



TENUTA
DELLE
TERRE NERE

Harvest 2016

The vintage was characterized by a mild winter, with temperatures almost never below zero in the cold months of December, January and February. The average rainfall was scarce, with only one snowy event in mid-January and only a few frosts in the coldest mornings of January and February. At the beginning of March, a hailstorm of vast proportions saw more than 30 cm of ice left on the ground. This hailstorm had no direct effect on vegetation, as the plants were still in the resting phase, however, its violence, boosted by strong winds, resulted in damaging the gems, which decreased the production of the affected vines.

The vegetative awakening was two weeks early compared to the average of the previous years, precisely because of the high temperatures and low winter rains. Overall, budding occurred between the end of March and early April. Then, an abnormal heat wave in the first ten days of April, led to a significant growth of the shoots that, in less than a week, on average exceeded 10 cm in length.

During May we experienced the return of a winter-like weather, with a significant temperature decline and abundant rainfall. This, however, allowed a partial recovery of the water deficit accumulated during the winter.

The end of the month saw temperatures rising, which brought phonological ripening in balance with respect to previous vintages. At the beginning of June, the arrival of a low-pressure area from the Tyrrhenian Sea, brought more rain and even thunderstorms, which again caused a new temperature drop and high humidity.

At this stage a careful defense strategy became vital to avert dangerous mildew attacks, particularly in the delicate phase of flowering and fruit set. The unstable weather lasted until the middle of the month. In fact, from June 15 to 20, there was a gradual rising of daytime temperatures with highs around 28-30° C; Minimum temperature, however, remained rather low, with thermal excursions between day and night of around 15-20 °Celsius.

In July, as usual, there was a stable weather pattern with warm, sunny days, low level of cloud cover and rather low relative humidity. Unlike other years, there were no heat peaks: in fact, the maximum temperatures never exceeded 35 °C while the minimum at night were often below 20 °C.

August started along the lines of the previous month, with a rise in temperatures after some rainy days, which didn't lead to excessive heat peaks. This situation remained stable until the end of the month, albeit with a significant lowering of the maximum and minimum temperatures with each passing week. At the end of the month a period of low-pressure brought on more unstable weather with rainfalls that actually improved the situation of water stress of the vineyards: they hadn't, in



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fact, had water for almost a month. Following this unstable weather phase, the temperatures dropped, with the maximum below 30 °C and the minimum under 18-20 °C.

Abundant rainfalls and high relative humidity were experienced throughout September. This led to a slowdown in the veraison, which didn't reach completion, in some cases, until the last half of the month. Furthermore, the microclimate situation at a cluster level, imposed additional work in the vineyard, in particular severe pruning and targeted thinning, functional to an effective prevention of gray mold infections (*Botrytis cinerea*) and / or acid rot.

Fortunately the control of the moth population (*Lobesia botrana*), thanks to an efficient organic management, kept our clusters healthy and intact.

The end of September was characterized by a significant temperature drop, with minimum temperatures during the night below 10 °C and maximum daytime temperatures never more than 22-24 °C, with humid winds of Scirocco which certainly did not help to improve the situation. Despite all, the first white grapes harvested were perfectly healthy with excellent acidity albeit with a potential alcohol slightly lower than the average of other years.

October saw once more unstable weather, with rains and high humidity brought in by Scirocco winds, which also contributed to increase daytime temperatures up to almost 30 °C. Such weather conditions somewhat hampered the even ripening of the fruit. Therefore, the grapes were harvested by making a rigorous selection in the vineyard. At Terre Nere we found no great issues, although the ripening at this stage showed a general slowdown.

After the first ten days of October the situation improved, with the Mistral wind reducing humidity and lowering temperatures, leading to stable weather conditions until the end of the month. The ripening at this point was in due course, indeed suitable for the quality standards of our production.

In general, the 2016 vintage yielded wines of high quality, with an acidity significantly higher than the average and slightly lower alcohol. The wines at the end of the alcoholic fermentation seemed fragrant and fresh, with intense aromas both in the whites and the reds. The whites very pleasing and salty, the reds showing intense color with a most agreeable impact on the middle palate, fine and elegant tannins and a lingering finish. All in all, quite complex and complete wines with a fine spirit.

It can definitely be said that 2016 is a lovely vintage for our Etna wines, characterized by the advantages that cool vintages enjoy when the grapes are ripe and healthy.