

Domaine J.A. Ferret

HORS CLASSE "LES MÉNÉTRIÈRES"

2022



Region

Mâconnais

Appellation

Pouilly-Fuissé 1er Cru

Grape variety

Chardonnay

Situation

Located at the exit of the village of Fuissé, behind the Mont Pouilly in the middle of the slope, this vineyard covers 80 ares and is East oriented.

Age of the vines

The vineyard has been renewed three times from 1974 to 1999. The second time was in 1989, 200 years anniversary of the French revolution.

Soil

The soil, which is derived from alluvial deposits, consists of a mix of deep silt and clay containing few stones. The subsoil features streaks of limestone and limestone marls, while the top layers are rich in stone-free limestone deposits derived from the light marls of the Dogger bank.

Vinification

Fermentations and ageing take place in casks of which 25% of cask new, 75% of cask from 1 to 3 wines for 10 months. The ageing continued in stainless steel tanks, always with all their lees for another 9 months. Bottled at the end of April 2024.

Tasting

With a well-anchored Mâconnaise footprint, and a dense material, the Ménétrières are a perfect Fuisséenne illustration as Jeanne Ferret understood it. After a light aeration, stand out flowers aromas but also lemon and lemon balm notes. We note a nice lengthening and a delicate and sappy finish.

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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Food pairing

Thanks to its richness and its great balance, 'Les Ménétrières' deserves to be paired with the most refined dishes, such as sole Meunière, a foie gras terrine, grilled lobster, sea bass, chicken with porcini mushrooms and also with washed rind cheeses like Vacherin Mont d'Or, creamy St Marcellins or tangy goat's cheeses like a Sainte-Maure.

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.

