



DELAS

DELAS 2006 HARVEST REPORT

After a summer of quite varied weather, expectations about the quality of this year's harvest remained conservative for some time. This was partly due to fears that the scorching heat at the end of July would lead to a repeat of the situation in 2003; it was thought that the vines would be hard-pushed to endure another heat wave and producers began to expect the worst. The weather in August was the complete opposite however, and it has been a good many years since it has been quite so cold in the mornings at that time of year. On the other hand, these low temperatures are also beneficial in that they allow the synthesis of a large quantity of primary aromas. Alternating cool nights and sunny days is undoubtedly an element that is essential in distinguishing the wines from our northern vineyards, in contrast with the cultivation of Syrah grapes in the south of France and even more so in the New World. Consequently, we are now looking forward to wines that are totally in keeping with the ancestral typicity on which the reputation of our AOC wines has been built.

Harvesting began with the white Hermitage grapes on the 11th of September and ended with the last Cornas and Saint Joseph grapes on the 30th of September. All grapes were in perfect health and winery operations were able to take place in excellent conditions. Fermentation and maceration techniques have now been perfected at Delas and the vinification process is thoroughly monitored on a daily basis by an entire team of people, each member of which knows exactly what to do and what is expected of them. This was of particular importance this year because we were in the fortunate situation of obtaining grapes from our new Crozes Hermitage estate, Domaine des Grands Chemins, for the first time. This extra harvest, added to average yields of 38 to 40 hectolitres per hectare, meant that we had to use some vinification vats twice. Our ability to track every stage and process from the vineyard to the finished wine will, over the coming weeks, allow us to validate certain practical approaches to handling the grapes harvested from plots grown according to different methods and to decide the fate of these wines (from maturing to bottling). Observations made of the grapes (very loose bunches and small berry size) and of the unfinished wines (very intense colour and silky smooth tannic substance) promises well for the finished product.

Several new producers have joined our list of suppliers. We have therefore vinified grapes from over 3 hectares (7.41 acres) of Saint Joseph vines from the village of Mauves, at the heart and origin of this wonderful appellation.