

VINTAGES



Vintages are not only dependent upon the growing conditions and the picking of the grapes but also the drying period: ie usually the months of October through to end of January or beyond. Unless the grapes undergo appassimento in a climate controlled environment, like the state of the art facilities at "Terre di Fumane" used by Allegrini, the winter months should be dry, cold, with sufficient wind to ventilate the drying sheds, otherwise the grapes are prone to grey mould.

With Amarone only achieving full international status in 1990 vintage records before this year can be unreliable and incomplete: especially as bottles from the 50s, 60s and 70s are very rare. Bertani and Masi do still have some stocks of older wines.



The table below is based on vintage appraisals provided by the Consorzio di Tutela della Valpolicella

1947	Excellent	1973	Good
1958	Very Good	1974	Very Good
1959	Good	1975	Good
1960	Fair	1976	Very Good
1961	Very Good	1977	Very Good
1962	Very Good	1978	Good
1963	Fair	1979	Very Good
1964	Very Good	1980	Good
1965	Fair	1981	Good
1966	Good	1982	Good
1967	Very Good	1983	Excellent
1968	Good	1984	Good
1969	Very Good	1985	Very Good
1970	Good	1986	Good
1971	Good	1987	Fair
1972	Fair	1988	Excellent
		1989	Fair



1990: Excellent



The Vintage that put Amarone well and truly on the international map. One of the five great vintages this century so far, which produced wines that are still outstandingly good now. Excellent weather from June continued all throughout the drying period, giving the perfect conditions to create this great wine.

1991: Good

Now showing fully mature wines: the beginning of the season was poor however better conditions later on enabled the grapes to recover.

1992: Fair

A very difficult vintage for Valpolicella as a whole and all wines now should be drunk.

1993: Good



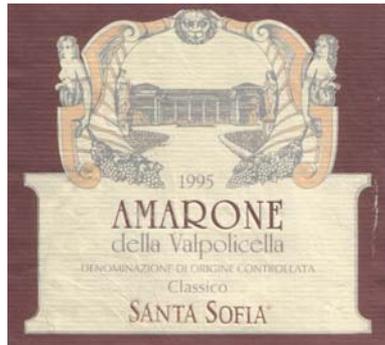
Perfect conditions for the drying period were offset by uneven conditions in the vineyard. The best of the wines are powerful and ripe, peaking now but many will keep.

1994: Good



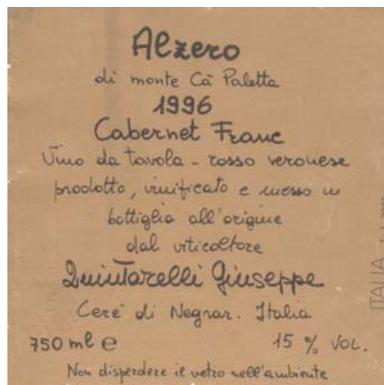
A mild winter and spring raised hopes only to be dashed by heavy rain and storms in August and September. However some producers notably Allegrini made exceptional wines in this year.

1995: Excellent



A truly outstanding vintage and probably one of the finest of the century. Optimum environments from the growing conditions, to harvest and all the way through the appassimento period.

1996: Fair



Like 1992 a difficult period in the vineyard with rain and a late harvest. The drying process was also interrupted by humid conditions. Still some excellent wines were made by some producers.

1997: Excellent



Along with 1990 and 1995 this was an exceptional year. Whilst violent hail storms hit the area in July, the harvest was early with top quality fruit on the vines. The vintage is characterised with rich concentrated wines showing excellent ageing ability and structure.

1998: Excellent



Rains in September assisted the growing season which was predominately dry. Ideal conditions due to low humidity accompanied the drying process. The wines produced are ripe and balanced with medium term ageing potential.

1999: Good



The growing season was dictated by a wet summer and lower temperatures. However the vines produced reasonable quality fruit and some exceptional early maturing wines were produced.

2000: Excellent



The season was hot and dry with rain when it was needed: perfect conditions. The crop, which was early was small but consisted of superbly ripe and healthy fruit. Again there were perfect conditions for the drying period. All producers were able to make great wines with perfect balance and ageing ability but with early approachability.

2001: Good



The harvest started around 27 August with the picking finishing by the 15 October; five days earlier than the previous year but yields were down by 20% due primarily to a period of drought in June. Pockets of vineyards were also hit by hail storms which damaged the crop, in addition rain interrupted the harvest which had some impact on the appassimento phase.

2002: Fair



Hail and rain wiped out a large proportion of the crop on the 5th August: losses reached 50%: this was most devastating in the Classico zone. The harvest was completed in the week of 21 October with the grapes saved from disaster by a 20 day period of sun. Some producers including Allegrini took the view that their selected grapes destined for Amarone were not of sufficient quality and would be used to make Riserva Valpolicella instead. With hindsight the vintage was not as disastrous as first intimated.

2003: Very Good



The season was typified with high temperatures and lack of rain: none between April and the harvest. Older vines fared better, able to cope with the drought conditions which were the hottest in 150 years; Corvinone yielded better than either Corvina or Rondinella. The harvest was two weeks earlier than normal and was assisted by lower temperatures which helped the vines to balance sugar and acidity levels: what was picked was ideal for appassimento. Levels of production were up by approximately 5% - 10% on the previous year. Some excellent wines will be made.

2004: Excellent



This will be a great year for Amarone, the grapes will produce wines with excellent ageing ability and good structure and balance. Rain and lower temperatures delayed budding and flowering. However summer temperatures were ideal with most importantly sunny days and cool nights, ensuring the grapes ripened evenly and slowly with the harvest starting in the third week of August. Again production was up in some cases by 20% - 30%. Yields whilst cut by hail in early July ensured the remaining grapes were of excellent quality.

2005: Good



Yields were 20% down on the previous year, this was due to the rain as there were a lot of grapes which were just left on the vine due to black rot. However for those producers who picked early enough, the grapes showed excellent sugar content along with being well balanced with total acidity and polyphenol ripeness.

2006: Excellent

This Vendemmia produced the same level of yields as 2005 but with overall better quality. June and July were characterised by a long period of drought which gave way to an August which started cool with some rain, the harvest started in September and continued through to 21st October. With healthy grapes showing optimum acid and sugar levels, this will be an excellent year for Appassimento.

2007: Good

An excellent start to the year, a very mild winter was followed by a warm spring. A hot July and rain in August provided excellent opportunities for the grapes to achieve optimal ripening, but all was to change on the 30th August: a hail storm of devastating proportions descended upon Valpolicella just as the grapes intended for drying were being selected for picking. Those vineyards in the hills suffered most, the Classico Zone fared somewhat better, with losses of up to 90% equating to losses of €50m. The unaffected vineyards were able to pick from the first week of September, selected bunches showed well spaced grapes, ideally suited for appassimento. The remainder of September and October experienced very little rainfall and low humidity which ensured that the drying grapes enjoyed ideal conditions.