
THE 2017 VINTAGE IN PROVENCE

Côtes de Provence • Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence • Coteaux Varois en Provence

Climate conditions for the 2017 vintage

A LOOK BACK AT A YEAR IN THE VINES

Despite short episodes of significant cold, Provence experienced a relatively dry and mild winter in 2017. The rains that were expected in March and April resupplied the water tables, ensuring the good growth of the vine.

A period of frost at the end of April affected some of the vines that were budding early, particularly those in the centre of the Var. From the end of May, the weather was much warmer and drier than usual which meant that the vines were able to continue their development.

The flowering and fruit setting happened quickly, resulting in a bountiful setting and as such, the varying climate conditions, which included heat and rain, and occasionally frost and hail depending on the site, fortunately did not have a major impact on the quality of the grapes.

A powerful mistral helped maintain the overall good health of the vineyards. At the end of the summer, despite some particularly arid areas suffering from water-stress, the grape harvest was well-balanced in terms of maturity, heralding a high level of quality in the finished result.

These conditions have helped vine growth get ahead by as much as a week compared to average times. The harvest began mid-August in the more mature areas and continued until the end of September in the later-developing sites.

139 million bottles of rosé wines produced in Provence

Production in 2017 reached 1,165,389 hectolitres (the equivalent of 155 million bottles) for the Côtes de Provence, Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence, and Coteaux Varois en Provence appellations, the three appellations represented by the CIVP.

89% of the harvest was used to make rosé wine (1,042,995 hectolitres or the equivalent of 139 million bottles) while 7% of the total production was used to make red wine (77,464 hectolitres) and 4% was used to produce white wine (44,930 hectolitres).

Key figures - 2017 Vintage

Côtes de Provence / Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence / Coteaux Varois en Provence

Production: 1,165,389 hectolitres, the equivalent of 155 million bottles

Area: 26,948 hectares across 3 departments: Var, Bouches-du-Rhône, Alpes-Maritimes (one community)

Sector: 547 producers (486 independent wineries and 61 cooperatives) / over 100 négociants

Key figures by appellation - 2017 Vintage

AOC Côtes de Provence

Area: 20,026 hectares

Production: 864,920 hectolitres (equivalent to 115 million bottles) of which 90% produced rosé wine, 6% produced red wine, and 4% produced white wine

Sector: 349 independent wineries, 40 cooperative cellars, and 21 négociants

Maximum yield authorised: 55 hl/ha

Average yield: 43 hl/ha

By terroir designation :

Côtes de Provence Sainte-Victoire - Production: 26,816 hectolitres (rosé and red)

Côtes de Provence Fréjus - Production: 488 hectolitres (rosé and red)

Côtes de Provence La Londe - Production: 6,073 hectolitres (rosé, red and white)

Côtes de Provence Pierrefeu - Production: 4,834 hectolitres (rosé and red)

AOC Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence

Area: 4,178 hectares

Production: 187,460 hectolitres (equivalent to 25 million bottles) of which 85% produced rosé wine, 10% produced red wine, and 5% produced white wine

Sector: 68 independent wineries and 12 cooperatives

Maximum yield authorised: 60 hl/ha

Average yield: 45 hl/ha

AOC Coteaux Varois en Provence

Area: 2,744 hectares

Production: 113,009 hectolitres (equivalent to 15 million bottles) of which 91.5% produced rosé wine, 5.5% produced red wine, and 3% produced white wine

Sector: 69 independent wineries, 9 cooperatives and 2 négociants

Maximum yield allowed: 55 hl/ha

Average yield: 41 hl/ha

TASTING NOTES

Côtes de Provence

The white wines of the 2017 vintage feature pale yellow colours with green hues. Elegant and bold, they offer fruity aromas of pear, exotic fruits, pineapple and citrus, complemented by delicate notes of white flowers and herbs (mint, sage). The Côtes de Provence white wines develop on the palate with a tangy, fresh mouthfeel, thanks to the dense, round, full-bodied characteristics of the Vermentino grape which is so widely used within the appellation. The alcohol content is optimal and is well-balanced by the acidity. The white wines aged in wood barrels have flavours of vanilla, spice, honey and apricot.

The rosés of the 2017 vintage are luminous in appearance and come in a palette of pale pink colours ranging from salmon to antique rose. Grenache, Cinsault, and Syrah make up the basic blend, which is sometimes complemented by Mourvèdre, Tibouren, or white grapes (Vermentino). The wines are expressive, with good aromatic potential, freshness and alcoholic richness. The wines offer notes of citrus (pomelo, lemon), exotic fruits (passion fruit, mango), as well as slightly sharp notes of red fruits (redcurrant, strawberry, raspberry, cherry); they are rounded out with some floral notes (white flowers, hawthorn, fennel / anise). A slight minerality can be detected in wines from the driest *terroirs*. On the palate, the flavour is full and round; the wines express a freshness that persists leading to a lively, succulent and more-ish finish. The few cuvées aged in wood barrels feature notes of vanilla, dried fruits, and spices, bringing complexity to the aromatic bouquet.

The red wines of the 2017 vintage offer intense colours, ranging from ruby to purple. The climatic conditions allowed the tannins and anthocyanins to mature fully. The superb sugar content of the grapes resulted in wines that are balanced, without being too alcoholic. The red wines which will be consumed while young, offer a refreshing fruity flavour with notes of cherry, strawberry, raspberry, and blackcurrant, and soft, round tannins. The wines that have undergone long vatting periods are dense and complex. They offer aromas of dark fruit (blackberry, blueberry, burlat cherry), with a herbaceous garrigue flavour, complemented by spicy notes. Wooden barrels are used to enhance, rather than mask, the flavour of the wine, giving it subtle notes of vanilla and rounded tannins. These have good potential for laying down.

Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence

The white wines of the 2017 vintage are, overall, subtle but also expressive and powerful, with a complex nose marked by traditional notes of white flowers and citrus; they are full and round on the palate, with a long finish.

The rosé wines of the 2017 vintage have luminous robes with occasional nuances of blue and grey. More fruity than floral and often intense, the nose is expressive with aromatic notes ranging from citrus to red fruits. They offer a fullness on the palate and a slight acidity that balances the alcohol content. Complex, powerful and fruity, these rosé wines are the perfect accompaniment to Mediterranean and Asian cuisines.

The colours of the **red wines** of the 2017 vintage range from purple to deep garnet; they have a complex nose often characterised by notes of dark fruits that tone down the vegetal notes, and a robust, well-structured, "wild" palate and a fully present tannicity. They should be consumed after an ageing period of several months. With great potential for laying down, this red vintage will join the lineage of the most celebrated years, such as 2011, 2015, and 2016.

Coteaux Varois en Provence

The white wines of the 2017 vintage feature beautiful pale yellow hues with glints of green. The nose reveals lovely floral aromas (broom, hawthorn), stone fruits (peaches) and citrus. On the palate, these wines are full-bodied, with a rich mouthfeel and a long finish. Characteristic of Coteaux Varois en Provence, they are wonderfully fresh. The white wines have a nice balance, making them a real success story.

Despite an unusual year, the 2017 **rosés** have a lovely pale colour with pretty hints of rose petals. Some have an even paler hue (grey), or more rarely, salmon. The nose has an exquisitely aromatic intensity. The mouthfeel reveals a wide range, progressing into a delightful freshness at the finish. When the fruit flavour is dominant, particularly with citrus (lemon, grapefruit, mandarin) and small red fruits (raspberry), salinity is sometimes present. One of the best vintages of the decade.

The red wines of the 2017 vintage have a beautiful ruby red colour, sometimes drifting into deeper red. The nose is bold, dominated by the herbaceous garrigue aroma and red fruits. These wines are structured and are well-balanced on the palate, with subtle and well-rounded tannins. The notes of dark fruits and spices dominate, sometimes accompanied by floral notes (violet). These are accessible, enjoyable wines that are ready to drink and will leave you wanting more.

Sources: The Syndicats *des Vins* in Côtes de Provence, Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence, and Coteaux Varois en Provence.