



# DELAS

## 2005 Harvest Report

This year's harvest began on September 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Southern part of the Rhône Valley, and on September 8<sup>th</sup> for the most forward villages in the North.

Throughout the valley the grapes were nice and healthy. There were two main reasons for this lack of trouble in the vineyards. Firstly, the summer weather was truly Mediterranean whilst remaining free from the drought and heat extremes of 2003; this meant plenty of sunshine and little rain through the summer months. The other precious ally that helped us out this year was the Mistral wind that dried out the vines and avoided the development of any cryptogamic diseases.

Throughout the valley, the grapes changed color roughly a week earlier than in 2004. As harvest dates gradually drew nearer, local differences between one vineyard and another began to emerge. Some gentle and beneficial rain (40 millimetres in two sessions during August) helped bring forward the ripening in the Delas Frères vineyards in Hermitage (especially in *Les Bessards*), as well as in the appellations of Crozes-Hermitage and the southern part of Saint-Joseph.

Some of the most northerly parts of the valley (the northern section of Saint-Joseph as well as Côte Rôtie) suffered from drought, which slowed up the ripening of the bunches. This meant that harvest was spread out over a considerable period of time, with 25 days separating Saint-Peray (where we produce a white Côte du Rhône called *cuvee Saint-Esprit*) from the last plots to be picked in Saint-Joseph, especially our single-vineyard offering, *Sainte-Epine*.

Cool mornings facilitated cool starts to the maceration and fermentation processes. Alcoholic fermentation got off to a slow start, which means we should have plenty of glycerol in the wines, bringing a "fatty / luscious" sensation to the palate.

The major piece of news on the technical side during this 2005 harvest at Delas Frères is the use of new tools that have been specially designed for cap-punching in our red wine fermenting tanks. Directly inspired by manual cap-punching traditions, a series of pneumatic pumps work slowly, perfectly imitating the gestures previously made by hard-working cellarhands. According to Jacques Grange and his assistant, Jean-François Farinet, this form of cap-punching is an improvement, as it is more thorough and manages to push the cap further down into the liquid contents of the vat. So this is anything but a gadget: it extends our range of instruments and techniques aimed at improving gentle, controlled extraction during the vatting period.

Regarding the white wines, one of salient points of the 2005's will be the marvellous balance between alcohol and acidity levels in Condrieu. We asked for, and obtained, from our faithful

suppliers earlier harvest dates to ensure freshness in the viognier grape. This has the added advantage of maintaining the nuances that stem from the *terroir* of Condrieu and which tend to fade away quite easily when this variety becomes over-ripe.

In terms of red wines, one of the features of the 2005 vintage is record levels of antho-cyanins that produce color. This is true just as much of the syrah from the northern part of the valley as of the grenache from the south. We are looking forward to being able to taste rich, well-structured and deeply colored wines. We will need to take special care during the malo-lactic fermentations to ensure that none of these vital qualities are lost prior to the crucial ageing period for the wines.

Overall, Fabrice Rosset, the CEO of Delas Frères, is very pleased and considers that the wines from the 2005 vintage are off to a good start.