

2020 Vintage

As was the case the previous year, winter 2020 was mild and the vines did not get the resting period we expected. With temperatures three degrees above the seasonal norm, it was the warmest winter since the start of the 21st century, with several remarkable heat spikes in February. While the world went into lockdown at the start of spring, the vines awoke from their slumbers nearly a week earlier than the average since 1993.

Spring continued in the same vein : warm, sunny, with little rainfall bar some showers towards the end of May. We were not surprised when we saw the **first flowers emerging near the windmill on the 20th of May**. Only 2007 and 2011 were further ahead in their growth cycle at this time of year: there was little doubt that **2020 would be the sixth harvest to begin in August since the start of the millennium**. Weather conditions changed noticeably however, and June brought with it some rain and cooler conditions, slowing the frantic growth of the vines. We had been fairly relaxed before, but now we needed to keep an eye on our bunches in order to avoid the development of powdery mildew.

These conditions were maintained throughout the first fortnight in July, but the vine continued to follow its normal pattern of growth and the first hint of véraison was seen mid-month at La Rochelle. Summer then picked up its normal pace; the rains disappeared and temperatures rose swiftly, with heatwave spikes towards the end of the month. Sweltering conditions struck during the first ten days of August, there was no respite between sunrise and sunset and the sun beat down relentlessly.

Having gone without water for a month, some of the vines suffered, particularly in locations where the roots found little nourishment in the soil.

Leaves withered noticeably, particularly in some of the Moulin-à-Vent parcels close to the windmill, where the bedrock rises to the surface.

These extreme conditions meant that we began tasting the first grapes on 12 August. **We had planned for picking to begin on 24 August**, but in the end we started harvesting three days earlier, on the 21st. Although 2020 is widely regarded as being the second-earliest vintage on record (after 2003), we have never picked earlier at the domaine. Ever since budbreak, the growth cycle of the vines had been ten days ahead of the norm throughout the growing season.

2020 not only put the world on pause, but it has shaken us out of our complacency and has carved its place in the annals of history. At risk of appearing to exaggerate, this extraordinary year has also left its mark on the Château des Jacques and the wider Beaujolais region. Ideal though the growing season was in many ways, it also brought its own fair share of concerns. But, thanks to our viticultural practices, our system of triage and a gentle vinification, 2020 will be remembered as being hot in name only; nothing that we have tasted in our cellars reveals the year's excesses. **Overall, the vintage has close similarities to 2018: deep colours, notable generosity, firm but fine tannins**. Proof, if any were needed, of the affinity between the Gamay grape and the challenging soils of the Beaujolais region.

Cyril Chirouze



THE PARCEL SELECTIONS



MOULIN À VENT LA ROCHE

This climat, situated just beneath the famous windmill, owes its name to the pink granite bedrock that rises to the surface just a few metres away. The Gamay is, without a doubt, one of the few varieties to thrive on these austere soils that afford no water reserves during the hot summer months. Oriented towards the rising sun, these vines have given birth to a wine that is fresh and juicy, with firm tannins.



MOULIN À VENT CLOS DU GRAND CARQUELIN

Located just a few metres away from la Roche, the Clos du Grand Carquelin is very different from its cousin, thanks to a soil that is somewhat deeper and richer in clay, and its sunnier orientation. Even though the cordons suffered from the extreme conditions that prevailed in the first half of August, the old bush vines put up a valiant fight. This is a wine that shows elegance and harmony, and is already delicious to drink.



MOULIN À VENT CLOS DES THORINS

Halfway between Carquelin and Rocheigrès, this southern-facing climat offers the Gamay deeper granite soils with greater water reserves than either. As a result, the bunches here suffered less from the hot summer conditions. Although levels of ripeness and concentration are high as a result of this extraordinary vintage, the wine is very Burgundian in style, with very fine tannins.



MOULIN À VENT CLOS DE ROCHEGRÈS

Rising to a peak at 361 metres, Rocheigrès overlooks the Moulin-à-Vent appellation. Similarly to Carquelin and la Roche, the vines are mostly planted on shallow granitic soils. The terroir here is notable for its numerous seams of quartz. The wine's hallmark freshness is still present, and with a depth of fruit that bears witness to the year's exceptional weather, this new-born bears a strong family resemblance to the wines of 2000 and 2018.



MORGON CÔTE DU PY

Similarly to the Côte de Brouilly, this climat is typified by its diorite soils, a bluish rock derived from submarine volcanoes that were even more ancient than those that led to the formation of the granite that prevails elsewhere. In 2020 our vines were able to benefit from the richness of this soil, even if the Gamay vines were still pushed to their limits. The deep purple colour of this wine is suggestive of its intensity, its complexity and its depth of fruit.

