

Domaine J.A. Ferret

CUVÉE HORS CLASSE "TOURNANT DE POUILLY"

2022



Region

Mâconnais

Appellation

Pouilly-Fuissé 1er Cru

Grape variety

Chardonnay

Situation

Based in the northern part of Fuissé, just on the borders of the hamlet of Pouilly, the « Tournant de Pouilly » is a vineyard of one hectare in area, split between two parcels, planted on a gentle slope that faces north-east. This historic vineyard is a part of 1er Cru "Les Reisses"

Age of the vines

Planted by Jean-Alfred Ferret in 1995, 1963 and 1964, the vines from this parcel are, on average, a little bit older than 60 years old, one of the oldest vineyards owned by the Domaine. A small parcel of 15 "ares" was replanted in the spring of 2018 after having lain fallow for several years. This particular parcel of young vines won't make it into the cuvee for several years to come.

Soil

This deep clay loam soil contains lots of limestone, but little in the way of stones. It is derived from the pale loams of the Dogger.

Vinification

Fermentations and ageing take place in casks: 25% of new cask, 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 just like the Ménétrières in April 2024.

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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Tasting

Always a bit austere and shy at first glance, it is undoubtedly the most "chic" of the selections with its chalky touch and its fresh and persistent finish.

Food pairing

Scallop ravioli in a mild curry sauce, turbot with hollandaise sauce, John Dory with Szechuan pepper, chicken with a creamy morel sauce, aged Comté.

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.

