



2011 Vintage in Burgundy

Pleasure first and foremost

15 November 2011

2011 will remain etched in our memories, not just because it was an early year, but because of its unique weather conditions. Whilst the world's wine enthusiasts are getting ready to discover this new vintage, the first impressions are already being made. This year, elegance and indulgence, in particular, are enhancing the mosaic of Burgundy's "Terroirs". These wines are accessible, providing an ideal way of discovering the wealth and diversity of Burgundy wines.

The Burgundy winegrowers know how to trust their instincts. Before the arrival of summer, they remained cautious, even though the particularly hot, dry spring gave the vines the potential for excellent quality. The rainfall in July helped reconstitute the water reserves in the soil and provide the vines with a new lease of life. The stormy weather in August, which was very difficult to anticipate, encouraged the winegrowers to follow their plots inch by inch. They were fully aware that they would need both humility and intuition to determine the date of the harvest: between maturity and the health of the vineyard, nature has an important role to play. To wait or not to wait? This is the crucial question that the Burgundy winegrowers asked themselves in the last weeks of August, particularly for Pinot Noir, which is reputed for its delicacy and complexity.

The harvest was spread out across several weeks, with the winegrowers harvesting the plots according to their maturity. The sunshine and lack of rain in September were the rewards for their patience. Careful selection was carried out, on the vines and in the cellars. Only the very best grapes were vinified.

■ White wines

The white wines are characterised by aromatic purity. Clear, frank aromas of citrus fruits and delicate floral notes are unveiled on tasting. These flavours are brought out by a good level of acidity, making the wines fresh and expressive. The harmonious balance, which was already perceived on tasting the grapes, is confirmed. All this is strengthened by a pleasant roundness on the palate.

The expression of the "Terroirs" is already notable. Maturity will bring additional complexity and subtlety to these wines, but they can also be enjoyed in their youth.

■ Red wines

These are highly quaffable wines with a very intense red colour. Depending on the sectors, there is a wide aromatic palette: fresh fruits, red fruits (raspberry, cherry) and a few soft, spicy notes. Freshness and balance grace the palate. The tannins are round, supple and elegant.

The broad sensorial diversity and the qualitative distribution are characteristic of each "Terroir". The potential for laying down the wine will vary depending on the style. However, the very pleasant aspect of this vintage, which is already noticeable, means that they can already be enjoyed.

■ Crémant de Bourgogne

The Crémant producers began harvesting in the third week of August in the south of Burgundy. The harvests continued until the end of September.

The wines made from Chardonnay grapes feature white peach and grapefruit aromas. The Aligoté presents light, tangy notes.

The Pinot Noir provides structured, coloured wines. The Gamay reveals great-quality wines, with intense red fruit aromas.

The first assemblages will be made at the end of the year.

This press release presents general characteristics per area. As each wine and each winemaker is unique, each wine must be tasted before it can be characterized.



BOURGOGNES



Climatology 2011

An unparalleled year !

The first few months of the year were marked by clement temperatures and levels of rain that fell well below the norm. Even at this point, 2011 could already be characterised as a hot, dry year. The arrival of spring confirmed this trend and the first weekend of April ushered in some exceptionally pleasant, warm weather. The arrival of the summer marked a sharp change in the weather, allowing us to reconstitute water reserves without detracting from the maturing process.

■ A hot, dry spring

Average monthly temperatures significantly exceeded seasonal averages in March, April and May. In parallel, rain was scarce. The rainfall deficiency was considerable (particularly in April and May) and the amount of sunshine was even greater than average for the summer period. There was, on average, 50% less rain than normal. Summer arrived early!

The vines grew rapidly. At the beginning of April, budding took place in the space of a few days in these exceptional climatic conditions. The mid-budding stage (50% green shoots) was reached at dates similar to those in 2007, making it one of the earliest in the last 17 years – some three weeks in advance when compared to the average (1994-2010).

This unusual weather held out for several weeks and the flowering began during May, despite a slight cooling and some rain towards the middle of the month. The mid-flowering dates (50% of flowers open) fell around 20th May and the 3-week lead continued.

Thanks to the dry, warm weather, the vineyards were very healthy as conditions were unfavourable for pests and disease. However, the drying up of water reserves in the soil triggered fears of early water stress for the vines, which could weaken them during the maturation period. The return of rainfall at the beginning of June was beneficial for the vines and reassured professionals.

The showers, which were often stormy, were sometimes accompanied by hail, which caused a certain amount of local damage, particularly in the Yonne. The advance in the vegetative cycle was nevertheless maintained thanks to the clement temperatures.

■ A radical change in summer weather conditions

From 7th July, weather trends reversed completely. There was much instability, with daily storms. July saw rainfall totals that were three times greater than the seasonal average in some areas. It was also one of the coldest of the last 20 years! One thing that particularly stood out was the frequency and intensity of the hail storms that took place across the vineyards, with a particularly violent episode occurring in the night of 12th to 13th July in the Côte Chalonnaise, which caused sometime very serious damage.

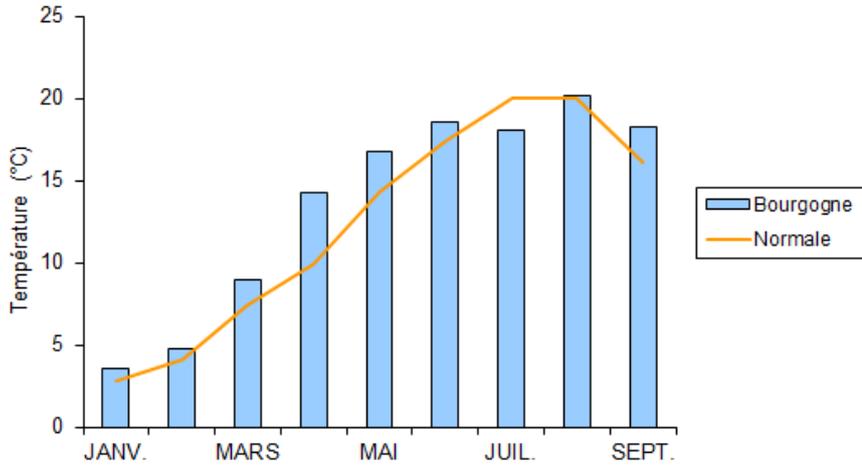
In August, warm, sunny episodes alternated with cooler, rainy periods. The vines made the most of the favourable periods and maturing took place at a good pace. There were three to four particularly heavy rainy episodes, with the first two alone providing the average monthly rainfall.

■ The return of good maturing conditions

The last ten days of August saw the return of dry, warm weather with temperatures exceeding seasonal averages. This allowed the grapes to mature perfectly under ideal conditions. September continued in the same way, with summery climatic conditions and a significant lack of rain that had no adverse effect on the vines.

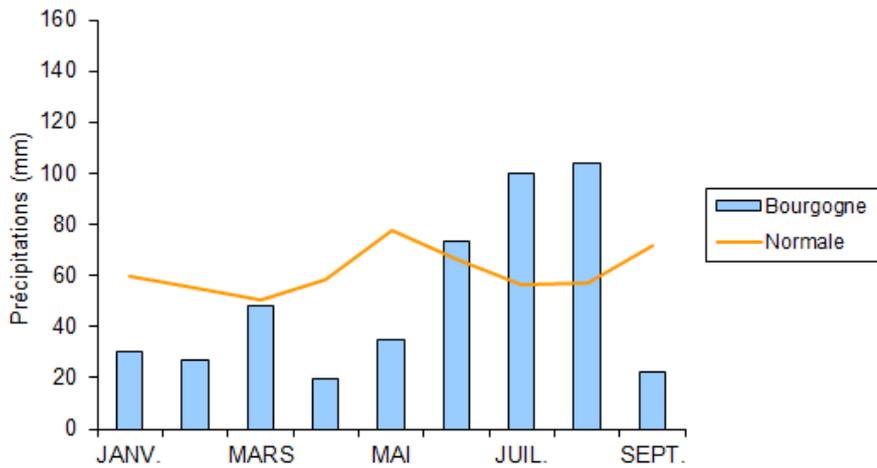
Sunshine-bathed harvests therefore began at the end of August for the earliest sectors, and continued into the first weeks of September in excellent conditions.

Average monthly temperatures – Burgundy 2011



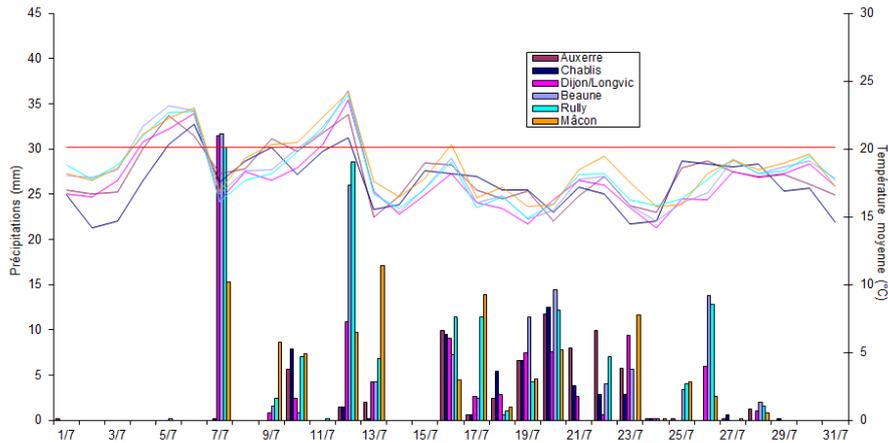
Source: BIVB/Météo France

Average monthly rainfall – Burgundy 2011



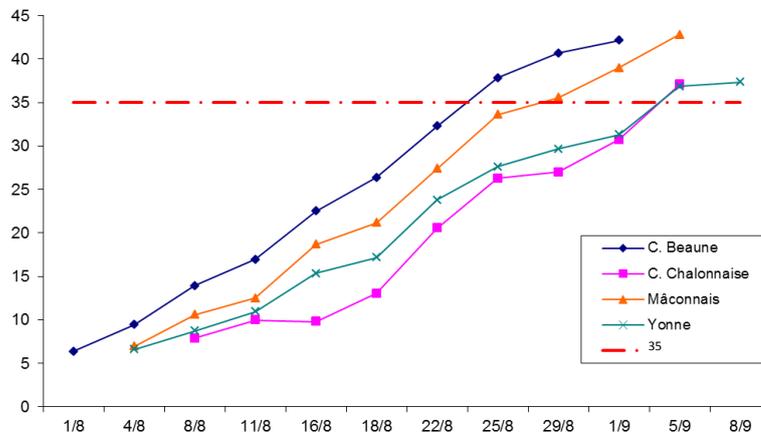
Source: BIVB/Météo France

Average rainfall and temperatures in July – Burgundy 2011



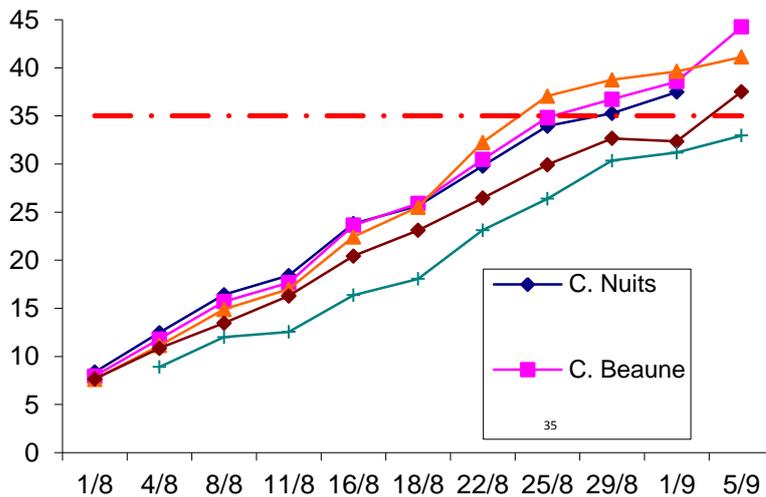
Source: BIVB/Météo France

Change in the Chardonnay sugar/total acidity ratio – Burgundy 2011



Source: Observatoire du millésime du BIVB

Change in the Pinot Noir and Gamay sugar/total acidity ratios – Burgundy 2011



Source: Observatoire du millésime du BIVB

A value of 35 is commonly accepted as a good sugar/total acidity ratio

Contact:

Cécile Mathiaud – Press Officer BIVB

Tel. +33 (0)3 80 25 95 76 - cecile.mathiaud@bivb.com



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