



Thursday 17 September 2009
Day Ten

Welcome North America

Incredible! This morning the Côte was enveloped in a thick fog like the worst of November days, and the temperature very chilly. Raincoats and sweaters are back as part of the essential picker's kit.

Two great vines were picked simultaneously: the **Côte de Beaune rouge**, which is the last for the Beaune team; and the 2.5 hectares of sloping vines of **Gevrey-Chambertin Les Evocelles** where the Côte de Nuits team spent the whole day, given that the rain meant we were a few pickers short. Once again we harvested large quantities but we must finish it now as small pockets of rot form with these damp conditions. The **Les Evocelles** vine is symbolic because it was the estate's first, planted in 1966 by Jean-Claude Boisset and his father. Now 43 years old, it is in full bloom and gives us fruits with lovely *millerandage*, but unfortunately rather low yields because here on the top of the hill, the rock is close to the surface and there is little earth to nourish the roots. But they nonetheless seek out the *terroir* deeper down to offer us a majestic, structured wine of great distinction.

The winery received an early morning visit from a group of Americans who toured the estate and enjoyed a tasting as tastings should be – in the cellar with the discovery of the Clos Blanc; always a magic moment. The **influx of grapes** continues, this time colored red. The first *pigeages* using the feet were done on a very thick and dense cap that the *pigeon* struggled to break up. This is an excellent sign of quality. At the start of fermentation, these burgeoning wines are already violet, a deep and intense color promising phenolic richness, another sign of quality.

The last whites were pressed, grapes from Les Pierres Blanches, after a night in the cold Beaune air before yielding to the gentle membrane of the press. As always, we separated off the end of the press which is heavy with deposits and will be vinified separately. All the whites have now begun fermenting and we continue to put them in barrels – by gravity of course – and in ten days, all the whites will be in the cellar. One hundred and ten barrels, 30% new from the Forest of Jupille in the Loire Valley with their very fine grain. The wood from Cîteaux is still drying out at the Domaine and will be used next year. The **Fête de Famille** is also bubbling gently but almost all its fermentation will take place in the vat. This is to keep its lightness and avoid it being too marked by the wood, which swells with the wine during fermentation.

In the middle of the day, the sun shone and the temperatures suddenly climbed under a bright blue sky like an Indian summer over the Côte. During the afternoon we had another visit, this time from the Deputy Prefect of Beaune. She was followed in the evening by a group of Canadian wine buyers who witnessed first hand the manual destalking ritual in the courtyard of the last six rows – or 23 more crates – of Musigny. Sylvie, however, was down south, presenting our wines to a star-studded gala soirée in Marseilles.

After three tricky years, in 2009 we have returned to what we refer to as “large” quantities but which is still very reasonable with yields at the estate estimated at 38hl/ha. This is significantly more than our average of 30 hl/ha, but is still within the range of normal. The difference is mainly due to the minimal percentage discarded this year compared to others. In 2008, we discarded a third of the harvest. Les Cras for example last year filled 11 *pièces* and this year will fill 25. But that radical sorting meant we obtained some very fine material. Indeed, the 2008 vintage was greatly appreciated this evening by our experienced palates, notably with Les Corvées Pagets which was mercilessly sorted, leaving us with little hope. It was a painful choice but one which we now see was worth it as we sampled what is proving to be a great wine.