



## **BURGUNDY 2022**

After three successive high-quality but low-quantity vintages, winemakers in Burgundy are refilling their cellars with an excellent 2022 harvest. This is not to say that it was an easy ride. Once again, frost, heat and drought put stress on the growing season, but timing is everything, and the extreme weather did much less damage than in previous years.

Winters have been wet and mild for years now. The winter of 2021-22 was not, with less than average rainfall and seasonal temperatures. Under these 'normal' conditions, we would expect budburst in the first half of April. But summer-like conditions at the end of March forced the vines, especially Chardonnay, to bud early, and we went into frost season with tender green buds exposed. There were two nights in the coming week below zero, but damage was limited. Spring conditions set in in mid-April, but Summer followed soon thereafter, dry with spiky heat waves. The vines went wild. Winemakers fought to keep the growth under control. And the fight continued until flowering, which happened a couple of weeks early in mid-May.

The warm, dry conditions led to nearly-perfect flowering. We saw for the first time the potential of a great crop, with lots of beautiful, full, well-formed grape bunches; and an early harvest, with fruit setting well ahead of schedule.

But the drought held, and the fear was that this beautiful fruit would shrivel on the vine. Finally, at the end of June, the rain came. Summer storms bring with them the risk of hail, so all eyes were on the sky as the storms were sometimes violent causing significant but limited hail damage. The rains were intermittent, but regular for the next weeks. The cumulative rainfall would not be enough to see the crop through to harvest, however.

The heat waves continued through the rains, and so the risk of fungal disease, usually associated with wet conditions, dried up. But temperatures spiked and dry conditions set in again. The grapes ripened in a full-blown heat wave. Winemakers had to keep a close eye on sugar levels, as the risk was that ripeness could gallop away at the last minute.

And then, just about the time when it looked like an over-ripe mid-August harvest was imminent, it rained again. And the producers were able to let that water absorb into the fruit, increasing the volume of juice that was ultimately harvested in the first week of September.

2022, both white and red, are showing real depth and ripeness. And while there was once again very little malic acid, the tartaric acid holds the balance and structure together. Early tastings in the barrel show enormous charm and vitality. Very promising.