



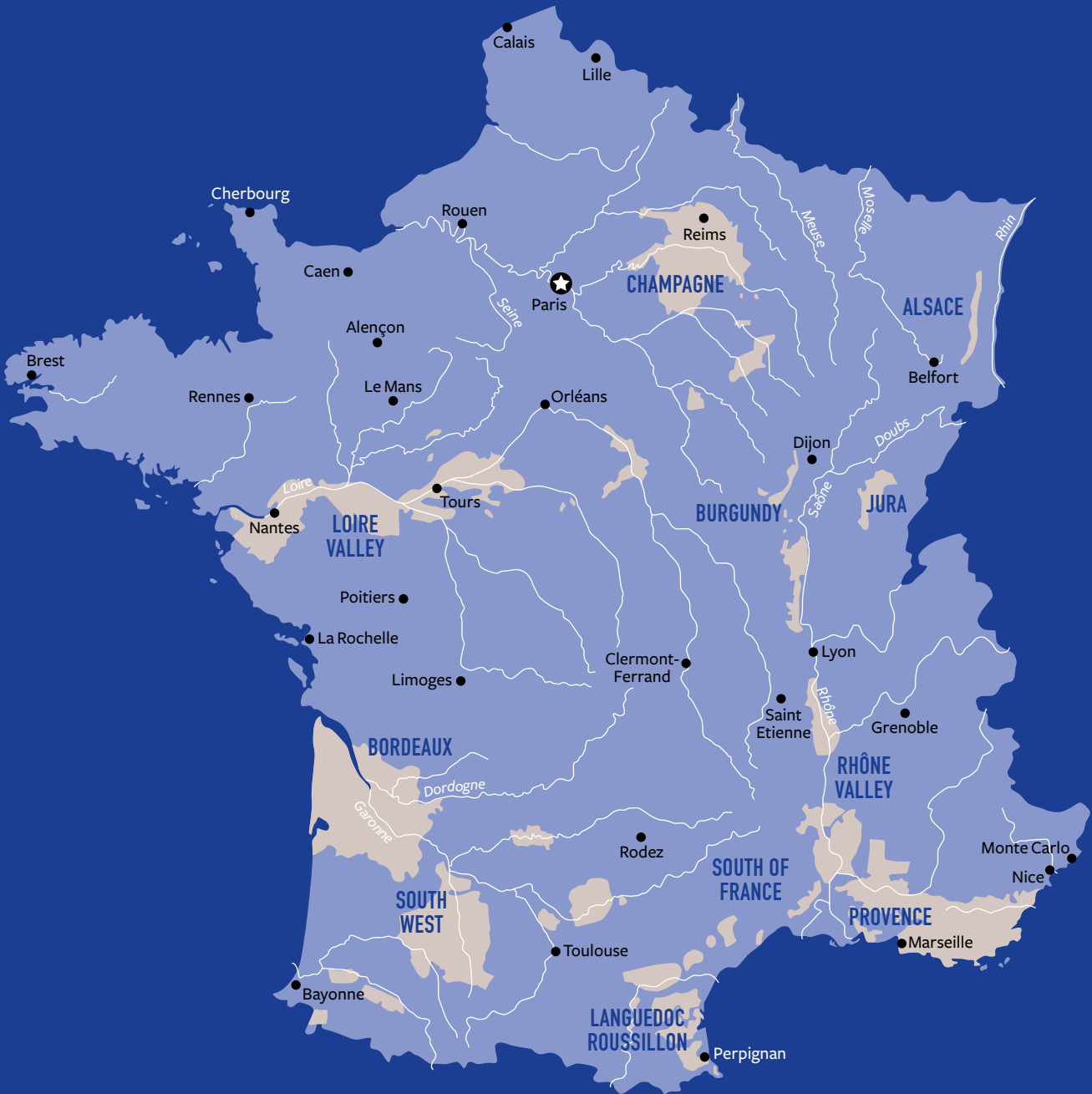
# HARVEST REPORT

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

2019



# FRANCE



# FRANCE

Latest estimates predict that France's total harvest came in 15% down on 2018's bumper crop and 7% down on the five-year average. The story, which is repeated around much of Europe, is of a cool spring, which hindered flowering and fruit set, coupled with heatwaves and drought during the summer months. There were also some localised occurrences of frost and hail, causing major losses in some regions of France.

## ALSACE

2019 in Alsace was characterised by intermittent heatwaves during the summer months. **Domaine Muré** commenced their harvest on the 9th of September, bucking a trend of increasingly early starts to picking. The winery confirmed that "the harvest took place in ideal weather conditions, and the grapes ripened well, whilst maintaining extremely good levels of acidity."

## BEAUJOLAIS

A combination of April frosts, cool weather during flowering, summer heatwaves and violent hailstorms in August will see volumes reduced in the region of 25-30% against 2018. At **Georges Duboeuf**, harvest began on the 6th of September, thankfully accompanied by warm and sunny weather. Whilst there has been some botrytis in Beaujolais, diligence on the sorting tables has ensured that only healthy fruit made it into the vats and the grapes came in with an average potential alcohol of 12.8%. Winemaker Denis Lapalu is "very pleased with the overall quality of the 2019s" declaring it as a vintage that "will better express its terroir and offer lively, fresh wines with aromas of raspberries and redcurrants."

## BORDEAUX

The 2019 vintage in Bordeaux was not straightforward, with heatwaves, drought and a rainy finish, but the early outlook is largely positive, thanks to a long, dry summer and harvest with just enough rain, and no major occurrences of frost, hail or mildew. A cool and rainy spell in early June may have affected flowering, leading to uneven fruit set in some vineyards, whilst heatwaves in late June and July exerted some pressure on the vines, but the overall effect was minimal. The main impact on volume has come from a lack of rain, with 25% less rain overall than the average, leading to smaller berries, which will reduce the amount of juice and therefore the volume of wine produced. Overall, yields are expected to be 8% lower than in 2019, although still significantly greater than the frosthit 2017 vintage. In terms of quality, 2019 is promising. Despite the warm and dry weather, harvest took place at the normal time. Alcohol levels are in line with a dry, warm year, with Merlot coming in at around 14-14.5% and Cabernet at 13-14%, and there will be no shortage of concentration; in fact the biggest challenge will be managing tannins.

## BURGUNDY

Following the large harvest of 2018, the 2019 has seen something of a return to the smaller harvests of the preceding years, with a fall in production of 30-40%. Although winter was quite mild, frost in April, particularly in the Mâconnais, caused some damage to the vines. This was followed by a cold spell in June, which led to uneven flowering and incidences of millerandage. Warm weather returned in July, with some periods of extreme heat, but the summer was particularly notable for its lack of rain and the above-average temperatures. The combination of the poor conditions for flowering and the months of drought have led to the small harvest, with the yields of whites suffering more than the reds. The outlook for quality, however, is good. The smaller berries have produced concentrated wines.

In Chablis, Odile van der Moere, the winemaker at **Jean-Marc Brocard**, echoed this, stating that they had harvested "many bunches of healthy, but very small grapes which on the press gave aromas of apricots, bananas, lemons and acacia flowers. Very well balanced. It is the most beautiful vintage ever for La Boissonneuse."





# FRANCE



## CHAMPAGNE

Following on from the wettest winter on record, Champagne experienced frost in spring, hail, summer heatwaves and outbreaks of powdery mildew, all of which contributed to the harvest declining in size by 15-20% in comparison to 2018. The heatwave in July was particularly notable as the region experienced its highest ever recorded temperature, with the thermometer peaking at 42.9°C. In spite of these challenges, the combination of hot, sunny days and cool nights in August and September helped to ensure that the grapes ripened fully and whilst the volume decline is not welcome, the size of the previous year's harvest means that reserves are high. The harvest began early in September, which whilst significantly earlier than it was 20 years ago, is now becoming the norm. Quality is expected to be high, with musts offering a good balance of sugar and acidity, together with an aromatic concentration that bodes well for future blends.

## PROVENCE

Provence experienced a return to more typically Mediterranean weather in 2019. Spring was mild without too much rain and the summer was hot and dry, although the relative lack of water has meant that yields have fallen by 5-10%.

Despite the fall in volume, the team at **Château Minuty** are extremely pleased with the quality, commenting: the 2019 rosé wines have a deep pink colour with a remarkable balance on the palate, lots of freshness and powerful aromas of peach and grapefruit."

## LOIRE

2019 will be remembered as a challenging vintage in the Loire, with spring frosts wreaking havoc in Muscadet and parts of Anjou causing some growers to lose their entire crop.

Vineyards were also affected by varying degrees of millerandage and coulure, whilst periods of drought and extreme heat during the summer months further affected the length of the ripening period and eventual yields, which are expected to be between 10-15% lower than in 2018. For the key appellations of the central Loire, Sancerre and Pouilly Fumé, the harvest was larger than may have been expected at the most challenging points of the season.

Growers here are extremely positive about the potential quality, with a rare combination of fruit concentration and acidity boding well for the wines on release.

## RHÔNE

After 2018's exceptionally early harvest, 2019 returned to a more normal pattern, in line with the average. The size of the harvest is expected to be broadly similar to 2018, with quality throughout the region promising to be good.

### SOUTHERN RHÔNE

In the Southern Rhône a mild winter helped to kick-start vine development, but cooler conditions in April and May slowed this down. June brought hot weather which caused sunburn on some fruit and foliage in certain areas but July was not as warm. There was a distinct lack of rainfall, which caused some stress to the vines, although the dry weather helped to keep disease pressure low. Frédéric Coulon at the biodynamic **Domaine de Beaufort** is reporting quality levels that are "off the charts". Their old vines were able to weather drought conditions, and ripening and harvest took place between the 3rd of September and the 4th of October, under ideal weather conditions. Yields are back to normal levels this year and at this stage the wines are deep in colour, with good intensity and bold but silky tannins.

### NORTHERN RHÔNE

Drought and heat were a feature of the vintage and although plentiful rain during the winter meant that water reserves were relatively high, the summer saw only a third of the usual amount of rain. This lack of rain did cause some stress to the vines and June saw a freak hailstorm that caused significant damage, in Crozes-Hermitage in particular. Yields have certainly been affected although the dry weather did also help mitigate the risk of fungal disease. At **Ferraton**, winemaker Damien Brisset is certainly happy with the quality of the vintage, stating that "harvest took place with perfectly healthy grapes on the vines and the small berries had the perfect conditions to achieve optimal ripeness, leading to concentrated but well-balanced musts which required very little extraction."



# ITALY



# ITALY

Early estimates in August that the harvest would be 15% down on 2018 seem to have been optimistic and the final deficit is likely to be in the region of 20%, well below the five-year average. This can largely be attributed to a cool, wet spring which prevented even bud-break.

## TRENTINO-ALTO ADIGE

In Trentino-Alto Adige, a cold May delayed flowering by nine days, pushing back the whole ripening process. There was little in the way of disease pressure and no drought or excess rainfall.

For **Mezzacorona**, the harvest began at the beginning of September and came in at 20% below 2018 in terms of volume. Chardonnay and Traminer were the worst hit, coming in at 30-40% below the previous vintage. Overall quality is expected to be good, especially for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir used for sparkling wines, showing good potential alcohol and good levels of acidity. Pinot Grigio has slightly lower levels of alcohol than normal, but with good acidity and good intensity of fruit.

## FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

Friuli saw an 18% decline in total production, due to the cool weather in spring hindering flowering and fruit set, coupled with localised hailstorms in July. Harvest took place later than in recent years, although this extended ripening period allowed the grapes to develop greater concentration and complexity of flavour. At **Marco Felluga** and **Russiz Superiore**, the team are especially happy with the “excellent” quality that the vintage has produced.

## PIEDMONT

2019 is being touted as a classic year for Barolo and Barbaresco following the precocious 2018 vintage. A wet winter and early spring allowed the ground to build up good reserves of water.

Temperatures rose during June and July, with intermittent spells of intense heat, and although there was some hail in September, major damage was avoided. Harvest began for Nebbiolo in the second half of November, and whilst there will be a slight drop in production against 2018, the grapes were ripe and healthy and should produce age-worthy wines with good structure.

## LOMBARDY

In Lugana, **Pratello** had early expectations of a good-sized harvest, but once picking was complete the volume was largely in line with the average production, a shortfall of 20-25% on 2018. Quality is, however, expected to be extremely high, with ripe fruit and good levels of acidity, bringing freshness and elegance.

In Franciacorta, the cool spring weather was followed by droughts during the early part of summer. This did not make it easy to manage in the vineyards, but the resulting delay to the harvest will help to produce high-quality wines. Nonetheless, **Ca'del Bosco** report a 40% loss of volume in 2019.

## VENETO

Following a relatively warm and dry winter, a cool and rainy spring delayed bud-break, putting the whole ripening cycle behind schedule. Warmer weather returned in the summer, but harvest took place later than usual. In terms of volume, two key wines both saw a reduction in volume: Pinot Grigio from the delle Venezie DOC (which is responsible for 42% of the global production of this variety) was down by 25% on the previous year, whilst Prosecco saw a decline of around 15%. This decline can be attributed both to the cooler weather in spring as well as the vines compensating for the increase in production of the previous year.

At **Canevel**, their vineyards in the Valdobbiadene DOCG in Prosecco benefitted from mild weather in April, before hail at the end of the month and cooler temperatures struck in May. The damage caused by the hail was minimal, but the cold weather delayed flowering. Warm weather returned in June, with some drought, but July brought rainy nights and warm windy days which helped to mitigate the effects. This clement weather ensured that ripening proceeded calmly and whilst the effects of the weather in spring will see yields down on 2018, a good quantity of healthy grapes were brought in.

In the Valpolicella region, the cool spring delayed bud-break and flowering. Warm weather arrived at the end of June, and although mid-July saw some hail, there was no major damage. At **Masi**, harvesting began around one week later than normal, and volumes are expected to be 15% down on the previous year. Quality is looking very good, though with a harvest of perfectly balanced grapes for Valpolicella and Amarone.

Soave experienced a mild spring and May was rainy and cold, delaying the development of the Garganega grapes by around one week. July hailstorms caused intermittent damage, although luckily for **Masi**, their Colbaraca vineyard was not affected. This year the bunches were more loosely packed, due to difficulties during flowering. This has hit yields, although the improved airflow around the grapes helped to ensure that they were in good health.

## TUSCANY/UMBRIA

As in much of the rest of the country, in Tuscany and Umbria this vintage has been defined by the cool weather in May delaying flowering and therefore the whole growth cycle. The benefit that this has brought is that of a long and even ripening process. Renzo Cotarella of **Antinori** is particularly pleased with the 2019 vintage in Chianti Classico, Bolgheri and Umbria, with Sangiovese faring especially well. In his words, this is “a vintage of great satisfaction, of good richness, of great elegance, of regular quantity, but surely a vintage that will produce wines of great character.”





# ITALY

## MARCHE/ABRUZZO

In the Marche, the first three months of the year were cooler and dryer than average, although April and May both saw some rainfall. May in particular was colder than normal. Summer brought a combination of extremes of heat and above average rainfall, which although bringing the typical disease risk associated with humidity, also helped to provide a good supply of water to the vines. Three separate heatwaves in June, July and August were particularly intense. September brought the ideal combination of warm days and cooler nights, helping to ensure even ripening and good levels of acidity.

At **Bisci** in Matelica, harvest commenced on the 16th of September, and came to a close on the 5th of October. Sporadic rain during the harvest period led to some delays. Production was slightly lower than in 2018, but the favourable conditions in September will see Verdicchios that combine freshness, richness and aromatic intensity.

In Abruzzo, winter was cool and rainy and with the addition of some low-altitude snowfalls ensured good water reserves in the vineyards. Low temperatures, without frosts, and scattered rain persisted throughout spring, delaying

flowering by 10-12 days compared to the norm. June saw a combination of rainy and sunny days, but high temperatures in July and August ensured that ripening was on track and the grapes remained healthy.

At **La Valentina**, the harvest took place within the normal timeframe, with picking of white grapes starting on September 10th and red grapes from the end of September until the second half of October. Yields were average, but good weather conditions during the harvest have resulted in exceptional overall quality both for white and red grapes. In the words of owner Sabatino di Properzio, "this will be a memorable vintage."

**Umani Ronchi**, who have vineyards in both Marche and Abruzzo, began their harvest of Verdicchio grapes in the last week of August, whilst Montepulciano and Cabernet were brought in during the first half of October, with beneficial conditions throughout: "sunny days with moderate temperatures during September allowed a smooth harvest of the early-ripening grapes while the late-ripening varieties – such as Montepulciano – were able to achieve the perfect balance of acidity, sugar and phenolic ripeness."



## SICILY/SARDINIA

In Sicily, flowering took place two weeks later than normal, due to an unusually cold and wet spring, and this delay continued right through the growing season, with harvest starting ten days later than in 2018. Volume is expected to be down around 30% against the average, although it should be largely in line with the 2018 harvest. This deficit can be attributed to smaller grapes and lighter bunches being harvested.

At **Fuodo Arancio**, picking took place throughout the month of September, significantly later than normal, meaning that the final stages of ripening took place after the fierce August heat. The result of this has been a good-sized harvest, with the perfect balance of acid and potential alcohol. Grillo is showing both good aromatics and freshness, whilst Nero d'Avola and Syrah have good colour, fruit intensity and ripe, plush tannins.

At **Tasca's** Regaleali estate, spring was cold and wet, and it was only in June that temperatures rose in line with the season. July and August, whilst warm, did not see extreme temperatures. The result of this was a drop in production and a later-than-usual harvest, but Tasca are happy with the quality, describing it as "among the best in recent years; this vintage has good natural alcohol content and exceptional aromatic characteristics and acidity." **Tenuta Tascante** on Mount Etna experienced a similarly cold spring, although June temperatures were above the average. This led to an imperfect fruit-set and lighter bunches, but after this ripening continued and the grapes remained healthy. Harvest took place ten days later than usual and the yield was slightly higher than average, thanks to a larger number of bunches compensating for the below-average weight. Quality is again good, with the Nerello Mascalese picked "in perfect health, with soft tannins, excellent acidity and a moderately high sugar content."



## CAMPANIA

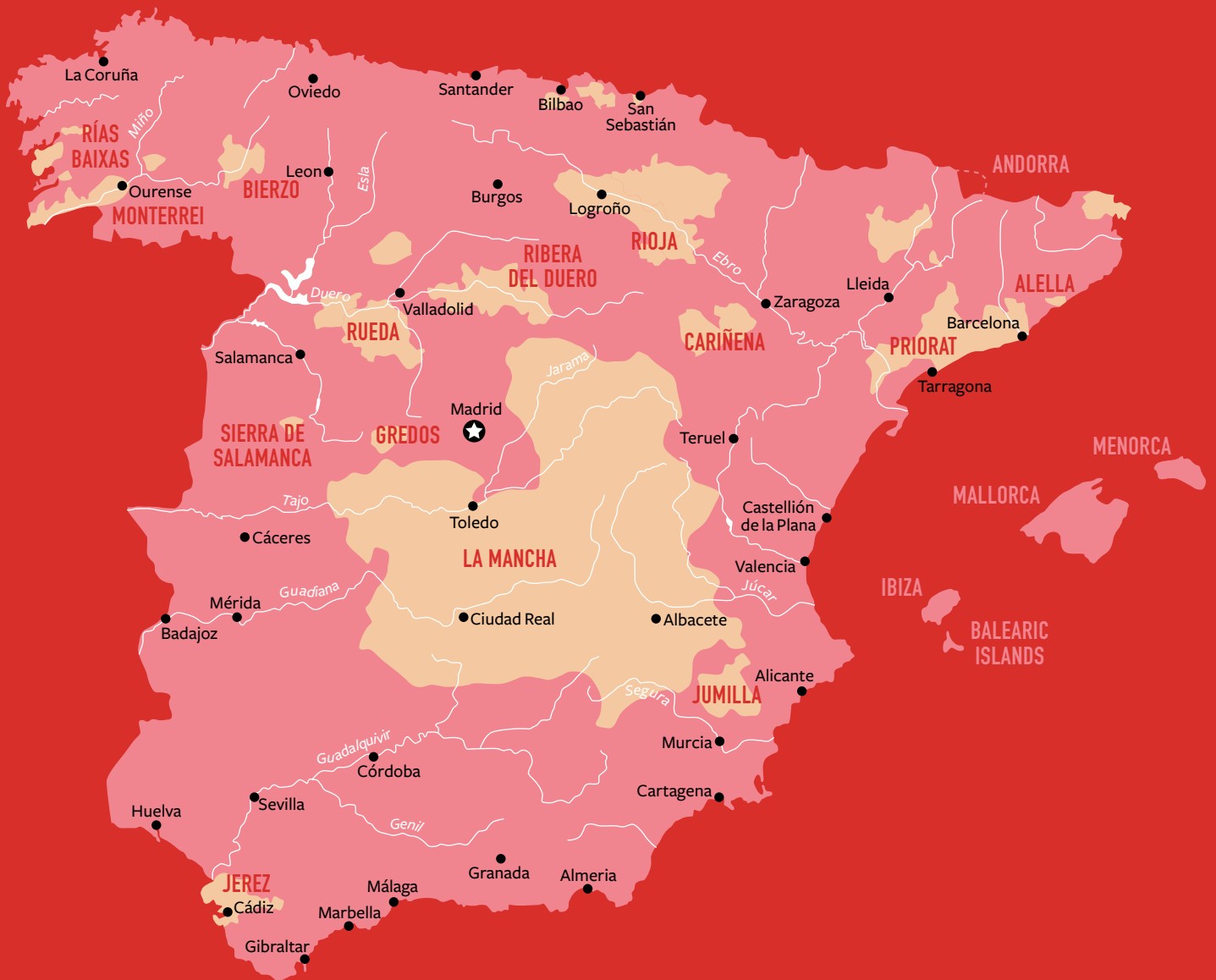
The cold, wet spring was followed by a warm, dry summer, reflecting the pattern throughout much of Italy in 2019. There was a delay of ten to fifteen days in harvesting compared to a typical vintage, although this delay did ensure that the ripening season was long and even, and the dry weather helped to avoid the risk of disease. The unseasonal weather during flowering has negatively impacted volume; however, according to **Villa Matilde**, we can expect high-quality wines to be produced in 2019, with Aglianico "characterised by an excellent structure, concentration and elegance", whilst Fiano is notable for its "elegance and aroma" and Falanghina has "good acidity and freshness".

## PUGLIA

In Italy's heel, the rain and cool weather during May were also present, and whilst as elsewhere summer was warm and dry, the cold weather during flowering has negatively affected yields and also delayed the harvest.

At **Tormaresca**, who have estates both in the north and the south of the region, picking took place around two weeks later than normal, although the summer heat ensured that the grapes ripened fully. According to Vito Palumbo, "Primitivo and Aglianico will stand out this year."

# SPAIN





# SPAIN

Spain saw a reduction of around 25% in volume against 2018's bumper harvest, largely thanks to a cool, wet spring causing irregular flowering, coupled with extreme heat and drought during periods of the summer.

## NORTHERN SPAIN

In Rías Baixas in the north-east of Spain, winters tend to be cool and wet, but in 2019 the region experienced unseasonably mild and dry conditions during the winter months. The weather during spring was far more changeable and the months of April to June remained relatively cool, with the heatwaves experienced in much of continental Europe failing to reach Galicia. July and August were warm but not excessively so, and it was only during September, as harvest was commencing, that the temperature started to rise, hastily bringing the grapes towards ripeness. This meant that rather than the threat of rain at harvest, excessive heat became a worry.

At **Bodegas Castro Martin**, who produce **Casal Caeiro**, harvest commenced on the 12th of September, with the mercury hitting 35°C during that week. Their harvest came in below 2018's in terms of size, largely due to the lack of rainfall over the summer, but the Albariño grapes that they did harvest were in good health, with the requisite balancing acidity.

It was a similar story at Serra de Estrela producer **Adegas Valmiñor**, who are based in the O Rosal subregion, in the southern part of Rías Baixas. Here, hailstorms at the end of April caused damage in the vineyards, resulting in an 18% decline against 2018, but quality is expected to be high.

## RIOJA

Early talk in Rioja is suggesting that 2019 will be a year of exceptional quality, albeit one with a below-average yield. Mild temperatures throughout the summer coupled with a lack of rainfall have led to lighter bunches of smaller grapes, which will produce a smaller quantity of wine, but greater concentration. Vineyards in warmer areas, which ripen earlier, may have fared better than those in the cooler, later-ripening zones, as warm weather at harvest may have raised alcohol levels. Some heavy rains did arrive late on in the season, causing picking to be delayed, but diligence in the vineyards helped to mitigate the risk of pests and rot. At **Finca Valpiedra**, 2019 is already being talked of as "one of the best vintages of the 21st century" and given the long and even ripening period, "balance would be the word to qualify this specific vintage".

## CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

**Finca Antigua** are extremely excited about the potential of the 2019 vintage. Good rainfall at Easter was followed by an extraordinarily dry remainder of the spring and summer, with exceptionally mild temperatures throughout. Providential rainfall in September, however, allowed the grapes to ripen and whilst yields may have been hit, the technical team are confidently describing 2019 as "one of the best years in Finca Antigua's history."

## CASTILLA Y LEÓN

The growing season in Rueda was exceptionally dry, requiring **Finca Montepedroso** to irrigate their vines for the first time since 2012. Harvest took place during the evenings of the 13th and the 16th of September. Yields were comparatively low this vintage due to the lack of rain, but the Verdejo grapes are showing good concentration and complexity and quality is expected to be correspondingly high.

After a dry winter, rain remained scarce throughout spring and summer in the Sierra de Salamanca, until two rainstorms in late July and mid-August deposited 40 litres of much-needed water onto the vineyards. Western Spain also managed to avoid the spells of extreme heat that were felt in much of Europe, with the weather remaining generally mild. For **Cámbrico** this meant that their vines were in good health, with little need for the use of copper or sulphur sprays. Harvest began on the 29th of August and the resulting grapes were picked with good levels of acidity, the highest since their first harvest in 2002. Whilst the lack of water has reduced yields, the quality is expected to be extremely high.



# UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, EASTERN & CENTRAL EUROPE AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

## ENGLAND

2019 has proved to be a more challenging vintage than 2018 in England, with later flowering and wetter weather bringing the risk of disease. Yields are certainly down in comparison to the atypical volumes achieved the previous year. That said, the vintage is still shaping up to be above average in size, with unseasonably warm weather in September ensuring that the grapes ripened fully. Quality is expected to be good. Hugh Liddell of **Cottonworth** in Hampshire is certainly happy, stating: “each vintage is special in its own way and leaves its mark on the resulting wine. 2019’s weather was kind to the vines throughout the year, and most importantly, did not cause a significant increase in my blood pressure!”

## GERMANY

Overall, production came in 17% below the huge 2018 harvest and 2% beneath the ten-year-average. This reduction can be attributed to a second successive dry year, sunburnt grapes, as well as certain regions experiencing violent hailstorms.

At **Balthasar Röss** in the Rheingau, spring and summer were dry, with some spells of extreme heat. Work in the vineyard at this point could only be carried out in the early morning, with the primary focus being canopy management to protect the grapes from sunburn. The Riesling harvest began on the 22nd of September, which unfortunately coincided with a week-long spell of heavy rain, meaning that picking had to be carried out during the limited dry spells. By the 16th of October, the whole harvest was complete and in spite of the challenges faced, winemaker Oliver Schmid is “more than satisfied with the quality achieved.”

## AUSTRIA

The first three months of the year were exceptionally mild and dry, and although May was a little cooler than usual, flowering took place at the normal time. The summer months began with the hottest, driest and sunniest June on record. July and August saw several heatwaves as well as thunderstorms and torrential downpours, although fortunately there was no damage from hail.

For **Zero-G** in Wagram, the harvest provided an average yield, but the quality is expected to be high. Winemaker Arnold Holtzer is particularly positive about the effects of the cool autumn nights which helped to ensure that the grapes were picked with “excellent fruit and good acidity.”

## HUNGARY

2019 is shaping up to be a fantastic vintage in Hungary, with the southern regions producing fully ripe red varieties, and botrytis in Tokaj. In the words of Peter Pohl, winemaker and managing director at **Sauska**: “we haven’t had a harvest this comfortable for a long, long time! An Indian summer with the optimal amount of rain gave us bold and round tannins in Villány, and crisp minerality with no untimely botrytis in Tokaj. Merlot, Blaufränkisch and Furmint are in especially top form, and there is a good chance of producing Aszú.”

## SLOVENIA

The region of Brda, which borders Friuli, experienced similarly cold weather during flowering and this, coupled with hail during June, has had a negative effect on yields. At **Quercus** over 30% fewer grapes were harvested in comparison to 2018, with a shortfall of 15% against the average forecast. Chief oenologist Darinko Ribolica is very happy with the quality this vintage which is “characterised by an intensity of fruit, coupled with balanced acidity and moderate levels of alcohol.” Red varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot performed particularly well this year, with the warm and sunny September helping them to achieve full physiological ripeness.

## GREECE

Early talk from many of Greece’s wine regions is that 2019 could be the best vintage of the last 20 years. The perfect combination of even rainfall and a warm summer that avoided extremes of temperature has produced ripe and healthy grapes with a good level of acidity.

In Naoussa, a long and cool winter was followed by a long and warm ripening season, with rainfall concentrated during May and June, and the rest of the summer remaining dry and warm.

**Thymiopoulos** began picking on the 20th of August and finished on the 20th of October, and although there were two rainfalls during the harvest period, 2019 has produced “wines with excellent phenolic ripeness, round tannic structure, crisp acidity and elegance, with low levels of alcohol in comparison to other vintages.”

On the Aegean island of Tinos, where **T-Oinos** is based, winter and spring were also cold and wet. Flowering was delayed due to the cold weather and the weather remained cool during June. July was warmer, but August was relatively mild and windy. Harvest took place later than usual and although the vintage presented many difficulties, winemaker Thanos Georgilas is happy with the quality, describing 2019 as “another promising year.”

## GEORGIA

As has been the case for the last decade, Georgia’s main winemaking region Kakheti had a relatively dry winter. Spring and early summer had moderate temperatures and rainfall, but during the second half of the summer, the weather was hotter and drier than usual. This hot spell brought harvest forward to the end of August rather than the first week of September. The warm, dry weather during ripening produced grapes with smaller berries and higher sugar content, leading **Tbilvino** to predict that the 2019 vintage will produce wines that are “concentrated and full-bodied.”

## TURKEY

In Turkey, the 2019 vintage was generally a little cooler than the average year, although August did see some warmer weather which ensured that the grapes were able to ripen fully. Bud-break and flowering and veraison occurred at the normal times, leading to harvest taking place within the regular date range. Clement weather during harvest ensured that the grapes were healthy when they arrived at the winery.

**Sevilen**, who have vineyards in several different regions, report that thanks to a warm August which allowed ripening to speed up after a slow start, their Izmir vineyards near to the Aegean coast produced a good yield of healthy white grapes, with pronounced aromatic purity and good natural acidity. For red grapes, the yield was slightly lower than average, but the quality is looking extremely good, with Cabernet Sauvignon, Kalecik Karası, Öküzgözü, Petit Verdot, Merlot and Boğazkere showing fine tannins and intense aromas. Further inland in Güney, quality is equally high, with whites showing good varietal character and richness, and reds that combine freshness with bold tannins. As a result, 2019 “will be remembered as one of the best vintages of the decade.”

# NORTH AMERICA

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## CALIFORNIA

Yet again California faced what has become an annual ordeal of wildfires, this year compounded by a series of power cuts designed to limit their spread. Against this challenging backdrop, winemaking continues and thankfully for the embattled wineries, inclement weather did not compound the challenge that they were facing.

### NORTH COAST NAPA & SONOMA

2019 is looking like a classic Northern Californian vintage. A warm, late summer was followed by a cooler spell that coincided with harvest, meaning that picking could take place at a controlled pace. The cool and sunny days late in the vintage helped give enough time for later-ripening red varieties to develop greater complexity.

At **Joseph Phelps**, they began harvesting Pinot Noir in Sonoma on the 5th of September at their Freestone estate, and the harvest finished at the end of October in their Napa Valley vineyards. At this early stage, the winemaking team are extremely happy with the wines, which

“show a purity of fruit with rich colour and concentration.” For **Radio-Coteau**, heavier than normal rains in late May delayed fruit set by an average of two weeks, vineyards began setting fruit on average two weeks later than normal. Warm and clement weather over the summer months moved veraison and ripening forward, however, meaning that picking commenced at nearly the same time as last year. Owner Eric Sussman notes that, “as the young 2019 wines embark on their *élevage* in barrel, signs point to a classic coastal California vintage with noble structure, vibrant fruit character and ageability – a dynamic vintage showing much promise.”

### CENTRAL COAST SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS

In the Santa Lucia Highlands, a much-needed wet and cold spring (helping to replenish water levels after several dry years) meant that the growing cycle began late. Summer was generally mild, with the temperature gradually increasing up until harvest. The weather during harvest remained dry and mild, ensuring that the grapes were allowed sufficient time to ripen fully. At **Pisoni**, harvest began at Garys’ Vineyard on the 13th of September, followed by the Soberanes Vineyard the next day, with harvest commencing

at the Pisoni Vineyard on the 20th. Picking was completed at the beginning of October and Jeff Pisoni is hailing 2019 as a success: “harvest was beautiful. There are a lot of excited winemakers this year. The finished wines are concentrated with pure and focused aromatics. Tannins are rich, but approachable – also due in part to slightly lower acid levels this year. There is a lot of structure to make the wines cellar-worthy, but I suspect people will love the wines out of the gate.”

## CANADA

In British Columbia’s Okanagan Valley, moderate temperatures during the summer allowed for a long and even ripening season. September was a little wetter than the average, requiring careful vineyard management to avoid disease pressure. Susan Doyle, the head of winemaking at **Quails’ Gate**, is positive about the vintage, stating: “2019 has provided exceptional aromatic whites, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. We’ve seen early flavour development, great acidity and colour.

The cooler spring and summer allowed for slow even ripening and we’re expecting lower overall alcohol levels. We had brought in 100% of our fruit by the end of October. It’s looking like a fantastic vintage for the Okanagan!”

