

## 2012 Vintage

The 2012 campaign began with a fairly unusual winter weather pattern. In fact November and December were rather milder than average: maximum temperatures of as high as 15-16°C were recorded in more exposed areas in December. The coldest weather arrived a little later than usual, when temperatures dropped considerably below zero between the end of January and the beginning of February. Peaks as low as -15°C were reached, something which had not occurred for decades. The low temperatures which continued throughout the month of February were also accompanied by heavy snowfalls. While on the one hand these contributed to creating good water reserves, they also unquestionably postponed vegetative recovery, which occurred later than usual and was staggered, clearly favouring areas more exposed to the sun. Spring started out cool and wet in March and April, while though there was no shortage of rain in May (55 mm on average), temperatures rose considerably (as high as 17°C). This abundance of water combined with high temperatures accelerated vegetative growth, producing a more balanced situation than had been seen on bud break. June also began with wet weather, and as flowering was taking place at the same time this reduced berry set, resulting in a smaller number of berries on average per cluster. This was not a concern however, and in certain cases proved to be an advantage, as it led to less green harvesting being required, and helped in the prevention of the diseases which take hold more easily in compact clusters. From the end of June, summer was marked by medium-high temperatures, which reached their peak in the second half of August (with maximums of 38°C), and little rain. Nevertheless, no water stress issues were recorded due to the abundant reserves which had been built up during winter and spring. Picking began with Chardonnay and Arneis in the first week of September, which continued through to the middle of the month. Though the production of our whites was not too high, it was much closer to the norm than in other areas of Italy which had been more affected by the summer climate. In terms of quality, acidity levels are slightly lower than in 2011, though the overall balance is excellent. Vinification methods will have considerable effect on the preservation of the aromas that give them their distinctive character. The first red wine variety to be harvested was dolcetto. After taking a normal physiological break at the end of August, activity in the Dolcetto vineyards picked up again early in September thanks to some rain and a slight drop in temperatures, and by the middle of the month the grapes were in very good health: excellent anthocyanins (colour), and considerable balance in the aromatic substances. Together with a more limited sugar content than usual, this augurs well for an excellent 2012 vintage. This applies to all the Dolcetto denominations, and in particular to Diano and Dogliani. The Barbera grape harvest took place between the middle and the end of September, when their genetic properties were at their peak: good colour, marked varietal acidity, and sugars in line with recent vintages, so the potential is there for a wine with good structure, probably less complex than the last two-three years but with great finesse on the palate. The beginning of October saw the opening of the harvesting of the Nebbiolo, which had enjoyed a period of big variations in daytime temperatures from mid-September on. The quality and quantity of the phenolic substances recorded when monitoring the ripening of the grapes is of particular significance: a positive development was noted over the last month, suggesting that the grapes are very likely to produce well-structured wines lending themselves to ageing, even though average alcohol contents are slightly lower than in recent vintages. In conclusion, overall the yield was not overly abundant, but excellent raw material in terms of plant protection and tasting quality can be expected to produce extraordinarily well-balanced wines. All that remains now is to wait for the results of vinification to see whether what was obtained in the vineyard will be maintained in the wine.