

SPRING 2011 NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

Dear Member,

Greetings from Château Fonplegade! It's a wonderful time of year in St. Emilion and here at the winery as we begin turning the page from one growing season to the next. The days are serene, yet quietly busy, as our Technical Director Eloi guides the pruning of the last vines. In the winery, our Winemaker Franck tends to the maturation of our lovely 2010 vintage, while a new energy infuses our tasting room with addition of a talented new individual—Virginie—who is busy preparing the latest wine shipments. For their part, Mr. & Mrs. Adams are overseeing the final details of our highly anticipated debut Fleur de Fonplegade Rosé release, selecting the right cork, bottle, and elegant label for this special wine to wear.

A passion for detail is a fundamental part of great winemaking. Thanks to his 20 years of experience, Franck has the expertise and insight to select the best supplies to guarantee the utmost in wine quality. Though the character of Fonplegade is rooted in the soil, there is more to the story than climate, grape varieties and how long the wines are aged. Our selection of barrels is also a decisive factor! Barrels improve and enrich our wines, both in terms of taste and structure. At Fonplegade, we source barrels from approximately eight different cooperages to enhance the complexity of our wines. While our selection of barrels is diverse, we always use 100% new French oak barrels for Château Fonplegade.

French oak is universally recognized as the most desirable wood for the creation of wine barrels. We use oak from sustainably grown forests, including Limousin, Allier and Tronçais. When selecting our oak, we also look at growing conditions, tree shape, thinness, porosity of the wood and tannin content. For our wines, we favor oaks that impart additional tannins, while contributing to a full, rich body, roundness and great aging potential. The toast level of the barrels is another key consideration. Whether it is for Château Fonplegade, Fleur de Fonplegade or Château L'Enclos, Franck prefers barrels of light-to-medium toast. Soft toast preserves the freshness of the fruit and adds subtle oak flavors such as sweet vanilla, cocoa and spice.

One of the very finest cooperages Fonplegade works with is Tonnellerie Quintessence. With the arrival of this newsletter, some of you will have already had the pleasure of visiting their workshop as part of our Spring Pick Up Reception. Tonnellerie Quintessence combines centuries-old French traditions with modern technology.

We were proud to work with this esteemed cooperage to launch "Fleur de Quintessence," a new premium barrel for aging the world's finest wines at Château Fonplegade beginning with the 2009 vintage. Recent tastings of our 2009 wines have shown the spectacular results of using this new barrel. Its artistry, craftsmanship, French heritage and exceptional wood source have helped to set a new standard in our winemaking, while establishing Fleur de Quintessence's as the cooperage's icon barrel.

Because we know that time and distance make it difficult for many of you to join us at our release receptions, we decided to hold a drawing for two complimentary magnums (one for a US club member, and one for a European club member) at our Spring Pick Up Reception... so if you get a pleasant call in the days ahead, don't be too surprised!

Finally, with this Spring Newsletter you will be receiving your wine shipment of the 2007 Château Fonplegade and 2007 Fleur de Fonplegade. Though the 2007 growing season in Bordeaux has not earned the same focus from the press as vintages like 2005 and 2009, for demanding châteaux with the savoir-faire to coax greatness from their vines, it was an excellent year. We are very proud of these wines, and as always, we would love to know what you think about them.

Thank you for your loyalty. I wish you great tastings!

Rachida HAMMOUCH
Fonplegade Wine Club & Boutique Manager
Bordeaux, France.