

2006 VINTAGE REPORT

GENERAL CLIMATIC CONDITIONS OF THE 2006 VINTAGE IN CHILE

The 2005-2006 season began with a rainy winter over the normal (Apalta 1100mm, Atalayas 566,5mm, Las Kuras 562,5mm).

Spring was quite normal if we think of temperatures and rains. There is a frost on September the 12th in the central part of the country with some damages for Merlot in Apalta, Sauvignon blanc in Requinoa and Chardonnay in Casablanca.

In November flowering was short with good weather conditions but in December the conditions were very irregular in terms of temperatures with max of 32°C to 35°C but also some days with only 22°C to 24°C providing a delay in the developing of the berries.

The growing season finally was dry and colder than the past seven years. This occurs in all the valleys (Casablanca, Cachapoal and Colchagua). Conditions of luminosity and temperatures of end of march don't allow to compensate the climatic conditions of the month of February which was rather cloudy and with lower temperatures than the normal.

Summer was dry (the last rain occurs in November) but the veraison was very large and in February we still have some green berries.

In general terms, there was an absence of rain during the fruit's ripening season except a single, low-intensity event on April the 13th (15mm), and although there were some high temperatures, during March and April maximum temperatures were generally moderate.

At least on April the 15th and 16th there was a frost with very low temperatures (-2°C to -6°C)

In the end, we only noticed an average delay of twelve days in phenolic maturation.

The primary challenge of the 2006 vintage was the particularly long wait for each variety to reach proper phenolic maturity. However, the cool, dry summer and an early autumn allowed us to wait patiently for phenolic maturity, thereby conserving the fruit and allowing good concentration with soft, well-rounded tannins. Cold nights of the beginning of April and shorter times of days allow preserving a good level of acidity and fruit expression but making the fruit's ripening period longer.

2006 was a season in which monitoring and tasting the grapes was very important to ensure that each lot reached maturity. Leaf-pruning during pre- and post-veraison was of the utmost importance in all our vineyards to improve the micro-climatic conditions for the fruit, and decrease the presence of green flavours

THE 2006 VINTAGE AT CASA LAPOSTOLLE

The 2006 Vintage: Requinoa Vineyard

We started the picking of Sauvignon Blanc at the very beginning of March in Requinoa, electing to pick block by block. Sauvignon Blanc was hand-harvested early in the morning to preserve the cool temperature and to protect the aromas, in small cases of 12kg. The grapes were transported in refrigerated trucks

The Sauvignon Blanc wines show typicity, with very nice fruit, crispness and vibrancy.

Sauvignon Blanc exhibit good aromatic expression and good natural acidity that provides freshness to our future blends.

They are remarkably intense, with a wide range of aromas, from citrus to tropical, but also floral and herbaceous notes and sweat, providing a fresh and lively style. Mouths are full and of good volume.

Our sixth crop of Syrah confirms once again just how well-suited it is to the round stones of our Requinoa "terroir". This year, one vat was hand-de-stemmed and fermented in French wooden vats of 70hl capacity. As a result our Syrah Cuvée Alexandre 2006 has a deep colour with silky tannins and is very attractive. The wines stand out for their intense colour, sweet palate, classic complex notes of ripe black fruit and spices

The 2006 Vintage: Las Atalayas Vineyard, Casablanca

This year, the harvest in Casablanca was longer than scheduled. The 2006 season required repeated combing of the vineyards and extensive grape tasting to ensure that each plot was completely ripe. Dividing the vineyards into sectors of differentiated maturity and beginning the harvest in riper sectors of each vineyard while waiting for the remaining sectors to continue ripening. We tasted the berries at least twice a week and made selections according to the level of maturity. Our Atalayas vineyard in Casablanca is located on slopes facing different directions, which gives great diversity in maturation and a great complexity once all the different parcels have been assembled into the final blend. Using effective canopy management and by conducting two green harvests, we avoided any problems with botrytis, and were able to wait until May the 17th, to pick the last grapes. Harvested by hand in small cases of 12 kg and transported in refrigerated trucks, 100% of the fruit was sorted by hand on a hand sorting table and directly pressed without skin contact.

The Chardonnay wines exhibit good, balanced mouths and nerve are bright with good fruit intensity. They are still fermenting in our new French oak barrels which we specially commissioned from our suppliers.

This year, our Casablanca Pinot Noir is also very promising. We start the harvest on March the 29th and finished on May the 17th. 50% was hand-destemmed and all the grapes fermented in small 45hl and 70hl wooden vats. Some vats are showing great structure and others ones lots of fruit and freshness. The Pinot Noir exhibits their typicity with good fruit intensity. The blend should be very interesting.

The 2006 Vintage: Apalta vineyard

We started to pick red varieties according to their polyphenolic maturity, tasting berries at least twice a week to assess the levels of ripeness dividing the vineyards into sectors of differentiated maturity and beginning the harvest in riper sectors of each vineyard while waiting for the remaining sectors to continue ripening.

At the new Clos Apalta winery

On March the 22nd we began the vintage at the new Clos Apalta winery, picking part of the 15ha of Syrah we have planted in San Jose de Apalta: We hand-destemmed about 2500kg that we fermented in opened new French barrels in a way to improve the quality and the potential of this new project.

For the second time in the all new buried gravity-flow winery dedicated to the production of wines made from 100% hand-destemmed fruit, fermented in 100% new French oak small capacity tanks, we began by picking Merlot on March the 28th early in the morning to preserve the freshness of the fruit. 7000 kg were hand-destemmed by 90 people and poured directly into new wooden vats without either crushing or pumping. They remained at 10°C for 6 days for pre-fermentation maceration. The fermentation was conducted using indigenous natural yeasts and was very slow, allowing us to carry out gentle hand punching down.

In the same way, we harvested and hand-destemmed a total of 204,000 kg of Merlot, Cabernet, Carmenère and Petit Verdot according to the maturity of each one. All the 21 new French wooden vats of 70hl were filled, some of them twice; the last one being filled on May the 13th with Carmenère, which is showing wonderful colour and sweet soft tannins. All the red wines of the new Clos Apalta winery are already showing great potential.

Intense work was carried out to obtain a fine harmonisation between well-balanced canopies and vigour uniformity, to obtain fruit in perfect condition. With controlled irrigation and good climatic conditions we were able to wait until maturation to start the harvest beginning the harvest in riper sectors of each vineyard

We are still filling a selection of new French oak barrels using gravity going into a lower level in the new cellar, where will undergo the second fermentation (malolactic fermentation) before being aged on its lees.

At the Casa Lapostolle winery

The double selection tables system was well utilised and was on a large scale. We were able to hand-destem and ferment some lots of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenère that had never had a chance to undergo to this process before.

Generally speaking, because of the new 21 wooden vats at the Clos Apalta winery we were able to ferment parcel by parcel in a very precise and detailed way.

Harvest data:

- Syrah was picked from 24 March to 5 April
- Petit Verdot was picked from 25 March to 5 April
- Pinot Noir was picked from 29 March to 17 May
- Merlot was picked from 15 March to 10 May
- Cabernet Sauvignon from Requinoa was picked from 5 April until 19 April and mainly during the second week of May for Apalta and Pichidegua vineyards
- Some Carmenère in Apalta was picked during April, but the most important section of Carmenère was harvested during the second and third week of May

Hand-destemmed grapes:

A total of 234'000 kg was hand-destemmed compared to 50'000 kg in 2004 and 160'000kg in 2005-204'000 kg at the Clos Apalta winery & 30'590 kg at the Casa Lapostolle winery.

Fermentation in French wooden vats:

27 vats of 75hl (used twice) at the Clos Apalta winery

16 vats of 70hl and 6 vats of 45hl (used twice or more) at the Casa Lapostolle winery

We were right to wait and select grapes according to the good maturity; the wines do not show any green characters, and they display intense fruity notes. Even if this year we have bigger berry size, we are quite happy with this 2006 vintage because we have an excellent selection of wines for blending, with very good aromatic and color intensity, sweet, ripe tannins and a broad range of flavours

Jacques Bégarie
Technical Director, Casa Lapostolle