



2003 Vintage

General climatic and meteorological pattern

In terms of climate, the 2003 vintage was distinguished by lasting sunny conditions and the almost complete absence of rainfall: a combination that had temperatures rising to historic maximums for the area, and their being maintained at these levels over a long period of time.

The data in our possession show that overall active temperatures of higher than 10°C reached an aggregate of 1740°C between January and the end of August 2003, compared with 1392°C over the same period in 2002. When compared with 1997, which is considered to be one of the hottest vintages of the last century, it is found that the aggregate by the end of August in that year had reached 1400°C. In practice, the total heat benefiting the vine had reached a similar level by the end of August in 2003 as it has by the end of September in 1997, and by the end of October in 2002.

From a physiological point of view, the vintage started out later than average, with the opening of the buds delayed by around two weeks. With the passing of time, however, rising temperatures stimulated the flowering to take place at the end of May, which was in line with previous hot years. Further confirmation of an anticipation of approximately 2 weeks in the vegetative state of the vines arrived with the beginning of the veraison, which showed in the early-ripeners - such as Dolcetto - in the first half of July, and in the later ripeners - like Nebbiolo - relatively closer in time, at the end of July.

As regards rainfall, the vintage was very miserly: as little as 265 mm of rain by the end of August, compared with 830 mm in 2002, and 390 mm in 1997 by the same date.

Comments on the vintage

Although the weather was still fine at the beginning of September, there was a generalized sharp drop in temperatures, interspersed with some timely, though limited rainfall.

The harvesting of the white varieties (Chardonnay, Sauvignon blanc, Favorita and Arneis) was practically completed during the first ten days of September. The general situation was very good, with high average alcohol contents, balanced acids, and promising aromas.

The Dolcetto vintage was also over by the middle of September, and early winery data are showing wines of great potential, with excellent levels of alcohol, balanced acidity, and very intense colour.

Fine weather and very sound grapes also meant an anxiety-free harvesting of the Barbera grapes, and in the Nebbiolo vineyards where the grapes had ripened to perfection.

Some berries in the more exposed bunches had clearly been scorched by the sun, but early indications suggest that the quality is high, with wines showing plenty of alcohol, just the right acidity, and colouring that is very intense for the Barbera, and standard for the Nebbiolo.

With operations now completed, we can look back on this as an extremely tranquil vintage. The climatic conditions allowed the harvest to be carried out in a regular manner, in accordance with the ripening of the single varieties and single vineyards.