

DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU

2019 HARVEST NOTEBOOK.

2019
Forever Vigneron

“Grace”

It looks like the 2019 vintage was, once again, a vigneron's vintage. Season after season, this vintage demanded observation, analysis, rigour, advance preparation. The winegrower, at one with nature, before benefiting from the exceptional summer conditions, knew how to deal with the mixed spring weather, how to assess the risks, how to understand the temperament of each plot.

Without doubt, we can't say often enough how much talent is brought together in our rows of vines, to work this beautiful material cleanly, sustainably, passionately.

Top quality, reduced quantity

While regretting the slight drop in volume compared with 2018, above all we welcomed the rare quality of the musts in 2019. This vintage will fascinate us for a long time: deep, structured, balanced and marked with a rare distinction. It has so much to tell us...

Weather

A radiant wine-growing summer after a spring of twists and turns. Excess rainfall in April, fine weather in May, a sharp return to cool temperatures in early June; heatwaves at the end of June and July (and therefore with no risk of sunburn at this stage of the cycle), almost no rain over the whole of the summer and until the end of harvest, very moderate temperatures in August and September (again avoiding the risk of burning exposed berries).

Privilege of the terroir

The Ducru-Beaucaillou plateau saw an extraordinary flowering between 31 May and 2 June thanks to very fine weather and very high temperatures (32°C recorded at 7 p.m. on 1 June). The vine blossom perfumed the property with its pleasant and intoxicating scent of honeysuckle: sweet, tangy, suave.

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On the satellite terroirs at the centre and to the west of the appellation, the less hurried plots experienced a longer and more sensitive flowering (between 3 and 13 June), the consequence of a sudden “chilly” wave that set in just after the hot weather (on 5 June in particular: heavy and continuous rain throughout the day, only 13°C at 1 p.m.). This treacherous cold spell finally passed without causing too much suffering. From mid-June, the sun poured its beneficial warmth on our vines every day. Manicured care (green and pink harvests, careful leaf removal) corrected some of nature’s imperfections.

Throughout the summer, our vines did not waver. They know their strengths: the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gironde estuary, which protect them from excessive summer heat, and these fine Günz gravels with their retention capacity that moderates water stress.

Ripening

At the beginning of September, an equally demanding vigil started, monitoring the ripeness of the different grape varieties and each plot. The grapes are tasted continuously at this stage, methodically, vine by vine, then analysed in the laboratory to determine the timing of the harvest, sector by sector. Micromanagement within a single plot in order to gain precision.

Harvest

The very good weather in August and September, combined with mild temperatures, allowed the grapes to flourish calmly. At the end of September, when the Merlot offered itself complacently to our secateurs, the Cabernet Sauvignon was still not ready... The light rains on Sunday 22, Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 September restarted the ripening process. At the turn of the month, the Cabernet Sauvignon finally underwent its transformation to excellence.

The observation is that here, and no doubt better than Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon can cope with these warmer climatic conditions by maintaining a long vegetative cycle: 120 days or more from flowering to full ripening of the grapes.

With the IBMP (*) fully broken down, restrained alcohol degrees, acidity in phase, thick skins with extraordinary anthocyanin power, perfectly ripe seeds, there was no doubt that the potential for excellence was there!

Very careful hand picking was complemented by strict inspection of the bunches at the end of the rows and then optical sorting of the berries on arrival in the vat room. The material had to be flawless.

Vinification

We obtained superb juices. This vintage, we experimented with a battery of new-generation (“smart”) conical tanks of small size (60/80 hectolitres), allowing us to work very accurately and ultimately to express as closely as possible the identity of each plot in the wine. This precision is found in the blends, which have now reached a remarkable level of precision (less than 0.3%). Each year, decision-support tools are added, both in monitoring the health of the vineyard and in the winemaking and ageing. No stone is left unturned in the pursuit of excellence... to reveal the essence of the terroirs of Ducru-Beaucaillou.

A tribute to science and technical progress.

Such sophistication bears witness to the scientific ingenuity at work in viticulture and oenology in the world in general and in Bordeaux in particular. This search for the absolute is based on the talents of our researchers and academics, our agronomists and oenologists but also on an economy that is demanding in both human and financial resources. We must pay tribute to it and fight to preserve it. We mustn’t let this product of high culture escape us!

Ultimately: Grace. An absolutely magical cuvée with a typical Médoc aesthetic. A cuvée that approaches the sublime. Remarkable for its contained power, elegance, charm. A deep presence with an athletic figure. No heaviness, no excess. Like a ballerina whose hands could catch the sky. With a skip and a leap... she rises so high that she cannot fall. Full of grace.

See you all soon! The traditional “*débutante ball*” for the 2019 vintage could not be held because of the pandemic. Our teams continue courageously, and with all their characteristic diligence, to age the wine with the greatest care. As soon as we can, we will present the wines for tasting. While eagerly awaiting this, we send you and all your loved ones our best and sincere wishes so that this virus spares you and yours and will soon be just a bad memory! See you soon, and keep well!

Bruno Boné

(*) IBMP or 3-isobutyl-2-methoxypyrazine is the molecule responsible for the taste of bell peppers or green beans. It is therefore advisable to wait for it to break down, to avoid these faults appearing in the wine.