

# THE 2019 VINTAGE

The 2019 vintage will remain forever in our memories for the numerous climatic events to which we were privy: an extremely dry year (practically no rain from May through to September), a very mild February followed by two frost spells, one at the beginning of April (temperatures below freezing point) and another one at the beginning of May engendering shatter and poor fruit set for many varieties (Sauvignon, Chenin and Cabernet).

## THE WHITES

However, the 2019 vintage appears to have delivered concentrated and well-structured wines, characterized by high alcohol potential, but also with acidity providing very good balance. The Sauvignon, Chenin and Melon wines will be more typical of the region than last year's vintage.

Just prior to the harvest, the grapes were perfectly healthy (equally an exceptional year from a phytosanitary point of view, as we used few treatments). This allowed us to obtain clear and frank juice. The complexity of this year was decided at the harvest date in light of the fruit's uneven rate of maturity (chiefly due to frost). Well-managed vines or those planted in deep soils tolerated the lack of water a lot better. The ones that were not frozen offered a yield similar to that of 2018. The estimated volumes were less than expected, as the Chardonnay and Chenin vines produced 40 hl/ha. Sauvignon was the white grape variety that held up best with an average quantity of 50 hl/ha in Touraine, however the vineyard of Nantes remained under the 30 hl/ha mark.

Rainfall during the month of September was beneficial especially when it comes to the Cabernets from Anjou

Once inside the vats, the Melon B musts displayed a pH range of 3.15 to 3.20 with plenty of tartaric acid and potassium. The malic acidity levels were high enough to provide freshness. The fermentations took place without a hitch with regular kinetics, despite potentially high degrees. The fermentation of numerous base wines had to be stopped with residual sugar to avoid excessively high degrees.

The best Melons were crisp with fresh fruity aromas, notably apricot with a hint of lemon. The base wines were aromatic and taut, with a better balance between sugar and acidity than in 2018. In Anjou/Saumur, the total acidities represented 7 g/L H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> with potential levels of around 11%. Two styles of wine were identified in Vouvray: those harvested before the rain with good acidity, little juice and plenty of astringency and those harvested after the rainfall on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, allowing the berries to swell and greatly improving the vintage's potential in terms of quantity and standard of quality. The Sauvignon wines of Touraine boasted potential levels of around 11.5% to 14.5%. Despite this context, the cool night-time temperatures conserved very fresh aromas of thiols, and the acidities provided the tension required to offer good balance on the palate.

## THE ROSÉS

The Gamay and the Grolleau grapes over ripened very quickly with degrees up to 15%. Initially estimated as late when first evaluated, the harvest ended up being normal as the first Grolleau vines were picked on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September. It would have been better to start even sooner. Within a week the acidities evolved normally along the same lines, thereby losing 2.5 to 3 points. The anthocyanin content and the potential extractable pigmentation were high. In terms of color, the wines displayed notes of fuchsia and violet. In terms of taste, they were flavorsome and very fruity (evoking notes of sour cherries), with amylic notes (fruit drops and banana, aromas expressed by young wines). The Pineau d'Aunis vines suffered less from the difficult conditions in 2019. Notes of violets and spices were already present in the grapes and the fairly good yield, displayed color and aromatic intensity similar to 2018. The balance in terms of sugar and acidity was better, thereby favoring the production of base wines, well adapted to the production of XNoir.

The Cabernet wines were harvested as of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September with milder acidity when it comes to the Grolleau and Gamay wines. The missing volumes (a low yield of 40 to 50 hl/ha) will be compensated by last year's stock.

## THE REDS

The grapes for the production of red wines were picked as of the 20<sup>th</sup> of September with regard to the earlier varieties (Gamay and Pinot Noir). Most of the Cabernet Franc vines were harvested between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of October. The grapes were especially healthy up until this date, but their skins then became fragile and botrytis showed up because of the rain. The uneven rate of maturity made organizing the picking schedule all the more complex, notably with regard to the Cabernet grapes. Frost and drought were joined by bad flowering conditions in the springtime (cold temperatures and rain at the end of May) and a drawn out phenological stage (practically 3 weeks). As a result, the wine profiles were very different: some were vegetal, whereas others evoked black berries with high degrees (more than 14%). In all of these cases, the acidity was high with pH levels ranging between 3.6 and 3.8 after the malo-lactic fermentation. Hopefully this acidity made up of tartaric acid will still be present after the maturing stage.

Most of the Cabernet Franc wines were fairly well ripened and spicy with plenty of color (violet and black) and silky tannins. The Gamay grapes were not used to make primeur wines, as they were well ripened. The Cot grapes evoked spices and very ripe fruit.

The Cabernet vineyards produced the lowest yields, as shot berries caused worst damage than the frost and drought. This problem was noted within the Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil and Chinon appellation areas. The yield was around 40/45 hl/ha in Champigny, with bigger amounts of pomace (so less juice in the berries). In normal conditions, 130 kg produce 1 hl of wine, but this year 150 kg was the general rule. The expertise of winemakers was important to extract a less dense matter than in 2018 – a matter bringing about pleasant aromatic freshness with plenty of suppleness and color. True to type, 2019 is going count among the Loire's finest vintages.

## THE SWEET WINES

These wines were marked by the harvest date. For those harvested before the heavy rainfall on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, the grapes dried in the vineyard and the concentration of the vintage produced refined sweet wines with acidity, thereby heralding a great potential for ageing. When it comes to those harvested after this date, the observation was less positive, as the grapes were watered down and the botrytis on the berries was not noble. The sweet wines derived from this second harvest period displayed better balance with 11% for 60 g/l of residual sugar. 2019 is a very good year for sweet wines.