



TENUTA
DELLE
TERRE NERE

The 2017 Vintage

The 2017 vintage was characterized by mild weather until the end of **December**. Between then and the beginning of January, temperatures dropped significantly. The thermal drop brought on considerable snowfalls which determined on two occasions the accumulation of a significant amount of snow, which altogether exceeded 60 cm, with peaks of 1 meter in the highest vineyards.

Temperatures remained rigid throughout **January** and a good part of **February**, with morning frosts characterized by temperatures close to or below zero. Rainfalls occurred mainly during **March**, in average quantity. Temperatures rose rapidly in the first two weeks of **April** and then fell dangerously around April 18th-20th. In particular, on 20th April a freeze caused frostbite damage as a result of the thermal inversion that hit young vines in areas where air circulation is more difficult.

The greatest damage in our vineyards occurred in the young vineyard of the Moganazzi area (damage on young plants of 70-80%) and to a lesser extent in some vineyards in the Calderara area. The period of budding was in line (early **April**), while the growth of the shoots, following the return of the cold described above, suffered a slowdown, with a delay at the beginning of May estimated on average in about 1 week.

In the first half of **May** there was a rise in temperature linked to a persistent Scirocco wind that brought on highs of around 30°C; consequently, the phenologic delay accumulated until the end of April was easily recovered.

The second half of **May** was cooler with average temperatures in line with the period and a few rainfalls that were of great benefit to the young vines planted during the winter. May ended with stable weather and average temperatures, with rather low minimums. The amount of rain was scarce however, favouring possible summer water stress.

The first half of **June** was characterized by a certain instability with a few rainy events, one of which very intense. At first, temperatures were rather low increasing sharply to almost 40°C, accompanied by very hot Scirocco winds. The extreme conditions put a strain on the very young plants; to cope with this situation, we manually irrigated each of them. Health-wise, once averted the mildew risk, we focused on the defense from oidium and tignoletta with targeted, specific and strictly biological treatments.



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The rest of **June**, unlike in 2016, was not characterized by precipitation, while at the thermal level there was a gradual increase in temperatures. This situation brought a certain tranquility about the health of the vines, in such a delicate phase as that between flowering and fruit set. On the other hand, the absence of rainfall started to give some concern for the lack of water that young plants could face.

In **July** and **August** there was a continuous rise in temperatures that in the second half of the month led to situations of scorching heat, with temperatures around 40°C. The wave of intense heat aggravated the drought situation, putting a strain on the vineyards, especially the younger ones.

During **September**, the temperatures lowered progressively to reach values in line with the average for the period. The water deficit due to the prolonged drought, however, was offset in part by some rainy events between September 10th and 20th.

In reality, There followed obvious early ripening for white grapes and in general in all young vineyards. This precociousness was gradually reduced in vineyards located in traditionally “late areas” (Santo Spirito, Guardiola, San Lorenzo) especially where the old vines are, which didn’t suffer from the thermal stress of the previous months.

October was characterized by mild temperatures and low humidity due to the persistence of Mistral winds that blew incessantly throughout the harvest. This resulted in health conditions that had very few precedents in the recent history of Etna viticulture.

The grapes were so healthy that for the first time in the history of Tenuta delle Terre Nere, the use of sulfur dioxide in the vinification phase (already very low in normal vintages) was completely eliminated. In other words, all the wines of the 2017 vintage were vinified without the use of sulfur dioxide.

In general, the 2017 vintage promises wines of very high quality. From an analytical point of view, a noticeably lower acidity is reported, while the alcohol content and extract are slightly higher than the average of the other years. The wines at the end of the alcoholic fermentation were very intense at the nose, with marked notes of ripe fruit, flowers and sweet spices. **White wines** have a pleasant acidity on the palate supported by an important structure; the **red wines** have sweet, rich and ripe tannins, balanced by a rather powerful structure that never overflows into opulence. Rather, they maintain the finesse and elegance which are the hallmark of Tenuta delle Terre Nere’s wines.

It can certainly be said that 2017 is a year to be counted among the warm vintages on Etna. Despite this, thanks to the great quality of the estate’s vineyards and the extreme care reserved them, 2017

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wines have a very high average quality with peaks of excellence, specifically in the wines from the old vines of the highest altitudes.

All in all, we would hazard saying that the 2017 reds will rival those of the finest vintages we've had at Tenuta delle Terre Nere.

A special note is due to the 2017 whites, all displaying a rare and complex intensity that we cannot remember experiencing so early in their development. So much so, that induces us to suppose in them an unrivalled quality.