



Olivier Leflaive

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET - FRANCE

VINTAGE 2003

After a normal winter without extreme cold, the bud burst in the vineyard started at the end of March, few days before year 2002.

The 11th of April, a strong frost led to important damages in Puligny, Chassagne and Meursault vineyards. Few days later, Chablis had the same problem and lost an important part of the harvest. Afterwards the combination of hot weather and humidity promoted a quick growth of the vineyard. Disbudding started at the end of April and hot weather lasted all along the month of May.

Blossoming arrived at the end of May in good conditions. Some disparities were seen in the frosted vineyards.

June was very hot, a storm of hail on the 12th of June made damages on the three villages (Puligny-Montrachet, Meursault, Chassagne-Montrachet). We lost 10% of the harvesting. The close of the bunch was held on the 24th of June (Ten days before 2002). The temperature of July and August were very important and unusual (95° to 104° F during the day but also 77°F during the night.) Veraison is obtained between the 14th and the 20th of July. Never a vintage had been ready so early. At the moment we expected the harvest for the beginning of September

During August we had a terrible heat. The vineyard needed water and maturation went very fast, especially in Pinot Noir. Everybody was surprised with the fast evolution of ripeness.

Quality of the harvest

Pinot Noir in Cote de Beaune

The maturity of natural sugar is very high (12,5°C for the Bourgogne and 14°C for the 1st crus) and the level of acidity is correct. The yield in juice is very low and gave very colorful wine, with supple tannins. The character "mature and mellow fruit" is perfect. A lack of malic acid will not have an influence in the wines. I do not know if it will not be an exceptional vintage but Pinot Noir has quite well supported the heat.

Anyway : half of the usual harvest

Chardonnay in Cote de Beaune

The level of natural sugar is very high, too high in some cases. On the contrary, the acidity is rather low but the lees are very nice and some natural modifications of acidity are established.

Anyway, light rectifications in the tartaric acid are necessary to allow the yeast to work in good conditions.

2003 wines are nevertheless charming, easy to drink but not for aging.

Anyway : half of the usual harvest

Chablis

Same conditions than the Cote de Beaune. The level of acidity is a little bit higher and the quality of the lees is good. Of course, the yield is small but the style is concentrated.

2003 vintage is an exception in the history of winemaking in the Cote de Beaune because of the precocity of the grapes (85 days after flower instead of 100 days)

Franck GRUX