



TENUTA  
DELLE  
TERRE NERE

## 2021 VINTAGE

A year beginning with a mild and very dry winter, snow at vineyard altitudes appearing just once and in small quantity. Rain in the first three months of the year totaled 100 mm against an average of 250 mm.

**April** followed with particularly cold weather, bringing about a late and inhomogeneous budding and damage due to late freezes.

Conversely **May** and **June** were characterized by unusually warm *scirocco* (southern) winds which saw the vegetation recuperating April's growth loss.

By **July** the lack of rain accumulation during the winter months coupled to a drought beginning in mid May started to severely stress the young plantings. Notwithstanding irrigation where possible, we lost several hundred vines. The drought continued through July and **August**. Setting was a week early with significant *coulure* and floral abortion. By late August young plantings in particularly rocky soils were precociously losing their leaves. In order to keep them alive we dropped all clusters. The protracted drought slowed down the vegetative activity, the young vines concentrating on survival.

The older vines fared far better, and simply reacted by producing very small berries and showed no vegetative stress whatsoever. Veraison started early, very slowly, and finished late.

In a **September** still warmer than average finally the vineyards got relief from mid month showers. Vegetative activity accelerated and with it an acceleration of the ripening, which remained uneven. The first Carricante grapes were harvested roughly a week early, the last a week later than average.

**October** was cold and wet, the temperature dropping suddenly followed by very heavy rainfalls. The *Nerello* grapes slowed down and gradually aligned themselves to average ripening times.

Having said all the above, one would have expected very high sugars, low acidity and formidable tannins, such as was true of other hot vintages, such as 2008, 2012, 2014. This, however, only in part was true. Acidities on the whole resulted just a touch below average; alcohol levels decidedly and agreeably below average. Notwithstanding a deliberately delicate handling of maceration-fermentation to limit extraction as much as possible, the proportion of skins to juice was extraordinarily high. Tasting the first red wines that completed *malo*, one does perceive the vintage's tannic impact.

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**Production plummeted:** the lowest in the last 20 vintages. April freezes, *coulure*, floral abortion, followed by a four month drought that resulted in very small berries with tough skins and little juice, left us with roughly a 30% loss in production, only partly compensated by several hectares of new vines of *Nerello* coming into production.

**On the positive side,** the prolonged drought yielded all grapes in the healthiest sanitary condition I've ever seen. The harvest was long and deliberate, lasting over one month, and allowed slow but sure ripening. The early ripening unevenness dispelled, and with it my fear of finding wines in some cases vegetal.

Our whites are already showing well: we expect fine, elegant and substantial wines.

Surprisingly, given the very warm and protracted summer, the reds have great freshness and very promising, deep, ripe – but not overripe! – bouquets. Great variation from Cru to Cru on the mouth feel, with a generalized tannic presence, never rustic, but decidedly gripping. Wines of a sinewy rather than muscular nature, that I believe shall appreciate some aging and shall reveal their virtues more and more with the passage of time.