

Harvest 2022 Press Release



Have extremes become the new norm?

Calm has returned to the vineyards after 12 days bubbling with excitement.

The years are now characterised by extreme conditions and ‘the norm’ seems to have become a thing of the past. Whilst 2021 was a year of humidity and cool temperatures, 2022 stood out for its intense heat, drought and early ripening.

These weather conditions gave us one great advantage: there was no sign of vine disease (fungal disease in particular) and the harvested grapes were therefore perfectly ripe and healthy.

A closer look at the key events over the winegrowing year at Champagne Deutz.

Despite the difficult conditions encountered during the 2021 vintage, we are pleased to say that our vines’ reserves were not impacted. The vine was nicely hardened at the start of the growing cycle which enabled us to carry out high-quality pruning work.

Phase ‘1’ Autumn/Winter

When it comes to ‘seasonal rhythms’, there is no denying that cold winters are becoming increasingly rare. We can count on one hand the number of days and nights when temperatures fell below zero.

The Autumn/Winter of 2021/2022 was characterised by humidity and warm temperatures.

Such conditions are not beneficial to the vine’s health and make any mechanical work impossible. This led to a delay in the crushing of the vine shoots.

Phase '2' Spring

Although the vineyards are less prone to winter frosts these days, they are becoming increasingly common in the early part of the season.

There were two frosty spells in spring this year. On 4 April temperatures dropped as low as -8°C in certain parts of our vineyards just as the vines were waking up from their winter dormancy. Fortunately, the weather was dry and windy and there was very little damage caused by this first spring frost.

Heavy rainfall on 7, 8 and 9 April brought our vines a healthy dose of humidity. Anticyclonic conditions set in on the afternoon of 9 April and pushed away the clouds. The starry sky was a sign of the cold temperatures that would follow on the nights of 9 and 10 April. In the morning the temperatures were subzero and the vines were covered by a fine layer of white frost. The damage was done and we recorded an 8% loss of buds across all of our vineyards.

The vine however resumed its growth and the average dates for bud burst recorded this year by Patrick Boivin, Director of Vignoble Deutz, and his assistant Cédric Georget, were 11, 16 and 19 April respectively for Chardonnays, Pinot Noirs and Meuniers. Although slightly later than usual, these dates remain in keeping with the 10-year average.

The intense heat and sun in the early part of the growing cycle led to the gradual drying of the layers of the soil.

Whilst the lack of water undeniably had its advantages (lower risk of fungal disease and the facilitation of mechanical soil work), the younger vines were nonetheless very thirsty and we were required to water them to prevent too much of them from dying off.

Temperatures soared from 14 May and were well above the seasonal average. High temperatures at this time of the year are highly beneficial for the growth of the vine.

Lifting work ('relevage') began on 19 May.

Flowering

The vine went through a growth spurt and gained as many as four new leaves in just a week. The first flowers appeared on the vines on 13 May.

Although there is an intrinsic variability between the terroirs and the vineyard plots, full flowering was recorded on the following dates:

- 28 May for our Aÿ Pinot Noirs
- 28 May for our Bisseuil Chardonnays
- 31 May for the Côte des Blancs
- Our Meuniers were later and did not flower until 6 June

A succession of stormy spells in June brought the vine some water just when it needed it most. The vine turned green once again, growth resumed, the grapes swelled and the clusters began to close before our very eyes. All of these factors led us to expect an early harvest in 2022.

Phase '3' Summer : "August makes the must"

Summer was particularly warm and dry. A few light storms brought the vines some very welcome water although there was no sign of the usual vine diseases (mildew, powdery mildew).

We did however notice, here and there, that some grapes had been scalded and were dried up, particularly on the clusters at the end of the vine rows which have the most exposure to the sun. That said, the loss was fortunately minimal.

From 8 August, we began to carefully monitor ripeness levels in the grapes, plot by plot. The evolution curve for maturity was very steep.

After consultation between the winegrowing and winemaking teams, the date of 29 August was set for the start of the harvest in the Deutz vineyards.

The Harvest

The first grapes to be picked were those in our Aÿ and Pierry vineyards.

The initial heterogeneity across the plots had somewhat reduced and picking was therefore carried out in quick succession across all of the terroirs.

The harvesting of the grapes, which had received virtually no treatments owing to the exceptional weather, was spread out across 12 days during which the heat and sunshine never let up and made the work rather difficult for our team of pickers.

NB. A quick look at two of our most renowned terroirs and eponymous wines: The Deutz harvests began in La Côte Glacière (Aÿ Pinot Noir) and came to close in Aÿ with the Meurtet plot (Pinot Noir) even though they are situated less than 100 metres from each other!

As it is so rare, it is certainly worth mentioning that no sorting of the harvested grapes was required this year.

In the pressing room, our duo of Cellar Masters, Caroline Latrive and Michel Davesne, as well as their assistant Olivier Bernard, were delighted to see such perfectly healthy grapes being brought in.

The volume of the harvest was just as plentiful and almost reached the maximum level authorised for the AOC by the Comité Champagne: 12 000 Kg per hectare.

The mustimeter showed high alcohol levels of around 11.4% ABV on average. (We had to wait for full phenolic maturity and the shift from vegetal aromas to more fruity aromas before deciding on the harvest date for each plot).

The acidity levels were relatively low, in particular the malic acidity which had dropped as a result of the sun and high temperatures.

Some remarkable levels were recorded: 11.4% ABV for Aÿ, 11.3% ABV for Avize, 11.65% ABV for Le Mesnil and Oger and 11.6% ABV for Mareuil sur Aÿ.

All the indicators are pointing to some outstanding wines in 2022.

However, as our CEO Fabrice Rosset likes to remind us: “we must remain humble and prudent as it is only when we taste the still wines in a few months that will we be able to confirm with certainty that the 2022 vintage is of high quality and true to the Deutz hallmark style”.



From left to right : Fabrice Rosset, Champagne Deutz' Chairman and CEO, Caroline Latrive and Michel Davesne, the duo of Champagne Deutz' Cellar Masters

Video « Harvest 2022 » by Champagne Deutz :
<https://youtu.be/DGfE8-Gxz6g>