

2015 Vintage

The 2015 vintage began with a winter marked by plenty of snow, providing the soil with an excellent supply of water. Combined with mild spring temperatures from February on, this factor brought forward the vegetative cycle, which meant that bud break was earlier than in 2014, and the same can be said for flowering, which began towards the middle of May and was followed by an excellent berry set. The season continued with a series of rainfalls between the end of May and the first ten days of June. From the second half of June throughout the month of July, there was no rain and temperatures stabilized to above-average maximums, as can be seen from the fact that maximum temperatures during July peaked at around 40°C, with averages substantially above 30°C. However, the vineyards were in no way stressed by the heat, thanks to the plentiful water supplies which had accumulated during the early months of the year. The climatic conditions recorded at the beginning of the summer laid the foundations for the ripening of the grapes about ten days earlier than in the previous vintage, but in line with what we could call a “normal” year.

In terms of quantity, production was on average within the norm. This allowed for taking action by means of careful, targeted green harvesting. Particular attention had to be paid this year to the management in the vineyard of the foliage: in view of the abundance of solar radiation, great care had to be taken not to uncover the clusters excessively and cause damage from scorching, especially in vineyards facing south, south-west. Then again, from the point of view of the health of the grapes, the vintage can be recorded as one of the very best of recent years, with no particular protective measures needing to be taken as the climate made a decisive contribution to limiting the development of fungal diseases. The only exceptions were certain areas hit by hailstorms, which fortunately were limited however.

For the white grape varieties, picking began at the end of August for the early-ripening cultivars and the best aspects, and lasted until the middle of September for the later-ripening vines. On picking, the health of the grapes was excellent, as were the very positive analytical data in terms of both the sugars (a mean of 19.3°babo), and the acidity (with pH values of around 3.20) fundamental for achieving appeal and structure. The Dolcetto harvest began around the second week in September. The summer heat had led to more of a reduction in the acidity than in other varieties, while the excellent solar radiation had allowed for a good accumulation of anthocyanins, which should produce soft, deeply-coloured wines. Looking at ripening data for the Barbera grapes, it is easy to see how this variety benefited from the weather this year, and on ripening the data are particularly encouraging and very well-balanced: its genetically high acidity was broken down well by the physiological phenomena, helped by the heat during July and the last part of the summer, when the cooler nights enabled a balance to be reached between the anthocyanins and the tannins, as well as a good sugar content. The Nebbiolo ripened perfectly, though slightly earlier than over the last few

years. In particular, climatic conditions were seen in the second part of the summer that allowed for an impressive accumulation of polyphenols. The excellent quality of the tannins emerging on analysis will certainly ensure elegant, long-lasting wines with good structure. As far as colouring substances (anthocyanins) are concerned, nebbiolo is renowned not to be a great accumulator, particularly in hot vintages, but the good quantity and quality of tannins should guarantee stability in terms of colour intensity too. The sugar content settled at average potential values of around 14–14.5% vol., while the acidity is perfect for nebbiolo (6.5 g/l). With the ripening data at hand, the great balance that clearly emerges in the technical parameters goes well beyond the numbers, promising big wines.

In general, considering the great balance shown in the ripening data we can say without any shadow of doubt that all the conditions are in place for a truly great vintage: one to remember, like few others in history.