



Harvest at Fattoria Ambra

Tuscany

There was not much rain during the winter, and the temperature during springtime was below average. Diseases were very well controlled throughout the region. The flowering of the vines was slightly early. The high temperature at the end of May, scarce rain and hot winds caused the vines to suffer from hydric stress in some areas. In some cases the grape berries were smaller due to the lack of rain. (source: Assoenologi – Associazione enologi enotecnici italiani). Careful agricultural practices, vineyard management and selection of the clusters in the vineyards was extremely important this year. Please find further details regarding the different Tuscan zones as follows:

SAN PANCRAZIO (Province of Florence)

The winter was cold without rain. There was snow, but it did not replenish the water table as it froze followed by wind so that the water evaporated. In April/May there was regular rainfall after which it did not rain till August and at the beginning of September.

Riccardo Galli agronomist-oenologist of Fattoria di Lucignano (Chianti Colli Fiorentini DOCG): “..the grapes did not ripen as early as last year. We picked from the last decade of September till the 5th of October. There were some rains

during the harvest, but this was good as the rains lowered the temperature of the clusters when they were taken to the cellar. It is an interesting vintage. We still have to rack off the wine (8th of October. The grape yield was lower this year ”

MONTI IN CHIANTI (Province of Siena)

The beginning of spring was quite normal with a few rains followed by a long period of drought that started on the 11th of June. Luckily the temperature was not very high so that the vines could resist without too much stress. From the 20th of August till the end of the month the temperature was high (it sometimes reached 40 degrees Celsius) and with a narrow night/day temperature range. At the beginning of September a few good rainfalls made the vines recover their vegetative activity and continue the ripening phase. Finally the grapes ripened perfectly in a more “normal” period of time in comparison to the early ripening of the last vintages. The harvest started during the second half of September and was finished at the beginning of October.

Sandro Sderci owner of Il Palazzino (Chianti Classico DOCG, Vin Santo del Chianti DOC): “..we started with Colorino on the 17th of September, we continued with Merlot (21st of September) and a week later we picked Sangiovese. Cabernet and Merlot were picked at the beginning of October. The grapes had an extraordinary quality of the skins which were perfect. There was no rot and in very rare cases the clusters showed signs of hydric stress. The sugar level was optimal (20 Babo degrees). The wines that are fermenting all have an alcohol strength between 13 and 14% vol. The grape yield was quite low, an average of 5 tons/hectare. ”

MONTALCINO (Province of Siena)

The winter was cold with snow, but with very little rain. The temperature was high in the summer (it reached 38 degrees Celsius in July and August) with little rain. At the end of August there was some rain that helped the vines.

Andrea Cortonesi owner of Azienda Agricola Uccelliera (Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Rosso di Montalcino DOC): “ although there has been little rain this year, the vines adapted to this situation by producing smaller clusters. This will certainly result in complex and concentrated wines. At the end of August/beginning of September the temperature got lower so that the aromatic compounds of the grapes were favoured, in fact, although it was hot throughout the summer, the wines are fresh (the acidity is good) and fruity and their colour is bright and intense. We started picking on the 19th of September and we finished on the 29th of the month. I am satisfied with the result: nature always gives us wonderful surprises. Vineyard management was particularly important in 2012: careful canopy management, adequate soil tillage, minimum spraying of the vines. It is also of utmost importance to adequately work the soil before planting new vineyards.....”.

Patrizia Mazzi and Roberto Bellini owners of Podere Brizio (Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Rosso di Montalcino DOC, Sant’Antimo DOC): “..we luckily had a brief, but abundant rainfall in June in our zone. As we had recently tilled the soil of the vineyards, the water was absorbed by the soil and this helped the harvest. We started picking on the 8th of September and we finished on the 21st of October. The clusters reached a good ripening and the wines have a good alcohol strength (an average of 14%) and a good acidity (approx. 7.5 g/l). The colour is an intense ruby red. This year we made Brunello di Montalcino, Rosso di

Montalcino and Sant'Antimo Sangiovese Leonensis and we did not make Vin Santo nor Pupà Pepu. We could compare this vintage to 2011...."

Andrea Mantengoli owner of La Serena – Azienda Agricola Rasa 1°(Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Rosso di Montalcino DOC): *"Although there was little rain this year, as we follow the principles of organic agriculture, we also follow the principles of dryland farming. We keep the canopy and the production of the vines low, so that the plants do not suffer with little rain. The quality and the balance of the wines is good. The colour is beautiful. We harvested from the 26th of September till the 4th of October for a total of 7 days...We have a vibrating sorting table that also separates the dry parts of the clusters through a grid. The grapes are placed on a conveyor belt that drops the clusters into the destemmer before the sorting table. In this way smaller quantities of grapes are processed and quality control is higher before the berries are crushed....I am satisfied although 2012 was a difficult vintage. We sow barley and clover on every other aisle between the rows of vines. In March we cut the grass and leave it on the aisle. This practice helped the vines as the water in the soil evaporated less...."*

S. GIMIGNANO (Province of Siena)

There were no rains during the winter. There was some rainfall during the springtime and then it did not rain till the end of August.

Franco Troiani owner of Azienda Agricola Fontaleoni (Vernaccia di S. Gimignano DOCG, Chianti Colli Senesi DOCG, Chianti DOCG): *"..we luckily have fresh soils, so that the vines did not suffer. The grapes ripened well. We harvested from the 10th of September till the 9th of October. It is still early, but the forecast is good for the 2012 wines. The musts look good. We had a lower grape yield this year. Starting from 2012 we are in the conversion phase in order to obtain the certification for organic viticulture...."*

CARMIGNANO (Province of Prato)

The winter was cold without rain and with very little snow. It was very rainy in April, May and June. This made up for the drought during the winter. The summer was extremely hot, in August the temperature sometimes reached 40 degrees Celsius. There were rains at the end of August which helped the vines to complete their ripening.

Beppe Rigoli of Fattoria Ambra (Carmignano DOCG, Barco Reale DOC, Vin Santo di Carmignano DOC, Rosato di Carmignano DOC). *".. the vines luckily had a good supply of water so that they did not suffer during the extremely hot summer, except for some small plots of vineyard standing on sandstone soil. We followed very careful agronomic practices sowing graminaceous and leguminous plants on every other aisle between the rows of vines in autumn. We then mowed the grass and worked this "green manure" into the soil giving it structure. We then continued working the soil during the summer. These practices help the accumulation of water in the soil and prevent evaporation. At harvest we carefully selected the clusters in the vineyard and we use a vibrating sorting table before the grapes are crushed. We started picking Merlot on the 26-27th of August and we finished with Sangiovese and Cabernet at the beginning of October. The yield was lower in comparison to 2011: in 2011 we produced 850 hectolitres of wine while in 2012 we produced approximately 750 hectolitres. We just finished racking off (16th of October) and the wines have a lovely colour, good aromatics, a good alcohol strength and good acidity...."*

SAN CASCIANO DEI BAGNI (Province of Siena)

There was a drought this year: the winter was cold without rain, it rained a little in the springtime and then there was no more rain.

Giacomo Mori owner of the homonymous estate (Chianti DOCG, Vin Santo del Chianti DOC): "...this year we had a lower grape yield, but the quality of the grapes was excellent, so that the quality of the wines will also be good. We started picking on the 15th of September and we finished at the beginning of October....."

MONTEPULCIANO (Province of Siena)

The first months of the year were very cold with a lot of snow in January and in February. From March till June the temperature and rainfall were average. It was very hot and dry during the summer (July and August). After which the temperature and rainfall were normal.

Azienda Agricola Dei (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG, Rosso di Montepulciano DOC): "...we picked Merlot on the 30th of August, Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon from the 15th of September till the 5th of October. The grapes had an optimal technological ripening and good phenolic ripening. The grape yield was lower than average. We follow organic practices for disease control and we only use organic fertilizers, such as green manure. We have a new grape reception and selection line at the cellar. The wines have good alcohol strength and a good acidity and they are well balanced, the colour is intense and the structure is good.....We made the whole range of wines. 2012 is a very good vintage and it is similar to 2011...."