



❖ Harvest shines through an unusual calendar ❖

Traditionally the feast of the cross on September 14 marked the starting date of the harvest across Lebanon. It was the signal to pick pomegranates, grapes, walnuts and quince etc ... with festivities in the rural areas around *hrisse* cooking (stew of wheat and sheep) and all kinds of social celebrations and preparations known as the *moune*, when families began to fill their pantries for winter.

With climate change now affecting rainfall and temperature, the feast of the cross has come to signal the *end* of the harvest. This year we started the grape harvest for the white wine on August 1 and for the red wines, on August 10. The lower than average winter rainfall meant that **the grapes were maturing ten days ahead of schedule**. The grapes were perfectly ripe and beautiful with the exception of some varieties such as Cinsault, Carignan and Chardonnay which were affected by *oidium*, a minor disease related to exposure to excess humidity during the early vegetative cycle. Overall, rainfall was 30 percent below average this year. However, with the months of May and June relatively humid due to some late rain, production increased on some terroir by 30 percent. This was especially noticeable in Haddath Baalbeck, home to the Mourvedre (Terrasses de Baalbeck) and to the Clairette, a white variety that we ferment at Faqra. Grenache, a disease resistant variety of

grapes, was perfect this year with regular yields and beautiful results at Ras Baalbeck. These are the grapes used in Cap Est.

Climate change is without a doubt affecting the timing of harvest but beside the weather conditions, we have **a human factor that is shifting the harvest calendar**: the introduction of early maturing grape varieties. For instance some colleagues are using Muscat, Pinot noir, Merlot - varieties that are adapted to more temperate weather and are hardly compatible with the vineyard calendar of Lebanon.

At Massaya the early variety that we use for the reds is Syrah and for the whites, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. We develop these varieties at a higher altitude (in our vineyards in Faqra and in Haddath Baalbeck) in order to delay the maturity of the grapes. Our traditional white grape variety Obeïdi however, is still picked after September 14—it's as if our ancestors made a point of respecting the traditional calendar.

Early maturity of grapes, be it human or weather enticed, could mean less complexity for the wines. One could compare it to cooking in a pressure cooker versus simmering in a thick pot: The flavors and ingredients integrate better when cooked slowly in a pot. Of course the stage of maturity is not the only factor to affect the complexity of the wines. At Massaya we believe that **70 percent of the quality comes from the vineyards and just 30 percent from the winery**. We are proud to say that **in 2018 we used only organic spraying and very rarely fertilizers**. We did have some Chardonnay affected by *oidium*, but if that is the price to pay for keeping the ladybugs alive in the vineyards, that's absolutely fine with us!

It is still too early to give a final assessment regarding the 2018 harvest, as we will wait for the visit of our French partners in December to grade the results. Meanwhile, we know that the team did a fantastic job this year and derived much pleasure from tasting and retesting the vats. We look forward to sharing our 2018 wines with you!

[Read More](#)



Spectacular from Seattle

They're coming from the renowned Middle Eastern restaurant Mamnoon to prepare a spectacular **set menu lunch on Saturday the 13th of October** as part of our international programme at Faqra's Fireplace restaurant. Led by general manager Jen Kligerman, these chefs are expert in producing a dazzling menu based on the Lebanese/Syrian dishes that have made Mamnoon a go-to destination for discerning diners.

For more details about the menu , click [here](#)

Mamnoon comes to Massaya – and we look forward to seeing you on October 13.

Book Now



A famous Londoner in our kitchen

Henry Harris is a phenomenal British chef who made his name cooking French dishes even better than the French at his famed restaurant *Racine*, located in London's elegant Knightsbridge district. Now he's coming to Faqra on **October 14** to add his Anglo- Franco finesse to our popular **Sunday Brunch**, and we look forward to opening our kitchen- and your table- to his expertise.

Book now for Sunday Brunch with dishes by Henry Harris, October 14.

Book Now

❖ **Massaya's Residency Program** ❖



Manon the Resident of 2018 harvest - Living the dream

One of the best ways to learn about wine is to join our Massaya Residency program. We encourage young people from around the world to experience life and learn at our Faqra winery and resort.

This year we welcomed three residents from France and the UK who stayed with us at Faqra and worked in various roles. Manon Ramone had already studied for the Diplôme National d'Oenologue in Toulouse and she helped in the winery while Will White and Adam Pearson worked mainly in the restaurants.

To give you a flavour of this exciting opportunity to live and learn in the world of wine, here's what Manon said at the end of her residency.

'Surrounded by a welcoming and dynamic team, working at Massaya was an original and rewarding experience. From a professional point of view, the three months allowed me to apply my knowledge while adapting to new working techniques, sometimes very different from those previously taught. From a personal point of view, I developed essential qualities for a winemaker. I also explored Lebanon, a country steeped in history that was previously unknown to me. A Mediterranean gastronomy, healthy and refined and landscapes where mountain and desert influences intermingle.'

To apply for the 2019 Residency program at Massaya:

Apply now

FALL SEASON AT MASSAYA

Daily winery tours and tastings, 10:00-17:00

FIREPLACE RESTAURANT Thursday
lunch | Friday & Saturday lunch and
dinner | Sunday Brunch

SUNSETBAR

Saturday & Sunday, 17:30-23:00

THE POND GARDEN - reopens June 2019

**Massaya Faqra is closed from October 15 - December 7*

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