

2019

Vintage Report



GAJA

GAJA - BARBARESCO AND BAROLO AREA

The start to the season was marked by a dry spell. The months of January and February were dry with average and relatively low temperatures for the time of year, especially at the end of January (ranging from -4°C to -8°C). Optimal conditions because they helped to protect against the onset of diseases. Scarce snowfalls in general in the winter months, with just 10 cm falling in January after the sixth of the month and a few sporadic downpours (50-60 mm) in February. With little water available in the ground, budding was slower and later compared to previous years, as was the ripening of the grapes. From April 20 onwards and throughout the month of May, there was abundant rainfall (200 mm) with average-low temperatures ($15-17^{\circ}\text{C}$). Budding progressed at a steady rate in May and canopy management was successfully completed, without rushing, because the plant grew well at the right speed. At the end of June, the temperatures rose from 26 degrees to 41.5°C for about 3 days and this situation proved stressful for the plant with signs of browning appearing on the leaves. From mid-July onwards, however, the first significant rains set in with 200 mm falling at Barbaresco, 130 mm at Barolo and 150 mm at La Morra. This rain was very important because the vine started growing again with lush vegetation. Temperatures settled at around $26/28/30^{\circ}$ degrees for the rest of the summer. At the end of July/beginning of August, more rain fell resulting in a total of 800 mm from the beginning of the year to the end of August (based on the rainfall in the Langhe in the 1990s). The grapes regained tone, the soil now with a high water content plus warm, but not excessively hot temperatures, allowed the phenolic ripening to progress. The Chardonnay harvest, a slow and late harvest, started in first week of September (7-8 September). We started the harvest in Barbaresco at the same time as the harvest in Barolo, but we the harvest lasted longer in Barbaresco (because it had rained more and the ground was cooler which delayed the ripening of the grapes). The grapes ripened slowly and we finished harvesting the white wine varieties around September 18-20. The Nebbiolo harvest started at the beginning of October and finished on October 20. The white wine grapes are healthy with small bunches, so the yield is lower compared to 2018. The red wine grapes resulted in a slightly higher yield. The colour of the wine is bright with a good presence of anthocyanins and mature tannins.



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CA' MARCANDA – BOLGHERI AREA

The initial months of 2019 confirm the climate change under way, which is demonstrated by the occurrence of much more frequent extreme events with shifts in seasons and brief but intense rainfalls. The winter was cold and dry; an increase in temperature was only recorded in the final days of February with figures well over the seasonal average. Stormy showers characterised the spring months, especially in May, compensating for the lack of rain over the winter, but contributing towards a further delay in budding (20 days later compared to 2018). June and July were, however, months with temperatures above the seasonal average, characterised by very hot and dry days. The temperature fluctuations between night and day helped the vines to remain balanced in a year which, up until the end of July, had been worryingly dry. At the onset of the veraison, delayed by a week compared to the norm, the vines were healthy with excellent foliage. At the end of July, a total of 80 mm of rain fell in one day alone (in the night between July 27 and 28), followed by a drastic drop in temperatures for about 10 days. The grapes benefited greatly from this abundant rainfall, which contributed towards a slower and more balanced ripening. In August, there were further downpours (30 mm of rain on August 23) which, in turn, delayed harvesting (10-15 days later than last year) and resulted in grapes with riper skins and elegant tannins. In September, the Tramontane winds dried the grape bunches helping to keep the grapes healthy and allowing the harvest to start with the white wine varieties in the first few days of September and the red wine varieties on September 15. Some brief, unsettled weather (around September 20 with 40 mm of rain) softened the skins and, together with the good weather up to October, contributed to the full phenolic ripening of later-ripening varieties, such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The harvest terminated on October 6 with great satisfaction. Our perception is that the vines have started to defend themselves better against climate fluctuations, so are more resilient and have reached a more balanced vegetation; highly important aspects in late vintages such as 2019. The quantity harvested was average and the progress of the fermentation is turning out to be an opulent year for the Merlots, structured for the Syrah and Sangiovese varieties, and complex and elegant for the Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon varieties.



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PIEVE SANTA RESTITUTA – MONTALCINO

The decrease in rainfall over the winter and spring resulted in a dry start to the year. In compensation, the low temperatures prevented the onset of diseases. Budding was delayed and slowed down and the grape bunches remained small in size. The amounts of rain recorded over the summer were in line with seasonal averages (between 700 and 900 mm), but most of the rain was concentrated in the months of May, July, August and September. Even though it rained heavily in May, the lower temperatures meant we were able to cut back on treatments because the spores and fungi could not reproduce. Over the course of the year, 1.8 kg of copper per hectare were used against powdery mildew and downy mildew. The colder months were immediately followed by high temperatures that characterised June; the May rains, however, managed to maintain the balance of the soil. The development of the vines and grape bunches accelerated in June, but slowed down again in July due to the summer heat. Fortunately, heavy rains occurred again at the end of July (up to 250 mm of rain overall between July and August). In fact, at the end of July alone, between 40 and 85 mm of rain fell depending on the areas, which played an important part in preventing thermal shock. The August rains, on the other hand, helped the grape bunches to reach full ripeness. Very hot months, but characterised by abundant water resources and light Tramontane and Mistral winds which not only caused no damage, but also avoided the formation of moulds. Throughout September, the temperatures fluctuated (from 15°C at night to 28°C in the day) which are significant results. The grapes also reached full ripeness thanks to the final rainfall of about 70 mm which occurred around the middle of the month. The harvest began on September 22 and terminated on October 6. The grapes are healthy and fully ripe which is confirmed in the intense colours of the musts. The individual grapes are juicy and the bunches of average size with a balanced proportion between the skin and flesh. The fermentation is proceeding slowly but steadily with alcohol contents between 14° and 14.5°. We mainly used the whole grape to prolong the maceration. We are very confident that this will be a good vintage in terms of structure with good aromatic complexity.



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