

THE 2015 VINTAGE

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2015 is one of the most precocious vintages of the past few years. The dry, summery weather enabled us to pick the grapes at optimal maturity, although again this year the yield was small. Flashback on the making of a vintage now maturing in the cellars and which shows promise ...

THROUGH THE SEASONS

After a wet autumn, the mild winter was followed by a dry spring. These weather conditions enabled the ground to be prepared for planting the lower section of Clos de l'Arlet.

Warm, summery temperatures started as early as April, alternating with cool, rainy periods. The vine developed at a steady rate, with a high susceptibility to mildew early in the season. This persisted until July and required the attentive and continuous effort of the team to prevent it from taking hold.

Flowering began at the end of May in the early Chardonnay and Pinot Noir sectors, and became widespread from early June. The vine continued its rapid development with the help of some rain in the second week of June, which turned out to be the warmest June since 2003, causing poor fruit set in some plots.

Ripening started in mid-July, with temperatures exceeding 35°C. Beneficial rain arrived at the end of the month, but drought conditions nevertheless persisted, and ripening continued to be earlier than usual. August saw a return of the rain and more normal temperatures.

EARLY GRAPE HARVEST

The dry, sunny summer provided good ripening conditions for the grapes. The fine weather made for a good harvest. Our team of thirty harvesters picked the Chardonnay and Pinot Beurot grapes on 3 and 4 September, then from 4 to 9 September the Pinot Noir.

The grapes were sound and healthy. There was little need for sorting and the harvest advanced at a good pace. Phenolic maturity was excellent. Natural potential alcohol content was close to 13°. The healthy, well-ventilated clusters meant that for many appellations the full crop could be used for vinification.

It soon became apparent that volumes were small—similar to those of the 2010 vintage. Compared with 2014, whilst volumes for whites were slightly up, red wines volumes were down by 16%, with an average yield of 24hl per hectare.

VINIFICATION AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Fermentation in the vats was simple and spontaneous. From the very first days of maceration, the juice of the red grapes showed a good potential for colour extraction and revealed notes of fruits. As fermentation progressed, a smooth, elegant structure emerged. Cap punching was moderate in order to allow silky tannins to develop. Pumping was combined with aeration to give precedence to the fruit. We drew off after 18-20 days of vatting.

The whites started their alcoholic fermentation slowly in the vats and completed it in barrels. Although still very young this vintage already holds promise of great richness and balance.

Currently in the aging stage, all the wines of the 2015 vintage now require patience to reveal their full finesse and subtlety.