

Dear friends, dear guests,

As you already know, this newsletter starts the reservation schedule for Emmanuelle. I know that you will be lenient and accommodating because every year, it is a real headache for her to place you as best as possible and in accordance with your wishes. As you also know, priority for dates and places goes to our regulars based on their seniority ; so please send your booking as soon as possible and if possible before the 4th of February especially for weeks 30, 31, 32 and 33. We have received many request already for the apartments and LodgesAfter this date, available pitches are allocated as requests arise, as in all campsites. This is the way we have chosen to thank you for your loyalty and friendship.

The 2023 season was a good season. From a weather point of view we have found this summer balance with warm but not scorching temperatures. Small rains, at regular intervals, contributed to the beauty of nature throughout the summer. Despite two particularly hot weeks at the end of August, we still had beautiful flowers at the beginning of September and the beautiful green colors of the trees and shrubs showed us that they had not suffered like previous summers.

However, the common fir trees (Abiès Alba) continue to die and I had to cut down around fifty of them in the Bois de la Chapelle but there are still as many, if not more, to fall...

I think that in less than 10 years this species will have disappeared from our Brionnais-Charollais and it is said that the famous Douglas, which has made and still makes the wealth of our region through the quality of their wood, will be next...

During this 2023 season some of you were able to meet Michel, whom we nickname Mimiche! He arrived with his camper van to spend a week or two with us and stayed the whole season to help us. It was a pleasure for me to meet this childhood friend again (we were 15 years old when we played football together, 50 years ago!) There is a good chance that you will meet him again this year during your stay in Showing.

This year the theme' week will take place from the September 7 to September 14. Therefore the campsite will close on September 15.

The establishment of the two new lodges announced in the 2023 newsletter will be postponed to 2025 or 2026.

There are priorities that cannot be deferred...

What's new in Montrouant?

As in my letter last year, I want to start with the saddest and end on notes of optimism and hope.

Like November 2022, November 2023 brought mourning in my family.

It was my little brother Christophe, my favorite guitarist, who left on the night of November 21 to 22. Last October he was diagnosed with a lung tumor, certainly cancerous. But before we could verify the malignancy of this spot, another was detected, on a kidney, then another on the lumbar vertebrae and finally in the brain, three in number. No chance for him to survive.

I spent the last week of his life with him, in the Toulouse hospital. It was hard, very hard... I didn't hide anything about his condition from him. We talked a lot. He was ready.

What I will remember from this painful week is the extraordinary courage he showed. No complaints, no tears...I can't say the same...

For mom, it was a stab in the heart. We surround him as best we can. Evelyne, my sister comes up from the south, where she lives, as soon as she can. Emmanuelle and the children are also there for her.

Work is her escape, as soon as the weather permits she rake the leaves, prepare her gardens for spring, take care of her chickens... she doesn't forget, of course, but it keeps her busy, she thinks about it less ... and I know that when the good weather returns with its share of tasks necessary for the maintenance of Montrouant and the preparation of the campsite, she will find the strength, the energy, which is specific to her.

The rest of the family is doing well, Emmanuelle's parents too.

As for the beer, my plans were of course postponed. I think the next brew, and probably the only one, will be made in February-March. Marco and I will be very vigilant regarding possible contamination by lactic acid bacteria in the wine in order to avoid acidification of the beer. The bottling method will, in my opinion, be predominant because I firmly believe that it is during this stage that the problem appears. The goal is rather modest this year. Let's try to produce a classic, light and tasty blonde beer before considering other types of production.

The wines look interesting, especially the red and white. Rosé, there are few of it this year, I like less... The red we will be drinking this summer comes from the Gamay de la Chapelle vineyard. We are really on the fruit with typically Gamay aromas, like red berries and English candy. The alcohol level is reasonable: 13%. The white wine produced with the Auxerrois plot of St. Julien stands out for its great liveliness, freshness brought by good acidity and a low alcohol level of 12%. The rosé from Gorgerottes, the other parcel of Gamay de Montrouant, seems a little heavy to me but, let's be patient, we are 6 months into the season and it will of course evolve a lot. Its alcohol content is 13%. I was unable to make Pinot noir because black rot and mildew destroyed the entire St. Julien harvest. This grape variety is really sensitive. To summarize 2023: low quantity (we'll have to share !) but good quality.

The big news for 2024 regarding vines will be the planting, in Montrouant, of 5,000 m² of Floréal. It is a white grape variety which was obtained by crossing vines resistant to diseases such as powdery mildew and mildew. This means that there is no need to treat, except in the event of a rainy year, when it will be wise to frame the flowering period with 1 or 2 treatments. The wines produced with this grape variety, at least those that I have tasted, I like because they are fruity with light aromas of Sauvignon.

As for the truffle trees, they grow well. Some could produce truffles within 3 years but, as you know, nothing is certain... We are not going to do any major plantings in 2024, just replace the missing 5 or 6 and complete a small plot with 50 or 60 trees.

The emptying of the pond gave us satisfaction and the first fishing allowed us to bring out many pretty little zanders and small black-bass, already all sold. We recovered the sturgeon (there is only one left now) and the 3 carp Amour (*Ctenopharyngodon Idella*), a lot of fry but exclusively spawners, because the spawn was devoured by the small carnivores. A lot of beautiful tench but none small, because they are also chewed. The thirty big carp took advantage and this is normal because there are not many of them for the pond which is almost 3 hectares. I knew I was going to catch some small carp because there were a lot of them last summer. I estimate their number at 800 to 900 pieces. They weigh between 150 and 400 grams, which is already pretty good for fish aged 5 to 6 months. Unfortunately it is difficult to sell and it often ends with donations to friends and owners of ponds in the region in exchange for fried fish or other fish... This is how I was able to replace the few zander and black-bass spawners disappeared last year. However, I took the time to select around fifty of these small carp which I put back in the pond, bringing the number of carp to 80. Of course they will barely weigh more than a kilo next summer but will already be able to bite on boilies and other carp baits.

Here, in a few lines, is the summary of some of our activities over the past year.

I was saddened in my 2023 newsletter by the war that this crazy Putin started in Ukraine but a second conflict in the Middle East now saddens me... Let's hope that 2024 resolves one or the other of these wars or even better two but I admit, again and like a year ago, I don't really believe it...

Finally, and I know that Emmanuelle joins me, I want to thank those of you who send us these kind messages and these pretty cards that are so pleasant to read. The little touches and little 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 spent together .

We wish you a sweet, peaceful and beautiful New Year with excellent health for you and those you love.

Kind regards to all,

Jean Mi

