

The Burgundy Briefing

news, views and tastings

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Vintage Report

2005 Chablis

The season

It was a classic season, just little drier than average, but not with the vine stress experienced in the Côte d'Or. There was no frost in April and May and the flowering in June was rapid. June was warm and sunny. The peak of temperature came in August (nearby Auxerre was the warmest city in France for three days). It was very healthy vintage with few problems of disease. Cut worms attacked in a few places. Philippe Drouhin mentions that they appeared at the beginning of the season, giving them a long period to munch, reducing a cop level. Yields were less than average in 2005, lower than the abundant 2004, but not as low as 2003. It seems that there were few problems with frost, hail or disease. The focus was on the vintage.

Harvest

The Ban de Vendanges was the 17th September. Ripening happened very quickly around the 19th to the 22nd September. Sugar accumulation was rapid and just a few days could make all the difference. Christian Moreau's Les Clos increased by 1 degree over a weekend. By harvest there was some shrivelling and some fruit reached 15% potential alcohol.

Although Benoît Droin considers 2005 a very easy year, he voices the opinion of the majority in emphasising the importance of timing the harvest. "If you waited there was too much concentration and an emphasis on the cépage with a lack of freshness and impression of terroir. Some wines are more like the Maconnais." Quite a few vingerons remarked on sluggish or stuck fermentations given higher than average sugar levels.



Christian (right) and Fabienne Moreau

Philippe Drouhin (right) comments, "The acidity, ripeness and concentration were good and the fruit was very healthy. The little bit of rain at harvest (it rained a little on the 15th) triggered a little phase of concentration in which the acidity went down and then up again and then the flavours and fragrances appeared. We had more rain here than in the Cote d'Or.



The vigneron comment



François Servin (seen left with Marc Cameron on his right) remarks; "The problem is how to make the authentic Chablis in a warmer vintage."

At Domaine William Fevre Didier Séguier believes that "The terrior does exist in this vintage as long as you didn't go into surmaturité"

On the question of oak in this rich vintage. Pinson considers "the 2005 vintage is so well balanced that the wine integrates differently to previous years. The wood works very well, bringing the wine forward earlier."

Bernard Raveneau considers the vintage to be like 2002, but richer.

Jean-Benard Marchive of Domaine des Malandes makes some vintage comparisons. "The acidity similar with 2003, but more evident for in 2003 glycerol masked the acidity. 2005 is crisper on the finish. The aromatics are more 'Chablis' than 2003 with more lemon and grapefruit. Similar to 2004s in the mouth and analysis, except for village Chablis (which he picked later)."

Benoit Droin (right) considers "the body is like 2000, but it is less austere than 2000. 2002 is more fruity. 1996 has more acidity" Overall he judges it is most like 1990 in richness, but fresher and more classic.





At Domaine Moreau-Naudet the 2005 reminds Stéphane Moreau of 1992, 1985 and 1995, "...lots of fruit immediately. You need to leave it just three years to get the mineral coming through."

Style, quality and when to drink

At the moment the 2005 seems more fruit, than terroir driven. Watch out for wine at 14+% alcohol which is on a par with 2003, although most of the 2005s I tried were well balanced wines. Rich certainly, but the acidity is generally fresh enough (with the caveat of timely picking). The overt fruit makes them accessible. The premier and grand cru may well be approachable earlier than the 2004s. As the jovial Bernard Legland of domaine des Marronniers observes, "they are so pleasant, we would like to drink them now."

2005 certainly has more gras and gloss than the nervy 2004s in which the more marginal conditions produced greater translucency to the terroir. It is also more consistent than the higher yielding 2004 and the generic quality level is good. As for 'drinking from' dates, the 1er cru will be enjoyable for their primary fruit in 2008/9 and the grand cru from 2009; or for secondary development 2010 for 1er cru and 2015 for grand cru. The intensity of the fruit in the best wines should make this a vintage to keep. Overall a very good vintage.