



CHAMPAGNE GRATIOT-PILLIÈRE

— PROPRIÉTAIRE - RÉCOLTANT —

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

Madam, Sir, Dear clients,

We are happy to share with you our news for the second semester of 2021.

Looking back on a positive note to the season

We took our pruning shears out for the first time on September 14th. The sugar level in the grapes had finally evolved throughout the first half of September despite rather poor weather. The low yields, mainly on the Meunier grape variety, contributed to this.

The harvest lasted a dozen days (9 or 10 in previous years). We are constantly challenged to find workers for harvesting... We were fortunate to have 13 "Polognais" join our team this year.



The quality of the juices is correct. Its richness corresponds to the level of sunshine that we had in August and September. We have been able to produce our TRADITION cuvées of high quality by blending high quality reserve wines of years 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Despite the on-going complex sanitary context of 2021 and a slow start to the year, champagne demand has grown well beyond our expectations. Although some activities are still slow (family celebrations, business seminars, etc.), a good commercial dynamic started in March and concluded very positively for the end-of-year celebrations. In the Export market, orders have also been quite regular in all of our legacy markets. The American market has also reopened to us in Minnesota with a significant order in September from our new partner Bourget Import! Most of our products can be found at Haskell's stores.

We can't, for the moment, explain the new dynamic. Is it a restocking phenomenon following the year 2020 which emptied cellars? Is it a phenomenon of overstocking in anticipation of price increases?

Regarding the sales outlook for 2022, we remain prudent. We have had some good signals in January and February. Several pallets left our cellar for distant horizons such as England, Finland, Estonia (new market), Czech Republic (new market), United States and Japan.

"Reserved Wines" to prevent challenging conditions

This year, our vines suffered the wrath of MILDEW a cryptogamic disease of the vine which destroyed more than 30% of our grapes. For other winegrowers, this loss was even more significant. Some have not even opened their press!

We also regularly suffer from climatic hazards, hailstorms, and especially spring frosts which can seriously reduce our harvests.

The Champagne operators, under the control of the CIVC (Comité Interprofessionnel des Vins de Champagne), decided in the 1950's to allow Champagne winegrowers to constitute an "INDIVIDUAL RESERVE". This consists of storing wine in vats which will be used to fill a future deficient harvest.

This year, the harvest quotas were set at 10,000 kg per hectare. We picked up 6,900 kg/ha of fresh grapes in our vines and released 2100 kg/ha of wines from our INDIVIDUAL RESERVE. These will only be used in our TRADITION Cuvées' blend on which we do not claim a vintage.

Shortage of raw materials and soaring prices

In the spring of 2021, significant growth was announced to us, and we were quickly faced with supply problems. Have companies stopped their activities for too long? Didn't they anticipate a quick restart of consumption? No or little stock at the time of resumption of activity?

The global restart is not up to the demand which is too high in such a short time. In addition, some operators closed their business following the pandemic.

In spite of limited challenges of the previous year, on our side, to be able to prepare our bottles for the end of the year, we have armed ourselves with patience and perseverance!

We hope you are all doing well and in good health. Looking so much forward sharing with you our news on the upcoming harvest which will hopefully be stunning!

Sparkling greetings,

Olivier & Sébastien

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