

Vintage 2017

Picking of the first Gamay grapes is due to start at the beginning of next week in the earlier ripening areas



This year the grapes are ready early, and the weather still just as dry in Beaujolais.

The official start to vintage has been fixed as Monday 28 August for the earlier ripening parcels. This official date is a minimum, given as an indication, after which each producer determines their own harvest date, according to the parcels or the style of wine they are looking for.

A point of departure that has certain similarities with the harvesting dates of 2015, 2011 and 2009.

Weather wise, if sunshine hours and temperatures have broken no records, remaining more or less within seasonal averages, it is rainfall that is lacking. Drought conditions have been omnipresent this year, since the spring.

As happens every year, over a period of almost a month, some 20,000 pickers will descend on Beaujolais to cut and bring in the bunches of Gamay and Chardonnay. For, along with Champagne, Beaujolais remains one of the only wine producing regions of France where practically all the grapes are picked by hand.

The sanitary condition of the vines is remarkable, but the hydric deficit is very real in the greater part of the vineyards. If one adds to that a touch of spring frost in the south of the region, and several substantial episodes of hail in the north over the summer, then in terms of quantities we are looking at low volumes in 2017.

However, at the moment, with berries that are small and concentrated, conditions are optimum for the production of a vintage of excellent quality.

Hot weather is forecast for the coming days, and even if no significant rain is expected now before the September equinox, it is likely that the harvest will take place in normal, slightly cooler, seasonal weather conditions, which will allow picking to progress serenely, right through to the later ripening parcels.

It is, of course, still too early to judge the quality of a harvest that is still 'on the bush', but after our daily berry tasting this year, our observations and comparisons that show an ideal balance between richness in sugar and acidity, we can already say, without making any false promises, that 2017 will be a something of a solar, concentrated vintage, along the lines of 2015, but with the fruit and freshness in the style of 2011.

Just wish us happy harvesting, and everything will go swimmingly!