

## **Harvest**

### **2010: A fine Vintage to celebrate 175 years of Delas Frères**

Now that the last grapes have just been vatted, it is time for the firm Delas Frères to share the very first impressions of its Technical Director, Jacques Grange, on this new vintage.

The harvest was long this year, starting on 16<sup>th</sup> September with Condrieu and White Hermitage before finishing on 9<sup>th</sup> October with the plots in Cornas.

A partial explanation of this extended harvest can be attributed to the disturbance of the growing cycle during flowering due to the cold temperatures and regular rainfall. The latter only had very limited consequences for setting of the southern grape varieties. However, it caused a very considerable amount of drop amongst the Grenache in the southern Rhône Valley.

This irregularity during fertilisation of the grapes continued until the harvest. Ripeness testing revealed an exceptional disparity from one plot to another, from one vine stock to another and even within the same bunch it was not rare to see still pink grapes alongside others that had ripened perfectly.

The dynamics of ripening were relatively slow and even if the richness in sugar did not experience very significant increases, the fruit aromas progressively showed themselves to be of a particularly remarkable level. The other highlight of this vintage lies in the stability of its acidity with a pH of around 3.3 to 3.4. At such levels of acidity, the grape's health is not tarnished, remaining at a perfect level.

Once again, the risk of postponing the harvest paid off! As if it were still necessary to underline, it is absolutely essential to wait for perfect ripeness of the fruit to even hope to make keeping wines that will be an image of all the subtleties of the land from which they originate!

Here are some of the highlights of the year on the Delas Frères estates:

- The harvest of the White Hermitage grapes was carried out with distinction between the whites from the foot of the Bessards slopes and those from Grandes Vignes.
- The Red Hermitage from Domaine des Tourettes were harvested in two separate pickings, depending on the grapes' taste criteria: the first were picked on 20<sup>th</sup> September and the others on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September.
- The Domaine des Grands Chemins (a Delas Frères estate in Crozes Hermitage, acquired in 2006) has once again this year kept all its promises in terms of quantity (4,700 litres per hectare) and quality (an impressive robe and natural alcohol content of more than 13°).

And also in the vineyards of the Bruyere-Delas family:

- The Clos Boucher (our Condrieu "plot wine") was separated according to the exposure and age of the vines into three different batches and vinified separately.

The winemaking process for the reds did not encounter any problems. The length of vatting for certain vats was deliberately reduced, in order to preserve the subtlety of the tannins. Indeed, "over-extraction" in such a vintage can quickly become detrimental by hardening the tannic structure. The wines are short barrelled and we have introduced a proportion of one year old barrels on running off from the vats.

All in all, we have a vintage of excellent quality, respectable, subtle and firm.

A fine personality somewhat different from its predecessor, another great vintage: 2009 is currently finishing maturing into a richer and more generous character.