



AO YUN 2018 VELVETY & FRUITY : THE ELEGANT AND COMPLEX EXPRESSION OF OUR TERROIRS



2018 : BETTER CLIMATE AFTER 2 CHALLENGING VINTAGES

A wetter and warmer winter gave an early start to the growing season, while less rain and warmer spring accelerated growth and permitted to create a qualitative water constraint that will remain all the season even if there was more rain than usually in summer. These summers rains were well distributed compared to the two previous vintages. They permitted to compensate the dry air of our high-altitude terroirs which was positive for grape quality.

Then, a dry and cool fall enabled the fruit to ripe well and develop beautiful terroirs and vintage characteristics.

A COUSU MAIN VINEYARD APPROACH FOR A PURE EXPRESSION OF OUR TERROIRS

Ao Yun leases 314 blocks, with 727 tiny sub-parcels identified, totaling 28 ha from 120 local families in 4 villages of the Upper Mekong Valley. There are different soil types and climates in each village due to different altitudes, sun exposure, wind exposure, landslide and river deposits. Each year, we learn more and finetune our techniques, in 2018, we increased precision in the following ways :

- **Shoot accuracy for customized fruit thinning**

Unlike most wineries who aim for a generic yield target per hectare, we've optimized quality down to a single shoot. Based on our 35 terroirs and 5 vine types, we only keep 100 to 200g of grapes per shoot.

- **Creation of an accurate weather forecasting tool**

Considering our complex topography surrounded by 6800m mountains, 3 Parallel Rivers, in addition to our remoteness, it took many years of experimentation and AI to create an accurate forecast tool.

- **Pure soils and fruits give birth to our wines**

We manage our vineyards organically respecting European standards since the beginning in 2013. To ensure we harvest the purest expression of our terroir, we've included an unheard-of technique of rinsing the grapes twice while still hanging on the vine prior to harvest. This ensures that any residue, even organic, is removed from grape skins.

REFINED WINEMAKING FOR A FINE EXPRESSION OF OUR TERROIRS

As we do each year at Ao Yun to adapt to our terroir's specificities and the 25% less oxygen, after the 2018 harvest, we tweaked winemaking in the following ways:

Gentler extraction - For more refined texture

- Using gravity to move the grapes into tanks instead of pumps
- Less and more fragmented pump over during maceration

Improving the quality of press juice - To improve quality of final blend

In the 2018, we added 8% of the best presses. We separated the press for each terroir type, so we had 35 lots of press wine to monitor during barrel aging, we are adding less but higher quality press juice into Ao Yun blend.

Less oak influence - For more terroir expression

- Initial ageing for 5 months in Chinese earthenware jars (50%), wooden barrels (50%)
- Additional ageing for 10 months in new oak (30%), 1-year-old barrels (30%) and older barrels (40%)

THE SILKY FRESHNESS OF THE HIMALAYAS

Only 50% of grapes harvested used in this blend

The final blend is:

By grape variety: 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Cabernet Franc, 10% Merlot, 7% Syrah, 4% Petit Verdot

By village: 19% Xidang, 23% Sinong, 29% Shuori, 29% Adong

Nose: Expressive of Himalayan freshness with purity, finesse, and complexity.

Black fruit sorbet mixed with toasted bread, cold fireplace, tea leaves, thyme, coffee. Sweet and fresh.

Mouthfeel: The texture in the mouth is also fine with dense but a fresh and silky texture with a balance between creaminess and tension.

Signature: Finish with length and salinity

