

DOMAINE DUJAC

2006 Vintage Report by Jeremy Seysses

2006 began auspiciously under a coat of snow during a long cold winter. Prolonged periods of below freezing temperatures help decompact soils and kill off a number of pests and parasites. A cool, rainy Spring followed with no frost. This led us into a very warm month of June and even warmer month of July. As a result, flowering was fast and very even, in ideal conditions. The extreme heat of July made us fear a repeat of the incredible 2003 growing season, but the heat wave passed at the end of the month, following a hail storm on 27th July. The storm was fortunately not devastating, but left some damaged leaves and fruit which would need careful sorting at harvest. When hail happens at such an early stage, there is little sugar in the grapes and rot tends not to settle in immediately, if at all. However, the leaf damage slows photosynthesis and hence ripening.

Following the storm, August was wet and cold and by the end of the month, grey rot had taken hold in some of the bunches. The distribution of rot was unusual: 10 grape-bunches might not be affected at all and one bunch would be completely rotten. Perplexing, but it made sorting relatively easy. It did, as one would expect, affect yields; consequently, quantities are quite small in 2006.

Once again, September weather came to the rescue, with bright, sunny skies and a cool northern breeze helping to dry things out and ripen the grapes. In these comfortable conditions, we waited patiently, preparing the winery and cellar for harvest and making some of the choices that would contribute much to shaping the wines we would make that year. First and foremost, we were faced with the quintessential winemaker decision: pick now or wait longer. This decision is a heavy one in a vintage that already has some Botrytis affecting grapes because you never know how much you are going to gain if the weather should remain sunny or how much you might lose if the weather should turn ugly. It's important to point out that we are not so much looking for "very ripe" as for "just ripe enough". In any case, we opted to delay the beginning of harvest by a few days and with retrospect, are very happy with our choice.

Picking began on Saturday 23rd September. One team picked the Puligny-Montrachet "Les Petites Nosroyes" vineyard from which we purchase fruit every year. The grapes were beautifully golden with a very good sugar/acid balance. The other team began in the Echezeaux where we found the grapes to be a little riper than anticipated. This encouraged us to put in a long day and we carried on with the Bonnes-Mares and Charmes-Chambertin. Subsequently, we slowed down the picking rate so as to allow the slightly less ripe vineyards time to catch up. The picking was slow and laborious because of sorting. We have found that we get the best sorting if the pickers do it as they go along, rather than on a hypnotic sorting table, so it is important for us to take it slow enough that our pickers can do a thorough job.

The weather cooperated. Other than a rainy day on 24th September, misty mornings inevitably turned to glorious sunshine by mid-day and by 3rd October, all the grapes were in tank. At this stage, the stress of picking was essentially over and the task of winemaking began in earnest, but to be honest, that was the easy part. The grapes we had brought in were healthy, impeccably sorted and behaved very well in tank, fermenting spontaneously and extracting well. From the outset, the wines showed charm, balance and grace.

After pressing, the wines went to barrel where they went through malo-lactic fermentation the following Spring. That secondary fermentation revealed a sweetness, depth and concentration to the wines that was greater than anticipated. We racked the wines to tank between December and February, depending on the cuvées, and bottled them after 3 weeks of settling.

In bottle, the 2006s white and red have confirmed our high opinion of them. They are wines of balance, poise and elegance, with lovely pure fruit aromas and many layers. They have all the freshness of classical burgundian vintages, but are also ripe enough to give them the delicate, silky tannic texture that is one of the hallmarks of great Burgundy. As you can tell, we are very proud of what we have produced in this vintage.