



**DE LAS**

*Grands Vins de la Vallée du Rhône*

## The 2013 harvest with Delas

### **2013 ... 2003 ... has the climate gone crazy?**

Exactly ten years ago, in 2003, we experienced an exceptionally precocious harvest. Whilst 2013 will stick in memories as being historically retarded.

The vine's flowering in late June was already a sign that the weather pattern was unusual, and the maturing phase that followed was particularly slow. September's weather nevertheless helped the bunches of syrah, viognier and marsanne to attain remarkable aromatic intensity.

The grapes' natural acidities were thus preserved and tasting the berries soon convinced us that we were looking at a potentially great vintage.

The first bunches of white grapes were cut, simultaneously and on September 25th, in our Crozes Hermitage vineyards of Domaine des Grands Chemins and in the Clos Boucher in Condrieu. In the case of Condrieu the viogniers were harvested with average levels of potential alcohol of 13,7° and perfect acidities that produced *Ph* levels close to 3,3.

With these « late harvest » conditions, we needed to be patient and wait for each plot, one after another, to reach the optimal maturity levels required for each cuvée. Thus our best plots on the Domaine des Grands Chemins were harvested on October 7<sup>th</sup>, our first pickings of red Hermitage grapes from the Coteau de l'Oncle on October 8th, whilst the Hermitage l'Ermite plot had to wait until October 17<sup>th</sup>.

Tastings of the fermenting musts, and then of the first wines as they were run off, have confirmed the very high quality level of this most unusual vintage.

The whites taste very pure and their acidity levels will allow us to take them, at least partially, through malo-lactic fermentation. Reds are showing exceptionally deep colour and remarkable tannic structure.

There is just one downside to the picture: yields are very low across the board. The cold and wet spring weather that persisted during flowering resulted in poor fruit set (*coulure*) for all our Rhône varieties. The yields from Côte Rôtie and Hermitage are just around 20 hectolitres per hectare, whilst Condrieu has barely managed 18 hl/ha. Our vinegrower partners in the southern Rhône have also experienced considerable losses of volume, with Grenache in particular producing just a tiny crop.