

CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE 2021

An old-fashioned vintage with great aging potential

More fear than harm for the AOC Châteauneuf-du-Pape which crossed without much difficulty a year 2021 to say the least difficult, not only in France but throughout the planet.

Never in the memory of Castelpapaux winegrowers has the spring frost arrived so close to the heart of the appellation, raising fears of a lot of damage to the earliest grape varieties, grenaches, syrahs and bouboulencs. Fortunately this was not the case. The vintage 2021 is nonetheless atypical and takes us back fifteen years for this which is the climatic conditions and the profile of the wines produced.

On the night of April 7 to 8, 2021, a cold spell affected almost all of France continental, sweeping away everything in its path, tree and wine production first place. The windy character and the proximity of the Rhone have however allowed the appellation

Châteauneuf-du-Pape to suffer more limited damage than elsewhere. This climatic event exceptional mainly affected the edges of the vineyard where we noted temperatures of -1.5°C (against -7° in other areas of Vaucluse).

After a particularly mild winter ($+2.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ compared to the average for the month of February), and a very cool spring, followed by a summer marked by a few very hot episodes (mid-June, end of July and mid-August) but not scorching. Summer rainfall was between 55 and 77mm. Thanks to fine rain at the beginning of August, the ripening process of the grapes will not have

not had to suffer from excessive water stress.

At the end of summer 2021, the vintage was set to be late, the result of a fairly long (due in particular to the summer nights which remained cool) and heterogeneous in yield between the plots affected by frost and the others. Spared from mildew attacks and not very susceptible at the beginning of September, the vineyard presented a perfect sanitary state due to powdery mildew. stormy episodes

which occurred around the autumnal equinox had the effect of slowing down the harvest; and in some cases to modify harvesting habits, in order to adapt to the requirements of a vintage regularly qualified as "winegrower". The stripping of certain plots had beneficial effects, notably making it possible to accelerate the ripening of the berries while preserving their qualitative potential.

The last plots were harvested at the beginning of October. The first vats pressed leave predict lower average degrees than in previous years (around 14%) and relatively high coloring intensities (more than 8). The fine acidity of the vintage leaves foresee a good aging potential for wines that will already be appreciated in their prime youth.

A few days before the last rackings, it turns out that the 2021 harvest should be 20 to 25% in quantity compared to the average (92,000 hl). Inventories as of July 31 were almost identical to those of the previous year. Good stability at the end of two years commercially complicated (US taxes, Brexit, confinements) which proves if there was still a need for it the strong interest of consumers around the world for the wines of the Rhône Valley and more especially for those from Châteauneuf-du-Pape.