

THE 2009 VINTAGE AT CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

Handsome and very healthy grapes thanks to the dry and hot summer

With less than 30 mm of rainfalls between June 9th and September 14th, the summer 2009 was extremely dry at Châteauneuf-du-Pape. It was even drier than the 2007 summer record of 35 mm, whereas the average rainfalls of the last twenty summers reaches 161 mm. Hopefully, heavy rains during the fall 2008 and the winter 2008/2009 help the soil restoring water reserves before summer.

The Spring 2009 was cooler and more humid than average (31 days of minimal temperatures between 10 and 15°C, in comparison to 30 days in 2007; 170 mm of rainfalls between mid-april and mid-june). On the opposite, summer that followed was particularly hot, with 24 days of maximum temperatures above 35 °C (in comparison to 7 days only in 2007). 12 of these hottest days were in August, which rank it the 2nd hottest august of the last 46 years (just behind 2003). At last, from may to september, the Châteauneuf-du-Pape sky was much more shiny than the normal: this period of time being placed 4th after 1967, 2003 and 1989 which holds the record. Finally, the thermic balance of the year is slightly in surplus (above the average).

Coming from the North, the Mistral wind blew all over the year. Some months, it had blown hard in gusts for numerous days.

The quality of this vintage reflects the climatic conditions of the vegetative (growing) stage: with the help of a rainy spring, summer 2009 allows to obtain very healthy and colorful grapes, with well-structured tannins. The 2009 vintage is one of the earliest of this beginning 21st century.

Into the vineyard, sorting of the grapes was minimum. Harvests took place gradually, giving wine-producers peace in mind to organise hand-picking according to the ripness of the different grape varieties and of the different plots. Rainfalls in mid-september (53 mm within the month) did not disturb the course of the harvests, which began at the end of august and ended the first weeks of october.

In 2009, quantity is low with average yields of 28 to 30 hectolitres per hectare, even though maximum yield is set at 35 hl/hac. Fermentations went off well, last devattings finished at the beginning of november.

First tastings of finished wines confirm that the 2009 vintage is among the great vintages, such as 2005 and 2007. Like them, it will be a worth keeping vintage. In the meantime, wine drinkers could fully enjoy the freshness and delicacy of the 2004 and 2006 vintages, as well as the fruitiness of the joyfull 2008.

We have an appointment with you on February the 1st at the "Club des professionnels du vin" in Marseille (Palais du Pharo), and on February the 22nd at Vinisud Montpellier.

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