

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 2020

A STRESS-FREE YEAR IN THE VINES AND A SMOOTH HARVEST GIVE US A BRIGHT AND BALANCED VINTAGE

After a very dry summer in 2019, and therefore big, concentrated wines last year, the 2020 vintage, harvested exceptionally early, signals the return of fresher wines, with a great balance.

The dry and exceedingly hot 2019 summer required a subsequent rainy winter to allow water supplies to be restored. And such was the case, with a total rainfall of 400 to 500 mm depending on the location between October and December 2019, and then with a particularly wet late spring. The winter temperatures were fairly mild, which triggered a particularly early bud burst, 12 days earlier than in 2019. Despite a morning frost on 25 March, which caused limited damage to a few unlucky parcels, the mild temperatures carried on through the spring, confirming a very early vintage, with flowering mid-May.

The absence of rain from mid-June to early August caused some fears of water stress on the vines, until a few summer showers prevented all risk. The summer was hot, yet not scorching hot: only 3 days out of 5 above 30°C (86°F) between June and September, with a peak above 40°C (104°F) around 1st August. The ripening of the grapes started late July and was extremely quick.

AN EARLY, LONG YET TROUBLE-FREE HARVEST

The first white grapes were harvested from the 3rd week of August while the Syrah started being picked early September. Around 20 September, a few rain showers (40 to 60 mm) delayed the harvest, slowing down the build-up of sugar yet hastening the phenolic maturation of the Grenache and the Mourvèdre grapes. Harvest carried on stress-free until mid-October, through ideal weather conditions, and the wine-growers were able to harvest each plot at optimal ripeness. The perfectly healthy grapes needed very little sorting and the alcoholic fermentation went smoothly.

FRESH AND BALANCED TASTE PROFILES

As far as the **whites** are concerned, the 2020 vintage is characterized by elegance and a beautiful acidity. The nose is marked by citrus and fresh fruit. The mouth combines aromatic intensity and a lingering finish. The **reds** display colours that are slightly less intense than in 2019, but they also feature less alcohol, more freshness, pure fruit and fine tannins. The Syrah grapes exhale aromas of blackberry and notes of white pepper and menthol, while the Grenache brings aromas of fresh raspberry, *garrigue* or ginger, depending on the terroirs. The 2020 reds are elegant and supple, a sure sign that they can be enjoyed in their youth, while keeping a good ageing potential as well. 2020 is undeniably a wonderfully balanced vintage, combining delicious fruit and freshness.

As if the gods had decided to console us from the prevailing gloom linked to the covid-19 crisis, the 2020 vintage is the outcome of a trouble-free year in the vines and a harmonious development of the grapes. It was therefore in a peaceful and relaxed atmosphere that the wine-growers harvested and vinified Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines that already prove to be an amazing tasting experience.



See what's happening in the wine world of Châteauneuf-du-Pape at www.chateauneuf.com