



Domaine de Reuilly

2019 REUILLY HARVEST

1976. Do you recall ? Probably not, since it is very likely too long ago for most of you...

But what about 2003 ! I am sure you have not forgotten that year where we had a terrible drought and canicule. Well, unfortunately, just like these two years mentioned above, 2019 will be listed in the book of records...

The year had started relatively nicely. There had been some rain in the winter, not a whole lot but nothing that was worrying. The buds had come out smoothly in the first week of April and despite a few nights with temperatures below 32° F in the third and fourth week of April, we had avoided most of the frost damage which can be so devastating at that time of the year.

Until June 15th, we benefitted from a normal rain level and although the flowering was not ideal since we had quite a bit of coulure in the Pinot noir and Pinot gris, there was nothing at that stage which was overly preoccupying.

It was in the third week of June that the first heat wave came. This surprised everyone because it came so early in the summer and lasted a full week. It caused the first damages, but the grapes at that time were still very small and we thought they would recover.

The second heat wave came in mid July. It was a little bit shorter but with more excessive temperatures. It reached 108°F in the shade which means above 120°F when the sun rays were hitting the grapes in the afternoon. At that type of temperature nothing resists. The leaves of many vines were totally burnt and the whole vineyard was in sleeping mode because of these extreme temperatures and the hydric stress.

We had the last heat wave in the last days of August. It did not last as long because the days are shorter in this period, but what was even more damaging was the fact that for 45 days in a row we did not have the slightest drop of rain. We were even hoping to have some thunderstorms which can sometimes be devastating but usually bring some rain. Nothing of that happened. Since the beginning of June until the harvesting time we got only half an inch of rain and since the beginning of the year we got 10 inches only, when the usual yearly level in Reuilly is around 30 inches.

With these climate conditions the work in the vineyard has been pretty easy. We have had no hint of mildew at all and we have sprayed only 6 times which is very little when you grow your vineyard organically and biodynamically. To illustrate that I will only mention that we have used the equivalent of 4 pounds of copper per ha when we are entitled to 14 per year when following the rules of the organic certifiers.

The harvest started early, on September 6th. But it had started on August 29th in 2017 and September 2nd in 2018, which clearly shows that early harvests which were unusual in the past have become very common nowadays. It ended on September 21st and during this period we had a totally dry weather, not a single cloud, and chilly nights which were very beneficial since the temperatures during the day were still high in the afternoon.



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As every year we started with the Pinots Gris and the first presses demonstrated what we were anticipating and fearing, a very low yield of approximately 30hl/ha, which is roughly 50% of a normal harvest. When the grapes are small (the weight of a bunch this year is below 100gr versus 130 gr on a normal year) and have not been swollen by a minimum of water supply, there is a lot of concentration of the juice and it just cannot be otherwise. The good thing is that we are very happy with the quality: the juices have a little more colour than usual, the initial peach and litchi aromas are very delicate and there is a good balance of acidity and sugar.

Right after having brought in the Pinot Gris, we harvested the Pinot Noir which had ripened very quickly in less than a week. This was not surprising by the way, since in the second week of September we had temperatures of 85°F or more in the afternoons. However, it was important to well evaluate the phenolic maturity since this one is not related to the sugar and acidity content. It was very key to well observe the color and the texture of both the skins and the pits, to do a lot of tastings in the different lots and to have accurate analysis of the tannins and anthocyan content in order to determine the optimal harvesting dates. All the grapes that we brought in were fully ripe and healthy and the yields were similar to the ones of Pinot Gris, in the 30 hl per/ha range. Taking into account the specifics of this harvest, we have decided to increase the duration of the cold soak at a temperature below 50°F to one week. We also limited the remontages since this year there is an intense natural coloring and a good extractability. The first juices are very tasty with aromas of raspberries and currant which leads us to think that it will be a great vintage for the reds (like most of the years ending with a 9 figure...).

We ended the harvest with the Sauvignons and we made sure to harvest all our parcels very early during the day, always before 11:00 in the morning, since the afternoon temperatures were very hot and there is nothing which can be more damaging for the aromas of the Sauvignon than high temperatures. We harvested lot by lot according to the ripeness of each parcel; the alcohol content of all our tanks is between 12.6 and 13.3% and the total acidity content between 4.2 and 4.7 gr/liter which is a good level for a year which has been so hot. Since the malic acid was degrading very rapidly in the last days it was important not to wait too long to harvest in order to keep the freshness which is so key to have a good Sauvignon wine. The dry weather also helped to limit the potassium assimilation, which contributed to preserve the level of tartaric acid in the grapes. The spontaneous alcoholic fermentations have started with no specific problem and went to an end with no interruption. The juices are more golden than usual because of the good ripeness, the smaller grapes and higher concentration. The citrus and white flowers aromas are well present and expressive and let us believe that we will have a very nice outcome when we will bottle the different cuvées next spring.

We can definitely say already that this year 2019, a solar vintage, will be a great vintage quality wise. Some elders even pretend that it could be one of the very best ones in the last decades. Too bad there is not more of it!