



The 2017 harvest: Much enthusiasm in the Bourgogne region

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Most of the grapes have now been picked in the Bourgogne winegrowing region. And in the vines, the mood is one of relief and joy because the 2017 vintage is everything the winegrowers had hoped for. This year, it all happened very quickly. The harvest began at the end of August, with quality and quantity much in evidence. After a series of vintages that have suffered the whims of the weather - the 2016 in particular - the Bourgogne winegrowing region has returned to cruising speed in terms of production, while averages across the rest of France are down.

The 2017 season started how it meant to go on. Mild weather at the end of winter into early spring led to early and fast bud-burst. And in mid-April, it only took a few days for the vines to produce their first covering of leaves, some 7-10 days ahead of the average over 1994-2016^{**}. From then on, the vines grew at breakneck speed, thanks to the weather which offered sunshine, heat, and the odd welcome spell of rain. There was little disease, and the number of sprays was reduced across the entire campaign.

There was no downtime as the vines dictated the pace, and it seemed that everything happened in a rush. By mid-June, the plants were flowering, and the first fruit appeared soon after. The suggestion that this would be an early vintage was confirmed – still 7-10 days ahead of the average over 1994-2016^{*} – and the idea that harvesting would begin at the very start of September seemed increasingly likely.

During the summer months, we had a few periods of intense heat, and the weather was fairly mixed, but ripening continued at a good pace.

On 23 August, the first grapes were picked in the south of the region, to be used in the production of Crémant de Bourgogne. This was around two weeks earlier than in a typical year. Harvesting in the rest of the region followed quickly, with more southerly plots being picked just a few days earlier than

those in more northerly vineyards. Whether the grapes were to be used in still or sparkling wines was irrelevant – only the level of maturity of the fruit determined the date of picking**.

In general terms, the whites reached maturity before the reds, and this perfectly healthy and ripe fruit was gathered in the sunshine. The more delicate Pinot Noir required greater patience. More autumnal weather arrived in early September and the rain was another element that needed to be considered when selecting a harvest date. Picking peaked during the first two weeks of September.

The only slight damper was the springtime frost that hit the Châtillonnais and part of the Chablis and the Mâcon regions, which left its mark on those estates most affected, and which had already been hit by the frost in 2016.

The good yields this year were a huge relief for many, but quality was also there in spades, which is, of course, essential to the Bourgogne winegrowing region.



*Source: The BIVB's network of reference plots

**The imposition of an official start date for harvesting in the Bourgogne winegrowing region was abandoned in 2007 to leave winegrowers to pick the right date for each plot.

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