



DOBIANCHI.COM – 23 AGOSTO 2018

Sparkling in the north, whites in the south: Italy's 2018 harvest has begun (photos and notes)



Dispatches from Italy's 2018 harvest are just beginning to come in.



That's a shot from Oltrepò Pavese, snapped earlier this week. They've started picking their Chardonnay (below) and Pinot Noir for their classic method wines.

From what I've been told, Oltrepò Pavese was spared a lot of the late spring and early summer rain that hopscotched across northern Italy this year.

The photos come from winery Travaglino who's underwriting a blog that I'm writing for the next six months on the appellation. More on that later...



I've been told that [most](#) a lot of Franciacorta has already been harvested. I was in Franciacorta in May and then back in June. Limited but still menacing hailstorms and late rains were keeping producers on their toes. When Tracie and I were there in June with the girls, there was a huge thunderstorm that had growers



spraying a lot of copper the next day. (After heavy precipitation, copper is sprayed to prevent peronospora, otherwise known as downy mildew.)

Looking around on the internets, I found [this authorization](#), dated June 15, for Trentino producers to increase the maximum yearly amount of copper per hectare to 9 kilos.

The request and authorization are indicators that they've experienced problems with peronospora during this very rainy vintage in northern Italy.

Currently, the EU allows growers to use 6 kilos per hectare per year. But the EU's Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) Committee is considering reducing that amount to 4 kilos per year, something that has organic growers gravely concerned (see [my post from July 23 here](#)).

Copper is [a very sticky issue](#) in Europe these days.



Southern Italy has also seen some patchy but limited rain late in the growing cycle this year. It didn't impact growers to the same extent as in the north.

Those are Chardonnay grapes harvested in Salento this week, above, photo via my friend and client Paolo Cantele.

The quality of their fruit this year is excellent, he said, despite some late rainfall. He and his brother Gianni are really happy with their results. Those grapes will be used to make their flagship Teresa Manara Chardonnay, their twentieth vintage (mazel tov, Cantele family!).



Down in Tuscany, they've had a "rainy and cool" season, said my friend and client Stefano Cinelli Colombini in a Facebook post ([translated here](#), by me, for their blog).

Those are Stefano's Merlot grapes in Maremma, along the coast.

Based on his lab samples, he's expecting an early harvest, which is surprising considering the conditions.

"With these crazy seasons," he wrote, "there's no telling what the results will be." But he's confident that the vintage has good potential.

Between the wild fires in California wine country and the odd weather on both sides of the Atlantic, I don't know of any winemaker — not even the rubiest red



Trump supporter (and there are plenty of them in California, by the way) — who doesn't believe that climate change is affecting and impacting their livelihood.

Earlier this year, Stefano wrote [this compelling op-ed on how winemakers need to face the challenges of climate change](#) (I translated it for his blog; it's worth checking out).

Wishing winemakers across the world, a bountiful and healthy harvest! Buona vendemmia!