



# SAINT CHRISTOLY

**T**he official company name: "G.F.A. HÉRAUD et Filles" says it all!! Over the last 6 generations, a family has worked together, with the daughters of each generation playing an important role – past and present, whilst the youngest generation of daughters is still too young at the moment to be yet involved. Emphasis is placed on the role and influence of the female touch and this extends to the wine itself.

Hervé Héraud is surrounded by a couple of dynamic, enthusiastic young daughters, Cathy and Sandrine, who are totally involved in the everyday running and the overall survival of the property. In fact, they are very much responsible for the healthy state of affairs at this Northern Médoc, 28 hectares property, not neglecting their father's role in preparation the way.

The key words are modernisation and economy – finding the exact balance in the wine, achieving success at being small and yet to make quality wine at a competitive price. Thanks to a policy of direct sales and a modest, but modern, marketing strategy, Château Saint Christoly has created a faithful nugget of clients. Since 1979, Hervé and his daughters have transformed the quality and potential of the property.

Immediate attention was given to the 71,66 acres of vineyards, stretching over the slopes descending to the Gironde estuary, thus benefiting from its temperate influence and the specific micro climate that it creates. The vineyard is planted with 45% Merlot and 55% Cabernet Sauvignon. The average age of the vines is around 25 years. The soil is gravelly with chalky clay, some clayey sand and gravelly sand. Traditional viticulture is combined with modern techniques to ensure quality and the sustaining the equilibrium with Nature. Double Guyau pruning, controlled green cover, treatment only when necessary, deleafing forming the basis.

Cathy Héraud studied viticulture and oenology and keeps herself abreast developments by regularly attending courses dealing with specific aspects. Sandrine returned to the château after a literature degree and spent some time studying in England, which is turning out to be useful experience when it comes to marketing and promotion.

Cathy is responsible for vinification and representation at trade fairs, whilst Sandrine looks after initial client contact, the administration and marketing. The secret remains that everybody is at ease at any task on the property, from tending the vine to selling the bottled product.

Château Christoly share a vintage machine with two other properties, economising on the phenomenal cost, yet assured of having its services as and when required, without it being idle for several days at a time awaiting optimum maturity of the property's different grape varieties. However before fermentation all the grapes are hand sorted on a practical and modern sorting table. Volume per hectare varies depending on vintage but is situated around 19,43 – 21,05 hectolitres/acre.

Vinification is traditional and meticulous attention is given to every step of the way. Concrete and stainless steel vats are used and wine is then matured for approximately one year in barrel. A new barrel cellar can house 410 barrels. Eric Boissenot is the consulting oenologist. Bottling by a specialist, outside bottler at the château.

Production : 200,000 bottles per annum  
 Direct sales are important but since 2001 Château Christoly has worked directly with the Bordeaux Wine Shippers  
 Second Wine : Château La Rose Saint Bonnet