

Delas Frères Vineyards *Flowering 2021*



We had to wait until week 23 for flowering to be fully underway in the vineyards in 2021.

Every year brings new surprises for us so let's take a look back at the beginnings of this new vintage in our Northern Rhône vines.

The pruning period, which forms a bridge between two vintages, took place in what was a mild and dry winter. Our winegrowers' savoir-faire was invaluable to us when it came to pruning the domaine's vines without causing damage. Particular care was taken to rejuvenate our "old Syrahs" and develop new vine stocks from the replacements of recent years. At the **Domaine des Grands Chemins** in Crozes-Hermitage, special attention was paid to the vine stocks that were still showing signs of damage from the hailstorm on 15 June 2019.

Hydric assessment for the first three months of the year showed just 70 mm of rainfall making this first quarter one of the driest in recent years. The situation was really quite serious and we became accustomed to seeing the winegrowers carrying water on their backs over to the year's new "complantations" (newly planted stocks to make up for dead ones), as well as the one and two year old vine stocks on the domaine's hillside and low-lying plots.

This “drought” in the early part of the season was followed by frosts on the nights of 7 and 8 April. After a careful count of the buds in Delas’ Hermitage and Crozes-Hermitage vineyards, we were very happy to see that disaster had been averted with only around 5% of buds damaged by the frosts.

Our vines in Saint-Joseph were more severely impacted however with 25% of the buds damaged. The work carried out in the early part of the year, in particular the very precise ploughing, enabled us to reduce the impact of the sub-zero temperatures in our plots.

The rainfall was much higher from mid-May onwards (145 mm in May) and the warm weather enabled us to put this cold snap behind us and look forward to the resumption of the growing cycle.

A great deal of ploughing work was required to reduce the competition between the vine and the weeds. Several winches are still at work on our hillside plots. As for the plots on the plains, trailed implements were used in the vine rows as well as in between the vine stocks to keep the soils in good condition and facilitate water access to the vine.

In conclusion, the flowering phase took place in almost perfect conditions and all signs are pointing to a later vintage than in previous years. A return to normality at last.

We’ll be keeping our fingers crossed until the time comes to start cutting the bunches!