

2016 Vintage

The 2016 vintage was certainly one of the longest-lasting in recent years. Signs of the vegetative cycle being so long first appeared at the beginning of the season, when the mild temperatures and low rainfall in January and early February confirmed the trend that had already been seen during the first part of the winter. From the end of February throughout March, on the other hand, the temperatures dropped and there was plenty of rain, providing the soil with good reserves of water, although less than was recorded the previous year. The “late” cold led to a delay in the restarting of the vegetative cycle which can be estimated at around ten days for all the varieties compared to last year. Spring began with a considerable amount of rain, though it did not cause any plant disease damage in view of the stage reached in the vegetative cycle, with average temperatures which were not high, due mainly to low overnight minimums. This phenological delay continued until the end of the summer, which also began slowly but extended until the end of September. All the grapes were healthy, and cases of hail were less intense and widespread than during the previous year. The harvesting of the white varieties began on September 5th and lasted until September 20th. They showed excellent aromas and good acidity due to the fact that, unlike 2015, there were no peaks of above 35°C during the hot period. On the basis of these data, and also in consideration of the good sugar contents, we are expecting well-balanced wines with good structure. The red wine grapes began to be harvested immediately after September 20th with the Dolcetto, followed without a break by the Nebbiolo through to the middle of October. On picking the Dolcetto proved to be in splendid shape: there was none of the berry drop which sometimes occurs, and this was due mainly to the moderate differences in temperature between night and day over the last two weeks of the vintage. From the point of view of sugar accumulation, it was a very good vintage for Dolcetto, but even more so for Barbera, which acquired excellent levels of sugar over a long period of good weather, while maintaining the variety's typically good acidity. Overlapping in some cases with the harvesting of the Barbera, the picking of the Nebbiolo followed the classic order: first Barbaresco and Nebbiolo d'Alba, then Barolo. Full ripening was achieved in all cases with no technological or phenological problems. This was shown by the low quantity of malic acid, which is an important ripening indicator (c. 2.5 g/L for the Barbera, 1.5 g/L for the Dolcetto, and less than 1 for the Nebbiolo grapes). The late development seen in the early part of the year was made up for during the months of August and September. In particular, the second half of September was crucial for the components which will go into determining the structure of the wines, above-all as regards the accumulation of phenolic substances. While waiting to be able to assess the real quality of the 2016 wines, as far as can be evaluated analytically we can look forward to wines with excellence balance, big bouquets and great structure, although in some cases lower alcohol contents will be recorded than in 2015. We can therefore expect a vintage featuring significant qualities which will be talked about for a long time to come.