



PRESS RELEASE

CHAMPAGNE: AN OUTSTANDING 2020 HARVEST

The front runners were picking from 17 August, which made this the earliest harvest in the history of Champagne – and the quality is outstanding!

This year continued the exceptional pattern set by 2018 and 2019. A top-quality harvest is the first requirement for the production of a Grand Vin, and weather conditions were just right to deliver that.

The start of the year was unusually blessed with rain, February receiving the most rain ever recorded for that month. Heat and drought conditions then commenced in mid-March, and the vines budded sixteen days ahead of the ten-year average – a head start that was maintained with an exceptionally rapid ripening dynamic right up to the week before harvesting commenced.

Last year a new temperature record was set (42.9°C) and this year July was the driest ever recorded. Due to the drought, the weight of berries was lower than average, but their condition was excellent. The musts are balanced and fruity, with a fine freshness and a grand show of aromas. Alcohol measured in the musts range 10-10.5% vol.

The Covid-19 epidemic did of course call for exceptional health safety measures, put in place to protect the 120,000 seasonal workers who came to work in the vines and the press centres.

With yields limited to a maximum 8,000 kg/ha, the harvest at an individual level was completed somewhat faster than usual, but picking was spread across a normal period of around three weeks, taking account of variations in ripening from cru to cru and between varieties. Tasting of berries and seeds and the analysis of sugar levels in the grapes allowed each winegrower to adjust the start of his harvest and optimise the order of picking, parcel by parcel, to hit the point of optimum ripeness.

A run of three superb harvest years means Champagne should in a few years be ready to offer exceptional blends and vintages too, fit to celebrate the event for which the whole world is now waiting: the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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