Joseph Drouhin

2018 - Rejoicing

The autumn winter 2017/2018 was wet and rainy in Burgundy after a very dry summer of 2017. It rained almost every other day with a cumulative rainfall above normal. The soil was in great need of it and the water tablets were thus able to be reconstituted.

The rain had, of course, generated a lack of sunshine without any consequences. The end of March was cold with little luminosity and the vines slowly resumed their activity. At the end of the month the buds were barely inflated for Chardonnay and still closed for the Pinot Noir.
In mid-April the weather changed and the rains become more rare. The weather became milder and the vineyard resumed its activity. During the 2nd half of the month due to higher temperatures and moist soils the growth of the vines was almost explosive and in a week we went from budbreak to almost 5 to 6 unfurled leaves. It rained considerably in Côte de Beaune but also in Côte de Nuits.
At the beginning of May we experienced a very limited frost episode, really inconsequential, and nothing to do with the 2016 or 2017 vintage.
The cocktail of rain plus heat caused difficult conditions in terms of mildew. Vigilance was essential throughout the vineyard.
The first flowers were observed on the 19th of May for Chardonnay and at the end of the month flowering was already well underway throughout the vineyards.
We also noted an extreme homogeneity between the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir and the Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits.
It hailed a little on the sector of Puligny and Chassagne on the 8th of May, without real consequences.
In mid-June the berries reached the sized of small peas. Growth continued at a good pace.
In almost 3 weeks we moved from the end of flowering to the complete closure of the bunches.
Summer settled; dry, bright and windy with 150 more sunshine hours than normal.
Temperatures followed this trend with degrees higher by almost 2 ° C than normal. There was no impact on the vineyard which fortunately had spring water reserves. Under these conditions the first berries were observed in mid-July. We noticed now, after the initial homogeneity of the vineyards, an heterogeneity between the sectors having more rain than others. August was going to be very dry.
Some plots began to struggle with their veraison, others were more advanced. On average we were on the same level of precocity as 2015. The first estimates of harvest dates envisaged a beginning of harvest in the last days of August. The vineyard was healthy, there was no mildew present. There was no rot. The berries had good colour, the skins were thick, the berries had taste. The harvest could therefore begin in excellent conditions. The harvest was homogeneous; rather abundant throughout the region. It had been many years since we had not found a normal agronomic yield.

Harvesting on the estate started on the 29th of August in Côte de Beaune with the Corton Charlemagne and on the 5th of September in the Côte de Nuits with Grands Crus.
Many vineyards had been perturbed by the deficit in water of the summer season. The rains of early September associated with the return of light morning dews unblocked the situation and accelerated the cutting. As of the 6th of September, almost all the grapes from the Côte de Beaune were picked.
In Chablis, the situation was the same with a slight shift. A cooling of the nights and morning dews brought a little freshness to revive the ripening of the grapes. In general, the sanitary condition in the vineyard was remarkable. As a result, the musts of the whites had pretty lees. The degree of natural sugar was important. The acid balance was satisfactory, although with the heat of August a significant part of the malic acid had been burned by the plant. The heavy rains of spring and early summer generated a good concentration of tartaric acid.

Vinification of the whites: the alcoholic fermentations were very slow. We left the yeasts to do their work. The ageing continued harmoniously, with the malolactic fermentations also being slow, and in some appellations continuing until the first days of summer 2019.

The maturity of the year is carried by a subtle freshness that gives length and dynamism in the mouth. We vinified our wines on good lees. During ageing, they should maintain their freshness and aromatic complexity.

Style of the wines: the wines have a very pretty aromatic expression of floral notes and ripe fruit. They have a very nice balance, rather structured, a little in the style of the 2015's in their prime youth. The ageing in oak, for the prestigious appellations is well integrated.

Vinification of the reds: such a nice harvest provided us great pleasure in the vinification of these beautiful grapes. We favoured a proportion of whole harvest, the stalks and berries being perfectly ripe and healthy. The colour was released naturally, the tannic structure present and ripe; it was necessary to seek elegance and balance. It's a vintage where pumping over was preferred to punch downs, so as to not over extract the dry or tannic elements. They lasted from 12 to 21 days.

Style of the wines: the reds are colourful, structured with a nice grain of tannin, good body and very expressive aromatically. The balance between alcohol / acidity is satisfactory. As for the whites, the oak ageing is well integrated. The wines are fairly homogeneous from both the Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits and, for the Grand Crus, could have a very good ageing potential.

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