

Avize Grand Cru 1996

Lying at the heart of the Côte des Blancs on the lower slopes of the **Grand Cru** village of **Avize** can be found the lieux-dits of **La Fosse, Némery and Champ Cain**. Jacquesson's three parcels on these south-east facing sites were planted to Chardonnay between 1962 and 1983.

Here, Campanian chalk, made up of calcite granules coming from the skeletons of marine microorganisms, rises almost to the surface, above which the very shallow topsoil is permeable and prone to frost. Additionally, the poor nature of the soil necessitates the occasional addition of nutrients, which, as always at Jacquesson, are organic.



The climatic conditions in **1996** were marked by a rapid succession of highly contrasting weather patterns. Severe winter frosts, reaching close to -20°C in February, were followed by a grey, cold month of March, record high temperatures and sunshine hours in April, frosts and hailstorms in May, giving way to excellent weather in early June to start the flowering which finished after a brutal cold snap that ran from the 19th onwards. The months of July and August witnessed repeated bouts of fine weather, thunderstorms and hot and humid weather, all propitious to the development of botrytis, mildew and other diseases. Fortunately a persistent wind came to rescue the meticulous efforts of our vineyard team by preventing this humidity from lingering, thereby allowing the grapes to grow under good conditions. The same north wind dried the grapes during the mid-September rains with the result that the sugar content of the berries increased in a spectacular manner. Picking took place on 25th September in sunshine. Such an atypical year could only produce atypical must: the balance between alcohol and acidity was without precedent, combining 11 degrees of potential alcohol with an acid reading of 10 gr/l.

Vinified partly in 40 and 75 hectolitre oak casks and partly in tanks, the *assemblage* of our three parcels was bottled on 2nd and 3rd June 1997 to become Avize Grand Cru 1996. Disgorged at regular intervals, this wine receives a minimal dosage of 3,5 gr/l and creates a perfect match of the minerality of the *terroir* of Avize with the exceptional ripeness of the 1996 harvest.

Champagne JACQUESSON + 33 (0)3 26 55 68 11