

Louis Latour

MAISON FONDÉE EN 1797

Domaine Louis Latour

Vegetative Cycle 2016



Despite the frost in April, the 2014-2015-2016 series could become a trilogy of great vintages, such as the 1988-1989-1990 series!

2016 Plant Cycle:

Bud burst: 17 April (3 days late)*

Flowering: 16 June (12 days late)*

Veraison: 10 August (9 days late)*

Harvest: 23 September (9 days late)*

**Compared with the 1981-2010 average*

French Climate Analysis – 2016

Average temperatures were higher than normal for a great part of the year (except in February, September and October).

There were two heat-waves in July and an exceptionally mild end of year.

2016 was ranked as one of the three hottest years since 1900, behind 2014 (+1.2°C) and 2011 (+1.1°C).

2016 began with a mild and particularly wet winter. In vine-growing terms, 27 April was the day that indelibly stamped its mark on the year. The temperature of 0.1°C on the southern side of the Hill of Corton meant that the frost caused no damage. By contrast, in the lower zones and the western side of the hill where the temperature fell to -2.2°C, the frost proved fatal for the young buds. This is the harsh reality of the working on the land, and we have stated time and time again that the grands crus are small islands with their own specific conditions.

The frost only reached 20% of the Latour domaine. Luck was on our side in what could be considered at once in a century occurrence, especially as our Chambertin parcel hasn't frozen since 1945! It was an extremely complex weather phenomenon; some areas (with less rain the night before?) were miraculously spared, while others were devastated for no topo-geographical reason. It was a particularly random frost, and some will have lost everything for 2016.

Spring continued in the same vein. May was a catastrophe, cold with 135mm of rain. Conversely, we were lucky in June. Aloxe-Corton and the Beaune side received only 55mm of rain, whilst Marsannay had more than 100mm and Chablis nearly 200mm. Some areas suffered incredible damage from mildew, but luckily, we were spared.

Of course, at a vine-growing level, we were

now facing a complex strategic situation: the frost-damaged vines only regrew a month after the others, their growth was "anarchic", and it was a complicated job to get any harvest from them in the end. The other vines were magnificent; however, we continually had to nurture the soil, protect the vines and undertake intense leaf-thinning as there was little sun in June.

After these overall gloomy conditions, the summer set in for good and became very favourable: July, August and September were redemptive, miraculous even. August was the driest for 20 years and September was radiant. We had two other miracles during the season: a beautiful week at the end of June which allowed flowering to happen quite well; and three days of rain in mid-September which unlocked the ripening process. After starting to suffer from the dry conditions, the grapes were replenished, the flavours developed and the tannic base improved. The good weather remained for the grape harvest.

At the end of August, we did a green harvest in the young parcels where the crop was magnificent but a little abundant, which seems paradoxical when we know that Burgundy in 2016 will produce a vintage historically low in volume, but high in terms of quality. In the end, the 2014-2015-2016 series could become a trilogy of outstanding vintages, like that of 1988-1989-1990.

Christophe Déola,
Director of Domaine Louis Latour
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2016 Moyenne (1981-2010)

