

Domaine J.A. Ferret

POUILLY-FUISSÉ "AUTOUR DE LA ROCHE"

2020



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

The most recent vineyard to enter into commercial production is the young vineyard of Métertières, which became part of Vergisson blend, alongside fruit from much older 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.

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 middle of January 2022.

Tasting

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

Food pairing

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

Vintage

Even though the level of water reserves at the end of 2019 gave us plenty of reassurance as we headed into 2020, the growing season began with a speed that took us all somewhat by surprise due to the warm and relatively sunny weather in February. The inevitable consequences followed: a historically early and abundant vegetative growth (until the next record is broken...) that set the pace for the rest of the growing cycle. Nevertheless, the rains followed and it wasn't until mid-March, when the streets emptied of people and the rain vanished, that we were able to venture forth to undertake the various mechanised tasks in the vineyard that had been held at bay by the soaked state of the soil.

The first green shoots appeared towards the end of March on the slopes of Fuissé. The 2020 vintage was, at this stage, around a fortnight ahead of schedule compared to the average of the past decade.

At the same time in 2019, at the tail end of the chilly spring, the balmy weather that arrived in April saw the eventual spread of ten leaves towards the end of the month. The speedy rate of growth in 2020, therefore, saw us a month ahead of schedule relative to the previous year.

The welcome, if heavy, rainfall at the end of April did nothing to slow growth, which continued at a frenetic pace. We were able to work at the same feverish pace as the vines and the careful management in the vineyard saw us able to direct the growth in an appropriate direction.

In mid-May, reassured by a resumption of freedom and having been given permission to use our bicycles again, we were able to appreciate the delicate perfume of the vines' flowering. All the conditions for optimal flowering and fruit set had been met.

The fragile return to relative normality in terms of weather patterns and life in general during June gave us hope. Seasonable temperatures, coupled with some welcome showers, contributed to the swelling of the berries and the even formation of bunches. Precious water reserves were replenished before the advent of summer. There was no threat, however, of downy mildew, while powdery mildew - our main worry - was kept at bay, despite some initial concerns.

The first hint of veraison was seen in early July. At this stage, the speed of development in 2020 was similar to that seen in 2007 and 2011, albeit slightly ahead of even those years. The month of July also saw the arrival of significant meso-climatic influences across not only the wider Maconnais region but even within the appellation of Pouilly-Fuissé itself - differences that were seen

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between the lieux-dits of individual communes. Although Fuissé is often relatively short in terms of rainfall, this wasn't the case in 2020. Towards the end of July and the beginning of August, the lack of rainfall in the commune of Vergisson and the northern Maconnais enhanced levels of concentration, while in Fuissé and the south of the department milder weather and much-needed rains allowed the berries to continue to swell and hastened the ripening process.

Ripening progressed and it was therefore neither astonishing nor rainy when picking began on 24 August.

Ignoring the doubts and fears of others, our three teams of valiant pickers headed towards Fuissé.

Our pride in completing our annual adventure - and the joy of being able to share the pleasure of doing so - lifted our hearts and allowed us to leave our fears behind. Harvest was healthy and abundant, the grapes were perfectly healthy.

These were the earliest harvest ever picked at the domaine - the nearest comparison was 2003, when picking began on 30 August - but there was no threat of undesirable flabbiness in the wines.

Despite the poor levels of rainfall in summer and temperatures that bordered on heatwaves in August, the must was crystalline in nature and the acidity levels significant. The cuvees are paragons of precision and give no hint of a lack of balance or alcoholic warmth.

The wines of the domaine remind us of the structure and elegance of 2018, albeit enhanced with a little more generosity and flesh.