



# Côtes du Rhône

## - Når livet nydes

### The hour of the Grape Harvest has arrived for the Rhône Valley

The Rhone vineyard is in full effervescence. The grape harvest has just started. The winegrowers are ready, even if the vine this year **has a ten day advance compared to 2010**.

In the **southernmost appellations**, the first shearing took place in the south of the Gard on **August 22nd** (for certain **white varieties such as** viogniers). The grape harvest will spread out in stages in the remainder of the Gard, Vaucluse and Drôme.

For the **northern appellations**, harvesting will begin as of **August 24th** by the premature sectors of Crozes Hermitage and St Peray whites. The Syrah harvest, the unique red variety of the southern Côtes du Rhône, will begin **September 1st**.

For **Grenache and Syrah**, the harvest volume should be satisfactory according to last observations, whereas the quantities could be more limited for **Carignan and Mourvèdre**.

#### **2011 Harvest: quantity and quality**

Precocity is always a pledge of quality. The 2007 and 2009 vintages, particularly precocious, were largely recognized.

Today, while remaining attentive to the evolution of their vineyard, the **professionals of the Rhône Valley are optimistic**: the Rhodanien vineyard benefits from a **very healthy** situation, **favorable** to a great vintage.

**The Harvest looks promising in quality and in quantity**. According to the first estimates, after several years of declining harvests, 2011 should make a come-back with **outputs in conformity with the capacities of Rhône appellation production**, that is to say more than 1.5 million liters for the Côtes du Rhone Regional wines.

#### **A carefree year**

A rather mild fall and winter, characterized by temperatures close to seasonal averages, and low rainfall led to an **early start of the vegetative cycle of the vine**.

The particularly high spring temperatures accentuated this advance, in which **flowering took place in optimal conditions**.

A 20 day advance on 2010 was accounted for in June, but the atypical weather conditions of June and July slowed down the vegetative evolution of the vine. The water deficit noted in mid-June was somewhat resolved thanks to a couple of summer storms. **The ripening which had begun mid-July occurred very slowly**.

The strong heat wave in mid-August reversed the summers trend, **with a rapid maturation of the grapes, a significant increase in sugar content** (+ 1.70% vol. on average for the Gard and Vaucluse, all varieties combined), and a **notable reduction in total acidity** (- 1.25 g/l on average in the same sectors).

Produced in 6 departments, the **Rhône Valley wines represent the primary economic activity of the region** with 413 million bottles marketed in 2009 /2010 in 155 countries.

With 46,000 direct or indirect jobs in the sector, the wine activity is the number 1 employer of the Rhône Valley.

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