

**Derenoncourt finally gives his verdict on the 2009 vintage**



***Stéphane Deroncourt judges that Bordeaux growers have every reason to be happy with their 2009s and are reaping the rewards of their hard work throughout the growing season and a tricky fermentation process.***

**December 11<sup>th</sup> 2009**

*In September, as the harvest was starting, you were reluctant to give a verdict on the 2009, unlike many producers who were raving about the vintage, comparing it to years like 1990, 1982 and even 1947. Now that the malos are just about finished, do you have a better idea?*

**It's undoubtedly a great vintage. Now that the fermentations have finished, we can observe very promising balances in the wines. They combine power with fresh fruit aroma, though without much exoticism. It's always tricky to decide which vintage it resembles most, but the closest to me would be the 1989.**

*Have the growers watered down their enthusiasm for the 2009 since the harvest? Rather than being an amazing vintage, is it just a very good one?*

**I don't have that impression. The growers I see are very, very happy with the quality of this vintage. What is true, however, is that the high alcoholic degrees made the vinification more challenging, particularly at the end of the alcoholic fermentation. Some people had problems, but overall the growers have no reason whatsoever not to be delighted with the potential of their raw material.**

*People say that in 2005 it was difficult not to make good wine. Was 2009 different in so far as there was a danger of messing things up, despite the ideal weather conditions?*

**The real losers in this vintage were those who had hail destroy or reduce their crop. We shouldn't forget the thousands of hectares that were devastated. Then there were some growers who over-produced and produced high alcohol, hollow wines that were completely out of balance. Apart from these cases, overall everything is looking very good.**

*The heavy rain that fell during the weekend of September 19th, did it have a positive or a negative effect in the end?*

**Generally the rain was welcome and had a beneficial effect because acidities were still high and botrytis hadn't set in yet. It resulted in the vines unblocking and also in an acceleration of the phenolic ripening process. Perhaps in some soils it caused an increase in yield.**

*I know you are always reluctant to generalise and prefer to speak about individual terroir and good viticultural practices, but do you think that in the end the tannins ripened sufficiently, and in those cases where growers hung on a very long time before picking, were some wines over-ripe?*

**It was actually difficult to over-ripen the grapes this year. Bordeaux growers have become very dynamic nowadays as far as disease prevention is concerned; the vines are more and more tended like gardens, and these growers are reaping the rewards of that with ever healthier vines. Furthermore, the skins were thick this year and resistant to any attacks. With the fantastic autumn weather growers managed to bring in perfectly ripe grapes, a reward of some kind for all the hard work they had put in during the growing season.**

*Which varieties were the star performers this year?*

**My answer to that question is very simple because all of them performed well and everyone can be happy. This is not a vintage for one variety or for one bank of the Garonne River. All the growers I think will derive satisfaction from what they have produced.**

*Clearly, you don't think that the high alcoholic degrees were a problem for Bordeaux in this vintage, even though the markets are perhaps turning away from high alcohol wines...*

**Alcoholic degrees in 2009 will in fact be similar to those in 2005, 2003 and 2000 which have been the most sought-after vintages of the last ten years by consumers! Alcohol is one of the elements making up the balance of a wine.**

A dark red banner featuring a blurred image of wine glasses and a bottle. The text 'Andrew Black' is written in a white, elegant script font. Below it, 'PREMIÈRE PRESSE' and 'PRESS RELEASE' are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

*Andrew Black*  
PREMIÈRE PRESSE  
PRESS RELEASE

**You could well find that a wine at 12° actually tastes richer in alcohol if it has no body to balance it. Similarly, in a 14° wine, if it's well balanced, the alcohol can go relatively unnoticed.**

**If you focus on the alcoholic degree in this vintage, it can of course appear high, but here we are talking about great wines, that are a traditional part of our culture. We're not going to get drunk out of our brains on them. I'm fed up with politicians, environmentalist scaremongers, anti-alcohol lobbies or whoever deliberately mixing things that don't go together.**