

Press release

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The 2016 Vintage in Alto Adige An Exciting Year for Both Reds and Whites

Alto Adige's winegrowers and winemakers are pleased about a very exciting, good quality vintage for 2016 – with juicy, lively, and multilayered white wines and promising, well-structured Alto Adige red wines.

The capricious summer of 2016 posed a good many challenges to Alto Adige winegrowers: aside from a few hot summer days, there were numerous wet days with above-average rainfall. This required a great deal of attention and diligence in the vineyard. The growers had to exercise great care. What was necessary was a very precise observation of the vines as well as targeted measures, such as cluster division. All of that meant hard work and a particularly large amount of effort in the vineyards.

Ideal Autumn Weather Before and During the Harvest

The lovely, dry weeks that started at the end of August and continued through September into early autumn with warm days and cool nights brought tranquility back to the vineyards and provided all of the preconditions for a targeted and high-quality harvest. In addition, the cooler temperatures at the beginning of maturity slowed down the maturation process of the grapes. For that reason, the 2016 harvest began around ten days later than in 2015. The first white wine grapes were harvested in the Bassa Atesina and around Terlano starting from September 5. The extensive crush then began in the middle of September. It was completed in most areas by mid-October.

The quality of the grapes as they arrived at the wineries was perfect. The sugar and acidity levels were looking good, the pH values were low – the perfect foundation for juicy, lively, and multilayered white wines and for promising red wines with a good potential for developing.

White Wines True to Their Varieties, Well-Structured Red Wines

After the great year of 2015, Alto Adige's wine industry is pleased about a just as fine and exciting 2016 vintage. The white wines of this vintage present themselves with classic aromas that are very characteristic of the varieties, fruity and juicy, sleek, and elegant – above all else with Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, and Gewürztraminer. With the reds, on the other hand, the Schiava (Vernatsch) along with the Santa Maddalena and Lago di Caldaro that are made from it, with intensely colored, fruity-juicy wines, are for Alto Adige's winemakers some of the best of the past decade. And presenting themselves as powerful and structured with finesse and elegance are not only the Lagrein, but also the Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Cabernet.

With few exceptions, the harvest quantities are once again within the average over many years.

Comments by Wine Producers

Bassa Atesina – Martin Foradori, Tenuta J. Hofstätter

Very Balanced Wines

After a year that started out only fair, the autumn also made up for it all in the Bassa Atesina, as Martin Foradori of the Tenuta J. Hofstätter reports with pleasure: “The 2016 vintage is convincing with very balanced wines.” With Gewürztraminer, the trend of recent years is confirmed with “elegant, sleek wines”. With Pinot Noir, the appropriate acidity that is similar to prior years provides the corresponding backbone. “The 2016 Pinot Noirs present themselves with perfect physiological ripeness, with freshness and elegance, balanced tannins, and inviting drinkability.”

Oltradige – Martin Lemayr, Colterenzio

Special White Wines and Lago di Caldaro

For the Oltradige, 2016 brings along special white wines with lovely elegance and finesse, with freshness and fruit. The Pinot Blancs thrill Martin Lemayr, winemaker at Colterenzio Winery, “with classic, typical Pinot Blanc tones, sleek, soft, and inviting, with fruit notes, juiciness, and elegance.” The later time for the harvest that was purposefully tailored to each grape ended up having a thoroughly ideal effect upon the individual varieties. And the Schiava (Vernatsch) and Lago di Caldaro wines profited from fabulous autumn weather in all areas, the bunches remained loose with small berries. The 2016 Lago di Caldaro presents itself correspondingly well with “fabulous, radiant color expression, with mature structure, and fresh, juicy elegance.”

Bolzano – Stephan Filippi, Cantina Bolzano

A Great Vintage for Santa Maddalena and Lagrein

Stephan Filippi, winemaker at Cantina Bolzano, is pleased about one of the best Santa Maddalena vintages in the last decade. “The 2016 Santa Maddalena is convincing with its color intensity and fruit, with inviting purity and an interesting interplay of sugar and acidity, with structure and fresh, appealing drinkability.” At just a high level is the 2016 Lagrein: “With ripe fruit and spice, intense, dark hues, and concentrated tannins.” The white wines from the area around Bolzano present themselves as stimulating and inviting, particularly the Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay. Also very exciting for Filippi are the other red wines of this vintage, especially the Cabernet with “top-quality tannins, intense color expression, and a powerful, harmonious structure.”

Adige Valley – Harald Schraffl, Nals Margreid

Typical White Wines and Exciting Red Wines

The late harvest in the warmer areas of the Adige Valley had a very positive effect upon the 2016 vintage. “Surprisingly good for both the red and white wines,” says Harald Schraffl, winemaker at Nals Margreid Winery, with conviction. “A lovely interplay of acidity, fruit, and complexity characterizes the white wines all across the board. That holds true for Pinot Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc just as much as for Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, or Müller Thurgau.” The cool nights before the harvest have provided for above all else a good Sauvignon Blanc year: the vintage is characterized by appealing fruit aromas with elder flowers, grapefruit, and pepper as well as a complex structure with density and a mineral-rich quality. What especially stands out for Schraffl are the Chardonnay among the whites and the Schiava among the reds.

Val Venosta – Martin Aurich, Winery Unterortl - Family Aurich

Wines with an Alpine Character and Profile

The winegrowers of the Val Venosta were able to have time to leave the harvest until the end of October 2016. “The vegetation period between blossoming and harvest lasted two weeks longer than in a normal year,” which, for Martin Aurich of the Winery Unterortl - Family Aurich, represented “the ideal conditions for a very promising vintage.” Healthy grapes with a good, balanced acidity-

sugar proportion provide for very characteristic Val Venosta wines. The Riesling presents itself with fresh, fruity aromas and with linear, complex fruit as very typical of the Val Venosta, stimulating and mineral-rich. For Aurich, the Pinot Noir is convincing with its fresh, fruity, Alpine character, with favorable acidity levels and well-incorporated tannins.

Isarco Valley – Günther Kerschbaumer, Estate Köfererhof

Elegant, Drinkable Isarco Valley Wines that are Characteristic of their Variety

Günther Kerschbaumer of the Estate Köfererhof in Novacella is very satisfied with the 2016 vintage in the Isarco Valley. "The ideal temperature fluctuations between day and night during the autumn provided for intense aromas and the optimal ripeness of the grapes. Variety after variety could be harvested at just the right moment." The 2016 wines of the Isarco Valley present themselves without exception as very characteristic of their variety, with prominent fruity tones and with great elegance. For Kerschbaumer, the vintage "may be somewhat lacking in the complexity of 2015, but 2016 is convincing for its invitingly drinkable Isarco Valley wines that are typical to their variety and crispy with a mineral-rich quality, from Sylvaner to Kerner to Veltliner. A vintage to enjoy!"