



## De Villaine Vintage Report 2014

One of our friends, a longtime client in Bouzeron came this year to collect his wines. During this time he asked me why we have practiced organic agriculture since the '80s and currently experiment with biodynamics even though these types of agriculture represent painstaking work in conjunction with climatic conditions that are more and more difficult to anticipate from one year to another and demanding ever more indispensable manpower to ensure the good care of the vineyards.

Maybe it is because these kinds of agriculture finally return man, the *vigneron*, to the vineyard, with his courage, his experience, and his curiosity renewed with each vintage.

Maybe it is also because, as the 2014 vintage reminds us, these kinds of agriculture, apart from the fact that they ensure good wines, alive and easy to drink, are the best means to reveal the quality of a terroir. This revelation is never as magic, by the way, as when the wine is good. And this is exactly what the vintage 2014 proposes: a response to the delicate equation between the weather, the health of the grapes, and their maturity, to present remarkable wines.

After a mild winter and early spring, the temperatures remained above normal and the vine's vegetative cycle recommenced as early as the month of March. This was followed by a hot, sunny spell from April to June, without precipitation, which encouraged an early bud break. The mid-flowering was already achieved in the integrality of the domaine's vineyards during Pentecost weekend [June 8, 2014]. This water deficit and the higher temperatures, which might have made us fear an early hydric stress, limited the development of vine maladies and pests. At this point in the vintage, everything led to believe that the harvest could be early. It was without taking into account the whims of the weather.

From June 28, with the exception of a bright spell of hot, dry summer conditions during the week of July 15, the situation worsened. The weather remained gloomy with strong, almost daily rainfall and very low temperatures for the season.

We had to keep an eye out and take advantage of the smallest windows of dry weather to protect the vines and carry out the necessary plowing to liberate the vineyard from invasive weeds.

The month of September finally brought a return to more favorable weather and the good maturity of the grapes; the north wind, dry and cold, cleaned up the situation and restrained several pockets of rot.



## KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

The sugar concentrations grew and the acidity dropped depending on the grape varieties. This physiological maturity of the grape (optimal weight of the berry and sugar/acid balance) excelled. We had to wait a few more days to achieve a good phenolic maturity, which determines the quality of the color and the tannins, in particular in the pinot noir.

The harvest began Monday September 15 with beautiful weather. It continued for 14 days and concluded at the beginning of October with our Bouzeron. [Bouzeron], as a reminder, is the only appellation village wine made from *aligoté doré* - "golden aligoté." It had been a long time since we had seen so many big smiles on the harvester's faces, happy to pick such exceptional quality grapes under a sunny and benevolent sky.

In their integrality, our wines from the 2014 vintage are frank, energetic, and offer an excellent ageing potential.

### The Red Wines:

The precision of the sorting by a team of seasoned harvesters, all accustomed to our high standards for quality, was of utmost importance in order to allow only the finest grapes to enter the cave and to permit our cellar team to vinify one of the healthiest and most promising harvests of the past few years. The red wines, after an *élevage* in barrel, possess a beautiful, sustained color and are "full of fruit," proposing a rich aromatic range and a high quality tannic texture on the palate – suave, crisp, deep – which renders them both easy-drinking and compelling.

### The White Wines:

2014 seems to be a vintage where the elegance and the purity take precedence over the power. The white wines, after one year of *élevage* in cask and barrel, present a very nice aromatic freshness with white fleshed stone fruit and floral nuances dominating. The palate expresses a remarkable density of fruit, good tension and a rather saline finish that leaves the wines "vibrant and alive."

One note: Its *élevage* having been longer, our Rully 1er Cru Grésigny will be available in the 2013 vintage.

As they have been vinified and aged as naturally as possible, we recommend letting these wines rest in your cellar, and to aerate them before tasting them.

- Pierre de Benoist / Aubert de Villaine