



Olivier Leflaive

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET - FRANCE

VINTAGE 1998

The start of the vegetal cycle in March and April happened under quite low temperatures (5 to 10° Celsius) with even temperatures under zero the 13th of April (-4 to -6° Celsius) right after budspring with young branches of 4 to 5 cm. Especially at the upper slopes there was a lot of damage for the Chardonnay, these premier cru vinyards get a lot of polar air dominant at this height. At this moment the loss of potential crop was 20 to 50%.

A more gentle period followed from the 15th to the 30th of Mai who made the development of the second generation buds possible. A hail storm caused only real damage in the vinyards of Meursault.

The month of Mai was generally full of good weather dry and warm what assured the development of the buds. A part of the potential losses was recovered.

Despite the good weather there was a development of Mildiou and especially Oidium in the vinyards earlier damaged by hail. The protection and surveillance for the diseases will be necessary until the harvest.

The period of flowering(early June) took place under excellent conditions followed by a more humid and fresh period. The month of July was marked by irregular weather conditions with cloudy and foggy weather (totalising a lack of sunshine of about 20%) with sudden intense exposure of the grapes and high temperatures.

The month of August was very sunny with a perfect light intensity. Due to the extreme high temperatures around the 10th of August right in the middle of the maturing causes some damage of dryness.

Early september the end of the maturation was disturbed by rainfall and cloudy skies. The harvest release date was fixed for the Cote de Beaune at the 17th of September and from the 15th the good weather offered excellent harvest condition and the opportunity to many vinyards to finalise their maturity.

General impression of the Harvest 1998

After the many incident of during we can say that it could have been worse fro this vintage 1998, much worse. The blocage of the maturity early September was caught up by the last few days of maturation right before the harvest.

Pinot Noir

The concentration of polyphenols est generally spoken satisfactory as well as the sugar levels. The acidity is not very high but of good quality. The wines have good colors and a good structure of tannin. The fruit aromas are combined to spicy undertones. A severe selection of the grapes was really necessary (dryness + botrytis). The yields a much smaller than 1996 or 1997.

Chardonnay

The bloquage of the maturation was evident and made a few more days of waiting a priority with an amazing good result. The vinyards were stressed by the earlier hail damage and the second generation buds forced us to take some risk in favor of the maturity.

The balance is close to the 1997 vintage with a slightly higher acidity and better structure. The aromatic palate shows hints of lemon and citrus with exotic fruit with a medium keeping potential.

Franck Grux - 2 February 1999