

2021 Growing Year in Italy: What to expect

The life-force of the vine vs climate changes

High quality anticipated in the wine-cellar

Harvest is literally upon us with some white grapes already safely in the cellar and several red grape varieties being picked at this very moment. But it's still too early to draw any definitive conclusions about the 2021 harvest, since producers up and down the peninsula are still relying on predictions. Which, however, are encouragingly positive.

Let's give a brief overview of the growing season. The weather brought three distinctive phenomena that had critical impacts. A spring freeze plunged temperatures that delayed bud-break and shoot growth by some 10 days, whose effects are still being felt in the current ripening stage, while the south suffered under water deprivation and the north was hit by torrential rains. The common thread that emerged from these challenges, though, was the current outstanding health status and overall quality of the fruit, a situation that augurs well for fine wines from 2021. Delivering the best results seem to have been the most ecologically-sensitive vineyard operations and precision agricultural practices, approaches that protect and express terroir in the face of increasingly threatening climate changes.

We asked producers from north to south what they thought and how they were managing to transform climate threats into quality outcomes.

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The heat spells impacted Gaiole in Chianti, too, but director Luca Vitiello of **Bertinga** explains that "good canopy management protected the clusters and careful ground-working allowed the vines to recently complete veraison, a bit late perhaps, but with no excessive stress. These are the foundations for an excellent harvest, which we are looking for in the next days of September for the Merlot vineyards and the first half of October for Sangiovese."

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And now, there's nothing we can do but wait.