

Hail in Barolo

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It's that time of year, when a freak hailstorm can fatally damage a swathe of nearly-ripe grapes. Italy has had a relatively cloudy summer with far more and more violent rain than is usual in August. (The ripening process is also well behind average in much of France with, again, more rain than usual in August, prejudicing the health of the grapes.) In Valpolicella, several hundred hectare of vines were severely damaged earlier this summer. In Barolo, a violent hailstorm hit on 2 September and damage is particularly severe - close to total in some places - in vineyards such as Cerequio (Gaja, Roberto Voerzio, Michele Chiarlo), Brunate (Ceretto, Chiarlo, Giuseppe Rinaldi, Marcarini, Altare) and Cannubi (Sandrone, Paolo Scavino, Bartolo Mascarello, Marchesi di Barolo, Enrico Pira, Giuseppe Rinaldi, Chiarlo). The lower part of Serralunga was also hit, though less severely. Angelo Gaja reckons that about half of the grapes were destroyed in vineyard where he makes Sperss, and it's likely that Fontanafredda also suffered some damage. The Ginestra and Gavarini vineyards of Monforte d'Alba have also been affected. I suppose Barolo's wining streak had to come to an end, alas.