



## 2006 "HUGEL" Vintage report

Our 2006 harvest came to an end on 19<sup>th</sup> October and, by an amazing coincidence, the last vineyard to be picked yielded exactly 1639 kilos of grapes, matching the year in which our family company was established twelve generations ago in 1639 !

2006 has been a year of great contrasts, but it will be remembered as a vintage where strict vineyard management and exemplary vinification skills were necessary to achieve success.

Spring was cool and budburst later than usual, but fine, sunny weather in June ensured that flowering took place rapidly and on time. July was the hottest on record, but there was no drought problem because of the high clay content of our soils. Some rain showers during the coolest August on record slowed down the pace of ripening and ensured balanced acidity and sugar levels, so by 15<sup>th</sup> September the grapes were sound and ripe, awaiting the official decree to authorise the start of the harvest.

23mm of warm southerly rain fell on 17<sup>th</sup> September, which encouraged an explosion of unusually early "noble rot" in our own estate vineyards where bunches had been rigorously thinned out during green harvests earlier in the year. Picking in our contract vineyards started on 27<sup>th</sup> September for all varietals except Riesling and Gewurztraminer which began a few days later.

This year in particular, on lower slopes or in damper vineyards on the plain, with too much nitrogen in the soil and excessive yields, it was the "less noble" grey rot that developed and so extreme care was required to clarify the juice and to successfully vinify the wines from such vineyards.

Our contract vineyards were picked at record pace, with ruthless removal of suspect bunches, and so results were even better than anticipated, with higher than average levels of ripeness averaging 11.8° for Pinot Blanc, 12.3° for Riesling, 12.5° for Pinot Gris and 13.5° for Gewurztraminer.

In our family estates, perfect "Indian Summer" weather from 7<sup>th</sup> October enabled us to pick some fine late-harvest wines, including all 3 Vendange Tardives : Riesling (at 15% potential), Gewurztraminer (17%) and Pinot Gris (17.6%), as well as a splendid Riesling Sélection de Grains Nobles (more than 20%) that could not have been dreamed of three weeks earlier ! The average yield in our estate remained under 60 hl/ha.

Jean Hugel (82 and 58 vintages) describes 2006 as *"a vintage of stark contrasts and agreeable surprises, which will highlight the quality of the finest vineyards and reward superior vinification skills"*.

More details of our 2006 vintage on our new Blog at <http://blog.hugel.com/en/harvest/>