



VINTAGE 2020 HARVEST REPORT

The climatic conditions

DROUGHT AND LATER START THAN INITIALLY EXPECTED

The winter was dramatically dry with only 64 mm of rain from May to September 2019 in Puente Alto, 57% less than last year (150 mm) and 75% less than the average 256 mm during the period 1996-2019. In the Central Valley, we have to reference back to 1968 to record such an extreme drought. May and June were cooler than average and versus last year, while July and August were warmer, initially indicating early budding. However, September and the first week of October were cooler than average, so bud break finally occurred on October 9th to 15th for Cabernet Sauvignon; later than expected and 2-6 days later than average. The growth was slow and limited in October as the temperatures were variable, with cold days alternating with warm sunny days.

HIGH TEMPERATURES IN SPRING AND EARLY FLOWERING

November was very warm, with higher temperatures compared to last year and compared to average. These warmer temperatures generated an intense growth in November, and all the initial delay observed at budbreak disappeared during flowering. The 50% flowering stage occurred November 11th -14th for Cabernet Sauvignon, 4-7 days earlier than usual. December was then extremely warm with an average temperature of 20,7°C, compared to 19,2°C on average. In addition, Spring was also very dry with only 2 mm between October and December, compared to 11 mm last year, and 34 mm historically. Due to the lack of rain, irrigation started earlier than usual, during mid-August and was maintained throughout the dry summer.



HOT SUMMER DAYS AND EARLY VERAISON

The average temperatures in January and February 2020 were extremely high, similar to last year, but clearly higher than average with 21,4°C in February 2020 compared to 19,9°C in historical figures. Yet, with 34,3°C as the absolute highest temperature of January 2020, we did not reach the record maximum temperature of 38,5°C of January 2019. Without any summer rain, a close control of hydric stress and irrigation was necessary during these acute drought conditions. Following the tendency observed during flowering, veraison occurred 4-7 days earlier than usual on the Cabernet Sauvignon, and 2-4 days early on Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

EARLY RIPENING AND ACCELERATED PICKING IN MARCH-APRIL

Although the initial late budding could have hinted at a late harvest, the intensity of the drought and the high temperatures then clearly aimed at an early harvest. As expected, the first Merlot was picked on March 13th, 8 days earlier than last year. The first Cabernet Sauvignon was then picked on March 16th, 11 days earlier than in 2019. The other batches were then expected to be harvested from the 3rd week of March until at least the end of April. However, considering the critical situation generated by the arrival of Coronavirus in Chile, and the elevated risks of not being able to receive and process the grapes later, we decided to anticipate and accelerate harvest, starting with higher daily quantities on March 18th in Puente Alto. Taking into consideration the overall situation, we were decisively very happy to have an early maturation of the grapes in 2020.





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The harvest

AN EARLY AND FAST HARVEST

The harvest was earlier and shorter than usual, lasting 24 days over a 5 week period, versus 39 days over a 10 week period last year. The grapes from Puente Alto (mainly Cabernet Sauvignon) were first harvested between March 13th and April 3rd over a period of 3 weeks. A few days later, we started in Peumo harvesting the Carménère grapes. These were picked at a normal pace in 7 days from April 8th to April 17th (5 weeks earlier than last year, but just a week earlier than 2017, a similar vintage to 2020 in terms of water availability and temperatures). Although typically low, the yields on the old vines were slightly higher than last year, with 18 hl/ha in the blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon and 41 hl/ha of Carménère. The younger more densely planted vines produced lower yields than last year, in line with our estimations and goal after conducting green harvests on all of them, reaching 43 hl/ha of Cabernet Sauvignon, 53 hl/ha of Cabernet Franc, 58 hl/ha of Merlot and Petit Verdot.



The wines of 2020

PROMISING VINTAGE OF EXCELLENT FRUIT, FRESHNESS AND TENSION

It is still early to have a definitive opinion of the 2020 vintage as all of the lots, now in barrels, just recently finished their malolactic fermentation. However, our first impressions on the wines - after 2 to 4 weeks - are extremely positive, with probably more freshness, fruit, precision and tension than usual.

Although initially we would have preferred to harvest the first lots of Cabernet Sauvignon a few days later, we were actually quite happy and impressed by the quality and the ripeness of the grapes, with normal values of potential alcohol and pH. Brought-in under perfect weather and sanitary conditions, the grapes gave bright wines with good acidity, persistence, and pure aromas. The old Cabernet Sauvignon vines produced vibrant, elegant and dense wines, with well wrapped tannins as usual; while the younger vines from the variety resulted in intense fruit, finesse and refined tannins, although not as round as those produced from the old vines. The Carménère is a very pleasant surprise, considering the early picking dates: more fruit, more elegance and purity, without any herbaceous note, maintaining the roundness and silkiness of its tannins. The Petit Verdot at this stage, is better than last year, with more character, density and fruit. The Cabernet Franc and the Merlot seem a bit lower than average, with less elegance and ripeness, going more to the freshness and the verticality side. Although the next steps of the vinification and the barrel aging will be determinant in the evolution and the final expression of the wines. Vintage 2020 so far, is showing tremendously well. With interesting yields and very promising quality of batches coming from diverse ages and varieties of vines, we will be offered many options of magical associations at the moment of blending and producing Almariva 2020.

We have great expectations and excitement for such a special vintage that will see Almariva celebrate its 25th anniversary.

