

Reasons to be thankful

26 Nov 2009 by Jancis Robinson

Thanksgiving Day, and it seems that the 2009 harvest has been particularly kind to us wine lovers, especially those of us in northern Europe.

I took a bit of a risk writing a [story for the front page of the FT](#) about how well the vintage was shaping up, but no thunderbolt from on high came to strike down my optimistic predictions, even if many winemakers I have talked to have been somewhat bemused by the structure of this vintage, so very different from so many.

In many regions the vines shut down and physiological ripening stopped as the vines were so stressed by the prolonged dry season. Growers in some particularly dry soils on **Bordeaux's** right bank had to wait so long for phenolic ripening that they picked musts with a potential alcohol as high as 16%. One of the [Boissenots'](#) clients reports that this classical consultant oenologist father- and- son team were making comparisons with 1945, 1959 and 1949 but maintained that very old-fashioned winemaking techniques were called for in order to control the tannins. Christophe Coupez, director of the official Pauillac oenology lab, reports that he has never seen tannins and aromas of such quality, and told me that for him the vintage was like a superior combination of the best of 2003 (the fruit but more freshness) and 2005 (the power but less austerity).

In **Burgundy**, growers were also hugely enthusiastic about 2009. 'We didn't really need a sorting table', said Aubert de Villaine of DRC, the grapes were in such perfect condition, adding '2009 reminds me of 1959: very lovable and seductive, and with high quantity, 31 hl/ ha on average for us'.

In the **Rhône**, too, they can't wait to show off their 2009s, and again, quantities were pretty good too.

In **California**, late rains put pressure on vines and wine producers but it seems likely that there will be some fascinating wines for our delectation, and at much more reasonable prices than in the past now that the \$100 bottles are proving so difficult to sell. Truly, there are many reasons to be thankful. To see more specific vintage reports, click on the 2009 link below.

If you are celebrating today, choose your best bottles and don't begrudge sharing them with those who are yet to have fallen for wine's charms. They need encouragement!

As for our expanding team at JancisRobinson.com, we give heartfelt thanks for your continued interest and support and are continuing to invest in making the site even better. All suggestions, as always, very welcome.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Jancis