



DELAS

Grands Vins de la Vallée du Rhône



DELAS FRÈRES Harvest 2016

Changing emotions: Concern, Vigilance... Serenity

Growing cycle

There was a difficult beginning to the 2016 campaign with almost constant cloud cover, low temperatures and especially frequent rainfall right until the end of June – 52 rain showers between March and July.

In early April there was a hailstorm in Hermitage, which destroyed, or badly damaged, the first inflorescences (flower clusters) that had formed in part of a 2.5 hectares “Grandes Vignes” plot situated on our **Domaine des Tourettes**.

Some damage was also seen on the vegetation at “Les Bessards” (Hermitage), as well as the Sainte-Epine (in Saint-Joseph) plot, but it has not had any major consequences.

In terms of the flowering, it took place two to three weeks later than in 2015, which ultimately corresponds to a typical year. The first stage of flowering took place in sunny conditions, whereas the second stage unfortunately took place in heavy rain, which led to the development of *coulure*, in particular in Hermitage.

The pace of treatments was stepped up, but despite all these efforts, the outbreaks of mildew and later oïdium, were significant. It was only from mid-June that the sunshine emerged and, although there were a few rainy spells, the high temperatures and sunny conditions dried out many of the areas affected by outbreaks of disease.

At the bunch closure stage, we observed, on almost the totality of Crozes-Hermitage vineyards, including our vineyards of **Domaine des Grands Chemins**, a fairly good quantity of grapes, whereas *millerandage* (uneven fruit set) – more or less significant depending on the plot – was seen in Hermitage.

By the end of summer the vineyards had returned to a perfectly healthy state and ripening went well, particularly after a beneficial rainy spell in early September.

The Harvest

First of all the whites (as per usual)

The first white grapes were harvested on 14 September. On the same day we were able to pick two plots of Crozes-Hermitage as well as our rare white Sainte-Epine *cuvée* in Saint-Joseph.

The first selective pickings on Clos Boucher (Condrieu) took place on 15 September.

Domaine des Tourettes white was only harvested on 23 September, and shows great balance with an alcoholic potential of 13.2 degrees and a pH of 3.35.

The white harvest came to an end on 29 September with the picking of the last white grapes from the east-facing vineyards in Clos boucher and two parcels of Saint-Joseph planted on the most northerly slopes of the Saint-Joseph Appellation.

...and then the reds!

At the same time, the reds started to arrive at the winery from 21 September. As usual, a vat of Cornas opened the harvest (from the “Les Reynards” and “Champelrose” *lieux-dits*), followed by the Crozes-Hermitage from **Domaine des Grands Chemins**.

Due to the length of the flowering period, harvesting took place at a leisurely pace and we were able to wait for the best time to harvest each plot. The sugar concentrations were absolutely normal. The potential alcohol varies between 12.5° and 13.5°. There was also phenolic maturity with lovely fine tannins. However the concentration of the phenolic content (tannins) was slightly below average. We are having to adapt our vinification techniques in order to achieve better extraction (more frequent and intense pumping over and pushing down the cap), at the same time preserving a very pure, natural fruit.

The red grapes from **Domaine des Tourettes** were harvested on Friday 30 September in the “Le Sabot” *lieu-dit* and at the beginning of the following week for “Les Bessards” and “Les Grandes Vignes”. “La Landonne” in Côte-Rôtie was harvested on 1 October. The end of the harvest took place 10 October with our last Cornas grapes (“Saint-Pierre” *lieu-dit*).

In terms of quantity on the white Hermitage, we are around 30 hl/ha (hectoliters per hectare). In the “Le Sabot” plot, we harvested 5,275 kg from around 8,000 vines. At the time of writing, we can say that this yield of a little under 30 hl/ha gives us a fairly good indication of what we can expect from all of our **Domaine des Tourettes** approximate 10 hectares (red and white).

In Côte-Rôtie, the last pickings took place on 6 October, including the “La Landonne” *lieu-dit*.

To summarize this 2016 vintage, we would say that we are facing a “challenging” year, saved by an exceptional late season. It is a “challenging” vintage in view of a complicated vegetative cycle, with significant outbreaks of mildew and oïdium. It is also a “challenging” vintage in terms of the tannin structure of the Syrah reds.

However, the weather conditions in September and the first 10 days of October have allowed us to attain optimum maturity on each parcel. It is for this reason that harvesting was spread out for over a month.

In the South, the Grenache are looking very nice indeed, but some of the yields appear to be inconsistent with the profile of wines for cellar-ageing. The exceptional Syrah from the Gard area of the Rhône Valley will be the backbone of our next Saint-Esprit blend.