VINTAGE 2013 - Roussillon

An historically late vintage with a "northern" expression of the terroir of Roussillon

After a cold winter, difficult for the pruning, the unusually cold and wet spring gave large water reserves, favoring maturation without blockages during summer and in contrast with the heat waves of the previous vintages. Many plowings of the soils were required not to be invaded by weeds which have rapidly depleted the precious reserves.

Rainfalls reached two hundred liters per square meter for the month of April.

The flooding of the Tech and Agly Valleys have not affected our vineyards located on the top of hills.

The very late development of the branches was accompanied by a very rapid growth and the obligation to act quickly for the green work: disbudding and grouping of the shoots of the year.

Then the successive waves of north wind broke some unattached branches.

We had to be clever to fight against the wind but, with our know-how to understand the vineyard and the climate, we have tested a support system of the vegetation surrounding Grenache "en gobelet" with wires, which has saved the harvest of the most exposed vines.

The historically late flowering has resulted in very low yields on Grenache, sensitive to "coulure". The other varieties have well reacted and caps flowers have fallen rapidly preparing for a homogeneous maturity.

The scorching summer and completely dry on the Agly valley helped to slightly catch up with the late flowering and allowed us to easily manage, with the help of biodynamic preparation, diseases and botrytis.

Water reserves proved to be sufficient for proper operation of the vines until the arrival of maturity.

A small storm with twenty liters per square meter in early September was the only rain of the three months in summer and it has been beneficial in helping the vines in the last phase of maturation. This rain, followed by a week of tramontane wind, allowed us to earn up to three potential degrees in a week.

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Here, this vintage with chaotic climate caused many difficulties and even forced us to innovate in our winemaker work but, again, the painful tramontane wind makes us privileged over other wine regions as it clears up clouds and rain, preserving an healthy vineyard. This 2013 vintage is therefore a good year in terms of both quality and quantity.

Harvest

In previous years, the harvest took place at the end of August.

The choice to postpone the beginning of the harvest until mid-September was difficult because the risk of heavy rainfall with the approach of the equinox was important in the Roussillon region. We were successful and storms began the day after the traditional meal at the end of the harvest.

We found homogeneity of the flowering on the maturity of Syrah and we needed to double the team of pickers in order to harvest more than twenty tons of grapes per day in the peak of the harvest.

The harvest was therefore held from mid-September to mid-October under a radiant sun. This late harvest for the region gives us a unique vintage with exceptional Syrah, with a perfect balance of acidity and alcohol.

Vinifications

Maceration of three to four weeks and gentle pumping added value to a vintage full of finesse with balance on freshness and high aromatic potential of fruits and spices.

The mineral soils of schist and granite deliver a unique expression in this vintage.

What the wines give and what they suggest for this atypical vintage ...

Les Vignes de Bila-Haut White : A great vintage for whites! The characteristics of this late vintage with cool nights gives us a bright white wine, with a lot of minerality, and a floral and captivating nose.

Les Vignes de Bila-Haut Red : Carignan, finer than usual, associated with a strong base of Syrah with very spicy notes of cinnamon, combine with structured and concentrated Grenache and give a balanced wine.

Occultum Lapidem : The subtlety of the wines from schist punctuated by the elegant and spicy aromas of Syrah, and the high concentration of Grenache gives the wine a unique structure.

VIT and RI are only in their premises but they already show a great ageing potential.