



*Domaine de Reuilly*

## **2020 REUILLY HARVEST**

It started on Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup> and was completed on September 12<sup>th</sup>. I am tempted to say that this sentence summarizes it all.

It tells indeed how early it took place, since (except for year 2003 which recalls very dark memories...), we have never harvested that early in the last two decades.

It tells also that it did not last for a long period of time because the three grape varieties of the Appellation were fully ripe almost at the same time.

Finally it tells that the quantities harvested were small; it is obvious that whenever there is less to pick, harvesting lasts a shorter period of time.

This summary is once again the consequence of the exceptional climate conditions that we had during the year 2020, but can we really qualify them as exceptional since they basically occur now year after year!...What we are referring to is obviously the draught of the 2020 summer, but let's talk a little more precisely about what took place during the season.

The winter had been mild with very few frost days and significant rain falls which had refilled the soil water reserves.

This has favored the very early coming out of buds in week 13, two weeks earlier than usual and this lead has been kept all through the vegetation period up to the harvest.

We were scared by frost in April (as every year) but despite several nights with temperatures below 32°F, we ended up with limited frost damages (5 to 10% in the different parcels of the vineyard).

Spring was warm and dry. No one will forget that during this period of time which corresponded to the lockdown period, we had a summer-like weather. With this heat and the levels of water which had been gathered during winter, the growth of the vines was fast and linear.

This warm weather proved also to be very beneficial to the sanitary situation of the vineyard. We had no major mildew attack during the spring which enabled us to limit to a minimum all the spraying of products on the vines.

Therefore during the spring we were able to focus our energy entirely on the soil work, all the classical tasks on vegetation (debudding trellising, green harvest,...) and the specific tasks of organic and biodynamic cultural practices.

With the few rains of mid-June (just at the time the lockdown was ending...) we had then very healthy and vigorous vines and the harvest to come seemed very promising.

Unfortunately it was without knowing what would take place during the summer : a very very dry summer and more specifically one with deadly heat waves, the longest being a full week in the middle of August which caused very heavy damages.



*Domaine de Reuilly*

At temperatures of 105°F in the shade which imply more than 120°F when the sun rays hit the grapes, nothing resists and all the bunches facing the afternoon sun were totally emptied, dried up and grilled. It was just so weird to see on a same vine beautiful bunches on the side exposed towards the East morning sun and entirely dried up grapes on the side exposed to the West. This explains by itself why the average yield is close to 50% of a normal harvest.

We had good climate conditions during the harvesting period with dry weather, sunny days with no excessive heat which made it possible to collect the grapes at a good temperature and all grapes were in a perfect sanitary condition with not a single hint of rot.

The Pinots Noirs and the Pinots Gris were both collected at the same time. The Pinots do not carry the same intense foliage than Sauvignon and being less protected they were hit more severely by the sun rays; the yields for these two varietals are particularly low.

The aromatic ripeness has come later than the technological ripeness which has led us to postpone harvesting by few days. This has brought an alcohol content slightly higher than in preceding years: 13° in Pinot Gris and 13.5° in Pinot Noir because the rise of sugar content was very fast in the days just before harvesting. On some parcels we could measure a rise of 1.5% alcohol in three days.

The level of malic acid is low because it has faded away substantially during the heat wave but the level of tartaric acid is satisfactory thanks to the fact that the plant was well supplied with water through its root system during all the vegetation period. The PH of the different tanks are close to 3.15 in Pinot Gris and 3.35 in Pinot Noir.

The tannins of the skins could be extracted easily and we have a good level of anthocyanins in the Pinot Noir which brings a nice intense colouring of the reds.

The aromas precursors let us think that we will have very aromatic wines with the usual notes of peach and passion fruit for the Pinot Gris and red fruits and morello cherries for the Pinot Noir.

The Sauvignons were brought in last and the different tanks have an alcohol content which varies from 12.8° to 13.7° which again is slightly above normal but they are well balanced with an average level of acidity of 4.3 gr/liter.

The alcoholic fermentations are going on smoothly without any disruption and we have already put in barrels our cuvée Les Chênes Blancs 2020 which is our unique cuvée in blanc for which we perform a malolactic fermentation.

At this stage, all the juices of the different cuvées of Sauvignons, which all correspond to single parcels, are tasty, well balanced and have a range of characteristic aromas of citrus fruits and white flowers.

The very fine quality of this 2020 vintage will no doubt help us a bit to not focus too much on the small quantity harvested. Ironically at the time I write this note, rain does not stop pouring...