

CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 2017

A rare, excellent vintage

Exceptional in many aspects, 2017 witnessed weather records that led to an early and small harvest. The main characteristic of this vintage however is certainly the outstanding quality of the wines produced. Well balanced wines, rich and with beautiful silky tannins for the reds, fresh and fruity for the whites.

A quick look back at this record year:

Despite a very cold month of January -the coldest in 5 years-, and due to a sudden rise in temperature early February, it seemed at the end of March and just as in 2014 that the vintage was going to be an early one. After the cold spell which hit France at the end of April (3.7°C on 20th April in Châteauneuf-du-Pape!), the area went through a particularly hot vegetative period, with temperatures exceeding 30°C at times as early as late June (37.6 ° on 23 June, 40.5°C on 4 August). The 2017 vintage is therefore the second hottest vintage after 2003 and just before 2015 and 2009.

Total rainfall, for the months of July, August and September, amounted to just 17mm, against 70mm over the same period in 2016, which had already been considered a dry summer! Only early November did the rain fall, thus putting an end to nearly 6 months' drought. Overall, the vegetative period only benefitted from 185mm rainfall against 360mm on an average year.

Harvest started on the very first days of September, triggered by the early ripening of the grapes and their perfect sanitary state. They came however in very small quantities, meaning that the crop was usually quickly over. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that thanks to a mild Indian summer, some plots were harvested as late as early November. Generally, the “**coulure**” (failure of the fruit to set) on the Grenache, as well as the persistent **drought** deeply **affected** the yield, reducing it to **23 hl/ha against an average 30 hl/ha over the last decade** (for the record, the specifications for the Châteauneuf-du-Pape protected designation allow 35 hl/ha at the most). With 72 000 hectolitres of Châteauneuf-du-Pape AC wine declared in 2017, this is the smallest harvest in 40 years.

There are now no less than 857 hectares of vines grown **organically**, ie **27% of the surface area** of the appellation. This makes **Châteauneuf-du-Pape French leader** among all other appellations (national average in 2016: 9% of surface areas).

A few tasting notes:

The **Châteauneuf-du-Pape whites** have a beautiful, bright colour, aromas of white blossom and are fresh in the mouth. **The reds** are characterized by the perfect ripeness of the grapes, releasing aromas of black fruit and with a long and silky mouthfeel. They have fine soft tannins, show a good balance and give signs of a long ageing capacity.



The wine brotherhood of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the « **Echansonnerie des Papes** », created in 1967 by Docteur Dufays, will celebrate the **50th anniversary of its first council by an exceptional gala evening** at the Palace of the Popes on **Saturday 26 May 2018**, held in partnership with the International Guild of Cheese-makers.

On **30th June and 1st July**, Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Avignon will welcome the 4th International Days of Enlightened Wine Amateurs during a **symposium on the theme “the AC is dead, long live the AC”**.