens Harvest A small harvest of exceptional quality**

The harvest of 2007 was of exceptional quality and was characterized by its lower than normal yields, down 30% - 35% when compared to 2006. This meant that the Syrah yields were as low as 25hl/ha, the Marselan 30hl/ha, the Grenache at around 35hl/ha and the Carignan at 45hl/ha.

These lower yields combined with good weather and a long ripening period meant that the grapes had greater concentration of fruit and minerality and will produce some stunning wines.

### **2007 is Camplazens Best Harvest in Ten Years**

#### **Why were the yields low?**

The reasons for the lower than normal yields for the 2007 harvest started as early as the summer of 2006. The number of flowering sites at the base of the buds which determines the number of flowers and hence the future number of bunches of grapes is largely set in the summer of the preceding year. The cool weather and lack of rainfall from April – September of 2006 was particularly unfavourable for floral initiation and had a significant influence on the flowering initiation for 2007. The further rain and high winds at the time of the flowering in April 2007 again reduced the buds that formed producing even lower overall yields.

#### **The Weather**

A mild early spring gave every indication of an early harvest, possibly one week early but as the ripening season progressed it was clear that the harvest would be actually be prolonged. Regular rainfall throughout the spring was welcome but exposed the vines to a high risk of disease, particularly mildew, however due to the good health of the vines and selective treatment all problems were averted. As usual, the summer was dry right up to the harvest with climatic conditions favorable for slow and consistent ripening. The grapes were able to reach full maturity both from the perspective of sugar and acidity and also phenolic ripeness with almost full and complete ripening of the pips. The result was a harvest that exhibited complex and intense aromas, excellent skin color, and ripe harmonized tannins.

#### **The Harvest**

The favorable weather conditions and the absence of disease or rot enabled us to harvest at the moment of optimum ripeness. The **Viognier** was the first to be picked. This took place on September 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 a.m. so the grapes could be pressed when they were still cold in order to preserve the aromas. The must was then immediately transferred to the fermentation tank, thereby limiting exposure to oxygen and maintaining the quality of the fruit.

The first red to be harvested was a parcel of young **Syrah** on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The Syrah was also harvested early in the morning so that the grapes could be cold macerated in the temperature-controlled vats prior to the start of the alcoholic fermentation.

The older **Syrah** was harvested 15 to 17 days later.

The **Grenache** was harvested during the final days of September and the first week of October and at the same time the Old Carignan was hand picked for fermentation by Carbonic Maceration.

Finally, the Marselan, which is normally the last to mature, was brought in to the winery on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

With the exception of the **Carignan**, all the red grapes were harvested by machine. Machine harvesting of mature grapes means that essentially all of the stems remain on the vines while the machine shakes off the berries. This is a most efficient separation of the grapes from their stems and when followed by mechanical destemming, which can now be performed on the harvesting machine itself, means that essentially “clean” grapes are delivered to the winery. Nonetheless, at reception the grapes are de-stemmed a second time to ensure the almost complete removal of any residual green vegetable matter before being transferred to the fermentation vats.

In 2007 we harvested 19 parcels of vines in order of their maturity. The must was then divided up in to separate vats with the objective of achieving a gradation of quality of each grape type. This year the harvest comprised:

20 ha Syrah from 8 parcels fermented in 6 Concrete Epoxy-Lined Vats  
8 ha Grenache from 5 parcels fermented in 3 Concrete Epoxy-Lined Vats  
5 ha Marselan from 1 parcel fermented in 3 Concrete Epoxy-Lined Vats  
1.2 ha of Old Carignan from 3 parcels, in 1 Concrete Epoxy-Lined Vat.  
1.2 ha of Viognier from 2 parcels, 30% fermented new French Oak barrels and the remainder fermented a single Stainless Steel Vat before being blended together.

### **The Wine Making**

The extended harvesting period allowed more attention to be given to the wine making process. In 2002 we had modernized and extended the cave and installed 10 pairs of vertically separated dual fermentation tanks. The tanks enable us to perform controlled fermentation and precision management of the maceration of the grape skins, which rise to the top of the mixture in the vats. For each vat this involves a combination of the sustained regular mechanical turning over of the cap (piegaje) and pumping the juice from the lower tank over the cap in the upper tank to obtain optimum extraction of the soft tannins from the skins. In this way we avoid any risk of over-extraction of the harsh tannins that can be present if some of the pips have not fully ripened. This year we were also able to successfully conclude the Carbonic Maceration of our Old Carignan.