

Dear friends, dear guests

As you already know, this newsletters is starting the reservation schedule for Emmanuelle. I know you will be forgiving and accommodating because every year it is a real headache for her to place you in the best possible way and according to your wishes. As you also know, the priority of dates and places goes to our regulars, this is the way we have chosen to thank you for your loyalty and your friendship.

How has it been for us this 2020 season? Many of you have already asked us this question in your year-end message.

Rather well, in any case better than we thought last June.

Of course we lost a month of opening because the borders only opened on June 15th and by the time we understood and installed the different protocols, the campsite only opened its doors on June 27th. But from the opening you responded, and we sincerely thank you. We have of course thought of those of you who could not or dare to make the trip. We missed you, really, but we fully understand these decisions related to particular situations but all based on wisdom and prudence.

A decent season therefore because I have to be honest with you, the help from our government made up for the loss of turnover in June and it was a good surprise.

Where we lost, and I'm not talking just financially but also from a relationship standpoint, it was our Friday night parties that it was wiser to cancel.

I think and hope that we will be able to organize these parties in 2021 ...

What's new in Montrouant?

Everyone is in good health. The children, Emmanuelle and I, but also my parents and my in-laws.

One or two pitches have been enlarged. On the ground, dead trees were cut. Mainly common firs (Abiès Alba) which like humidity and cannot stand the hot, dry weeks of recent summers.

A defibrillator has recently been installed in the toilets. We had wanted to buy one for several years because we know that we are 4 or 5 times more likely to save lives with such a device than with cardiac massage. And your lives, the lives of your children, matter to Emmanuelle and me, and believe it or not, it is a real pleasure and a great relief to own one. This pleasure was more than doubled by the help given to us. I will not say more ...

2021 will also be the year of the installation in Montrouant of two chargers for electric vehicles. Indeed, since the arrival of the first Tesla in Montrouant, three years ago now, each passing season brings us more electric or hybrid cars. Last summer, we received no less than 5 Tesla in Montrouant. We know there will be more and more of them in the next few years.

But it is not very wise to recharge these vehicles on the camping pitches because neither the cables nor the electric plugs are suitable for this and there is a risk of "overheating" and fire.

But of course we understand the need for our camper friends to take advantage of the immobilization of the vehicle, at night for example, to recharge the battery. Also, near the reception, two places will be reserved for recharging. The cable used will be type 2. The chargers are Hager brand with all the necessary security and have a charging power of 7.4 kw. It's not that high, but it's enough to charge a Tesla up to 80% overnight.

A financial contribution remains to be defined and I invite my camper friends, happy electric or hybride cars drivers, to contact me to help me define a reasonable price for both parties. The spirit of trust that has always been the specialty of Montrouant will be here again. The initial idea, which may evolve according to your comments and suggestions, is to give, for the entire duration of the stay, a recharging badge and a small notebook

to note the KW consumption. Before departure, our host returns the badge and notebook and pays for the consumption of his refill (s) with Emmanuelle at reception.

And a little scoop now!

Our little Twingo, after 20 years of loyal service and 345,000 km on the clock, contracted the Covid at the end of the year. She doesn't recover, she coughs a lot with a scraping noise on the first three gears which requires us to start, ride and stop on the four gear.. You will agree that this is not very practical !

So we did some research to buy a new vehicle. Stroke of luck! While I was working on the charging possibilities at the campsite, a very interesting promotional offer for the purchase of a 100% electric KIA E-nero vehicle appeared on my screen.

After studying, we decided to take the plunge and we therefore acquired this automobile on a two-year lease. The charging stations will thus be doubly useful.

This very special year 2020 will have been a year of planting for Montrouant. In fact, it was in February and March that together with Camille and Emmanuelle we planted our first 200 truffle trees, just below our St. Julien vines. These are oak (*Quercus Pubescens*), lime (*Tilia*), hornbeam (*Carpinus Betulus*) and hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya Carpinifolia*). No, I'm anticipating what you may think, it's not about making beer with it ! This tree is named after its pretty, cone-shaped fruits that look a lot like the female hop flowers.

Last November, next to the Château and between the barley and wheat lanyards (necessary for beer but which also feed the chickens and fish) I planted 30 walnut trees with large walnuts and 820 vines of Chardonnay. In 7 to 8 years we will be able to eat excellent walnuts and produce natural Montrouant walnut oil ! The six long rows of Chardonnay replace the parcel sold in 2019 because it is located too far from the Château and difficult to access.

What about the wine?

First of all, you should know that the harvest was of good quality overall. We harvested fine grapes, especially Auxerrois. The bunches of Gamays were beautiful but many were attacked by wasps and hornets. Pinot noir, in addition to insects, also suffered from dryness and heat. I estimate the loss on these vineyards at 25%, but as nature was rather generous (once is not usual) I was able to make enough wine for the year ahead.

Half of the Auxerrois grapes have been vinified in a classic way and seem interesting in terms of aromas. The other half was vinified in a completely new way and I must say quite daring. For the moment it tastes worse than the traditional method, but this must be reversed over time ... the alcohol content is 13%

The Gamay rosé is frank with clear citrus aromas. Hopefully he will keep them until next summer. 13% alcohol too.

The red (50% Gamay and 50% Pinot) has a good nose and a good length in the mouth. If there is any left over after the season, I will age a few bottles. Watch out for the % alcohol. A little over 14% ! I know, it's too much to drink in the middle of summer but I had no choice and I'm not going to put water in it anyway!

So, to sum it up, honest wines that should be better than 2020.

What about beer?

The two brews, 300 liters each, produced in 2020 were not sufficient. I expect three 300 liter brews for this year. Since mid-November with Yannick, my employee, when the weather does not allow us to work outside, we have malted barley and wheat for future beer. We spend more time there this year because there are a lot of small stones in the cereals. The harvest was poor. The fact of no longer wanting to plow so as not to disturb the horizons of the soil clearly favored the growth of competing plants which in places really covered and laid down the stems of the cereals. To collect as much as possible, the machine worked flush with the ground, which explains this significant contribution of gravel which significantly lengthens the work because once the germination and drying processes are completed, we must re-soak the cereals in water to remove the small stones that remain at the bottom of the soaking tank. And of course, start a new drying process again.

On the other hand, the Cascade hops were harvested in good conditions in mid-September, just after the season. Drying, vacuuming and freezing allow it to wait in optimum conditions for the moment of its use, certainly next April, the planned brewing period, with my mate Marco.

But we will exchange our impressions, both on the wine and on the beer, in visu, quietly seated under the barnum ...

What about the fish?

We finished draining the pond on December 28th. We only emptied in four times this year (1 time in October, 1 time in November and 2 times in December) because there were unfortunately not many small pike-perch and small black-bass which are, as you know, a significant source of income for us in winter.

This is the smallest turnover of the last 10 years but I am not complaining because it is an almost free gift from Mother Nature, and even if this donation is less important this year it is still significant in comparison the little work it takes.

The complete emptying of 28/12 allowed me to find the two sturgeons and the three grass-carps which have grown even bigger and to have the pleasure of admiring one or two beautiful carp which must not be far from 25 kg. A lot of small white fish that I estimate in quantity at 180 to 200 kg, around sixty big tench and good spawners of pike-perch and black bass.

Here is my friends, summarily summed up, a review of our activities over the past year.

Before closing this letter, Emmanuelle and I would like to thank those of you who send us these kind messages and these lovely cards that are so pleasant to read. Small attentions and gifts made during the summer are always special moments for us when we look at them or taste them, in autumn and winter, because they remind us of your faces, your kindness and the good times we spent together.

The 2021 season will see security protocols maintained.

Hydroalcoholic gels in washrooms, at reception and under the barnum. Protective plexiglass at the reception. The distribution of two wine glasses that you can return or buy at the end of your stay to avoid the concentration of people in the small bar. The maximum number of people in the swimming pool, a maximum number never reached elsewhere due to the size of the pools and the beach and the low capacity of the campsite.

If wearing a mask is mandatory we will wear it, if it is not we will not wear it but we will respect barrier gestures and safety distances with each of you. Even if it costs us not to shake your hand warmly or to hug each other.

Let's hope that the vaccine will deliver us quickly from this damn virus and its consequences, but let's not be naive, we will still have to protect ourselves next summer.

This is where we leave each other. Emmanuelle and I wish you the best for this new year, for you and those you love. Above all, stay healthy. Embrace your children for us because we won't be able to do it next season yet.

Très amicalement,

Jean Mi