

## 2021 Vintage

The two thousand and twenty-one vintage began with a mild winter, though plenty of rain and some snow ensured an excellent supply of water, which proved to be essential over the course of the rest of a vintage where rainfall was at its lowest level in recent years.

Plant growth resumed as per normal and in keeping with traditional timing, rather than early as happened last year, coping well as a result with the last cold snap at the beginning of spring and limiting frost damage to the newly-developed buds. Even the Nebbiolo variety, which is an early developer and therefore potentially more at risk, was not significantly affected by the drop in temperatures, with just slight damage limited to lower altitude vineyards. During the subsequent phenological phases it could be seen that the crop load was not too high - an estimated 10% lower than in 2020 -, reducing the need for green harvesting while allowing the yields provided for under production regulations to be reached.

A long period of fine weather began with spring and lasted throughout the summer, with recorded temperatures in line with averages for the time of year and without excesses, especially at night. Heavy storms in the first part of July reached their climax on the 13<sup>th</sup>, when part in particular of the area around Castellinaldo, Castagnito, Guarene and Canale was hit by a violent hailstorm, causing damage - some of it major - to vineyards. No damage was recorded to vineyards in the Barolo and Barbaresco growing areas though, and summer continued with little rainfall, contributing to what proved to be an excellent plant health and quality profile at harvest time.

The harvest began mid-September with the picking of the white wine grapes and Dolcetto. The former in particular showed excellent properties, with an optimal sugar content and strong acid profile that should preserve their freshness.

Dolcetto was one of the varieties with the best outcomes this vintage: its typically late bud break averted any late spring cold-related issues, and the absence of substantial day-night temperature variations in summer protected it from premature berry drop, resulting in the harvesting of healthy grapes with excellent properties.

The Barbera was picked in a perfect condition from both technological and phenological points of view in the last week in September. The very high sugar content and stronger acid profile than in the previous vintages, above-all in terms of malic acid, will combine to produce complex, long-lasting wines.

The harvesting of Nebbiolo began during the last days in September, peaking in the second week of October. The grapes were healthy, with optimal phenological maturity facilitated by the lower temperatures and the day-night variations observed from the second half of September on. In terms of quantity, crop loads were optimal and well-balanced, with visibly smaller berries than last year. These factors resulted in a strong polyphenol content, which is essential in order to produce wines of structure and balance intended for lengthy ageing.

In conclusion, we can say that despite the vintage being distinguished by a succession of significant climatic events, with late frosts, storms and hail in summer, as well as drought, remarkable results have been achieved in terms of the quality of the grapes, maybe partly due to the fact that the yields were not too high.