

Vintage Report 2004

COTE D'OR

LOUIS JADOT HARVEST TIME

COTE DE BEAUNE - REDS SEPTEMBER 20

COTE DE BEAUNE - WHITES SEPTEMBER 22

COTE DE NUITS - SEPTEMBER 24

Following the very warm and unusual weather of 2003, 2004 saw a return to a cooler weather pattern, which brought with it its own problems of oidium outbreaks and hail. It was almost opposite to 2003.

The winter was mild and surprisingly humid for this time of year. The mild weather continued into the spring and in March we saw the vines growing quickly in the vineyard. Luckily there was no threat of frost.

In May and June the lack of sun slowed down the initial growth spurt and flowering was delayed by about two weeks compared to the 'usual' flowering dates. The flowering indicated that the potential crop was going to be huge.

July was warm but humid and the area was even hit by hail and thunderstorms – unusual for this time of year. This unsettled weather continued into August when hail storms hit the Cote de Beaune mainly in Volnay, Pommard, Beaune and Savigny.

There was a threat of disease throughout the growing season – much more than usual, due to the damp, unsettled weather and lack of good sunshine. Starting in April this continued on into August effecting both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. It was necessary to 'powder' the vineyards to ensure the health of the fruit. Steps were also necessary in the vineyard to manage the size of the crop during the season with de-budding, de-flowering and green harvesting. This was critical to managing the quality.

Harvesting took place in September, which started off warm and dry and helped ripen the fruit and dry out the vineyards. The quality was certainly rescued by the weather in September. The quantity was very good but it was an important year for sorting. We are still waiting to see how the wines develop but both the red and the whites have good acidity and fruit character and we are confident this is a good vintage for both quality and quantity.

BEAUJOLAIS

This region followed a similar pattern.

The winter was generally cool and damp with some sunshine. Spring saw the return of warmer weather and a drier spell, which led to setting and flowering about a week later than usual.

July and the beginning of August were well in line with the temperatures and rainfall of the preceding 10 year average; but as August progressed the temperatures dropped, the sun retreated and the rainfall increased to the level where 160mm fell in the Beaujolais – almost half the ANNUAL rainfall for the region!

As a result, the grapes swelled and, despite the lack of maturity in the grapes, a degree of rot set in. On the 20th July, a hailstorm devastated the Beaujolais Villages area just above the Julienas, the Pouilly Fuisse area near Vergisson and the South Maconnais.

The weather turned on the 27th August and became warm and sunny with drying breezes, which thankfully stopped the rot, concentrated and darkened the berries and as the harvest began the prospects were good.

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The 'ban de vendages' was fixed on the 11th September in Beaujolais (average date over the last 30 years has been the 12th September and in the last 10 years 5th September), 13th September in Maconnais and 18th September for Pouilly Fuisse.

Overall the crop was a good one but producing wines of differing qualities, with a large number of good 'cuvees'. The most conscientious growers, those who controlled their production with green harvesting and careful soil management and their vinification with rigorous grape selection and control of fermentation temperatures have produced the more impressive cuvees. 2004 will be good for quantity and quality, with careful selection.

