



Tuesday 15 September 2009
Day Eight

Freezing men and freezing grapes, under the influence of the moon.

Today feels like fall and the changing weather points to the new moon on Friday. It was just 7°C this morning, the sky covered with thick gray clouds and the first splashes of orange in the vines. Pierre is happy to have harvested the best vines in the fine weather and at full maturity. For the past two years there has been no official start date for harvesting and for us, the tempo is set by the Clos Blanc which tells us when to get out the secateurs.

So we hurried to finish the large plot of **Beaune Blanc** located in a chilly and somewhat-damp valley. Higher up on the plateau is the **Côte de Beaune Les Pierres Blanches**, in red and gold. This is another large plot to keep us busy until tomorrow with the whites. And this year, we had to wait for the **Beaune Premier Cru Clos du Roi**, normally among the earliest to ripen. It seems that the August heat temporarily blocked its maturity but we did well to wait – the harvest is magnificent.



Over on the Côte de Nuits, the pickers were right on the top of the slope in the vines of **Nuits-Saint-Georges Premier Cru Les Damodes**, which produce a wine with aromas of cherry clafouti. The world and his wife were there this morning, the vines and paths heaving with people. We snapped a few pictures of the team standing orderly in the rows before they set off to work with a smile. They include Burgundians of course, but also Bretons, Congolese, people from northern France and a Martinican. Some new faces and old hands, including the most senior member, the valiant Georges, aged 78!

The afternoon continued in the gravel section of **Gevrey-Chambertin La Justice** – sumptuous grapes with lots of *millerandage* for vines located in the lower part of the village and thus on less of a slope. The same applies to the neighboring Les Galands, one of the plots which goes into the *cuvée* of **Gevrey-Chambertin**, that great village of red wines where we have ten hectares of precious patchwork. Les Evocelles and Bel Air are still waiting to be harvested as are a few other village plots.

In the winery, **vats are being juggled**. Given the volumes, it is impossible to follow the pre-established logic of vats sized according to plot and we have had to adapt so eight stainless-steel storage tanks have been turned into fermentation vats. A great year such as this allows for some small vinification tests and we have been using Carboglace; chips of dry ice or carbon dioxide that are placed in the vats to lower the temperature. But Pierre was slightly heavy handed despite his assistant Blandine's caution and he ended up refrigerating some of the Les Marconnets grapes, leaving them smoking with cold. For two days, the vat remained at 5°C. We will watch this surprising idea very closely and compare the results with the temperature-controlled wooden vats to see what emerges.

Today also saw the first **wine put into barrels**, with the Clos Blanc. The end of the press from the first harvest filled four barrels for fermentation, previously soaked by our cellarman for 24 hours to make them watertight. He received 19 from the cooperage this morning, but with us buying around 170 a year, we'll surely need another delivery soon.

The two vats of Les Marconnets received their first **pigeages** this morning, done by **Charles**, a true Brit who has moved from movies to wine with a relaxed Anglo-Saxon air. The day finished late with the last Musigny grapes so patiently sorted. The interns are tired but the harvest will end on Saturday. It seems like it began only yesterday...

