2nd September 2016

**2016 VINTAGE**

**BEAUJOLAIS MATURITY UPDATE**



 In the Beaujolais, as elsewhere in France, the conditions in Spring complicated the beginning of the growing cycle with the delicate state of health of the vines requiring extreme vigilance. However, the bunches are now looking very healthy after the high temperatures and wind of these last weeks, and in the vineyards that were untouched by the hailstorms that swept the country in April, May and June the grapes are superb!

**Right now, everything’s looking perfect in Beaujolais with the vines in good shape and favourable meteorological conditions.** Asthe ultimate quality of the grapes is determined in the weeks running up to harvest, **the outlook for this 2016 vintage is excellent!**

As in most of the vineyards in France, the 2016 harvest looks like being late compared to the last 25 years’ average. But rest assured, **this lateness** (although relative compared to the eighties and the nineties) **in the vines’ growing cycle in no way affects the potential quality of this vintage in perspective.** For example, in 1983, harvesting began on the 19th September, and the outstanding quality and ageing potential of that vintage are unforgettable. And we have seen the same phenomenon as recently as 2013!

 **Maturities continue to progress steadily.**  The hot, sunny days of August have allowed alcoholic degrees to develop nicely. This ideal weather has facilitated the monitoring and management of the sanitary conditions in the vines and the favourable forecast for the coming days should mean that these excellent conditions can be maintained until the harvest takes place. In later ripening areas the winegrowers will be able to wait and harvest the grapes at optimum maturity in all serenity.

At the moment berry weight is within the average, similar to 2009 at equal degrees, but bunch weights are fairly high.

**As for volumes, the harvest should be above the average of these last five years** with yields close to those of the appellation. If this should be the case, Beaujolais will at last see a ‘full’ harvest again, close to 800,000 hectolitres.

**The evolution in maturities allows us to envisage the start of picking between the 15th and the 20th September in the earlier zones.**

The winegrowers of Beaujolais will therefore continue to closely follow progress in their vines in order to pick at optimum maturity. They have the benefit of data made available to them by the **Maturity Network** which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year (see box below).

In just a few days we will have more precise details and know a little bit more about this new harvest. See you then!

**The Maturity Network: 25 years of teamwork in Beaujolais**

This year the Beaujolais Maturity Network is celebrating its 25 years of existence. This unique service, the result of a partnership between a number of viticultural institutions in Beaujolais (the UVB, Inter Beaujolais, SICAREX, Labo du 210, INAO, the Rhône Chamber of Agriculture), was put in place in 1992 based on an original INAO network created in 1947. It relies entirely on the voluntary participation of the producers and winegrowers of Beaujolais.

Today the network covers almost 230 parcels of Gamay and Chardonnay from which samples are collected twice a week from veraison up to the moment of harvesting. Degree, total acidity, pH, number of bunches per vine, bunch weight, percentage ripened, sanitary condition, leaf size…. all these analyses are realised in nominated maturity points (cooperatives or private cellars) following strict protocol. The data is then analysed by the Rhone Chamber of Agriculture who track daily evolution and compile the results in a twice weekly bulletin distributed free of charge to all the wine producers and winegrowers of Beaujolais.

In addition, some fifteen or so parcels are monitored by the SICAREX to complete the picture with analyses that require specific equipment: levels of tartaric and malic acids, potassium, anthocyanins and colour indices etc.

 An aid to the monitoring of the vines’ phenolic development offering the possibility of comparison with previous years, a decision making tool to guide the winegrowers in their choice of harvest date, a database to help in the choice of vinification… the Maturity Network has, over the years, become a collective reference tool for the implementation of quality management in the Beaujolais!

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