

Vintage Report 2003

2003 was an extraordinary year for us, which culminated in a harvest unlike any other we have ever experienced.

In spite of rather erratic weather throughout the year, the vines turned out to be quite exceptional. The summer in France was unbelievably warm, particularly the first 15 days of August when temperatures reached an all time high of over 40°C. These conditions, coupled with strong storms, hail and frost in some areas in April, resulted in a very unusual harvest.

The volumes harvested were low. In the Beaujolais area, they were 30 - 40% down. In the Côte d'Or, they amounted to about half the usual quantities. The high temperatures and sunshine caused some damage to the grapes but also had the benefit of concentrating the juices. Some of the grape skins were slightly withered with a high and early sugar content but, unfortunately, with low phenolic maturity and low acidity.

Some domaines started harvesting on August 13th in the Côte d'Or, and on August 15th in the Beaujolais. We decided that there was no rush, as we want to ensure that the phenolic maturity was right.

We started the harvest on the 28th August in the Côte d'Or, and the previous Saturday (August 23rd) in Beaujolais. To give you an idea, a number of others had by this time already finished. 2003 was the earliest vintage ever in the history of Louis Jadot.

WHITE WINES

We retained the malic acid in our 2003 wines which has given them energy and power. They are open and powerful but not too much and show typical 'Burgundian minerality' with a touch of citronella and white flesh fruits characteristics. At Louis Jadot we are very excited by the white wines, which have good balanced acidity. Many people have written off the 2003 white Burgundies but we feel that we have managed to capture good acidity and our wines are showing very well with lots of individuality.

RED WINES

Colours are good and the aromas in these wines have mellowed from the immediate fruitiness that was expressed following vintage and we are recognising more and more the Pinot Noir typicity. The wines have terrific structure and whilst certainly forward our expectation is that they will be long living. There are some sensational wines and 2003 will be regarded as one of the great vintages. However, the volume is approximately half that of a normal vintage.

Pierre-Henry Gagey,
President, Louis Jadot.

