

Burgundy Report

Raphaël Chopin – 2016 & 2017

February 2018

Raphaël on 2017:

“2017 was an interesting year – a nice year for the sun but also for storms. We lost some of the harvest – 20-80% losses was the effect of being hit by hail 3 times – but the quality is clearly that of a good vintage a mix. I think of it as a mix of 15 and 16 so a mix of fruit and power – they look very good. Régnié with 15 hl/ha was the worst. In the end it’s a little less than half a harvest.”

Raphaël on 2016:

“2016 was also a little hailed, but I’d say a ‘hail of quality’ as it reduced the yield a little and we still made 45 hl/ha – so we have both finesse and elegance – at least where it wasn’t too hailed like some of my neighbours. There’s a purity of gamay in the vintage which I find excellent.”

The wines...*In 2016, Raphaël has produced super wines, most will need a little patience on behalf of his customers, and one, the Gaïa, is possibly the best wine tasted of my 50 visits in February! I doff my cap!*

2017 La Savoye

A super nose of depth and width, almost a chocolate aspect to the lovely fruit. Round, a little fat, super depth of flavour – the concentration of a 15 with some extra brightness of fruit. Bravo!

2017 Funambule Beaujolais Sans Additive

Perfumed, floral and fresh – what an invitation to drink. Round again, a little softer, redder fruit – very supple and easy to drink – ‘glou, glou’ as they say in these parts – really excellent, elegant wine!

2016 Régnié La Ronze

The name of the lieu dit. Schist and rosé granite here. Practically the only area that didn’t get hailed – had to do a little green harvest to keep to about 45 hl/ha.

Lovely purity of aroma – redcurrants – higher toned fruit in the mouth, almost a suggestion of pyrazine – in a good way. Almost blueberry in the finish – super clarity. Open, fresh, less cushioned than the first two. Excellent.

2016 Morgon Les Charmes

Tasted from tank

Darker fruit – really a fresh attractiveness. In the mouth too, full of vibrant darker cherry extravagance and gamay freshness – this will be great.

2016 Régnié Caprice

Name of the cuvée. This from old vines in Laronze ‘but capricious wines!’ Elevage of 12 months in demi-muids of 500 litres – probably for bottling in March.

Luxuriously oaked – too much for today, but the direct palate slowly widens offering waves of fine finishing flavour. Very impressive but you should be patient – 3-5+ years – super material though.

2016 Morgon Archambaud

Same idea for a March bottling

More open nose. Oaked but less overt, sweetness above. In the mouth there is a little more width than the Caprice, sweetness too, plenty of oak complexity – again to wait for. Here is the more relaxed, if not less concentrated wine. Excellent again.

2016 Régnié Gaïa

La Ronze’s old vines (80-90 years) but made in the round tank of 10 hl (which looks like a large cement-mixer) that’s turned through 360° ‘maybe’ once per day for 12 days. Afterwards the elevage is in demi-muids of 500 litres. The Gaïa wasn’t made in 2017 as there was hail here, so Raphaël was worried about its affect showing on the longer maceration

Open and fresh despite a touch of reduction. Beautiful core of red fruit. More gas, a little reduction again – really wide and complex, more minerality, salinity, so complex here, a touch of tannin that stays long in the finish. Not an easy fruit wine, but a complex, intellectual and brilliant wine. Bravo – despite difficulties of tasting this in the cold cellar – perhaps the greatest wine of my February tour!

