

PRESS RELEASE:

After the grape harvest: Everything points to a good vintage

The last grapes are yet to be harvested, but one thing is clear already: Despite some extreme weather fluctuations in summer, the 2025 vintage looks set to be a good one - with juicy red wines, and white wines that will be lighter than in recent years.

Looking back to 2025 in the vineyard, experts are agreed: It was a year of extreme weather fluctuations, that manifested themselves in particular during the summer. In contrast, the winter was mild and flowering was comparatively early and abundant: "It seemed as if the vines wanted to make up for the low quantities in the previous year", Lukas Ploner, cellar master at Abbazia di Novacella commented. "On the other hand, the vines then largely regulated the quantity of their own accord during the flowering period."

A warm and in some regions even hot June was followed by a rainy, extremely cool July, which gave way to an occasionally extremely hot August. It was precisely these fluctuations that presented challenges to winegrowers throughout the country. "Vines are like people: if they have time to get used to the heat it doesn't trouble them greatly, but if cool days are followed by extremely hot ones, the vines suffer from heat stress.", Matthias Bernhart from the Ansitz Mairhof in Parcines commented.

Early, quick harvest

Ripening progressed rapidly precisely because the temperatures were high in August. "Harvest time arrived faster than expected this year", Jakob Gasser, oenologist at St. Michael-Eppan Winery stated. The harvest there began some two weeks earlier than last year. In Valle Isarco the harvest of the first Müller-Thurgau grapes also started around ten days earlier, while Schiava in the Val Venosta was almost three weeks ahead of last year. "This year is one of the earliest harvest years I can remember," Matthias Bernhart, who is also chairman of the Vinschgauer Weinbauernverein (Val Venosta Winegrowers' Association), said.

Lukas Ploner emphasised that harvest in all growing regions was not only earlier than last year, it was also "brief and intense". The good weather windows had to be exploited to the

full, which is why the winegrowers had to show great commitment and flexibility. "It was extremely important to harvest the right variety and site at the right time," Jakob Gasser explained. He pointed up that this year's harvest was one of the fastest in the history of St. Michael-Eppan Winery.

Matthias Bernhart also stressed that the harvest had been technically difficult. "Due to the weather fluctuations and rainfall during the harvest, we not only had to harvest quickly, but also keep an eye on any rot."

Precise hand-picking, good grapes

Because grapes are harvested strictly by hand in Alto Adige, this challenge was overcome through precise work in the vineyard. The grapes harvested are consistently very good, even though there are differences. "The quality of the grapes from good sites was once again significantly better this year than those from inferior sites," Jakob Gasser said.

Matthias Bernhart is thoroughly satisfied with the area he covers: "The qualities are very good, the sugar levels are slightly lower than last year, but if the degree of ripeness is right, that's not a problem - on the contrary: a half or a whole per cent less alcohol by volume is good for our wines." Quantities throughout the whole country were largely average, while quantities in Oltradige and Bassa Atesina were slightly below expectations. This is mainly due to a very loose grape structure.

Juicy (and occasionally great) red wines

After a quick and difficult harvest, Alto Adige wine producers are now starting work in the cellar. It is of course still too early for a detailed outlook on the 2025 vintage, but the first few days in the cellar have already provided a few clues. "It is still difficult to say how the individual grape varieties will develop, but I am confident that we will bottle good quality wines again this year," Lukas Ploner from Abbazia di Novacella said.

Jakob Gasser from St. Michael-Eppan Winery is more confident in his predictions. For Pinot Noir, for example, he predicts savoury, fresh wines. Furthermore: "Good sites can also produce extremely great wines this year." This year's Merlot is also juicy and the 2025 Schiava and Lagrein are equally promising, Gasser commented - a judgement shared by Matthias Bernhart from Ansisz Mairhof in Parcines: "I'm expecting a fine vintage for the Schiava, probably the best of the last four or five years," Bernhart said.

Exceptionally light, fruity white wines

Experts are emphasising the lower sugar levels this year compared to recent years, particularly for the white varieties. As a result, we can expect white wines that are characterised by slightly less alcohol and slightly more acidity. We can therefore expect light, fresh and fruity Alto Adige white wines for the 2025 vintage, which are in line with the global trend.

When looking at the individual varieties, Pinot Blanc stands out somewhat from the other whites. It ripened particularly early this year, and the sugar levels are also slightly higher than in the other varieties. Nevertheless, growers expect fresh wines with crisp acidity. Riesling grapes also arrived in the cellar much earlier, and as a result it has low sugar levels. "I expect wines with around 12 per cent alcohol and a nice fruitiness," Matthias Bernhart said.

As far as Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon are concerned, they arrived in the cellar perfectly ripe: "They should be very good," Jakob Gasser commented. His assessment of the Alto Adige Chardonnay 2025 is even more enthusiastic: "In the good locations, we were able to wait for the ideal ripening time, and the grapes show ideal conditions for great wines," Gasser said.