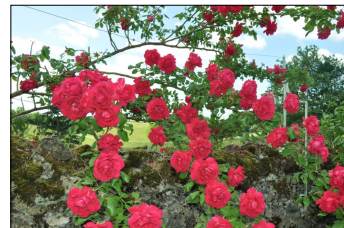
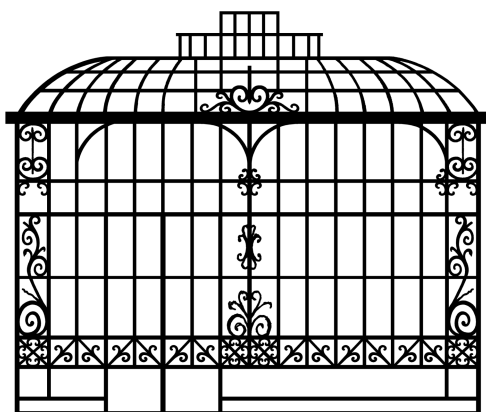


CHATEAU CARBONNEAU



News N° 12 November 2011



Suzanne and her crew



Filming



Hugo and Diana at Vinexpo



8th Estate Winery- Hong Kong

Lots of activity and lots of people this year – the highlights being Vinexpo, the television film crew from Arté and the sale of our grapes to Hong Kong.

A difficult year

But before going into any more detail, a word about this rather unusual year weather wise. The locals are comparing it to the drought of 1976. Between March and July we had barely 10mm of rain and luckily at the end of August a couple of good downpours saved the day. As a result the hay stack is 50% down on last year and the vines grew and cropped very irregularly. We have had to ration feed for the herd in order to reserve some for the winter and in the vineyard we tilled every second row to keep the competition with the grass to a minimum. The harvest began on the 2nd of September with the Sauvignon Blanc and finished on the 6th of October with the reds. It was much earlier than usual and more like in 2003. The quality of the wine reflects this – the areas of the vineyard that suffered most from the drought were lighter in fruit but more concentrated and those that weren't affected have produced lovely soft, full-bodied wines, perfect for a fruity Cuvée Classique.

Vinexpo and beyond

Vinexpo is *the* International Wine trade fair. It takes place every two years in Bordeaux and we took part for the first time this year sharing a stand with four other vineyards from different appellations. Over four days we met buyers from all over the world which allowed us to have them try our wines and develop new markets. It is an ideal way to stay up with the market and realise how much the Chinese are interested in Bordeaux wines.

On the subject we have had the exciting opportunity to sell 30 tons of our grapes to the only winery in Hong Kong. Following a trip to New Zealand in February, with a stopover in Hong Kong, we visited the 8th Estate Winery which is situated in an industrial building down town. They have already bought grapes from Australia and America in the past and now they will produce a French style vintage with Carbonneau. Of course it won't be called Chateau Carbonneau but we do hope it might lead to an opening for us into the Asian market.

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Blonde of Aquitaine



Anna and Afua, our helpers



Breakfast on the terrace



Chambre du Parc



Anna et Jacquie



Tea Leaf



Carbonneau from the air

A few awards

2011 has also brought several awards for our wine. The Sequoia 2009 was awarded a bronze medal at the Bordeaux Wine Fair and also a mention in the Guide Hachette. Cuvée Lulu and Cuvée Margot are still as popular as ever and the 2011 vintage will be available at the beginning of 2012. A very big thank you to all our loyal friends and acquaintances who helped to handpick the Sauvignon Blanc and give us the opportunity to spend a very special day together. Anyone interested in helping next year should let us know in advance.

Château and activities

As far as the B&B is concerned, we had a great time again this year. Firstly we were joined by Anna Worthington, a young New Zealander from Christchurch who spent four months with us helping with everything from cleaning rooms, designing flyers, painting signs to cooking. We won't forget her efficiency, her smile and her sense of humour - not to mention her baking! Together we started our tea room, 'Tea Leaf' and three afternoons a week we offered tea, cake and scones under the trees in the park. We didn't have much luck with the weather however, as the temperature dropped from 36° to 17° in the first week of July. The glass house came into its own and lots of people ended up drinking their tea under the banana leaves!

We were very lucky to have the return visit from many guests and we have made plenty of new friends. As usual our guest list encompasses the whole world: Brazil, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Italy, China and Hong Kong not to mention all our English and French guests. We now work with some new tourist guides: 'Maisons d'Hôtes de Caractères' based in Belgium and les 'Itinéraires de Charlotte' in Bordeaux. We also had a mention in the Flybe in-flight magazine over the summer. Our eldest son Hugo worked very hard to help prepare Vinexpo and for the occasion has created a Facebook page for the chateau. Even though I'm still a little challenged by all the technology it's a great way to let everyone know what we're up to. I also have plans to start a blog in order to write about all those unforgettable moments during the year and to help me remember them for posterity.

Finally

And finally the highlight for the year has to be the visit from a German film crew from the television channel Arté. Led by the presenter Susanne Gebhardt they came to prepare a pilot programme on the Bordeaux region seen through a stay at Chateau Carbonneau. The whole family took part: Pierre, Lucie and Anna were filmed sailing at Arcachon and climbing the Dune de Pyla. I was filmed in the chateau rooms and with Margot wandering through Bordeaux and Wilfrid in the winery and even flying over Carbonneau in an ultralight! Not to mention Donut who managed to appear in most scenes! A very big thank you to all the guests we had staying during this time and who played their 'roles' at breakfast and dinner so naturally and professionally.

We're now closed until the beginning of March and the winter projects are starting to take form. They include a new rose arbour in the park, revamping the pool surrounds, the entrance to the chateau and kilometres of curtains. Just the thing to help pass the rainy, foggy days waiting for next spring.

Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to all and looking forward to seeing you next year.