

## **THE 2011 HARVEST BY DELAS**

### *In the vineyards*

Despite a wet autumn in 2010, the vine's five month winter period of dormancy finished with a 32% deficiency in rainfall compared to normal levels. Exceptionally high spring temperatures then encouraged precocious and rapid growth throughout our vineyards. This meant for instance that, by the end of April 2011, vines at **Domaine des Tourettes** were as far advanced as they had been on May 20th the year before. In such exceptional conditions, flowering was over by mid-May, which led us to imagine that harvest would be very early...until the July weather mercifully slowed things down.

Grapes then took their time to ripen, and the fine weather we had in September finally gave us crops of perfectly healthy and ripe grapes that we harvested, plot by plot and appellation by appellation, when the time was right.

As the vine leaf's photosynthetic activity was slow at this late stage (110 to 120 days after flowering), the sugar levels (and the corresponding alcohol in the wine) did not reach the high levels that can occur in similar circumstances.

The grapes for our Crozes-Hermitage blanc, which were crushed on August 30th, showed potential alcohol of 12.8% and a pH of 3.43. White grapes from Hermitage, as well as the first pickings at Condrieu, were brought in on September 14th, and the last bunches from the Clos Boucher (Condrieu) on the 23rd.

The same logic of spreading out precise harvest dates obtained for the syrah grapes, with the first bunches from **Domaine des Grands Chemins** (Delas Frères' properties in Crozes hermitage) coming in on September 8th, then the **Domaine des Tourettes** (Delas Frères vineyards in Hermitage) being picked successively on September 20th, 23rd and 28th. The last bunches from Cornas were finally picked on the 30th.

### *In the winery*

In terms of its white wines, this vintage will bear the signature of freshness. The wines are lively under the attractively unctuous structure that is one of the hallmarks of our white varieties : Viognier (Condrieu), Marsanne (Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage and Saint Joseph) as well as a touch of Roussane (Saint Joseph).

For the reds, the widespread harvest dates enabled us to extend vatting periods at relatively high temperatures. Maceration lasted a relatively long time : in fact some wines were "de-vatted" after 20 / 25 days.

For all our plots, both at the must stage and for the wines-in-the-making, we have observed good tannic structures that are gradually blending with the naturally rich fruit flavours. The colours are very intense and the tannins tightly-knit and very finely grained, giving the wines those silky textures that remind one of great vintages.

The maturing process started, using a broad palette of barrels of various ages and origins. Over the past few years, we have extended the number of cooperages that supply us, adding Damy, Nadalié, Tonnellerie de Marsannay, Seguin Moreau and Saury to François Frères. This is part of our quest for the best patina to give to the fruit of each terroir and vintage, as it is revealed during the vinification stage.

### *As for the wines*

The 2011 vintage will surely be on a par with the excellent 2009s and 2010s. In the infant stages it is certainly looking that way.

The nuances of each plot and specific harvest play variations on a theme that runs from year to year and is the hallmark of the best *terroirs*.

As an exemple regarding the "single vineyard wines" : *La Landonne* (Côte Rôtie), as soon as it was de-vatted, showed incomparable delicacy and style. The *Sainte Epine* plot of Saint Joseph combines finesse and power. **Domaine des Tourettes'** Hermitages, especially the *Bessards* plot, show all their usual strength and depth of flavours.

**Fabrice ROSSET, CEO as well as Jacques GRANGE Chief Winemaker and his assistant Claire DARNAUD are extremely happy of Vintage 2011.**