

The 2014 vintage in Alto Adige

A year for exciting white wines

Somewhat lower alcohol content and higher acidity, along with freshness and fruitiness, characterize the Alto Adige wines of the 2014 vintage. In particular, Pinot Blanc and Sauvignon from medium and high altitudes have turned out well. Schiava wines are typical and invitingly drinkable, Pinot Noirs from higher altitudes are very promising, as is Lagrein in general.

The year 2014 began promisingly. Warm temperatures in the spring brought on early blossoming and budding of the vines. Then, however, came long periods of rain and strong growth at relatively low temperatures. A nearly complete lack of longer dry phases in summer resulted in some of the berries bursting and an increased risk of fungus infection. The threat of *Drosophilla suzukii* and fungus infections additionally challenged the winegrowers. Using targeted intervention and the corresponding exertion and additional work, Alto Adige's wine growers were able to get the problem under control. Especially the early-ripening varieties, which were already harvested in early September, suffered from the inclement weather. The medium and high altitude vineyards were able to profit from the period of good weather from the end of September to the beginning of October.

Through labor-intensive harvest and significant losses in yield it was possible to supply the wineries with a healthy, flawless harvest of grapes.

The low harvest yield is however a cause for concern for all those involved. Depending on the winery, variety and vineyard, this year's yield lies between 10 and 30 percent under the long-term average. All in all, around 290,000 hectoliters of wine were produced in Alto Adige in 2014, meaning a decrease from last year of 17%.

Statements of the winemakers:

Minerality with lively acidity

"In the peripheral areas, we came through very well in 2014", **Martin Aurich** from Winery Unterortl in Val Venosta is happy to say. The grapes profited from the beautiful fall weather and the late harvest. "Pinot Blanc and Riesling are fruity, have good minerality and lively acidity – the best prerequisites for long-lived and elegant wines", Aurich states confidently, putting this vintage on a level with that of 2013.

Aromatic, fruity, juicy

Optimal ripening conditions in the fall were also found by **Celestino Lucin**, winemaker of the Abbazia di Novacella winery. "The Valle Isarco white wines are aromatic, fruity, juicy and fresh with somewhat higher acidity, very typical and inviting." Sylvaner, Veltliner and Müller Thurgau are developing especially well, Lucin states, "We are looking forward to a very good white wine vintage 2014 in Valle Isarco".

White wines very good

“Qualitatively, we must evaluate the grapes from early-ripening vineyards and varieties as average in 2014”, sums up **Willi Stürz**, winemaker of Cantina Tramin, “on the other hand, white wines from medium and high altitudes are of very good quality, especially Pinot blanc and Sauvignon.” In the case of Gewürztraminer, it was sometimes difficult to reach optimal ripeness.

Willi Stürz sees the quality of the red wines as very variable: “Pinot Noir from higher vineyards is very good, and the Schiava wines are somewhat lighter than in the past. Lagrein has been developing better than expected”.

Fruity and well-structured

“2014 was a difficult year for red wines”, **Martin Lemayr**, winemaker of the Colterenzio winery, is convinced. Lagrein has turned out the best, in his opinion, “very fruity and well-structured”. But also Schiava has come forth for Lemayr with “surprisingly good color, fruity and delicate”.

This said, 2014 is even more interesting for white wines, Lemayr is glad to say: “The wines from higher vineyards have a good backbone of acidity and intensive fruit; they are, as far as body is concerned, on the lighter side”. This year’s wines, however, will need a bit more time to ripen in the cellar.

Good vintage with individual top wines

“A good vintage with individual top wines” is the evaluation of **Stephan Filippi**, winemaker of Cantina Bolzano, about the 2014 vintage, whereby “definitely elegance and freshness are at the forefront”. The white wines, especially Pinot Blanc, Sauvignon, Müller Thurgau and Sylvaner are, in his opinion, “very interesting, pronouncedly fruity and elegant”. For Filippi, the targeted selection of healthy and ripe grapes at harvest was essential for the red wines of 2014. “Santa Maddalena from the proper locations is fruity, with medium structure, fresh and straightforward”. Stephan Filippi is also enthusiastic about Lagrein: “fabulous wines with ideal tannic structure, soft, fruity and inviting”. But also Merlot and Cabernet have surprised Filippi in a positive sense.