

## **2007 Southern Rhône Vintage Report**

No doubt many of you are keenly aware of the many accolades bestowed upon the 2007 vintage in the Southern Rhône. But for all of the enthusiasm surrounding these wines, perhaps you are wondering what conditions are necessary to create the “perfect storm” of vintage greatness? Below is a brief synopsis of this exceptional vintage. Please read on!

Vignerons in the Southern Rhône were blessed with a near perfect growing season, which resulted in perfectly ripe grapes with good levels of acidity and fine, supple tannins. Temperate and dry are the key words here. Flowering occurred in early May, a month that was also marked by nearly 400-plus millimeters of spring rain. However, by June drier weather prevailed, with only 35 millimeters of rain falling between June and September, making it the driest growing season of the last 20 years. Despite the aridity evidenced in the region, temperatures were a bit cooler too. The average daily temperature, as recorded in Orange from May 1st to October 1st, was 80.3 degrees Fahrenheit, which is cooler than the average temperatures for the same periods in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. Additionally, between July 1st and September 15th, the region experienced forceful high winds, known as the Mistral. Although the growing season was unusually dry, these strong winds helped ensure the sanitary health of the grapes (i.e. a preventative against rot and mildew). From September 16-18th the region received another 20 millimeters of rain fall, however this brief moisture did not affect grape quality. The exceptional ripeness and health of the fruit resulted in a relatively easy harvest, (i.e. very little triage, or sorting of the grapes).

Along with the high quality of the vintage, yields were also a bit higher than normal throughout the Southern Rhône, with Châteauneuf-du-Pape ranging between 32-34 hectoliters per hectare for an authorized maximum of 35 hectoliters per hectare. The skinny on all of this data translates to a very strong showing for the Southern Rhône in 2007. Beautiful, clean fruit, moderate-plus acidity and excellent phenolic ripeness mean great drinking across the board, from entry level Côtes du Rhône to high end and age-worthy Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The quality in this vintage is so consistent that I would recommend that Rhône enthusiasts snap up not only their tried and true favorites, but venture out and try some less familiar but intriguing wines too.

Check out K&L’s entire selection of [2007 Southern Rhône](#)s on the web at [KLWines.com](#).

Mulan Chan-Randel