



Monday 14 September 2009
Day Seven

Hard work and chilly weather

Something was up this morning in Premeaux. Our little village was experiencing unusual levels of activity and the gridlock of cars, trucks, tractors and *enjambeurs* – those special high-clearance vineyard tractors which straddle the rows of vines – surprised our pickers who had a tough time finding a parking place. The explanation was, of course, obvious – all the estates located in Premeaux are in full harvest and from every winery emanates that special fragrance of fermenting grapes which will linger here for a few more weeks.

Our two teams – one for each Côte – were in the vines at 7.45am when the temperature was just a chilly 11°C. The *vendangeurs* said that a little sun would do a world of good to their aching muscles numbed from their day off yesterday. A shy sun would make a few appearances throughout the day.

It was a “white” day for the Côte de Beaune team with some wonderful grapes showing fine *millerandage* and weighing in at 13°. The pickers set to work on the **Beaune Premier Cru La Montée Rouge** plot in the *en blanc* section planted with Chardonnay. The small plots of La Montée Rouge were partially harvested with enough grapes for two presses. These fruits make our **Beaune Blanc** *cuvée*, and the remainder will be gathered tomorrow.

Over on the Côte de Nuits, the team continued harvesting in **Chambolle-Musigny** on the Les Chardannes plot. Then they headed over to Le Clos du Prieuré to gather up the remaining Chardonnays, filling 70 crates; the equivalent of a small press.



The afternoon was entirely dedicated to the *grand cru* **Clos de Vougeot**, in the upper part of the plot near the château. The grapes were wonderful despite a few patches of dry rot, resulting in a discard of 8%. This is a big plot covering more than a hectare, cultivated according to biodynamic principles. The vines, the oldest of which date back to 1946, run parallel to the enclosing stone wall – a legacy of the Cîteaux monks – and plunge their roots deep into pebbly limestone soil that is perfect for developing a great wine.

The pace is accelerating and the winery team is hard at work with 17 vats filled out of 31. But this morning dealt a blow to Pierre with three sorters absent and the crates arriving in regular waves. So cellarman Jean-Luc and our “treasure” of a cleaner Karine came to lend a hand at the sorting table. The pickers may be stiff but the sorters are exhausted, working from 7.30am until 10pm with rotating breaks for lunch and tea, laboring on until night falls, on their feet and in the cold.



But for Pierre, the day ended at 11pm, to the sound of the first stirrings from vat n°5 as the alcoholic fermentation of our **Bourgogne Terres de Famille** began. The whites, however, are taking their time, patiently awaiting their turn in their stainless steel vats. Hush now, or you’ll wake them.