
YEAR 2020



MAISON FONDÉE EN 1776

LOUIS ROEDERER

C H A M P A G N E

THE 245TH HARVEST

A SUPERNATURAL VINTAGE
AND THE THIRD IN A TRILOGY



We never tire of saying that each new vintage is different and its unique conditions will forever remain ingrained in our memories... although 2020 took this to a whole new level!

The 245th harvest at Louis Roederer took place in the midst of the pandemic which was declared on 17 March this year. Just as humanity was coming to a standstill and going into lockdown, the vine began its growing cycle as if nothing had happened, helped no end by the wonderful weather; almost as if it were refusing to be beaten by COVID-19! The weather conditions in the spring and summer of 2020 were magnificent!

From 6 April, just as bottling was underway for the delicious 2019 vintage, 18 volunteers from Roederer's various departments came to lend a helping hand to the vineyard teams who were cut off from their external providers in lockdown. The following week saw no less than 30 volunteers helping out in the vineyards, some of whom even stayed until 19 June! On 24 August it was time for the cellar production team (usually working on riddling, disgorgement and labelling, etc.) to roll their sleeves up for 15 days of harvesting and sorting the grapes that would go into our rosé infusions.

I would like to say a big THANK YOU to each and every one of our volunteers as their support was greatly appreciated.

From bottling to picking, planting to disbudding, you allowed us to ensure that perfect quality and hygiene conditions were in place in the run-up to the 245th harvest.

These exceptional conditions, which we still can't quite believe, have given rise to the 2020 vintage, a "supernatural vintage".



THE EPHEMERIDES OF A 'SUPERNATURAL VINTAGE'

WINTER

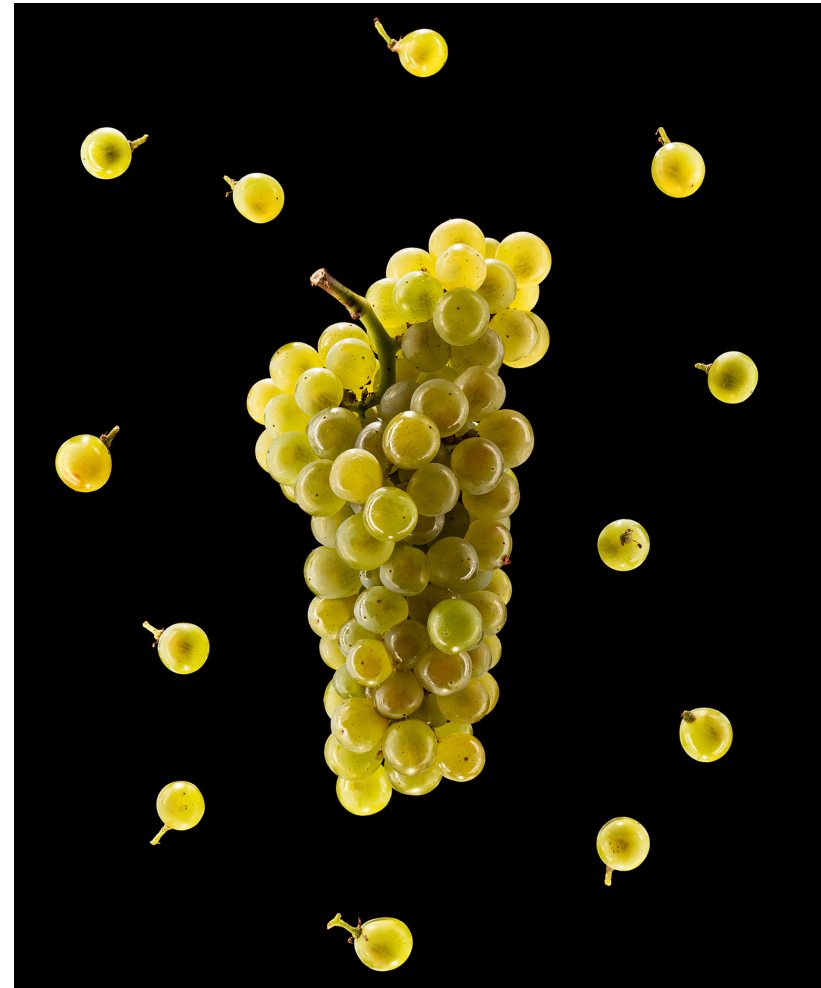
Our winters have become very mild and rainy in recent years which has helped to ensure good water reserves in the soils. The downside is that this also makes mechanical work much more difficult in winter and we therefore have no choice but to wait for less humid conditions before being able to grind up the vine shoots and begin ploughing.

APRIL

The mild winter led to a relatively early budburst, 3 to 4 days earlier than the average for this decade. The Chardonnays came first on 4 April, followed by the Pinots noirs on the 8th and the Meuniers on the 9th. The warm temperatures in mid-April, combined with well-hydrated soils from the winter rain, helped to speed up the vine's growth. The vine grew almost one new leaf every five days up until 21 April which meant that we were already 10-12 days ahead of the usual schedule at that point. Temperatures cooled at the end of the month which slightly slowed the growth and gave our teams time to finish their planting work.

MAY

The month got off to a cool start with the usual cold spell brought by the 'Ice Saints' although the cold temperatures brought us a few frosts as well. The windy weather soon blew the cool temperatures away and the warm weather returned, in particular during the bank holiday weekend. It turned out to be a warm and dry month of May which subsequently sped up flowering. It was a 'May Bloom' this year for our vines, around 17 days earlier than the average for the decade: 26 May for the Chardonnays, 28 May for the Pinots noirs and 2 June for the Meuniers. The spring growing cycle was very fast with just 52 days between bud burst and full flowering (which was also the case in 2018, 2008 and 2007).



JUNE

10 days of cold, almost autumnal temperatures in early June reversed the situation and slowed down the flowering which caused a certain degree of heterogeneity in our plots and significant disparities in growth from one vine to the next. June was quite chilly overall and with less sunshine than usual. Nature relaxed a bit and the frequent rainfall, which was welcomed by the vine, brought on a rapid bunch closure. There were a few storms in the Champagne region towards the end of the month. With regards to the vineyards, we decided to keep leaf stripping to a minimum in order to leave a protective layer for the clusters in case of a summer heatwave.



JULY

A dry, cloudy and relatively cool month slowed down the veraison (when the grapes begin to change colour and increase in sugars). It got off to a gradual start around 15 July in the earliest ripening plots. The storms forecast by the Met Office ended up bypassing the champagne region and we therefore decided to stop ploughing work on 10 July in order to allow a layer of vegetal cover to develop which would protect our soils during the winter.



AUGUST

The first half of the month saw a long heatwave that accelerated ripening and resulted in the fastest development of sugars ever recorded by Roederer. Due to this very fast pace, we were considering harvesting the grapes very soon and certain producers did indeed begin too early. As of 22 August, the daytime temperatures fortunately cooled and the nights turned rather cold. Ripening slowed down and we had to push back the harvesting of our Chardonnays to give them the time they needed to ripen. The ripening cycle of our first Pinots noirs was completed with 88 days between flowering and harvesting (which has been the average timeframe since 2008). The first Chardonnays were a little slower, likely indicating a more classic style to come, with 93 days between flowering and harvesting (the average timeframe since 1996).

Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon – 17 September 2020

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through the 2020 harvest at
Champagne Louis Roederer
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@LouisRoederer_*
