



Wednesday 16 September 2009
Day Nine

Asia

Some warmth returned to the Côte today with around five degrees more than yesterday. However, there was more humidity in the air with a mass of cloud that enveloped us all day, releasing a few light raindrops around lunchtime. But the gray weather had no bearing on our mood because the yields are still just as impressive. Today was another busy day with rain forecast for tomorrow so we had to get in as many grapes as possible.

All of the Beaune team's efforts today were concentrated on the large plot of **Côte de Beaune Les Pierres Blanches** where we finished the whites and got stuck into the two hectares of red.

Twenty miles further north and it was the soil part of the **Gevrey-Chambertin La Justice** that received our attention now the gravelly part is harvested. This plot has been the revelation of the year. Flowering was somewhat irregular offering a profusion of tiny bunches with lots of *millerandage*, worthy of a *grand cru*. The busy team worked until 12.30pm when they enjoyed a hard-earned lunch. The afternoon was spent harvesting at Premeaux, right nearby the Domaine, with the **Nuits-Saint-Georges Premier Cru Les Corvées Pagets** which were sorted immediately. Then it was back to Vougeot in the lower plot of **Clos Vougeot**. The levels of maturity here were quite frankly amazing, once again thanks to the *effeuillage*, or thinning of the leaves, carried out in July at the start of veraison on these two vines that are naturally more productive and which ripen less well.

It's still action stations in the winery. Now four vats have begun their alcoholic fermentation so there are a few more *pigeages* and pumpings of the juice over the cap to maintain the humidity. And on the advice of a key professional in the wine business, this morning we began testing a **new de-stalker** with a perforated drum made of smooth plastic rather than sharp stainless-steel. This doesn't just separate the stalks from the grapes at the speed we need, but it does it more gently than before. We are always looking for more gentle ways to handle our precious berries in our on-going quest for excellence and every detail counts.

The visits don't stop, the rhythm is frenzied and we feel like we're working in a beehive. This morning, **an Asian TV channel** arrived to film the process and to interview a still-smiling Pierre. Then 27 salespeople from the fine wines division of our Japanese importer came to soak up the atmosphere of the *vendanges*.

The days are long in the winery and everyone is on deck in an extremely studious atmosphere with quiet music playing in the background so as not to disturb our ten seasonal workers who are deep in concentration. Indeed, two of them have not yet been introduced: **Maxime** is studying viticulture in Beaune at the Lycée Viticole, and writing a thesis on Le Clos Vougeot. **Héloïse** is working for us on a two month temporary contract to follow all the harvest and start of maturation and has just been awarded her diploma in oenology. Every one mucks in, like Thierry Jeannin, our head of cultivation on the Côte de Nuits who also handles our biodynamic preparations. After a day in the vines, he joined our five patient **Musigny** de-stalkers dedicated to their daily rosary of grapes. This evening, ten more crates were placed like an offering in the small vat n° 31 that is filled a little more each day. Fruity fragrances, the scents of impassioned vinification and the ill-timed sound of car horns all spell the end of the *vendange*...