



* Sud de France

PRESS RELEASE
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The 2012 Vintage in the Roussillon

The clip of secateurs has been echoing in the Muscat à Petits Grains vineyards since the 5th of August. Grapes harvested very early have given the advantage of vivid fruit character to the first dry white wines.

And, as usual, the first harvests in France are taking place in the Roussillon.

The quality is materializing. The 2012 vintage is promising, and the last month of ripening unfolded under the best of conditions with very healthy fruit, contrary to the rest of France which was touched by rain, hail and vine diseases.

With respect to quantity, after 2011, the year of the century for the Roussillon, 2012 will remain in the memories of the growers as one of the smallest harvests they have ever known!

The Climate Cycle and Behavior of the Vineyard

A cold, rainy winter and a warm spring gave a glimpse of a superb vintage, but a too dry, even scorching summer, held down volume.

The weather remained dry and hot from the beginning of July, aside from the storm on August 6th (between 5 and 15 mm of rain) unfortunately accompanied by hail in the region of Maury, Lesquerdes and les Fenouillèdes. Several hundred hectares were damaged.

In the youngest vineyards, the vines suffered a little from the heat and dryness but this was not the case for the majority of vineyards with deeply rooted old vines.

The late onset of leaf development and flowering led to a ripening that was in the end early, comparable or earlier to that in 2009 for most varieties, except for Muscat of Alexandria and Syrah, which were closer to 2010. The fruit/canopy balance was very positive.



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Beginning in mid-August, after the intense heat and in spite of the southeasterly afternoon breezes, a period of scorch brought on a harvest requiring the growers to redouble their efforts in the cellars to handle the fruit in the most careful manner possible.

The end of August planted serious doubts in the minds of the growers in the face of a climate that is becoming semi-tropical (without precipitation). Vines that had not suffered from the dryness during the cellular reproduction of the berries in June suffered at this point.

Present during the greater part of the month of September, the rescuing Tramontana prevented development of vine diseases, bringing cooler, less dry climatic conditions. Ripening, which evolved unevenly from parcel to parcel, microclimate to microclimate and even within plots, after some instances of arrested development finally went forward positively due to a few slight, temporary showers. Meanwhile, this same Tramontana also contributed to lowering the quantity of the harvest through concentration, and in this rare case, by fruit drop. Many clusters and berries fell, sometimes up to 20 percent of the harvest.

The harvest concluded at the end of September, nearly 15 days early due to the light fruit load and ripeness arriving nearly simultaneously throughout the region. The producers on the Roussillon plain were for the most part finished by mid-September. The last varieties to be gathered were Muscat of Alexandria (for the production of Muscat de Rivesaltes), as well as some Carignan for the production of red wines, Mourvèdre and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Quality of the Vintage

From the standpoint of quality, the remarkable cleanness of this concentrated, healthy harvest has provided fruit of quality and balance with excellent aromatic potential for all varieties.

Conclusion

Once again, it is a remarkable vintage in the Roussillon:

- quality, a direct result of the expertise of the growers and particularly of their great adaptability and responsiveness in the face of the year's conditions,
- the reduced volume of production, on the order of an average 40% below that of a normal vintage, will reach about 700,000 hectoliters total, the smallest harvest of the last forty years



The white and rosé wines, both dry and VDN, are fresh and very aromatic.

The dry red wines and red VDN for early drinking will be fat and lush, whereas those in cask promise lovely cuvées.

The Vins Doux Naturels that are especially well suited to this kind of climate very easily got out while the getting was good.

Small volume and vivid character sum up the 2012 vintage in the Roussillon. Its wines will be aromatic and concentrated, but unfortunately too rare.

www.winesofroussillon.com

Samples available upon request.

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