

2015

Vintage Report



A cold, damp end to winter hardly hastened budbreak, which took place towards the end of March/beginning of April.

The first fortnight in April saw lots of bright sunshine, but the cool weather retarded growth somewhat. At this stage, we were looking at an annual cycle that appeared to be more or less average, possibly with a bit of delay.

The second half of April and all of May were warm and dry, and growth accelerated as a result. The first flowers put in an appearance around the end of May and start of June. The soil held plenty of water reserves thanks to the rainy winter.

In certain areas, particularly those that had suffered hail damage in recent years, it was already apparent that yields were going to be low.

June was very hot and the growth cycle accelerated further. Flowering only took a week, and it only took three weeks to go from the end of flowering to bunch closure (half the time that this process usually takes in an average vintage).

At this stage we began to talk about the possibility of an early harvest because some of the vineyards with reduced yields were ripening so fast that it looked as if they would be ready to pick before September.

At the end of June rain fell copiously on the Côte d'Or, and this helped swell the grapes. The start of July saw temperatures that were 4°C higher than usual, bright sunshine and rainfall that was down 60mm on the July average.

Growth slowed as the plants protected themselves from the hot, dry climate, and some bunches got a little hot. In Beaujolais and the south of the Mâconnais, vines suffered some hydric stress as they hadn't had any water since winter. Some vines lost a few leaves and veraison was delayed due to the lack of rainfall. Come the end of July, come the rainclouds, and the vineyards got between 5 and 30mm of rain (the level varied area by area).

It was hot in August but there was also some rainfall (notably on 8 August), which was more than welcome. The grapes began to ripen and the ideal climatic conditions persisted right up to the end of the growing season: the speed of ripening varied hugely depending on yield and the availability of water in each parcel. We started picking some of the whites in August, as well as some of the riper Gamay parcels (some of which achieved potential alcohol levels of 15%!).

At Louis Jadot, we began picking our white grapes on 1 September, then the red harvest started on the 7th. Yields are about average for whites but rather low for the reds. The hail that hit Chablis on the eve of picking had little impact on overall yields in the region, and the fact that harvest was early and fast helped to ensure that quality was maintained.

We have been pleasantly surprised by the balance of the grapes, particularly in terms of the extraordinary levels of acidity seen in the whites. The warm wind that swept through the vineyards towards the end of August may well have concentrated the levels of acidity in the grapes.

2015 is set to be a great vintage for both reds and whites. We blocked the malolactic fermentation in our whites in order to preserve the balance between richness and tension in the wines. The period of maturation will, of course, be highly influential in determining the finished quality of the wines. The reds are a work in progress, but so far the colour is deep and rich, as are the flavours. The raw material looks very promising, and we are looking forward to following the progress of these wines over the coming months.



FREDERIC BARNIER



HATCH MANSFIELD 

Hatch Mansfield Agencies Limited | New Bank House | 1 Brockenhurst Road | Ascot | Berkshire SL5 9DJ

Telephone 01344 871800 | E-mail info@hatch.co.uk | www.hatchmansfield.com

[@HatchMansfield](https://twitter.com/HatchMansfield) [hatchmansfield](https://www.instagram.com/hatchmansfield) [hatchmansfielduk](https://www.youtube.com/hatchmansfielduk) [Hatch Mansfield](https://www.facebook.com/HatchMansfield)