Guigal 2008 harvest report

10 Oct 2008 by Julia Harding

Philippe Guigal pictured here at Ch d'Ampuis, son of Marcel and general manager and winemaker for Guigal, gives a realistic account of the 2008 vintage in the northern Rhône. After weather 'worthy of London' in the run up to the harvest, they did have fine weather during the harvest itself.

Regarding the harvest, I'll try to sum up the controversial feeling we have right now. June, July and August have been globally cloudy and rainy (except the day of our wedding!).

Therefore, coming back from our summer holidays end of august, we were quite pessimistic. The pressure of diseases was very strong: mildew, black rot, botrytis, etc. Unfortunately, we saw incredible rainfalls early September and we almost lost everything.

Following this period, the only way to avoid a complete disaster would have been to have strong winds, sunshine (to dry the grapes) and cold temperatures (to avoid the propagation of botrytis) and this is exactly what happened.

Therefore, we can say today that thanks to the outstanding weather conditions we had during the three weeks of harvest, we have saved the vintage.

But I do not agree with some growers starting to describe 2008 in advance as a 'great vintage'. The conditions have been ideal during the harvest but the damage was done before.

The result is an overall quality that can be described as average to mediocre and some rare exceptions with good wines.

We have been very successful with the treatments against diseases in our estate and the yields reached about 37 hl/ha, but globally the decrease is between 25 and 35%. We can consider it is a small crop in volume even if it is too early to announce these predictions yet.