



The 2004 Vintage

General climatic and meteorological pattern

Following the autumn rains in 2003, the large amount of rainfall in the first few months of 2004 restored soil water reserves which had been reduced considerably by the very hot, dry summer of 2003.

A snowy winter with low average temperatures was followed by a spring characterized by plenty of rain over long periods until the beginning of May, delaying the start of the budding cycle of the vine. Initially this rainfall caused concern amongst growers about the possibility of early attacks of downy mildew, which fortunately did not take place however, with the pathogen being confined to its normal virulence.

However much the growers of the Langhe and Roero may have been worried about downy mildew though, the pathogen which kept them most occupied was powdery mildew, which hit the vineyards heavily from the first ten days of July on, helped by little sunshine, average temperatures, and fairly high relative humidity.

The following months were distinguished by summery temperatures which were never too high, with almost no periods of oppressive heat or rain. These conditions allowed for good development of medium-to-large sized bunches. The delay in the budding and the moderate summer temperatures allowed the vine to develop normally, though the expected ripening period at the end of August was delayed by at least 10 days. The distinguishing feature of the 2004 vintage was the arrival in our region of an anticyclone, which lasted throughout September and early October, with days full of sunshine, no rainfall, and temperatures above the seasonal average. This meant that the grapes could be picked when they were perfectly sound and ripe, allowing growers to enjoy a calm, anxiety-free harvest. Hail made an appearance on the morning of 8th August, involving a very limited strip in the Barolo growing area.

Comments on the vintage

The harvesting of the grapes began later in 2004 than in the particularly early recent vintages such as the 2003, and the standard of quality of the grapes was higher than expected. It was also a good year for astute growers who balanced production attentively with the vegetation of the plant.

Picking of the white varieties began around 10-15 September with Chardonnay, followed by Sauvignon blanc, Favorita and Arneis. The general situation was very good, with average alcohol, balanced acids and intense aromas.

A few days later, harvesting of the Dolcetto variety began in its four areas of production. It was completed between the end of September and the beginning of October, with early winery data showing wines of great potential, with good alcohol levels, the right acidity, and deep colour.

After a short break, it was the turn of the Barbera and Nebbiolo varieties to be picked over a succession of days of sunshine mixed with others with overcast skies, though with limited rainfall. The resulting wines have very interesting, complex noses, with the right amount of acidity and alcohol.

The 2004 vintage therefore followed a "normal" pattern, with a not overly hot summer, the appropriate rainfall, and a long, tranquil harvest, which began in mid-September and ended late October, showing excellent promise in terms of quality.