Major Wine Producing Countries

French wine harvest to rebound in 2018, say officials

French wine production in 2018 will be between 46 and 48 million hectolitres, up 27% over 2017 and a 7% increase compared to the average of the last five years, according to Agreste, a French agriculture ministry service. Mildew is undoubtedly the plague of 2018 for wine growers, along with hailstorms. But summer heatwaves have also brought forward potential harvest dates, despite a cold start to the year. 

Click here to read more

France: Champagne yields look set to break all records with bumper crop

This year’s Champagne yields are breaking all records, with one of the largest harvests in living memory in the offing.

However, the appellation authorities are restricting how much growers can produce. The Comite Champagne (CIVC) recently held its annual pre-harvest meeting and decreed the maximum appellation quantity which has been set at 10,800 kg per hectare. This is equal to last year’s volumes and is an indication that the region expects the Champagne market will level out in 2018, even if slight growth is expected for the following years.

Claude Castelina, a 78 year old grape producer from Hautvillers who has been working in the vineyards for nearly seven decades told Wine-Searcher that he has never seen so many grapes on the vines. Jean-Mary Tarlant of Champagne Tarlant concurred, adding that the harvest looks to be even bigger than 1970 and 1983.

This surfeit of grapes is also the reason why the Vignerons Indépendents de Champagne asked for a higher appellation quantity of 11,500 kg per hectare. According to their president, Yves Couvrreur, the extra 700 kg/ha would have helped ease the financial pressure of many independent Champagne makers, and would help their investments in export markets. He is concerned that restricting volumes will continue to push prices ever upwards and lead to another crisis such as in 1991.
“Grape prices rose sharply in ’89 and ’90, and then dropped all at once by 30 % in ’91,” he pointed out. “This severely impacted many growers. We do not want to find ourselves in the same situation in the next few years.”

Michel and Martine Loriot, from Champagne Apollonis, had also hoped for an appellation of around 11,000 kg/ha. “After the last few difficult vintages it is a pity to curb this healthy and abundant-looking harvest,” Martine Loriot said.

One of the reasons for this year’s large yields is partly down to two smaller previous harvests which were hit by severe spring frosts and mildew. With high temperatures forecast to prevail for the foreseeable future, hail storms remain a risk. Alternatively, if it does rain later in the month, then botrytis would present a real risk.

Source: Vinex

Click here to read more