

Vintage 2003

The season started with great anticipation at the end of June and the phase of the sprouting came about in a warm climate, with scattered rain which allowed regular vegetation.

From June onwards the rains were almost non-existent, together with high temperatures. In these unusual conditions for Valpolicella the favourable characteristics of the microclimate were highlighted, such as the clay soils' ability to hold water and therefore guarantee regular moisture levels.

Our vineyards in Negrar, around three hectares with heavy clay soil, demonstrated a perfect adaptability to "tropical" climates bringing the grapes to a perfect ripening with a large amount of polyphenolic substances.

All the land situated in an elevated position better supported these high temperatures, for example our vineyard in the hills above Fumane situated at 500 meters above sea level, where the average temperature was 5-6°C below the average and proved ideal for a correct ripening of the grapes.

July, August and September with approximately 80 millimetres of rain and temperatures around 32°-37°C showed up the value of the vineyards equipped with automatic irrigation systems, which proved indispensable particularly for the broken and stony ground in the plain.

This year will be remembered not only for the drought and high temperatures, but also for the very few attacks by parasites.

Under these meteorological conditions the harvest was earlier than in previous years, beginning in the vineyards of Negrar with the selection of grapes for Amarone on the 12th of September where the harvest normally begins around the 10th of October.

The Corvina, the Rondinella and the Molinara are the grape varieties which, different to Corvinone, are more stable from a quality point of view and therefore this year have developed well during the year.

This year which was "extreme" for our region, and showed up the professional expertise of the better winegrowers who were able to manage to best advantage their vineyards with low productivity and the thinning out of the grape bunches to maintain the balance of the vegetative system which would otherwise have suffered from hydro stress.