



PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAMPAGNE HARVEST – LATE, BUT POTENTIALLY OUTSTANDING

It has been another strange year for Champagne, starting with a cold, wet winter, followed by a gloomy, chilly spring with a lot of rain. Vine development started two weeks behind the ten-year average, and never made up for that lost time.

Along the way came a hot dry summer, boosting fruit quality thanks to the most sunshine ever recorded in Champagne in July and August.

Rain came from 6 September onwards, which helped to fatten the berries - then fortunately stopped in time to allow good conditions for final ripening. Considering the lateness of the harvest, the weather this year was exceptionally good – almost summer-like with unusually warm temperatures and sunshine, and a wind from the east to help keep the grapes healthy.

It was a year of big differences in the timing of the harvest, with picking in the most precocious plots starting on 24 September and in the slower-ripening areas on 9 October. Most plots commenced harvesting in the first days of October – the latest start date seen in Champagne for two decades.

Bearing in mind the economic situation, Champagne's governing body has set the yield limit at 10,000 kilos per hectare. Most crus should achieve this yield, excepting only a few that were partially affected by millerandage (shot berries), hailstorms and botrytis.

An average potential alcohol of nearly 10% ABV and good acidity averaging around 8.5g H₂SO₄ per litre together suggest a promising balance for the eventual wine. The Champenois are already drawing favourable comparisons with the vintages of 1983, 1988 and 1998 – these too being the product of late harvests.

Epernay, 16th October, 2013