



CHAMPAGNE
TAITTINGER
Reims

2017 HARVESTS,
THE RESULTS OF A COMPLEX YEAR.

2017 was characterized by various climate events that had a direct impact on the vineyard.

First, there were two particularly severe frosts in April when the first buds had already emerged, thanks to the rather mild winter. Several of our best plots were badly damaged, mainly around Murigny (40 hectares in Reims); more than 80% was destroyed by the frost, resulting in a rarely seen 3,500 kg/hectare harvest. Our vines on the Côte de Bar, in the Aube region, also suffered from the icy temperatures, for the second year running, yielding a disappointing 6,900 kg/hectare.

After this difficult period, the rest of the season continued with excellent conditions. Rather high temperatures suggested that the harvests could be relatively early, in August. The hot, breezy weather continued until the middle of the summer, with the result that the vines needed very few treatments.

From July onwards, substantial rainfall made management of the vines more complicated, with a high risk of disease in some areas. Rumours of mildew circulated in Champagne. The Pinot Meunier grapes were most at risk, especially around Epernay and Hautvillers. The Pinot Noir generally fared well, except in Ambonnay. The Chardonnay grapes of the Côte des Blancs remained in perfect health.

The harvests started early. Some wine growers began in late August. In our vineyard, the snapping of secateurs could be heard on the 1st of September. Rather unusually, harvest dates across the whole of the Champagne appellation were virtually the same. Furthermore, the harvests took place over a period of just ten days, rather than the usual three weeks.

One word which comes to mind to describe the 2017 harvests : *technical*.

This season required all of Taittinger's expertise on various points.

The harvests had to be carried out at a brisk pace, which progressively accelerated. This was necessary to avoid any deterioration in the quality of the grapes. The heavy rain during the summer resulted in outbreaks of botrytis in some areas, and it proved to be crucial to harvest only the healthiest bunches. Such rigorous sorting is made possible by manual harvesting and is essential to the production of our wines.

Thanks to the vigilance and efficiency of our teams, this drastic selection could be carried out everywhere where it was necessary.

Fortunately, the unusually low temperatures at the end of the summer prevented the disease from spreading. In Bouzy and Ambonnay, more than 30% of the harvest was left aside. In Pierry and Hautvillers, we barely reached 7,000 kg/hectare.

Meticulous attention was required at the presses, to ensure that no damaged grapes went into the vats. Overall, the grapes' ripeness was very good, with an average of 10.2% potential alcohol in the vats.

The spring frosts and the rigorous sorting inevitably had a dramatic effect on the yields. In the Taittinger vineyard, the average was extremely low, at 8,200 kg/hectare, for a year in which the maximum authorized in the appellation was 10,300kg.

However, there is nothing to regret. The absolute priority during these harvests was to focus on quality rather than quantity, in order to ensure the excellence of our future wines and in no way compromise the guarantee of excellence that we give our customers.

In this complex year, the Chardonnay has proved to be a pleasant surprise, and seems likely to produce some promising wines.

But we shall have to wait patiently until January, when the still wines can be tasted, to make any pronouncements about the general quality of the 2017 vintage.

IMAGES

