



The 2026 Harvest at Pol Roger

An unprecedented year, marked by the vines' resilience and a historically early harvest



The 2026 grape harvest at Pol Roger, which began on 11 August, brings to a close an exceptionally early winegrowing season marked by contrasting weather conditions. Spring frost, drought, rainy periods, and then a succession of heatwaves: throughout the season, the vines and our vineyard team had to contend with everything that nature threw at them! At the end of this eventful growing season, 2026 is emerging as a vintage of unusual and unexpected character. A record-breaking year for Pol Roger, it is distinguished by historically early ripening, unprecedented sugar levels and exceptional concentration in the berries, as well as the remarkable health and condition of the grapes. Yields are lower, but the harvest is promising in terms of the balances and grape quality.

Resilience throughout a challenging winegrowing season

From the very first weeks of spring, the 2026 growing season was already notably advanced. Bud burst began as early as 23 March on the Chardonnay, followed by the other grape varieties around 28 March, i.e., 16-21 days ahead of the ten-year average.

From the end of March, the Champagne region was hit by several episodes of frost. Across the appellation, around 38% of buds were affected, making 2026 the second-worst year for frost damage since 2003. The Pol Roger vineyards were similarly affected, with significant variation in damage, sometimes even within individual plots.



After an exceptionally warm and sunny March, with maximum temperatures around 2°C above the seasonal average and rainfall broadly in line with the average, April 2026 was the driest month ever recorded in the vineyards, with an average rainfall of only 7.1 mm.

This sharp contrast in weather patterns was followed in early May by regular rainfall, which was heavy in some areas. These conditions required heightened vigilance as the wetter environment made the vines more susceptible to disease. Towards the end of the month, dry, sunny weather returned, allowing the vines to resume vigorous growth and enter flowering in favourable conditions, still well ahead of the ten-year average. On the plots spared by the frost, observations at flowering indicated very good quality potential. But the summer, too, would bring its own share of surprises!



This growing season has been a remarkable demonstration of the vine's ability to adapt. We went from frost to a historic drought, followed by periods of rain and then a succession of heatwaves. At each stage, we had to observe, understand and adapt our work in the vineyards. This year, more than ever, nature has dictated the pace, adds Lucile Perard, Vineyard Manager.



Spectacular ripening

By July, after several consecutive heatwaves, the vines seemed to have adapted to these conditions. Veraison was slow to begin, and there was talk at the time of a possible heat-induced blockage of the veraison process. Once started, however, ripening accelerated dramatically. The small berries showed a particularly pronounced concentration of both sugars and acidity. This concentration was accompanied by very fast ripening, with some plots gaining up to three degrees of potential alcohol in a single week. This exceptional pace of ripening confirmed the prospect of an extremely early harvest.

The harvest kicked off on 11 August, a historic date for Pol Roger and a new record for the earliest start to harvesting. Despite this early start, the harvest took longer than expected and is still ongoing at the time of writing. This exceptionally early start also presented us with an unprecedented logistical challenge, requiring considerable agility in organising the harvest. As the ripening process accelerated, we had to organise pickers, teams and equipment at very short notice, while the picking schedule was adapted to the pace of ripening within each individual plot.

Notable features

- At harvest time, the unusual nature of the 2026 vintage is immediately apparent in the noticeably smaller clusters and berries compared with the previous year. This partly explains why **the yield is about 20% below that set for the appellation.**
- **The average potential alcohol content** in the vat room is 11.8% vol. across all grape varieties: 11.5% for Pinot Noir, 12.2% for Chardonnay and 11.4% for Meunier. What is particularly remarkable in such a hot and early year is that this **exceptional concentration** is not confined to the sugars alone. The grapes also preserve **excellent acidity**, averaging 5.15 g/L H₂SO₄, allowing the musts to retain a freshness that is evident from the very first tastings.
- In addition to these balances, another notable feature of the harvest is the **excellent health of the grapes.**



Promising first tastings

In the vat room, the first tastings have confirmed the unique character of the harvest. The musts are particularly fruity, expressive and attractive, with aromatic intensity and remarkable concentration, thick with pure fruit. Aromas of fresh fruit are already filling the vat room as the first fermentations get underway.

This year, the red grape varieties are looking particularly promising: both Pinot Noir and Meunier are generous, expressive and intensely fruity. The Chardonnays show high degrees of maturity and impressive concentration. After months spent observing and tending the vines, the focus is now firmly on the wines. We will have to wait a little longer to fully understand the profile of a year that, from bud break to harvest, has consistently defied expectations.

“*This has been an unprecedented year, though not necessarily for the reasons we first thought. We are seeing exceptional levels of concentration, while retaining a freshness that is quite unexpected in such a hot and early year. The first tastings are very promising, with wines that are already remarkably fruity and expressive. But with a year like this, we have little to go on. We will have to adapt, learn and allow the wines to gradually reveal their personality. This is also what makes the work ahead particularly exciting. See you in December for the tastings that will give us our first glimpse of the future blends,* concludes Damien Cambres, Chef de caves.”



▶ [Discover the 2026 harvest at Pol Roger on video](#)

