



HISTORY & GRAPE VARIETIES

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The vineyard and its linking stairs

Clos du Hays - Neufchâteau



A BIT OF HISTORY...

The medieval origins of Neufchâteau have inspired the creation of linking stairs between the upper and lower town. A south-facing steep slope, formerly embellished with dry masonry storey gardens, inspired the idea of planting a vineyard on the Hays hillside.

2010

What inspired the non-profit association Les Amis du Château de Neufchâteau to take up the challenge of planting a vineyard was a conversation between some history lovers and Paul Zeler, a qualified nurseryman, concerning the vines planted on a steep slope opposite the South. What remained to do was to convince the officials of the town of Neufchâteau, the owners of the old gardens and to find funding.

2016

The officials of Neufchâteau approved the project for the creation of a vineyard, dry stone walls and linking stairs. The costs were at 80% subsidised by the Walloon Public Service, the province of Luxembourg and the town of Neufchâteau.

2019

The town concluded an agreement with the non-profit association Les Amis du Château for the use of the vineyard. The town keeps up the vineyard and the non-profit association manages it.

The vine was planted in 3 days (from May 20th to May 22nd) by the Pirot Jacky nursery in Ucimont under the guidance of Hubert Burnotte, an amateur winegrower. The planting was done under a waning moon, which helps the resumption of the vine (principle of biodynamics). For the first planting (600 plants in total), Phoenix grafted vines were selected for their precociousness and resistance to vine diseases (mildew, powdery mildew, botrytis). In the first year, only 17 plants did not grow back, which is a good sign.



2020

The summer heat of 2020 caused the plants that were not sufficiently settled in the substrate to die. In March 2021, 120 plants were replanted. The dead Phoenix grafts were replaced by Solaris grafts, a resistant and precocious variety, providing an interesting diversity for future wine production.

2022

In 2022, a hundred plants suffered from unsuccessful implantation and the passage of strimmers, they will be replaced.

THE GRAPE VARIETIES

THE PHOENIX

Identification/Origin:

interspecific crossing between white Bacchus and white Villard created in 1964 by Gerhardt Erich Alleweldt (1927/2005) at the Geilweilerhof station in Siebeldingen, Germany. It should be noted that the Sirius and the Stauffer were also grown from these same parents. Phoenix is little known even in France, although it is listed in the official catalogue of varieties of ornamental table grapes

Description: medium to large, conical, winged, dense bunches; medium length peduncles with little or no lignifications; medium to large, round or slightly ellipsoid berries, thin yellow-green skin when fully mature, juicy flesh with a slightly musky flavour, which explains why it has been classified and grown as a table grape.

Grape of Vat/Table: gives a good quality dry white wine which is full-bodied, ample with a pleasant acidity, with a delicately muscatel taste to be fully exploited in the production of sweet or semi-dry effervescent wines. Aromas of citrus fruit, floral notes, mineral notes, lychee, ...



PHOENIX



THE SOLARIS

Identification/Origin:

interspecific crossing between the merzling and the Geisenheim 6493 (Zaryasevera x Muscat Ottonel) obtained in Germany in 1975 by Norbert Becker. It has the particularity of having only one gene of resistance to mildew and powdery mildew. It can be found in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, England, etc. In France, it is still relatively unknown;

Description: medium-sized, cylindrical, elongated, sometimes winged, more or less dense bunches; medium-sized peduncles with strong, little or no lignifications; small to medium-sized, spherical or elliptical berries; yellow-green to golden yellow skin which is even reddish when fully mature. The grapes must be protected from bird damage, they can also be attacked by wasps.

Wine type/flavour: gives a dry wine with a fruity aroma, sometimes with a slight musky, powerful, warm taste, which can be very slightly bitter when young. Vinification with over-mature grapes has given very interesting results. In Belgium and Germany, the Solaris is sometimes produced as a sweet wine or even as a sparkling wine. Aromas of banana, exotic notes (pineapple, lychee, mango, ...), hazelnut, ...

Source : Hubert Burnotte

