



2018 Harvest: All smiles in the Bourgogne wine region

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As harvesting came to an end around 20 September, those in the Bourgogne wine sector were delighted with this delightful vintage. Like last year, the harvest began early, towards the end of August in early-ripening areas. The favorable weather and the perfect health of the grapes allowed winemakers the freedom to decide the date for picking when maturity was optimal. The quality, hand-in-hand with good volumes, means that everyone has come up smiling.

2018 has been a surprising year. Winter was genuinely beneficial to the vines, the abundant rain in January and March allowing the plants to reconstitute their hydric reserves. The particular weather conditions, notably at the end of winter, meant bud burst was delayed until mid-April, when it happened in a flash. The excellent weather from then on gave the vines the chance to make up time, and even get ahead of the average growth cycle. Outbreaks of disease were rare, despite weather favorable for their development.

In June, the meteorological conditions turned fine, and did not change significantly from there. The months were warm and dry through to September and the vines grew rapidly. As such, flowering was significantly earlier than usual. The stage of mid-flower was mainly reached from 29 May to 3 June, depending on the area, which was about 10 days ahead of the average from 1994-2017 (the third earliest year, after 2007 and 2011). Then the bunches appeared and developed.

The hot summer meant the vines had to draw on their resources. In consequence, *veraison* was slowed due to lack of rainfall. However, this weather resulted in grapes with exceptionally good health. Finally, some rain showers arrived, allowing the vines to complete the ripening process, and places where maturity had stagnated were unblocked.

The good health and summer weather allowed optimal maturity to be attained, which explains why harvesting was spread over a month, from the end of August to the third week of September, according to the judgment of each winemaker and the development of each plot.

With a smile on every face, one thing is sure: This vintage has fully lived up to expectations, both in terms of quality and quantity. The fermentations are underway. The wines are showing good balance. The reds are undergoing extraction of deep some rich colors, while the minerality and crispness of the whites is very promising. The tastings ahead of the Hospices de Beaune wine auction at the end of November should confirm this first impression of excellence.



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