Harvest 2026 – Domaine des Homs, Minervois, Languedoc

This is the 26th harvest at Domaine des Homs, and the earliest to date, as has been the case in many other regions across France.

It all began with a very wet winter, with 700 mm of rainfall between December and March—twice as much as fell over the course of an entire year in each of the previous two years. By the end of March, water reserves had been fully replenished.

Budbreak came early, and by the beginning of April all the grape varieties had started growing. Flowering followed the same rapid pace and took place under excellent, even conditions around the end of May.

By mid-July, the vines throughout the Minervois were looking magnificent. However, as has increasingly been the case in recent years, there was no rain in either mid-July or mid-August, whereas in the past rainfall during these periods was more common. The drought was compounded by successive heatwaves, putting the vines under considerable stress.

In this part of France, the divide is becoming increasingly pronounced between winegrowers who have access to irrigation—under very strict regulations—and those who have no access to water.

From mid-July onwards, Jean-Marc began mounding-up the vines, bringing additional soil around the base of each vine to increase the depth of the soil layer and help insulate the roots from the intense heat.

The Chardonnay was the first to be harvested, on August 20, followed by the Viognier in early September, and then the Grenache Gris and Vermentino together. The red varieties began to be harvested with the Syrah from September 10.

Unfortunately, Syrah was the variety most affected by this exceptionally hot and dry vintage. The berries contained very little juice, and the estate expects only around half a normal crop of Syrah—a significant reduction given that it represents an important part of the domaine's production.

Something particularly remarkable this year is that the Cinsault is still on the vine and will be among the last varieties to be harvested. Jean-Marc explains that Cinsault has very delicate skins and does not tolerate rainfall well, as wet conditions can quickly lead to the development of rot. In the past, it was therefore harvested early, ahead of the September rains, to ensure the grapes arrived at the winery in perfect condition.

However, when conditions allow—as they have this year—the grapes can be left to achieve perfect ripeness. We tasted the Cinsault directly from the vines: the bunches are beautiful, juicy and wonderfully sweet. This bodes extremely well for a magnificent 2026 Amandier cuvée! The neighbouring Grenache will be harvested at the same time, although its bunches are smaller and contain less juice.

The harvest is planned for the night from Wednesday into Thursday, which is expected to be the coolest in the region, with temperatures dropping to 12°C. These are ideal conditions for bringing the grapes into the winery, cool and in optimal condition.

There is another piece of good news this year: an additional half-hectare of Grenache Gris has come into production. This will make it possible once again to produce the domaine's delicious Grenache Gris white cuvée, as well as Maïana, the AOC Minervois Blanc, where it is blended with Vermentino.