

HARVEST BULLETINS

DAILY UPDATES FROM
THE DOMAINE DE LA VOUGERAIE - YEAR 2018



THE HIVE

DAY TWENTY-TWO

This year's harvest seems never-ending, but we are delighted that quantity is going hand-in-hand with quality – two words that are often incompatible when it comes to wine, and just what we need after the lean years of 2016, when yields were down by half, 2010 and 2012.

Today, we finished the whites of the **Côte de Beaune Les Pierres Blanches and the Beaune la Montée Rouge**.

On the Côte de Nuits, we continued our high-altitude harvest on a plateau at 420 meters above sea level, taking in two hectares of the large plot of Hautes-Côtes de Nuits white at Chaux, and for our **Bourgogne** from the high-trained vineyard called **Au Defois**. This name can lead to some confusion, since the delivery dockets are often spelt haphazardly, resulting in Des Fois, Des Foies, Autrefois – in short, any-old-Fois will do!

Specifically named places such as these are the famous **climats** of Burgundy, which were included on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015, and are one of the characteristics of our region.

There are no fewer than 1,247 on the Côte d'Or and 1,463 in the whole Burgundy wine regions from Chablis to the Mâconnais. These evocative names sometimes bear witness to geographical features, soil type or former vegetation, local historical details, or the site's orientation, each having its own identity. Studying them is like plunging into an ethnographic, geographic and historical adventure all at once.

In the winery, the pace is unrelenting. But with one person fewer, we have to juggle between the overwhelming influx of grapes; the pressing, which dictates much of the day's work; the continual filling of barrels in the cellar; and the pumping over, to which can now be added the de-vatting of the reds! While at the same time managing the teams of pickers out in the vines. François gave us all a scare this morning when he entered the cellar saturated with **carbon dioxide** – an odorless gas produced during fermentation. He didn't notice and had a lucky escape. Three minutes without oxygen can be fatal, and serious accidents are sadly too frequent in the wine industry.

We took delivery of ten 450-liter barrels, great big containers that are difficult to handle, but which impart less oak into the wine, giving it more nuance. They will have to be disinfected with steam before we fill them. As the harvests approach the end, the winery is like a buzzing hive. No one walks, they run; concentration is at its height, there is no music, everything is a matter of urgency – a vat overflowing, more grapes arriving, crates to be cleaned. “Too busy to be nice,” as it says on Sylvie’s T-shirt, which neatly sums up the tension and fatigue. But once all our grapes are in, no doubt come Monday, we will revert to our usual serenity.

The first tastings offer a glimpse of this **sun-drenched vintage**, very ripe with lovely tannins, nice body and lots of polyphenols, which situates it somewhere between the 2015 and the 2017 wines. The first *cuvées* picked – Prieuré, Marconnets, Chambolle, and Nuits-Saint-Georges – are very crisp and light, as in 2017.

The profile is quite spicy, with delicious ripe fruit and a good balance of acidity, similar to the roundness of the 2015 vintage rather than the tension of the 2017.

Of course, the colors are very pronounced, a result of the very thick skins, which are opaque and almost black. During ageing, Pinot Noir tends to lose its intensity, since the color struggles to stabilize. A transparent ruby hue is part of its identity. As for the whites which were harvested in the first days, their profile is similar to 2017, their nice acidity gives them a pure style after their initial fermentation.

We thought we might be finished tomorrow, but it will likely be Monday now, since we still have to bring in several large plots of Bourgogne from the Hautes Côtes, another six hectares of hard labor!

