



# Harvest Notes

## 2018

An early warning of a difficult year came as early as in the winter: rainfalls, cold weather, and a couple of snowfalls even at a low altitude. Spring started with continuous rainfalls between April and May, which exposed our vineyards to persistent attacks of peronospera, because even going in the field to spray was difficult. In the afternoon of 3 May – when vegetation was at its growing peak and bunches of grapes were already formed – a dry hailstorm of unprecedented heaviness left on the land 50 cm (!) of ice in 20 minutes and destroyed a fair chunk of vineyards in Telesina valley in the towns of Solopaca, Castelvenere, Sant'Agata dei Goti, Amorosi and Telese. Our valley bottom vineyards were not spared. During the whole summer and until harvest rainfalls continued incessantly. With the few sound grapes left we succeeded in making Falanghina, Fiano and a number of Aglianico grapes for rosé and Brizio. The damage caused by the hailstorm has not just affected the production of the year, but will have consequences on the next pruning as well.

## 2017

The year showed up with a snowy winter, and the cold extended into spring without any rainfalls in March and April. A late frost at the end of April made some damage, but only to the vineyards situated at the bottom of the valley. 2017 will be remembered as the hottest summer in the last 50 years: the temperature exceeded 40°C for as much as 7 times, and rainfalls were slow to arrive from May to September. Under those conditions, our Greco and Fiano grape varieties in Cesine suffered from water stress, therefore we had to resort to two emergency manual irrigations between July and August. Vineyards in Pozzillo (Falanghina, Sciascinoso and Aglianico), being at a lower altitude and on a sandy land, underwent no drought. Harvest activities commenced and continued well ahead of time. A 30% average reduction in production was recorded. The health conditions of grapes were excellent everywhere. Red grapes easily reached an optimal phenolic maturity that enabled us to make both Brizio and Talento 2017. Whites, although with a reduced olfactory complexity, had a good acidity and texture.

## 2016

On 15 October, soon after the 2015 harvest, a terrible flood, similar to that which occurred in 1944 as the old recall, brought 70 mm of rain in one single night, causing great damage to Telesina Valley vineyards closer to the river, which overflowed its banks in many areas. Having no vineyards close to the river, we did not suffer any damage, but we will remember that terrible day for a long time.

A mild winter without snow and just little rainfalls, helped by an early spring, caused a faster vegetative recovery. April was at first very rainy, with a wintry weather return on 26 April, when a snowfall arrived (!) that caused frost damage to younger vines in valley bottom areas. Unstable conditions continued in the spring, with frequent afternoon storms for the most part of May and June, which turned into a rainy and not particularly hot summer.

Harvesting time arrived earlier and given the small quantity of grapes, it took less time than usual. While white grapes better held out against the unstable weather until harvest, red ones suffered from lack of phenolic maturation. Whites will be nervous and long lasting wines, while reds from this vintage will play more on fruit notes than on structure.

## 2015

What a beautiful vintage! The particularly mild winter resulted in an early budding (2 weeks in advance) and continued with an early flowering (mid-May) and optimum fruit setting. No rainfall from mid-June until the end of July with above average temperatures, resulted in an early maturation of about 10 days compared to the previous year, but in line with a normal season. From a quantitative point of view, just a selective thinning was necessary. Given the hot conditions which continued throughout the summer, we decided to limit crown cutting and defoliating in order to avoid sun damage. At harvest time grapes showed among the best we had ever had. Very little work was needed on the berry selection table and optimal analytic data of sugar, acidity and PH on both red and white grapes was the result. 2015 was the first year of official organic certification of all our products (grapes, wines and extra virgin olive oils).

## 2014

Following a mild and rainy Winter, we had an early budding: the first shoots opened in the last days of March. Relatively high temperatures favoured normal budding and a fast development. Flowering started at the beginning of May with numerous large flowers, a prelude to good bunch quantities. These optimum conditions ended in June with heavy isolated storms and low temperatures, which continued for the rest of the Summer. Rain continued, even during veraison (around mid-July) slowing maturation and compromising grape health. Given the low quality standards and poor phenolic maturation, we decided, sadly, not to vinify any red grapes. After a careful thinning in the vineyards and a severe selection in the winery, white grapes produced high acidity wines that will better express themselves in the long term.

## 2013

A vintage like "it used to be", that is, a harvest starting in mid-September and finishing at the end of October ! During Winter there was over abundant rainfall (over 200 mm between January and March), followed by regular Spring rainfall, which caused fungus attacks. This was the prelude to a difficult vintage. Although it was a normal Summer, the vines were not able to recover from the late budding resulting from conditions in previous months. The white wines would have a complex aroma and optimal acidity to better develop the nose. Sugar, and consequently alcohol content, would be below average compared to previous vintages. Red grapes, however, had favourable maturation conditions during September and October, giving good results after thinning and defoliating at the correct time.

## 2012

The year 2012 started with a mild Winter until the end of January when temperatures fell below zero. Together with a fresh and rainy March and April this resulted in a late budding. From the end of June temperatures rose sharply, reaching a maximum in mid-August of over 40° for many days, with little rainfall. Notwithstanding these drought-like conditions, the vines did not suffer stress due to the good subsoil moisture from the early Spring rain. The harvest started in the first week of September with Fiano and continued in the second week with Falanghina and Greco. Between the end of September and the first week of October we completed the harvest with Sciascinoso and Aglianico for both Sciascì and Talento 2012. Another early harvest due to the hot Summer, produced healthy grapes with lower acidity and a good balance of alcohol, aroma and tannins.

## 2011

2011 was our first year of conversion to an organic system. It was a choice we took after long consideration, being sure that the characteristics of the area together with attention to good farming practice, would increase grape and wine quality, while at the same time lowering the impact on the environment. It was a compelling challenge with a normal winter and heavy rainfall in March (more than double the average) that guaranteed a good subsoil moisture for the rest of the year. In general we had favourable conditions for the change in farming practice. Careful soil and leaf management, together with hot temperatures in July and August, ensured an early harvest of healthy grapes.

## 2010

2010 was characterized by a very long, cold winter. April and May temperatures favoured optimum budding and vigorous growth. From the beginning of Spring to the end of Summer abundant rainfall made it difficult to manage fungus attacks. However in August the more regular weather, with temperature lower than the previous 3 years, resulted in later maturation of the grapes, but in line with historical data. From the second half of August to the end of September increasing temperatures and a high day / night range, helped to increase the phenolic content of red grapes, especially of Aglianico.

## 2009

The 2009 winter was characterized by heavy snow even at low altitudes. This, with heavy rains in early Spring guaranteed good subsoil moisture, but caused problems with early spraying. The hot, dry weather from late Spring resulted in an early budding and consequently an early flowering, which we knew would result in an early harvest. In fact at the end of August, we started harvesting Fiano grapes in prohibitively high temperatures. During September normal weather conditions helped the slow phenolic maturation and we could harvest red Sciascinoso and Aglianico grapes until the end of October. Musts showed high sugar levels, good acidity and tannic structure.

## 2008

After a rather strange 2007, 2008 was a decidedly more regular vintage. The beginning of Spring brought heavy rain and unstable weather with strong peronospera and oidium pressure and fruit set problems. With the arrival of Summer the situation became more regular with a long period of sunny, windy weather and little rain and with a high range of temperatures between night and day. The recently planted Aglianico vines needed emergency watering, while with the rest of the vines we followed the normal procedure of thinning and defoliating in August. We were satisfied with the quality of both red and white grapes. We commenced harvesting early and with favourable weather conditions until the end of October, we decided to vinify Talento 2008

## 2007

The first year of wine making served to show us how difficult the process of growing grapes and producing wine would be. The vintage will be remembered as the driest in the last century. A mild winter and historically low rainfall in the first part of the season (from July to December we received no rain at all) together with high summer temperatures, led to an early harvest (approximately 14 days) and healthy grapes. Given the weather conditions, we refrained from defoliating in order to safeguard the bunches from sun damage in June and July. Recently planted Falanghina, Greco and Fiano required emergency irrigation. The phenolic maturation of the red grapes was optimal, whereas the whites had less aromatic complexity in favour of a stronger structure. From a quantitative point of view we had an average reduction of about 20%.

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