



2001 Vintage Final Report

Climatic and phenological conditions

The winter of the 2001 vintage was distinguished by different conditions to the previous years, with more rainfall. This extra water in the soil, combined with higher than average temperatures, led - from March - to advance budding, which was in keeping with the last few years, but was above-all uniform along the entire cane.

There was very little rainfall in April, but unsettled meteorological conditions meant that on the 15th the lowest temperature of the year was recorded at -5°C, to the clear detriment of the vineyards, in which similar conditions had not been seen in living memory. The following day (16th April) a heavy hailstorm affected above-all the village of Treiso.

The month of May guaranteed a good supply of water in the soil, which - combined with the high temperatures - allowed for fast plant growth and produced a good surface of leaves. Flowering occurred in excellent conditions, and began in the last week of May for the nebbiolo, continuing over the subsequent days with all the other grape-varieties. Over the following months there was no major rainfall, but the rains which had fallen during the previous months catered for regular vegetative growth of the vines and normal phenological stage development. The month of August, and the first few days of September, were distinguished by sweltering heat and absolutely no rainfall, allowing the early-ripening varieties to mature perfectly. Over the following days conditions changed, with a general lowering of the temperature throughout the area, and some rainfall which temporarily slowed down the ripening of the medium-late varieties, without compromising their quality. In the area of the Roero this rainfall was accompanied by heavy hailstorms which caused considerable damage to the production.

Comparison with 2000

A qualitative comparison with the 2000 vintage shows virtual equivalence for both the white and red wines. A distinction can be made between the early-ripening varieties (which have the same properties as the previous year) and the medium and late-ripeners, in which the sugar content was slightly lower this year, though high enough to guarantee good quality.

In general, production throughout the Alba area was plentiful in terms of quantity, though it was kept under control by careful tending of the vineyards in order to benefit the quality and soundness of the grapes. According to early data, 2001 should have recorded a higher average production of approximately 10% compared to the previous year.

The white varieties

In 2001 the climatic conditions benefited the white varieties such as Arneis, Chardonnay and Sauvignon, leading to the production of well-structured wines with a good acid content, meaning freshness, finesse and elegance, with delicate, lingering aromas.

The red varieties

In assessing the quality of the red varieties grown in the Langhe and Roero, consideration must be given to the climatic conditions recorded from August to October, which delayed ripening by several days compared to the previous year. This was caused first by sultry heat in August with no rainfall, and then by a sequence of rain and lower temperatures in early September. The low temperatures sharply slowed down the vegetative activity of the vine, while a good supply of water at the roots led to sudden swelling of the berries, and resulting dilution of the sugars and corresponding postponement of the ripening. Subsequent fine weather meant that all the red varieties ripened in excellent, sound conditions, with fine acids and good sugar content, although the latter was slightly lower than in previous vintages, which had all seen particularly early ripening with a lot of sugar.

Barbera reached good alcohol and acidity values, packed with polyphenols and very strong, persistent aromas.

The Nebbiolo-based wines - Barolo, Barbaresco, Roero and Nebbiolo d'Alba - have good alcohol contents, with deep colouring, ample, complex bouquets, and good structures and plenty of polyphenols.

All these properties promise five-star wines that will be able to present themselves onto the world stage with every chance of success, and will satisfy the most demanding of palates.

And that makes seven

In the last few years the wine-producers of the Langhe and Roero have witnessed and taken part in a succession of seven vintages, which - though differing in their properties and development - all have the stuffing of great years. So for one and all, a good omen for the great success of this "latest vintage of seven" - the first of the new millennium.