



## FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE 2017 CHAMPAGNE HARVEST

Harvesting on the Champagne hillsides has been underway in most production areas since 4th September and is now coming to an end.

The 2017 campaign has been marked by severe frosts in spring (wiping out 23% of buds across the region) followed by an exceptionally hot and sunny spell between mid-May and the end of July. New heat records were set in many sites. Until the end of July, the vines remained in remarkable condition despite the lack of rainfall.

However, this situation was reversed in early August with a number of storms, some including hail at local level. With the maturation rate maintaining its momentum, the earliest vineyards began picking their first grapes on 26th August, making the 2017 harvest one of the earliest since 1950, preceded only by 2003, 2007 and 2011.

Frequent rainstorms since the start of harvesting, just when the grapes were fully ripe, have led to outbreaks of botrytis, forcing the winegrowers to sort the grapes very carefully.

Because of the frost and hail damage and the selection process, the maximum authorised yield set for this year (10,300 kg/ha) will probably not be achieved in every part of the region, with winegrowers and houses having to draw on the Champagne reserve in order to supplement their production.

The average alcohol content of the musts, frequently exceeding 10% by volume, coupled with a satisfactory total acidity suggest a very promising balance. However, the quality of the vintage can only be evaluated after the first tastings of base wines.

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