

2011

Vintage Report



The annual cycle started with a mild but rather dry winter (50-100 litres per square metre less than the average for the previous year). This was followed by warm, dry weather in March and the first half of April. Welcome rain arrived in late April and May and this, combined with the warm temperatures helped the vines develop and blossom.

By the end of June, vineyards had surged ahead of the average cycle by about 10 days. July and August continued in the same vein with lovely warm, but very dry weather bringing about an overall healthy and well-balanced crop. Quality was looking good but the main concern was on quantity which seemed to be lower than previous years brought about by the overall dry conditions throughout the whole year.

At the beginning of September a little more rain arrived and the harvest started in mid-September, about 10 -15 days ahead of the average, and finished in the second week of October. Although generally good conditions prevailed it was still important to have good selection of healthy grapes in the vineyard and at the winery door to ensure optimum quality. The wines produced are well structured, with a high content of polyphenols and a lovely intense colours.

The Consejo Regulador's official rating for this vintage was pronounced 'Excellent' following rigorous testing and tasting of some 3,987 representative samples from the 277.31 million litres of wine made with this harvest. The results from all the testing and tasting placed this vintage among the top three since the current quality control system was implemented in Rioja thirty years ago.

The final quality of the 2011 has been credited to good vine development across the region with a low incidence of pests and disease and excellent canopy development and health right through to the end of the growing season, despite some drought issues in a few areas.

The exceptional health of the grapes was one of the fundamental traits of the 2011 harvest, facilitating seamless fermentations and very promising, well-structured, healthy wines with good colour levels. The excellent, careful work of the grape growers and winemakers coupled with very moderate yields (the lowest since 2002) were key factors in order to reach the excellent rating for the second year in a row, something that also occurred in 1994/1995 and in 2004/2005. Only eight vintages have been rated 'excellent' in Rioja in the last thirty years.

