

2017 Vintage Report: *Alto Adige*

Quality over Quantity

- April frosts, June heat and August hailstorms reduced quantities overall (10-15%) but some of these same events enhanced our quality
- Our normal practice of hand harvesting made all the difference: the wines have beautiful perfumes, lively minerality and freshness with a concentration of varietal flavors

2017 was not the easiest growing season (consistent with most of Italy's winegrowing regions), but the ideal sugar/acid levels were ultimately reached in the Alto Adige.

March was a little warmer than usual causing an early start to the season (bud break was late March/early April). Unfortunately, just as shoots were starting to push out (5-6cm even at our highest elevations), two spring frosts hit the region (April 18th and again on April 21st) and caused damage to the already-developing shoots and buds. **Fortunately, spring frosts generally impact quantity instead of quality.** Higher altitudes usually feel a great impact of the frosts, but this is offset by our plantings on slopes (where cold air can drain away quickly).

The growing season continued with normal flowering from mid-May to early June. Then very hot and very dry conditions in June slowed down vine growth significantly. June is the when the vine and tiny green berries go through significant cell growth. High temperatures and low water causes slower photosynthesis. This slower photosynthesis means slower cell multiplication in the berries, which ultimately means small berries. **Smaller berries are wonderful for concentrating flavors, but it also means less juice than usual.**

Ripening continued with véraison a little early (by about one week) so we were planning for a slightly early harvest. That all changed on August 9th and 10th, when two hailstorms hit the region. Hail can negatively impact quality since berries can be damaged (and leaves stripped, slowing down the last bit of photosynthesis/ripening) but the hailstorms were followed by two weeks of ideal weather. Dry conditions in the latter part of August helped to ward off development of grey rot and lot of **sunshine and warmth in August/September finished ripening.**

Our regular practice of 100% hand harvesting made all the difference for selecting and bringing in the healthiest and best grapes for 2017. You can taste the freshness and concentration of varietal flavors in the glass.

