



Friday 11 September 2009  
Day Four

### *The paradox of the 2009 vintage*

The Côte was covered with clouds this morning and despite the mercury tipping 15°C, a northerly wind had gotten up. It blew relentlessly across the countryside, the pickers moving back and forth along the rows, the leaves and the trees, concentrating the ever-finer and more abundant grapes.



The quantities this year are unlike no other. This is what we are gradually coming to realize as crate after crate arrive in an uninterrupted flow to the winery. On the Côte de Beaune, the day was dedicated to our most southerly plot, the great vines of **Pommard Les Petits Noizons** which require a whole day to harvest. But at 5pm, despite the pickers' enthusiasm, we realized we'll have to come back tomorrow. No fewer than 450 crates each holding 20kg of grapes made their way to Premeaux during the day. Fortunately, they required little sorting.

The paradox of this year is that all logic has been turned on its head. The 2009 vintage is one of **quality and quantity**. We normally insist upon small yields to bring out the sophistication of the Pinot Noir grape, with around 30 hectoliters per hectare. But it seems that this astonishing *millésime* with much greater yields hasn't diluted the grapes – on the contrary. The bunches are very dark and the thick skins carry the very essence of the grape, the color, aromas and spirit of the future wine.

But chance didn't come into creating this vintage. Flowering occurred under ideal conditions in warm spring weather ideal for encouraging regular blossoming. One hundred days later, it provided the fruits of this happy harvest. There was no *verjus*, or unripened grapes, and the vines gave the very best of themselves. It's a far cry from last year, which was the complete opposite with small yields, a lot of *verjus*, patchy degrees of maturity and some pink grapes. It makes us even more appreciative of these favors nature so rarely grants.

So even if the vats are filled to overflowing, even if it's a real brainteaser trying to work out where to put all this juice, even if nobody predicted such a harvest despite the very precise and regular evaluations, everyone is smiling and we are happy. Exceptionally, this year we have carried out some *saignées* – racking off a little juice from the bottom from the vats of Marconnets and Pommard to concentrate this divine nectar even further.

Over on the Côte de Nuits, the pickers made their last trip to **Le Clos Blanc** in the lower central section of the plot known as Number 3, from which the harvest was perfectly balanced. Since the beginning of the week, maturity has been increasing and is now at its zenith. Any later and it would have been too late. The end of the morning was spent at neighboring **Le Prieuré**, this time in the whites. The Vouge river runs along this vineyard and as a consequence, there is always a little humidity and some powdery mildew, that grey rot which smells of mushrooms and must be ruthlessly eliminated, especially when it attacks the center of the bunch. In the afternoon, the team was back at Vougeot in the long vineyard of **Vougeot Premier Cru Les Cras** which runs along the bottom of Le Clos Blanc – a so-called “solar” vineyard with its velvety wines.



The sun sets on the last sprays from the high-pressure hose, as this beehive of a winery receives its nightly cleaning. In the courtyard, 100 cases of Prieuré white will enjoy the freshness of the night air before being pressed tomorrow morning.