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PULIGNY-MONTRACHET - FRANCE

VINTAGE 2011

Unlike last year, the 2011 winter did not show any great cold period. The first three months of the year were rather dry and mild, and mid-march almond trees were full of flowers.

The spread Chardonnay bud break was observed on April 5th in the Côte de Beaune.

The mild and dry weather enabled the vine to grow quickly and regularly. Six weeks after the buds broke, on May 18th, the vineyards were in blossom.

At that rate, the harvest was said to be around August 15th, to say like 2003.

June made its way in between high temperatures and a few storms. Scalding (burnt grapes) was observed on Pinot Noir after the 26th.

July revealed as a very rainy month and temperatures noticeably dropped. The Côte Chalonnaise, and Rully especially, was hit by a hailstorm which caused dramatic damages.

August gave way to a mitigated weather, divided into bright intervals and rainy episodes. Nevertheless, maturity went ahead. We had to keep watchful for botrytis on Pinot Noir in a few places, but also for acidity on whites as it started decreasing on August 25th.

The weather remained fine and stable for the whole duration of the harvest.

Harvest start: Côte de Beaune on August 27th

Harvest end: Côte de Beaune on September 10th

In Chablis on September 15th

Grapes quality general impressions:

On Pinot Noir in the Côte de Beaune:

Grape maturity was sometimes heterogeneous. One did not have to hesitate in throwing away not-fully matured or damaged grapes. Sorting was in the order of 5% to 15%. The yield was not really high, similar to 2010.

After an attentive vinification of totally destemmed grapes, wines showed beautiful colour, decent tannins quality with potential, present fruit, and moderated acidity after malos. Great wines of Volnay and Pommard.

One will have to be patient to see the true colours of certain wines, a bit like in 1991.

On Chardonnay in the Côte Chalonnaise:

The small 2010 harvest forgotten, vineyards were gorgeous until July 16th, day of the hailstorm on Rully and Mercurey.

If the wines show less quality than usually, the fruit and pleasure are there. Wines will have to be drunk young.

On Chardonnay in Chablis:

The vineyard of Chablis did not suffer bad weather and evolved in a linear way. Maturity is coherent, mineral quality does not reach 2010's but is close to 2007's. We decided to harvest relatively early in order to keep the acidity.

On Chardonnay in the Côte de Beaune:

Broadly speaking, the complete cycle of the vine reminded us of 2007's with maturity phases sometimes irregulars.

This year's great characteristic is the exceptional sanitary state of Chardonnay in all villages, despite difficult weather conditions at times.

Yields are similar to 2009's due to summer rainfalls.

This vintage is still under construction today; malic acid needs to be taken down in order to reveal terroirs' true colours.

If we had to compare this vintage to others, we would say that whites have a bit of 2004 and more of 2007.

Franck Grux
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