White burgundy vintages

3 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

2012 produced very low volumes of Chardonnay in Burgundy. What there is, however, is being welcomed with cautious enthusiasm. As with the reds, poor quality was expected after such challenging weather conditions, but the first tastings indicated the wines are very good. A triumph against adversity, perhaps?

2011 Less ripe than the previous two vintages, needing chaptalisation in many cases. Chaotic weather made this a tricky vintage overall.

2010 High acidity, after the more opulent style of the 2009s. A small, ripe crop - although a storm in early September did produce some rot, so sorting was crucial - as ever.

2009 Good, healthy and high quality across the region. Warm conditions and fairly large yields have given balanced grapes, and most agree 2009 whites are at least on a par with 2005.

2008 Challenging climatic conditions abounded throughout the season, leading to high acidity that gives these whites a particular freshness. Challenging, then, but as ever the best producers have made some spectacular wines.

2007 Another challenging summer with no shortage of rain but for once Chardonnay flowered after Pinot Noir and was more reliably saved by the drying winds that arrived in late August. Crisper whites than in 2005 and 2006.

2006 Poor summer was followed by much-needed fine weather in early September producing a relatively consistent crop of early-maturing, quite fleshy whites.

2005 Very concentrated wines that should last much longer than most white burgundy vintages. Promising indeed.

2004 Acid levels are relatively high and these are not massive wines so are best for classicists who like their white burgundy to be quite angular.

2003 A very difficult year with exceptionally low levels of acid, some of them made from grapes that shrivelled rather than ripened. Curious.

2002 Good quality and quantity.

2001 Erratic weather produced some rot but also some surprisingly good white wines, if not for the long term, as well as some rather thin, disappointing ones. A variable vintage that rewarded those who limited yields. Devastating hail in parts of the Côte Chalonnaise.

2000 Extremely ripe, sometimes too ripe, healthy grapes with fairly good acidity that were able to charm even in their youth. Especially good for Chablis and the Mâconnais.

1999 Large crop ripened by fine weather in late August and early September. Generally slightly crisper than the 2000s and the best may last longer - if they are allowed to.

1998 Everything went wrong: frost, hail, powdery mildew. Respectable, considering.

1997 Charming wines for relatively early drinking.

1996 As with the reds, acidity is the keynote. The best-balanced are stunning but some are a bit meagre.

1995 Very small crop producing wines with real concentration.

1994 Generally better than the reds and certainly more consistent, especially the Mâconnais.

1993 A large, ripe harvest struck by rain, so concentration was a problem.

1992 Balanced, elegant and refined: best from the Côte d'Or rather than Chablis.

1991 Rain reduced acidity and concentration, some were delightful but many were dilute.

1990 Very ripe but yields were just too high for profound wines. Chablis best.

1989 A medium-sized crop produced spectacularly rich and horribly expensive wines.

1988 Pretty lean and astringent.

1986 Not as consistent as 1985, but great from reliable growers.

1985 Beautifully balanced, expansive wines.

1983 Huge and alcoholic, the few with acidity to balance were spectacular.