



## **First impressions of the 2004 vintage**

# **THE 2004 GRAPE HARVEST**

### **A number of unexpected signs mark the beginning of the 2004 harvest!**

To begin with, the weather for the two weeks before picking commenced, from 23rd August to 6th September – pretty much out of the ordinary, hot and heavy with a hazy, though completely mist-free sky – really unusual and seldom witnessed.

During the night the temperatures reached a record 15°C (59°F) around four in the morning, versus the usual average of 6-8°C (43-46°F) for the September nights. And, odder still, the relatively limited heat in the day, with 25°C (77°F) at midday, compared with the customary 30-35°C (86-95°F) averages of early September. In all then, 25°C during the day and 15°C at night, against a classic 35°C in the day and 7°C (45°F) at night, making for a warm and muggy atmosphere with high hygrometric levels.

**Here's a combination of conditions that lends itself toward enormous aromatic opulence with unparalleled tropical nuances!**

On that same morning of warm, hazy light, more reminiscent of an autumn day at the end of October, a number of things stopped us in our tracks - several hundred of swifts flocking together in the great hackberry tree between the cellars and the river; the birds all sitting in the top of the hackberry, taking it in turns to dive down to drink from the Gassac stream. This winged gathering, usually held on the eve of migration, was two to three weeks ahead of its usual time at the end of September.

Then, in the river, under the bridge, we were met by an enormous trout (2 to 3 kilos) at seven o'clock, although large trout are never normally seen during the day – perhaps it was a distant cousin of the celebrated Salmon of Knowledge living in the depths of the Irish well?

And now, the first load of Chardonnay grapes has been brought in, much heavier than usual, weighing in at 22 kilos per load, instead of the conventional 19 kg.

And stranger still, those grapes that were green a fortnight ago have exploded - 13° potential alcohol this fine morning, with a wonderful acidity level, at around 5.00.

**When we taste, we find complex aromas that are out of the ordinary and difficult to analyse, but wonderfully set off because of the striking contrast between acidity and sugar content. A potentially sensational wine in the making!**

To the producer with twenty-five grape harvests to his name, 2004 is surprising because of the strangeness of both the circumstances and its aromas. The wonderful wine that will result can only be great, but will also be inimitable - that's the reward for the traditional produce and vigneron, working in the old-fashioned way, rejecting chemical fertilisers and rejecting especially any cloned varieties, planting only pre-clone vines with low yields. **The supreme reward is not to witness the annual emergence of a wine, but of a singular, unique and stunning Vintage. And the 2004 Vintage definitely looks set to be a stunner.**

You see, at Daumas Gassac, we haven't bowed to the modern world of quantity and mass-produced uniformity. We remain citizens of the unique world, embodied every year within Nature, with all those wonderful differences and nuances that are to be the hallmark of the great 2004 vintage.