



2007 in Burgundy

A tailor-made vintage

16th November 2007

Following the doubts and anxiety caused by an autumnal summer (see Climatology), a sigh of relief was heard around Burgundy as soon as vinification started because of the high quality of the musts tasted. This lovely surprise is a reward for all the efforts made by the professionals in Burgundy who have not hesitated at harvest time to make a rigorous selection, worthy of a masterpiece of haute couture.

The cool temperatures and the detailed work of the professionals made resistance to climatic aggression possible. Indeed, both in the vineyard and the vat-rooms, wine producers selected each grape and adjusted their vinification stages so as to retain just the quintessence of the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay varieties, the kings of Burgundy!

The trend for the 2007 vintage is to offer wines that are both very up to date and faithful to Burgundy's great classics. Novices will be able to initiate themselves in the pleasure of these wines while amateurs will find in each production the spirit of the great Burgundies as much as the talent of each creator and wine producer.

These wines that are both sophisticated and within reach will be able to be drunk quite rapidly since they are already pleasant to savour.

White wines: great purity of flavour

Since it enjoyed sunshine until mid-September, the 2007 vintage for whites is remarkably typical in flavour.

This year, Chardonnay in Burgundy is revealing all its facets. Chablis wines are characterised by their mineral taste, remaining sharp after their malolactic fermentation. In the South of Burgundy, the white Mâconnais and Côte Chalonnaise wines, harvested later, gained more opulence and diversity of aroma. In the Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits, the predominant elegance and harmony express the subtlety of each area, thus establishing a link with the classic Burgundy vintages.

Red wines: a spark of freshness

The 2007 vintage offers fresh and appealing red berry flavours. The richness of the aromas perceived at the first nose is perfectly reflected in the mouth through the amplitude, roundness and silky length of these wines made for pleasure. The maturity of the film has enabled attentive wine-producers to moderate extraction, thus building a structure that is characterised by delicacy.

What is more, the acidity present at the time of harvest and essentially due to the significant concentrations of malic acid disappears during malolactic fermentation, contributing to a fine balance in the mouth.

The wines have a fine cherry red colour highlighted by a few traces of violet, which is characteristic of fresh vintages.

Crémant

The low temperatures this summer enabled the grapes intended for the production of Crémant de Bourgogne wines to achieve good maturity while retaining a level of acidity that is ideal for the expression of their characteristic freshness. These levels of acidity also make it possible to work on the cuvées destined for a longer aging period in cask.

These favourable conditions lead to a forecast that the 2007 vintage will produce Crémant de Bourgogne wines of a very high quality.



Climatology 2007

After the season mix-up, September once again saves the vintage

Over the past weeks, most qualifiers have been used to describe this new vintage: from early to heterogeneous via whimsical, unprecedented, difficult, etc. The great source of inspiration for communicators: the weather and its mood changes! In Burgundy, however, the vintage that, at the end of August, was feared to be compromised, benefited from a favourable and saving September.

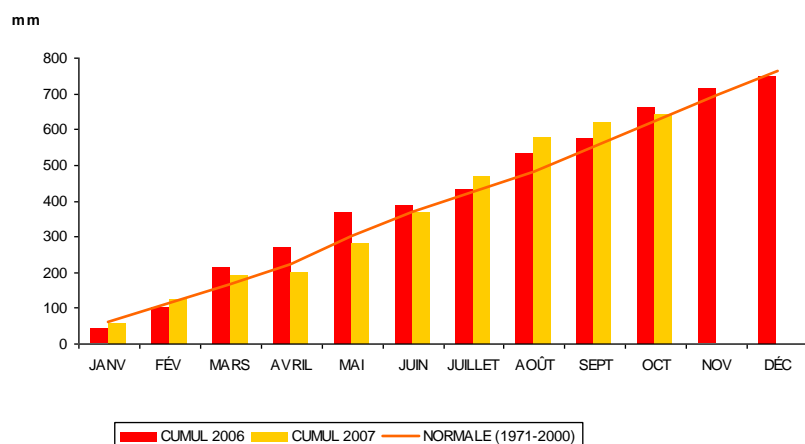
Indeed, weather instability has been this year's leitmotiv. July in April, September in May, August in September... such were the vintage's weather conditions, worthy of a confusing puzzle.

The weather's versatility is not without its influence on vines. Hence, the exceptional conditions in April followed on from a winter that was far from Burgundy standards, led to rapid plant blossoming. The term "early" was thus put forward. The head start that the vegetative cycle had acquired held throughout flowering and fruit setting, despite a distinct drop in temperatures from mid-May onwards, followed by significant rainfall from June. Following this period of uncertainty, climatic disorder set in over the summer. This autumnal weather endured, not facilitating maturation. Each bunch then adapted to its micro-climate: heterogeneity thus set in within the vineyards. It was to remain until gape picking.

Profiting from the ambient humidity and optimum conditions for their development, certain vine diseases sought to flourish through the vineyard. Thankfully, however, nature is occasionally able to restore a measure of balance: thus the low summer temperatures served to spare Burgundy from these diseases, in particular from late blight. Nevertheless, the significant rainfall did not make matters easy, requiring constant vigilance from the sector's professionals.

Finally, September saved the day, with its blue skies and north winds, restoring a measure of order in the vineyards. The bunches were able to dry and the grapes took advantage of the sun's rays to become golden and to reach their best balance.

Total rainfall for 2007: a very wet summer...



With, on average, a surplus of nearly 77% rainfall relative to normal seasonal values, July 2007 shall go down as one of the wettest of the past 30 years. August followed on in the same vane, with a surplus of nearly 92% relative to normal values for the month. A pleasant lull settled in during the first weeks of September, while the grape harvest was in full swing. The rain returned with a vengeance at the end of the month, rapidly making up for lost time, thus explaining why the month's total was higher than normal.

■ **Temperatures for July and August 2007: ... as cold as they come!**

Up until July 14th, the average temperatures were of nearly 3°C below the norm. The lowest temperature readings in the region's 3 departments were in the vicinity of 9°C. These were followed by a very hot week, with temperatures approaching 30°C, before a return to a period of low temperatures.

The August weather also fell in line with July, with mean temperatures for Burgundy that were 1 to 2°C below the seasonal average. Once more, the lowest temperature readings were of circa 9°C.

These low temperatures prevented the explosion of late blight that was observed in other vineyards that had experienced milder temperatures.

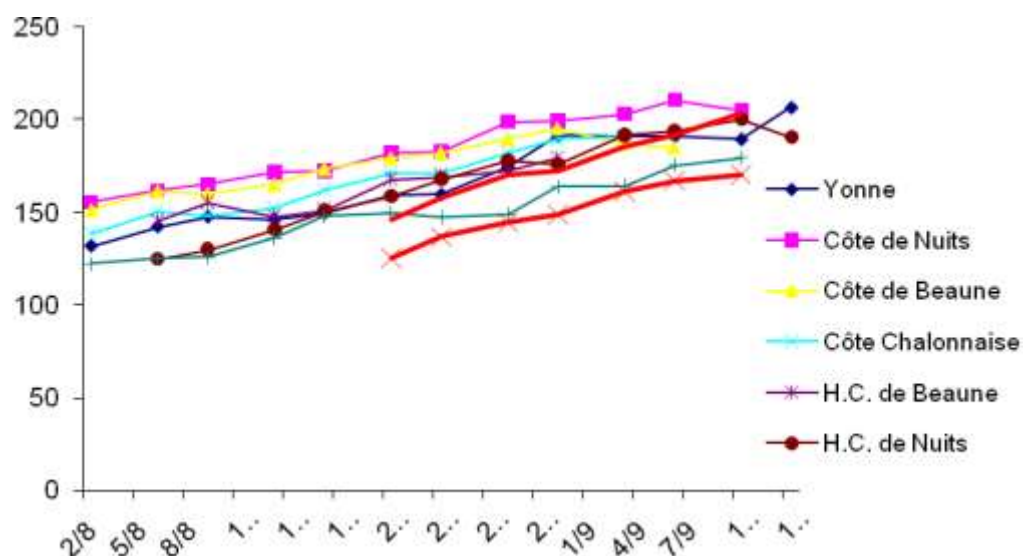
■ **August versus September: after the rain, the sunshine!**

196.6 hours of sunshine in September (nearly 10 hours more than the norm), compared to only 183 hours in August (nearly 60 hours less than the norm): these figures alone are sufficient to describe the weather difference between the two months and show that, though August was appalling, the Indian summer of September brought out the best in this vintage.

On the rain side, it was also blatant: 42 mm in September, that is 30 mm less than normal, compared to 109 mm in August (52 mm more than normal). September was abnormally dry and accompanied by a north wind which accelerated the drying of berries and promoted their end of cycle maturation.

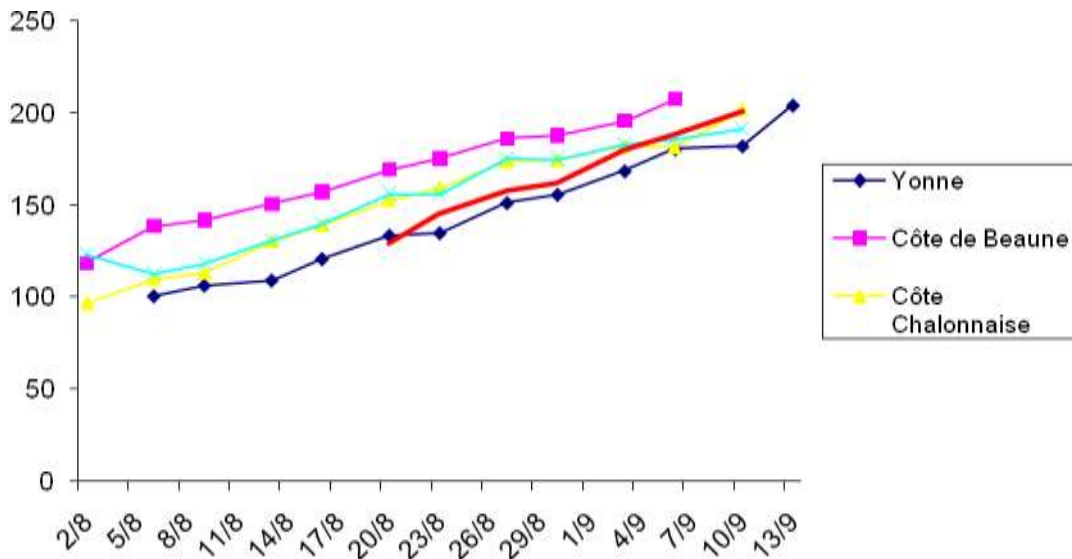
Sunny and dry, September genuinely did have a beneficial effect on the 2007 vintage, that it literally "saved from the flood"!

■ **Development of Pinot Noir and Gamay sugars: slowly but surely**



One of the most noteworthy points of this vintage for Pinot Noir is the very low rate at which sugar concentration increased in the berries, relative to the 2006 vintage. It should be noted that the final sugar content reached was close to that of 2007 for plots that could be left until September to be harvested.

Development of Chardonnay sugars: September changed the odds



The curve clearly shows a drop in September, along with the rapid gain of the last few grams of sugar allowing the grapes of Chardonnay to be picked at optimum maturity.

Source : B.I.V.B