

Domaine J.A. Ferret

POUILLY-FUISSÉ "AUTOUR DE LA ROCHE"

2022



Region

Mâconnais

Appellation

Pouilly-Fuissé

Grape variety

Chardonnay

Situation

'Autour de la Roche', formerly known as 'Sous Vergisson' is a blend of grapes grown in the best terroirs located around the Vergisson outcrop.

Age of the vines

A lot of old vineyards, including the Vigne des Verchères which was planted in 1959. The average age of the vines that go into cuvee is around 40 years old.

Soil

As is typical in Fuissé, the geology is diverse, with some stony soils but, in the main, soils derived from Triassic sandstones and clay, as well as shallower soils based on hard limestones with marine fossils.

Vinification

This vintage was entirely vinified in stained steel. Bottled end of January 2024.

Tasting

With a delicate nose of white fruits and a tender but lively mouth, it is the right reflection of the freshness of Vergisson terroir

Food pairing

Scallop carpaccio, veal tartare, roast chicken, semi-mature goat's cheeses and creamy cow's cheeses.

Vintage

2022 was warmer than the norms set over the course of 1991-2020.

These days, a statement like this doesn't elicit a gasp of astonishment. Instead, these chilling statistics have become the new normal.

Even though there was abundant rainfall in 2021, this took place during the period of vegetative growth and not over the course of autumn. Total levels of rainfall at the end of winter 2022 were in deficit, and the weather during this period had been relatively mild. By the end of March, the unfurling of the tender shoots was complete, and the young growth began to reach outwards, evoking concern for those vines still bearing the scars of the hailstorm that swept across the slopes of the premier cru vineyards on 21 June 2021.

Budbreak took place in early April. The two episodes of frost that swept through the area at this point caused no damage in the southern Mâconnais, other than temporarily slowing the rate of growth in the vineyards.

We were unsurprised when temperatures began to climb rapidly, bringing with them vigorous vegetative growth in May and a notably early flowering, which took place in excellent conditions, despite the lack of rainfall.

The trend towards extreme levels of heat settled in over June, and brought with it the much-desired heavy rainstorms towards the end of the month, along with regrettable but inevitable episodes of hail. This time round it was the commune of Vergisson that suffered most from the effects of the storm. Luckily, the damage caused was far less than had been the case in Fuissé the previous year. Despite the tricky nature of the soil, and taking advantage of the first beams of sunlight and - more importantly - the lack of wind, our entire team braved the elements and strapped on their spraying kit in an effort to lend support to the vines, which were pursuing their growth cycle at a frenetic pace. Several showers at the start of July helped the berries to swell and led to the early closure of the bunches and the start of veraison, and we were able to begin to feel the softening of the berries by 9 July.

If early summer was marked by heavy levels of rainfall, the hallmark of this period was the inevitable return of the searing sunshine between 4 July and 13 August. Burning evenings were succeeded by waterless dawns, leaving growers increasingly concerned about the coming harvest. On 10 August, we tasted the berries and forecasted a start to the picking on 17 August. It was at that point that scant rainfalls put in a late appearance on 14 August, and again on the 17th. We decided to delay the harvest by a few days in order to make the most of this meagre advantage.

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On 22 August, our secateurs set to work for 10 days. The appearance of the bunches and the tasting of the musts brought to mind the 2018 and 2020 vintages, but oh, how much more complex was our task this time round... This year there was little nuance to be sought in the management of our poor bruised grapes. Instead we need to face up to the fact that the current trend towards ever-earlier harvests is likely to dominate viticulture in southern Burgundy over the course of the coming decades, bringing with it ripe harvests without discernible levels of excess. There is no easy solution, instead we need to shoulder our new responsibilities and learn to deal with the challenges set by both vinification and viticulture under these conditions.

Having said that, we present this vintage, picked at optimal ripeness, in a spirit of joy and hope. Joy because its flavours, its charm and its balance have hit just the right notes in a very heterogenous vintage; with confidence because yields, although far from generous, have surpassed the expectations set by the very short harvest of 2021, but equally full of hope as we have successfully introduced a suite of viticultural techniques that point us in a new, more virtuous direction.

