

## Cool-climate wines give a boost to French exports

**2016 is shaping up well for exports of cool-climate wines. While overall French wine exports dropped in 2015 compared to 2014, cool-climate wines are holding up in 2016, in spite of lower harvest volumes. This indicator is proof of the dynamism of these regions outside France. The new trade show for cool-climate wines, VinoVision Paris, will be an opportunity to explore the specificities and assets of these regions which appeal to French and foreign consumers alike.**

Without a doubt, 2016 is an eventful year for wine. Notwithstanding challenging weather conditions which hit several French winegrowing regions, cool-climate wines are already posting improved export figures. With total French wine exports in 2015 dropping by 1.4% in volume compared to 2014\* (down 1.5% for AOC and 5% for PGI respectively\*), cool-climate wines have remained steady. The first months of 2016 saw substantial success for still wines from cool-climate wine regions, with an increase in exported volumes, in particular towards the major markets of the USA and the UK.

### Loire and Burgundy, the powerhouses of the first half year – Champagne still leading by value

Wines from the **Loire Valley** and **Centre-Loire** region recorded the highest growth in the first half of 2016. With a leap of 10% in exports to the USA, the Loire Valley posted a 6% overall increase for the first half of the year, with Centre-Loire also recording a 6% rise for the first 7 months of the year.\*\*

The United Kingdom, a major market for **Loire** and **Burgundy** wines, remains a loyal consumer of French cool-climate wines. The leading export market by volume for Loire Valley wines (+18,000 HI in a year) is also the most loyal consumer of Burgundy wines around the world. Indeed, Burgundy has recorded a 17.7% rise in business with the UK since the beginning of the year. This is a huge increase for producers who will be congregating at VinoVision Paris from 12 to 14 February 2017 and will take advantage of the exhibition to show off the assets of their vineyards.

**Beaujolais** also turned in a promising performance for the first 7 months of the year, with export sales up 1.6%.

**Champagne** remains stable following an excellent 2015, and has maintained its status as the leading wine region in France for exports, with its number one consumer market once again the United Kingdom (34.2 million bottles). Out of total annual sales of 4.7 billion euros, exports account for 2.6 billion (and 48% by volume).

Finally, in the first 8 months of the year, Alsace recorded an increase of 2.7% in sales to third party markets (outside Europe). Overall therefore, these regions display increased business and solid momentum.

### A high-quality 2016 harvest

Although it is difficult to make generalisations, the following observations were made in the wine cellars of **Alsace**. **Crémant** based wines are superb. **Pinot blanc** and **Sylvaner** are light and fruity. **Muscat** wines reveal themselves to be very aromatic and crisp. The first juices of **Pinot noirs** are deep in colour with ripe tannins. **Pinot gris** wines appear to be among the big successes of this vintage. As for the first **Gewurztraminers** picked, they are very distinctive, with exotic fruit notes. The excellent



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weather of the end of the summer and the perfect condition of the grapes should allow growers to pick **Gewurztraminers** and particularly **Rieslings** at perfect maturity.

In the **Loire Valley** the vintage is looking abundant, with higher-than-average yields. For **Muscadets**, the ideal weather conditions encountered in September produced very high quality and disease-free grapes. In the Loir et Cher, the **Sauvignons** are concentrated and feature a very aromatic aspect. Discounting the parcels that were affected by hail, the grape harvests of **Chenin** generated both quality and quantity thanks to a favourable end of season. In the **sparkling Loire** category, the base wines are balanced and fresh with citrus notes and showing the typical signs of good ripeness.

Also thanks to an Indian summer beyond all aspirations, the **Cabernet franc** varietal was able to ripen perfectly in the Loire Valley. To the east in Touraine, the **Gamay** is wonderfully ripe thanks to the fine weather in September. The fruit offers freshness with a striking violet fuchsia colour. Juices have just started fermenting on **Grolleau**, without any particular difficulties to speak of, with winemakers aiming to emphasise the fruitiness during the vinification process by adjusting clarification.

In **Burgundy**, the series of springtime adverse weather events left their mark in the vineyards. Frost and hail hit some appellations to greater and lesser extents, and winegrowers were offered little respite with a subsequent bout of mildew. However, the sunshine combined with the heat of August and September raised spirits again. Grape harvesting took place on healthy vines and lasted for a longer period than usual. 2016 will certainly be a less productive vintage, with estimations forecasting a figure close to 1.15 million hectolitres as against a ten-year average of 1.5 million, but it will nonetheless be of high quality. Healthy ripe grapes with high sugar content were picked. Each vintage is unique. Disciplined and scrupulous work continues, with vinification taking place at the moment. An excellent vintage is under preparation...

Further north in **Champagne** country, the poor weather conditions of this challenging year reduced the volumes available for harvesting by at least 30%. Harvesting took place in almost summery weather with the exception of a few days of rain which had a very positive effect on the weight of the grape bunches. This has allowed forecasts for average crop yield to be reviewed upwards, slightly above 8,000 kg/ha. Drawing on the inter-branch reserve, which makes it compulsory to set aside still wines in good years, wine growers and champagne makers will be able to supplement this yield and thus replenish their stocks to levels on a par with a normal year, equating to approximately 316 million bottles. Aided by good ripening conditions, the grapes were in excellent health. Although caution should be exercised at this early stage, many observers highlight the fine acidity/sugar balance and the aromatic quality of musts.

### Trade Associations, the pillars of VinoVision Paris

In spite of a difficult year, 2016 promises to be a satisfactory vintage in terms of volume and harvest in Alsace and the Loire, which will allow sales to pick up again. Experts have declared that a very high quality vintage is to be expected for the cool-climate wines of these regions.

The trade show VinoVision Paris will be the opportunity to dialogue with all winegrowing regions on these subjects. The event is the result of the partnerships of all the winegrowing sectors which teamed up to promote the specific characteristics of winegrowing in more northern latitudes, at the heart of the French winegrowing identity: garden terroirs, cutting-edge know-how, ability to deal with weather issues,



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typified wines, etc. All these characteristics contribute substantially to the success of a wine-rich France, and deserve to at last have a trade show dedicated to them.

This first major show for cool-climate wines will also be the backdrop for the first-ever trend book on wine, entirely conceived by the agency NellyRodi. This forward-looking guide will give substance to the avant-garde vision of the show and will decode current and future consumption trends of wine lovers.

### **VinoVision Paris and NellyRodi exclusively announce the theme of their trend book: OMNI.**

The first trade show for cool-climate wines, scheduled from 12-14 February at Paris Porte de Versailles, has joined forces with the Paris-based trend forecasting agency NellyRodi, an industry standard in lifestyle and fashion and a veritable trend scout. VinoVision Paris today exclusively announces the theme developed by NellyRodi: **OMNI**.

This partnership is an illustration of the desire of VinoVision Paris to offer both visitors and exhibitors a new perspective on wine. By joining forces with this trend forecasting agency, VinoVision Paris seeks to identify changes in consumption and underlying weak signals which could potentially shape the market of tomorrow. The OMNI trend book will in particular study the behaviour of Millennials, the young generation which breaks with conventions by wanting to have "everything and its opposite". Both demanding and daring, cool-climate wines rise to the challenge of understanding and anticipating their needs. Through their appeal, their simplicity and their complexity, cool-climate wines are a perfect reflection of the contradictions displayed by the young consumers of today and tomorrow. This playing field swayed the trend forecasting agency NellyRodi, which will roll out the theme in the form of a visiting trail throughout the exhibition.

More information coming soon...

#### *About VinoVision Paris*

The first-ever trade show for cool-climate wines VinoVision Paris will be held from 12 to 14 February 2017 in Hall 4 of Paris expo, Porte de Versailles and will welcome more than 500 exhibitors. This show offers a new perspective on wine, drawing inspiration from the expectations of French and international buyers and proposing ways of catering to changes in consumer patterns.

COMEXPOSIUM

Vins  
d'Alsace

B  
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LES VINS  
DU  
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\* source FAM – FranceAgriMer

\*\* source: Inter-branch organisations and winegrower associations