

December 1st, 2023

2023 harvest report

Throughout September, as autumn approached, the sun was shining on the vines that were relieved of their fruit and in remarkable shape. With the work completed, they seemed to want to make the most of this moment of plenitude before lying dormant until the next season.

After the wonderful Indian summer during which the vines gave us an outstanding chromatic range, we directly entered autumn with its share of heavy rains, lower temperatures, humidity and fog. This was the starting signal for the tireless work that will follow in preparation for the next campaign.

This year we were spared the nemesis of cold weather and severe frost.

The mid-flowering occurred around June 3rd in Montrachet and a week later in Côtes de Nuits.

Flowering went smoothly. The weather was dry and hot, but not scorching. From early June the vines reached « cruising speed »: they grew faster and a first thinning was done around June 12th.

The hydric regime was rather sustained in June as, outside the flowering period, rains were frequent without being too abundant. As a result of the alternation of sunny and rainy days, the vines began growing beautifully.

According to the biodynamic method that we have chosen at the Domaine for more than twenty years, we had to wait for "windows" that would allow us to apply the necessary treatments. Finally, everything went as hoped and the timing was perfect this year: we could intervene at the right time, just before rains, and protect the vineyards against diseases while limiting our passages and their impact on soils.

Rains followed one another in June with successive periods of beautiful weather and heat ; they seemed to be infrequent, but were quite violent. There was also a small episode of hail in Echézeaux around June 20th, but fortunately it was not serious.

The threat of oidium was pressing in the sector of Montrachet where the characteristic grey marks covered a significant leaf surface. Thanks to the vigilance of our team we decided to remove the leaves from the area where oidium was present in order to limit contact contamination.

In July we believed that the harvest would be early, but the pace slowed in the second part of the month and caused some impatience... Whereas last year at the end of July we were at the stage of mid-véraison, this year the berries remained deep green like countless jade beads.

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We decided to do green harvest in order to diminish the natural charge and reduce the number of grapes on each vine.

In the winery, Alexandre Bernier and his team were getting ready to welcome this new vintage: everything was cleaned out. The equipment was installed and the vats watered... The devil being in the details, everything was meticulously inspected: screws, gaskets, pipes, valves and temperature controllers...

Only a few days before starting the harvest, we were still making adjustments in view of the last analysis and observations in the vineyards.

Finally, the Domaine team started picking in a parcel of Grands-Echézeaux on September 5th.

On the 7th, our team was complete: around fifty pickers and twenty porters were supervised by our new vineyard manager, Sylvain Pellegrinelli. It was the beginning of a long and beautiful harvest. The sun was the ever-present companion of these ten days. Sometimes we had to stop work when it was too hot to protect the people and the grapes.

Vineyards were harvested in the following order:

- 09/07 : Montrachet and Grands-Echézeaux
- 09/08 : Corton-Charlemagne and Grands-Echézeaux
- 09/09 : Corton-Charlemagne and Richebourg
- 09/10 : La Tâche and Richebourg
- 09/11 : Romanée-Conti and La Tâche
- 09/12 : La Tâche and Romanée-St-Vivant
- 09/13 : Corton and Romanée-St-Vivant
- 09/14 : Romanée-St-Vivant and Corton-Charlemagne
- 09/15 : Echézeaux, Romanée-St-Vivant and Corton-Charlemagne
- 09/16 : Echézeaux
- 09/17 : Echézeaux and Grands-Echézeaux

A very selective sorting was necessary both in the vineyards and in the winery where the sun-roasted or too wilted grapes and the few rotten berries were eliminated.

The sorting was all the more difficult and meticulous because the grapes were in excellent sanitary condition, perfectly ripe and the juices were already delicious. However our 15-people sorting team did this work on the sorting table in the winery, following instructions to the letter.

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While our work plays a major role in the results obtained, each harvest is a reminder that luck is an important factor. After a rainy day and a few phone calls, we made the decision to harvest our Corton although weather conditions were uncertain. Yet, Mother Nature gave us a day with no rain at all and moderate temperatures, which had the effect of boosting our team's spirits. We even enjoyed a picnic in the vineyards and had a friendly and comforting time together.

At the time of this writing, the 2023 wines are snuggled up in the cellars of the Vendangeoir of the Saint Vivant monks. We are happy with this harvest, which, as in 2022, required a great deal of energy, especially after the difficult conditions of these last three years. Even if we have confidence in our terroirs, in our vegetal material and in its capacity to adapt, we feel today that it is necessary to deepen our observations and listen to what the vineyard is telling us so that we can anticipate future challenges and make the quality of our work sustainable.
