

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 2016

A FABULOUS VINTAGE !

As autumn is drawing to a close and the wine presses have been washed and put away, the first wines tasted before being blended confirm what had been sensed: 2016 is going to be a fabulous vintage! And if some compare it to the magnificent 2010, some others do not hesitate to go as far as the famous star-vintage 1990... Either way, the evidence that we are witnessing the making of a great vintage is clear.

After a rather mild winter and a dry and cool spring, the vineyard had to resist a hot summer –hotter than average with several days exceeding 35°C, including in early September. A hot –albeit not blistering hot summer, characterized as soon as early August, over the *Véraison* ripening time, by wide temperature variations between day and night, a positive factor that encourages polyphenol synthesis. Summer was also particularly dry; the total rainfall barely reached 70mm, with 17.8mm in July, 8.4mm in August and 44.6mm in September. It was precisely the thin drizzle that fell continuously on 14 and 15 September that allowed the grapes to reach full maturity, without hampering the quality potential of a harvest that can -in all respects- be qualified as exceptional (perfect sanitary state, optimum phenolic ripeness...).

The harvest started on 12 September and spread over 6 weeks and more. The consequence of this dream weather was that the sorting of the grapes –although mandatory- was made hardly necessary. From a general point of view, the wines of the 2016 vintage are very aromatic, complex, frank and crisp. The average yield should be close to 32hl/ha, compared to the 35hls authorised.

The Châteauneuf-du-Pape whites are fine and full-bodied. They reveal an optimum ripeness and at the same time, thanks to a naturally low pH, a beautiful freshness. The Grenache grape expresses aromas of white and yellow fruit (peach, pear, quince) and white flowers. The Roussane grape is very expressive and reveals scents of exotic fruit, peach and apricot. Thanks to a beautiful autumn, the Clairette and Bourboulenc grapes, both late varieties, were picked at full ripeness, thus contributing to the final blending by their elegant notes.

The 2016 reds are characterised by very crisp, frank, intense and complex aromas. Depending on where they grew and their “terroir”, the Grenache-based wines give off scents of raspberry, liquorice, *garrigue*, candied ginger, black fruit and citrus fruit. The blending of the various varieties allowed in the AC gives birth to a magical complexity, the subtle result of the interaction between the inherent characteristics of the grape variety and the influence of the “terroir”. The red wines show dense, dark colours, with very high levels of anthocyanins. In the mouth, the wines are intense, full-bodied, with a beautiful freshness. In a word, they are powerful! The tannins are there, but they are extremely fine and already very silky.

2016 marvellously embodies what can be called an exceptional vintage.



In 2017, Châteauneuf-du-Pape will celebrate the **80th anniversary of the embossed bottle**, created in 1937 by its wine-growers and Baron le Roy de Boiseaumarié in an attempt to tackle the economic problems that had been affecting the vineyard ever since the phylloxera crisis in 1866.

A tasting of the latest vintages of 20 organic and biodynamic wineries of Châteauneuf-du-Pape will be held for wine professionals on **Monday 30 January 2017** at the MUCEM museum in Marseille.

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