



2012

a rare and precious vintage in Bourgogne

12 November 2012

A first! That is what Bourgogne's winegrowers are saying about this year's weather. Given Mother Nature's whims, they had to redouble their efforts to ensure the very best results from their vines. And the first tastings confirm that all their hard work was worthwhile. From the north of Bourgogne to the south, the industry is unanimous - the quality of this year's nascent wines is excellent, surpassing all expectations given the weather.

The only downside is the quantity which is below average, down as much as 20% according to some estimates. (Definitive figures will be available in early 2013).

A mild winter, a chilly spring with frosts, a warm May, a cool and rainy June, an unstable summer, a heat wave, hail and storms - weather like this could not fail but affect the vines. The cold and rain in spring caused shatter, where some flowers fail to turn into fruit; *millerandage* where incomplete fertilization of the flower giving rise to small berries; and a big threat from both downy and powdery mildew. The brief hot periods in summer brought some very high temperatures that burned the fruit.



These phenomena, which occurred before the grapes ripened, meant yields were significantly lower this year, but had no impact on the quality of the grapes. On the contrary, aerated bunches of smaller berries guarantee concentration and intensity.

Having had to manage the elements and struggle on a daily basis, both man and materials have emerged from this vintage worn out, yet victorious. During the harvest, which took place under sunny skies, the grapes being welcomed into the wineries were healthy and showed no signs of disease or rot.

The scarcity of the 2012 vintage will only serve to make the wines even more precious!

| White wines

These expressive wines reveal notes of fresh fruits and citrus. Forthright, they are already demonstration very good balance on the tongue.

The whites from northern Bourgogne are powerful, and translate the unique characteristics of their *terroir*: minerality with notes of flint and chalk.

This is a classic vintage, illustrated by the wines' sophistication and good concentration.

| Red wines

The wines are deep red in color, dense, and some are almost black. They release rich and intense aromas of red berries. The tannins are ripe and silky, offering a lovely harmony on the tongue.

The 2012 vintage looks like a safe bet. The red wines reflect the diversity of each winegrowing region and offer a happy ending to this unusual year.



| Crémant de Bourgogne

The low yields also concern the grapes for Crémant de Bourgogne wines, and the Gamay grape in particular. The Aligoté turned out to be more generous. Overall, production volumes could be down as much as 30%.

The grapes harvested were perfectly mature, combining the richness of optimum sugar content with good acidity. The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir base wines are fruity, with lovely balance.

This press release presents general characteristics. As each wine and each winemaker is unique, each wine must be tasted before it can be characterized



The climate in 2012 in Bourgogne

The whims of the weather affected quantity not quality

A particularly dry start to the year

The end of 2011 and the start of 2012 showed temperatures well above the norms for the season, with a slight dip in rainfall. February was marked by a period of intense cold with an average temperature of 0°C. Rainfall was practically non-existent. In March, the cold gradually gave way to some unusually mild weather and the rain stayed away for the most part. Overall, rainfall was down by close to 40%.

These conditions led the vines to embark upon their vegetative cycle earlier than usual. ***In late March/early April, a large number of plots were already mid-budburst.*** By this point, 2012 was looking like an early year.

A wet spring

A bout of chilly weather descended on Bourgogne for several days in April, which slowed down the growth of any late-developing plots. By this point, 2012 was still looking like an early year. Only in the Yonne was budburst late, in comparison to the average for the past 10 years, especially for the Pinot Noir.

Although the temperatures were average for the season, a late period of cold weather caused some spring frosts, in particular on the night of 16 - 17 April. These caused some local damage on the more exposed plots.

Drought was no longer a problem, with monthly rainfall exceeding the average. April was the wettest month of the year with over 93mm, as opposed to 58mm average rainfall for the month between 1971 - 2000. May and June were also wet with temperatures around average. The acute humidity in spring meant powdery and downy mildew were a significant threat, right from the start of the season. This required a great deal of vigilance.

For the earliest plots, flowering began at the end of May, prompted by some very summery temperatures during the period.

After that, the weather was somewhat chaotic with storms, some of which were very violent and often accompanied by hail. On 30 May, and 2, 3 and 7 June, this caused significant damage in Saône-et-Loire and Côte-d'Or. Certain appellations were particularly hard hit. The Côte Chalonnaise, which suffered hard in 2011, was spared.

All this served to upset the flowering process and meant the vines lost any advantages of an early budburst.

A fine end to summer for optimum ripening

July followed in the same vein as the previous months, with average temperatures and high rainfall. These tricky weather conditions led to an increase in *millerandage* and shatter. **The grapes were few and small in size, in loose, aerated bunches** (see graph comparing the weight of 100 grapes). A heat wave occurred during the last ten days of July, leading to some sunburn damage. All these phenomena had a significant impact on yield but had no effect on quality.

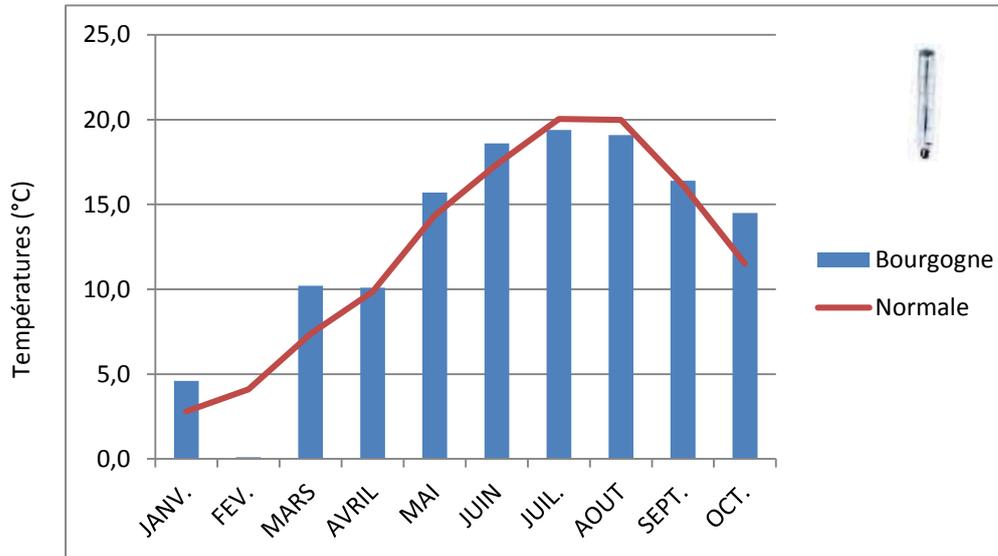
August was fine, hot and dry (especially in the Yonne). September's temperatures were normal and the rainfall slightly higher than usual at the end of the month.

The fine weather enjoyed while the grapes were ripening **meant the fruit attained a very good level of aromatic maturity and a very elegant balance of sweetness and acidity**. A northerly wind combined with the heat and absence of rain meant the **grapes were perfectly healthy**, with no rot at harvest time.

Apart from the Crémant de Bourgogne, for which the harvests started earlier, the first bunches were harvested in mid-September.

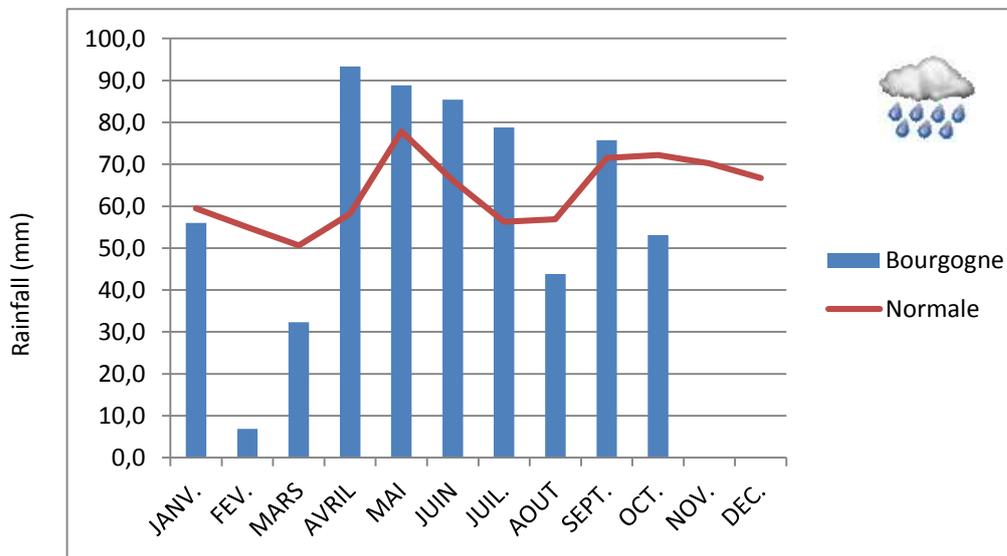


Average monthly temperatures - Bourgogne 2012



Source: Météo France

Average monthly rainfall – Bourgogne 2012

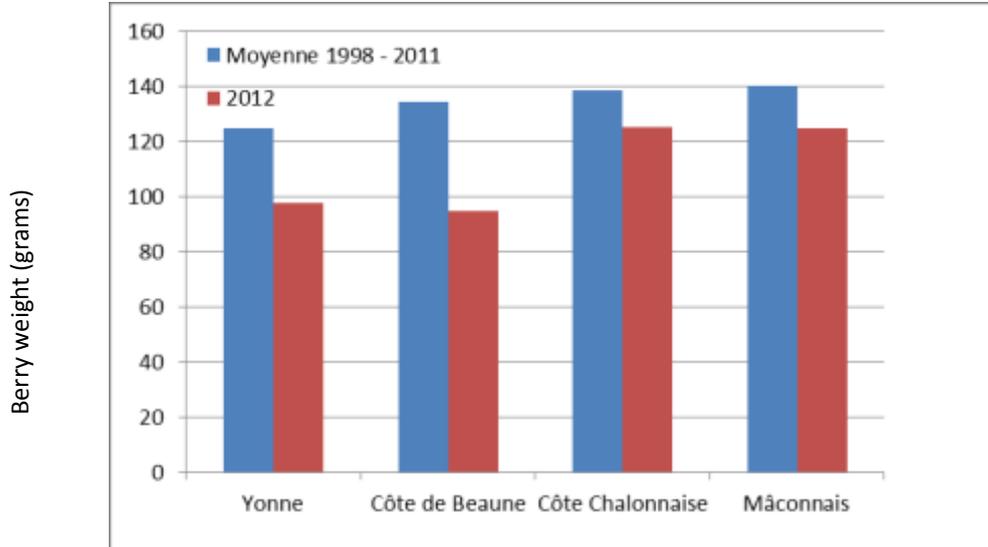


Source: Météo France

Berry weight generally below average

Weight comparison for 100 berries (in grams) for Chardonnay

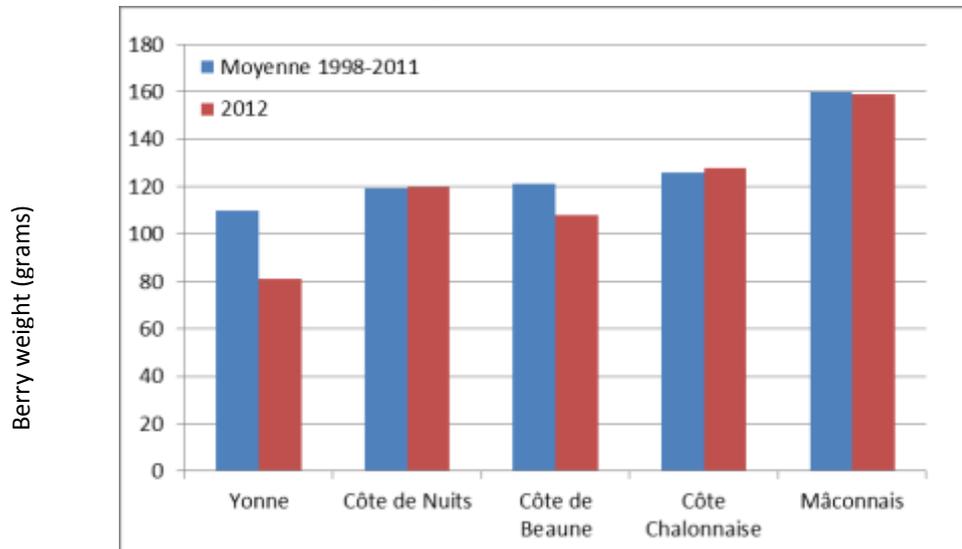
Comparison to the average from 1998-2011 (samples taken in week 37)
Reference plots from the BIVB network



Source: Observatoire du millésime du BIVB

Weight comparison for 100 berries (in grams) for Pinot Noir and Gamay

Comparison to the average from 1998-2011 (samples taken in week 37)
Reference plots from the BIVB network



Source: Observatoire du millésime du BIVB

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