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by Karen Hart | October 21, 2021

TJ Evans

Winemaker

Domaine Carneros

It's hard to believe that this is my 28th harvest. Over the years, I've found that for me anticipation really builds starting with veraison, [change of colors of the grape berries]. It's then that I begin getting into the mindset of harvest, and there are a few subtle things that I like to do. The first is to sharpen my thinning shears. These will be in hand for all vineyard visits, so that any cluster that's not up to par can be quickly and cleanly removed, and grape samples can be taken to taste and assess their maturity. I am a big coffee drinker, but during harvest I switch to black tea. Eliminating the acid from the coffee sharpens the palate, and makes it a tiny bit easier to taste all of those grapes, which have plenty of their own acid.

As I reflect on the growing season and start to formulate a harvest strategy it is nice to search for other inspiration. I do this by diving into the wine cellar to taste my own wines as well as those from colleagues to refresh and fine-tune the aesthetic goals of each wine as it relates to the coming vintage. It's almost a subconscious process as thoughts of the different ranches and clones move about like so many mental puzzle pieces. It is nice to have a game plan, even if it has to be modified when the grapes start flying. Fingers crossed for all of my friends and colleagues to have a safe and successful vintage!

