

2017 Vintage

The 2017 vintage growing year will be remembered for its hot climate, and in particular sparse rainfall. The winter was mild, with only a few snowfalls, while spring was marked by some rain and above-average temperatures for the season. This further facilitated the vine's vegetative development, which immediately proved to be ahead of time and continued to be so for the rest of the season.

Towards the end of April, the sharp drop in temperatures recorded - especially overnight - throughout Italy caused some frost damage, though in the Langhe only the bottoms of the valleys and cooler slopes were affected.

May saw the beginning of a long period of fine weather due to the passage of numerous anticyclones.

The meteorological situation stabilized, ensuring excellent conditions in terms of plant protection, so there are no particular vineyard management issues to be reported. The maximum temperatures recorded during the summer months were above average, just as they were in the whole of Italy, but the nights were cooler than in other hot years.

Between the end of August and the beginning of September, eagerly-awaited rain helped to accumulate 25 mm of water, which partly rebalanced the water supply to the grape berries for which veraison was now well and truly underway.

Starting from the first week in September, temperatures dropped appreciably and growing patterns were nearer seasonal averages, with considerable differences between day and night temperatures. This situation was further helped by the polyphenolic profile of the red wine grapes with a medium-long vegetative cycle, such as Nebbiolo and Barbera, for which the data differed to those recorded in other "hot" vintages. As a matter of fact, the values observed this year are better in terms of both quantity - accumulation of anthocyanins and tannins - and extractability, an essential factor in wines for ageing.

From the point of view as well of the length of the vegetative cycle, many differences with other early-ripening vintages can be observed: in fact, although the period that elapsed between bud burst and technological ripening was earlier than usual this year, it still lasted an average of 185 days, while in other similar years it was around 170 compared to the 200 days of vintages considered "late-ripening". In short, the cycle was early this year, but the vine was able in any case to enjoy a full development cycle.

As regards the main components of the wines, it should be noted that although alcohol contents are significant, they are not out of the average, especially in Dolcetto and Nebbiolo base wines. Most probably this is because the vine's metabolic processes were interrupted during the hottest period, which meant that though the harvest was early, values were normal. Furthermore, a good level of pH has been recorded, while lower total acidity can be traced back to a smaller quantity of malic acid, demonstrating the excellent degree of ripening of the grapes.

The lower yield recorded in the vineyard is in keeping with a year in which there was sparse rainfall, with clusters which were compact when picked and showing must-skin percentages within average ranges.

On the basis of recorded data, this vintage can certainly be remembered as one of the earliest of recent years, given that the picking of the nebbiolo grapes began in the middle ten days of September, and ended early in October, around two weeks earlier than the norm.

The 2017 vintage has given us wines showing great promise considering the fears of the beginning of summer, confirming once more how well-suited and well-equipped the hills of the Langhe are for vinegrowing.