Joseph Drouhin

2019, in line with the vintages ending in 9

Autumn-winter 2018/2019 was marked by mildness with average temperatures 2.5°C higher than usual. It was probably one of the mildest winters in the past 25 years as there were few periods of frost.
The month of December was rather wet and compensated for the summer 2018 rainfall deficit.
With this mildness, we saw the first signs of resumption of activity in the vineyard in the second half of February. The nights, however, remained cool.
At the end of March, we observed the buds swelling on almost all the plots of the Côte.
The clement temperatures continued during the first days of April, before a return of the cold which slowed down the vegetative development. In mid-April, the stages varied from green tips in the later ripening areas to spreading leaves in the earliest plots. The month of April remained rainy, above average, however with strong heterogeneities depending on the sectors of the Côte. A frosty episode took place on the 5th of April in the Côte de Beaune sector and then also on the 14th of April, without too many consequences because the weather was dry.
The month of May began with cool nights, and it was only in the 2nd part of the month that the vines grew. At the end of the month, we were around the stage of ten unfurled leaves on the Côte.
With the heatwave in June, the vines grew actively and the first flowers appeared on the 10th of June in the Chardonnay and in about ten days the whole of the Côte was in flower.
The month of July was also hot with greater than normal sunshine. Fortunately, it rained 20% more than compared to a typical month of July but with very localised and heterogeneous precipitation. The berries grew larger. There were also phenomena of berry shot in many plots. The heat affected the vines and certain phenomena of drought appeared. A hailstorm affected the areas of Savigny-les-Beaune without too much damage, then again in the Corton on the 14th of July.
August turned out hot and windy and increased hydric stress. Veraison began on the first days of the month and ended around the 25th. At the end of August, with no mildew; the vines were very healthy; however, we had to be vigilant about powdery mildew throughout the season, but the summery conditions of the month slowed down its development. The sanitary condition was very satisfactory and without rot. This was probably one of the years with the lowest pressure from botrytis. By the end of the month, all the plots had completed veraison. This was around the same date as in 2010.
With the fine weather in the first days of September, ripening progressed at a good pace. On the eve of the harvest, a hot wind accelerated the ripening of the grapes and here and there caused signs of wilting of the grapes. However, the balance of the berries remained good in terms of sugar and acidity.

The harvest began on the 7th of September in the Mâconnais, the 10th of September in the Côte d'Or and the 11th of September in Chablis. Yields were down compared to the five-year average, around -20% in Chablis, for the Côte d'Or from -20% to -30%, for Côte de Nuits reds - 10% and for Côte de Beaune reds -15% to -20%.

Vinification

For the reds: the harvest being particularly healthy and the stems ripe, we favoured whole cluster vinification. We consider the stalk an important element because it brings a very interesting aromatic complexity. The vinifications lasted 18 to 24 days depending on the vats with gentle punching down and pumping over. As we usually do; we separated the end of the pressings. The ageing continued in barrels on lees with little racking. Some of the wines are now racked and others, such as the grands crus, will continue to mature for a few months.

For the whites: we were surprised by the balance of the musts with normal acidity and relatively low pH. We favoured working on lees and stirring at the start of the fermentation. Overall, the whites are very dynamic for this year, considered hot.

The 2019 vintage is in line with the vintages ending in 9; a very nice vintage, which should appeal to amateurs with the fullness and aromatic expression that the wines are offering in their youth, but also with the ageing potential especially for great red wines.

Frédéric DROUHIN
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