

Viticulture in 2024

Are we going to be biodynamic? No, not yet and not until I find a balance between our climate and our need to take care of our plots. I still have in mind a sentence that a friend told me once: *Everything is a poison and nothing is a poison, only the dosage will be the poison*. And that even applies to water. Everything has to be thought through before using it, every intrusive process (on vines or on wine) has to be carefully considered.

I do not seek a label just because it would mean better sales. Right now, in Champagne, as far as I am concerned we do not have the right climate to be organic every year. Vintage '21 & '24 are the best examples. Let's take a small look on 2024: I made 13 spraying passes, 8 organic, 5 with agrochemical. One of my organic friends made 25 separate sprays, only copper & sulfur, sometimes going 2 to 3 times a week on his plots. How on earth those numerous passes won't affect the soils harder than just with a bit of agrochemical?

When you seek to make terroir Champagne, you seek to reveal a terroir, and terroir is made of 4 things: Weather, Vines, Winegrower & Soils. Without the last one you miss 30 to 40 % of what you want to achieve. By going too often with a tractor on your plot, you create compaction. Compaction prevents soil from breathing, thus inhibiting the development of microorganisms. Spraying too much, even organic treatments--which are nonetheless heavy metal--you pollute even more your soil because copper cannot easily go away. Pollution of your ground inhibits even more the release of nutrients and the mineralization of your soils. And then with every pass, however small a drop of copper, you still use a lot of energy, either electric or oil, which will have an impact on Earth and climate change. So yes, trying to be organic is the best option, but you do need to think if at one point you shall use a drop of agrochemical or bucket of heavy metal. This choice belongs to everyone.

What I aim to do with Dad is to use all the tools possible, organic at first and then agrochemical if needed, and yes, biodynamic tisanes are always welcome since they worked as vaccines, so always good to use them at the beginning. And no, never do we use herbicide or insecticide.

Julien Lancelot