Joseph Drouhin

2021 – Seductive and unique…

The autumn/winter was relatively mild, with temperatures slightly above normal. The cumulative rainfall from October 2020 until the end of February 2021 was comparatively rather excessive by nearly 100 millimeters. It was quite similar to that of the previous year. These rains were welcome in order to replenish the water tables.

The month of March was contrasted with a cool first ten days and then significant warming and almost summery temperatures for a week until the first days of April. Sunshine was above normal in all regions of Burgundy; Chablis, Côte d'Or, and Saône-et-Loire. Nearly 200 hours of sunshine were recorded in the Côte d'Or for an average of 150 hours usually. Rainfall was close to normal with 52 millimetres. The vines then began their vegetative growth.
A large-scale frost covered all of Burgundy on the night of April the 5th; in a few hours the temperatures dropped to minus 7°C. The buds emerging from their cocoon, and the first spread leaves of the Chardonnays were then exposed and, despite the protections put in place in certain plots of the whites, the frost decimated up to 100% of the harvest potential. The Pinot Noir was less affected by the frosts. This stress blocked the vines for about ten days and it is only at the end of the month that the vegetative cycle resumed.
In the first days of May, the difference between the frozen and unfrozen vines was quite obvious. The former went from the stage of green tips to 3 spread leaves, while the latter exceeded 5 unfurled leaves. It rained hard. No disease was seen at this stage.
In June, hot and dry weather returned. It then allowed a very fast flowering, with really ideal conditions for pollination. The mid-flowering stage was reached on June the 13th for the Chardonnays and June the 18th for the Pinots in the Côte de Nuits.
We mirrored the dates of 2019.

The vines grew very quickly, and it was sometimes difficult to contain them and to carry out the green harvest. All our teams were mobilised and it was only in July that everything was in order.
The sunshine in July was below normal and a few stormy episodes were reported locally. In mid-July, the latest ripening vines were still showing pea-sized berries while the earliest ones were at the stage of bunch closure.
The month of August was not very bright and was lacking in rain. The mid-véraison stage was reached around August the 16th, but there was some heterogeneity in the vineyard.
The first half of September was beautiful and bright and even almost summery. The second half of September was more autumnal with the return of the rains.

2021 was a year that required great vigilance for the management of mildew and powdery mildew. Unsurprisingly, the volumes produced were impacted by the spring frost which mainly affected the Chardonnays and the vines situated on slopes, with losses of 50% to 100%. The Pinot Noirs, which ripen later, did better. Overall, Burgundy produced less than one million hectolitres, whereas in a normal year we produce 1.5 million, and in 2018 1.8 million.

The start of the harvest at the Domaine was launched in the Côte de Beaune on the 17th of September in Chorey-lès-Beaune then on the 19th of September in Puligny-Montrachet. On the 20th of September, the harvest began in the Mâconnais and at Domaine Drouhin Vaudon in Chablis with our Grand Cru 'Les Clos.' Finally, in the Côte de Nuits, the harvest began on the 22nd of September.

The 2021 vintage presents a rather classic maturity index with correct sugar content and a nice acid balance. In this context, monitoring the maturity and health of each plot was essential and reinforced. Precise and recurring coordination of these controls made it possible to harvest our plots at aromatic maturity and to seek the maximum phenolic maturity.

In the cellar, actions of preferential sorting and selection during the harvest were essential. Thanks to the involvement of the teams around these qualitative issues, we were able to make the most of the harvest received (meticulous sorting, selection for pressing, settling, etc.). The vinification and ageing of the 2021s have been carried out to accompany and best reveal this 2021 vintage.
The low yields of 2021 make this vintage unique compared to those we have known previously.

The wines are in a very classic and Burgundian style. They are harmonious, very elegant with a beautiful aromatic precision but also lower alcohol levels than in previous warmer vintages.
The red Premiers Crus of the Côte d'Or are particularly attractive, the Chablis are well-typed and with a refreshing salty touch.

Frederic DROUHIN
October 11th, 2022