

PURE CHABLIS

One grape

One region

One of a kind

Press release – 30 October 2020

Only from France

Chablis 2020: An early yet classic vintage

The 2020 vintage will forever remain in our memories. While the vines continued their inexorable growth cycle, albeit slightly faster than usual, the rest of the world was trying to protect itself from COVID-19. It was, indeed, an early vintage in 2020, with picking starting in August. But it was also a classic vintage that produced wines offering good balance and the characteristic vigor of Chablis wines.

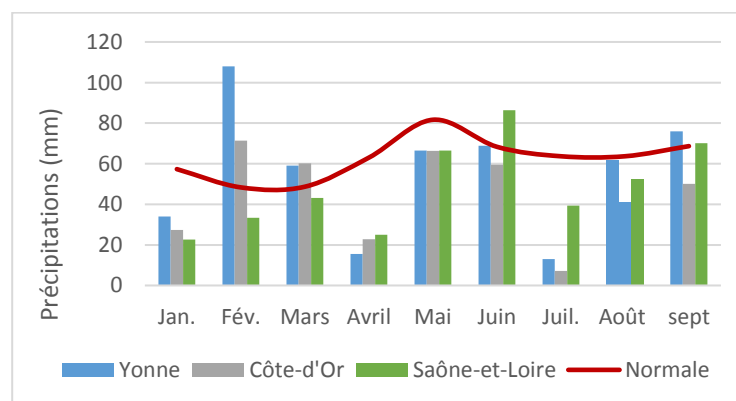
It all began with a warm and wet winter that allowed the vines to emerge from hibernation relatively early on. Budburst took place during the second half of March.

As the whole of France went into lockdown, winegrowers were leaving their beds in the middle of the night to protect their vines from spring frosts. From the end of the March to early April, and again on 11 and 12 May, temperatures plunged below freezing. Luckily, ambient humidity limited the effects, with the only damage happening in the most susceptible spots, mainly in the bottom of valleys.

The advance in growth seen in March was maintained. Flowering lasted for two weeks and the beautiful blossoms indicated a generous harvest, despite those few plots hit by the frost showing a little shatter or *millerandage*.

Then came the summer, hot and dry. The lack of rain sometimes acted as a brake on ripening, and it also limited the size of the individual grapes and thus the overall yield at harvest.

Monthly rainfall (mm)

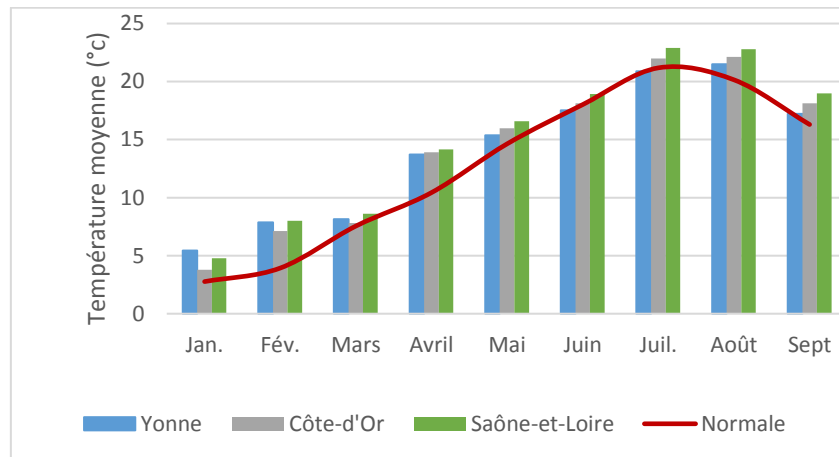


In August, the vines enjoyed the occasional shower of rain, but this was patchy across the region, with some villages like Poilly-sur-Serein, Viviers, BÉru, and part of Chichée receiving less than others.

Some of the vines were also hit by hail, like a few plots in Courgis in May. A hailstorm also happened on 12 August in the villages of BÉru and Beines.

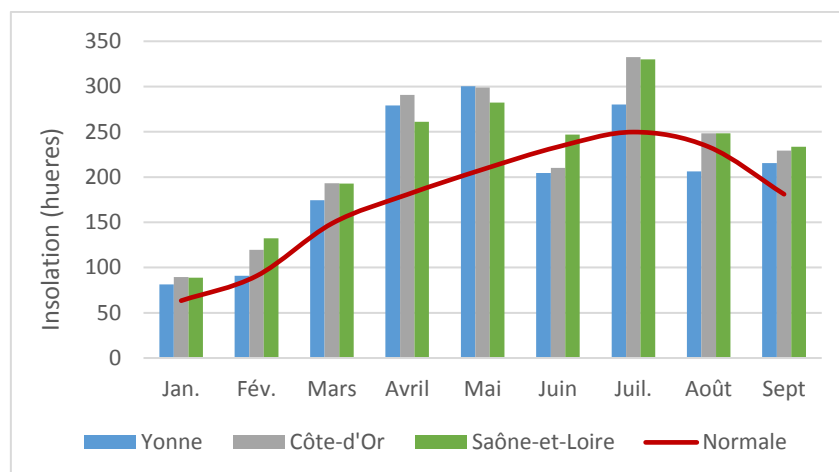
The growth cycle of the vines maintained its advance of 15-20 days compared to averages for the past 20 years, with ripening complete in August, in hotter conditions than a “normal” year. 2020 was therefore not, strictly speaking, a hot vintage; it was, above all, an early vintage.

Average monthly temperatures (°C)



On the eve of the harvest, the vines were in excellent health. However, those plots facing east on pebbly soil or growing on less vigorous rootstock suffered more than other plots with regard to this full-summer ripening, showing traces of scorching or drying.

Monthly sunshine (hour)



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Harvesting began on 24 August, and by the following week, practically everyone was bringing in their crop. Picking continued for three weeks, finishing in mid-September.

In 2020, deciding when to start picking was a tricky task, although the weather did allow winegrowers flexibility in this respect, and to harvest their grapes at the pace of their choosing.

The pace and date of flowering suggested to producers that the harvest would be a generous one. But the lack of rainfall changed things and yields from the press were lower than they had hoped.

It is still too early to precisely evaluate the volume of the harvest given all the disparities from one plot to the next. However, professionals agree that the average yield was between 52 and 57 hectoliters per hectare, and up to 60 hectoliters per hectare for some.

Alcoholic fermentation began quickly and passed without a hitch. The juices showed normal levels of sugar and little malic acid, but enough tartaric acid to keep the wines balanced and fresh, which is the magic formula for Chablis wines.

This early vintage is one of quality, and a classic one for Chablis wines.

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