



THE 2017 VINTAGE

2017 is living proof that it is still Mother Nature who holds the reins, for better or worse.

2017 was a vintage which is almost synonymous with the great late frost which swept much of Europe, though the damage it caused varied greatly in different regions.

So, to look back on this atypical, 2-in-1 vintage...

The winter and early spring were extremely mild and dry, in fact one of the driest of the century so far. This naturally led to quite uniform early budding, from the 26th of March in some of our plots, and an initial phase of rapid growth.

In the second half of April, however, the weather changed with the arrival of an anticyclone marked by clear skies and a north-easterly wind. The air mass therefore cooled and temperatures fell fast.

The nights of the 27th and 28th of April were devastating, not only because of the intensity of the cold but also the vast area where it struck.

No region was spared: the only difference was the scale of the damage.

65% of the production at Château Canon La Gaffelière was affected, while at Clos de l'Oratoire it was 70%, Château Peyreau over 90%, and Château d'Aiguilhe 60%. Only La Mondotte was spared.

After the initial shock and despondency that an event like this causes, it was time to set to work. It was time to seriously take stock of the situation. What should we do? Prune? Rush to work without a plan? No. It was essential instead to take time, to wait, to watch and keep watching, and to weigh up the life force still present in the wood of the vines... and only then intervene and fight...

Marking the vines, taking action to prevent disease, analysing the petioles, applying liquid compost, etc. There was a great deal of work to be done - painstaking, but necessary for the future, working in the short term for a second generation of grapes.

Yes, that was what it was about... betting on the second generation of this 2-in-1 vintage.

After the frost, the weather in spring was radiant and almost summerlike. Temperatures above the seasonal norms, combined with a dry spell that lasted until the end of June, led to a quick and consistent flowering, starting on the 15th of May in the earliest plots!

While late June was very wet, summer was amazingly dry, exacerbating the water shortage of the winter, even in clay soils.

Rain at the beginning of September brought the grape skins to full maturity, and the ripening process was very uniform.

Painstaking work that marked the whole vintage reached its culmination during the harvest, with the combination of first and second-generation bunches: picking of the first-generation grapes began on the 14th of September, finishing on the 29th, while the second generation was harvested between the 3rd and the 10th of October.

At this stage of development, our different crus are all fresh and elegant, displaying rich aromas, and tannins.