

2018 Vintage

The 2018 vintage opened with a long winter with plenty of rainfall, restoring the soil's water supply which had diminished due to the weather conditions in the previous year. The winter season extended until the beginning of March, with temperatures which were lower than in recent years. This led to a gradual, slow resumption of the vine's vegetative phase, which was completed by the end of the same month. Bud break was regular, with none of the problems caused by late frosts. Spring continued in keeping with what had been seen at the end of the winter, with frequent rainfall and temperatures which were not high, suggesting that the vintage would develop along "classic" lines, and in any case not earlier than usual as had happened the previous year; this expectation would then be confirmed by the course of the season. Between the end of May and the beginning of June there was a period in our vinegrowing area marked by numerous storms, bringing copious rains that created some difficulties for vinegrowers from a vineyard management point of view. Indeed, problems were recorded associated with fungal diseases wherever it was not possible to intervene in time. Flowering and subsequent berry set took place regularly and in optimal climatic conditions, immediately suggesting that it would be a plentiful vintage, as proved to be the case following the closing up of the clusters of grapes. Green harvesting became necessary for nearly all varieties in order to curb production to within the limits provided for under the various production regulations. Development was gradual during the summer, with temperatures rising considerably from mid-July on, and a long period of constant fine weather helped the grapes to ripen without the harvest needing to be brought forward. Harvesting operations began in September with the sparkling wine grapes, and continued with the other white wine grapes until around September 20th. The data at our disposal suggest not too high an alcohol content, which - together with a sufficiently high level of acidity - guarantees good support to the aromatic properties of the grapes. Dolcetto was the first red varietal to be picked, and it is showing an average sugar content, while the acidity is lower than in recent vintages, even though the levels of pH in the musts are as usual. This is due mainly to the ratio between the two main acid components: indeed, the malic acid degraded thanks to high daytime temperatures in late August-early September, while a good concentration was preserved in the grapes of the tartaric acid which formed early in the season when lower temperatures helped its synthesis. This phenomenon was also seen in the later-ripening red wine varieties. The Barbera was marked by a good state of health, although there was a certain degree of disparity between vineyards, due mainly to the yields: where they were higher, the management of the vineyard was more complex, and the ripening-related parameters were also affected, recording data which were inferior to those with a lower production. As has been the case here for several years now, the weather in September was good for the vines, contributing to the quality of the wines produced using medium-long vegetative cycle varieties, which were able to benefit to the full. As a matter of fact, the Nebbiolo grapes were ripe for harvesting as per tradition in early October, with picking operations taking around three weeks in all. Unlike the other varieties, Nebbiolo yields were limited, with certain situations in which there were few clusters in parts of vineyards. This phenomenon can be attributed to the weather during the previous year, in particular the abnormal heat recorded during the period when fruit bud differentiation takes place. In both the Barolo and Barbaresco growing areas the sugar contents increased over the last part of the season, and an acceleration was also seen in the phenolic ripening, which made it possible to arrive at the harvest with excellent parameters. Combined with a perfect level of acidity, all of this will allow for well-balanced wines with excellent ageing potential.

In conclusion, we can say that it has been a vintage in the traditional mould which demanded the attention of vinegrowers in their management of the vineyard in order to achieve results which were better than had been expected at the beginning of the campaign.