

Domaine J.A. Ferret

SAINT-VÉРАН

2021



Region

Mâconnais

Appellation

Saint-Véran

Grape variety

Chardonnay

Situation

This cuvée is based on grapes grown on a small parcel of 35 'ares' located in the commune of Davayé, a lieu-dit known as les Plantés. It has belonged to the domain for several decades.

Age of the vines

The vines were planted in 1991.

Soil

The parcel is situated on limestone outcrop of the upper Jurassic (Argovian). These are whiteish-beige limestone with some seams of marl.

Vinification

The fermentation and maturation of this cuvée takes place in oak on the lees, in much the same way as the domaine's Têtes de Cru and the Hors Classe cuvées. Light batonnage takes place towards the end of fermentation and at the start of the maturation period.

Bottled in March 2023.

Tasting

This wine has an elegant nose with understated oak and notes of lime leaf, white peach and citrus. The palate is fresh, rounded and balanced, with plenty of fruit.

Food pairing

This is a wine that will enhance a dish of roast cod, bread crumbled scallops, a roast loin of veal or a Comté that has been aged for 18 months.

Vintage

As has become the norm over the course of recent years, winter was mild and the heavy rainfall in autumn 2020, allied to those of January, created a generous cushion of hydric reserves for the growing season to come. But the mildness of the weather around the time we finished our winter work in the vineyard was only equalled by the growing sense of foreboding we felt as the mercury began to climb and the vegetation began to grow.

Our fears were not unfounded. After the rain... came the rains... Some of them came in the form of gentle drops of moisture that echoed the beads of the rising sap, others were bitter harbingers of losses to come. After the cruel, cold nights of 6, 7 and 8 April, when the black frosts laid a blanket of Siberian temperatures across the length and breadth of France's agricultural regions - grape-growing zones in particular - we shook in our shoes as we walked the vineyards to measure our losses.

Nevertheless, against all expectations - even given the situation in the south of Burgundy and the relatively early growth of the vines in that region - the vineyards of the South Mâconnais escaped largely unscathed. Our hearts swollen with optimism as a result of our good luck, we pursued our work of training and topping the vines, tasks necessary for the traditional trellising techniques used in our vineyards. Initially we welcomed the first rains of May wholeheartedly, remembering the drought-ridden challenges of previous years. Time passed. Our attitude towards the rains changed from joy to concern, and then the rainfall became overwhelming. The 145 millimetres of rain that fell - about twice the usual level in May - left us no choice but to abandon our "enjambeur" tractors in favour of backpacks containing anti-fungal sprays. Our efforts were not in vain. The vines remained in perfect health, despite the threat of mildew, exacerbated by such humid conditions.

But we still had not exhausted the challenges that the year was to set. In July the rains began to fall again. This time we saw water levels reach 150 millimetres, in contrast to the 40 millimetres that fell in 2020, while temperatures remained stubbornly well below the seasonal average. We knew that any let-up in our ongoing battle against the weather would allow downy mildew to win the war. Meanwhile, powdery mildew was trying to muscle in on the action throughout the growing season. Thankfully, all the hard work we put into protecting our vines, in tandem with our organic viticulture, in which our bywords are 'little and often', helped us to avoid serious damage.

At the start of August, growth was a fortnight behind the decade's average, but the weather gave us a bit of respite as the rains retreated. These conditions lasted right up until the

Domaine J.A. Ferret

SAINT-VÉРАН

2021



end of summer, although we weren't to know that at this stage.

Although the weather forecast in early September caused some concerns - and the threat of unsettled conditions persisted throughout harvest - we decided to begin picking on 17 September.

Luckily, the sun shone and temperatures rose to a level above the norm for the time of year, allowing the grapes to finish ripening. The good weather settled in, and we only saw one rainy day over the course of harvest.

This year, more than any other in recent memory, we have had to rely on our work in the winery to ensure the quality of our wines. Never before has our grape selection process been so drastic, our pressing so carefully monitored or our settling musts been so judiciously dosed with sulphur. The impact of our work in the winery, as grapes were transformed into wine, has never been as important as it was during the course of this year. It has been the key to the production of wines that show both liveliness and depth.

It's certainly the smallest harvest ever gathered on the property, but these cuvees are a source of great pride.

Notes of jasmine, verbena and lime, and a mouthwatering palate with saline minerality, are lent structure by a long, fresh finish in the wines from this bright vintage.