

Alsace wines 2007 : A long-awaited and unanimously acclaimed vintage !

Alsace wine professionals are happy : 2007 is one of the finest vintages ever !

2007 can be added to the list of unusual years. After a very mild winter, and an almost summery spring (with exceptionally warm temperatures that led to very early bud-burst and flowering around 25 May !), June, July and August were marked by numerous showery spells and some periods of quite cold weather. Consequently, this unsettled weather cancelled out most of the advance gained in the spring. Thankfully, such climatic conditions led to slow and perfect maturation of all grape varieties, enabling their freshness and fruit character to be preserved.

The starting dates for the harvest were decreed as follows : 22 August for AOC Crémant d'Alsace, except Riesling and Chardonnay (27 August), and 5 September for the still wines, except Riesling and Gewurztraminer (10 September). Concerning Vendanges Tardives and Sélections de Grains Nobles, the starting date was 19 September.

For AOC Crémant d'Alsace, the harvest began under ideal conditions.

First to be harvested were grapes from the earliest-ripening slopes. Then Alsace took full advantage of a magnificent month of September with extraordinary anticyclonic weather ! Hot days and cool nights with practically no precipitation ensured optimal ripening conditions. Alsace professionals "hurried slowly" to harvest perfectly healthy bunches of each grape variety at optimum maturity. 2007 was an absolutely textbook vintage from every point of view, and not only as far as quality and quantity are concerned.

Pinot Noir has soft fruit notes and plenty of colour, with a palette of aromas ranging from redcurrant to black cherry. Pinot Gris is especially successful, powerful and honied, yet nicely balanced by ripe acidity. Riesling will of course need time to mature but is already very fruit-driven (citrus) with incredible elegance and freshness. Sylvaner and Pinot Blanc are both full of character. Gewurztraminer is particularly successful in this vintage. The wines are rich, intense and extremely aromatic. In fact, in 2007, all grape varieties have given excellent results !

To crown it all, superb weather conditions at the end of the harvest enabled numerous Vendanges Tardives and Sélections de Grains Nobles wines to be produced, and the record quality levels of 1997 have even been exceeded !

As far as quantity is concerned, total production reached 1 151 749 hl, + 6.5 % compared to 2006 (916 044 hl of AOC Alsace and Alsace Grand Cru, plus 235 705 hl of AOC Crémant d'Alsace).

From a commercial point of view, sales of Alsace wines in 2007 progressed slightly (+0.8% compared to 2006) this rise being due to record export sales (+2.1 % overseas against + 0.4 % in France) and to rising sales of AOC Crémant d'Alsace (+8.4 % overall). The level of sales is therefore once more in perfect harmony with the level of production.