Joseph Drouhin

2005 – A Symphonic Masterpiece

Everything came together to make 2005 an exceptional vintage. The winter of 2004-2005 was rather mild. The growing season was marked by warm temperature and a drought which started to be seriously felt towards the end of June. July was cool at the beginning, then returned to normal, with dry conditions, except in Chablis. August had plenty of sunshine. The lack of rain was more pronounced in Côte d'Or than in Yonne (Chablis region). September was quite hot at the beginning but became more seasonable, with a short period of rain followed by more sun and very good weather. The rain deficit was quite noticeable except in the Chablis region.
A hail storm on May 3rd, however, struck some vineyards in the Clos de Vougeot area. Hail so early in the season had no defavourable effect on the quality of the wine. Other small hail storms in Chablis on the 24th of June and in late July had little incidence on the quantities. On the other hand, a violent hail storm on July 17th in Southern Côte d'Or, particularly in Santenay and Chassagne-Montrachet, caused considerable harm.
The vines were healthy and the crop was easy to manage. The white grapes showed a bit of millerandage during the flowering. In general the fruit was exceptionally sound except in Chablis, where botrytis struck hard and late, reducing the production. Modern vinification methods, however, preserved the quality.

The official beginning of the vintage was set quite early: the 12th of September, and even more unusual, it was the same day in Côte d'Or for the picking of both chardonnay and pinot noir. For Côte de Nuits, Hautes Côtes de Beaune and Chablis, the vintage began on the 17th of September. The early vintage date for Chablis was particularly remarkable as this more northern region often picks eight to ten days later than the rest of Burgundy.
The grapes were so perfect at harvest that the growers had the time to organize the picking village by village, even vineyard by vineyard, taking advantage of the optimum moment at each location. Although technical criteria (alcohol, acidity, polyphenols) remain important, more and more attention was paid to the organoleptic quality of the grapes, the maturity of the tannins and the taste.
Quantity: the harvest amounted to 1,569,000 hl, or 3.5% less than in 2004 (- 4.3% for whites; - 1.6% for reds).

In summary, 2005 has a lot in common with some great vintages of the past: the beautiful richness of 1990, the harmonious character of 1989 and the haunting bouquet of 1961.

Frédéric DROUHIN
October 10th 2006