

THE 2021 HARVEST

After a 2020 harvest that was entirely picked in August in dry weather, the early fall brought little rain. However, **December and January 2021** were extremely wet. We even had around 10cm of snow.

Early **FEBRUARY** was quite cold, before becoming much milder. This lasted until 20 March. The beginning of spring saw temperatures rise rapidly to around 30°C in the afternoons. The vines were immediately drawn out of hibernation and very quickly, the buds swelled, the green tips emerged, and bud burst was rapid. A little rain fell to help this promising start on its way, and most vines were showing between one and two leaves on white grapevines by the end of the month.

However, it was at this moment that **Mother Nature turned nasty**. Between 1 and 5 April, a current of cold Siberian air descended across Europe. Coats and hats were required and it felt chilly, but the air was dry. Winegrowers quickly got themselves organized and set out burners, wind machines, and turbines in the vineyards in anticipation of the frost that was forecast from 5 to 9 April.

The first night of 5 April was windy but nothing serious.

But the following night, snow fell across a large part of the region from **midnight on 6-7 April**, landing softly on the open and defenseless flowers. Burners were lit everywhere across the villages, including on the hillsides where it almost never freezes. And then, at around 4am, the outside temperature was between -6°C and -9°C, the buds were wet, and **an advective frost struck**, moving horizontally without wind. Despite the efforts of the winegrowers and their teams across the region, by mid-morning, the situation was clear: Most of the future harvest had been destroyed. Arborists, vegetable growers, and winegrowers from other regions also suffered.

It was difficult to revive the vines, and to make matters worse, the period from 10 April to 15 May was cool, with 30% more rainfall than average. **From 20 May onwards**, fine, bright, and dry weather set in, and the wind removed any humidity.

JUNE was warmer, and the few remaining shoots were full of life. As expected, we were looking at between 10-20% of a normal yield on average.

FLOWERING took place fairly quickly between 12 and 20 June in warm weather.

Vegetation grew in a disorderly way, with varying vigor and downy and powdery mildew were a real threat across the region.

JULY, which is traditionally very hot, was mild and wet, with 88mm of rain, accelerating the BUNCH CLOSING and FRUIT SET processes.

The first half of **AUGUST** was rather strange, with patchy sunshine and a little light rain.

VERAISON gradually began to set in, as did fine weather from mid-August. Despite there being so few bunches on the vines, we started to notice changes from week to week as phenolic maturity slowly but surely happened.

Following numerous visits to the vineyards and weekly sampling, we decided to start **harvesting** on 20 September, finishing on the 29th.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

A fairly mild winter: The period from December to February was 1-2°C higher than normal.

A fairly cool spring: 0.7°C lower than average from April to September.

Hard frost between 5-9 April destroyed 60-80% of the harvest depending on village and varietal.

The last frost episode took place on 3 May in Meursault, Chassagne-Montrachet, and Gevrey-Chambertin.

Slow vegetative growth between April and June.

The end of the cycle saw fine weather but it was not very hot.

Good weather for harvesting.

OUR OPINION ON THE COTE DE BEAUNE REDS:

The Pinot Noir grapes tend to develop more evenly over the season. Early areas for Pinot Noir, such as Beaune, Volnay, and the Pommard hillsides were hit badly by the frost, while other sectors on the plain, like Chassagne-Montrachet, Santenay, and Bourgogne Rouge fared better. The Pinots ripened earlier than the Chardonnay. However, there is no doubt that the style of our 2021 wines is lighter than that of the three previous vintages of 2018, 2019, and 2020. The color is less intense than in recent years, but the fruit is there. The malolactic fermentation must be finished before the wines can truly be judged, but the outline of the wines is slowly taking shape. For all our *cuvées* produced from grapes rather than must, yields range from 12-40 hectoliters per hectare. Vatting time ranged from 14-20 days, with mostly de-stemmed grapes and very careful extraction. The vertical press was used for all the wines.

OUR OPINION ON CHABLIS WINES :

We had such a small harvest in 2021 in Chablis that it's impossible to make a rational judgment. We will simply say that our partner winegrowers were hit badly by the frost. Despite the low yields, we vinified the juices separately in small temperature-controlled vats and the Chablis spirit is very present, with nice fruit and energy.

OUR OPINION ON THE CÔTE CHALONAISE WHITES:

The harvest was very small here, too, and in some places non-existent. Our Rully Premier Crus are absent from our wine list for the first time since 1985, and we only have a few barrels of Montagny Premier Cru in the cellar.

The spirit and style of this appellation are very much present in the wines, most of which have just recently finished their malolactic fermentation. The very low yields of between 8-17 hectoliters per hectare have resulted in energetic and light wines with character.

A few more weeks of maturing and we will start thinking about preparing them for bottling before the next harvest.

OUR OPINION ON THE CÔTE DE BEAUNE WHITES:

It would be unfair to judge wines that are still developing today, but never before have we harvested such small yields here. The 2021 vintage will go down in history as an **ANNUS HORIBILIS** for grapes and pome fruits in general, a little like 2016 or even 2012, to a lesser extent.

The acidity caused by a lack of heat in the summer contained a significant amount of malic acid, while the tartaric acidity was at a satisfactory natural level. The sugar content was very good due to the low harvest, but some musts required a chaptalization adjustment of around 0.5°GL. The alcoholic fermentation was rather slow but efficient, and in January, we decided to cool down the cellars to delay the start of the malolactic fermentation. Today, some vintages are still underway, while others have been finished for a month or two. The tastings we did in January and February were very different to what we are tasting now.

The individual work carried out for each barrel is bearing its fruit, but one must be patient...

Little by little, the spirit of the *terroir* is taking hold. Although this vintage might not have the richness or power of previous ones, flavor and elegance are the words that come up most often in our comments. We will be carefully managing the ageing process over the next few weeks, which will require us to make choices in terms of the style we are seeking. For this reason, a comparison with recent vintages seems hasty.

An important general remark that is valid for all white wines: In view of the tiny volumes harvested in 2021 on certain *terroir* plots, these will be vinified individually only if they present a genuine interest in terms of the style and spirit of the appellation and the vintage.

Puligny-Montrachet, 2 May 2022.

Franck Grux and Philippe Grillet for Olivier Leflaive